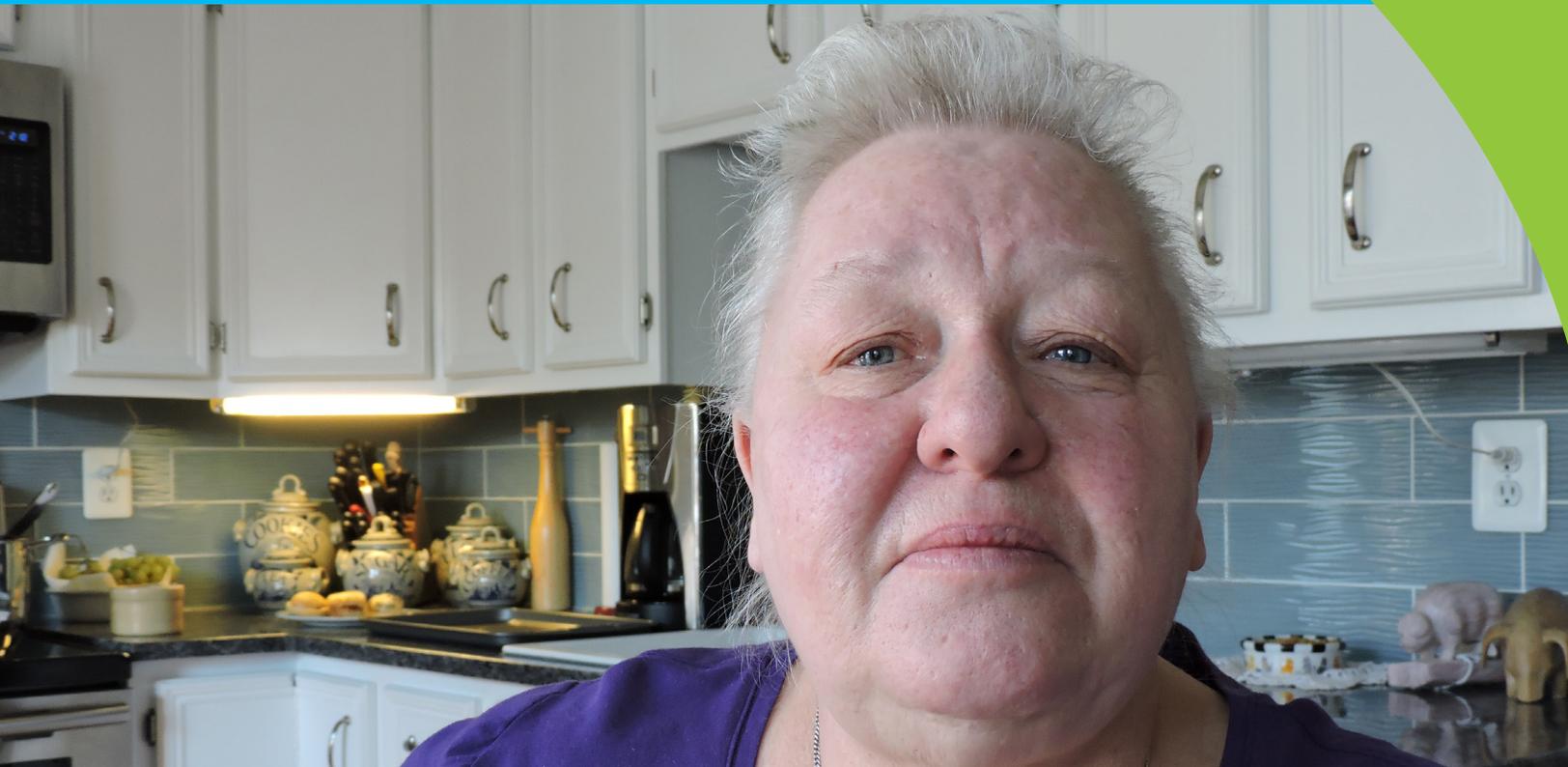


YW Advocate

Winter 2017



Taking Control

More women are building brighter futures - thanks to you

The first thing you notice about Regina is her warmth. Next, it's her formidable strength.

For 20 years, Regina suffered unspeakable acts of physical, sexual and mental abuse she can only describe as evil.

Like many, she mistook his early possessiveness as a sign of love. "You don't see that it's actually control until it's too late," Regina shares. Young and pregnant, her life became unbearable when they moved to an acreage; isolated from her work, her family and friends.

There, her every move was monitored. Regina recalls the many ways he controlled her, sometimes by taking the carburetor out of their car; even taking her shoes. Soon, their two young sons were also his targets.

His attacks escalated. Regina describes how she felt the "only way out was to take my own life." But how she couldn't, saying "I had to stay alive until my sons could be on their own." When her husband turned on their six-year-old she couldn't wait. The escape plan she and her older son had often discussed was put into action that day.

They had made a game of racing the long distance to a neighbour's house, but this time, they would borrow her car and race to a Calgary police station, desperately hoping not to be caught. Once there, Regina recalls refusing to leave, insisting someone help because "he was going to kill us."

"YW Sheriff King Home crisis shelter was the only place at that time that would take me with a teenage son, she adds. I was so scared but I will never forget them. They gave me space to heal and never gave up on me."

Although Regina escaped her abuser many years ago, she hopes women facing abuse today will find strength in her story. Today, she is a generous supporter, owns a flourishing business, has been happily remarried for more than 20 years and is thriving. Regina beams when she mentions her sons who she proudly says, "couldn't be kinder, more special men."

Message from the CEO

The last year can only be summarized as a year of monumental change and growth for YW Calgary. You've probably noticed our refreshed brand that reflects our changing environment, a time of bold hope and advancement of women in our community.

You may also have heard the buzz about our future plans for a new YW facility in Inglewood. This is a community where we have been supporting women and children for more than 30 years at YW Sheriff King Home crisis shelter. The future facility promises to provide new opportunities to support women and their families to thrive.

These bright futures are possible because you have put your trust and support in YW through our 106 year history in Calgary.

I can't thank you enough for your continued commitment to helping us fulfill our mission to intervene, empower, and lead when and where women need us the most.

YOU are an important part of our future.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sue".

Sue Tomney, CEO
YW Calgary

YW in the Community

YW KEEP A ROOF OVER THEIR HEADS®

In just one night, you can change many lives with YW Calgary at the 10th annual KEEP A ROOF OVER THEIR HEADS® event, Thursday, May 11, 2017.

This pledge-based fundraising event will take you through a simulation of women's experience with homelessness, poverty and domestic abuse; a journey to access YW services that includes one night under our roof.

Register today! Ask your family, friends and co-workers to support you through a donation.

For details or to register, visit: ywkeeparroof.ca

YW 106th Annual General Meeting

YW proudly hosts its Annual General Meeting and donor appreciation event on June 20, 2017. This event celebrates YW's supporters, achievements, milestones and successes over the last year while outlining a vision for the future.

WALK OR RUN FOR YW CALGARY

You can support **Team YWCA** in the Calgary Marathon's Scotiabank Charity Challenge on May 28, 2017! YW was chosen as one of the charity's for the 2017 Charity Challenge, where 100 per cent of funds directly donated will go to YW. Be a hero and raise funds by participating, or make a one-time donation.

Visit: calgarymarathon.com/charity-challenge.html

YW on the Move

After receiving the option to purchase property in Inglewood, YW took our plans to the community. With their feedback, we have submitted final designs and development permit applications to the City of Calgary.

The new location will improve women and their families experience and comfort as they access our support.

Visit: ywcalgary.ca/engagement

Connect with us online

 @YWcalgary

 @YWcalgary

Read our blog

 www.ywcalgary.ca/our-view

Busting the myths

Q: What misconceptions do people have about women and abuse?

A: Foremost is the idea that the women are weak, from poor neighbourhoods – or both. That they did something to make their partner angry, or that he was just stressed or had ‘one too many.’

Q: What is the reality?

A: Our clients come from all walks of life, including our most affluent communities. They work hard and almost without exception are strong, extraordinary parents who protect their children at all costs - including their own safety. The abuse they’ve endured is not about anger, it’s about control.

Abusers are very skilled at gaining control over time, in tiny increments that no one can see coming. Abuse doesn’t happen overnight.



Allison Mclauchlan
Manager, YW Crisis Shelter & Outreach

Thanks to You:

- More than 450 women and children received support at YW Sheriff King Home crisis shelter in 2015.
- Our outreach program offers support to women looking for solutions outside the shelter.
- In 2015, YW Mary Dover House provided transitional housing to 323 women and 28 children.

Q: Are there also misconceptions about the shelter?

A: Yes! People assume it’s gloomy, depressing and undignified. Nothing is further from the truth. Most clients notice immediately how relaxed and upbeat they are. We laugh a lot. Moms and their children often enjoy the first genuine warmth and friendship they’ve had in months, sometimes years. There’s no tip-toeing around to keep the peace. They feel safe and free to be themselves. There’s no judgement. They have the control.

Q: What help do you offer?

A: Safety, 24/7 is our first priority. Provincial guidelines offer 21 days in shelter, so after taking a bit of time to settle in, the work begins: Are there custody, visitation or other legal issues? What about school, daycare and work? Where will they live and how will she pay the bills? A big part of our work deals with overcoming the financial abuse.

Q: What is financial abuse?

A: It’s also about control. Clients may arrive without a dime - not because they’re poor but they don’t have access to accounts or credit cards. Moms who’ve been “allowed” to work might lose or have to abandon their jobs to look for childcare in a new neighbourhood, attend court appointments, or to take time to find housing. If they do have assets: an old car, or any savings, they typically won’t qualify for assistance - until they have nothing. One woman had to give her abuser her own car in order to get help.

Q: What would you say to someone who is thinking about getting help?

A: We can provide tools and knowledge around ways you can help keep yourself and your children safer. You won’t be judged. You’ll be free to make your own decisions and we will support you, no matter what. We won’t give up. And life will be better.

