

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

YWCA Holiday Gift Program Spreads Festive Cheer to Local Families

Peterborough, ON - December 1, 2010 --- When women and their children escape abuse, the first year can be a difficult period of transition. The holiday season often presents unique challenges for single moms who are already struggling to make ends meet. In an effort to help reduce some of these pressures, YWCA Peterborough, Victoria & Haliburton has embraced a heartwarming annual tradition called the “Holiday Gift Program”.

Beginning in October, the YWCA matches families who have accessed counselling or stayed at Crossroads Shelter or Haliburton Emergency Rural Safe Space (HERS) with local sponsors who generously supply new toys, clothing and grocery gift cards for the family’s holiday celebration.

In cases where a sponsor is not available, YWCA “elves” pack special gift baskets containing a variety of new items donated to the YWCA during November and December. Donations of new unwrapped toys for children ages 1-16, grocery gift cards, clothing for women and children, and household items are gratefully accepted at the YWCA’s Administrative Office, located on the main floor at 216 Simcoe Street, until December 21st. Drop-off is available Monday through Friday from 9:00 am to 4:30 pm.

Gift cards for local department stores and shopping centres are always welcome and help to ensure that everyone, including difficult to shop for teenagers, receives something that will bring a smile to their face.

“The YWCA Holiday Gift Program is very dear to my heart,” says program coordinator Margaret Soles, “Since the program began over ten years ago, I have received calls and emails from hundreds of local groups, businesses and families, eager to offer what they can to support single moms and their children during their first holiday season in a new life. For many of these families, leaving an abusive situation has meant a drastic lifestyle change. Being able to maintain some of the simple traditions they have always cherished is just part of the magic this program offers to the women and children we support here at the YWCA.”

Another benefit of the program is that the women who receive support are offered the opportunity to maintain an active role in providing for their children. Sponsors are encouraged to supply gift cards as a portion of their gift package, which allows women to personally select special gifts and treats for their children without having to worry about where the money will come from.

If you are interested in sponsoring a family, or would like more information about specific items that are still needed, please contact Margaret by phone: (705) 743-3526, or email: info@ywcapeterborough.org. More information about the YWCA Holiday Gift Program is also available at www.ywcapeterborough.org.

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