



*New YWCA Crossroads Safe Haven Shelter. Image created by Trevelyan Architect Inc.*

# A Shelter Built on Compassion: Honouring YWCA Crossroads 27th Anniversary

*By Roula Kovios, Communications Specialist  
YWCA Peterborough, Victoria & Haliburton*

For more than 118 years, the YWCA of Peterborough, Victoria and Haliburton has been a leading agency for women who are at a turning point in their lives. The organization provides leadership on issues affecting women and their families, and creates positive change so that all women can participate to the full extent of their abilities.

In 1983, the YWCA of Peterborough, Victoria and Haliburton was one of the first organizations in the country to recognize the enormous impact domestic violence was having on women and their children in the community. Building on their tradition and reputation for excellence in serving the changing needs of women and their families, Crossroads was born on February 14th of that year. The YWCA purchased two older homes in

Peterborough and opened the Crossroads Shelters, which have since provided emergency accommodation and professional support to over 13,000 women and children in the region, who had nowhere else to turn. For women escaping violence, Crossroads is the first and most effective defense against the harm and potential lethality of domestic abuse. For the women who arrive at these doors, this is the most critical turning point of their lives. “In an abusive situation, a woman has to make a very brave and courageous decision to take the extra risk of walking out that door, taking her children and saying goodbye to the relationship, a marriage, a home and hoping something better will come next,” states Lynn Zimmer, YWCA Executive Director.

The YWCA has been integral in

expanding our community’s safety net for abused women and creating awareness, policies and protocols around the issue. Deeply committed to the community, the YWCA works tirelessly to prevent violence and improve life for women and families living in poverty through an important array of programs. According to the 08/09 annual report, Crossroads shelters average occupancy rate (beds filled each night) was 92 per cent, an 18 per cent increase over the previous year. The average length of stay at Crossroads shelters was 32 days, a 23 per cent increase over last year. Additionally, skilled YWCA staff operate a 24-hr crisis and support phone line, conduct risk assessments, provide information, answer questions, and when needed, arrange transportation to the shelter. Crossroads staff answered 10,466 crisis



Groundbreaking Ceremony, Fall 2009

and support calls over the past year. Beyond crisis management, Crossroads staff also provide supportive counselling to shelter residents and to women who may still be living at home, but who seek to end a cycle of abuse. Women and their children are given practical, emotional and psychological support to assist them to transition from abusive relationships to healthier ones.

**The Vision for a New Crossroads Shelter**

Today, Crossroads itself is at a turning point. Our aging facilities were no longer adequate to meet our community's needs for future. The YWCA had a bold vision for a new YW Crossroads Shelter. At 14,178 square feet, the new Crossroads shelter will be twice the size of both previous buildings combined. It will be wheelchair accessible and is designed to accommodate the needs of injured, disabled, and elderly women, as well as women with small children requiring cribs and strollers. A significant enhancement will be additional space for private counselling as well as children's programming and areas for group programs for both shelter residents and women in transition. Helping women imagine and achieve a different future requires nourishment of self-esteem, rebuilding of confidence, pre-employment programs, assistance with access to resources and often special

supports for those women struggling with psychological problems. Helping children recover from the trauma of abuse in the home is also a crucial intervention. Professional support to the mothers and children is critical to ensuring these youth do not themselves grow up to be abusers or victims. The YWCA, in partnership with appropriate community service agencies, will provide women and their children with the enriched professional support they require to break the cycle of violence and build healthier futures.

A lot has been achieved in the past 27 years: Construction on the new Crossroads Shelter began in the Fall of 2009. The YWCA volunteers, staff and clients are profoundly grateful to all donors of the YWCA Crossroads Safe Haven Campaign. It is expected that the new facility will be operational before the end of the year. "We must generate hope and compassion," says Lynn Zimmer, "so that change is possible, and then take practical steps forward." In addition to the overwhelming support received during the campaign, you can send your electronic donations to the Crossroads Safe Haven campaign through the YWCA website by visiting [www.ywcapeterborough.org](http://www.ywcapeterborough.org) or you can donate items that the new shelter needs through the Sears Crossroads gift registry, kindly organized by Sears Peterborough.

d e s ! g n

- communicate
- graphic
- image
- copy
- web
- market
- research
- production



c r e a t i v e

since 2001



fireklix

imaging & design  
www.fireklix.com

705 741.5210

fireklix@nexicom.net