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# Profile of YWCA Receives Boost

## Banish the Blues Fundraiser Educates Public About Organization's Work

By Mark Arike



It might have not been the largest fundraiser that Haliburton County has ever seen, however, the first-ever YWCA Banish the Blues event undoubtedly did raise awareness about what the organization is trying to do.

"It was just as much about raising awareness as it was about raising the funds," said Laura Redman, event developer for the YWCA of Peterborough, Victoria and

Haliburton. "We wanted to get the word out that the YWCA is in Haliburton County and that it is there for women who need us."

At Saturday evening's event held at the Pinestone Resort by the not-for-profit organization, nearly 100 people showed up to enjoy dinner, a silent and live "altered image" art auction, and music from award-winning Canadian blues talent in the form of Rick Fines and Suzy Vinnick.

Prior to stepping on the stage, Fines and Vinnick spoke to The Voice about their decision to perform at the YWCA event. "Having been a musician for more than 30 years professionally, I probably get asked to do a fundraiser

once a week," said Fines about the demand that's out there to perform at similar gigs. "I have to pick and choose which ones to go to because otherwise you get inundated ... this is an important cause and when you look at the services that the YWCA provides – like the women's shelter – you see how it's very important to the community."

The duo went on to perform a mix of songs in two sets – mostly acoustic blues tracks with a few traces of folk and rock thrown into the show.

Lynn Zimmer, executive director of the YWCA chapter, said that it's been difficult to hear about the many stories of violence that women have recounted over the years. At the same time, hearing about tales of tragedy turned to triumph has spread hope to many.

"The YWCA has been present in Haliburton County since 1986," began Zimmer, "and during those years we have met some incredibly courageous women who are dealing with things that are almost beyond belief."

Zimmer spoke about the successful creation of the Haliburton Emergency Rural Safespace (HERS) – a place where women and their families can find refuge from a current volatile situation.

"Women don't have to leave Haliburton County in order to get to a safe place," she said. "We're very, very happy that we have that secure place available now."

Any funds that were raised at the event will go to support HERS as well as the local women's shelter. To learn about the services for women provided by the YWCA visit [www.ywcapeterborough.org](http://www.ywcapeterborough.org).