

FALL 2015

# YOUR REDWOOD

your gifts at work for women and children

## MONTHLY DONORS ROCK!

FOR DAVE BIDINI, SPREADING THE ANTI-VIOLENCE MESSAGE BEGINS IN YOUR COMMUNITY

Meet Dave Bidini! Gemini-, Genie-, and Juno-nominated musician, author, columnist, world traveller, social justice crusader, and a **monthly supporter** of The Redwood. Though he travels the world with his band and supports various causes, he believes change begins right in your own backyard.

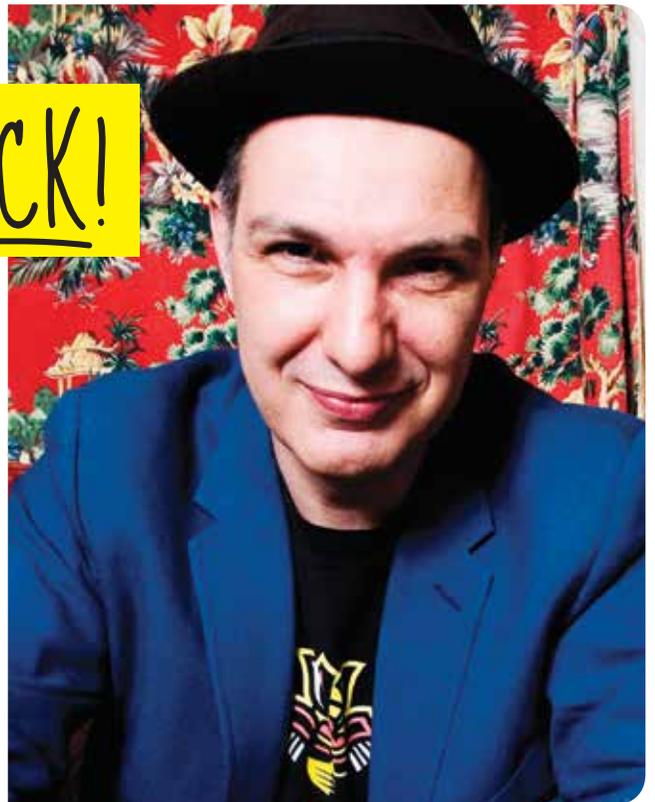
Your monthly gifts provide women and children with the stability they need in a time of great uncertainty. Becoming a monthly donor, like Dave, is as much about helping Redwood families as it is about being a part of the bigger community. You are all working to help end violence against women.

"I support The Redwood because it is in our neighbourhood, and that's important to me. Think about your community, your neighbourhood — the issues that are close at hand and the people that you share your streets with.

*I give monthly because it's important to keep the support of those who have been affected by domestic violence strong.*

A new cafe, or cheese shop, or hardware store will open on the corner and you always hear people say they would rather go to those local shops to support businesses in their community. I want to support local endeavours in the same way. If people looked at supporting The Redwood like this, we would realize we need to preserve its presence too.

If you're spending ten or fifteen dollars a week on



coffee at your local cafe to help it thrive, it makes just as much sense to support a place like The Redwood. We need to keep it as an active and vital part of the community. Domestic violence affects so many people. Even those who are not affected by it are only removed from it by a couple of degrees. The presence of The Redwood in our community also serves as an important reminder that, sadly, domestic violence is just as much a part of our social fabric as anything. It won't go away on its own.

I give monthly because it's important to keep the support of those who have been affected by domestic violence strong. Imagine, a family member or your co-worker facing this. Everybody is busy, we have lives and jobs and kids and families, and it's easy to lose sight of a lot of the issues that affect our world and our community. If we all work

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a little bit harder, then maybe we can make things a little bit easier for those who are affected by violence. And maybe we can help stop it before it starts.

It's also important for men to hold other men accountable for our actions. Traditionally, men haven't been actively vocal when it comes to these issues, but that's a mindset of another time. It's an issue that affects all genders — not just women. We need to examine how we view women in society, and try to open peoples' minds if they're willing to listen. That's how we can actually break the cycle of violence.

To me, supporting The Redwood is a no-brainer. I encourage everybody that lives in the community to help. It's an issue that affects all of us. When we create a supportive environment where women know they have somewhere to turn for help, they will feel safer doing so."

—Dave Bidini, Safe Haven monthly donor

To join Dave and our amazing family of monthly donors, give **Yvette** or **Liz** a call at **416-533-9372, x249**.

# STAFF CREATE A SAFE HAVEN FOR WOMEN WITH THEIR MONTHLY GIFTS

INSPIRED BY THE IMPACT OF YOUR GIFTS, MILA BECAME A PROUD DONOR TOO



Taking the first step to leave abuse also means leaving everything you own behind. When women arrive at The Redwood, they are unsure of what to expect or where they will go next.

You help women along every step of the way. With the support of your monthly donations, Resident Services Counsellors like Mila are here to provide care and guidance

for women throughout their journeys. Mila assists women when they arrive with counselling, housing, legal matters and education. She also makes home visits with families to check in and see how they are settling into their new lives after moving out of the shelter.

Mila is so inspired by the impact of our amazing community of supporters that a year ago she too signed up as a monthly donor! "It's great not only

to help women with our work, but to contribute to something you believe in as well. To support women and families fleeing abuse, it takes the whole community. It's not an easy decision to leave. 'Where will I go? Who will support me? How will I get status, or custody of my kids?' If everyone as a community pitches in, we will have all of the resources we need."

Monthly gifts provide moms and kids with the ongoing necessities and inspiration they need to heal. Through parenting programs, music and art therapy, healing circles, and fun day trips, **you ensure their needs are met so that moms and kids can focus on starting new lives — free from violence.**

With your help, women thrive, grow, and heal with each other. Mila sees this transformation in her role every day. You help women reclaim their lives, work through trauma, and learn about and begin to identify cycles of abuse. Women gain confidence to follow their dreams and create brighter futures for both themselves and their children.

Mila's message to donors? "Keep being great. Keep believing in our work. Keep giving and supporting our families, because unfortunately violence still exists. If there wasn't support for organizations like The Redwood, women would stay in abusive situations. With nowhere to go, families will stay at risk. Women need encouragement, and kids need to be kids. You make that possible. Thank you for being amazing!"



# GOING BACK TO SCHOOL AND LEAVING ABUSE BEHIND

Your support gives Elena a fresh start and great career

Going back to school is hard. Going back to school as an adult is even harder. You inspire women to turn their dreams of returning to school into a reality. Former

Redwood resident and *Women on the Move* graduate Elena reflects on her journey and the path that led to her education. Today, she is celebrating the new beginning she is embarking on thanks to your support.

When Elena arrived in Canada nine years ago with her husband and son, she came ready for a new life and opportunities. Her dreams were quickly shattered by an increasingly violent relationship. Five years ago, after years of isolation and abuse, Elena arrived at The Redwood with her son. She was determined to make a change. She wanted to provide her son with the happy life she had promised him.

*"I knew I had to leave because I couldn't handle the abuse anymore. I saw my son growing up in this environment, watching what went on, and he was changing. He became angry. The violence got worse and worse. I always thought my husband would change, but he felt power over me and enjoyed it. I told myself, I didn't come to Canada for this, I'm not this person. I came here to improve my life, but it happened that to improve it I had to struggle a little bit first."*

**Today, thanks to you, Elena's dream of a fresh start is a reality.**

After leaving the shelter, Elena joined our *Women on the Move* leadership program. You helped her regain confidence and hope for the future and learn that she was in fact not alone. Your support, together with the guidance of Redwood counsellors, encouraged Elena to enroll in classes at George Brown. She completed her high school certificate.

Helping her son with his homework improved his grades too! She gained custody of her son, acquired citizenship for both of them, and found a place to live. Because of you, she just completed her Bachelor's degree in Financial Accounting, and is preparing to go back into the work force.

*"My time at The Redwood was life-changing. There is no measure for my deepest appreciation for the help that my son and I received at The Redwood during the most difficult time in our lives. I felt hopeless, scared, and miserable when we first arrived. The professionalism, support, and compassion we received made it possible to overcome our life crisis. With help from The Redwood staff I was able to face my challenges, overcome fears, and believe in myself and my future. I especially want to thank each and every supporter of The Redwood. I wouldn't be where I am today if it wasn't for you."*

Because of your wonderful commitment, women receive the support and resources they need from the second they walk through our doors until they leave — and beyond. Their journeys don't just stop when they leave the shelter. Your dedication is crucial to breaking the cycle of violence, and helping women and children in every step of their journey to leave abuse behind forever.

**SAVE THE DATE!**

ANNUAL  
GENERAL  
MEETING



**DATE:** Wednesday, October 7<sup>th</sup>, 2015

**RECEPTION:** 5:30 pm – 6:30 pm

**SPEAKER:** 6:30 pm *Women on the Move* representative

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING:** 6:30 pm – 8:00 pm

**LOCATION:** TBD

To RSVP, please call Lucy DeLuca (416) 533-9371, x226

# YOU GAVE KIDS A SUMMER FILLED WITH FUN AND HOPE

THANKS TO YOU, WE REACHED OUR SUMMER FUN GOAL OF \$14,000!!

THANK YOU for your incredible support this summer. You sent moms and kids on so many fun outings, and created happy new memories that will be cherished forever.

Kids had a blast going on big adventures to Ripley's Aquarium, Centreville, and the Pan Am games. They played on sports teams, devoured books in summer reading tents, and celebrated birthday parties with lots of chocolate cake and candles. Families bonded at summer BBQ's and picnics in the park. It was truly a summer to remember, and we couldn't have done it without you!

Here are some of the smiles you made possible. You can always visit our Facebook page to follow upcoming programs: [www.facebook.com/theredwoodTO](http://www.facebook.com/theredwoodTO)



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