

FALL 2014

YOUR REDWOOD

your gifts at work for women and children

GOING BACK TO HIGH SCHOOL WITH AN ANTI-VIOLENCE MESSAGE....

YOUR HELP GIVES LIA THE CHANCE TO INSPIRE OTHERS TO BUILD HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

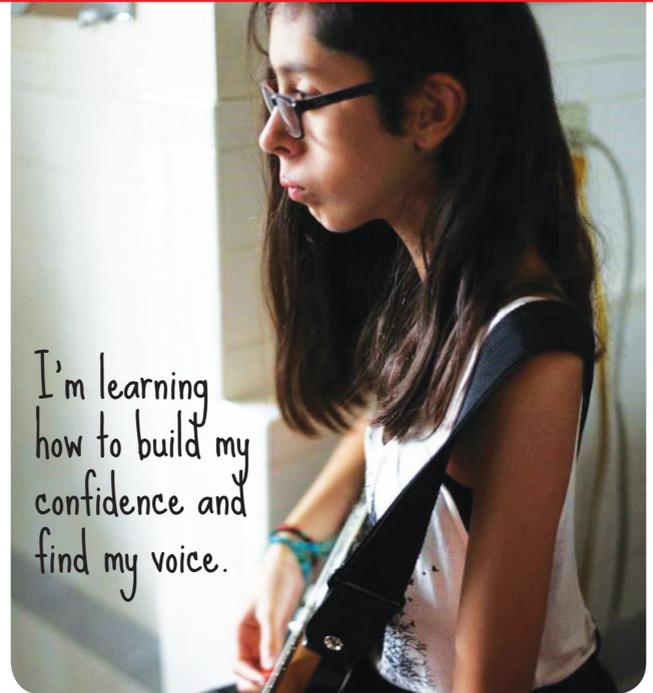
Thoughtful, optimistic and leading by example. Meet Lia. She's 15 and she's the next generation of women leaders in your community.

Because of your inspiring support, Lia is a participant in our second Women on the Move Youth Leadership program (YWOTM).

"I believe that if you feel violence against women is wrong, then you should really try to do something about it. Speak up and let others know how you feel. This is why I am so happy to be in this program. I'm learning how to build my confidence and find my voice. Some of our classes at school are student-run. I'm going to lead a class this year and talk about dating and that violence in relationships isn't okay.

Since I was little I have always been aware of injustices against people. I talk about it a lot with my mom. Sometimes people just don't get it and laugh about stuff. This is really frustrating for me but I think I can find a way to talk about it and get more people to talk about abuse too."

Because of your ongoing dedication, you are helping to stop the tragic cycle of abuse by reaching young people early. Teenagers are especially vulnerable



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to abuse and the early signs of violence can be very subtle and hard for young women to identify.

The Redwood's Women on the Move Youth Leadership program engages high school-age women to take an active role in addressing issues of violence against women. The Community Outreach team provides a structured training program for participants to learn and develop confidence and develop leadership skills. Many will go on to make presentations or co-facilitate workshops on the issue of violence against girls in their schools.

This YWOTM group has a strong passion for the arts. Because of your interest and commitment, the young women were inspired to start a new program after attending a Shakespeare in the Park Theatre production. The youth are busy planning an event with MicroSkills, a partner agency. The idea is to rework a well-known children's Fairy Tale into a feminist and gender positive play - an interesting twist on a classic!

To stay up-to-date on all YWOTM events, follow us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/theredwoodTO

REBUILDING ONE'S LIFE TAKES TIME...

With your help, every woman and child who has suffered abuse will know how it feels to 'shine bright' again



Many years ago, in the prime of my professional career, I got involved in a highly abusive relationship that had quite devastating consequences. I lost everything — my business (which I spent years building up), my professional reputation, my friends, and worst of all, my sense of self. I hated who I had become and felt absolutely powerless for the first time in my life.

It took me years to leave, which was extremely hard for me. I felt I had nowhere to go, no one to turn to, and lived with the fear that he would either follow me or kill himself.

Once I crossed that hurdle, I had to rebuild my life from the bottom up — from scratch. This took many years because once I figured out where to start, I also had to rebuild myself; the years of feeling shame over what happened made that hard. There was also the matter of rebuilding my personal relationships with the people in my life, which was terrifying. It was hard for me even being in social situations for a long time.

What made all of these things more difficult for me was the finding that belief in myself that I could have a different life; I needed to believe that things would be better, and I could feel strong and vital again.

Looking back at the worst of times in the heat of the violence, the moment I remember most was lying on the floor of my studio after a big fight, beaten down and the room completely in disarray from the fray — in that moment, I had lost all hope. I couldn't imagine in that moment that my life could get better, and I had given up. I felt broken, and not just in a physical sense. I laid there motionless for over an hour, when finally somewhere behind all the tears, I found the strength to sit up. Somewhere in that moment I decided that I had to make a change now, or I never would.

And I did.

Even after leaving, that feeling of hopelessness stayed in the shadows of my mind for a very long time, but once I started to really believe that I could have a

different life, that's when the real change began for me. It took me 4-5 years to start up my business again. The next step for me was to understand that what happened was just that — something that happened; that it didn't define me, or who I was, or what I deserved. Once I let go of that shame about the past, I felt a freedom to design my future. This was a process that spanned years, but I got there. Today, I believe that anything is possible as long as I believe in myself.

I did all of that on my own, which was really, really, really hard. The Redwood would have made all of that feel like less of a burden, and would have provided me with the support that would have eased the sense of isolation that I had felt.

I think there are a few things that people don't consider where domestic abuse is concerned. The first is that from an objective point of view, people don't understand why one can't just leave the situation. It's hard to understand what it's like from the outside. People constantly asked me that, a million times over, and it was hard to get them to understand. It's more

complicated than it seems. Like I said, it starts with believing that you can have a different life, and most of all, that you deserve one.

Secondly, people often think that once one leaves the situation that the hard part is over. They don't realize that once you leave, that's when the real work begins. Rebuilding myself was a process that took many, many years. The residual feelings are hard to let go of — I can still remember them, and how it felt at the time, even if it feels more foreign to me now. Rebuilding one's life takes time...

The programs and work that happen at The Redwood are all designed to not only provide a safe haven to leave the situation, but to help rebuild lives afterwards; it gives the hope and strength to believe that there is a better life waiting. While my experience is in the past, it makes my heart so happy and light to know that The Redwood exists for all the other women and children out there, so that they can feel the way that I feel today.

All of the struggle that I went through makes me understand why organizations like The Redwood are a treasure, and need to be supported and recognized. I am thankful for all of the people involved with The Redwood who help to make the families feel like real people again. That kind of support is priceless...

I have always felt that it was important to be a part of something bigger than myself and I wanted my life to be meaningful. The Redwood is very close to my heart and I know it is one that is close to your hearts too! I became a monthly donor a year ago and

UPCOMING ACTIVITIES



Hold the date – Annual General Meeting
Date: Wednesday, October 8th, 2014
Reception: 6:00 pm – 7:00 pm
Speaker: 6:30 pm Women on the Move representative
Annual General Meeting: 7:00 pm – 8:00 pm

St. Joseph's Health Centre Toronto
 30 The Queensway
 Education Centre A & B, first floor

To RSVP, please call Lucy DeLuca
 (416) 533-9372, x226

I started the Oh! Baby Charity Babywear Collection specifically so I could give 100% of the proceeds to the women and children. I also volunteer the production and materials as my personal contribution.

I want every woman and child who has suffered abuse to feel what it feels like to 'shine bright' again; to find that vitality within them and truly let it shine. I want them to know that their options are limitless, and that they can have all the joy and happiness imaginable. The Redwood makes all of this possible...

Please join me and become a monthly donor too if you haven't already!

YES! I WANT TO JOIN SHELLI AND BECOME A MONTHLY DONOR TOO!

I would like to make a monthly donation of:

- \$10 can provide a child with school supplies
- \$15 can provide a week's worth of nutritious dinners for a child staying at The Redwood

- \$20 can provide pajamas for a woman or child who arrives with nothing but the clothes they are wearing
- \$25 can give a new mom a special kit containing basic baby needs

- From my chequing account — I've enclosed a cheque marked "void".
- From my credit card: Visa MasterCard American Express

Card number _____ Name _____

Expiry date ____ / ____ Phone _____ Address _____

Signature _____

Your monthly gift will be processed on the 1st or 15th of each month or the next business day. You may revoke your authorization at any time.

Please use the enclosed envelope to mail in your commitment.

THANKS TO YOU, GIMME SHELTER 2014 BROKE ALL RECORDS!

A NET TOTAL OF OVER \$67,000 WAS RAISED TO HELP
GIVE WOMEN AND CHILDREN A SAFE HAVEN FROM ABUSE

Music wafted through the summer evening amidst the backdrop of Toronto's historic ROM. Guests mingled on the terrace of the world renowned Gardiner Museum sipping wine and catching up with old friends. The occasion? June 11th marked The Redwood's eight annual fundraiser to give women and children a lifeline out of abuse.

An outpouring of support came from over 225 guests. Fabulous items donated for the silent auction created quite a stir and a flurry of bidding. Items ranged from a weekend in Prince Edward County to one-of-a-kind pieces from a local fashion designer.

The highlight of the evening for everyone was our guest speaker Diana. A graduate from The Redwood's Women on the Move Leadership program and former resident, Diana shared her story of abuse. Thanks to your support, she had the resources needed to leave her violent relationship. Today her future with her daughter looks bright, full of hopes and dreams.

This evening would not have been possible without a dedicated and enthusiastic Event Committee. A heartfelt thanks goes to our Co-Chairs Courtney Glen and Teresa Lee and the following committee members: Dori Burchat, Angela Cloutier, Randy Cousins, Alex Dimson, Kelly Drinkwater, Nicole Dunn, Brynn Lackie, Lauren Lackie, Kristin McCormack, Amy Nhan, Lisa Pearson, Margaret Riley, Sonja Smits, Emily Won and Pamela Zabarylo. And a special shout out to all the volunteers who helped with registration, greeting and acted as donor ambassadors!

Thank you to everyone who purchased tickets, attended the event and/or donated a silent auction item. Because you care, more women like Diana will be able to rebuild their lives and explore their futures free from the threat of violence.

We extend a special appreciation to our generous sponsors, donors and Friends of The Redwood.

Congratulations to all for an unforgettable evening!

