

FALL 2016

YOUR REDWOOD

your gifts at work for women and children

BUILDING LONG-LASTING CHANGE WITH YOUR MONTHLY GIFTS

For Ilana Landsberg-Lewis, the road to a better future is created by all of us

Leading change. Improving the human condition throughout the world. Passionate advocate to keep women and children safe from violence. This is the life work of Ilana Landsberg-Lewis.

Fiercely committed, she has devoted many years to this struggle. She's dedicated to 'fighting the good fight' until women and girls can live their lives joyfully, in strength, in equality and safety, and in the embrace of community.

Being a monthly donor to The Redwood is one way Ilana believes she can create positive and long-lasting change in the lives of women and children in our community.

"I feel passionate about the neighbourhoods in the west end of Toronto. From Ossington to Parkdale, it's an extraordinary and diverse community. I feel strongly about supporting the efforts of organizations in my community.

I very much appreciate the 'holistic' approach of The Redwood. Women need safe places to stay when they leave a violent home. They also need housing assistance, counselling, and help with daycare. Then there's employment, language services, and legal support. All of this and more is what we know it takes to help a woman and her children get back on their feet and reclaim their lives. It's an honour to be a supporter of The Redwood in any way. And I'm learning from women in community organizations about what real leadership looks like.

Monthly donations mean The Redwood can plan ahead. They give certainty that funds are coming in. And they add up over the course of a year! Every dollar makes

continued...



Executive Director and co-founder of the Stephen Lewis Foundation, Ilana has seen the devastating effects of violence on individuals, families, and societies.

"I find courage and inspiration from the women who have lived through desperate and dangerous situations and who so often devote themselves to the well-being of other women."

continued...

a difference. There is no time to waste and no donation too small! We're talking about women and children in our midst who could be contributing so much to our community. Because abuse is often hidden away and silent we must shine a blazing spotlight on it. **If every single person in our community donated a modest monthly amount, lives would be liberated!** Suffering would end.

With enough resources and support, community-based organizations like The Redwood can create long-lasting change. We need to listen to these organizations. They know what the priorities are. Women who have experienced violence carry with them a wealth of knowledge and wisdom. I strongly believe it's this wisdom that is key to addressing the challenges women experience.

Let's face it — this issue is complex! You and I have a long struggle ahead. There's still so much awareness-raising about violence against women to be done. But if we look at this as a community issue that involves and affects all of us, we can all work together to bring positive change.

And we have organizations like The Redwood to give us light and hope. They are our lifelines to a better future." — *Ilana Landsberg-Lewis, Safe Haven monthly donor*

To join Ilana and our incredible community of monthly donors, give Yvette or Caitlin a call at 416-533-9372, ext. 249



SO MUCH GOODNESS COMES FROM VOLUNTEER MONTHLY LOVE AND SUPPORT
MEET SARAH. LIKE MANY PEOPLE, SOMEONE SARAH LOVES HAS EXPERIENCED ABUSE.

Before Sarah was born, her mom was in an abusive relationship. Fortunately, she was able to escape —

taking Sarah's older sister with her when she left. "She didn't just save herself and my sister from a painful situation when she left. She continues to save me every time I doubt my own strength and capabilities. Leading by example, she's given me backbone and optimism."

Passionate about ending violence against women, Sarah is proud to be a monthly donor and volunteer at The Redwood. For Sarah, it's really important for women to know there's support in the community. Making sure The Redwood is here for women and children now and in the future is key.

Sarah shared her special understanding of how to support women in abusive relationships. She didn't

agree to be interviewed for this article until her mother was ready. "It isn't my story to tell. While I think the benefits of sharing experiences like my mom's are vital, every woman is different and should have the option to talk about it — or not — in any way they choose." The Redwood offers women and children love and care, so they can move along their healing journeys at their own pace.

Being a monthly donor makes Sarah smile. **"Do it! Support The Redwood every month! Any contribution will be met and exceeded in the emotional value you get back. We ALL make the work at The Redwood possible!"**

Your commitment every month creates a safety net for women and children who have lived through abuse. Thank you for making a better world possible.

Interested in volunteering? Check out www.theredwood.com to find out ways you can help!

WITH YOUR HELP, THE IMPOSSIBLE BECAME POSSIBLE FOR AMY

With just one more semester at Ryerson University to go, Amy has already begun her exciting career!

Amy is one of very few women working as a Production Manager in the printing industry. She's super excited to be breaking new ground as a female role model. "This is opportunity for change! I hope to inspire other women to know their career options are limitless." Because of your support, Amy's ready to face this challenge head on.

As past president of Parkdale Collegiate's P.O.W.E.R. group for girls (Parkdale's Organization for Women's Equity and Rights) Amy's leadership skills started early. The young women in the group discussed topics like self-esteem, self-perception, and healthy relationships. Amy revealed that she struggled with low self-confidence. An emotionally abusive relationship in high school took its toll on her self worth. She became self-destructive.

Amy pushed on. In her final year of high school, she joined The Redwood's *Young Women on the Move* (YWOTM). "YWOTM is like a family. They helped me learn to look within myself and find strength. The program changed the way I view myself and life challenges. I believe in myself more. I take more risks. Things aren't so impossible after all."

You supported Amy, helping her confidence grow. She incorporates YWOTM learnings into her everyday life. In her managerial role, Amy believes compassion, empathy, and self-awareness are the skills that help create a healthier and safer society.

Amy's relationship with The Redwood is far from over. She's considering becoming a board member. "The Redwood is amazing. They're helping to make this world a better place and I can't imagine any other organization I'd want to help."

"Even though violence against women and children has been part of our history, I genuinely believe it does not have to be a part of our future."



Change makers don't act alone. They emerge from strong communities. The Redwood community gets its strength from YOU and your commitment to ending violence against women!

You've supported Amy and countless women in their journeys as they become leaders and educators in our community. **Thank you for being by our sides!**

OPEN UP HERE TO CELEBRATE THE REDWOOD'S AMAZING FAMILY OF SAFE HAVEN MONTHLY DONORS!



ANSWER:
CROAK-O-COLA

QUESTION:
WHAT DO FROGS LIKE TO
DRINK ON A HOT SUMMER
DAY?

It's been an AWESOME summer! Thanks to you there were trips to Centreville, the EX, Ripley's Aquarium, the Science Centre, Blockbuster movies, reading camps, and Canada's Wonderland! Your generous donations made all these amazing outings possible.

Difficult and traumatic situations bring kids and moms to The Redwood. But because of you, the kids will go back to school with lots of happy memorable stories to tell their friends. Thank you for sharing your gifts of optimism and positivity with everyone here at the shelter.

You've also helped strengthen The Redwood community. Our annual *Women on the Move* (WOTM) picnic in August was the perfect ending to a great summer. When women and kids leave The Redwood they move to neighbourhoods all over the GTA. A new home brings safety and security. But it can also be isolating and hard to stay in touch with old friends.

Because of you — our dear donors and volunteers — women were brought together to relax and rekindle friendships. And the kids were kept busy hula-hooping with their friends. We're certain some records were broken for longest hula-hooping times! Friendship and community are so important for women and kids leaving abusive homes. Thank you for opening your hearts to help families heal!

For more updates on how the kids and moms at The Redwood are doing, follow us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/theredwoodTO

