

SUMMER 2020

YOUR REDWOOD

your gifts at work for women and children

SUMMER 2020...
DIFFERENT, AND STILL FUN!



It is the hope of all of us at The Redwood that you and those dear to you, are well. We know that you will be happy to hear that the women and children residing in The Redwood's emergency shelter, and our staff remain safe and healthy.

For the children at The Redwood, living with the restrictions required to stay safe during the COVID-19 pandemic has been particularly challenging. So many of their Redwood activities like weekly one-on-one tutoring and art workshops have had to be cancelled. The children have been spending much of their time in the room they share with their mothers and siblings.

You no doubt share the wish illustrated by a child living in the shelter — that COVID-19 could be trapped in a box, and that all of us around the world could be free.

It may be some time before that wish can be granted. **But with your support The Redwood can plan opportunities for children to safely play, learn new skills and even have adventures over the summer of 2020.** This summer will be different — and it can still be fun!

WILL YOU HELP CHILDREN AT THE REDWOOD
HAVE FUN THIS SUMMER?

Last year, The Redwood's wonderful community of donors came to the rescue with generous gifts to the SUMMER FUN program.

This year our goal is \$25,000 and here are some of the highlights of the impact you can make! **THANK YOU** for your support!

\$50 Treat a family to a picnic in the park complete with TTC fare, a gift card for lunch — and of course hand sanitizer and a mask to keep them safe!

\$100 Delight a child with a summer shopping spree for new runners and clothing — in the right size and favourite colours, that moms and children can pick out themselves!

\$500 Boost children's feelings of togetherness (while at a safe distance) with a set of djembe drums the shelter can use in workshops led by Child and Youth counsellor, Ngasseu!

\$1,600 Thrill children with a week of *Camping Under The Stars at Redwood Park*. Overnight camp may not be permitted this year, but Redwood families can take turns "bamping" (backyard camping) — with tents, sleeping bags, s'mores, and a camp counsellor to lead the fun — and keep everyone safe!

Visit our online **Safe Haven** store for more ways to provide **Summer Fun** this summer!
theredwood.com

THANK YOU CATHERINE BOOTH AND MICHAEL KIRK!

Overcome with gratitude! Rendered speechless!
Moved to tears!

These were some of the reactions of Redwood board and staff when **our dear friends Catherine Booth and Michael Kirk delivered the news that they were entrusting us with a gift of \$360,000. They wished to entirely fund three critical initiatives** that support women and children to live without abuse, homelessness and poverty.

You may have seen news stories about how the “stay at home” directives that keep so many of us safe from COVID-19, make life more dangerous for women who are isolated with the person doing them harm — women who may not have the privacy to telephone a crisis line for help. **iDetermine.ca, The Redwood’s new online platform gives women the opportunity to more discreetly reach a Redwood counsellor, using text or live chat.** This lifeline for women was launched in May. It would not have been possible without Catherine and Michael, who are providing funding for a full-time counsellor to staff iDetermine.ca, for three years.

Each year, The Redwood expects that 14 women leaving the shelter will not qualify for subsidized housing. **The *First and Last Fund* helps women with the hefty first-and-last month’s deposit they will need to secure a market-rate rental.** And by helping women to vacate their rooms in the shelter when they are ready to move, versus when they can save for a deposit, **the initiative also increases The Redwood’s capacity to deliver emergency services to women who need it most.** Last year, The Redwood turned away 200 women who desperately needed shelter because we were filled to capacity.

Catherine and Michael helped launch the *First and Last Fund* at last year’s Redwood Palooza, challenging guests to match their gift.



Michael Kirk and Catherine Booth

“Domestic violence against women and children is an issue that concerns us deeply. We know that The Redwood team provides critical shelter and support to those experiencing abuse, so when they came forward with specific programs we could help fund, we jumped in. We hope our support encourages others to do the same.”

– Catherine Booth and Michael Kirk

Not everyone is safe at home.

If you're living with abuse, get support by visiting iDetermine.ca to live chat or texting 647.370.8300.



They are now even more committed to the impact of this project and will cover deposits for 14 women moving out of the shelter, every year for three years.

Since 2017, when Catherine and Michael first became involved with The Redwood, they have been committed to enriching the lives of children living in the shelter, providing \$10,000 each year for children to enjoy summer activities, including overnight camp in northern Ontario. Sadly, this experience will not be available for any child in the province, this year. But, while the summer of 2020 will be different, it will still be fun! If the children can't go to camp, then Catherine and Michael will bring camp to them!

Each week, for 3 weeks, small groups of children will be able to participate in Redwood Bike Camp to learn to safely ride a bicycle. Biking can provide independence, a sense of freedom and opportunities for life-long fitness. Children who take part will be provided with a new bicycle in the correct size that they can take with them when they move from the shelter, along with a helmet, lock and bell.

The impact of these three initiatives — supporting women isolated with an abuser, helping women move from the shelter when they are ready which in turn increases The Redwood's



Tanisha Sri Bhaggiyadatta, The Redwood's Resident Services Manager, Catherine Booth and Abi Ajibolade, The Redwood's Executive Director with photographs donated to the shelter by Catherine.

ability to serve more women in the shelter, and bringing joy to children, is life-changing and life-saving. You can understand why we were all so overwhelmed when Catherine and Michael shared the news of their remarkable donation.

Yet the depth of their compassion comes as no surprise to us. Catherine and Michael have always been generous with financial gifts – but they have also shared their time and talents.

Catherine creates beautiful photographs and has donated a series of landscape and wildlife portraits that we proudly display in the shelter. Women and staff use their calming influence to help alleviate stress. Catherine and Michael set up a photo studio and took much-treasured portraits

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of all of the families during our residents' winter holiday party. Catherine even provided her own homemade cupcakes for the celebration!

Thank you, Catherine Booth and Michael Kirk. We are so honoured to work with you on our shared goal to create a country in which we

no longer lose a woman to murder at the hands of her intimate partner, every six days. Thank you for standing with courageous women who risk so much to make a better life for themselves and their children. **Thank you for making our community safer and healthier for us all.**

THE REDWOOD: A TOP 100 CHARITY IN CANADA!!!

We couldn't be more proud!

The Redwood is happy to share the news that our organization has been chosen as **one of the "Top 100 Charities in Canada" by Macleans, Moneysense and Charity Intelligence.**

Hundreds of Canadian organizations were assessed on two key criteria: what they do with

each donated dollar, and how transparent they are about it. For more details, please see the link on our website at theredwood.com or visit macleans.ca/society/canadas-best-charities-2020-overview.




COMING SOON:
REDWOOD PARK!

Redwood Park is almost complete! And, this special therapeutic playground, created especially for children living in the emergency shelter, could not have come at a better time. We look forward to sharing all the details — and celebrating the donors whose gifts made it possible, in a special edition of "Your Redwood" coming in the next few weeks. Until then, here is a sneak peak!



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