

Monarch Place

Chrysalis Place

Summer 2003

Dear Friends,

Someone asked me recently if we were “successful” at Monarch Place. This is an interesting question - **what defines “success”?**

Because of the recidivistic nature of domestic violence, we have found that **we need to reframe how we define success.** It’s different for us. What we have found is that the most significant supportive thing we can do to create a climate for success is to focus our time on building relationships and sharing information.

The good news is we see remarkable changes, changes that are as diverse as the women we serve and the individual journeys they travel.

We work with women who haven’t had good experiences with the police, so if they call 911 when they are assaulted, this is a success. If a woman

makes a courageous decision to leave, even though she may return, this is a success. If she is able to access a safe place or feel more confident of the resources available to her, this is a success. Women do go back into relationships but if they have a better understanding of the dynamics of that relationship, the impact it has had on them, a safety plan, and how to call us, this is a success. Of course, our biggest successes are those in which the woman leaves and gets her life back on track.

So for us, success has many different faces:

“I feel blessed that myself and my children have had the opportunity to have met all of you and that you have made our stay a safe and comfortable one. Your patience and support were greatly needed and definitely appreciated. I am moving forward on my journey toward the life I want. I won’t be there for a while yet but I have hope.”

“I am more calm. My panic attacks are rare. My chest pain is gone. My blood pressure is under control. I am my own person again. Even though I’m going home this time, I fear less. I want to live and be happy.”

“First off, let me say thank you for your support, the laughter and the chance you have given me and my children for a new and safe, happy, healthy life. I couldn’t have done as much as I have nor come as far as I have without you. My children and I will be eternally grateful for all you have done for us. You will always hold a special place in my heart and my memory. You have all become like family to me.”

“Jessie” came from a dysfunctional family where she thought normal was to be put down, ridiculed, and controlled, having no life of her own. Her family was characterized by frequent arguments, violence, and disrespect for the value of each individual. Then, she fell in love with ‘Prince

Charming' and thought she had escaped to something wonderful. But before long, the familiar pattern of escalating tension and outbursts began, punctuated by apologies and promises to change. She began to feel like she was living in a nightmare without an exit, vacillating between hope and despair. She wasn't allowed to have contact with her family and friends and felt very isolated and alone. One night when she feared she was losing her mind, she slipped out of the apartment with only the clothes on her back and ended up with us. Through the next month we helped her to understand how the violence and abuse she had experienced had so impacted her as a person. We helped her establish a new life and find supportive housing to give her some time to get back on her feet and restore her soul. She learned that normal can and should be characterized by respectful relationships with value attached to opinions offered by each person. Today she is proudly independent, living in a peaceful and happy home. Her goals are huge but she will achieve them because she is determined to succeed and achieve the life her heart longs for.

Different faces of success. One woman at a time. One family at a time... It's been a busy year at Monarch Place! June 2003 saw a new high in our occupancy rate (110.3%). Overall stats indicate that we have served 732 women and 436 children since we opened the doors in December 1998.

We just celebrated our 2nd anniversary at Chrysalis Place Second Stage and graduated 3 women and 2 children from the one year program.

We are looking forward to our annual summer picnic in August, celebrating how many of our former residents are moving on with their lives.

With the help of many volunteers, our house is looking very good both inside and outside! Many hands have made a wonderful contribution. Thank you to all who have helped out in many practical ways.

With your generous support, we were able to achieve our fundraising goal last year. With rising costs and the uncertainty of government funds, we count on you!

Any financial contribution over these next few months would provide a significant boost this year.

Thank you for your encouragement and support.

Lorrie Wasyliw,
Executive Director

RECENT STATS

⌘ In 2002, there were 15,909 women and children admitted to transition houses in BC, representing 20.3 per 100,000 women (the national average is 18.7). According to experts, this represents only 13% of women who leave their partner because of domestic violence.

⌘ In 2002, there were 980 recorded requests in New Westminister with 315 reported criminal code violations.

⌘ New Westminister continues to track the highest rate of domestic violence in BC. In the first quarter of 2002, New Westminister had a rate of 3.04 per 1000 women; Surrey was 1.82; Coquitlam at 1.28, & Burnaby rated .9.

⌘ In BC the estimated cost of domestic violence is 385 million dollars per year.

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