

## Chantal Kreviazuk lends voice to Yellow Brick House virtual gala

Juno-winner Chantal Kreviazuk will lend her acclaimed voice to Yellow Brick House as the shelter prepares for its first-ever Break the Silence virtual gala.

Originally slated for March, the local shelter for women and children escaping domestic violence has retooled their traditional gala to a free live virtual event on Friday, May 7, with a goal of raising \$125,000 to fund programs and services just in time for Mother's Day weekend.

Fundraising has been greatly impacted by COVID-19, says Lorris Herenda, Executive Director of Yellow Brick House. Although our community did step up and were very supportive in helping us with some basic needs for our families, overall we've noticed almost a 40 per cent decrease in our fundraising revenue. Having a virtual gala is uncharted territory for us.

The virtual gala will get underway at 6.45 p.m., and run for approximately an hour, but a lot will be accomplished in those 60 minutes.

Emceed by Layne, who has helmed the last six years of in-person galas, she will be joined by Ms. Kreviazuk who is slated to perform three sets of live songs. Helping to bring in the revenue will be silent auctions and live auction bidding.

Every \$150 raised that evening will provide a night of safety in Yellow Brick House's shelters for a woman and or child escaping violence.

Attendees will also be able to listen to a testimonial from two survivors and learn a little bit about Yellow Brick House, says Ms. Herenda. We have one hour of education, entertainment and some fun shopping for everyone. The event is free and the only thing people need to do is register. It should be fun and it is one hour of your life on a Friday night.

Most of the fundraising dollars brought in by Yellow Brick House goes towards the operation of their shelters, including the facility in Aurora. In light of COVID, there has been an increased demand on services, says Ms. Herenda, and this demand is expected to increase after the pandemic winds down.

Among the items currently in urgent need at Yellow Brick House include grocery gift cards, laundry pods, women's winter coats, winter boots for women and children, kids' snowsuits, pyjamas for both demographics, size five and six diapers, high chairs, baby baths and playpens. All items for donation must be brand-new.

We update our needs on a monthly basis, or as things change, depending on the families that are coming in, says Ms. Herenda. I encourage everybody to visit [yellowbrickhouse.org](http://yellowbrickhouse.org) to check out the needs list. We encourage everybody, especially during these times, to [consider] gift cards so that families are able to purchase what they need and when they need it, on their own time, as opposed to actually having people themselves into stores. We're trying to reduce exposure in stores whereas with gift cards you can also purchase online as well as picking up in stores. Anybody who is able to assist, gift cards will be top of the list, especially during COVID-times. We're always looking for food donations and new clothing donations for the families, as well.

For more information on Yellow Brick House's Break the Silence virtual gala, including how to register and take part, visit [yellowbrickhousevirtualgala.com](http://yellowbrickhousevirtualgala.com).

**By Brock Weir** Editor/Local Journalism Initiative Reporter