

## Shoppers Foundation raises nearly \$100,000 for Yellow Brick House

Vital services supporting women and children fleeing domestic violence got a significant boost in support this month as the Shoppers Foundation for Women's Health presented a donation of \$96,300 to Yellow Brick House.

The money, which was raised across 50 local Shoppers Drug Mart locations through its annual Giving Shelter Campaign, was a chance for customers to support women and children seeking safety from domestic violence and abuse by funding emergency shelter beds, counselling, and other essential programs that support survivors.

?We're very excited with this partnership opportunity because it really focuses on women's health and the health of their children, which is something that we are definitely supporting through our services, through our emergency shelters for abused women and children.? says Lorris Herenda, Executive Director of Yellow Brick House.

?Yellow Brick House provides a whole array of services for women and children who experience domestic violence and our first services are two emergency shelters that offer shelter beds to women and children who are escaping violent homes. While they're in the shelters, they receive trauma counselling, crisis intervention, help with searching for housing, legal support, immigration coordination, employment supports, anything that the family needs to leave the shelter and start leading a life free of violence. All the same services that are offered to women and children in the shelters are also offered to families that are in the community that are not in our shelter system.

?What the support from the Shopper's Foundation for Women's Health enables us to do is to support that wide range of services for women and children. The shelter beds, the cost per night is \$300 per woman or child, which is the shelter bed, it's all the supporting pieces around staying in a shelter such as food and clothing and also all the support services. That's the cost. This generous support from Shoppers Foundation for Women's Health enables us to reach more women and children, enables us to keep our shelter beds open, to keep them really available for families who are desperate to escape a violent situation.?

With such a wide-ranging customer base, Herenda says she appreciates that a company like Shoppers Drug Mart has put such a ?prominent focus on maintaining the health of women and their children.?

?Being safe is one of the major, major conditions to ensure your health, and if you're not safe and your children are not safe, your health is compromised.? she says. ?I do believe that customers who go to Shoppers Drug Mart and purchase their health needs and supplements are really relating closely with families who don't have access to safety and really want to share their concerns for the health of women and children in the community as a whole.

?It's so crucial for businesses to partner with local organizations, social service organizations that support vulnerable populations ? in our case, abused women and children, because it really demonstrates the organizations, the corporate or the retail business' commitment to ensuring that the communities are strong, and the only way you get a strong community is when you support individuals who are vulnerable.

?And in this case, Shoppers Drug Mart and Shoppers Foundation for Women's Health definitely demonstrate their commitment to not only supporting the community members through purchasing of items and through retail shopping, but really investing in the well-being of the community as a whole. And other organizations and corporations can certainly do the same thing and align themselves with other social services to strengthen their community and also to strengthen and support their customers, because these women and children are potentially also their customers. They're investing in the well-being of their buying power.?

By Brock WeirEditorLocal Journalism Initiative Reporter