

Your Gratitude Report:
The Redwood 2014-15

A woman in crisis looks deep into her heart and pulls out the courage to take her kids and escape violence. And we know that it takes almost everything she has just to get to the doorstep of The Redwood.

But that's just the beginning of her story.

Arriving on the doorstep of **The Redwood** is the beginning of a new journey filled with healing, hope and possibility.

She is taking brave steps into a bright future. And at the same time, she is also on an emotional journey.

It takes time, dedication and support to rebuild your life and leave violence behind forever.

And it is in that spirit that we are sharing three stories with you today.

These are stories of women at different stages in their journey with **The Redwood**.

No one wants their journey to involve living in a shelter, but the reality is that there are women and children in our community who desperately need **The Redwood**.

Some stays are long, some are short, but all have a profound impact on the lives of the families in our home.

Your amazing and generous support means that you are there for the women and children in our home at every stage in their journeys.

Sarah

I. Can't. Just. Leave.

It begins with
a phone call...

Sarah's husband kept her confined to their small bachelor apartment every single day for five years. No taking her kids to the park or visiting with other moms. No shopping ever, unless her husband came with her to "keep my eyes on you".

He constantly belittled her, erupting into loud, angry outbursts that just kept getting worse. Her three children grew more and more scared and withdrawn.

One particularly violent night, a concerned neighbour called the police. It wasn't the first time. But this time, the police brought Sarah and her children to [The Redwood](#).

When Sarah arrived, she couldn't catch her breath. Everything she said came out in bursts, holding her hand to her throat.

"I. Can't. Just. Leave. I'd be all. Alone. How. Can. I support. My kids?" she sobbed.





The Redwood counsellors sat with Sarah and talked about how she had choices. That even just staying for an hour or two, or spending the night, to see what goes on here and learn about her options... that was still a choice.

After a few extra blankets and a few extra kisses, the kids finally fell asleep. That was the only time Sarah smiled.

Sarah felt their concern, their warmth and their caring. She felt the first whispers of excitement and possibility...

But she wanted to give her husband another chance.

While counsellors at The Redwood respected Sarah's decision, they expected the abuse could get worse.

They helped Sarah come up with a plan in case that should happen—and concealed some emergency contact numbers in a sanitary napkin. Sarah thanked the staff and walked out the door with tears in her eyes.

It was less than 2 weeks before we got the call.

Police had escorted Sarah and her children again from their home. This time her husband was arrested and charged. Sarah retrieved

The Redwood's hidden contact information and asked her Victim Services officer to call the shelter that had first supported her when she felt so alone.

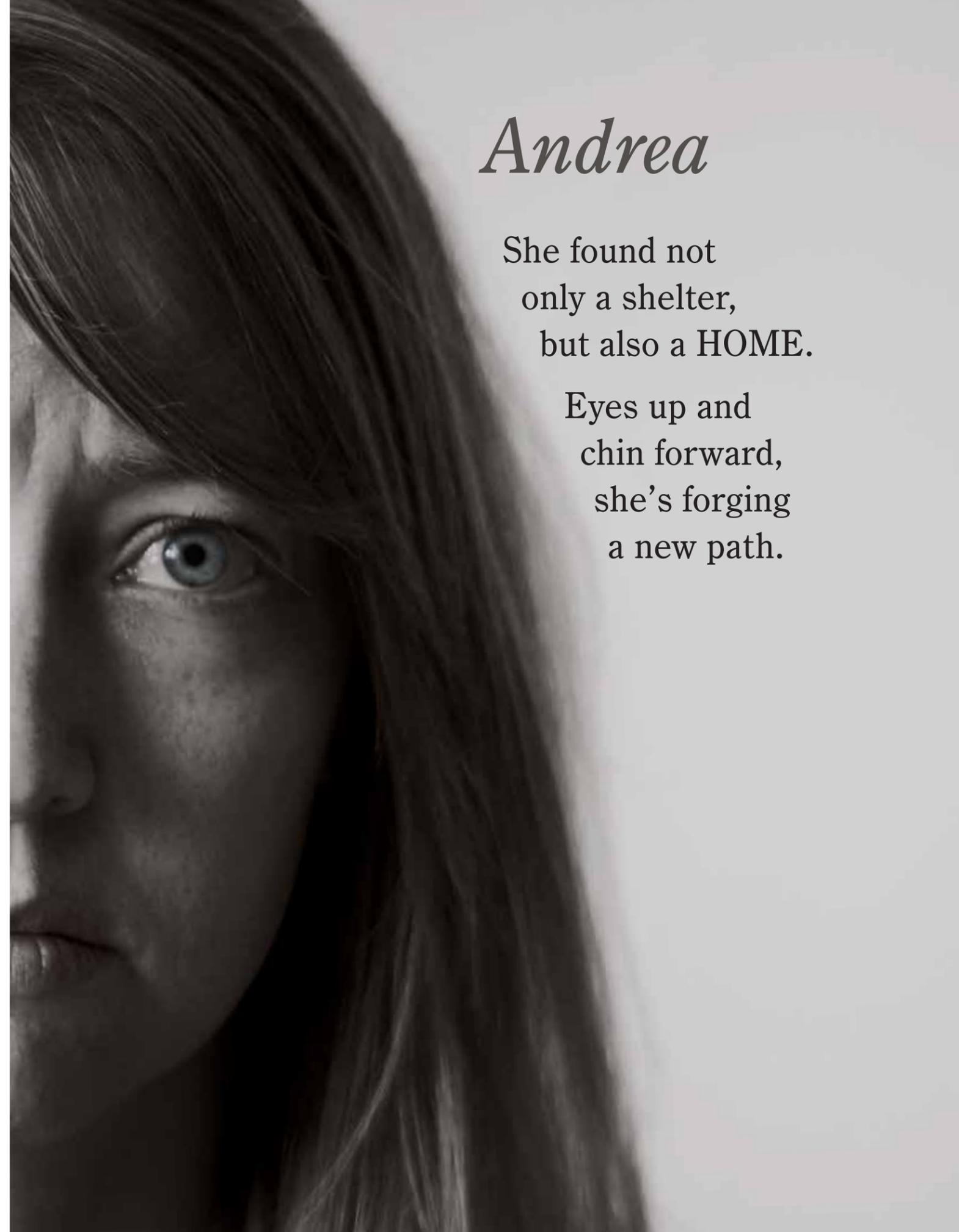
Sarah's journey had finally begun.

You help The Redwood be that vital first point of contact for women like Sarah. Women who feel utterly lost and alone... completely unsure of what comes next. You give them a glimpse of the hope and possibility that exists beyond the violence and fear, even if only for a few days or hours. It's enough to begin the journey.

Andrea

She found not only a shelter, but also a HOME.

Eyes up and chin forward, she's forging a new path.





Moms tell us that the Play Room is the heart of our shelter. Where tears stop for a little while. Play happens. Spontaneous giggles erupt. Healing deepens. Bonds grow once again between moms and their kids.

And it was here, in the Play Room, where Andrea and her little son, Geoffrey, began their journey to a better understanding of each other.

Two months earlier, in a fit of rage, Andrea's husband kicked her and Geoffrey out of their house.

They sat on a park bench for several hours, devastated and shaken.

Geoffrey was only 2 years old! Where would they go now?

She called a church friend, who told her to call 311. Scared and unsure, and so afraid of what might happen next,

Andrea made the call. She was re-directed to **The Redwood**.

At **The Redwood**, Andrea found a safe haven. A place to stay, a caring and supportive family. And a reminder that hope is not lost.

*"I was welcomed by **The Redwood** staff like family. I felt the genuine concern, warmth and love with each and every one of them. When I found **The Redwood**, for the first time in a long time I felt like I found a home. I was so relieved, not judged by any one of them, and on that night I slept like a baby. It felt like the burden, the heavy heart had been lifted. I learned that I don't have to face the struggle alone."*

But, little Geoffrey was in distress. He was acting out and so fearful of everyone. **The Redwood's** weekly parenting program, *Positive Discipline*

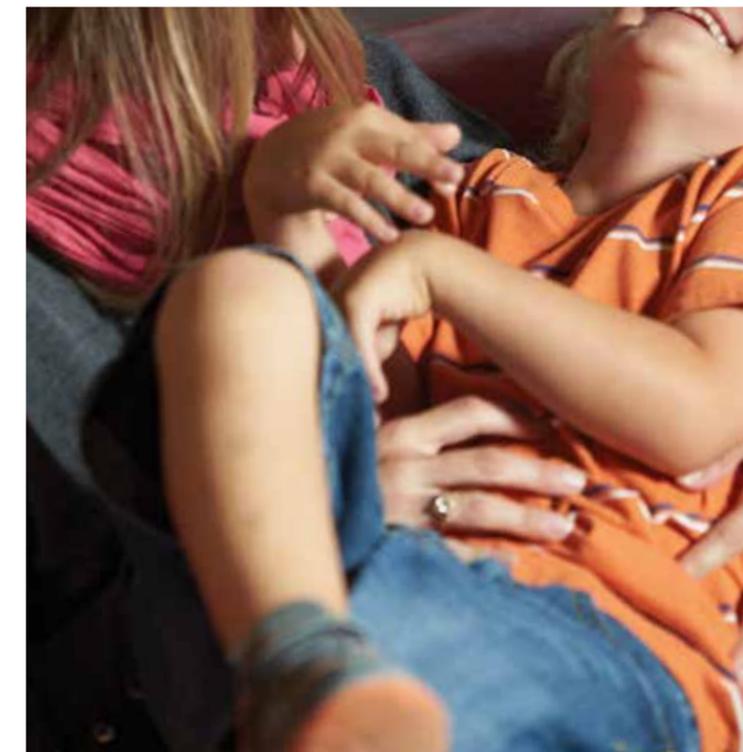
in Everyday Parenting, helped Andrea handle Geoffrey's temper tantrums.

Over the course of 12 weeks Andrea gained back her confidence as a parent.

"The program gave me a different outlook on communicating with my son. One of the lessons that I was able to immediately apply was being able to negotiate. This simple change has allowed me to be more patient and it has definitely reduced my stress level!"

Today Andrea and Geoffrey are living on their own. Life isn't perfect and they have bumps along the way. But their hearts are filled with a lot of hope. You were there to bring understanding and love back into the lives of Geoffrey and Andrea.

You helped them look forward to a brighter future, free from violence.



You help women like Andrea find safe haven—and vital support on the road to self-sufficiency. Along with the basic needs of security and food, you help them connect to childcare, employment, legal advice and more. Plus, programs like *Positive Discipline In Everyday Parenting* help stop the cycle of abuse!



Michelina

“I feel always welcome there, no matter what.”

When she walks out that door... she’s not alone.

They say that the first step is the hardest. Then when you start walking it gets easier along the way.

Michelina took her young son in the dead of night and fled her violent husband. Her journey took 2 years and 4 different shelters, but today she has found her own safe and happy home.

Michelina remembers feeling incredibly lonely and scared when she first moved into her new apartment. After the hustle and bustle of the shelter, it felt overwhelming to be on her own.

A vital step in her journey was getting involved in *Women on the Move* (WOTM)—a 12-month-long-but-life-changing leadership program coordinated by **The Redwood**.

*“I remember how relieved I felt when I talked to **The Redwood** and the WOTM counsellors and all I found in their eyes was understanding. I remember how much faster my heart started to beat when I heard the experiences of the other WOTM participants. When I felt I was not alone with my burden.*

I learned public speaking and how to give presentations. I wanted to share my story because I wanted to make a difference. I want to help other women to know they do not have to live with abuse.

I was so nervous the first time I had to speak in front of a crowd—I had terrible butterflies. Avon and Stephanie helped me prepare. One of my sessions was about the power of beliefs. So I filled my head with positive messages. I wrote them out and hung them all over my apartment. My voice is powerful. My speech will be beautiful. I am strong.





I spoke to the Foundation for International Medical Relief of Children at the University of Toronto in November. It was amazing. So many students came up to me afterwards and told me they were inspired by my strength. Wow!"

Michelina travelled a long and courageous journey, starting with a single step and a glimmer of hope sparkling from the inside. Many steps later she's well on her way, and will

continue to be supported by **The Redwood** as long as she needs.

While the first step to leave an abusive home is one of the hardest, it can be just as difficult for women to leave the comfort and security of the shelter. You help ensure The Redwood can be right there alongside women like Michelina as they take their first tentative steps towards building a safe new life for themselves and their children.

Your Support In Action Inside **The Redwood**

With the support of donors like you, together we are there to provide support, help and love to the women and children in our shelter at every step on their journey. Thank you! Here is a snapshot that shares just some of the facts and stats about life inside **The Redwood** this past year.



434 women in crisis called **The Redwood**. And we answered every single call, providing crisis counseling, safety support and making sure women knew they were not alone and that they had choices



58 women and **91 kids** had wounds heal and spirits brighten while living in our home on their journey to a life without violence



The average stay at **The Redwood** was **93 days**



12 of the **91 kids** had special needs and received additional care to heal



5 women arrived pregnant, and **5 beautiful babies** started their lives in our arms and in our home



We were welcomed with big hugs into the homes of **41 families** who left **The Redwood** and are now living on their own in our community

Our Volunteers



Volunteers supported us in 43 different activities and donated **8,407 hours** of their time and talents

Community Outreach



28 workshops for women and youth were held in community organizations and schools



519 people attended the workshops

Women on the Move



18 new leaders (women and youth) graduated from the *Women on the Move* leadership programs

Revenue & Expenses

Statement of Revenue Year Ended March 31

REVENUE	2015	2014
Ministry of Community and Social Services	\$ 1,247,589	\$ 1,440,827
Fundraising	\$ 722,607	\$ 696,344
Bequests	-	\$ 55,920
United Way Toronto	\$ 180,564	\$ 180,564
City of Toronto – personal needs allowance	\$ 42,820	\$ 36,660
Grants	\$ 80,000	-
Interest and other	\$ 11,000	\$ 11,855
	\$2,289,580	\$2,422,170

Statement of Expenses Year Ended March 31

EXPENSES	2015	2014
Salaries, benefits and staff development	\$ 1,627,950	\$ 1,487,408
Occupancy	\$ 165,750	\$ 161,501
Repairs, maintenance and minor capital – MCSS funded	\$ 15,000	\$ 203,445
Fundraising	\$ 147,308	\$ 115,066
Minor furniture and equipment	\$ 11,992	\$ 14,285
Office and general	\$ 24,415	\$ 22,662
Professional	\$ 37,086	\$ 57,296
Program	\$ 167,279	\$ 175,347
Personal needs allowance – City of Toronto	\$ 42,820	\$ 36,660
Promotional and publicity	\$ 20,309	\$ 21,430
Special projects	\$ 35,509	\$ 69,213
Volunteer	\$ 22,854	\$ 32,415
	\$ 2,318,272	\$2,396,728

(Deficiency) excess of revenue over expenses from operations	\$ (28,692)	\$ 25,442
Amortization of capital assets	\$ 54,720	\$ 58,819
Deficiency of revenue over expenses for the year	\$ (83,412)	\$ (33,377)



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Charitable tax number: 89172 8867 RR0001

