



Where Life Blooms, So Does Hope

A Tribute Gift from Local Rotarians to Armagh

It started in sad circumstances, but there's a happy ending.

In October 2016, Fred Durdan, a fine Rotarian with the Mississauga Lakeshore Rotary Club and a good friend of mine, passed away.

Our Club Foundation received donations from many Rotarians and members of the public in memory of Fred. The amount surprised us. Our Foundation Board decided to spend some of the funds on a project that reflected Fred's priorities. Fred's widow Liz, who is also a Rotarian, said she'd be glad to make a personal donation to the project as well.

We thought of Armagh. Although Fred was legally blind, he joined us on our periodic work parties there — holding our tools, supporting a ladder or wielding a paint brush — as long as he had a big wall to splash the paint on!

Liz and I talked to Armagh's Executive Director Lynn Ward about different programs we could help with, any of which would have been worthwhile. But then she said, "There's something we want to do here that we haven't been able to yet. Come with me and see."

Lynn showed us the conservatory and its state of disrepair. She talked about how it could be used to add a new dimension to programs offered at Armagh. Acquiring gardening skills and growing food was certainly part of it, but Lynn also shared how the space could help women and children explore their feelings and nurture new life. It was a project with practical, emotional, and spiritual sides. We were hooked! We wondered though, *how much would it cost?*

It took time for Armagh to get and review estimates for this



Rotarians from Mississauga clubs at conservatory plaque dedication on October 17, 2018. From left: Liz Durdan (West), Ghada Melek (Vice President—Streetsville), Joe Plens (President—West), Dave Grabb (President—Meadowvale), Chis Chorlton (West), Javed Khitab (President—Streetsville), Nelly Gong (Director, Community Service—Streetsville). Unable to attend: Saskia Wijngaard (President—Mississauga).

specialized renovation. The best quote was for about \$22,000 from a reputable company that had performed work for the organization before. By then, the Lakeshore Rotary Club had merged with the Mississauga West Rotary Club. We knew that the merged club would be prepared to support Armagh; however, we couldn't come close to meeting the total required. *What to do now?*

Well, because Armagh is a city-wide, regional resource, we thought, *why not ask the other Rotary clubs in Mississauga to come on board with the project?* Many of them already supported Armagh. In the end, the Rotary Clubs of Mississauga, Mississauga Meadowvale, and Mississauga Streetsville stood with us and Mississauga West to make significant contributions and we were able to reach our goal!

Rather than send one big

cheque, we thought it would be better to have each club give their contribution individually to Armagh, face to face. So, on February 6, 2018, cheque presentations were made to Armagh's President Lucy Cameron and Treasurer Joe Horneck. The money came from fundraising activities involving the work of many Rotarians in the various clubs. Armagh was also presented with packets of seeds for planting wild flowers and tomatoes.

We couldn't have pulled this off on our own. A year and a half later, we did it — together! Armagh's renovated conservatory is the result of the collective work of Rotary, but for me, I'll always think of it as "Fred's room".

May good things grow from it.

— Chris Chorlton, Chair, Mississauga West (formerly Lakeshore) Rotary Club Foundation

Their Best First Day Ever

The start of a new school year is exciting for many children and parents. There are friends to meet, new things to learn, activities to take up, and routines to settle into.

However, it can also be a stressful time, especially for residents at Armagh. Mothers here often don't have extra money for supplies and other essentials, and their children worry about getting everything on their list for class.

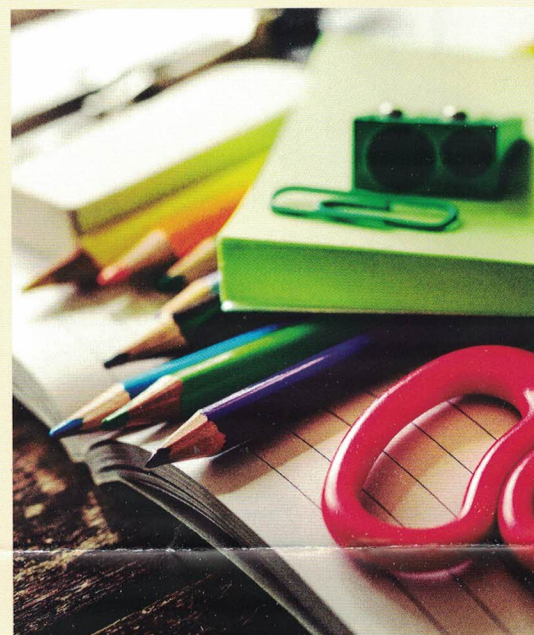
Armagh's Back to School Campaign takes this pressure off. Every year, we receive an outpouring of community support for this activity, and 2018 was no exception.

Those who generously contributed to this year's efforts include Erindale Presbyterian Church,

along with local businesses CRH Canada Group Inc., Petro-Canada Lubricants Inc., QM Environmental, and CertainTeed Gypsum Canada.

Each school-age child at Armagh received a new backpack brimming with school supplies during our summer barbeque on August 22nd. The smiles on their faces filled everyone's hearts with joy!

Moms were delighted to get gift cards to buy additional items their kids needed for school, as well as nut-free snacks for lunches. As one mother shared, "We didn't expect so much, and it's something I wouldn't have been able to do for my child this year. Thank you. It's going to be their best first day ever!"



Making Spirits Bright

The holiday season can be a tough time for families at Armagh.

Hae Yeon, a former resident, explains. "It's hard to think about being alone and having to live up to your kids' expectations. You stress about not being able to give them a Christmas that was like prior years, because life is different now."

That's why Armagh created its annual Holiday Sponsorship Program.

Together with our supporters, we ensure the festive season is indeed a merry one for the women and children we help.

There are several ways to contribute. You can be paired with a family in need, purchase an item on our wish list, or make a cash gift by cheque or online at armaghhouse.ca. If you're having a holiday party, you can also make Armagh your charity of choice.

However you choose to give, you'll be making spirits bright for women and children who have fled the darkness of abuse.

Sofia, another former resident, shares how your kindness and generosity will make a lasting difference.

"I'll always remember how we spent our Christmas at Armagh. I've never had so much fun! I felt like a kid again, so I can only imagine how my girls felt.

"We received gift cards, food, presents... the list goes on! There were so many memorable experiences. Santa Claus came to see the kids; the Peel police came by and gave out gifts; Armagh arranged for a private photographer to take beautiful family pictures; and so much more.

"For once in my life, for the first time in a long time, I was finally happy."

If you'd like more information about our Holiday Sponsorship Program, please call Holly at 905-855-0299 ext. 24 or email holly.armagh@rogers.com. Thank you!

2018 HOLIDAY WISH LIST

- Gift cards to major stores
- Local grocery store cards
- MiWay bus tickets – adult/child/youth
- Prepaid phone cards and gas cards
- New children's toys and crafts
- Gift cards for tweens and teens



Armagh Set to Expand to Help More Women Live Free of Violence

Walking away from abuse is one of the most difficult steps for a woman to take. For many, the final decision to leave comes down to whether or not they have a safe and affordable place to go.

Crisis shelters can accommodate women and their children for a short period of time, but permanent affordable housing is usually out of reach.

Women escaping domestic violence frequently have no savings or credit, as their abuser maintained financial control in the relationship. In addition, housing costs continue to soar; in Mississauga alone, they've nearly doubled over the past seven years.

This can result in a terrible choice for these women: become homeless, or return to their abuser.

Thankfully, there's a possible option: supportive transitional housing — a safe, secure place where women fleeing abuse and their children can stay for an extended period with supports.



Armagh has been providing such critical programming for over 25 years. However, it's still the only organization of its kind in the Region of Peel, and there's always a waiting list for a unit.

To help meet the pressing demand for our services, Peel Regional Council has approved funding for Armagh to build a 10-unit addition on our site. This expansion will double our current

capacity, and add more space for programs and common areas for residents. Construction is expected to begin in 2019.

Armagh is currently seeking financial and in-kind contributions for other expansion requirements, such as furnishings, equipment, and operational resources and activities. For more details, call Lynn Ward at 905-855-0299 ext. 23 or email lynn.armagh@rogers.com.

Local Fundraiser for Armagh is the Toast of the Town



Margot Stevens (left) and Rashmi Khosla (second from right) on their tour of Armagh.

Two extraordinary women, Rashmi Khosla and Margot Stevens, brought friends and colleagues together on May 26th for an elegant wine tasting event to raise money for Armagh and take a stand against domestic violence.

"On a personal level, we were looking for a cause where we could help, even if it was in a small way," Rashmi and Margot tell us. "There's so much misery, grief, and hatred in the world right now, and it's never too late to count our blessings and pay it forward. No act of kindness is too small and sometimes it can change somebody's life."

"What inspires us about Armagh is that it provides both the physical means and other supports for women and their children to get back on their feet after they've left an abusive relationship. The organization removes many of

the barriers these women would otherwise face, and helps them move forward in a positive way."

This event is the second Rashmi and Margot have organized to benefit Armagh, which raised an impressive \$8,500.

"The first time, we only had our girlfriends at the party. But then, our husbands told us they wanted to support the cause as well! So this year, we extended the invitation to the men in our lives. Many came and expressed how pleased they were to be a part of breaking the cycle of domestic violence."

Special thanks to Rashmi, Margot, and everyone who participated in this fundraiser. Their incredible support sends a powerful message to Armagh's residents that they're not alone on their journey to safety and independence.

Support Armagh's Wrapped in Courage Campaign

Too many women who are abused are afraid to speak out or seek help — and suffer in silence.

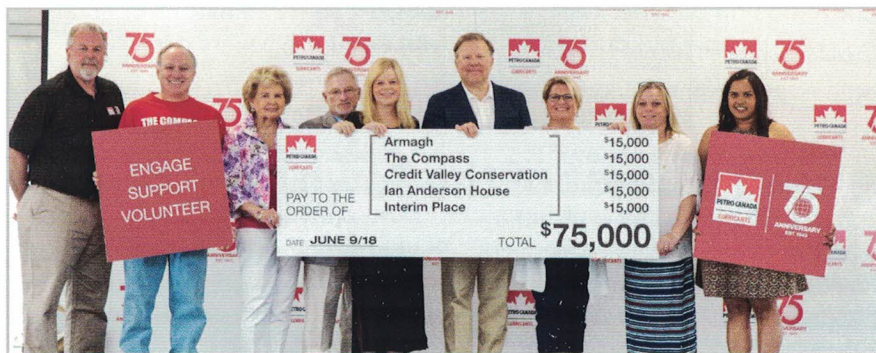
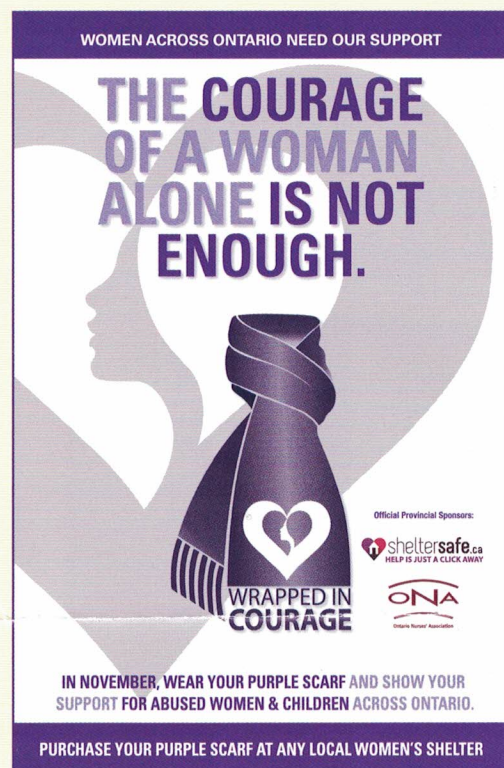
You can let them know they're not alone by buying and wearing a purple scarf during Armagh's Wrapped in Courage Campaign.

Now in its sixth year, this important initiative led by the Ontario Association of Interval & Transition Houses (OAITH) raises awareness about violence against women. Proceeds from purple scarf sales at Armagh are invested in our programs and services.

Armagh has two beautiful Wrapped in Courage purple scarves to choose from — a fashion scarf for \$20, or a warm knit scarf for \$15. Purple ties are also available for \$10 each. To buy yours, please call 905-855-0299 or email armagh@rogers.com.

"The purple scarf is a symbol of the courage it takes a woman to leave her abuser. However, the courage of the woman alone is not enough. It takes the strength of an entire community to end violence against women."

— OAITH



In June, Petro-Canada Lubricants Inc. celebrated 75 years of its Clarkson refinery's operations in Mississauga with a community open house and generous donations to five local charities, including Armagh. "We're honoured to be recognized for our work by Petro-Canada," says Lynn Ward, Executive Director (second from right), "and are truly grateful for the company's amazing support. Thank you!"

A GIFT OF TIME WITH GREAT IMPACT

One of Armagh's wonderful volunteer opportunities is helping out at RAMA Gaming Centre Mississauga and Bingo Country Brampton, where charitable dollars are raised year-round for our programs. It's an exciting activity that really puts the "fun" in fundraising! If you'd like to get involved, call 905-855-0299 or email armagh@rogers.com.



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