

Be the **light** that brings hope and joy



During a year marked by distress, anxiety and uncertainty the world over, children are uniquely impacted. Confused and worried by new rules, restrictions and the disruption of their routines, it's no surprise that many have been asking: *"Is Christmas cancelled this year?"*



But Kara's* whispered question is even more poignant: ***"Aren't we going to have Christmas this year - again?"***

That's because the shy eight-year-old is used to missing out on the joy, excitement and a child's wonder of Christmas. Not because of a pandemic, but because the holiday season at her house triggers even more arguing, violence, pain, tears and despair than usual.

It's the reality for far too many children like Kara who are living with domestic abuse. Cherished traditions and happy celebrations give way to fear and unease. And in stark contrast to the cheerful decorations and bright twinkling lights, women and their children in our communities face futures that are dark, bleak and seemingly hopeless.

This past year was especially scary and stressful for women, children and adolescents impacted by domestic abuse and/or homelessness. Health experts urged everyone to self-isolate and quarantine at home to slow the spread of COVID-19. But for women living with violent and abusive partners, staying at home meant they – and their children – were at even greater risk of harm.

That is why we never stopped offering our essential programs and services!

At a time when much of the world was stepping back and staying behind closed doors, our team stepped up. ***We did not close, not for one minute***, but continued to provide our vital programs including shelter and 24/7 crisis services, knowing they were needed – perhaps more than at any other time. We offer:

- Safe haven in our 24/7 high security 21-bed shelter, Oxford County's ONLY year-round shelter.
- Effective, comprehensive community-based programs including counselling, transitional and court support to help women rebuild their lives and their families.
- Help when they call us on our 24-hour crisis/information/support line, available to all in the community.

Since opening our doors in 1974, we have provided protection, prevention and possibilities for more than 17,000 women, children and adolescents. We can only do this with help from YOU – and supporters like you – concerned, caring people who know that only by working together can we end the vicious cycle of domestic abuse in the communities of Oxford County.

Continued on reverse



Please help us help! Ensuring we can continue to offer help and hope – even during a pandemic – means careful planning and new protocols to protect the safety of everyone. It also requires significant financial resources. Will you take a moment to consider a financial gift to help sustain our essential programs and services for abused women and their children?

Your donation, big or small, will bring light, hope and positive change to families living amid abuse and despair.

Domestic Abuse Services Oxford stands as a beacon and a refuge from domestic abuse and homelessness, a place to go when there is nowhere else to go. As we approach 47 years of service in Oxford County, we remain steadfast in our commitment to the important work we do because **we know we make a difference** in the lives of so many, such as:

Women like Jessica* who began seeing a different side of her boyfriend once he convinced her to move in with him. What she first took for attentiveness proved to be obsessive jealousy and a need to control her every move. Before long, insults and accusations were hurled at her daily and by the time the pandemic was declared and she was isolated at home even more after losing her job, the abuse had become physical and increasingly more violent. Trapped and terrified, Jessica somehow found the courage to reach out to DASO – a call she now believes saved her life.

And children like Kara and Tyler,* whose only wish for Christmas was that daddy and mommy would stop fighting. They didn't understand why they didn't have decorations and treats and fun, like at their friends' houses. After a particularly terrifying night their mother Crystal* took Tyler and Kara to DASO. The family received protected shelter while the children began to heal from witnessing violence through our specialized children's counselling service, *Believe In Me*. DASO staff supported Crystal through the court system while we helped her find new housing for her and her children in Ingersoll.

You too can make a difference!
Support from our friends is needed more than ever.

**Please complete the enclosed form
and mail your donation today!**

You can find other ways to donate, including online, by visiting www.daso.ca and clicking the 'Make a Donation' box. Donations can also be made via e-transfer to info@daso.ca, password: **donate**. Or call us at 519-539-7488 ext. 236 or 238 to donate over the phone using a credit card or for help in making your donation.

Thank you for your support.

From everyone at Domestic Abuse Services Oxford, from our home to your home, we wish you peace, health and happiness in the new year.

With warm regards,

Rhonda

Rhonda Hendel
Executive Director

Artwork helps children like Tyler
express how their homes and lives
have changed after receiving
help from DASO!*



975 James Street, Woodstock, Ontario N4S 0A5

24-hour crisis/help line

1-800-265-1938 or

519-539-4811

Text 519-788-9993

All other calls 519-539-7488

Email info@daso.ca

Website www.daso.ca

Facebook Domestic Abuse Services Oxford

Charitable registration # 10821 9767 RR0001

** Names changed to protect our clients' identities*

