

I dont have a clue  
how to start so I  
will write it down  
the way that comes  
out of my memory.

My name is Ana...



With my mom and sister back home...

I am from Mexico. I came as a visitor to Canada eleven years ago.

I met a nice guy who said he loved me and treated me with care and love.

I thought I had found the perfect guy for me and even I didn't have family or friends in Canada - I decided to stay with him and have our own family.

I had never experienced abuse before so when my partner started to be abusive I didn't know how to handle it or even how to get out of it. And even more difficult with an almost two years old son and without status here in Canada - and shame with myself and my family I kept the truth from them and from everyone else I knew.






Insults of who I am, being a child of a single mother or my religion - which I was forbidden to talk about because it would be a spark for getting in trouble with him. The threats of calling immigration and keeping my son here were the way of keeping me quiet for many years.



In 2007 I was full of fear but with the need of living a life of joy where I could be me without being judged I called a crisis line and with their help got out of there - because on my own feet I couldn't because of the fear. I was sent to this - an essential key in my life "THE REDWOOD" where I was respected and free. Where I learned that the abuse I suffered not only was emotional but also financially and much more.

A close-up photograph of a young girl with dark hair, wearing a white t-shirt with red lettering. She is looking down and eating a chocolate ice cream bar. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with a concrete ledge.

Unfortunately after two months I decided to go back to my abuser thinking that he was really sorry and that he might had a wake up call. Oh I was wrong. Two days later everything went back the way it was before

- and from there on, it was an inferno for me and my son.

Swearing and calling me names to put me down worked. I was in a deep depression.

Days, weeks, months and years went by - it may seem like I was used to that horrific life but I wasn't! My son and I learned to put a happy face for everyone to hide our reality.

I did everything I could to give some sort of happiness to my little guy but because I tried many times to defend myself from his insults things got worst and became physical - which my son was a witness to and made him to become a sad child and little by little...

traumatized...



Many times I tried to leave but I was with this enormous fear that filled my whole body and paralyzed me. How could I go back to The Redwood if I left on my own... 'Who was going to believe you again?' he said.

And I believed it too.

When someone has the ability to make you believe you are wrong, it's so hard to believe in yourself again. Eventually during those years my abuser sponsored me.

2010 came and I was expecting my second child, and the last drop in my life was the last time my mother came to visit me for my son's birth.

She witnessed how he treated me and the day she left, she told me that she was worried about me and that I had to leave him.

Five months after she passed away and day by day her words were filling me with courage to leave.

Through these years - a few times - I called Abi the coordinator and she was always willing to listen and told me that The Redwood was there for me when I decided was time to leave.




A group of people, including a woman with a backpack and a child, are walking away on a sidewalk next to a brick wall. The scene is captured from a low angle, looking down the path. The lighting is soft, suggesting late afternoon or early morning.

Finally came the day, I left.

I knocked at The Redwood and I was greeted warmly and given some space. I was afraid but at the same time I knew if I didn't leave now, I was never gonna have the opportunity and the courage to leave my abuser ever again.

I was released of my fear but sad for my sons that they left all what they knew and had.

Our stay at The Redwood was not easy. We had our bad moments of sickness and moments of desperation.

A close-up shot of several hands being held together in a supportive grip. The hands are of different skin tones, suggesting a diverse group of people. The background is blurred, focusing attention on the hands.

But with the help of the staff, therapy, new friends and support from The Redwood staff and my personal counsellor Mila, I was finally able to see a new beginning for me and my kids.



*At present, my kids and I have an apartment and the three of us attend school. I'm also participating in the program "Women on the Move" at The Redwood where I would like to learn to become more confident and develop the skills I need to become a counsellor too. I would like to help another women to be happy and help them to believe in themselves like me.*



These are Ana's words. Straight from her heart and soul. And we hope that her words, her story and these photos touch your heart and your soul. We are sharing Ana's story with you because you make stories like this possible. Every single day. Thank you for your vital and vibrant support of The Redwood.

Your gifts provide critical, urgent care to women and their children fleeing violence. Your gifts fund counselling services and a range of emotional and practical programs to help women and children get back on their feet.

But most important of all, your gifts inspire women like Ana. You give her courage. You empower her to leave violence behind forever. You inspire her to share her story and help others. And you help fund our Women on the Move initiative, training women like Ana to help other women escaping violence. We truly cherish all of your support of The Redwood.

## Inside The Redwood this year

### Volunteer Services

**4082** volunteer hours donated

Volunteers supported us in **23 different programs**, including Mandarin, ESL and French Tutors, Children's Program, Volunteer Cooks, Piano Tutors, Children's Program Assistants, Music and Movement, Volunteer Librarians Read Aloud and Story Times, Residential Services Office Volunteer Assistants, Women On The Move Child Care Assistants, Art Lab volunteers, Volunteer Drivers, Volunteer Yoga Instructors, Emergency Child Care Volunteers, Parent Relief Volunteers, Women's Wellness and Holistic Health Volunteers, and many others. Thank you!

### Resident Services

**72** women & **71** children served

**13** women pregnant upon arrival

**486** crisis calls received

**16** calls for help came via our Facebook page

**35,060** individual meals served to women and children

Sharing Meals, Sharing Moments • *Sharing meals together helps foster relationships, as we come together to unwind and converse, whether it is after a long exhausting day or to celebrate a birthday or cultural holiday. The Redwood's head chef 'Maureen' plays a pivotal role in replenishing each and every one of the women and children's bodies.*

### Community Outreach

**20** community groups attended workshops

**921** people attended workshops and events

**110** women and children served in the community

High Schools • *We have been working hard to foster working relationships with local high schools. These relationships offer us an opportunity to interact with youth and encourage them to reflect on violence against women in a way that they may not have been exposed to in the past. Gaining admittance into high schools is no easy task; it involves making personal connections with teachers and principals who are willing to weave our workshops into their curriculum. Recently we had a triple success! We were invited by a former resident, who works in the school system, to have one of our Young Women on the Move graduates come to Western Collegiate and deliver a workshop on gender-based violence which she had developed. This is evidence of how our work is effectively supporting women to raise their voices.*

## Revenue & Expenses

### Statement of Revenue Year Ended March 31

REVENUE	2014	2013
Ministry of Community and Social Services	\$1,440,827	\$1,196,228
Fundraising	\$696,344	\$488,359
Bequests	\$55,920	\$-
United Way Toronto	\$180,564	\$176,264
City of Toronto - personal needs allowance	\$36,660	\$28,842
Status of Women Canada and Trillium Grants	\$-	\$198,342
Interest and other	\$11,855	\$15,846
	<b>\$2,422,170</b>	<b>\$2,103,881</b>

### Statement of Expenses Year Ended March 31

EXPENSES	2014	2013
Salaries, benefits and staff development	\$1,487,408	\$1,396,059
Occupancy	\$161,501	\$138,420
Reparis, maintenance and minor capital - MCSS funded	\$203,445	\$5,490
Fundraising	\$115,066	\$125,511
Minor furniture and equipment	\$14,285	\$25,693
Office and general	\$22,662	\$22,740
Professional	\$57,296	\$55,284
Professional - Status of Women Canada and Trillium Grants	\$-	\$27,250
Program	\$175,347	\$201,192
Personal needs allowance - City of Toronto	\$36,660	\$28,842
Promotional and publicity	\$21,430	\$32,409
Special projects	\$69,213	\$53,863
Volunteer	\$32,415	\$19,734
	<b>\$2,396,728</b>	<b>\$2,132,487</b>

(Deficiency) excess of revenue over expenses from operations	\$25,442	(28,606)
Amortization of capital assets	\$58,819	\$63,472
<b>Deficiency of revenue over expenses for the year</b>	<b>(33,377)</b>	<b>(92,078)</b>



*On behalf of women like Ana,  
thank you for your generosity.*



the  
**REDWOOD**  
2014 GRATITUDE REPORT



**United Way**  
Member Agency

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