



## A MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

We are striving to not only provide one-on-one in person therapy sessions with a registered therapist, but to create opportunities to move and reconnect with the joy of physical activity!

Two weeks ago, as I was walking in the outdoor space of the shelter grounds, I came across a common sight: a group of 6 women were sitting together laughing and chatting. I smiled, my heart was happy to see a group of women holding space for each other, especially women who all share a bond of trauma and abuse, but still able to find the joy that exists in this world. A few children played at their feet, and two teenagers sat in the group, listening to the bubbling laughter of happy spirits, seeing their mothers' smiles and basking in the feeling of a safe family.

As I got closer, they welcomed me to join their group. I stood with them, and listened to the stories they were sharing. They were telling their birth stories. The monumental struggle to bring forth a new person and share this beautiful and broken world with a brand-new tiny person. Stories of pain, of struggle, of misfortune, of hospitals, homes, tubs, beds, stitches and c-sections. Stories full of their own mothers, the advice, the hand holding, and sometimes their sadly notable absence.



The birth story bonds us all. But it is just the beginning of our story, and of our mother's life-long love. This work of creating, protecting, teaching, cleaning, feeding and encouraging tiny hearts is not for quitters! A mother's most important work is ensuring we are safe, can grow up healthy and loved. Along with joy, pride and deep love, a mother's job is also stressful, exhausting, painful, full of sacrifice and sometimes boredom. **Due to the downs that come along with the ups of motherhood, we should make sure that**

**we look after our mothers as much as they look after us, and make sure they too are healthy, loved and safe.**

This year, Harmony House is investing in the mental and physical wellness of mothers, as well as all those women who have had a mother, will become a mother, wish to become a mother, have no desire to be a mother, or have a difficult relationship with their mother. **We are striving to not only provide one-on-one in person therapy sessions with a registered therapist, but to create opportunities to move and recon-**

*\* Picture - Momma Ruth Eskritt and baby Ray Eskritt.*

**nect with the joy of physical activity!**

After two and half years of confinement, many of us have gotten used to sitting still. Relying on comforts we hold within our homes, we have leaned heavily on books, screens, games and hobbies that would keep us safe from a virus that kept us apart. Harmony House is looking to shake those cobwebs off, and start to move outside once again!

The women who reside at Harmony House often struggle to find the time and space to feel safe to try new things, including forms of movement or ways to build muscle. To help them overcome this barrier to wellness, we are seeking donations to create an exercise and physical movement space for residents to reconnect with their bodies. With your donations we would purchase equipment that could be shared amongst residents, on their own schedule. We are looking for things like adjustable dumbbells and weights, resistance bands, weighted ropes, jump ropes, yoga mats, and yoga balls. We are also seeking instructors for classes like Yoga, Zumba, dance, or martial arts to lead women in experiencing the joy of movement and control.

**Because everyone with a birth story, whether they are the birth giver, the helper or the newest addition to love, deserves to write a new story. Their own birth story, of how they created a new life, in a post-COVID world. Please consider making a donation this Mother's Day and help the women who are raising up the next generation, as mothers, aunties, friends, cousins, sisters and as the women in our community, become stronger, more resilient, healthier and happier.**

Together we can help! Please consider setting up a recurring monthly donation to provide a sustainable, reliable source of funding for our work.

Thank you and Happy Mother's Day!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'R Eskritt'.

Ray Eskritt  
Executive Director  
Harmony House

EVENTS  
COMING UP SOON



AGM & 35th Anniversary  
Celebration

Day: June 23rd, 2022  
AGM - 6PM  
Celebration - 7:30pm  
Place: Andaz Hotel - 325 Dalhousie,  
Ottawa ON K1N 7G1



# Welcome Roxanne!

- Our New Family Support and Children's Advocate

“ My name is Roxanne Poudrier, I am the new Family Support & Children's Advocate worker. I am a proud Francophone woman originally from a remote region in Abitibi-Temiscaming who later relocated to a small community in Northern Ontario. I enjoy art, the great outdoors & learning new things. I have worked as a childcare worker for a few years, helping children develop healthy boundaries and working as a team to provide fun activities that respect the four developmental aspects of the child. Furthermore, I have worked with adolescents and their families experiencing substance abuse and concurrent disorder. Finally, I have worked also with women and their children fleeing violence in a shelter environment. I am delighted to work at Harmony House and be part of this community.



## The Power of Story

With Mother's Day around the corner, I wanted to share a thought that I found inspiring. One day, when I was researching Inuit culture and traditions, I found an article that explained how Inuit mothers teach their children to control their anger. The article stated that Inuit Mother's educate their children on how to control their emotions, specifically anger by storytelling. According to the article, Inuit mothers educate their children on inappropriate behavior by storytelling so that way, they understand the message that is being told to them.

*Stories are being told sometimes through humor, folklore, and legends. Stories are one of the most powerful ways to share important life lessons and meaningful truths.* Special thanks to Mary Simmerling, for hosting "The power of Story" workshop as part of the Amherst Writ-

ers and Artists 2022 Write Around the World events. for Harmony House women and for helping us to provide the 'Stay-at-Home Fitness & Wellness Kits'. Our moms and women at the shelter are excited to participate in this beautiful and powerful experience.

With this, I would like to wish a happy Mother's Day to everyone. Take that special day to share stories and thank a mother in the community. They work hard and with dedication, every day of their lives.

From all of us at Harmony House, happy Mother's Day!

Roxanne Poudrier,  
Family Support and Children's Advocate





# Mind, Body & Soil at Harmony House

By Alexis Ashworth, Root in Nature



The women and children of Harmony House are participating in a Horticultural Therapy gardening program. Once a week, Root in Nature Horticultural Therapy Practitioner Jessie Zimmerling arrives with supplies in tow and leads Harmony House residents through gardening and wellness activities.

Root in Nature is a social enterprise bringing together plants and people through horticultural therapy and therapeutic horticulture. Horticultural Therapy can assist participants in developing social connections, building new skills, creating a sense of purpose and worth, reducing stress and anxiety, and strengthening physical and mental health. More information on their services can be found here: [www.rootinnature.ca](http://www.rootinnature.ca)



Through Horticultural Therapy programming, Root in Nature is assisting Harmony House residents enhance their mental and physical wellbeing. They are learning how to plant seeds, care for seedlings, and plan a vegetable garden, all while practicing mindfulness and caring for themselves and the world around them. Future plans include planting up ornamental gardens, cleaning up the trees and shrubs, and learning more about the interconnectedness of all living things.

Harmony House residents ground themselves with their hands in the soil and their thoughts on their gardens. Residents work together to plan for the future, decide what to plant and when, and have an active role in influencing their environment in a positive way. While we are currently focusing on vegetable gardening, we have lots of plans to put old and new garden skills to use and leave the gardens around us better than we found them.

## Your Generosity Empowers Women And Children To Rebuild Their Lives.



As we continued to navigate through uncertain waters and so many challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, you were standing alongside survivors of domestic violence.

This past year, we achieved numerous accomplishments in our ongoing efforts to provide a safe haven for women and children in times of crisis. Because of you and your partnership with Harmony House, we were able to adapt quickly, embrace change, and think in new ways to serve, support and save lives!

We remain incredibly grateful for your spirit of support, that is allowing and empowering Harmony House to re-connect and stay strong.

Thanks to you, we were able to meet our goals!





# AGM & 35th Anniversary Celebration

It is with great pleasure that Harmony House announces their 35 years of impacting the lives of over 2,500 women and children in our community.

To celebrate this special milestone, everyone is invited to join us at ANDAZ HOTEL on Thursday, JUNE 23rd at 6pm for our Annual General Meeting, followed by the anniversary celebration at 7:30 PM and experience Ottawa elevated at the 16th floor rooftop lounge, Copper Spirits and Sights.

We can't wait to celebrate with you - Dress code semi-formal!



You are cordially invited to join us for our  
**Annual General Meeting**  
 6:00 PM - 7:00 PM  
 & **35th Anniversary Celebration**  
 7:30 PM - 9:30 PM

**Thursday, June 23rd, 2022**  
 Bubbly Toast & Hors d'oeuvres  
**ANDAZ OTTAWA BYWARD MARKET**  
**325 Dalhousie, Ottawa, Canada, K1N 7G1**  
 RSVP to Francesca Davila fundraising@harmonyhousews.com  
 by June 18th



*This is more than a Jewellery piece!*

Rudbeckia's first collection is Graceful and is inspired by Harmony House's vision of the world where all communities and families are safe. Rudbeckia will donate to Harmony House a portion of the proceeds from the sale of the pieces from Graceful Collection. With each purchase, customers will receive a Proof of Impact card - capturing the value of their stance for a cause and to help start the conversation. Rudbeckia's online store will launch on May 24th featuring our Graceful Collection. Available at [rudbeckia.ca](http://rudbeckia.ca)



## 2<sup>nd</sup> Foodie Friendraiser - International Women's Day, RISE UP Virtual Event

Our event was a great SUCCESS! On behalf of the local businesses, the women and children living at Harmony House, thank you for supporting us this year and supporting all the local food and beverage partners in your kit. We are so grateful to live in such an amazing community.

Happy 35 years to Harmony House and may you continue to Inspire, Empower and RISE UP our community.

To our volunteers, donors and community partners, please know that we could not do this without your hard work.

Special thanks to our AMAZING sponsors: Docs and Rogers TV, Tierney Stauffer LLP and iXCEED for making this all possible!

You have made an unforgettable difference! If you missed the virtual Show, you can watch it here - Scan the QR code

