



## COVID UPDATE – Fall 2020

### ***There is Laughter Again***

The week of October 19 we were thrilled to welcome women and children back into My Friend's House shelter.

In our previous COVID-19 updates we let you know that My Friend's House changed its' shelter service model to ensure safe refuge would always be available to women and children fleeing abuse. With the assistance of Royal LePage Locations North and the generous support of Realtor Sheila Shepherd, we were able to rent properties until the shelter was COVID proof. This temporary solution allowed us the time to determine the next steps to protect My Friend's House services.

Through the *United Way Simcoe Muskoka and the Government of Canada's Emergency Community Support Fund*, we were able to develop a comprehensive Pandemic Plan with the help of an infection prevention and control consulting company. They helped us to reconfigure the shelter, develop protocols for residents and staff and provide the necessary training and coaching to ensure everyone who enters My Friend's House is safe.

We are pleased to tell you that children are back in our playroom filling our home with laughter. Moms are watching over them, relieved they are enjoying new activities so they can sit with our counsellors and plan their future. It's nice to be home again.

We have learned a great deal over the last few months and one of the many lessons is that My Friend's House is resilient.

We can adapt our services to reach women and children who can't step through our doors because of COVID-19 or simply because transportation isn't an option. Through grants and community support, we have been able to invest in technology that makes this possible.

We will not be going back to normal for quite some time and that is ok. We have a new normal now and even though it includes masks and distancing, we are helping the women and children who need us the most.

Warmest Regards,



Alison FitzGerald  
Executive Director

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