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*Moving February 14, 2013 to 797 York St. at Rectory St.



November 10, 2013

Chair and Members
Corporate Services Committee

Re: Council Policy – Illumination of City of London Buildings and Amenities with Multi-Colour Capable LED Lighting Installations

The London Abused Women's Centre respectfully requests the proposed council policy addressing the Illumination of City of London Buildings and Amenities with Multi-Colour Capable LED Lighting Installations be amended to include the London initiated Shine the Light on Woman Abuse campaign as a recurring event each November on a permanent basis, noting the London Abused Women's Centre has always advocated and supported City of London Buildings be illuminated red on November 10th and 11th in support of Remembrance Day and our Veterans.

Background

- Since 1983, the Government of Ontario has recognized November as Woman Abuse Awareness and Prevention Month in the Province.
- In 2010, the London Abused Women's Centre (LAWC) launched its annual one month 'Shine the Light on Woman Abuse' campaign to run in November.
- The goals of the campaign are to raise awareness of men's violence against women by turning cities, regions and counties purple for the month of November; to stand in solidarity with abused women and support them in understanding that any shame and/or blame they may feel does not belong to them but to the perpetrators of their abuse; and to raise the profile of the community agencies that can provide abused women with help as they attempt to live their lives free from violence and abuse.
- Londoners have overwhelmingly embraced the campaign. From private citizens to small businesses to large corporations, Londoners have gone purple to show their support for abused women.
- With the enormous help and support of City of London employees, City Hall and city structures were illuminated purple in November, 2010 and have remained so each November since. In fact, the number of purple illuminated City of London structures has grown each year.
- The London Abused Women's Centre was the first organization to ever request a City of London building or structure be illuminated in colour.
- In 2012, in advance of the World Figure Skating Event, LAWC was asked to support and advocate for LED lighting with the corporate sector. We were happy to do so.

- In 2013, LAWC was told the illumination policy had changed and we could illuminate City of London structures for only one week. We later confirmed no such policy existed.
- Notwithstanding the absence of any policy, it was suggested to us by Mayor Fontana, that to ensure November would shine purple all month, we ask our community partners to submit applications to the clerk's office each requesting a different week. Changing Ways, Daya Counselling and My Sisters' Place all submitted applications. The clerk's office advised that city structures would be illuminated purple during the first, second and fourth weeks of November. However, another organization was approved for the third week because the application submitted by My Sisters' Place was received 23 minutes after the approved organization, and according to the clerk's office, "it was first come, first served." Fortunately, the approved organization's colour is also purple.
- In addition to City of London structures, private residences are decorated with purple porch and string lights and 35 corporations are illuminating their buildings purple during the month of November. Purple ribbons can also be seen on the telephone poles along Clarke Road. Both the CN Tower and Niagara Falls were illuminated purple on November 1st.
- Twenty-five corporate sponsors and 12 third party special events have made it possible to produce posters, postcards, bus ads and a billboard to raise awareness about the Shine the Light on Woman Abuse campaign.
- The Shine the Light on Woman Abuse campaign has spread to 17 cities and four counties in Ontario with communities in Nova Scotia and Manitoba adopting the campaign in 2014.
- As each community across the province launched its campaign, the media reported the campaign "originated in London, Ontario."
- Irene Mathyssen (MP, London Fanshawe) and Susan Truppe (MP, London North Centre) both spoke in the House of Commons about the "London, Ontario initiated" Shine the Light on Woman Abuse campaign with Ms. Truppe leading the House of Commons to a "Turn the House Purple" Day on November 7th in support of the campaign.
- London's Shine the Light on Woman Abuse campaign was one of five international finalists for the Avon Foundation Break the Silence Communications Award: Speaking out About Violence Against Women. The campaign is included in an online document, Violence Against Women, The Communications Evolution, which includes, "A campaign poster from Canada's London Abused Women's Centre for its 'Shine the Light on Woman Abuse' campaign urging people to 'Turn London purple during the month of November.'" (<http://www.avonfoundation.org/assets/communications-evolution-report-2012.pdf>)
- At the last meeting of The Mayor's Council to End Woman Abuse, the following mission statement was confirmed, "To create a community where we are collectively accountable to end violence against women and children."
- The City of London, in collaboration with the community, is the recipient of a national award for its work in developing I Step Forward to End Violence and Abuse in My Community, Workplace and at Home which also received international attention at a Washington conference in 2012.
- In his November 4, 2013 proclamation for Shine the Light on Woman Abuse month, City of Burlington Mayor Goldring said, "Governments and institutions have a primary responsibility to demonstrate leadership and provide resources to achieve equality and to end violence." In issuing his proclamation, Mayor Goldring acknowledged the City of

London and its role in initiating the Shine the Light on Woman Abuse campaign.

- The Shine the Light on Woman Abuse campaign is consistent with the City of London's strategic plan – A Caring Community - London is a community where people look out for one another and where a helping hand is never far away. We are a safe community where people know their neighbours and take pride in their neighbourhoods. We are a city with exceptional health care and social support networks that ensure the health and well-being of all Londoners.
- The Shine the Light on Woman Abuse campaign has been embraced by Londoners. It is their campaign. It is a London initiated campaign that is drawing positive attention to our city for all the right reasons.

Results

- Service demands at the London Abused Women's Centre continue to increase as more women feel supported in reaching out for service.
- Calls for service increased by 63% in 2012/13 (3,272 calls) over 2011/12 levels (2007 calls).
- Women walking in without appointments requesting service increased by 69% in 2012/13 (281 walk-ins) over 2011/12 levels (166 walk-ins).
- LAWC saw an overall increase of 13% in women served in 2012/13 (2,642 women served) over 2011/12 service levels (2,342 women served).
- There have been no "reported" intimate femicides by London Police Service to date in 2013.

The Shine the Light on Woman Abuse campaign is a significant City of London initiative that is making a difference in the lives of women and children. The campaign has been adopted across the province and recognized as a City of London initiative. All indications show it will be adopted over the coming years as a national campaign.

This is a campaign Londoners have embraced. It is important that the City of London continue to show leadership and support this month long campaign by illuminating all city structures purple throughout the entire month of November to show abused women it is this city's priority to end men's violence against women.

I will be in attendance at the meeting and have requested delegation status.

Thank you for your consideration,



Megan Walker
Executive Director

Statistics on Men's Violence Against Women

- Girls born today have a 50% chance of being physically or sexually assaulted in their lives.
- On average, every six days a woman in Canada is killed by her intimate partner.
- In 2009, 67 women were murdered by a current or former spouse or boyfriend. In 2011, the number of women murdered by a current or former spouse or boyfriend increased to 76 women. Increased trends in intimate femicides have been reported since 2009.
- On any given day in Canada, more than 3,000 women (along with their 2,500 children) are living in an emergency shelter to escape domestic violence.
- Each year, over 40,000 arrests result from domestic violence—that's about 12% of all violent crime in Canada. Since only 22% of all incidents are reported to the police, the real number is much higher.
- As of 2010, there were 582 known cases of missing or murdered Aboriginal women in Canada.
- In just one year in Canada, 427,000 women over the age of 15 reported they had been sexually assaulted. Since only about 10% of all sexual assaults are reported to the police, the actual number is much higher.
- Half of all women in Canada have experienced at least one incident of physical or sexual violence since the age of 16.
- About 80% of sex trafficking victims in Canada are women and girls.
- 67% of all Canadians say they personally know at least one woman who has been sexually or physically assaulted.
- More than one in ten Canadian women say they have been stalked by someone in a way that made them fear for their life.
- The cost of violence against women in Canada for health care, criminal justice, social services, and lost wages and productivity has been calculated at \$4.2 billion per year.

Aren't Men as Likely to be Victims?

- Men are much more likely to be assaulted by a stranger or someone from outside their family, while women are much more likely to be assaulted by someone they know.
- Although some people claim that men are too embarrassed to admit a woman has abused them, the reverse is actually true: in self-reported research, men tend to over-estimate their partner's violence while under-estimating their own. At the same time, women over-estimate their own violence and under-estimate their partner's. This explains why some self-reported research often shows similar levels of violence by men and women, even though most research clearly shows that women are disproportionately the victims.
- In addition, self-reported research does not clarify that men are far more likely to initiate violence, while women are more likely to use violence in self-defence.
- Most men are not abusive to their families. However, when family violence does occur, the victims are overwhelmingly female:
 - 87% of all police-reported domestic assaults are against women. This pattern is consistent for every province and territory across Canada.

- Three times as many women experience serious violence such as choking, beating, being threatened with a knife or gun, and sexual violence. Women are more likely to be physically injured, to get a restraining order, and to fear for their lives.
- For the past 30 years in Canada, women are three to four times as likely to be killed by their partner.
- Over 80% of victims of dating violence are female.
- Girls are four times as likely as boys to be sexually assaulted by a family member.
- Aboriginal women (First Nations, Inuit and Métis) are more than eight times more likely to be killed by their intimate partner than non-Aboriginal women.
- Young women are especially at risk. 66% of all female victims of sexual assault are under the age of twenty-four, and 11% are under the age of eleven. Women aged 15 to 24 are killed at nearly three times the rate for all female victims of domestic homicide.
- 60% of women with a disability experience some form of violence.
- Immigrant women may be more vulnerable to domestic violence due to economic dependence, language barriers, and a lack of knowledge about community resources.⁴¹

What About Children?

- Each year in Canada, an estimated 360,000 children witness or experience family violence.
- Children who witness this violence are at immediate risk of being physically injured.
- Long-term exposure to these traumatic events can affect children's brain development and ability to learn, and lead to a wide range of behavioural and emotional issues such as anxiety, aggression, bullying, phobias, and insomnia. Children who witness violence in the home have twice the rate of psychiatric disorders as children from non-violent homes.
- These long-term effects can easily extend into adulthood. Research shows that children who witness violence are more likely to grow up to become victims or abusers.
- According to the RCMP, a child who witnesses spousal violence is experiencing a form of child abuse, since research shows that "witnessing family violence is as harmful as experiencing it directly."

Conclusions

- Men's violence against women is the "most pervasive" expression of gender-based discrimination and it remains unacceptably widespread.
- The United Nations Commission on Human Rights in resolution decided to appoint a Special Rapporteur on violence against women. In the same resolution the Commission on Human Rights:
 - *"Strongly condemning* all acts of violence against women and girls and in this regard *called*, in accordance with the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, for the elimination of all forms of gender-based violence in the family, within the general community and where

perpetrated or condoned by the State, and *emphasized* the duty of Governments to refrain from engaging in violence against women and to exercise due diligence to prevent, investigate and, in accordance with national legislation, punish acts of violence against women and to take appropriate and effective action concerning acts of violence against women, whether those acts are perpetrated by the State, by private persons or by armed groups or warring factions, and to provide access to just and effective remedies and specialized, including medical, assistance to victims;

- *Affirmed*, in this light, that violence against women constitutes a violation of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of women and that violence against women impairs or nullifies their enjoyment of those rights and freedoms."
- What is most upsetting is the persistent denial of this war against women and the resulting lack of response. Wasted time defending why this is not gender neutral. This issue is men's violence against women. If we don't name it, it becomes invisible. To name it means to acknowledge it. To acknowledge it means to end it.

(Canadian Women's Foundation, <http://canadianwomen.org>)