

To describe Interim Place programs use the stories that describe the experiences of women and children we serve.

Janine was 25 years old and arrived at shelter with police after her common law partner beat her severely. She was 5 months pregnant and the violence in her relationship had escalated since she had become pregnant. He had routinely called her names, accusing her of running around on him and beaten her regularly. On this occasion he kicked and punched her so badly the neighbours heard the commotion and called police. Janine was taken to hospital where she had a miscarriage. Her partner was charged and arrested and she was brought to the Shelter.

Janine was struggling to physically heal from her emotional and physical injuries. She was trying to cope with the miscarriage and begin to rebuild her life. Interim Place Counselors provided much needed emotional support and helped her make plans for obtaining housing. They assisted her in registering for school in the Spring and getting part-time employment as it was unsafe to return to her workplace.

The Interim Place Legal Counselor helped her with the criminal court proceeding and with safety planning in terms of relocating herself safely in the community as she is aware that he has threatened her thorough her family and friends that he will kill her if he finds her.

Now Janine is safely relocated in housing in the community and she attends a support group provided by Interim Place in the community. Janine is a survivor, rebuilding her life, working and attending school. She is also volunteering in the community in a program which provides creative arts and expression opportunities for children who live below the poverty line.

Tabitha is in her early 20's and has a physical disability. When her disability cheque was stolen by an abusive male friend she lost her housing and ended up at our shelter. Tabitha soon began to trust the counsellors. She told staff that this boyfriend had not only stolen from her but he had forced her to have sex with him and hit her regularly. The staff worked with Tabitha around her legal options. We assisted her in talking with her disability worker about what had happened and helped her make an application for supportive housing. Tabitha is now waiting for her housing and talking about going back to school or into a training program when she is resettled in her housing.

Mary is a 60 year old woman who came to our Shelter after neighbours heard shouting and called police. She had come to live with her adult son after her husband

died and he had been beating her for the past 5 years. Mary loved her son and blamed his violence on his drinking. She felt responsible as his mother for his behaviour. With support and counselling Mary began to talk about her feelings and pain. She joined an Elder Abuse group. Mary then moved from shelter into a seniors housing building. She has now been able to talk to other members of her family and they are providing her with support. Mary is still hopeful that her son will seek counselling and help for his drinking and violence but knows that she made the right decision to leave and **for the first time since her husband died she can sleep through the night.**

Natalie is 16 years old and left her home due to family violence. She had been sexually abused by her father. She wound up working the streets and using drugs. She had been sexually assaulted by a man and a friend told her about shelters. She came in search of safety from a pimp and looking for help with her addiction. Natalie was referred to the Youth Substance Abuse Program and has been connected with a counsellor. She has also been referred to a peer support programs for victims of incest. Natalie is scheduled to move into a bachelor apartment in a building that provides support for young people. She is going back to school and wants to work with computers.

Hanna and her 5 year old daughter Sophie left a violent home. Her husband had sponsored her. Hanna was new to Canada, she was isolated without any family here, no community supports and not being able to speak the languages. She was afraid of her husband's threats to kill her and Sophie should she try to leave him. Hanna called the Assaulted Women's Helpline who referred her to us. When her husband left to go to work we sent a cab to bring her to safety.

Hanna arrived tired and frightened. Shelter staff provided counselling and support to both her and her child. Staff assisted her in making an application for the assaulted women and children's priority housing program. Hanna also received a referral to legal aid and a lawyer for both custody and immigration assistance.

Hanna is hopeful for the future and Sophie who came in to the shelter tearful with nightmares says that she is happy now. Sophie says she and her mom are now safe. She says that she wants her new room in her new house to be blue.