



The LIGHTHOUSE

Helping People | Changing Lives

1008 Bathurst Street • Toronto • ON M5R 3G7

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A Mother's Resilience

by Tiffany Kwok



Linda* wept quietly and alone in the darkness of her room at the local women's shelter, trying to hide from her daughter the fear and panic threatening to overwhelm her. Pregnant with her second child, and desperate to escape from the control of an abusive husband, she had no idea what she would do next, having just heard that the shelter would soon be closed for renovations.

For many clients of The Lighthouse, the journey of immigration and settlement is one fraught with numerous obstacles and challenges. This is especially true for Linda, whose nightmare began when she and her five-year-old daughter landed in Toronto and reunited with Linda's husband.

In the year-and-a-half following her emigration from China, Linda lived under the control of her husband. She recounted incredulously, "I couldn't even use the washing machine or adjust the blinds in the house. Who lives like that?" When she was given the opportunity to leave the house, it was only for grocery shopping with the meagre allowance provided by her

husband. "I couldn't even treat my daughter at McDonalds." Finally gathering her courage, Linda left and was able to divorce her abusive husband this past fall.

With no family, no money and minimal English skills, Linda and her daughter ended up at a women's shelter only to discover that she was pregnant once again.

As it is written in a Chinese proverb, misfortune never comes alone. This past February, a few short months following her arrival at the women's shelter, Linda was informed that the shelter would soon be closed for renovations. "I didn't know what to do at all. Even though my social worker was able to help me find an apartment, I had no money to hire help and I couldn't move my things myself because I was at risk of a miscarriage. I genuinely thought that my daughter and I were going to be homeless in the middle of winter."

In the midst of this desperate situation, Linda was referred to The Lighthouse and connected with Rita, our Chinese Counsellor and Program Coordinator. On Family Day 2014, The Lighthouse helped Linda and her daughter relocate from the women's shelter to an apartment, a place where Linda and her daughter can now call home.

Sitting in Rita's office at The Lighthouse, Linda shifted to make herself more comfortable. She reflected on her life and, with downcast eyes, said

"I chose to move to Toronto. I made this decision for myself and my daughter. When things got bad, I had no one. I didn't want my family in China to worry, so I didn't burden them with all the bad news."

"But now the difficult time in my life is almost over." Linda looked up and smiled. "The Lighthouse came into my life and offered me and my daughter unexpected, amazing assistance. Even my social worker commented on how wonderful and thoughtful the services provided by The Lighthouse were." Linda laughed, remembering her moving day with The Lighthouse. "I can't believe that the boss (Rob) was helping me move; it was snowing and such a cold day. I am so thankful!"

"The Lighthouse treats me like a family. The Lighthouse has helped me furnish the apartment, and has purchased things for me that I didn't realize I needed. All the stress from our stay at the shelter has seemed to just fade away. I used to have headaches, and I sighed a lot, worrying about the future for myself and my daughter. But now I feel safe at home, away from the fights and dangers of the shelter. My daughter and I no longer have to wait in line for showers. I can see that my daughter is much happier at our new apartment, and that makes me happy as a mother. I am now excited to prepare for the arrival of my daughter at our new home."

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Let Us Introduce Our Board Members...

Adrian Helleman

- Retired University Professor with Christian Studies International
- Has taught in The Philippines, Russia, Nigeria, Tanzania and The Gambia
- Education and poverty eradication skills
- Ordained minister
- Member of First Christian Reformed Church, Toronto
- Canadian of Dutch background
- *"The Lighthouse has been and continues to be a beacon for immigrants in Toronto."*



Jeanette Romkema

- Consultant and Senior Partner in Global Learning Partners
- Program & curriculum development and evaluation
- Education, animation & communication skills
- Leadership & community-building skills
- Member of First Christian Reformed Church, Toronto
- Dutch-Canadian
- *"The Lighthouse is a hidden gem working for healing, reconciliation and justice in the GTA."*



Jane Moore

- Retired executive director of SPRINT Senior Care
- Social work, community development, group work
- Member of First Christian Reformed Church, Toronto
- Canadian of Dutch background
- *"The Lighthouse serves as the hands and feet of Christ."*



Fadi Sharaiha

- Works with youth at Youth Unlimited
- Management and leadership skills
- Business skills
- New immigrant and excited to offer his insights to the LH Board, while strengthening the services of the LH
- Member of Harvest Bible Chapel, Oakville
- Jordanian-Canadian
- *"I am privileged to be part of a great ministry shining light in the darkest nights of Toronto, The Lighthouse."*



Kasih Nguyen

- Works for KPMG
- Tax Specialist/ Senior Consultant
- International Executive Services and Client Relations
- Strategic Relationships
- Her family is one of the first "boat families" to received assistance from The Lighthouse; she and her family become Christian through this connection with the LH
- Vietnamese-Canadian



Roger Visser

- Business Development Manager with Elco Systems Inc.
- Sales, organization and leadership skills
- Passion for fundraising
- Member Grace Christian Reformed Church of Scarborough
- *"It's an honour to be part of this important ministry that brings hope and faith to the community of the GTA."*



Juan Rojo

- Communication and marketing skills
- Search engine optimization
- Website design & website metrics
- Email marketing & desktop publishing
- Member of Willowdale Christian Reformed Church
- Colombian-Canadian
- *"I'm extremely excited to lend my skills to spread the word about The Lighthouse"*



The Lighthouse Board, staff and supporters wishes to thank Jessica Miedema and Alex Chan for many years of service on the Board of Directors.



thank you!



Immigration Information Session by Samia Saad



On April 5th, an immigration information session was held at The Lighthouse. An immigration lawyer came to speak about new changes in the refugee system, and how these changes will impact new comers' refugee claims now and in the future.

One of the reasons The Lighthouse offers these information sessions is the prevalence of dishonest and fraudulent immigration consultants in Canada. On an all too regular basis, these consultants present themselves as experts and collect large fees from new, vulnerable immigrants who know very little about how to navigate the system. The information provided by these consultants is often inaccurate, designed to give false hope and incur additional fees.

Over twenty participants attended the April 5th session. The provision of these information sessions is one of the many ways in which The Lighthouse advocates for its clients.



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Linda smiled at her daughter, studying at the kitchen table. "My wish for my daughters is that they grow up to be happy and kind to others, as The Lighthouse has treated me. In the future, I hope that one day I too can volunteer and help those in need."

Update: On May 21st, 2014, Linda gave birth to a healthy beautiful little girl, weighing over 6 lbs. Please continue to remember this family in your prayers as Linda is still recovering at the hospital.

**Names have been changed to protect the identity of the client.*



Coldest Night of the Year Update:

With your support and donation, The Lighthouse was able to raise over 11,000 dollars! Thank you!

Here are some fun facts about our very first Coldest Night of the Year:

Did you know...

- the oldest walker was 85 and the youngest was 5
- the participants included 4 staff and 6 Board members
- there was hot chocolate and cookies 1/2 way on the walk
- Grace Christian Reformed Church was the starting and finishing point

Join us next year as we bundle up and walk together for those in need!

Upcoming Events:

July 5th — Open House & Barbeque at The Lighthouse on July 5 between 10 am and 2 pm. and hear the staff provide highlights about their programs.



October 4th — Ride for Refuge
Ride for Refuge is a family-friendly cycling fundraiser that partners with various charities to raise needed operating funding for their work with the displaced, vulnerable and exploited.
You can ride for The Lighthouse by registering a team or registering as an individual rider. You see check for a location near you and register today at www.rideforrefuge.org to ride for The Lighthouse!

November 8th — Annual Dinner & Silent Auction
Held at Toronto District Christian High in Woodbridge

December 6th — Benefit Concert at Woodstock Maranatha Christian Reformed Church beginning at 7:30 pm.

February 28th 2015 — Coldest Night of the Year

From the Desk of Rob

In an article called "Fire Your Donors" by Josh Bowman, he states that organizations should "treat donors as responsible partners." This short phrase seems to suggest it is not always about the stories of the people we help but it is also telling donors about the salaries, electricity, water and other costs to keep an organization going.



Stories are great because they introduce everyone to the people we assist. They touch our heartstrings; they provide a glimpse of how these people were helped. These stories share what is happening in one's life and how the donors are helping them.

Yet we need to be honest and transparent. We need to share how the donations are distributed. This year we produced our 2nd Annual Report. (You can find an electronic copy on our website at www.lighthousecentre.ca) The report has stories and testimonies from our clients which show how The Lighthouse helped them in their journey.

Included in this report is another story. This story shows our financial situation. When someone asks me, "How is The Lighthouse doing?" I often say great because I think about all the people we have helped. To be transparent, I need to tell the other story as well. Financially we struggle as we rely on donations to keep The Lighthouse going.

"Charity is Love"



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Helping People Changing Lives

Thank you for being partners with us in this ministry.



Yes, I would like to help with a donation of \$ _____

Cheque enclosed

VISA MASTERCARD # _____ Expiry Date. _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ Postal Code _____

Other Ways to Help - Contact us for details

- PAR PreAuthorized Remittance
- Monthly Visa or MasterCard donation - makes it easy for you and for us
- Canada Helps on line at www.canadahelps.org
- Giving through Christian Stewardship Service
- United Way Payroll Deduction-just provide our CRA # and address
- Matched Corporate Giving - many companies match employee donations

Please mail your contribution to:

The Lighthouse
1008 Bathurst Street
Toronto, ON M5R 3G7

Receipts will be issued in the New Year.
Canada Revenue Agency #13036 3740 RR0001