



A survivor-centred approach to helping women flee abuse

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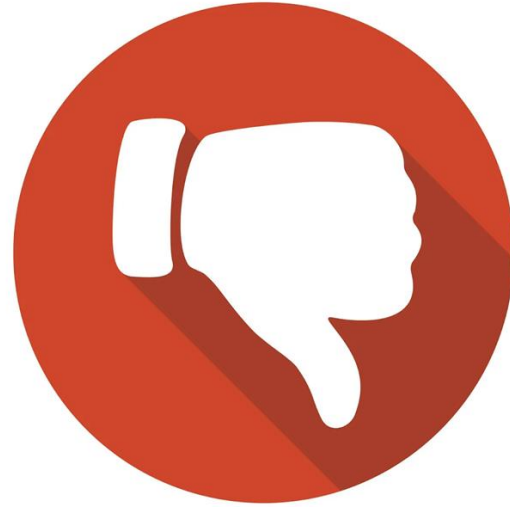
Boost Child & Youth Advocacy Centre

June, 2020

Land Acknowledgement



Need to step out?



What is Shelter Movers?

Our Mission

We provide free moving and storage services for women and children fleeing abuse. In collaboration with community agencies and businesses, we support families transitioning to a life free of violence.

Our Vision

A country where leaving abuse is easy, safe and barrier free.



What is Shelter Movers?

- Federally incorporated registered charity
- 9 members Board of Directors
- FY2021 Budget: \$1.2M
- Operating in 4 cities (current)
- 2020: Montreal & Waterloo
- +1,300 moves completed since 2016
- Moving avg. 50 families per month



Filling the gap: Our VAW sector partners

- Only service of this kind in Canada
- Trauma-informed; Survivor-centred
- Anti-Racist | Anti-Oppressive lens
- Collaborate with >100 partner agencies
 - Emergency shelters / transition homes
 - 2nd stage housing
 - Mental health services
 - Victim Services
 - Children's Aid Society
 - FN/I/M shelters
 - Police, physicians, social workers, etc.



Operational Partnerships



Shelter Movers is 100% free to survivors, thanks to private sector donors:

- Vehicle rentals / Carshare
- Security personnel
- Training & meeting space
- Storage units
- Moving supplies & equipment
- Language Interpretation
- Pet fostering



Powered by Volunteers

~800 active volunteers (4 cities)
Varied backgrounds and skillsets
Avg. 1 move per month
A place for male allies
Adaptable volunteer roles

Recruitment Process

- Police reference check
- Screening interview & orientation
- Specialized training
- Ongoing education / workshop
- Mental health counselling/supports



Barriers to Fleeing Abuse

“Why doesn’t she just leave?”

- Safety - risk of lethality
- Shame, guilt
- Emotional co-dependency
- Community isolation
- Fears about children / custody
- Legal / immigration factors
- Financial pressure
- Lack of resources and knowledge



One Service: 3 Types of Moves

Urgent Exit (higher risk)

Volunteers and security personnel transport the client and kids from the abusive household to a confidentially-located shelter that has agreed to receive them.

Escorted Move (moderate risk)

Volunteers and security personnel return with the client from the shelter to the former home to pack belongings, which we store at no charge.

Resettlement (low risk)

Volunteers transport client, kids and their stored belongings to the new home.

The Move Process

1. Referral
2. Intake
3. Coordination
4. Move
5. Follow-Up



The Move Team

On every move

1. Client
2. Mover(s)
3. Driver(s)
4. Lead Mover
5. Move Coordinator

On certain moves

6. Language interpreter
7. Security / Police
8. Client's children
9. Client's friend(s) / family
10. Pet fostering

Operating Safely & Legally

- Insurance: D&O; Commercial Liability; Non-owned Auto
- Safety planning with clients and referrers
- Division of assets: “No theft between spouses”
- On the move: Manageable vs. unmanageable risk
 - Lawful access = Client is present
 - Encounters with the abuser
 - Child & pet custody matters
 - Bed bugs
- Protecting volunteer & client data
- Ongoing safety training
- Storage and liability



Adapting to COVID-19

Lockdown = Increased risk to survivors experiencing abuse

Increases and decreases in referrals

Elevated risk to front line volunteers and staff

Customized [Infection Prevention Operational Procedure](#)

Pre-emptive wipedowns | Scheduled handwashing | Distancing | PPE

National supply chain and distribution established

Evolving Our Service - Rural & Remote

Urban + Suburban (Current)

- Easier access to trucks
- Shorter distances to travel
- More time in traffic
- Lower risk to privacy / conflicting relationships
- Easier access to traditional storage spaces

Rural + Remote (2020)

- Availability of trucks, security
- Smaller population
- Ensuring confidentiality
- Explore alternative storage option

Pilot testing: South Shore - Nova Scotia

Feedback from the VAW Community

“Your volunteers are so respectful, kind, strong and organized. They were quick and genuinely compassionate. It was really heartwarming to see strangers assisting other strangers, in the middle of winter, with so many smiles. Shelter Movers is an amazing service that is filling a huge gap.”

Nicole - *Support Worker*
Good Shepherd Centres, Toronto

Feedback from our Clients

“

When I arrived at the shelter, I figured there was no way I would see my or my son's stuff again. You helped me keep thousands of dollars in furniture and toys. Even better, you helped me get the small (but important) things - his first drawings and baby pictures. Thanks to your volunteers, I know I will never need to go back to my ex again.”

Brittany - Survivor



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To refer a client
sheltermovers.com
1.855.203.6252

We are a registered charity: #776372492RR0001
To donate: sheltermovers.com/donate

