

NEWSLETTER
Winter 2008



FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: WHY WE WORK WITH KIDS & FAMILIES

“What you are doing is very very good. I really do want to see someone do this and when I saw you that day working with youth to stop homelessness I was very happy because most of the time adults don’t take the time to think that a solution can come from youth. I would love to work with you in any way you want me to work. Thank you for asking.” –Jerry / Eyerusalem

I learned so many of my values and beliefs at my family dinner table. I can remember those moments from when I was as young as three, sitting ‘all ears’ as my mother and grandparents talked about the world around us. Dinner preparations started with the women cooking, my grandfather sitting at the table, drinking his strong, hot tea from a saucer, all enjoying the conversation. We lived under the same roof in the late 1940’s and early ‘50’s.

They reviewed their work days and talked about the latest newspaper headlines – not just the events, but the meaning of those events. History was never far from those intense conversations about the present. Because we were Jewish, perhaps because my family’s community believed so deeply in justice, they talked often about the Holocaust. Not only about the events, but about the moral, social, economic and political conditions that made those terrible events possible. The central value I learned from those conversations was the obligation to *witness* and to *act* in matters of injustice and danger. To *refuse*

to see, to hear and to take action was morally unacceptable.

This simple, yet complex belief system has stayed with me for all of my life.

I learned about beauty, music, and theatre from my family too. In our neighbourhood, you didn’t have to be affluent or well-schooled to appreciate painting or opera. My grandfather loved to sing, accompanied by my mother on the piano. My mother introduced me to the magic of film and photography. From an early age, I learned that images could move people, challenge our perceptions, and inform our heads as well as our hearts. I learned that shared images could connect people with each other’s experiences.

It is these beliefs, these passions that inform my documentary work. Sky Works is built on the belief that we can change the world, by working with communities of shared values and interests, one documentary at a time. We have built a community of documentary participants, volunteers, advisors and audiences who are determined not only to watch and listen, but also to engage

and to act with respect to the issues we believe need changing. We reach out for the collective wisdom of the diversity of people across Canada who want to make a difference for their families, in their workplaces, their schools and their neighbourhoods.

This work is not easy, smooth or flawless. At times, it is most overwhelming. We are sometimes in despair as we document the suffering, the need, the pain of injustice. But there is also affirmation and pride that we can share with project participants. We create opportunities for the kids and their families to tell their stories – to be heard, to be acknowledged. We are their witnesses – all of us. This is their form of action, and they encourage us to stand with them, to act on the issues that they are living and bringing to our urgent attention.

It is my hope that our documentaries will be shared with your families. At Sky Works, we have learned that our children can be our teachers, our moral compasses. Take it from me, change can start at our dinner tables.

HOME SAFE: A TWO-CITY LAUNCH

Home Safe, the new Sky Works project that tackles the urgent issue of child and family homelessness in Canada, is officially underway.

The launch of a new documentary is very special for Sky Works because it provides such an affirming opportunity to meet directly with friends and supporters who have shared our journey over the years. A launch is a 'reaching out,' a connection to the people who share our concern for the issues and who make up the vast network of interest, creativity and passion that gives the Sky Works mission such vitality. The energy and enthusiasm that comes out of the launch is what feeds the community development phase of any project – the real 'work' of any Sky Works documentary. And for *Home Safe Calgary*, it begins now.

The premiere screening of *Home Safe Calgary*, the first of four documentaries in the *Home Safe* series, took place in Calgary on October 21 to the acclaim of

the hometown audience, including many funders and project partners. Executive Producer, Street Nurse Cathy Crowe and Director/Producer Laura Sky were in proud attendance. More than three hundred people filled the Uptown Stage and Screen theatre to see the stories told by Calgary families caught in the affordable housing crisis that co-exists with Alberta's economic boom. Many of the documentary participants were on hand for a rich question and answer session following the screening which was an evening highlight for members of the audience. Here are some of their comments:

"I wanted to say how very much my husband and I enjoyed the screening. It is an outstanding project.... It's made me think. Those families were amazing and I admire their courage and tenacity. A mother's love has no limits for sure."

"My sincere congratulations on the premiere of this wonderful documentary. I was quite 'wowed' by the enthusiasm in the crowd. An atmosphere of honesty and safety was created for those participating in the movie... it definitely comes through. It's a gift to everyone and I am so glad for the opportunity to see it."

"The documentary opened my eyes to what is going on in our cities. I was blind to what real homelessness is and I have taken for granted the roof over my head until now. This was an incredible opportunity to celebrate the launch of this great project."

Three weeks later, in Toronto on November 6, the documentary was screened again as part of the national launch of the *Home Safe* project – a nation-wide community development and action program to find an effective and national response to the growing threat of family homelessness.

DELILAH AND DARLA PARTICIPATED IN THE DOCUMENTARY AND THE CELEBRATION AFTER THE CALGARY PREMIER.





ANDRÉ AND ROWAN AT THE TORONTO LAUNCH.

“...the documentaries stir people to think outside of the box, to continue to think and process what they’ve actually witnessed. And so they have questions and they are looking for answers. Questions that they would have never had if it had not been for the documentary.”

—Sue McCoy, educator and counsellor in the areas of trauma, death, dying, and bereavement, and a former police officer.

Another 400 people attended the impressive event at the Isabel Bader Theatre where they were welcomed by the host for the evening, author and broadcaster *Erika Ritter*. Those in attendance were engaged and delighted by the event, the presence of several of the film’s participants, and by the wonderful refreshments contributed by *Jamie Kennedy Event Catering*.

In fact, the launches in both cities were much indebted to the volunteer contributions of many individuals and groups. The Calgary event was hosted by *Governors For Children*, a local volunteer-based organization that works on behalf of children and youth and that has been a valued supporter of the *Home Safe* project in that city. A big thank you to *Teresa Nelson Keller* who gave the

event such good leadership on behalf of *Governors For Children*.

In Toronto, our *Outreach Initiative* committee members and a variety of enthusiastic volunteers, led by board member *Joan Laver*, worked hard and long to make the November event memorable.

Following the Toronto screening, *Tasha Brown*, one of the moms who appears in the documentary, said that seeing it helped her to realize that through all the time she was guiding her family through their hard, homeless experience she had not let herself feel the pain of the experience. “But the scene with all those cots lined up in that church basement made me weep, and I know it’s safe now to feel how traumatizing it was.” Tasha and her daughter *Delilah* are a major force in the documentary and are

committed to working with the film as peer facilitators to make a real difference for other families who are facing homelessness.

Though the documentary has great meaning for the participants, the goal at *Sky Works* is for the film to also connect with its audiences. To that end, *Home Safe Calgary* now begins its long journey of influence and impact in local screenings throughout Alberta and the west and wherever else Canadians are concerned about the issue of family homelessness. The community development phase of the *Home Safe* project aims to encourage Canadians’ personal involvement in the elimination of the harmful and preventable effects of homelessness.

SKY WORKS NORTH

SKY WORKS NORTH REPORT

Jim Hyder is the coordinator of a new Sky Works initiative based in Thunder Bay, Ontario that we call *Sky Works North*. Through this project we plan to focus specific attention to that enormous part of Ontario that few in the south ever think about. The idea grew out of our experience with the *Crisis Call* documentary where our eyes were opened to the burden that location imposes on northerners as they deal with the many social issues facing them, and especially the challenges borne by the aboriginal communities.

Jim and Laura Sky met in the seventies when they both worked for the National Film Board's *Challenge For Change* program. "We felt a professional bond and a shared critical perspective back then," according to Laura, "so I'm delighted to be reunited and working with Jim again."

Here is Jim's report on what's currently happening in Sky Works North.

KASHECHEWAN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

The *Kashechewan Community Development Project* began with a showing of the Sky Works documentary *Kids Care* at a seminar for members of the First Nation community of Kashechewan on the coast of James Bay. Community members thought that a project and documentary similar to *Kids Care* would be helpful for

Kashechewan, which faces many of the challenges common to northern First Nations communities – high unemployment especially among young people, housing shortages, serious environmental issues like flooding, substance abuse, suicide – subjects often highlighted by outside media. The project goal is to help the community find its own voice and tell its own story.

In partnership with Nishnawbe – Aski Nation, several workshops have occurred in the community to introduce basic documentary production skills to community members. In one workshop we documented a recreational event in which children raced against their chief and council members, while a second showed the traditional way of preserving goose and beaver meat by smoking it over an open fire. As a result of these initial experiences, the community has purchased some basic video equipment to support a community-based group with the interest and skill to carry the project further.

TALK ABOUT IT

Talk About It is a Sky Works North project in partnership with the Thunder Bay and Region Prostate Cancer Support Group which proposes to produce a number of short documentaries to educate, motivate and organize men around the

subject of prostate cancer, similar to the successful movement women have built around breast cancer. A short pilot containing candid interviews with men who have experienced prostate cancer was produced to help raise money for the project. However, after a number of screenings in the community, that first documentary, now titled *Talk About It*, has become a stand-alone production that has been sent to more than a hundred prostate support groups across the country. It is still being screened in the Thunder Bay region to stimulate discussions around the issues of prostate cancer. Our hope is to continue with additional productions that will explore the issues further.

KEEP TOBACCO SACRED

In partnership with the Thunder Bay and Region District Health Unit, Sky Works North is developing a project with the Health Unit and First Nations youth concerning the high rates of smoking among aboriginal youth and their communities. The project is in the initial stages of research with a facilitator from the Health Unit working with focus groups of young people from northwestern Ontario. The data from these focus groups will provide the orientation for the project which will progress over the next year.



JIM AND A NORTHERN FRIEND.



SKY WORKS BOARD CHAIR PAT DAVIDSON

ABOUT VOLUNTEERS

This speech was given by Michaëlle Jean, the Governor General of Canada, at the October 1st presentation of the Caring Canadian Award in Toronto.

Among those honoured that day was the Sky Works Board Chair, Pat Davidson, who makes us all very proud indeed. Congratulations Pat!

Sky Works relies on the good work of volunteers in many roles, so these remarks certainly resonated with us.

“Life sometimes puts us to the test.

When we suffer an illness, lose a job, survive a natural disaster, go into exile, experience separation, feel the pain of solitude: this is when we need a helping hand, an attentive ear, a kind word, a hot meal or a roof over our heads.

No one is immune to the challenges life throws our way. We tend to forget that, when things are going well. But as members of the human family, it is our responsibility to acknowledge our frailties and to take care of one another.

Helping others has nothing to do with profit, nothing to do with pomp and circumstance, nothing to do with obligation. The desire to help others comes from the heart.

Reaching out to someone in need stems from the deep conviction that life is precious and a strong desire to help improve the world around us. But this desire, this concern, is certainly not one-sided. Caring implies a spirit of reciprocity.

I believe that the true power in helping others is the way it changes the life of the person who is doing the helping, just as it changes the life of the person who is helped. That is why, to my mind, reaching out to someone else is the most promising thing we can do.

It is how we inspire hope in others, how it becomes part of our daily lives and puts an end to the feeling of powerlessness that leads others to despair and indifference.

It is by helping others that we overcome hatred, exclusion, and the defeatist, “everyone for himself” attitude. Helping others allows us to discover other ways of living together as a society. Ways that are more just. Ways that show more solidarity. Ways that are more human.

The fourteen people receiving the Caring Canadian Award this morning embody this promise of hope. You share a determination to act for the greater good, and it is an honour for me to pay tribute to you today. By donating your time, your talents and your resources, by being open to others and showing them compassion, you remind us what humanity really means. You are shining examples of commitment for all of us and for future generations following in your footsteps, who are looking for ways to express their willingness to share.

Thank you, to each and every one of you. As I like to say, you show us that our hearts should be as big and boundless as Canada itself!”

FUNDING UPDATE

OUR ANNUAL APPEAL

We raised \$34,423 in the 2007 Annual Appeal, a more than 40% increase over the 2006 campaign. Our 2008 Annual Appeal is underway with an objective of \$40,000 (another 16% increase). The broad appeal is a critical part of our core fundraising effort, providing individual donors a way to support the Sky Works mission, our community development work and infrastructure costs in our four program areas:

- Children & Families as a Focus for Social Change
- Mental Health
- Community Health
- Criminal Justice

THANK YOU

Thanks very much to the following individuals who gave generously between June 1, 2007 and December 4, 2008. We will continue to count on your support in the months ahead and look forward to welcoming new supporters to our organization.

THANKS TO OUR PARTNERS FOR CHANGE (FOR GIFTS OVER \$1,000)

The Marion Armstrong Charitable Foundation · Susan Copland · The Dalglish Family Foundation · Peter & Diane Dent · George & Kathy Dembroski · Peter C. Douglas · Nancy Garrow · Jackman Foundation · Eric & Sara Jackman · The Henry White Kinnear Foundation · Joan & Barrie Laver · Victoria Lee · Linda & Steve Lowden Fund at the Toronto Community Foundation · Kenneth Miner · Janice & Hugh Rennie · David Roland · Nick & Lynn Ross Charitable Foundation · Robert & Jilla Williams · Peter Wilson

THANKS TO OUR FRIENDS OF SKY WORKS (FOR GIFTS UP TO \$1,000) *indicates a project-specific gift

Jocelyn Allen · Hugh & Pat Armstrong · Marilyn Baillie · Carolyn Barrett · Bonnie Bean · Sally K. Beattie · Julia Bennett · Laurie Bissonette* · Robert Bourgeois* · Margaret Brook · Allan Brown · Jane Bunting* · George & Martha Butterfield · Susan Calder · Mary Cerré · Roger Chaplin · Mary Cornish & George Biggar · Ray F. Coutu* · Gary Cwitco · Isolde Daiski · Patricia Davidson · Scott Douglas · Rob Drynan · Nancy Emkin &

Gwyn Griffith · Jim & Mary Fisher · Wendy Fletcher · Anne Rochon Ford · James Garrow · Patricia Giddings · Alan Gouch · John Graham · Nancy & Richard Hamm · Jo An Hannah* · Beverly Hargraft · Peter & Judy Hatcher · William S. Hendrie · Patricia Hennessy* · Jane Alison Hill · Valerie Hussey · Elizabeth Kennedy · Katherine Kennedy · Karen Knopf · Terry Kopperud* · Michael Kositsky · Mark Krakowski · Jennifer A. Lee · Alan Lennon · Monica Le Ray* · Abby Lippman · Sandra Macdougall · Tracey Macey · Janet MacInnis* · Patricia M. Mackay · Seana Massey & Ian Moorhead · Alex Mayer · Susan McCoy · Joyce McKeough · Janet Mosher · Joann Moysey · Lynn Anne Mulrooney · Barbara Oughtred · Barbara Payne · Tanya V. Pimenof · Frances Price · Kathleen Quinn · Heather Ramsay · Gilberte Renaud* · Lorna Renooy · Judith J. Ridout · Lyne Robidas* · Marny Robinette · Donald & Marjorie Rogers · John Rook · Saskatchewan Union of Nurses* · Ben Shek · Carolyn Sinclair* · Denise Smith · Verne Sparks · Peter Stanley · Wayne Stewart* ·

Thank you for sustaining the work that allows our projects to succeed.

Jane Strathy · Idella Sturino · Brian & Norca Ticoll · Diana Tremain · Tri-County Mennonite Homes · Maureen Wall · Margrietha Weeks · George A. Wilson · Michael H. Wilson · Anthea Windsor · Judith Woodsworth · Tricia Younger · Margaret Zeidler

In honour of Marguerite Weeks.

AMONG RECENT GIFTS WERE THOSE IN MEMORY OF:

Helen Bennett · Esther Bluma · Lisa Gilmer · Nancy MacDonnell · Shirley Mann · Jewell Rodger · Jean A. Shek · William David Sheriff · Robert Strathy

PROJECT FUNDING:

HOME SAFE FUNDERS (CALGARY)

Anonymous · Arnold Massey & Jane Stodgell · Cadmus Foundation · Calgary Homeless Foundation · Canadian Nurses Association · College & Association of Registered Nurses of Alberta · George & Kathy Dembroski · Poverty Reduction Coalition of the United Way of Calgary and Area · The Calgary Foundation · The Dunlop Family Fund at The Calgary Foundation · The Henry White Kinnear Foundation · United Way of Calgary and Area

Home Safe Calgary was launched on October 21, 2008 and its public engagement phase is ready for implementation.

HOME SAFE FUNDERS (TORONTO, HAMILTON AND SAULT STE. MARIE)

Canadian Federation Of Nurses Unions · Canadian Nurses Association · George & Kathy Dembroski · Catherine Donnelly Foundation · Peter & Diane Dent · Hamilton Community Foundation · Jackman Foundation · The Henry White Kinnear Foundation · The Law Foundation of Ontario · Arnold Massey & Jane Stodgell · The McLean Foundation · Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario · Steelworkers Humanity Fund

Home Safe Toronto and Hamilton are in production now with completion scheduled for spring 2009. *Home Safe Sault Ste. Marie* is in its research and development phase.

HOME SAFE RESEARCH FUNDERS

BMO Financial Group · Canadian Auto Workers (CAW) · Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario · Laidlaw Foundation

WE NEED IT TO BE REAL: A DOCUMENTARY EXPLORING THE ISSUES OF WOMEN IN RECOVERY FROM ADDICTIONS

CAW Mining Council · CAW National · Charles Dobson · Iris Addiction Recovery Foundation · Knights of Columbus · Risto Lamanen · Laurentian Publishing Limited · Laurentian University Students General Association · Diane Massicotte · United Steel Workers Revolving Fund · Vale Inco · Sheet Metal Workers Local 504 · Sudbury Mine Mill and Smelter Workers Local 598/CAW-TCA Solidarity Fund · Jamie Williams · Xstrata Nickel

Filming begins January 2009.

KIDS CARE / COEURS À COEURS

TD Bank Financial Group · Ronald McDonald House Charities

LIVING WITH MIRACLES – RESEARCH

SickKids Foundation



SKY WORKS CHARITABLE FOUNDATION DONATION FORM

Your contribution will be much appreciated and will help extend Sky Works' community development and education efforts. You can donate online at www.canadahelps.org or return this form by mail or fax to Sky Works. Gifts over \$10 are eligible for a tax receipt.

Name(s) _____

Address _____

_____ Postal Code _____

Email _____

Phone _____

I/we will make a total donation of \$ _____

Annually Quarterly Monthly Once

I will donate monthly by direct payment from my bank account; please send me the required authorization form.

Cheques payable to *Sky Works Charitable Foundation* or check for Visa MasterCard and provide

Card number _____

Print name on card _____

Expiry date _____

Signature _____

Concerning gifts of securities, stocks or legacy gifts please contact jgarrow@skyworksfoundation.org

401 Richmond Street West, Suite 240
Toronto, ON M5V 3A8
T 416 536 6581 | F 416 536 7728

THANK YOU!

SKY WORKS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Cathy Crowe
Pat Davidson
Sara Jackman
Mark Krakowski
Joan Laver
Seana Massey
Janet Mosher
Doug Peter
Michelyn Putignano
Lynn Ross
George Wilson

SKY WORKS STAFF

Laura Sky – Executive Director, Producer/Director
David Adkin – Program and Production Manager
Verne Sparks – Operations Manager
Jackie Garrow – Development Manager
Helen Kampfmuller – Publicity and Tour Manager
Karen Knopf – Financial Manager
Graham Hawes – Bookkeeper
Erin Breau-Barkley – Administrative Coordinator
Lindsay Fisher – Administrative Assistant
Jim Hyder – Sky Works North Coordinator

NEWSLETTER PRODUCTION

Editor: Verne Sparks
Design: Megan Hunt
Writers: Verne Sparks, Laura Sky, Jim Hyder, Helen Kampfmuller, Jackie Garrow
Photos: Anna Prior, Stephan Villanueva

NEW AND UPCOMING

1. While we are celebrating the positive response to the *Home Safe* launch, *Kids Care* just keeps on working.

And the *Kids Care* schools initiative took a giant step forward this summer with an agreement between Sky Works and the Ontario Family Studies Leadership Council to produce a *Kids Care Teachers Resource Package* designed to be used in four different family studies courses in grades 11 and 12.

The province of Quebec will now have full access to the *Kids Care* benefits following the completion of our French-language version. The French versions of the documentary, the print materials and training guides were made possible through a generous grant from Ronald McDonald House Charities. The new version, *Coeurs à coeurs*, will be shown throughout the province through a cooperative effort with *Leucan*, a cancer support organization that has local chapters across Quebec. At the moment plans are being finalized for the premiere of *Coeurs à coeurs* in Montreal on February 16th.

Finally, Princess Margaret Hospital's Palliative Care Department in Toronto is creating a Palliative/Bereavement booklet to assist patients, caregivers and family members that will include the *Kids Care* DVD in its resource section.

2. *We Need it to be Real*, a documentary exploring the issues of women who are in recovery from addictions, moved closer to production on Saturday, October 25th with a successful fundraiser in Sudbury featuring Canadian rock 'n roll icon *Ronnie Hawkins*. The as-close-to-raucous-as-we-ever-get event was co-sponsored by Sky Works and *Iris Addiction Recovery for Women*, our partner in a documentary that will share the experience of women who are in recovery from addiction and substance abuse and the impact on their families. The union movement and leaders in the business community in the Sudbury region are very supportive of the project and were out in force for the concert at Fraser Auditorium at Laurentian University.

3. A new version of *Prescription For Addiction* was completed by Sky Works in May and is now being shown throughout the province by the commissioning agency, the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health. *David Adkin*, Sky Works' program and production manager directed the revision of the 2005 original, to provide a condensed working version that also addresses issues related to the use of methadone.

4. One of our biggest efforts in 2008 has been the production of a new short film that describes the Sky Works organization, its development, and its mission. For some time now we have felt the need for a way to interpret ourselves to the world, to help people understand what Sky Works is, and what it does. So, as part of our 25th anniversary celebration we have made *Sky Works – changing the world, one documentary at a time*, a 12-minute introduction to our organization that will be used to interpret our program and objectives to prospective partners, participants, funders and supporters. There will be many opportunities to see the new film beginning in the new year.



401 RICHMOND STREET WEST, SUITE 240, TORONTO, ONTARIO M5V 3A8