



Alberta Council of Women's Shelters
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Media Release
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Alberta Women's Shelters Add Up

In recognition of International Women's Day and the significant accomplishment of shelter workers keeping women and children safe – we are pleased to announce the results of our data count. Alberta shelters completed this province-wide survey on November 25, 2009. On this one day, 41 shelters serving those fleeing from domestic violence helped 693 women and 617 children. On this same day, 16 women and 20 children seeking assistance were unable to be accommodated.

The Alberta Data Count recorded experiences and thoughts from the staff and women staying in shelter, giving shape to a 'day in the life' of a shelter: *"One of our counselors drove her client to the lawyers to pick up some of her belongings that have been left there by her former perpetrator. Things were packed into brown bags and (were) very distasteful, pitiful and difficult for the client to experience,"* reported a shelter worker from Calgary.

The survey feedback included many experiences that show the wide range of services and supports that shelters provide on a daily basis. It also revealed that on a given day, close to 1/5 of the women in shelter were known to be pregnant – pointing to the need for greater prenatal and health services for women.

The Global Shelter Data Count revealed that 2,883 participating agencies from 24 countries around the world who protect women and children escaping violence at home helped 90,602 women and 63,315 children on their data count day. 12,228 women and 8,176 children were unable to be accommodated.

"We presented this data at the UN on March 2nd, launching the international network and ensuring that shelters have significant participation in the on-going dialogue about domestic violence," said Jan Reimer, Provincial Coordinator of ACWS and Secretariat of the Global Network of Women's Shelters. "As in Alberta, women's shelters around the world are not always heard when considering how to best meet the needs of women and children fleeing violence at home."

An inspiring revelation? Over half of Alberta shelters participating received assistance from Albertans on that one day – taking the form of donated food, clothing and furniture and volunteer hours.

Background:

The need for a Global Shelter Data Count was identified as a chief outcome of the first World Conference of Women's Shelters held in Edmonton and hosted by ACWS in 2008. This first Data Count was held on one day in the fourth quarter of 2009 and was organized by the Alberta Council of Women's Shelters on behalf of the emerging Global Network of Women's Shelters. Alberta chose November 25 as its provincial data count day, because it is also the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women. Today (March 8th) is the International Woman's Day.

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