THE BARRIE EXAMINER

# Fighting for the rights of women

## March 8, 2010

## INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY: Celebrating contributions to the community

### By NICKI CRUICKSHANK

A woman standing on a shelter's doorstep after fleeing an abusive home likely won't feel like celebrating.

And a sense of equality to men probably isn't alive inside her, either.

That's the case for many of the victims the Women and Children's Shelter in Barrie and Colibri Centre des Femmes Francophones.

"In order to feel safe and live an autonomous life, these women need to have a good home, good-paying job and a support system," said Lynda Muir, executive director of the Women and Children's Shelter in Barrie.

Monday is International Women's Day, and the two shelters hope to shed some positive spotlight on the strength and accomplishments of local women.

"The underlying message of the day is still the same: fighting for the rights of women," Muir said. "We want to celebrate what women in the community are doing. Let's support our women."

The Women and Children's Shelter and Colibri are hosting an International Women's Day event Monday night at the Army Navy Air Force Hall (7 George St.) from 5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

The shelter usually teams up with Athena's Sexual Assault Counselling & Advocacy Centre.

"But, they stepped back this year, so we're partnering with Colibri," Muir said. "It's been going on quite a few years in Barrie, and we wanted to keep the celebration going."

The event will feature live entertainment and food prepared by local ethnic restaurants.

"There's going to be a lot of different tastes and displays," Muir said. "This year, we've invited a number of agencies and local women who have started their own businesses to put up displays."

Keynote speaker for the event is Kim Kitchen, with her presentation, the movement of water. Kitchen describes her experience following women and children in Tanzania on their long journey to retrieve water.

The event is open to men, women and children, and will offer a cafe-style setting perfect for socializing.

"We're really hoping to get a good crowd out. It varies every year," Muir said.

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