



ANGEL FREEDMAN

Fill a Purse for a Sister Campaign in Final Stretch

By TINA NOVOTNY

While the world is happily putting the COVID-19 crisis in the rear-view mirror, domestic violence activists are calling attention to the pandemic's lingering impacts on women.

Although the federal and provincial governments are providing emergency funding to women's shelters and other services, more support is still urgently needed.

That's why the seventh annual Fill a Purse for a Sister Campaign is more important than ever.

Angel Freedman, a Stouffville-based social worker, started the campaign in 2015 out of her living room.

Fill a Purse for a Sister now has 40 community leads coordinating efforts across Canada, with a goal of 10,000 donated purses for this year's campaign.

"I'm an advocate for women, but I do this for many reasons," says Freedman.

"I'm also a child of domestic violence, so I know how it feels. The purses help keep a woman's

dignity intact when she leaves and has nothing."

Ontario women's shelters and police services reported that crisis calls increased significantly during pandemic lockdowns.

Quarantines and social isolation put abusers and victims behind closed doors, and stressors like job losses and financial insecurity fuelled intimate partner violence.

Mona Steitieh, owner of Auntie M's Closet, is the Georgina Community Lead for the campaign and is collecting donations at the store (482 The Queensway South).

The local goal this year is 275 filled purses. "It's important to remind those experiencing crisis that people want to help them. We really believe in Susan B. Anthony's quote that 'every woman should have her own purse.'"

Donations of gently used or new purses should include personal care items like toothbrushes and paste, hairbrushes, shampoo and conditioner, deodorant, razors,

and feminine hygiene products. You can add winter pick-me-ups like body spray, lip balm, books, or scarves and gloves. Many donors add a personal note of encouragement and support.

Donations are accepted until December 1. Other donation locations are Colour Central

Hair Salon (422 The Queensway South), Twig Gardens & Co (10 The Queensway South in Keswick) and Sweet Pea Accessories (130 High Street in Sutton). Naturally Enchanted is also accepting donations through social media (@_naturally_enchanted) to arrange drop off.



AUNTIE M'S CLOSET, KESWICK