



CHEZ DORIS NEWS

COURRIER

For Our Donors and Partners

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CHEZ DORIS: RENEWED COMMITMENT TO GOVERNANCE FOR SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

As autumn unfolds, it marks a season of renewal and growth for Chez Doris. With fresh energy and unwavering conviction, our organization is expanding its services and deepening its commitment to supporting women in vulnerable situations. In times of transformation, strong, compassionate governance is essential.



We're proud to share that, in June, **Jill Hugessen**—an esteemed board member since 2016—was appointed Chair of the Board. This milestone reflects our collective vision: to build a resilient future while honouring our longstanding tradition of care and advocacy for women in need. My team and I are deeply inspired by this new chapter, and we look forward to building on our organization's well-established tradition of helping vulnerable women.

We've also welcomed six new members to our board: **1- Katherine Chartrand, 2- Marie-Pierre Habas-Gerard, 3- Camille Janvier-Langis, 4- Ray Kazan, 5- Laura Kennedy, and 6- Kseniya Veretelnik.** With their impressive backgrounds, they are generously donating their time and



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expertise to a cause we all care about deeply. Their arrival marks an important moment for Chez Doris— a focus on solid governance needed to meet the challenges we face in helping the women we support. I welcome them with gratitude and thank them for their commitment, fresh perspectives, and willingness to contribute to our growth.

This year, we will reach important milestones, including the upcoming opening of our first transitional residence for women and the development of the Fulford project, among other initiatives.

Every project is a concrete response to a reality that is too often invisible. And behind every step forward in our progress are dedicated teams, loyal partners, generous donors, and a visionary board of directors.

To everyone who makes this journey possible—employees, volunteers, donors, and partners—I thank you from the bottom of my heart. Together, we are determined to carry our mission forward so that every woman who walks through our doors can imagine and believe in a better future for herself.

Diane Pilote
Executive Director

STUDYING TO REBUILD: ANA'S JOURNEY WITH CHEZ DORIS

When you meet Ana, what strikes you first is her unwavering determination, her steady gaze, and the quiet strength in her voice. Her poise belies the gravity of the hardships she's endured—and the extraordinary resilience it took to rise above them.

Born in Guatemala, Ana's early life was shaped by abandonment and separation. At five, she arrived in Canada to live with her father, was adopted by her stepmother, and became a Canadian citizen. Yet despite this new beginning, she suffered abuse until she was removed from the family home at age 11. By 18, alone and vulnerable, Ana was in the grip of addiction. A few years later, she gave birth to two children, becoming a dedicated and attentive mother. However, their father's problems led to a painful separation, triggering a relapse. Within a few years, she had lost her home, her job, custody of her children—and found herself living a life she had never imagined, relying on shelters, where she discovered others, primarily women and elders, in distress—a devastating decline in her situation.

The road to sobriety is long. After several attempts to get back on her feet, Ana finally found a safe space at Li-BER-T house, where she could work on herself and begin to imagine a future.



Thanks to the Sinclair program, Ana was able to pursue a long-held dream: finishing high school. Chez Doris provided not only the essentials—school supplies, a computer, transportation, and food vouchers—but also something deeper: a steady, reassuring presence.

That's when Chez Doris entered her life. This support gave Ana the stability she needed to focus on her studies and succeed where she had once stumbled.

Buoyed by her academic success, Ana enrolled in a job readiness program at MIRE – Movement for Integration and Job Retention. Her performance stood out—so much that she was offered a position as a receptionist. Finally, she belonged—surrounded by others who shared her values and her desire to help others. Today, Ana plans to study psychosocial intervention, with the goal of helping other women in need. She is in regular contact with her children and is actively working toward shared custody. With continued support from Chez Doris, Ana is preparing to move into subsidized housing and to build a more stable life.

Ana's journey is nothing short of inspiring. Her determination to keep moving forward is palpable. She is living proof that with resilience—and the right support—a life can be transformed. Chez Doris didn't just help Ana rebuild; it empowered her to dream again.

CHEZ DORIS : MITTENS AND MIRACLES

Since 2015, the Chez Doris mitten project has been weaving more than just thread—it's been stitching together connection, restoring confidence, and offering dignity to women who have faced profound challenges.



Every week, about a dozen women gather for the workshop led by longtime volunteer Christina Donolo, whose commitment to Chez Doris has lasted for more than 15 years. For two hours, participants cut, sew, iron, and label mittens made from 100% wool sweaters and fleece. In exchange, they receive a \$20 gift card—a simple gesture, rich in meaning. The workshop provides a safe space, a moment just for them.

"We break isolation, rebuild self-esteem... and most of all, we feel useful, valued, and fully part of our community," says Ouassima, a participant in the mitten program.

Hadjira, another participant, points out that some women had never held a needle before; now, they're passing on their skills to newcomers. From participants, they become mentors—a powerful symbol of personal growth and regained confidence.

This is just a glimpse into a program rich in human impact. On chezdoris.org, meet Ouassima and Hadjira, two participants for whom mitten-making means far more than a simple workshop.



Each year, the group lovingly crafts 200 to 250 pairs of mittens, sometimes matched by slippers, scarves, or cushions. Sales from these items help fund inclusive activities for all: outings, shows, restaurant meals, and more.

Since its inception, the project has generated more than **\$88,000** in revenue—and it continues to grow.



How You Can Support Mittens and Miracles

- 🏠 Donate 100% wool sweaters
- 🏠 Buy our products on Sunday, November 30 at 1221 Guy St. during the holiday market.
- 🏠 See the detailed list of where to buy them at Chezdoris.org
- 🏠 Offer them as corporate gifts

Every pair of mittens warms two hearts: the receiver, and the maker.

Many women fear walking alone on the street at night.

Imagine living there.

Chez Doris helps the most vulnerable women avoid homelessness and rebuild their lives.

The need is urgent. | **PLEASE DONATE NOW**

chezdoris.org