

Women’s Place of South Niagara Inc.

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**WALKERS RETURN TO THE SEAWAY MALL THIS SATURDAY IN SUPPORT OF WOMEN’S PLACE**

WELLAND, ON, October 29, 2019 – Last year in Canada, 148 women were killed by violence, many of them at the hands of an intimate partner. On Saturday, November 2, walkers from across Niagara will be taking to the halls of the Seaway Mall to raise awareness of violence against women and to build a WAVE of awareness that will hopefully one day WIPE OUT domestic violence for good. Participants are also raising funds to support the domestic violence shelters operated by Women’s Place in Welland (Serenity Place) and Niagara Falls (Nova House). By “Joining the WAVE” (an acronym that stands for “Walk Against Violence Everyone”), walkers will help the agency to meet its goal of raising over $22,000, which will be used to provide safe shelter, support lines, legal support, counselling, housing support and other vital services for women and children experiencing abuse. The top fundraiser will win a hotel stay for two (including dinner and breakfast) donated by Niagara Casinos.

As the walk enters its fifth year, the pressure on domestic violence services has never been greater. “Last year,” says the agency’s acting executive director, Jennifer Gauthier, “260 women and children stayed in a Women’s Place shelter, while hundreds more used our outreach services. Our staff also answered nearly 3000 calls on our support lines. By supporting Women’s Place events like the walk at the Seaway Mall,” Gauthier explains, “our donors, sponsors, participants and volunteers will be helping to make sure we are always there when a woman needs our help.”

Peggy Thompson, a survivor who will be speaking at this year’s event, knows only too well how difficult it can be to leave an abusive relationship without support. Unfortunately, when she needed help, there was not the network of over 600 women’s shelters that now exists in Canada. “To this day I cannot believe that, even by accident, he didn’t kill me,” she explains.

While the walk will raise funds and awareness related to a serious topic, the event itself is designed to be fun, and includes a beach party theme, live music by the Dealerz Choice Duo, a performance by the Ukulele Club from Fitch Street Public School, a visit by Dunkin from the Niagara River Lions, and lots of beach-themed activities.

Registration will remain open all this week for anyone still wishing to “Join the WAVE” at <https://womensplacesn.akaraisin.com/JointheWAVE2019> . **Walker check-in starts at 8 a.m on November 2 at the Seaway Mall. Participants and media should look for the tiki hut in Ernie Allen Court (just inside the entrance Winners entrance to the mall). Opening ceremonies, hosted by Pat Porter from 91.7 Giant FM, will start at 9 a.m.**

For additional information about this event or Women’s Place, please contact Amanda Braet, at 905-356-3933 ext. 240 or amanda@wpsn.ca, or visit [womensplacesn.org](http://www.womensplacesn.org).

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