

Festive event supports Daybreak House

By Paula Roy

A night under the stars, accompanied by great music, delicious food and beautiful artwork combined for the perfect summer's eve fundraiser.

As a volunteer for Daybreak Housing, Kitchissippi resident Diana Bond, along with her family, wanted to host a fundraising party to benefit the non-profit organization.

The Piccadilly Avenue facility is one of five Daybreak residences in Ottawa, providing affordable accommodations for those who struggle with mental illness, as well as for anyone recovering from addictions or abusive relationships. Daybreak is designed as a caring environment where people can have not only a place to live, but a place to call home.

Bond says she first started volunteering at Daybreak because it's an outreach initiative at her church, St. Andrew's Presbyterian.

"With one of the organization's homes located right here in our neighbourhood, practically in my own backyard, it seemed a natural fit for me to become involved," she explains.

Bond volunteers as an intake interviewer and she says she likes meeting potential tenants, when she listens to their stories and be in a position to offer them hope—for safe housing as well as for a step towards a brighter future.

"Daybreak is still a relatively small non-profit corporation, with a grass-roots feel to it," she says. "I enjoy the three staff members who are on site and the board of volunteers that donate so many hours and talents to making this ecumenical shelter work."

Though she volunteers on a regular

basis, Bond and her family wanted to further showcase their support to Daybreak. So they opened their home up for a house party, and they say they were amazed by the support, ultimately raising \$1,500 for Daybreak.

"There was an intimacy to opening our home that was special for us, but it limited the invitees to people we knew, and limited numbers as well, so we were glad to raise the funds we did," she says. She notes that one of the most special aspects of the event was seeing guests of all ages—from teens through to seniors—dancing under the stars. "I enjoyed that so many of our various circles of friends and acquaintances intermingled, all while helping out a cause that is so meaningful to me and important for our community."

Food and a fine art sale, featuring gorgeous glass art by Diana's husband, Rick Bond, rounded out the menu for the summer's eve event, which saw the hundred partygoers of all ages socializing and dancing.

The house party fundraiser featured a concert by Toronto-based band Jane's Party, whom Bond describes as an amazingly-gifted band, both instrumentally and vocally.

"They are all young men with big hearts and were keen to participate in a fundraising idea that tied in with my work at Daybreak and my knowledge that funding has become increasingly difficult in these economic times for most charitable organizations."

The post-party feedback was nothing short of positive.

"It was a fantastic event," said Greg Fyffe, President of the Daybreak Board of Directors. "Everyone had a lot of fun and it was such a great initiative on the Bonds' part. (It's) really a wonderful example of people who are truly involved with their community choosing to help out a worthwhile cause."

Fyffe adds he was happy to meet some of the facility's neighbours.

"Now that they are more aware of our organization, they might become volunteers or supporters of Daybreak in some way," he says. "They might also think of Daybreak as a resource to help someone they know."