



I was driving home from my “real” Family Transition Place (FTP) office yesterday, (where we stagger our management and admin staffing time to ensure appropriate distancing), when I heard an interview on CBC with a researcher who has just published a book called *Hope Matters*. How timely I thought. Elin Kelsey has written a book on why *hope matters*, specifically in her case, in the fight against climate change. Her words of the importance of hope resonated with me on so many levels. Kelsey talked about how important it is to break through the doom and gloom and realize that evidence-based hope (not hopeful thinking) is our most powerful tool.

This reinforced for me the intention from which the HOPE Project was initially created. By creating an initiative that focused on hope, we wanted to inspire event attendees to see the potential in themselves and realize that there IS a point in action, because there is always the potential for a happy ending. To paraphrase Elin Kelsey, when we talk not only of the tragedies, but of the joys and successes—then we realize that happy outcomes are possible and that we can, in fact, effect positive change.

For many, hope can be a scarce commodity. For those women and children coming into FTP, it may be as elusive as a unicorn. Even for those of us who are not walking such a hard path, the pandemic is challenging. There is much about “normal” life that we miss. There is fear and anxiety. And yet, by searching out the positive, finding the stories of triumph over hardship, learning of those who have navigated dangerous paths to come to a better place, we realize that there is indeed possibility. And possibility IS hope. The stories that we have been sharing over the past 35 days were posted to demonstrate that hope is to be found in diverse and sometimes overlooked places. Some of the stories were of lives lived and paths travelled that were hard and desperate; others gave us insight into the goodness of people, the resilience and strength that can be found, even in very dark times; and they showed us what is possible when we find and hold on to hope.

Elin Kelsey says that it is the positive stories that motivate us to do more, feel better and create possibilities. It is the hope that the future can be better, that spurs us on, gives us the energy to make a difference.

At the beginning of this 35-day journey, I challenged you to think of this as your “Hopefulness Training.” We know, because the research is there, that hope can be learned. We can be trained to be more hopeful. On those days when you are feeling most hopeless, remind yourself of this. Go back to the stories contained here and read about the good of people, the resilience and adaptability of the story tellers, the innovation and creativity, the kindness. Teach yourself to find the hope and be grateful. There is always something, however small, to be grateful for.

Thank you for staying with us and for your generosity of spirit (and pocket book). Although we did not meet our goal of \$35,000, we are very pleased with the outcome of the fundraising component of this event. The funds raised through this project will enable us to continue in our business of **Creating HOPE**.

With much hope,
Norah