Giving Tuesday

PRESS RELEASE

When Rent Comes Before Food: The Hidden Reality of Women's Homelessness

Prevent homelessness before it begins: a practical way to keep women housed

Montreal, November 12, 2026 – While much attention is focused on helping people exit homelessness, we must also invest in preventing it from happening in the first place.People do not become homeless overnight. It often begins with an empty fridge and the impossible choice between paying rent and putting food on the table.

Since 1977, Chez Doris has supported thousands of women, many of them mothers. While many of the women who turn to Chez Doris are experiencing homelessness, 45% still have housing but are struggling to meet their basic needs. The reality is clear: year after year, the organization is seeing a growing number of women in need.

Front-line staff at Chez Doris see the warning signs every day: women are going hungry.

When food runs out, housing is often next

As financial pressure mounts, many women skip meals to keep up with rent payments. Women's homelessness is often hidden from view. Many stay temporarily with friends, remain in unsafe living situations, or endure abusive relationships rather than sleep rough. It may be less visible in encampments or on the street, but it is very real. Once a woman loses her housing, helping her becomes much more difficult.

A concrete solution as needs soar

Preventing homelessness means intervening before a crisis becomes an emergency. For several years, Chez Doris has operated a monthly prepaid grocery card program for women in need who are still housed, providing them with $100 each month to help put food on the table.

Demand for prepaid grocery cards has surged by nearly 80% in just two years, a stark reflection of the worsening affordability crisis facing women across Montreal. In response, Chez Doris plans to provide monthly $100 grocery cards to 400 women. Yet demand is expected to exceed available support. Women's homelessness is not inevitable. It is a crisis we have the power to prevent. Together, we can help ensure that 400 women do not lose their homes simply because they cannot afford both rent and groceries.

To mark Giving Tuesday on December 1, Chez Doris is seeking a lead matching partner to expand the program and inspire community giving.

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"Inaction is fueling the rise in women's homelessness, and we must collectively recognize that the impact of this crisis extends far beyond today, affecting generations to come. We can build shelters, and we need them. But for a fraction of the cost of responding after a crisis occurs, a modest grocery card can help a woman stay safely housed. What we need now is a partner willing to invest in prevention before temporary hardship becomes homelessness."

– ***Diane Pilote,*** *Executive Director of Chez Doris*

Partner sought by December 1

Chez Doris is issuing a call to action: become the lead matching partner for *Giving Tuesday*, with a commitment to match donations received in December.

A contribution of $1,200 provides one woman with monthly grocery support for an entire year, helping reduce food insecurity and strengthen housing stability. The lead partner will receive public recognition and will be associated with a concrete, measurable initiative that helps women remain housed.

To become a partner or learn more:

Elise Monaghan Joubert | Director of Philanthropy, Chez Doris
Elise.Joubert@chezdoris.org | 514-937-2341, ext. 228 | 514-963-2114

About Chez Doris

Founded in 1977 as a day shelter for women in difficulty, Chez Doris has grown to serve more than 2,000 women experiencing homelessness or financial hardship, offering comprehensive support in a spirit of inclusion and respect. In addition to meals, the organization provides clothing, financial management support, medical services, overnight shelter and access to a range of housing options, including transitional and permanent residences. Chez Doris's mission is to support and empower every woman in a vulnerable situation so she can reach her full potential, by offering a wide range of services in safe spaces where she can find help and comfort without judgment.

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