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Charity launches a spring cleaning appeal



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Published: **April 09, 2014 01:00 PM**

Updated: **April 09, 2014 01:301 PM**

An organization that helps some of Surrey's most vulnerable residents start new lives is now reaching out for help.

With spring cleaning season in full swing, Eversafe Ranch has launched an urgent appeal for donations of gently-used items that will help women and children leaving shelters furnish their new homes.

"We need furniture, small appliances, tea kettles, coffee makers, microwaves – things that are in good working condition," said Judy Daser, who founded Eversafe Ranch with her husband, Alan, in 2008.

The charity provides free furniture and household items to families making the transition from shelters and secondary housing – mostly women fleeing abuse, and their children.

They move two to three families in Surrey, White Rock, Langley and Delta, each week, at no charge.

The people are referrals from [Atira Women's Resource Society](#), the [Surrey Association for Community Living](#), [Metis Family Services](#), [Work BC](#), local churches and word of mouth.

"We're not even touching the need," Judy said, adding they get calls from as far away New Westminster and Vancouver. "We don't go that far. There's nobody else doing this."

Alan Daser, who works full time, drives the truck (itself a donation from Union Gospel Mission) and delivers the furniture and goods, along with a volunteer. Judy joined them on a recent job helping a mother and her son move into a new residence.

"It was an empty apartment," Judy said. "She had nothing. She was starting with nothing."

Their mission has grown from hosting informal barbecues in a neighbourhood alleyway in north Surrey where they gave away clothing and household items into a registered charity that operates a thriving Cloverdale thrift shop at 5641 176A Street to

support initiatives.

Items are priced to remain within reach to people on fixed incomes, such as seniors and the working poor. It's a hive of activity that attracts regulars of every description.

"You get to talk, and you hear their life stories," Judy said, describing a wide-ranging clientele that includes single parents, savvy bargain hunters, homeless people, and Cloverdale residents on fixed incomes.

"They don't have a lot of money. It's tough for them. I hear it a lot," she said. "People who are homeless – we just give them what they need."

The store doesn't make much money, once the rent and bills are paid. "It just helps us reach more people."

A [crowd-funding web page](#) has been set up to help Eversafe reach its goals. Big ticket items are a 22-seat bus to transport families to their dinners and community events, such as the Christmas dinner that hosted more than 100 people, a new sign for the thrift store.

The expansive Surrey property they were leasing is being re-developed, so Eversafe is looking for space elsewhere to host its picnics and family fun days and re-open Doolittle's Animal Rescue.

On a smaller scale, the Dasers are also hoping to send at least 30 children who are currently living in shelters or secondary housing to recreation programs this summer.

"You would be surprised to see just how many children are living in shelters in Surrey," Judy said.

Heather Woolley of Atira Women's Resources Society said the Dasers provide a unique service to the clients and to social service agencies like theirs, which operates transition houses and secondary housing complexes, including six in Surrey.

"We don't have facilities or trucks or storage, so [Eversafe] does all that for us," Woolley said. "When someone's leaving one of our shelters, they provide them with furniture, household goods, food, clothing – everything they need to set up their home."

The need is vast. "We had 8,000 women and children through our program last year," she said.

Last year the charity provided Christmas hampers and gifts for the kids and some of the moms, in addition to hosting an evening with Santa and a Thanksgiving dinner – helping spread good cheer to people who wouldn't qualify for other programs because they lacked an address, Woolley added.

"We are so grateful for Alan and Judy and their group for what they do for our women."

Items needed include:

- Small household appliances such as toasters, microwaves and coffee makers
- Gently-used furniture (couches, tables, bed frames, lamps)
- Linens, towels, dishes and cleaning supplies
- Non-perishable food items for welcome
- baskets
- Women's business attire
- Gently-used children's bikes

Volunteers are also needed: call 604-341-1503 for more information.

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