

SHELTER: 'Recognizing spirit through traditional cultural practices'

The other 5,000 are turned away to other shelters and agencies.

It costs about \$1.2 million a year to operate the program, which has a funding base of about \$1 million, which means an additional \$200,000 must be raised each year.

And that's where Herald readers come in.

Contributions to the Herald Christmas Fund this year will go towards assisting the women and children who need your help through Awo Taan and other agencies supported by this fund.

And, charity and kindness being the true measure of a community's strength of character, it is the wish of all of us here at the Herald that we can inspire our readers and other citizens to support those to whom life has lately been less generous.

What makes Awo Taan unique, says Daniels, is that it takes people "on a journey of recognizing spirit through

traditional aboriginal cultural practices such as smudging and healing.

"Prayer and spirit are not shunned here — they're celebrated."

Yet the centre is not so constructed that only people of aboriginal heritage would be comfortable.

Awo Taan considers itself multicultural to the extent that, as Daniels said, "a lot of women who are new immigrants feel comfortable here."

The heritage of those served by the centre is, according to Daniels, about 60 per cent aboriginal, 30 per cent "women of colour" and 10 per cent "mainstream" or people of European descent.

For the readers' purposes, however, background is irrelevant.

All of the women who seek help from Awo Taan have this in common: they are frightened, physically abused and emotionally abandoned people.

They need your help and we're asking you to give it.