

The little brown brick house on Bader Lane



BRC director
Carole Morrison

The Ban Righ Centre this year is celebrating its 40th anniversary as a home-away-from-home for women needing friendship, resources, and encouragement as they return to academic life.

BY FILZA NAVEED, ARTSCI'13, MA'15

When Sangeeta Shakrawar arrived at Queen's in 2010, she never anticipated that her life would change so drastically. Already apprehensive after leaving behind family and friends at home in India, Shakrawar felt lost and isolated. Two years into her MSc, she had exhausted her money and found herself pregnant. Curiosity led her inside the brown-brick house on Bader Lane that's home to the Ban Righ Centre (BRC). It was there that she encountered the understanding and help she needed, and it helped change her entire outlook on life.

"I don't have words to describe the kind of love, care and emotional support that I received at the BRC," Shakrawar says. On top of that, within 10 days she had qualified for enough bursary money to continue her studies.

"Amidst the vibrant and diverse culture at the BRC, I felt like I finally belonged," Shakrawar says. "The women there motivated and inspired me every day to strive, and to achieve my goals."

Shakrawar, who last year earned her MSc in Mechanical and Materials Engineering, is one of the many women who have benefited from the vital services and programs offered at the BRC.

Female students coping with the special problems of being older than classmates and often starting or re-starting university studies while juggling family responsibilities, time, and money, find the support, motivation, and inspiration needed to excel in their lives. That's why this unique campus facility is gearing up to celebrate its 40th anniversary with a special event.

Carole Morrison, the BRC's director, says that Board members are keen to honour the women who have worked so hard to make the Centre a special place, and to celebrate those who have overcome barriers and achieved their educational goals.

"We're excited to be marking the Centre's 40th anniversary," she says. "It will be a celebration of the community of women at Queen's. We hope everyone – present and past staff and directors, current students, successful grads, and our faithful donors – will come together to celebrate and to help us ensure that the BRC is still operating 40 years from now."

The anniversary event, built around the Centre's annual gathering, will be held in Grant Hall on Saturday, May 3. Morrison explains that this year's event will have a garden party theme and a new cookbook, *Soups for Every Season* will be sold. Morrison describes the book as a "treasured collection of seasonal soup recipes." It also contains the unique stories of students from various backgrounds, recounting their challenging journeys.

Soup recipes hold an important symbolic value for women with ties to the BRC, where a free soup lunch is served every day while women gather to chat and enjoy the meal. "This creates a sense of



Sangeeta Shakrawar with her son Riddham Kumar, who now sometimes joins her at BRC events.