

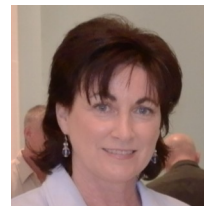
*Happy Holidays  
and Best Wishes for the New Year*



*Thank you for your kindness*

**bet**lehem  
housing and support services

## Christmas Greetings from the Executive Director



Dear Friends:

I am pleased to greet all of you after my first six months as Executive Director of Bethlehem Housing and Support Services. It has been a wonderful whirlwind of meeting new people, getting to know staff, Board members, volunteers and learning about all the great contributions Bethlehem makes to the community and the Niagara Region. It has been especially delightful to meet our resident families and clients; they inspire me every day with their stories of human spirit, fortitude and bravery. I hope the photo of the “three little sisters”, as I like to call them, have put a smile on your face. We are all pleased to introduce James who will share with you his journey to build a quality life for him and his son. The expertise and compassion of our staff is essential to these families. They relentlessly coach and support them along the path to independence with a goal to become self-sufficient citizens of Niagara who remain housed in their own home with their family and dignity intact.

This is what we do at Bethlehem Housing and Support Services! We provide housing first and then services that range from managing clean and safe properties, providing counseling and social service supports, lifeskills training and coaching, recreation arts and community connections, and helping parents learn how to best support their childrens’ healthy growth and development. It is the support programs that are essential to retaining a stable life and home.

In 2013 we assisted:

- Families who live in 115

supported housing units

- 43 adults and 63 children supported through transitional housing at Bethlehem Place
- 86 families living in permanent supported housing at Kenmore Court, Genesis Court and community homes
- Over 90 women fleeing domestic abuse who were supported through community outreach counseling
- 76 family households with homeless or risk of homelessness status
- 13 family household transitions to Housing First rental and community assistance programs
- Over 2,300 parent and 1,340 child visits to our Early Learning Centres

Our funders and government partners provide resources for housing and assist with a portion of our operations for which we are truly grateful, but your donations and contributions are critical to provide the supports and services to our families.

One of the most astounding things I have learned about Bethlehem in my short time here is the public understanding of our residents’ needs that is demonstrated by the generosity of donors and volunteers. On behalf of our families, we THANK YOU, but words alone cannot express our appreciation and gratitude. We try to do so by providing you with enjoyable fundraising activities and

events to participate in throughout the year. Please be sure to come out and support Bethlehem through some of our upcoming great events and community activities – I would love to meet you! Visit our website regularly to view our news and event pages for updates, acquire event and prize raffle tickets, make pledges and watch for upgrades to our website and social media pages for Giving solutions. Otherwise feel free to contact me or any one of our administrative staff to inquire about your Giving options. Again we thank you for the goodwill extended to Bethlehem not only at Christmas but all year round.

*It is the support programs that are essential to retaining a stable life and home*

In closing, I would like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation to the Board of Directors, staff, volunteers and community partners for supporting me through the learning curve. I am truly honoured to take on this important role and responsibility. I look forward to working together in the years to come and there is much work to be done to continue Bethlehem’s contribution to housing and support services as a cornerstone of a vibrant, caring and inclusive Niagara community. I wish you all great joy and happiness through the holiday season!

Warmest regards,

Lori Beech



## Volunteer Recognition



Volunteers are the backbone of our community and our organization. Without their dedication and loyalty Bethlehem wouldn't be what it is today.

This past year 102 volunteers assisted in a variety of roles including committee work, fundraising, caregiving, office work, special projects and maintenance. Over the course of the year, 3900 hours of service were provided by our regular volunteers and many additional hours by others who helped out at special events. *Thank you* to all of our wonderful volunteers!

Congratulations to the following volunteers who were recognized at our Annual General Meeting held on June 25, 2013. *(The individuals below were recognized for their service during April 1, 2012 – March 31, 2013)*

### First Year

Jordan Adelstein  
Robin Cotton  
Dave Edward  
Pam Guyatt  
John Lee  
Adam Montgomery  
Kathleen Orth  
Janice Quinn  
Elena Reyes  
Sandra Richards  
Paul Schankula  
Esther Ann Smith  
Francesca Stranges

### 5 Years

Patrick Boucher  
Chantelle Keay  
Adam Vendromin

### 10 Years

Lynne Silver

### 15 Years

John Van Every

### 20 Years

Pat Cicci

### 25 Years

Elsie Bedford-Jones  
Nel Brest Van Kempen

### 25 Years of Combined Staff and Volunteer Service

Vicky Bradshaw  
Sheena Jamieson

### Over 150 Hours

Dawn Gordon  
Angie Harris  
Tom Kelcey  
Robin Lewis  
Anne Mirynech  
Mary Lynn Pidduck  
Gail Richardson  
Amanda Sagon-King  
Drew Semple



*Lynne Silver 10 Year Volunteer  
(L: Julie Dennis, R: Robin Lewis)*



### Unsung Hero Award

A special 'Unsung Hero' award was given to Tom Richardson, for his contributions to Bethlehem and the Niagara Community

## Community Fundraisers

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Special thanks to the following individuals and businesses who have organized fundraising events with proceeds donated to Bethlehem.

### Over \$1,500 Raised!



*John Van Every, Julie Dennis, Robin Lewis*

In May, **John Van Every** once again held a fundraiser that raised over \$1,500 in donations to Bethlehem!

### Swirls for Support



*Joe Corso, Dawn Marie Cavasin, John Pettorossi*

On August 20<sup>th</sup> both the Niagara Falls and Welland **CC Swirls** locations held 'Swirls for Support' fundraiser for Bethlehem which raised over \$270 in proceeds!



### An Elegant Bridal Show

**Paula's Elegant Bride** Fashion Show was held on Sunday, November 3<sup>rd</sup>. The event began with over twenty-five vendors exhibiting everything a person needs to plan their wedding. During the two-hour show, models wore the latest trends in wedding apparel including bridesmaid, Mother-of-the-bride, grooms-man and of course the bride's gorgeous wedding gowns.

Collectively the event raised approximately \$4,000 for Bethlehem! Thanks to Paula Shaw, owner of Paula's Elegant Bride (73 Ontario Street, downtown St. Catharines) for all of her hard work put into organizing this event.

### Zehrs Save-a-Tape

For the past 18 years many of our supporters have participated in the Zehrs Save-a-Tape program, unfortunately, Loblaw has made a decision to cease this charity program.

We wish to thank all of you for participating in this program and the volunteers for totalling all of the receipts. Since 1995 Bethlehem has received a total of over \$11,000 from our participation in this program!

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## Christmas Greetings from the Board President



I am always touched during this magical time of year when businesses and individuals ensure others don't go without over the holidays. It's heartwarming to see people so excited about making a difference in someone else's life by volunteering their time or donating to those in need.

At Bethlehem, we have also seen the magic of Christmas shine bright as several organizations and individuals have come forward with donations for our families. The St. Catharines Meridian Credit Union branches purchase and wrap presents for Santa to give out at the children's Christmas party. The Canadian Federation of University Women donate books for residents and children. The staff at Henry Schein give mittens from their annual mitten tree. Vintage

Hotels dedicates its "Tree of Hope" and provide gifts for Christmas morning. Superior donates gifts for the Christmas baskets. Henley House sponsors our outreach families with Christmas gifts from their wish list, decorations for their homes and all the food needed for a Christmas dinner. Once again St. Ann's Catholic school is holding a Christmas Gift Shop, Friends of Linhaven are hosting their famous Mystery Shoebox Sale, and the Shaw Acting Ensemble is performing 'A Christmas Carol' with proceeds donated to Bethlehem. We have also had many individuals donate cookbooks, journals and chocolates so that all of our families have something to open on Christmas morning.

I wish to thank everyone for their thoughtfulness and generosity. I would especially like to thank our hard working volunteers and staff for continuing to put their heart

and soul into the work that Bethlehem Housing and Support Services does for our community. And finally, thanks to your continued financial support, we are able to provide the services and programs that complement our housing and make Bethlehem unique. These services help people like James whose story appears in this newsletter, build a better life for themselves and their families. We are grateful for your contributions and I ask that you please continue to give generously as you have in the past.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I wish you peace, health and happiness this holiday season and throughout the New Year.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Robin".

Robin Lewis

## Thank You!

To the following organizations who have donated \$500 and over to Bethlehem between March 2013 to October 2013:

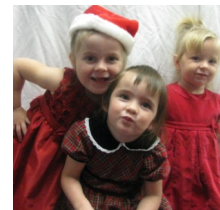
- Abitibi-Consolidated Foundation
- Burtnik Printing Inc.
- Canadian Tire Financial Services
- Canadian Women's Foundation
- Jubilee Fellowship C. R. Church
- PenFinancial Credit Union
- Providence CRC
- The Shaw Festival
- Trinity United Church
- Vineland United Church
- Walter Hildebrand Marine Services Ltd.

We would also like to thank the many individuals who generously support the work of Bethlehem.

*Thank you!*



## Congratulations to our winners!



On the evening of June 25th at our Annual General Meeting and Volunteer Appreciation, the draw took place for our 25th Anniversary Raffle Prizes.



*Ineke Brinkman, Pete Kocharuk*

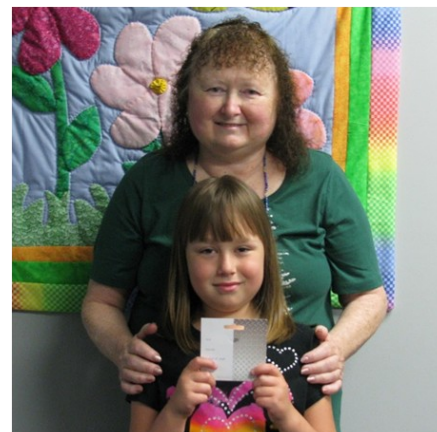
### **GRAND PRIZE WINNER!**

Pete Kocharuk won the 6 – 7 Night Royal Caribbean Cruise for two, donated by Brinkman Travel



### **SECOND PRIZE WINNER!**

Jamie Corfield won the two nights stay at Millcroft Inn and Spa, donated by Vintage Hotels



### **THIRD PRIZE WINNER!**

Sandra Legarde (seen here with her granddaughter) won the \$500 Canadian Tire gift card, donated by Canadian Tire Financial Services

Brinkman Travel was delighted to donate a one-week cruise for two aboard Royal Caribbean Cruise Line to anywhere the cruise line sails. "It was lovely meeting the winner," says Ineke, owner of Brinkman Travel.

"Many [individuals] provide the hours of labour, others provide the apple juice. Together we can make a better world, one step at a time," added Ineke. "Everyone is a winner by belonging to such a great group of neighbours, family and friends that together make Bethlehem a welcoming home. This was evidenced during their Annual General Meeting by how impressive it was to meet so many long time, dedicated volunteers who work countless hours for the betterment of society."

Looking for a trip in the New Year? Ineke extends an invitation to the other 999 ticket holders and their friends and families to come to the Brinkman Travel office on 8 Duke Street in St. Catharines to make arrangements for any upcoming travel needs. The locally owned and operated travel agency is celebrating twenty years of making travel dreams come true. Brinkman Travel can be reached at 905.988.9100 or visit [www.brinkmantravel.com](http://www.brinkmantravel.com)

## **Bethlehem Launches e-Newsletters!**

In October we launched our first electronic newsletter to almost 800 supporters and friends of Bethlehem! With increased costs of print and postage, we decided to decrease our print newsletters to two per year and email electronic versions four times per year.

Our "e-Newsletters" are more cost-effective and will keep people informed in a timely manner on what's happening at Bethlehem – and it gets emailed directly to their inbox.

**Why you should sign up!** It's a faster way to learn about our upcoming events, programs, services, community fundraisers, interesting stories, photos, videos, and much, much more!

If you'd like to receive Bethlehem News e-Newsletters in your inbox, please provide your email address to us by sending an email to [bethlehem@cogeco.net](mailto:bethlehem@cogeco.net) or calling 905.684.1660 ext. 2.

(To view a copy of our first edition, please visit <http://bethsupporthousing.com/category/news>)

## James' Story - building a better life for himself and his son



I didn't get the chance to take my newborn son home from the hospital because just days after he was born he was taken from me and put into another family's care.

It was the worst day of my life.

When my girlfriend told me she was pregnant all I wanted to do was the right thing and take care of her and my child because that's what my parents did for me. We lived at her parents while she was pregnant and a social service agency kept contacting us concerned about us living there and raising our child in that environment. During that time, Joan from Bethlehem Place called us and asked to meet, but we weren't interested. So we moved into a family shelter during the last month of my girlfriend's pregnancy.

My son was born premature with respiratory problems and had to stay in an incubator for three weeks. When it came time to take him home the agency showed up at the hospital with three security guards telling us that they were taking our son. They said we weren't able to care for our child. My girlfriend's family had been in and around this agency and I think that's where the concern came from – but I

didn't do anything wrong, I'm a good person.

I was so ashamed to have my child taken from me, this has never happened to anyone in my family. I knew I had to take care of my girlfriend throughout this ordeal and I became very depressed.

One month after our baby boy was taken Joan called me again to talk about getting us into Bethlehem Place. By this time I didn't trust anyone, but we were at the end of our ropes, so we met with her. She told us all about Bethlehem Place and because we were homeless we could live there for a year while we were working on getting our son back and that they had Support Workers, programs and services that could help us get back on our feet. She wasn't kidding, both my girlfriend and I were assigned our own Support Worker and we attended many of the programs that Bethlehem offered such as Creative Parenting, CODA, Life Skills and the Cooking Circle. I really enjoyed the Cooking Circle because one day I want to become a chef, so they gave me the opportunity to teach a few classes.

We had a tough battle ahead of us and

I was worried that we weren't going to get our son back but with a lot of hard work and support groups and supervised visits, five months later the Judge ordered the agency to give him back to us.

*Your support helps people like James build a better life for themselves and their children*

Now, almost three years later, although my girlfriend and I aren't together anymore, I have joint custody of my son. I still work closely with my Community Support worker from Bethlehem who really helped me with my custody rights and continues to meet with me on a regular basis. I also have a great place to live through Bethlehem's housing program.

If it wasn't for Bethlehem helping me get back on my feet and get my son back I don't know where I would be today. Thank you to everyone who contributes to Bethlehem Housing and Support Services, because through your support you've helped people like me and my son to have a better life.

James



### Please accept my Christmas Gift to Bethlehem Housing and Support

☐ \$35 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$75 ☐ \$100 Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_



You can also donate online through CanadaHelps by visiting [www.bethsupporthousing.com](http://www.bethsupporthousing.com) and clicking on the 'Donate' button

☐ I have enclosed a cheque payable to **Bethlehem Housing and Support Services**

I prefer to use my ☐ Visa or ☐ MasterCard

Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Expiry Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ In memory of \_\_\_\_\_

☐ In honour of \_\_\_\_\_

**OR** I want to be a Monthly Supporter in the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ month

☐ Please debit my credit card (details above)

## Upcoming Events



### Bethlehem Golf Tournament

Friday, May 30, 2014

Whirlpool Golf Course, Niagara Falls

## SHAW FESTIVAL

**A Christmas Carol** presented by Shaw Acting Ensemble  
St. Marks Anglican Church, Niagara-on-the-Lake  
Sunday, December 22, 2013 at 3:00 p.m.

Call 905-468-2172 for tickets or purchase at the door  
Adults \$15 / Children \$8 (*Hurry this event sells out fast!*)



### Pottery bowls created by:

Aimee Roger  
Barb Gailbraith  
Bette Molnar  
Carmelle Basset  
Caroline Chin Yet  
Chris Sora  
Darlene Benner  
Duncan Aird  
Jenny McSpadden  
Jill Crown  
Marsha Cox, Forks Road Pottery  
Nancy Howes  
Roberta Schmidt  
Ron Zimmerman  
Ruth Palleck, Metal Mud  
Sonja Zanuttini

### Empty Bowls - Wednesday, March 26, 2014

**Four Points by Sheraton, 3530 Schmon Pkwy., Thorold 6:00 p.m.**

Our Empty Bowls fundraiser event captures Niagara's finest chefs who prepare and serve their favourite soup in one-of-a-kind bowls created by local potters. Included as the perfect complement are Niagara wines, specialty beverages, and delicious desserts. Guests take the empty bowl home as a continuing reminder of those less fortunate in our community.

**New!** Get the VIP treatment at our VIP reception before the event! (5:00 p.m.—6:00 p.m.) As a VIP you'll choose your pottery bowl ahead of the crowd and enjoy wine and appetizers in the **VIP Lounge**.

### Food and beverages proudly prepared and served by:

Bella Cakes  
Calamus Estate Winery  
Chocolate F/X  
Dani's Bistro  
Diamond Estates - The Winery  
Great Lakes Brewery  
Gwen's Teas  
Hernder Estate Winery  
In Piazza at Four Points by Sheraton  
It's About Time!

Konzelmann Estate Winery  
Liv Restaurant at White Oaks Resort  
Niagara College, Canadian Food & Wine Institute  
Organo Gold  
Paris Crepes Café  
Redline BBQ Catering  
Stacie Royds Personal Chef Services  
The Garrison House  
The Heat is on Catering & Personal Chef Service  
The Soup Shoppe  
Zest Restaurant

**Early Bird tickets \$75 each until January 31, 2014 (After January 31, 2014 tickets \$85 each)**

**VIP tickets \$100 each** and include VIP Lounge and Empty Bowls event (limited quantity)

**Phone 905.684.1660 ext. 1 to purchase your tickets today!**

*Charitable tax receipt for a portion of the ticket price*

**We're looking for prize donations and/or sponsorship opportunities!**  
**If you're interested please call 905.684.1660 ext. 2**

Bethlehem Housing and Support Services

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