



bethlehem
housing and support services

Moving Forward Together

ANNUAL REPORT 2017-2018

Our Mission Statement

Bethlehem Housing and Support Services is a multi-service organization serving the diversified needs of Niagara residents by offering support for individual growth through housing and other focused services.

Our Mission

Bethlehem Housing and Support Services, in partnership with the community, provides affordable housing and services to support the personal growth of individuals and families.

Our Vision

Stable affordable housing and support services contribute to a vibrant, caring and inclusive Niagara where everyone has a home.

We believe:

- Safe, supportive and affordable housing is fundamental to the health, well-being and resilience of all people.
- Responsive and person-centred support promotes our residents independence, self-reliance and increased engagement in the community.
- Stable housing, combined with personalized support, is fundamental to our residents gaining greater confidence and realizing their housing goals and life aspirations.
- Affordable housing and support services provide a critical cornerstone for a caring community.

Our Values



Compassion

We provide the highest quality services with empathy, hope, understanding and caring.



Integrity

We act with integrity and honesty, treating all people with respect and fairness.



Dedication

We are passionate about our mandate and go above and beyond to deliver superior results.



Inclusiveness

We welcome and accept all people, embrace individual differences and create inclusion.



Accountability

We strive for excellence by being responsible, accountable and committed to improvement.

“ I would recommend anyone who needs help with housing to contact Bethlehem in an instant.

- MARILYN

Message from the President of the Board and Executive Director



LORI BEECH
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



JOHN LEE
BOARD PRESIDENT

“If everyone is moving forward together, then success takes care of itself.

- HENRY FORD

The Past Year In Review

This year we are celebrating our 30th anniversary and the final implementation year of a three year strategic plan. In 2015 our potential was clear and we identified goals to move through growth with three main priority areas to focus our efforts. A strong foundation was built, we gained transformation momentum and the work path is clear to realize our goals.

With the community's help, we achieved our goals:

PRIORITY 1: INCREASE OUR IMPACT IN THE COMMUNITY

- We have deepened our support service programs to provide a continuum of client-centred services such as implementing a centralized intake with a no-wrong door approach to client inquiries.

- An average of 300 families are supported each year by finding housing and providing needs-based supports. While doing so we build personal capacity and stabilize housing.
- In partnership with the community, government and private sector, we will build 127 new affordable housing units.
- Property management has been restructured with a foundation system to support growth in housing stock, steward our assets and manage tenancies.
- Our ability to identify and measure outcomes and impact has been enhanced through the development of a comprehensive program model based on a Theory of Change. It has helped us to improve our ability to meet client goals, enhance our organizational performance and assess our impact on the community.

PRIORITY 2: BUILD THE COMMUNITY'S ENGAGEMENT AND INVESTMENT IN AFFORDABLE HOUSING SOLUTIONS

- We have built the foundation to execute a focused community engagement and communications strategy that continuously fosters a culture of philanthropy among our community of supporters and donors.
- Our reach is deeper and wider throughout the Region.
- Awareness of the housing issues facing our community is much greater and the reputation of Bethlehem as a leader and important part of the solution has grown stronger.

- Investment in affordable housing is understood as necessary and the community has responded. The return on that investment is realized through the success of the families we serve and our newfound opportunity to increase the affordable housing stock in the community.

PRIORITY 3: MAINTAIN A STRONG, ADAPTIVE AND RESILIENT ORGANIZATION

- The need in our community has changed and is at crisis level. We have demonstrated our ability to “rise to the occasion” by continuously adapting and learning, along with building skills and expertise to meet those challenges head-on.
- The Bethlehem team continuously strives for excellence through the quality improvement of our programming and housing assets.
- We made the commitment to invest in our people by improving our human resource development processes and work environment.

Thank you to the Board of Directors for their leadership and for providing the organization with a forward-thinking plan that was thoughtful and aspirational, yet realistic and achievable.

Thank you to our community partners, government partners, donors and supporters who have come along for the ride with offers of help to meet the challenge.

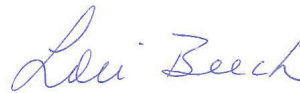
As always the BIGGEST THANKS goes to our dedicated staff team, who executed the plan with passion and expertise.

“Vision animates, inspires, and transforms purpose into action” - Warren Bennis, Organizational & Leadership Scholar

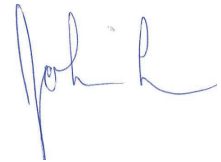
30 years ago a group of concerned citizens had a vision with a purpose...

On behalf of the thousands of families we have served since 1988, thank you to each and every one of you who have contributed so much over the years. We hope you continue to be proud of what you built as much as we are proud and honoured to be the stewards of today, driving forward to achieve the vision with the same purpose.

Sincerely and Respectfully,



Lori Beech
Executive Director



John Lee
Board President

“At Bethlehem I have a team of people that listen to me, believe in me and have my back. They have advocated for me on many occasions whether it be with community resources or attending court with me, being by my side and helping me gain the confidence I need to build a better life for me and my kids.

- COLETTE

Helping Women, Men & Families in the Niagara Region

Our Programs & Services Include

TRANSITIONAL HOUSING (BETHLEHEM PLACE)

A one year housing program that assists and supports residents to work on client-centred goals, leading to a successful transition to housing in the community.

Goal plans and services may include:

- Outreach supports while on the housing waitlist
- Information, referrals and connection to community services
- Life skills and capacity building programs
- One-on-one meetings with Community Support Workers
- Support groups and workshops
- Child development and parenting supports
- Safety planning, support and advocacy
- Access to rent subsidy programs and continued supports post-move out

Many continue with supports on an outreach basis while transitioning to housing in the community, which helps to ensure housing retention, a stable safe environment, and connection to resources and services.

- 35% of the transitional residents are survivors/victims of domestic violence
- On average there are approximately 10 families on our waitlist at any given time
- 36% of the families in transitional housing moved to market rent units
- 44% moved on to live independently in community-based subsidized housing



46 families including 69 children lived at Bethlehem Place in 2017–2018

PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

Long term affordable and/or subsidized housing with on-site support and advocacy services. Supports may include information, referrals and connection to community services, as well as social and recreational activities.

- 91 households lived in our permanent supportive housing buildings
- 47% are persons with physical or mental disabilities
- 36% are low-income working families living in market rent units

COMMUNITY OUTREACH SUPPORT

Support services are also offered, in collaboration with other service providers and agency partners, for individuals and families who do not live in our apartments but are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless and/or have experienced gender based violence.

When someone reaches out to Bethlehem for help, they are connected with a Community Support Worker (CSW) who meets them in the community. The CSW assesses the needs of the individual, works with them to develop a service plan and may make referrals that will assist them to achieve their personal goals.

- 253 households were served through the Community Outreach Support Program
- 144 individuals were homeless or at risk of becoming homeless
- 99 women were victims of domestic violence

HOUSING FIRST

Assists individuals and families who are chronically and episodically homeless to find independent and permanent housing through our Housing First Program, funded by Niagara Regional Services - Homelessness Services. The underlying principle of the program is that people are better able to move forward with their lives if they are first housed. Once the person is housed, Community Support Workers provide client-driven supports to assist with housing stability, physical and mental health needs, as well as life skills.

- 29 family households were provided community-based affordable housing allowances and community outreach services through Housing First

PERSONAL CAPACITY BUILDING

Programs offered provide information on topics such as housing supports, goal planning, safety planning, life skills for personal capacity building, employability, empowerment, self-esteem and leadership, mental health awareness, legal matters, anger management,



76%

OF THOSE WHO MOVED
OUT OF SUPPORTIVE HOUSING
TRANSITIONED TO STABLE
AND SECURE HOUSING

healthy lifestyle, budget and money management, and social and recreational activities.

- 73 group sessions were offered including a variety of life skills, educational workshops, personal empowerment and development programs.
- Over 125 social and recreational activities were offered

EARLYON CHILD AND FAMILY CENTRE

In January 2018, the three types of child and family centres in Niagara, including Bethlehem's Early Learning Centre, all became EarlyON Child and Family Centres. At the EarlyON Centre a variety of parenting and early childhood development programs are offered for families who live at Bethlehem Place as well as families living in the community. Our EarlyON drop-in program provides a healthy and safe educational environment where adults and preschool children interact, play and learn together. Our After School Club, funded by the United Way St. Catharines and District, provides interactive activities and skills development for children and youth. In 2017 we also offered the EarlyON program at St. Christopher School one day a week.

In 2017-2018, the EarlyON Child and Family Centre welcomed:

- 79 children who made 1669 visits
- 61 parents or caregivers who made 924 visits

Bethlehem Place Naturalized Family Park

The renovation to our Naturalized Family Park was completed in June of 2017! We worked with Bienestock Natural Playgrounds to revitalize the Bethlehem Place playground to create an inclusive natural environment for children of all ages and their families to enjoy.

We had groups from Brock University, General Motors St. Catharines and Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program volunteer 175 hours to help prep the site for the new playground.

Thank you to our Sponsors and Community Partners including ECCDC, Niagara Region, Wise Guys Charity Fund, Meridian Credit Union, Niagara Community Foundation, Merritton Lions Club, May Court Club of St. Catharines and Land Care Niagara for making this project a reality.

This natural play area will facilitate participation in our EarlyON Centre programs that will enhance development for children and improve the quality of life for families that live at Bethlehem Place and in the surrounding neighbourhood.



Investing in Our Community

As donors, volunteers and supporters, your giving invests in our work and enables us to continue to provide programs and services to help build a stronger community. Whether you donate monthly or annually, attend our fundraisers, volunteer your time, provide in-kind services or have given a major gift, we are grateful for your contribution. It is through your giving that you express to the men, women and families we serve that someone cares about their wellbeing.

Legacy Partners

As part of the Niagara Community Foundation's Legacy Partners Program, gifts provided by our loyal donors through bequests and other estate gifts are placed in an endowment fund at the Foundation. Legacy gifts are endowed and preserved in perpetuity with only the investment income used. Income earned on the endowment will provide Bethlehem with a sustainable revenue source so we can continuously provide housing and support services for families in crisis now and in the future.

In 2018, \$4,009 was distributed from our endowment fund and directed to our current annual needs to support the personal growth of individuals and families that reach out to Bethlehem for help. An additional \$110,000 was transferred to our Niagara Community Foundation endowment fund.

“Even if you just change one life, you've changed the world forever.

- MIKE SATTERFIELD

Empty Bowls

Our 13th Annual Empty Bowls event took place on Wednesday, March 7, 2018 at Club Roma. This year's event was our most successful yet, raising over \$40,000 for programs and services at Bethlehem! Guests enjoyed sampling gourmet soups, local Niagara wine and beer, speciality teas and delicious desserts. This year we had a Silent Auction, Mystery Soup Can raffle and 50/50 draw.

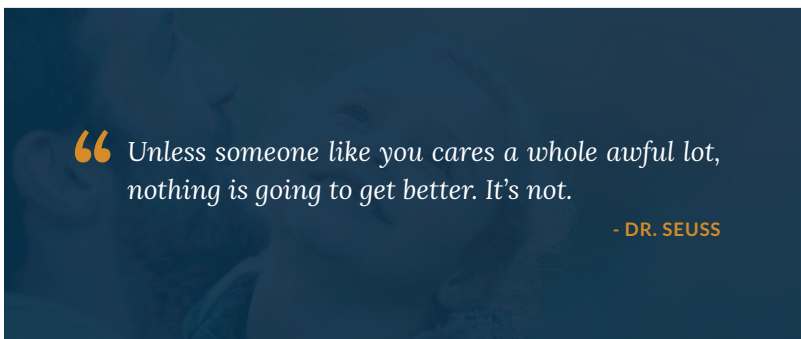
Thank you to our generous sponsors including CMS Intelligence, Enercare, O'Hara Trucking & Excavating, FirstOntario Credit Union, Sideline Telephone Inc., Sullivan Mahoney LLP, A-1 Flooring St. Catharines, CBC Computer Systems, Grant Thornton, ServiceMaster Clean, the Niagara Dailies and YourTV Niagara. The support from our partners continues to make our signature fundraising event so successful, year after year.

Congratulations to our 2018 Empty Bowls soup winners! PigOut Catering took home the People's Choice Award (voted by the guests) for the second year in a row with their Loaded Baked Potato Soup, while Johnny Rocco's Italian Grill received the Platinum Ladle Award (voted by the judges) for their Duck Broth and Shiitake Dashi Ramen.

Community Support

Planning an event is another great way to show your support of our organization. A DIY fundraising event is organized and managed by people other than Bethlehem staff and funds raised benefit the work of Bethlehem. With special thanks to the Barry Team Client Appreciation Party, Canadian Federation of University Women's 43rd Annual House Tour, Clair Fish's 8th Birthday Party and Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada for donating over \$3,600 in proceeds from their fundraising events.

Christmas holds a special place in the hearts of our supporters. A big thank you to the Gift of Reading, Henley House, Henry Schein Canada, Mastermind Toys, Meridian Credit Union - St. Catharines branches, the Murphy Family, Octane Hair Lounge, Penn Terra Group, Spinmaster Toys, St. Amand Auto and Truck Repair, St. George's Church and Vineland Missionary Church who helped make the holidays magical for our families this holiday season. Your commitment is a demonstration of good social responsibility that makes an impact on our community and those around us. You truly made this Christmas one to remember!



Donations Over \$500

APRIL 1ST, 2017 – MARCH 31, 2018



Memorial Gifts

Gifts were received in memory of the following individuals:

- ▶ John Anderson
- ▶ Dorothy Barley
- ▶ Douglas Jacobi
- ▶ Joe Kerr
- ▶ Estate of Marilyn Walker

Memorial Funds

Gifts were directed to the following funds in memory of the individual:

- ▶ Gloria Rooney Fund
- ▶ Henk Zwart Fund

Individual Gifts:

- ▶ Sue Anderson
- ▶ Dorothy Barley
- ▶ Emily Barry
- ▶ Elizabeth Bedford-Jones
- ▶ Richard & Maureen Chudyk
- ▶ Steven & Stephanie Collins
- ▶ T.J. Critelli
- ▶ Josephine Franzak
- ▶ Peter & Linda Hammond
- ▶ Corrine Hansen
- ▶ Edgar and Karen Hielema
- ▶ Janet Janzen
- ▶ Mike & Anne Jones
- ▶ Val Kerr
- ▶ David & Donna Lailey
- ▶ Helen McGlone
- ▶ David & Karen Morgan
- ▶ Douglas & Denise Pickard
- ▶ Robert & Margaret Reid
- ▶ Tom & Gail Richardson
- ▶ Mark & Wendy Rittenhouse
- ▶ Patricia Rooney
- ▶ Elda Ryan
- ▶ Carmen Sauer
- ▶ Annemarie Siebert-Tait
- ▶ Allan Sitar
- ▶ Graham & Mary Louise Turner
- ▶ David & Carolyn Vilim
- ▶ Thomas Whitelaw
- ▶ Elsje Zwart

Organizations Gifts:

- ▶ A-1 Flooring St. Catharines
- ▶ Canadian Tire Financial Services
- ▶ Canadian Women's Foundation
- ▶ CBC Computer Systems Inc.
- ▶ CMS Intelligence Inc.
- ▶ Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada
- ▶ Court Holdings Limited
- ▶ Covenant Christian Reformed Church
- ▶ Enercare Inc.
- ▶ FirstOntario Credit Union
- ▶ Flynn Real Estate
- ▶ Grant Thornton LLP
- ▶ Jubilee Fellowship C. R. Church
- ▶ Lions Club – Port Dalhousie
- ▶ May Court Club of St. Catharines
- ▶ O'Hara Trucking & Excavating
- ▶ ServiceMaster of Niagara
- ▶ Sideline Telephone Services Inc.
- ▶ St. George's Anglican Church
- ▶ St. John's Anglican Church
- ▶ Sullivan Mahoney
- ▶ Synergy Benefits Consulting Inc.
- ▶ The Ontario Paper Thorold Foundation
- ▶ Vineland United Church

We also wish to acknowledge the contribution of our donors who wish to remain anonymous and those who gave to the United Way and designated Bethlehem Housing and Support Services as the recipient of your gifts.

Thank You to Our Funders

In addition to your donations, Federal, Provincial and Regional Government agencies and foundations help to support our housing maintenance, programs and operational costs. We are truly thankful for the support they have given us.

Government Funders

- ▶ Ministry of Community and Social Services
- ▶ Ministry of Children and Youth Services
- ▶ Niagara Region Children's Services
- ▶ Niagara Region Community Services
- ▶ Niagara Regional Housing
- ▶ Service Canada Summer Student Employment Program

Foundation Funders

- ▶ Niagara Community Foundation
- ▶ United Way of Niagara Falls and Greater Fort Erie
- ▶ United Way of St. Catharines and District

“I'm very grateful for the encouragement, help and continued support I received through the programs offered by Bethlehem as I dealt with the issues of domestic violence. As I regain my self-confidence I now look forward to a fresh start and a violence-free future.

- SANDRA

Financial Highlights

Our core revenues for the fiscal 2017-2018 decreased from the prior fiscal year. Overall revenues were down by 12% from the prior year, largely due to smaller but still significant legacy estate and anonymous donations. These excess funds will be applied to the upcoming new building project expected to be completed in the spring of 2019. Without the large donation, revenues would be down by 7% compared to last year. The decrease in revenue is due to the sale of the community homes in 2016-2017 compared to no capital gains realized in 2017-2018. Expenditures were only \$5,000 lower than last year in correlation with revenues, due to lower fundraising expenses and savings for five months due to the sale of the community homes. Expenditures for 2017-2018 increased by 22%, mainly due to the construction of a new playground (\$120,000) and the renovation of the Lobby and offices (\$280,000), both at Bethlehem Place. With the exception of these two large projects the increase is only 4%, year over year, due to staff raises and the additional new employees required for the new capital building project. The consistency in year over year financial results is paramount as the organization continues to expand its much-needed services.

Financial Highlights

The overall net operating surplus for fiscal 2017-2018 was \$361,969. In terms of the fund category, direct service programs recorded a surplus of \$630,354 largely due to the two large donations received.

Long-term debt related to property mortgages was reduced by \$369,380. Restricted reserve fund activity resulted in an overall increase in assets by \$32,627 due to funding received for the playground (\$120,000) and allocation of fundraising monies for the Renovation Project (\$280,000), which was offset by the playground and renovation project expenses. Most of the gain (60%) in reserves is attributable to interest income on the investments. All the restricted reserve funds are set aside and tracked in secure investments. These funds are essential to the organization’s long-term sustainability, as they provide a concrete level of funds for future capital requirements and emergencies.

The organization is pleased to report we have maintained a healthy and stable financial position, moving into fiscal 2018-2019. As a result, Bethlehem Housing and Support Services will continue to provide our valuable and highly regarded services for years to come.

“We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give.

- WINSTON CHURCHILL

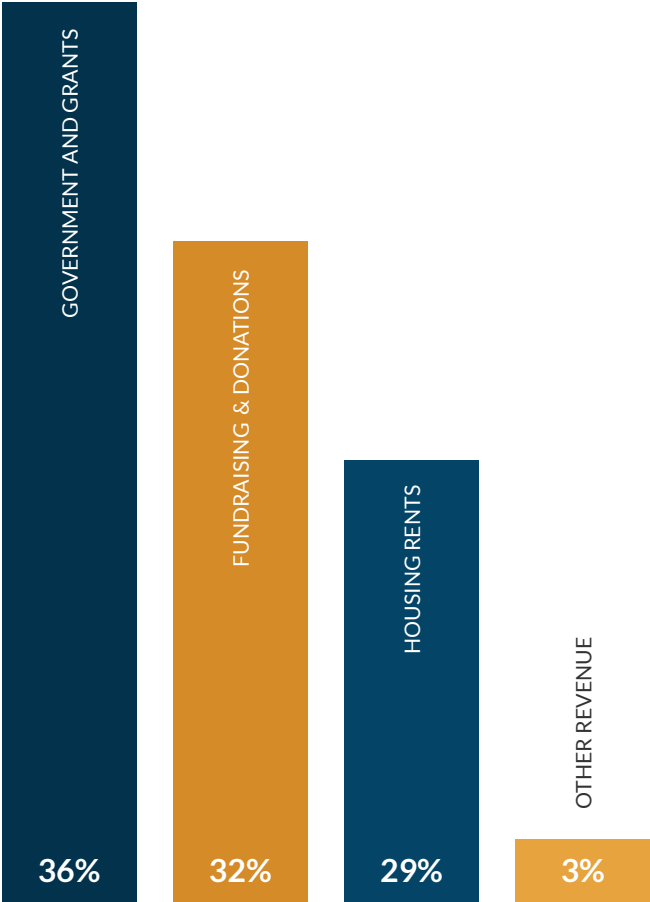
Statement of Operations for Year

ENDING MARCH 31, 2018

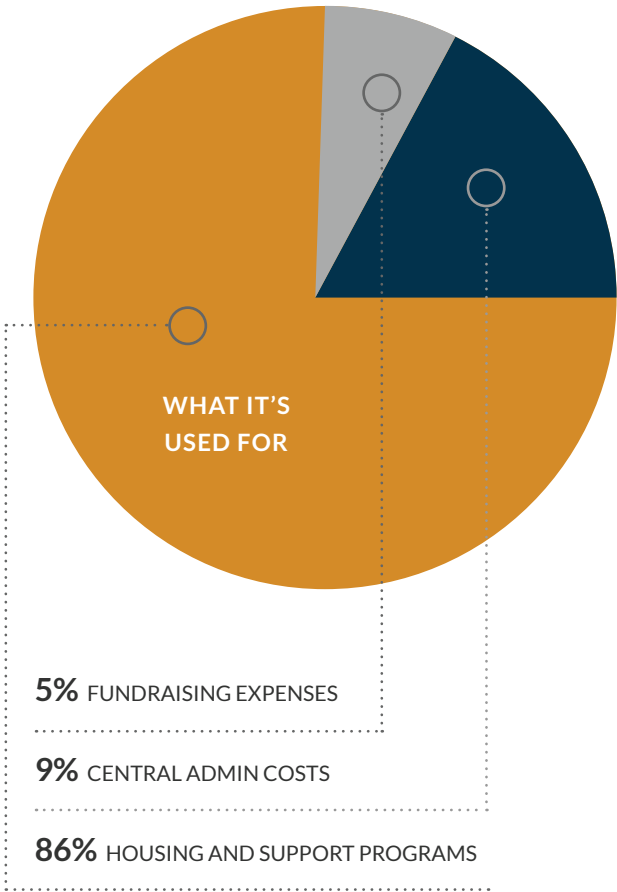
REVENUES	
GOVERNMENT SUBSIDIES AND GRANTS	\$1,145,751
RENTS	\$775,672
FUNDRAISING AND DONATIONS	\$1,031,840
MISCELLANEOUS	\$89,381
OTHER	\$113,256
TOTAL	\$3,155,900
EXPENSES	
WAGES AND BENEFITS	\$1,001,894
HOUSING RELATED	\$1,135,357
AMORTIZATION OF BUILDING COST	\$358,244
PROGRAMS AND BUILDING COST	\$298,436
TOTAL	\$2,793,931
EXCESS OF REVENUES OVER EXPENSES	\$ 361,969

Funding Sources

Bethlehem has a diversified source of revenue and although we receive some financial assistance through Funders, Foundations and Government subsidies, there are additional funds that we must raise on an annual basis to continue to maintain our affordable and transitional housing buildings, support services and targeted programs.



SOURCES OF REVENUE 2017-2018



“After I moved from Bethlehem’s transitional housing, I continued to benefit from their outreach support services. I was then able to provide my daughter with a stable, nurturing, loving and supportive environment, all thanks to the loving care of Bethlehem Housing and Support Services.

- DIANE

We Are Grateful for Our Volunteers

Volunteers are an essential part of our organization. Your kindness, dedication and commitment are an inspiration to us all. We are very fortunate and appreciative of your time, talents and efforts in showing that you want to make a difference in our community and for Bethlehem.

This year an incredible 1073 hours were provided by our 146 dedicated volunteers who contribute their skills consistently in the office, on Board committees, event committees, for fundraising events, meeting support and caregiving.

Our EarlyON Child and Family Centre had six volunteers who contributed over 65 volunteer hours to provide a healthy and safe educational environment. During the renovation to our Naturalized Family Park we had several volunteer groups contributing 175 hours. There were over 50 volunteers who assisted us during our 13th Annual Empty Bowls fundraiser, contributing over 300 volunteer hours towards the event.

Over the last year we have put together a new Housing Hero Committee. Our three talented committee members contributed their marketing expertise to help us launch our initiative to raise awareness about the issue of affordable housing Niagara.

Thank you to the hardworking individuals and groups who generously gave their time and talents to our organization. We couldn't do this without you!

“No act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted.

- AESOP

Board of Directors

2017-2018



Volunteers Serving

2017-2018

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- ▶ John Lee *President*
- ▶ Sara Prince *Vice President*
- ▶ Andrew Costantini *Treasurer*
- ▶ Todd Bright *Secretary*
- ▶ Steve Stone *Past President*
- ▶ Derek Ali
- ▶ Larry Anderson
- ▶ Erica Bush
- ▶ Arti Freeman
- ▶ Bryon Johnston
- ▶ Erica Walters

DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

- ▶ Larry Anderson
- ▶ Bryon Johnston
- ▶ Erica Walters

FINANCE COMMITTEE

- ▶ Noah Bruce
- ▶ Andrew Costantini
- ▶ Chuck Greenham
- ▶ Bill Keogh
- ▶ Brian Mocha

GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

- ▶ Todd Bright
- ▶ John Lee
- ▶ Sara Prince

HOUSING HERO COMMITTEE

- ▶ Victoria Donald
- ▶ Scharla Flynn
- ▶ Paul Giesbercht

HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE

- ▶ John Lee
- ▶ Sara Prince

EMPTY BOWLS EMCEES

- ▶ Brad Baker

EMPTY BOWLS JUDGES

- ▶ Jay Allin
- ▶ Dorian Anderson
- ▶ John Higgins
- ▶ Andrew McLeod
- ▶ Craig Youdale

EMPTY BOWLS LEAD POTTERS

- ▶ Chris Sora
- ▶ Roberta Schmidt
- ▶ Sonja Zanuttini

EARLYON CAREGIVERS

- ▶ Caitlin Campbell
- ▶ Mari-Anne Collee
- ▶ Ushany Kamgendiran
- ▶ Lynette Taylor
- ▶ May Truong
- ▶ Juanta

SOCIAL ACTIVITY VOLUNTEERS

- ▶ Andrea Clarke

BINGO VOLUNTEERS

- ▶ Laurie Farrell
- ▶ Max Steel

STUDENT INTERNS

- ▶ Jeannine Therrien, *Niagara College Event Management Program*
- ▶ Kaylah Zarger, *Brock University Business Communications Program*

1073

TOTAL HOURS DEDICATED
BY OUR VOLUNTEERS



NIAGARA COLLEGE BROADCASTING PROGRAM STUDENTS

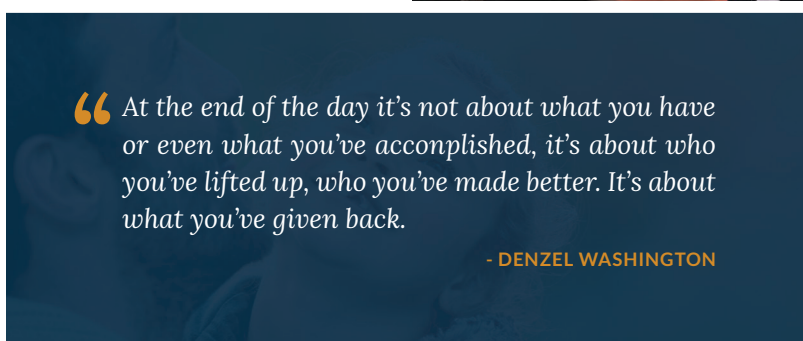
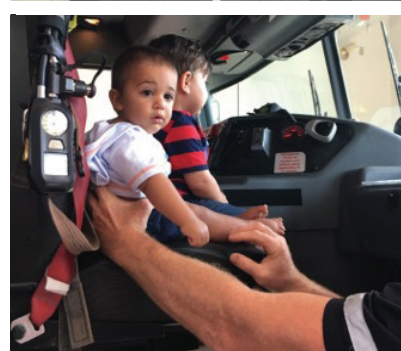
- ▶ Eric Books
- ▶ Brandon Lewis
- ▶ Emme Reichert
- ▶ Will Shuya
- ▶ Tyler Walton

ONTARIO YOUTH APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM STUDENTS

- ▶ Nolan Cochrane
- ▶ Lucas Grego
- ▶ Nick Hill
- ▶ Zach Maljar
- ▶ Sarah Wasylenko
- ▶ William Whitehouse

“Alone we can do so little; together
we can do so much.”

- HELEN KELLER



Our Team

Our dedicated staff is committed to serving the Niagara community and it is with great appreciation and thanks that we recognize their contributions to Bethlehem.

UNDER 5 YEARS

- ▶ Lori Beech *Executive Director*
- ▶ Ron Aubin *Maintenance*
- ▶ Rob Cammaert *Community Support Worker*
- ▶ Sarah Dashwood *Registered Early Childhood Educator*
- ▶ Carolyn Fish *Program Manager*
- ▶ Janet Fraser *Administrative & Accounting Assistant*
- ▶ Fred Geppert *Maintenance*
- ▶ Kellie Glen *Community Support Worker*
- ▶ Tiffany Grant *EarlyON Child and Family Centre Coordinator*
- ▶ Dave & Betty Kelley *Superintendents*
- ▶ Yvonne Kulawic *Community Support Worker*
- ▶ Lindsay McKillop *Community Engagement Coordinator*
- ▶ Jena O'Neil *Community Support Worker*
- ▶ Mayra Orellana *Community Support Worker*
- ▶ Candace Persia *Registered Early Childhood Educator*
- ▶ Chris Richardson *Finance Manager*
- ▶ Laura Sauer *Community Support Worker*
- ▶ Nicole Shaddock *Community Support Worker*
- ▶ Jennifer Sinclair *Philanthropy Manager*

5 – 9 YEARS

- ▶ Courtney Counsell *Housing Administration*
- ▶ Kathy Fraser *Manager of Housing Services*
- ▶ Diane Gendron *Security Resident*

10 YEARS

- ▶ Paul Kwiatkowski *Maintenance Supervisor*

30 YEARS

- ▶ Laura Arbour *Intake & Community Support Worker*

“We are truly grateful for the hundreds of caring and generous members of the Niagara community who, for so many years, have supported Bethlehem and the people we serve with their time, talent or treasure.

- LORI BEECH, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



CELEBRATING 30 YEARS

WITH LAURA ARBOUR



Laura first began working at Bethlehem Housing and Support Services, then known as Bethlehem Projects, on May 1, 1988.

At the time Laura was a student in the Social Service Worker Program at Niagara College and was completing her placement in the Senior Citizen Department at the Niagara Region.

Her placement supervisor recommended they attend a luncheon where the first Executive Director of Bethlehem, Elsje Zwart, was speaking about the newly opened organization.

After listening to Elsje speak, Laura decided Bethlehem was where she wanted to begin her career. She sent in her resume, received an interview, completed her program at Niagara College and started working for Bethlehem immediately after.

Now 30 years later, Laura says she has never imagined working anywhere else.

Laura's role has changed over the course of her 30 years with the organization. She is currently filling the role of Intake and Community Support Worker. Additionally, she facilitates support groups focused on developing healthy relationships, as well as coping with grief loss.

"As the intake worker I am the initial point of contact for people when they call Bethlehem. I help them to determine what exactly they are looking for help with, whether it's housing, support services or community outreach." Laura will then assign a Community Support Worker to work with the client based on their needs.

There are a number of reasons why Laura has committed her career to Bethlehem, but the one that stands out to her most is that the organization is always growing. *"I admire how Bethlehem is able to adapt and grow based on the needs of the community. For example, we are building a new affordable housing development that will help another 127 individuals or families in our community who need supportive housing."*

Laura walks alongside her clients throughout their journey to stable housing and improved quality of life. *"I have had over 1000 clients since 1988 and each one has been significant. It means so much when a past client tells me they remember the life skills I have taught them and that they still use these skills in their day-to-life. After hearing these positive comments, why would I want to work anywhere else?"*

It is important for Laura that the residents living with Bethlehem know they have support and guidance whenever it is needed.

"After 30 years I can definitely say it has been an honour and a privilege to work for an organization that cares so much about improving the quality of life for people in our community."



Bethlehem Housing & Support Services, along with our clients,
are grateful for the funding support of these organizations.



Bethlehem Housing and Support Services

166 James Street, St. Catharines, Ontario L2R 5C5

☎ 905.684.1660 ✉ info@bethlehemhousing.ca 🏠 bethlehemhousing.ca

Charitable Registration Number: 121926547 RR0001