

A close-up photograph of a child's hands, wearing a pink long-sleeved shirt, stacking wooden blocks on a green lawn. The child is placing a block on top of a stack of three other blocks. The background is softly blurred, showing more of the child and the grass.

bethlehem
housing and support services

CELEBRATING

30 Years

**RECOGNIZING THE PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE OF
BETHLEHEM HOUSING AND SUPPORT SERVICES**

2018 Spring Newsletter

BETHLEHEMHOUSING.CA

The Past

30 Years with Bethlehem Housing and Support Services



The Present

Residents of Kenmore Court, Permanent Supportive Housing

*"I have been living at Kenmore Court since it first opened in 2010. Having the Community Support Worker here has been extremely beneficial to me and the other residents in the building. Yvonne has been helping me with finances by learning how to budget my money properly. She also helps me with accountability and keeping on track. **Kenmore Court is my home.**"*

- ANDREA

*"It's been one year since I first moved into Kenmore Court and so far it has been a wonderful experience. The residents are very nice, quiet and respectful. The building is clean, safe and comfortable. I also enjoy the diversity of people in the building. There are different cultures, ages, family backgrounds and personalities. The onsite Community Support Worker has been a great support, as she is always willing to listen. **Kenmore Court has truly changed my life.**"*

- CECILIA

*"Before moving to Kenmore Court I moved three times in one year. I was afraid and felt alone in the world. Now I feel safe and secure. Yvonne, our onsite Community Support Worker, is very special to me. An accident left me with a brain injury and I find it difficult to make life decisions. Yvonne is always willing to help and guide me in the right direction. **I am grateful to have such a wonderful support person in my life.**"*

- RITA



CECILIA, ANDREA, YVONNE, RITA

The Staff of Bethlehem Housing and Support Services

Over the last 30 years, thanks to the hard work and dedication from all of our staff, Bethlehem Housing and Support Services has grown into a leading organization in Niagara that provides affordable housing and support services for men, women and families in need of stable housing.

The staff of Bethlehem carries out the organizations vision every day, that stable affordable housing and support services contribute to a vibrant, caring and inclusive Niagara where everyone has a home.

(Missing from photo Ron Aubin, Fred Geppert and Kellie Glen)



The Future

A Message from Lori Beech, Executive Director

"Vision animates, inspires, and transforms purpose into action." - WARREN BENNIS, ORGANIZATIONAL & LEADERSHIP SCHOLAR

For 30 years Bethlehem Housing and Support Services has stayed focused on its original purpose. Laura Arbour, our dedicated staff member of 30 years, states in her story that *"Bethlehem has always responded and adapted to meet the needs of the community."* As stewards of an organization that belongs to the community, this speaks to our ongoing obligation and responsibility, but that core purpose has always stayed the same and drives our vision for the future as it did in the past.

Our mission and purpose is to work for the community and in partnership with the community to provide affordable housing and services to support the personal growth of individuals and families. As Laura says, we have helped thousands of individuals and families since we began and each has their own story of challenge that brought them to our door asking for help. Most of the time, our help included finding or providing a home and someone to walk alongside them while getting back on track. The socio-economic conditions in our community have changed over the years but the need for supportive housing is still deep and currently at a crisis level. There are many more who need this same help.

Inspired by our past leaders, we have followed in their footsteps to once again transform our purpose into action. We have rallied the right partners to animate a vision that will contribute to meeting the community's needs. In partnership with PennTerra Group and FirstOntario Credit Union, we are so pleased to announce our latest affordable housing development project at 111 Church Street in St. Catharines. The project was also made possible through the partnership support of the City of St. Catharines, Niagara Regional Housing and the Niagara Regional Government.

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 and treasure. Throughout this year, we will be sharing a variety of ways for you to help us celebrate the past 30 years of service to the community and be a part of our vision for the future.

Lori Beech
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Affordable Housing Development

Construction has begun on our new affordable housing building offering 127 rental units in downtown St. Catharines.

This development offers a made-in-Niagara solution to provide affordable rental housing and support services for individuals and families of low to moderate income.

In addition to providing 127 affordable housing rental units there will be on-site support services, a licensed day care facility, a naturalized play area and other amenities.

For construction updates and progress visit our website at www.bethlehemhousing.ca

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 and 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 the community.

- LAURA ARBOUR



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