

# Mapping Our 35 Year History

**1986**

The Social Planning Council of St Catharines & Thorold conducted research on the need for second stage housing.

Together with a concerned group of citizens and local churches, The Bethlehem Project was formed

Provincial-Federal government funding was secured for building second stage housing

The Bethlehem Project officially incorporated (June 1986)

Dedication ceremony took place at the construction site on the corner of Lake and Welland Avenue



A concerned group of citizens and local churches came together to form The Bethlehem Project

**1987**

Construction of the building began

Elsje (Ellen) Zwart our first Executive Director was hired

Regional government funding was approved to hire staff to offer programs and services

Funds were raised to provide basic furnishings for the units and to provide program delivery



**1988**

The first residents moved into Bethlehem Place (February 1, 1988)

Official Grand Opening of Bethlehem Place (May 14, 1988)

A volunteer coordinator was appointed and a team of nine front line staff were hired to provide program delivery



Official Grand Opening of Bethlehem Place (May 14, 1988)

**1989**

Opening of the Parent-Child Resource Centre located on the main floor of Bethlehem Place

**1994**

Julie Dennis our second Executive Director was hired

Elsje (Ellen) Zwart retired



Elsje (Ellen) Zwart retired

**1997**

Opening of Brighter Day Early Learning Centre at Edith Cavell Elementary School

**1998**

1st community support home opened

10th Anniversary Gala Dinner & Cabaret

**2001**

Skills of Success program created and offered in five cities across the region



**2002**

Opening of the Billes House community support home. The project was named the Billes House in honour of the co-founders of Canadian Tire, J.W. and A.J. Billes

**2003**

St Catharines Community Housing Projects Committee was formed as a result of the Forum on Homelessness



**2004**

CAW Local 199 committed to provide volunteers for construction of an affordable housing project

Bethlehem proposal was short-listed for funding from the CMHC Affordable Housing Program

**2005**

Received approval from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs & Housing

A community investment of \$1.2 million was required to complete the project

Marilyn and Norris Walker were announced as Honorary Chairs of the "Building Community" Capital Campaign

Community Transitional Housing Support Program began

**2006**

1st Empty Bowls fundraiser event

Public launch of the "Building Community" Capital Campaign (February 2006)

Construction started on a new 40-unit affordable, permanent supported apartment building in St. Catharines

85% of the campaign goal was realized

Marilyn and Norris Walker named the building Genesis Court to reflect "new beginnings"



1st Empty Bowls fundraiser event

**2007**

The first tenants moved into Genesis Court (March 1, 2007)

Official Grand Opening of Genesis Court (June 28, 2007)

Niagara Region and the Niagara Economic Development Corporation presented the Genesis Court project with a Niagara Community Design Award



Official Grand Opening of Genesis Court

**2008**

20th Anniversary Celebration Brunch (February 2008)

20th Anniversary Open House (September 2008)

20th Anniversary Harvest Dinner (October 2008)

**20**

YEAR ANNIVERSARY

**2009**

Construction began on a new 40-unit affordable, permanent supported apartment building in Niagara Falls

**2010**

1st tenants move into Kenmore Court in Niagara Falls

Official Grand Opening of Kenmore Court (June 21, 2010)

Manchester Drop-in & Play Centre pilot project began

Membership approved changes of the organizations name to "Bethlehem Housing and Support Services"



Kenmore Court Official Opening

**2012**

Launched our new mobile Early Learning Program

Bethlehem began recruitment of private landlords as part of our participation in the NRH Homes First Housing Allowance pilot project

Bethlehem staff actively participated in the development of 10-year Housing and Homelessness Action Plan in collaboration with the community's housing advocates and agencies



Billes House Accenture Volunteers

**2013**

25th Anniversary Luncheon (January 27, 2013)

Julie Dennis retired

**2014**

Lori Beech, our 3rd Executive Director, was hired



**2015**

Empty Bowls 10th Anniversary

Bethlehem formed a consortium with a local developer and financier to build affordable housing in Niagara



**2016**

Lori Beech, Executive Director was appointed as the Chair of the Housing Affordability group of the A Home for All taskforce

**2017**

Revitalized the Bethlehem Place playground to create a Naturalized Family Park

Bethlehem Place lobby & main floor were renovated to create an accessible & welcoming environment

Ground Breaking Ceremony for new affordable housing development at 111 Church Street (November 22, 2018)

**2018**



Construction began at 111 Church Street providing 127 affordable rental units with on-site support services & community amenities

**2019**

A P3 partnership established & finalized between PennTerra Group/FirstOntario Credit Union, the Niagara Region, City of St. Catharines, & Bethlehem Housing for the new North Church Court Building in St. Catharines

**P3 Partnership**



Partnerships & head leases with community service agencies established to provide supportive housing services for clients/tenants of North Church Court

**2020**

Through the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the doors of North Church Court building were opened for Administration & Tenant Services. Then in May 2020 apartment units were completed & 127 families, over 300 people, moved in to their new permanent homes

September 2020 A Child's World Daycare opened their doors at reduced capacity providing childcare services for families of North Church Court

**2023**

IT'S OUR

**35**

YEAR ANNIVERSARY