

bethlehem

housing and support services

1986

- The Social Planning Council of St Catharines and Thorold conducted research on the need for second stage housing.
- A concerned group of citizens and local churches came together to form The Bethlehem Project
- Provincial-Federal government funding was secured to build 46 units of second stage housing
- St Catharines City Council accepted an offer to purchase a portion of the site
- The Bethlehem Project was officially incorporated (*June 1986*)
- A dedication ceremony took place at the construction site on the corner of Lake and Welland

1989

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

1994

- Elsje (Ellen) Zwart retired

- Julie Dennis our second Executive Director was hired

1997

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

2003

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

2004

- CAW Local 199 committed to provide volunteer labour for the construction of an affordable housing project
- The Bethlehem proposal was short-listed for funding from the Affordable Housing Program from the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation

2006

- Public launch of the “Building Community” Capital Campaign (*February 2006*)
- 1st Empty Bowls fundraiser event
- 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”

2009

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

2010

- The first tenants moved into Kenmore Court in Niagara Falls
- Official Grand Opening of Kenmore Court (*June 21, 2010*)
- Manchester Drop-in and Play Centre pilot project began
- Membership approved changes of the organizations name to “Bethlehem Housing and Support Services”

2014

- Lori Beech our third 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

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

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
- Habitat for Humanity recruited 60 volunteers and put in more than 400 hours of in-kind service to renovate the home

2005

- Received approval from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing
- A community investment of \$1.2 million was required to complete the project
- Marilyn and Norris Walker were announced as Honourary Chairs of the “Building Community” Capital Campaign
- The Community Transitional Housing Support Program began

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

2008

- 20th Anniversary Celebration Brunch (*February 2008*)
- 20th Anniversary Open House (*September 2008*)
- 20th Anniversary Harvest Dinner (*October 2008*)

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

2013

- 25th Anniversary Luncheon (*January 27, 2013*)
- Julie Dennis retired

2017

- Revitalized the Bethlehem Place playground to create a Naturalized Family Park
- Bethlehem Place lobby and main floor were renovated to create an accessible and welcoming environment
- Ground Breaking Ceremony for new affordable housing development at 111 Church Street (*November 22, 2018*)

2018

- Construction began at 111 Church Street that will provide 127 affordable rental units with on-site support services and community amenities.