



MATT'S JOURNEY

# TO STABLE HOUSING

What would you do if you suddenly become homeless without any savings or support network?

**Imagine**, marrying the love of your life and having three beautiful children together.

Your first child is born with a debilitating medical condition.

This leads to higher stress levels for you and your spouse. The persistent stress leads to mental health distress for your spouse, resulting in a dependence on medication.

Then, imagine bearing witness as addiction overtakes them.

As your spouse becomes more dependent on substances, their behaviour becomes abusive.

You try everything you can think of to reduce the negative impact on your children and keep your family together including quitting your job to help manage things at home.

Soon, finances are low and things seem completely turned around.

Your heart breaks as your family suffers.

Imagine, losing access to your finances and not having the ability to pay monthly expenses or cover the basic needs for your children.

You stay, for a variety of reasons, but eventually you know it's time for you and the children to leave.

You suddenly become homeless without any savings or support network. Do you reach out for help?

Thankfully, Bethlehem is here to offer a wide range of services and supports for those ready to leave their individually complex, and unique situations.

**This was Matt's experience!** As a male dealing with domestic violence, he had difficulty finding services that support men in Niagara. When Matt learned that Bethlehem offered services for both men and women he reached out for help.

“ I left an abusive marriage with my three children without a vehicle, access to our identification and bank account, and with no income source. I needed to start our lives again from scratch and I had no foundation to build upon. **When my family was spiraling out of control Bethlehem cast a large net that kept us alive.**

The staff at Bethlehem spearheaded the course of action to find suitable housing for my family within Niagara Regional Housing. When housing was found, they mobilized to find movers and coordinate the move into our new home. They helped me to reapply for new birth certificates for my children and start the process of claiming child tax benefits. They guided me through the process of renewing my identification and opening a bank account. The staff advocated on my behalf to secure resources and to connect us with services in the community that will help me to continue to support and care for my children.

Without the services that Bethlehem provides I would not have the means to support my family. **The people of Bethlehem took a huge weight from my shoulders and gave me the stable environment needed for my family to thrive.**

# 2018 Housing Heroes

AND THEIR STORIES

A Housing Hero believes that everyone deserves a home. Read the stories about our 2018 Housing Heroes who created their own Do-It-Yourself fundraising event to be part of the affordable housing solution in Niagara.



## Domenic & Lisa

FASHION IN BLOOM

The Fashion in Bloom Spring Fashion Show is a longstanding event organized by supporters of Bethlehem. When Domenic and Lisa heard that the event was no longer going to continue they passionately stepped forward to carry the torch. They dedicated their time and talent to organize a memorable fashion show and successful fundraiser for Bethlehem.



## Niagara Area Jeep Club

NIAGARA JEEP FEST

The Niagara Jeep Fest is an annual charity fundraising event for Jeep enthusiasts. Organized by members of the Niagara Area Jeep Club the show includes vendors, awards, prizes and games for the entire family. This year 116 jeeps registered for the event and they raised \$5,000 for Bethlehem.



## The Barry Team

CLIENT APPRECIATION EVENT

Emily Barry is a top producing Niagara Realtor and team leader of The Barry Team with Revel Reality. Every year The Barry Team hosts a summer Client Appreciation Party and invites Bethlehem to share about our mission and accept donations. Throughout the years they have raised and contributed thousands of dollars to support the programs and services at Bethlehem.



You too can become a Housing Hero! Contact us to learn more.

905.684.1660 ext. 2    [housinghero.ca](http://housinghero.ca)    [BeAHousingHero](https://www.facebook.com/BeAHousingHero)

VISIT [BETHLEHEMHOUSING.CA](http://BETHLEHEMHOUSING.CA) AND SUBSCRIBE TO OUR MONTHLY E-NEWSLETTER FOR STORIES AND UPDATES

**bethlehem**  
housing and support services

Bethlehem Housing and Support Services

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

905.684.1660    [info@bethlehemhousing.ca](mailto:info@bethlehemhousing.ca)    [bethlehemhousing.ca](http://bethlehemhousing.ca)





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BEST WISHES THIS

# *Holiday Season*

& THROUGHOUT THE NEW YEAR

2018 Christmas Newsletter

[BETHLEHEMHOUSING.CA](http://BETHLEHEMHOUSING.CA)



# Celebrating 30 Years

30 YEAR CELEBRATION EVENT MAY 30, 2018

2018 has been a year of celebrating Bethlehem's past, present and future.





# 2018 Message & Reflections

FROM BETHLEHEM'S EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

*"It's not how much we give but how much love we put into giving."* - MOTHER TERESA

In 1986 a concerned group of citizens and local St. Catharines churches were troubled about the extent of homelessness and the lack of affordable housing in the community. They came together with a collective obligation and the will to respond and be part of the solution. They had a vision that seemed a wise but fundamental solution – build affordable housing. And find a way they did! Bethlehem Place on Welland Ave. was born and to this day, 30 years later, remains a successful supportive transitional housing program that serves about 45 families per year.

Throughout the years Bethlehem has continued to grow in response to the need for affordable housing in our community. In 2006 Genesis Court was built in downtown St. Catharines and in 2010 Kenmore Court was built in Niagara Falls. These buildings offer 80 units of long term permanent affordable and/or subsidized rental housing with on-site, community-based supports and advocacy services.

We continue to expand our community outreach programs to be able to support individuals and families that reach out to Bethlehem for help, in addition to supporting those that live in our buildings. This year we assisted 241 families through our outreach program including Matt and his family in this newsletter's feature story.

Unfortunately, for a multitude of reasons housing issues continue to plague our community. Bethlehem carries out their obligation and responsibility just as we did 30 years ago. Today there is a group of dedicated and committed people and cross-sector partners who have stepped up to respond to the dire need for affordable housing and made a capital investment in a new building. Construction is underway at 111 Church Street in St. Catharines. In 2019 we will welcome another 127 families to their new home. This is where your continued financial support will be needed. These families will need our ongoing help to strengthen their lives through supportive housing services.

We continue to grow because the need is great. We continue to succeed, providing good service because we have people like you who generously contribute to help us in helping others. People like you who don't sit on the sidelines watching but who truly participate in building a good community.

One of the real joys of the holiday season is the opportunity to say thank you! Wishing you and your family a joyous and Merry Christmas, a New Year of happiness and success, and a hopeful continuation of our good work together through many more wonderful years ahead!

**Lori Beech**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

## Watch Us Grow

Construction has begun on our new affordable housing building at 111 Church Street in St. Catharines.

This project has become a reality as a result of a unique partnership between for-profit developer Penn Terra Group Ltd., co-operative financier FirstOntario Credit Union and non-profit housing provider Bethlehem Housing and Support Services, all committed to working together towards providing a solution to the need for affordable housing in the Niagara Region.

Sign-up for our e-newsletter at [www.bethlehemhousing.ca](http://www.bethlehemhousing.ca)





# What You Helped Us Achieve in 2018

THOSE SUPPORTED BY BETHLEHEM IN 2018

40

FAMILIES INCLUDING 58 CHILDREN  
LIVED AT BETHLEHEM PLACE

86

HOUSEHOLDS LIVED IN OUR  
PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

241

PEOPLE WERE SERVED THROUGH OUR  
COMMUNITY OUTREACH PROGRAM

143

INDIVIDUALS WERE HOMELESS OR AT  
RISKING OF BECOMING HOMELESS

98

WOMEN WHO WERE VICTIMS OF  
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

1,449

CHILD VISITS TO OUR  
EARLY LEARNING CENTRE

28

CHILDREN AND BABIES WILL CALL BETHLEHEM  
PLACE HOME THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

“My children feel safe and comfortable at Bethlehem's EarlyON Centre. I noticed that their imagination really opened up while engaged in naturalized play.”

– BETHLEHEM PLACE RESIDENT



Child and Family Centre

It is an exciting time for Ontario's child care and early years system! The new integration of child and family programs now offers the same services at any EarlyON centre in Ontario.

Bethlehem's EarlyON Centre Child and Family Centre continues to provide opportunities for Niagara parents and their children to learn and grow through interactive, educational and fun-filled activities.

To learn more, visit our website at [www.bethlehemhousing.ca](http://www.bethlehemhousing.ca)