

BEST WISHES THIS

Holiday Season

& THROUGHOUT THE NEW YEAR



2019 Christmas Newsletter

BETHLEHEMHOUSING.CA

FROM TRAUMATIC CHILDHOOD TO RESILIENT ADULthood

A lobby elevator door slides open. An excited little boy shouts to another, 'Hey, you live here too! How long are you staying for?!' Stepping out, the other little boy, recognizing his friend from their time shared in a local shelter, eagerly answers, 'what floor are you staying on?!'

Their mothers smile and chat briefly before leading the boys in different directions, one into the elevator and up four floors to their new home for the next 12 months, and one down the hallway to switch over a load in the shared laundry room.

From March 2018 to March 2019, 45 families including 62 children lived at Bethlehem Place our one-year Transitional Housing residence. Here, Bethlehem's Community Support Workers and Early Childhood Educators create an environment of consistency where personal resiliency can be built upon and independent living can flourish.

Staff at Bethlehem are equipped with trauma intervention techniques for parents and their children. Our approach recognizes that parents require support to make real changes in their own lives. **Strengthening a parents' resiliency can minimize the psychological impacts of trauma on them and their children.**

We all don't start with the same capacity. If you have survived trauma, at some point you were given the tools to survive. What if you were never given the tools? Those are some of the people we support.

- ROB CAMMAERT, HOUSING FIRST OUTREACH WORKER

Children and adults who have experienced homelessness are at a heightened risk for neglect, abuse, and family dysfunction. The impact of early childhood toxic stress can be unforgiving, leading to addictions, illnesses, depression, and mental health issues. Some adults who have experienced early childhood trauma struggle with poverty and homelessness while others thrive. Siblings experiencing the same adversities can be equipped with differing personalities and resiliency, and end up leading very different lives.

There is good news for those who have waded through childhood trauma and stress unsuccessfully; resilience can be built over time. To help promote intergenerational resiliency, Bethlehem offers a variety of support programs and services. Pathways to healing and recovery are offered through a variety of life skills workshops, individual sessions and support groups. Last year we offered 88 group sessions.

Promoting wellness in parents has a direct impact on the wellbeing of children. When children see their parents reaching out for help, they learn from positive role modelling. Children are more likely to reach out for support throughout their lives, which provides us an opportunity to promote a healthier next generation.

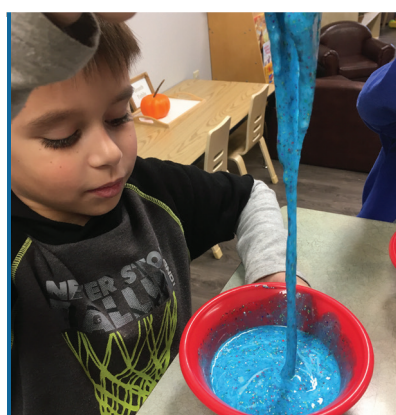
- CAROLYN FISH, PROGRAM MANAGER



EarlyON Child and Family Centre

CHILDREN PARTICIPATE IN PLAY AND INQUIRY-BASED PROGRAMS

Our EarlyON Centre provides opportunities for Niagara parents/caregivers and their children to learn and grow through interactive, educational and fun-filled activities.



2019 Message & Reflections

FROM BETHLEHEM'S EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

I dare you! To not fall in Love with all these beautiful children and not want to support them... how can you not? These are the faces of the many precious children that call Bethlehem Place “home” this year! They deserve to be happy, healthy, normal children with bright lives ahead of them. They came to us to get that chance.

The pictures and information inside our newsletter will tell you the story of our families, their children and how they typically come to Bethlehem from a dark place. The story is also about our staff and how we continuously build our knowledge and skills to understand our clients and their needs so that we can provide the right supports and services as we walk alongside them on the journey to a better life.

Because of you and your help, we were able to support 45 families with 62 children work through their journey this past year while living at Bethlehem Place. With your help we supported 300 families throughout the Niagara Region with our outreach services and in our permanent supportive housing buildings.

We accepted the dare to care about and love these families. We dared ourselves to tackle the big problems of housing and homelessness with solutions that are not easy to make happen.

Because of you, we are confident that in 2020, we can support an additional 320 people who will live in our new supportive affordable housing building on Church Street. That means over the next year we will not only double in size but double the demand for our services.

Because of you, we believe we can and will continue to ensure more families will have an affordable place to call home, reduce their risk, stay housed and live a quality life with dignity.

This holiday season, **dare yourself** to also....do a little bit more! On behalf of our Bethlehem family and the families we serve, we wish you and yours warmth, comfort and joy this Christmas!

Lori Beech
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

North Church Court

In January 2020, we are excited to welcome 127 families, A Child's World Daycare Centre, along with our administrative and housing support staff that will move into our new North Church Court building.

The tenants will be housed and supported through a new partnership model that includes participating community service agencies and have access to a dedicated Housing Services office that was made possible with a Grow Grant from Ontario Trillium Foundation. A BIG heartfelt thank you to all of our partners! We look forward to working with you long into the future. Stay tuned and watch us grow!



Strong and Stable Families

PARENTS / CAREGIVERS HAVE POSITIVE PARENTING SKILLS AND SUPPORT HEALTHY CHILD DEVELOPMENT

We offer a variety of programs in our EarlyON Child and Family Centre that focus on enriching parenting skills and knowledge, enhance children's wellbeing, and increase pro-social behaviour in school aged children. In 2019, our EarlyON Child and Family Centre welcomed:



143

143 CHILDREN WHO MADE
A TOTAL OF 1,479 VISITS



104

104 PARENTS WHO MADE
A TOTAL OF 1,068 VISITS

72%

PARENTS/CAREGIVERS WHO PARTICIPATED IN
OUR PROGRAMS REPORTED A POSITIVE CHANGE
IN THEIR QUALITY OF LIFE AS HIGH AS 72%

88%

88% OF PARENTS/CAREGIVERS EXPRESSED
SATISFACTION IN HOW THEY CARE FOR, VISIT,
AND PLAY WITH THEIR CHILDREN.

Triple P - Positive Parenting Program

Triple P is an eight week program that increases the knowledge, skills and confidence of parents and reduces the prevalence of mental health, emotional and behavioural problems in children and adolescents.

Parents/caregivers that attended this program reported an overall average of 23% increase in their knowledge of how stress impacts parenting, how to problem solve as a parent, how conflicts between adults impact child behaviour, how to cope with children's misbehaviours and improve routine and structure to help child behaviour.

School Age Kids Club

Our School Age Kids Club, funded through United Way Niagara, provides interactive activities and skills development for children and youth after school and during holidays. This helps children increase their connectedness and community involvement, support their emotional and physical well-being, and engage in learning opportunities.

Last year 29 school aged children participated in the program. 80% demonstrated that they care more about others, made healthier lifestyle choices, increased their emotional awareness, and gained knowledge and skills.

“ I like to play imaginative games that make me feel safe and welcome. I've made new friends and have a place to play and have fun. I love making crafts!



Through our partnership with Strive Niagara we offer weekly drop-in programs to support parent/caregivers and help them to develop positive parenting skills.

Niagara Brighter Futures builds upon the strengths that each individual brings, supporting families to overcome barriers for success and eliminates isolation.

Young Dads' Drop-In offers a supportive environment for young dads to socialize and learn from each other through facilitated group chats, such as; child development, healthy relationships, etc.



HOUSING HERO

The affordable housing crisis in
Niagara is real, and it affects us all.

Be a part of the solution.

BE A HOUSING HERO.

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