

# **BUILDING A** *together* **FOUNDATION**



PROVIDING STABLE HOUSING BUILDS A FOUNDATION  
FOR INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES TO GROW.

2019 Spring Newsletter

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



## HOUSING FIRST OUTREACH WORKER

# ROB CAMMAERT



Our Community Outreach Worker Rob has an impressive 22 year history of navigating housing and homeless supports in Niagara.

As a professional Outreach and Support Worker, Rob connects with our most vulnerable citizens, people who are chronically homeless and living on the street. With his distinctively gentle style Rob has been recognized for his abilities to build trust and rapport with clients.

In the early 1990's Rob was among the few at the frontlines of a new street outreach program in Niagara Falls. He recalls that for first-timers who ended up on the street it was too difficult to navigate services alone. If a person was evicted and had nowhere to turn, they simply fell to street level and lived under bridges and in abandoned buildings.

In Rob's early years working in outreach the only options for providing clients with shelter were the YWCA and the Salvation Army shelters. During the winter months there was only one overnight grassroots shelter available in Niagara Falls. In his recollection, there was no easy access to services for people living on the streets and as an outreach worker there were limited resources available to help people meet their basic needs.

In the late 1990's Rob recalls an emergence of a region-wide approach to homelessness; a Niagara Homeless Initiative which brought increased support for outreach. He witnessed new shelters, affordable housing builds and many government reforms to social services. Over the years, he also observed progress in collaboration between agencies which greatly assisted him in increasing the number of people he was successfully able to assist in finding a stable home.

***"The biggest difference between then and now is that many people who would have ended up on the street then, now have a better chance of finding a spot in a shelter. Many others facing eviction or homelessness can access supports that will keep them and their families housed."***

Now, Rob works for Bethlehem Housing and Support Services supporting clients in our 'Housing First' program. With this program, Rob assists chronically and episodically homeless individuals and families to find independent and permanent housing.

He is especially known for his unique approach and success in creating good relationships with landlords and speaks highly of their understanding of his work. He credits them with the important role they play in providing permanent housing for some of his most challenging clients.

Rob believes that with stable housing people are better equipped and empowered to move forward with their lives. By providing access to rent supplements and support services the Housing First Program allows Rob to increase his client's personal resiliency and well-being, with the ability to meet their basic needs.

He brings his experienced wrap-around service approach to each client, extending their capacity to find the means to assist themselves in staying successfully housed. Included in his 'Housing First' toolkit are valuable resources and ongoing supports for physical and mental health. He skillfully provides clients with mindful encouragement and a continued focus on gaining important life-skills.

***"Rob's commitment to making our community a better place for all is noteworthy - he is a true housing hero."***

- CAROLYN FISH, PROGRAM MANAGER



# 14th Annual Empty Bowls

This year's event was our most successful yet, raising \$50,000 for programs and support services. Thanks to all the support from our sponsors, judges, vendors, potters, donors, attendees and volunteers for continuously making our signature fundraising event a success, year after year. Congratulations to Karma Kameleon for winning the People's Choice and Platinum Ladle Awards!





# Support Programs

Because of the generous support from our donors we are able to offer a variety of support services and programs to improve the quality of life for our residents and outreach clients. Last year we offered 73 group sessions including life skills, educational workshops, and personal empowerment programs. Listed below are some of the group sessions recently offered with testimonials from participants.

## Women in Transition Group

Supports and empowers women to live free of violence and abuse by gaining coping strategies and learning skills to assertively set healthy boundaries for themselves and their family.

“This group helped me to understand the effect of domestic violence on children. I learned strategies to set healthy boundaries and that I deserve to be treated with respect and dignity.”

## Healthy Relationships Group

Increases an understanding of how to create healthy relationships by learning how to manage conflict, communicate effectively, build trust and set healthy boundaries.

“This group has opened my eyes to fundamentals that I unfortunately was not taught. It gave me a healthy foundation to try and improve upon.”

## Men in Transition Group

Increases awareness of how societal influences have impacted the way men have been raised and supports men to live violence free lives by gaining positive strategies to manage conflict and set healthy boundaries.

“I’m looking forward to the start of the new men’s group. I joined the group hoping to learn something new about myself.”

## Grief & Loss Group

Increases an understanding of grief and loss, how to acknowledge the grieving process, how to deal with grief in a healthy way and find new meaning.

“My favorite part of the workshop was the knowledge that the feelings I have are normal with grief and that when channeled properly can help with the healing process.”

## Rent Smart Program

Increases housing stability by helping tenants understand their rights and responsibilities and learn how to communicate effectively with landlords to maintain healthy housing.

“I learned that there is more responsibility than just paying rent. I will be more aware of my responsibilities of being a valued tenant.”

## Triple P Parenting Program

Empowers parents/caregivers to create a positive family environment by gaining strategies to strengthen their parenting skills and nurture relationships with their children.

“I enjoy getting ideas from other moms and facilitators on different strategies to deal with my children’s behaviour.”

## Self-Esteem Group

Increases an understanding of how self-esteem is shaped by various factors and how to develop a healthy self-esteem and self-confidence.

“If it wasn’t for this group I wouldn’t love the little things about myself as much as I do now. I really love being able to feel confident.”

## Coping Strategies Group

Increases awareness of the impact that stress can have at different stages of life, how to recognize unhealthy coping behaviours and how to gain healthy coping strategies to manage stress.

“I found it helpful to learn about the different types of stress and how to cope with stress.”



# Positioned for Growth

“Board members like Steve are a gem that you don’t want to lose. He is respected as a leader by his peers and his expertise in building development and facility operations is evident in Bethlehem’s properties that were built during his tenure. On behalf of the Bethlehem Housing Board of Directors, we thank Steve for his loyal support for the past 11 years.” – Lori Beech, Executive Director & John Lee, President of the Board

## Message from Steve Stone, Past Board President and Retiring Director



Having been a board member for the past 11 years it has been my pleasure to watch Bethlehem grow as an organization becoming a resource relied upon in the supportive housing community for their expertise and advocacy for those we serve. Providing stable housing for those in need as a foundational support for future growth has been both the mission and passion of the organization.

When I began with Bethlehem, we were just finishing our build at Genesis Court and planning for Kenmore Court. Now that we prepare for the opening of our Church Street home it reinforces to me how far Bethlehem has come as far as organizational capacity but at the same time, how much the service we provide is needed in our communities.

I would personally like to recognize the commendable efforts of our Executive Director, Lori Beech and her dedicated team for their steadfast work in building meaningful relationships with our community members. They have provided the foundation for enhanced organizational growth through extensive planning, consultation with key stakeholders and continued engagement with our incredible donors. Through their expertise and advocacy for local families, Bethlehem not only provides stable housing and personalized support, they have also instilled a greater confidence in so many to realize their housing goals and life aspirations.

I would also like to thank all those I have served with on the Board of Directors and our loyal volunteers, as well as welcome those who will serve going forward. The success of Bethlehem Housing and Support Services is our community’s success. With the ongoing support of donors, partners, Board members and volunteers, the trajectory of achievements is limitless.

Thank you,  
**Steve Stone**



## Introducing “North Church Court” at 111 Church Street in St. Catharines

The name comes from the three streets surrounding the corner where it will forever house 127 families, a licensed daycare and Bethlehem’s administrative offices.

In the community space we will welcome our service partners providing them with opportunities to support their clients living in our building. We will also be using the space to provide a variety of recreational, educational, health and wellness programs.

Our developer partners PennTerra Group, First Ontario, WSP Global and Solid Construction have been working very hard to ensure our occupancy by the end of this year. Thank you to all those who this year and into the future, support the ongoing and growing good work of Bethlehem Housing and Support Services.

For construction updates and progress pictures and videos visit our website at [www.bethlehemhousing.ca](http://www.bethlehemhousing.ca)



# HOUSING HEROES

Our Housing Heroes are creating a vibrant, caring and inclusive Niagara by using their time, talent or treasure to raise funds and awareness about Affordable Housing. Businesses, Individuals, Families, Sponsors and Groups are making an impact by contributing in unique ways. Support our upcoming Housing Hero events and fundraisers.



## The Art of Giving

Our Housing Hero and local Artist Lynne Mawson will generously donate 10% from each art sale to Bethlehem. Earlier this year Lynne sold eight pieces in a co-marketed art event at Mahtay Café. That sparked her decision to continue donating with every single piece she sells!

See Lynne's artwork on Facebook at **'Baubles and Babes'** and send her a message to arrange a purchase with delivery.



## Coursages & Boutonniers for Bethlehem

Graduates and Prom Princes and Princesses ought to complete their formal ensembles with an amazing gift from local florist Brad Barker of BBBlooms. Purchase the perfect flowers today! Partial proceeds will benefit Bethlehem.

**INFORM BRAD AND HIS STAFF WE SENT YOU!**

62 Welland Ave, St. Catharines  
(905) 682-5525



## Every Day Essentials Raffle

**WIN GROCERIES AND GAS FOR  
3 MONTHS VALUED AT \$1,600**

Tickets are \$10  
Draw Date: August 30, 2019  
All proceeds in support of Bethlehem

**CALL 905-684-0405 - EXT. 4**

Prizes generously donated by FirstOntario Credit Union,  
Zehrs Pen Centre and Gales Gas.



## Housing Hero Days at Safari Niagara

Bring your Family to the Zoo! July 8th, 9th and 10th marks Safari Niagara's second year of supporting Bethlehem.

Tickets are only \$20 each (savings of \$15)  
and \$3 will be donated back to Bethlehem.

**TICKETS ARE AVAILABLE ONLINE ONLY!**

Look for **Housing Hero Days** on the events calendar at [www.safarininiagara.com/events/](http://www.safarininiagara.com/events/)

**DO YOU HAVE A FUNDRAISING IDEA? SHARE YOUR VISION WITH OUR TEAM TODAY. CONTACT US AT 905-684-1660 EXT. 4**