



massey
centre

new lives start here

THE NEW LIVES NEWSLETTER

Creating new opportunities | December 2017



Message from the CEO

The launch of our four-year New Lives Start Here Housing and Education program in 2014 has led to some significant outcomes for the young women and children we serve. Over the past two years, the four young moms who graduated from high school enrolled in postsecondary institutions. This summer we hired two of them to work in our Summer Day Camp program. To learn more about one of our New Lives Start Here clients, please read Daisy's story.

With the generous support from Compugen Finance Inc., a long-time donor and friend of Massey Centre, we offered our first Summer Day Camp program. The evaluation results suggest that this program was a huge success. See the Summer in the City article.

This summer we received great news from our major funder, Ministry of Children and Youth Services (MCYS). We applied for a number of minor capital projects and were awarded a grant from the MCYS Partner Facility Renewal Minor Capital program to address repair needs during the 2017-2018 fiscal year. The projects include upgrading the electrical panels, repairing the townhouse roofs, replacing the floors in the 27 townhouses and apartments, and installing an electronic sign on our front lawn.

As we improve our physical visibility with a new sign, we continue to build public awareness of the Massey Centre brand through a new

partnership with the Canadian Institute for Child & Adolescent Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy (CICAPP). One of our partnership goals with the CICAPP is to increase our clients' access to mental health services.

As we improve our service offerings through new partnerships, we continue to measure the effectiveness of our programs. The *Inventory for Independent Living for Young Mothers and Babies* (Wittenberg and Prencipe, 2012) is being fully implemented to enable us to measure the effectiveness of the life skills program, an important component of our work with the young moms, as we prepare them to transition back into the broader community.

Finally, our tag line states that "New Lives Start Here". On Friday, October 13, a baby was born at Massey Centre. The young mother had a very short labour as the baby was determined to be born on his own time table. The midwife was on hand to ensure the baby's safe delivery and mother's well-being. Mom and boy baby are doing well.

The contributions from you, our donors, funders, partners, board, staff, volunteers and students are making a significant impact on our client outcomes. Please know that your support is helping to Start New Lives at Massey Centre!

Summer in the City

This summer, 11 children, aged 6–10 benefitted from our first Summer Camp because of the generosity of Compugen Finance Inc. The children lived in our Prenatal or Postnatal programs and some were Syrian refugees enjoying their first Canadian summer. Over the 8-week period, the children were guided by co-leaders (both former clients and current postsecondary students in Child & Youth Care programs).

It was a rewarding experience for the children. For the majority of them, it was their first experience attending camp. The children learned to play as a team which helped to build their confidence, enhanced their interaction with the other children and camp leaders, made friends, and created lifetime memories.

They had fun, enjoyed lunch and two snacks daily, and participated in activities including:

- nature discoveries in the community or parks
- field trips to African Lion Safari, Ripley's Aquarium, Brickworks, movies arts and crafts project with plenty of take-home souvenirs
- sports hour where soccer was the dominant sport and culminated in a soccer tournament
- "Just Dance" Xbox—exercising and having fun dancing



"Best summer ever!"

8 year old Camper



"Every day was fun but my favorite day was the African Lion Safari trip!"

10 year old Camper

"We have been in Canada for less than a year and we didn't have summer plans/activities for the kids. We were so happy that they had the opportunity to have fun, the kids were excited daily and couldn't wait to tell me about their day!"

Parent



"This opportunity has given me a chance to work with a demographic I haven't had experience with. Being able to work with these children gave me an insight on what I truly want to do in the future. This experience has taught me my strengths and my weaknesses that I was able to overcome. I look forward to applying what I've learnt here to my future jobs."

Summer Camp Co-Leader

Future Event Planner

Brought up in a family that didn't value education much, Daisy* is setting a very different example for her daughter, Rose*. She is among the first Massey Centre clients accepted in its New Lives Start Here Housing and Education program for young sole-support mothers who have a strong desire to complete postsecondary education and become self-sufficient.

Daisy's parents, who offered little encouragement in her early schooling, were abusive to each other and to their children. When Daisy, unaware of her pregnancy for the first five months, gave birth prematurely at age 17, the Children's Aid Society stepped in and refused to let her raise her child in their home. So she moved in with her boyfriend's family—underage, unemployed, and with her meager financial resources under his control. She had to beg her boyfriend for her money and very rarely did he give her any. Before long, he kicked her out.

Daisy said that was one of the best things that ever happened to her because she has not looked back since, determined to succeed.

In October 2013, she and 8-month-old Rose entered Massey Centre's Postnatal Transitional Housing program. Daisy worked hard, earning her high school diploma at the Centre's secondary school in 2015, and completing a one-year academic upgrading program at George Brown College in 2016.

In September 2016, Daisy began the Special Event Management Program at George Brown College. She is behind schedule as she missed several classes due to a lengthy illness, but she is well now and committed to completing the program in 2019.

She has also been learning the life-lessons of independence and parenthood and is grateful for how Rose progressed through the onsite the Early Learning Centre. Daisy actively actively participates in the onsite mental health, life skills and summer programs, workshops and events. Daisy also accesses support from volunteer tutor and parent relief as needed.



She continues to work on family reconciliation as her mom has apologized to her for the abuse she endured over the years.

Daisy would like Rose's father to be involved in her life, but that is proving to be challenging as he occasionally takes her for a day or two on weekends but does not provide any financial support.

Daisy is determined to successfully complete the Special Event Management program and get a job in the field. She is also instilling the value of education in her young daughter by being a role model.

**Names changed and stock images used to protect their privacy.*



Thanks Donors!

On November 1, 2017 over 40 donors, guests, staff and young moms attended our first Donor Appreciation Event. It was a thankful and inspiring occasion as one of the young moms, bravely shared her journey to be re-united with her daughter, and her progress in learning parenting and life skills. She is currently enrolled in Centennial College's bridging program and plans to become a Social Worker and later a motivational speaker.

Dr. Jean Wittenberg, a staff psychiatrist specializing in infant psychiatry at the Hospital for Sick Children and Associate Professor at the University of Toronto, created the preventive intervention Baby Love: Supporting Infant Security to prevent attachment disorders in babies. He addressed the attendees about the mental health of babies and how Massey Centre is working with the young families teaching them about the importance of the babies developing secure attachment with their moms.

Thanks donors for caring and for continuing to invest in young lives.



Young Moms Developing Life Skills



Almost 300 young moms and babies have benefitted from the implementation of *The Inventory for Independent Living for Young Mothers & Babies* (Jean Wittenberg and Angela Prencipe, 2012)—an empirically supported tool that measures the effectiveness of our life skills training

The young moms successfully completed pre- and post-assessments to determine their knowledge levels, and readiness for independent living at Massey Centre or in the community. Data from the Inventory assessments helps us to plan targeted life skills programs for the young moms.

The Inventory consisted of 10 domains which were increased to 13 to ensure a well-rounded skills development experience factoring in the young women's lived experience.

Intake assessments and feedback from the young moms influenced the separation of Housing and Housekeeping into two domains. Use of Technology was added as a new domain. Domestic Violence was also added as a new domain as over 70% of the young moms disclosed that they had experience with intimate or partner violence.

Several programs were developed after the expansion of the domains to help enhance the young moms' skills.

Use of Technology—training and support on safe use of social media, including preventing online bullying

Housekeeping—one-to-one support provided to help the moms develop and practice good housekeeping in their dormitories (Prenatal) and apartments/townhouses (Postnatal)

Domestic Violence—a weekly Breaking Free—Let's Talk program that helped the young moms to address systemic violence against women and deal with the trauma of being involved in sex trade/trafficking

The Breaking Free—Let's Talk program was a vital addition because over 30% of the young moms identified as having involvement in sex trade/trafficking. It was one of the best attended programs this year with many requests for it to continue. During the sessions almost 75% of the moms shared incidents which they did not label as sex work/trafficking but they were.

During a session one mom disclosed details of the relationship with her boyfriend. The police were immediately called and the boyfriend was later arrested. She continues to receive counselling support to help her deal with the associated trauma. She was also assisted in accessing additional resources.



ASQ Developmental Screenings

In order to increase its capacity to improve the mental and physical health of young children living in the East York community, We are increasing the availability of developmental screenings—Ages & Stages Questionnaires (ASQ) for all children between ages one month and five years old. To accomplish this, we are collaborating on a quality improvement initiative launched by Infant Mental Health Promotion at The Hospital for Sick Children.

We know from research and years of experience working with children that the early years lay the groundwork for lifelong health. The experiences during those first years of life are extremely valuable as the children's development cannot be delayed.

The Centre is committed to facilitating much needed change in our community by empowering our staff to see themselves as early interventionists regardless of their roles. This initiative will also help to prevent many developmental challenges by empowering

parents and caregivers to take an active role in supporting their children's development by learning what to expect at each developmental stage, how to provide the best support and opportunities for growth specific to each child.

Participation in the study will be on a volunteer basis by the parents, and every child engaged in the study will receive three ASQ screenings over a one-year period. The results of each screening will help determine if a developmental support plan is required. If concerns were identified in the first or second screening, the goal is to see improvements in the children's developmental trajectories.

Recent advances in science have reinforced the importance of early developmental screening and intervention. What we do in the early years profoundly influences a child's developmental trajectory over his/her lifespan.





Benefits to be achieved from the screenings:

- Children at risk for developmental delays will be identified earlier and enable the creation and implementation of an individual developmental support plan for each child requiring additional intensive assessment or interventions. The developmental support plans are designed to support families while they are waiting for specialized assessments and treatments, such as speech and language, developmental, psychological or psychiatric services
- Contribute to the three confirmed principles that improve the outcomes for children and families: reducing sources of stress, strengthening core life skills and supporting responsive relationships (Centre on the Developing Child <https://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/three-early-childhood-development-principles-improve-child-family-outcomes/>)
- Staff will increase their knowledge and skills on embedding the science of infant mental health into their daily work with the young moms and babies

Get Involved

Help Massey Centre continue providing support, treatment and other services for the vulnerable pregnant and parenting young moms, aged 13–25 and their babies living at the Centre or in the community. You can:

- Make a donation today
- Become a Best Start Monthly Giving donor
- Host an event and designate the proceeds to Massey Centre
- Honour someone's special occasion or memory with a gift to Massey Centre
- Make a gift in your Will to the Massey Centre
- Register, attend, and vote at the 2018 Annual General Meeting
- Tell others about the work of Massey Centre
- Volunteer and support the young moms and babies

Donation Form

☐ YES! I want to help new young moms and their babies because they need me!

Here is my gift of: ☐ \$50 ☐ \$100 ☐ \$250 ☐ \$500 ☐ I will give \$_____

☐ YES! I will join the **Best Start** Monthly Giving Program* with my gift on the **last** day of each month of: ☐ \$10 ☐ \$20 ☐ \$25 ☐ \$50 ☐ I will give \$_____

Name: _____ Email: _____

Address: _____ City: _____

Province: _____ Postal Code: _____ Phone No. _____

☐ Please add me to your email list. I understand I can unsubscribe at anytime.

Payment Options

☐ I would like to give by: ☐ Cheque

My cheque payable to **Massey Centre** is enclosed.

☐ Please charge my ☐  ☐  ☐ 

Card Number: _____ Expiry Date: ____/____

Name exactly as shown on card: _____

Cardholder Signature: _____

Name for Acknowledgement Purposes (if applicable): _____

☐ I would like this donation to be Anonymous.

* I can revoke or change my authorization at any time in writing or by calling 416-425-6348 x 224, subject to providing 30 days' notice.

* I have certain recourse rights if any debit does not comply with this agreement. For example, I have the right to be reimbursed for any debit that is not authorized or is not consistent with this Pre-authorization Debit (PAD) Agreement.

* To obtain a cancellation form, or for more information on my right to cancel a PAD Agreement or my recourse rights, I may contact my financial institution or visit www.cdnpay.ca.

Massey Centre protects your private information and complies with all legislative requirements. We will send you information from time to time. If you wish to limit, or not receive any correspondence in the future, please contact us at 416-425-6348 x 224.

Thank you for your support!



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