



massey
centre

new lives start here

THE NEW LIVES NEWSLETTER

Creating new opportunities | Winter 2020

Message from the CEO



Our ability, at all levels of the organization to build positive relationships with our young parents is critical. Based on a recent Client Profile Report we learned just how much stress and stigma these young mothers are facing as they

take on one of the biggest challenges of their lives – raising another human being.

Our 2019 Client Profile Report tells us that:

- 94% of the young mothers who accessed services were homeless or under-housed;
- 89% were not enrolled in high school;
- 83% experienced family/partner violence during their pregnancy;
- 72% experienced verbal, emotional, financial or sexual abuses less than 3 months prior to living at Massey Centre;
- 38% of the young moms became homeless in order to escape family/partner violence;
- 60% of the students attending our onsite secondary school program live in the community;
- 100% are poor with no income or have income below the poverty line.

Sometimes it takes a few months before a young parent starts to trust and open up to our positive and supportive staff. We know that even though it may take a few months to start getting a smile from a young parent, the engagement and relationship building is a process that will take some time. This is why all the management and front line staff work so hard to make this space welcoming and inclusive.

It also explains why we work hard to help the young mothers and the babies have the best health (including the social determinants of health), parenting, and mental health outcomes.

The homeless population faces worse health outcomes than the general population. They are twenty-nine times more likely to have Hepatitis C; Twenty times more likely to have epilepsy; five times more likely to have heart disease; four times more likely to have cancer and eight times more likely to go to the emergency department.

The health issues affecting the homeless young parents we serve is part of the reason why we sought to be a partner in two Ontario Health Teams (OHTs), East Toronto Health Partners and the North York Toronto Health Partner. I am pleased to report both OHTs have been successful with their applications to the provincial government. Now the work begins to achieve the objectives of the OHTs' year one priorities.

We also have been busy since the fall working with contractors and architects to complete the renovations/expansion of the Early Learning Centre. By the end of March 2020, there will be 16 additional preschool spots, a refreshed classroom, new cubbies for each child, a new stainless steel kitchen and an expanded front vestibule to make it easier for persons with physical disabilities to enter our building.

Another area of focus of ours has been to help young parents find housing in the community. As the young parents leave our onsite residential or transitional housing programs we can now support them to access "affordable" housing in Toronto through our Baby & Me: Our Home program where we provide up to \$800/month in rent subsidies.

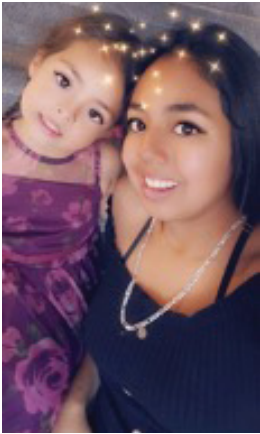


Since the fall of last year, eleven young parents found new homes thanks to the rent subsidies.

Just recently, I saw a young parent smiling from ear to ear. She had lived with us for the past 18 months. Thanks to the help of the Baby&Me: Our Home program she found a new home at Yonge and Eglinton. We found the apartment through a referral

from a corporate partner CBRE Limited. The young parent was so happy! I make a point of mentioning this young parent, because I remember her being very sad when she moved into our Residential program. Today, she is happy, hopeful and determined to build a successful life for herself and her child.

Evelyn's Story



When Evelyn first found out she was pregnant, she was nervous. At only 17, she was very young and thought she would be in big trouble. She hid her pregnancy from her mom for months but her mom eventually figured it out. Her mom told her that her life would be over, but Evelyn knew it wasn't. Pregnancy gave Evelyn a new motivation to finish school and work hard for her career.

She went to school until she was eight months pregnant, and then took a year off to care for and bond with her daughter, Cassandra. When Cassandra was one year old, Evelyn and Cassandra had to move out of her mom's place. The apartment had too many people living in it and Evelyn wanted the opportunity to raise her daughter in her own way.

She moved into our centre and has never looked back. Evelyn says that her time at Massey Centre has been "really awesome" and that "many more doors opened".

Evelyn switched schools and took an interest in learning auto body repair. She had a wonderful teacher who saw her potential and entered her into an auto body skills competition. She was the only woman in a competition full of men, but she put her skills to the test and won 2nd place! She then went on to compete at the provincial competition and beat out everyone to win first place!

Today, Evelyn is six months into an apprenticeship program for auto body and has a bright career ahead of her! She plans on working in a split shop – doing both auto service and auto body. Eventually she would like to open her own shop.

When reflecting on what she hopes her daughter learns from her, she said "I hope she knows that women can have it all. That I will always support her, and I will always be by her side".

Cassandra is already taking after her mom! She likes to play with toy tools and is always going under their chairs and pretending to fix them.



Magic of the Season

Every year, we are so touched by the outpouring of support to make the holidays here feel like home for the young mothers and babies. It really is thanks to the amazing people who volunteer their own time to run fundraisers, donation drives, or put together beautiful gifts that truly makes the season magical.

The entire centre got into the holiday spirit! Community potlucks and fun programs were offered at our EarlyON Child and Family Program. Santa visited the children in the Early Learning Centre for holiday photos. The young moms and babies enjoyed a home cooked festive holiday breakfast, Christmas dinner, and a fun filled New Year's Eve Pajama Party to ring in 2020!

Check out some of the generous support we received this year!



Our Heartfelt Thanks to our Donors

Hot apple cider and inspiring stories of courage from our young mothers came together at our Donor Appreciation Holiday Party on November 28, 2019. Over sixty donors, guests, young mothers, their babies and staff celebrated what has been achieved thanks to our donors' support. Four brave young mothers spoke at the event, sharing their hardships and successes to a captivated and sometimes tearful audience.

Donors, thank you so much for all you do to help us make happy endings for young mothers possible.

For those of you who missed the event, here is one of the heartwarming speeches from a young mom at our centre:



"Hi, my name is Alanna, and I am 16 years old. I moved to Massey this past August when I was 8 months pregnant so that I could attend the Section 23 school program Massey has in September. Since I've been at Massey, I have enrolled in the school program and I've also had my daughter last month in October. Her name is Rose and she is 8 weeks old now.

So far my favourite programs here have been the MOMS summer program, the school program and the drama class on Thursdays. With the MOMS program we learned a lot of things about parenting and there are a lot of fun activities such as the family feud a game we played against each other.

With the school program I get to bring my baby with me to school while I try to finish high school and graduate. I get to learn one on one with my teacher which ensures I fully understand what I am being taught. The school is also very accommodating to students whether you're still pregnant or not.

Since I've had my baby Massey has helped me a lot in becoming a better mother and by helping me learn about how to take care of myself when we move into the community. They have helped acquire a childcare subsidy, and find daycare so I can focus on my studies.

Massey is a great place for me and has already helped me so much by providing a place for me and my baby to stay and by helping me accomplish my future goals."

Microsoft Canada

Empowering Women One Code at a time.

This fall we were thrilled to partner with our amazing friends at Microsoft Canada who offered two new exciting workshops in our high school program and to our residents! In one workshop, our young mothers were introduced to the professional social platform LinkedIn and learned how to build their profile. Microsoft Canada even brought in a photographer to give them their best start with a professional headshot!

Next up was coding – yes coding! Microsoft Canada came back with some fun MineCraft coding lessons. They introduced coding basics using MakeCode to our young mothers who were able to work on projects and import them directly into their games during the workshop. Some of the young moms enjoyed learning how to code so much that they stayed after to learn more!

Thank you Microsoft Canada for investing in the empowerment of women.



Eat4Eight

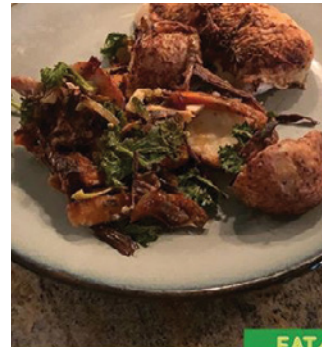
Teen mom budget challenge

In September 2019, we launched an exciting new fundraising initiative - Eat4Eight: Teen Mom Budget Challenge!

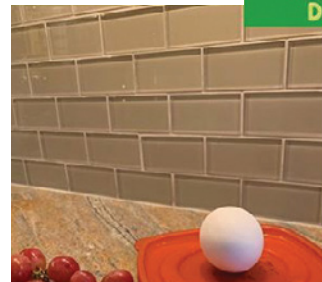
We put forward a challenge, to eat with the food budget of a young mom for 3 days, while raising funds for young moms and babies at Massey Centre. Participants could spend up to \$8.00 a day on food starting September 23rd and were encouraged to document their experience.

The response was overwhelming, teams filled up, and Eat4Eight journeys were shared through social media raising over \$25,000! Some stuck strictly to \$8.00 a day in their pocket for spending. Others lumped it into \$24 for groceries over those three days, or calculated the cost of each thing they ate that day up to the \$8.00 cap. Each experience was different, and came with its own unique challenges.

Are you, your family, or your department at work up for the same challenge? We are looking forward to having you join as Eat4Eight: Teen Mom Budget Challenge will be returning in 2020!



EAT4Eight-DAY 3



Fighting the Flu in the Community



Have you gotten your flu shot? As part of our comprehensive programs offered to local families, we held two free Flu Shot Clinics in partnership with East End Community Health Centre, to everyone over the age of 6 months on January 15th and 23rd.

Offering accessible services that create awareness and foster a healthy community is at heart what Massey Centre strives to do. The flu shot is especially important when working with vulnerable demographics such as newborns and infants under the age of 6 months who do not yet have fully developed immune systems. Thank you to East End Community Health Centre and surge funding through East Toronto Health Partners for making this possible.

Volunteer Spotlight – Lital

Volunteers are a key part of the Massey family and help us with everything from sorting donations to parent relief for the young moms. Lital has generously volunteered with the young moms and babies for over three years.

What motivated you become a volunteer at Massey Centre?

"It's always been something I've always wanted to do. It was on my bucket list. Then finally once I found the time to start, I jumped right in. I just want to give moms and babies a better chance. Help out, even if it's just to give moms a little break to catch up on sleep. Especially in this situation, they're on their own, single mothers and young, having babies on their own. I want to be able to give back and provide that extra help and better chance at succeeding in life."

Do you have any fond memories from Volunteering?

"They're all fond memories, honestly! Some people may look and not be able to handle crying etc but I LOVE it! Being able to watch each child grow, and being able to witness their development is beautiful. A TDSB teacher once approached me and personally thanked me, for helping with parent relief. Acknowledging the difference it makes, and how much it truly helps the girls out."

What's your favorite part of being a volunteer?

"Watching babies grow, develop and meet their milestones. I can't emphasize more how important it is to give mothers a break. It's challenging enough. What is there not to love about caring for babies? It's perfection! I would love to be a part of all the growth for both mommy and baby. I just hope I bring them just as much joy as they bring me."



Intake Automation

A step towards efficiency!

Our team has spent the last year working tirelessly on becoming a paperless organization and improving efficiencies. This allows our staff to spend more time where it is most needed – with our clients.

One significant change we made was automating our intake process. Previously, when a pregnant teenager called us looking for support, our staff would have to use a lot of different forms and programs to collect the information from the client. There was a mix of Microsoft Word and Excel forms, and paper forms for staff and clients to fill out. Some of this was very repetitive and required clients to give the same information in several ways. It also added a lot of data entry to the Intake Worker's workload.

Using Office 365 features (Powerapps, Sharepoint, Flow, and InfoPath) our IT department created a centralized automated system. The system copies the data from each stage to the next automatically, sending emails notifications and reminders so the Intake Worker can move the file to the next stage with one click. The client now can sign the required documents on a tablet and the system will convert the document to a protected format.

One of the best parts of the system is that it produces data and reports in real time!

Looking for laptops and other electronics?

We've teamed up with Green4Good on a new way you can support us. We'll receive 10% of the price of any electronics you purchase at <https://shop.green4good.ca/massey>. Please share the link with your friends, family, and workplace!



Get Involved

Volunteer

Give the gift of time. Our moms and babies benefit from the participation of volunteers across our programs. Each year, Massey Centre volunteers contribute more than 300 hours to support our programs alongside our staff. Follow us on Facebook or check out the Massey Centre website for our current Volunteer opportunities.

Make a Donation

By making a donation today, you can bring real help and hope to thousands of moms, babies, and caregivers served by Massey Centre. Every dollar counts!

Become a Monthly Donor

Consider becoming a monthly donor to offer ongoing support to our young families – just \$20 or more a month can help provide formula, diapers and infant care items to one family.

Donate Items for our Young Moms and Babies

The young moms and babies in our programs rely on your in-kind donations. For a list of items we are currently in need of please visit our website.

Host an Event in Support of Massey Centre

Commit to being a leader in your community by organizing a fundraising event for Massey Centre! Organizing an event is a lot of fun! Your fundraiser can be as modest or ambitious as you choose. Dinner parties, toonie drives, raffles, and bake sales are all great ideas to start with.

Join our Eat4Eight: Teen Mom Budget Challenge in 2020

Returning in 2020 is the Massey Centre Eat4Eight: Teen Mom Budget Challenge! Join our mailing list or follow us on Facebook and Twitter to get up to date information on the next fundraising challenge. To preregister your team, email giving@massey.ca

Leave a Gift in Your Will

Create a legacy while maximizing tax and other financial benefits. Gift a pre-determined or residual amount of your estate to ensure that support services needed by young moms and babies are available in the future.

Visit www.massey.ca or email giving@massey.ca to learn more about how you can get involved.



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 am interested in learning more about how to leave a gift in my Will to Massey Centre.

* 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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