

THE NEW LIVES NEWSLETTER

Winter 2022



massey
centre

new lives start here

Message from the CEO

Welcome to 2022!

As each new year begins, I take the opportunity to reflect on the past year, and plan for what is to come. Our staff and clients have shown tremendous strength and resilience this past year, and we have a lot to look forward to!

One big piece of news is that the Ontario Association of Young Parent Agencies (OAYPA) has received \$5.5 million to open nine early childhood development hubs across the province! Massey Centre will serve as the trustee for this initiative and will lead the way to provide early literacy, infant and early mental health, and family navigation programs for 3000 families in Ontario. We look forward to working with all of the incredible agencies that make up the OAYPA to continue to advocate for our sector and facilitate critical programs for young families. We are thrilled that SickKids Hospital, Infant and Early Mental Health Promotion, and Queen's University are also partnering with us on this project. Stay tuned for exciting updates as we get to work on this initiative.

We have also been lucky to receive some temporary funding over the past year to help us meet the growing need for mental health services for our clients. The pandemic has exacerbated the mental health concerns of many young moms and children. We have more requests for mental health support than ever before, and clients are using these supports for longer periods of time. We will continue to advocate for stronger mental health services from birth to adulthood, and for supports and services that will help young moms become independent and successful.

I am so thankful for the support our community has shown us over the past year. It has been a difficult time for many people, and I will forever appreciate our donors, staff, community partners, volunteers, and everyone else who stepped in to help when we needed it most. Your support ensures that our staff and clients remain healthy, and that we can continue to provide high quality and evidence-based programs for young mothers and children.

Wishing you all the best in 2022!



Ekua Asabea Blair
Chief Executive Officer

A Full Circle Moment: From Resident to Staff

Hello there my name is Samantha Pilcher. Let me tell you a little bit about myself. I am the single mom of Orion, my two and a half year old son, and he's amazingly sweet. The light of my life.

I found out I was expecting when I was going to college for acting. I didn't know what I was going to do so I reached out to the school's therapist who told me about Massey Centre. I was fortunate enough to be able to move in and become a client.

They have helped me so much; I feel like I struggle constantly and I am still finding my way through this world. With the extra support and guidance Massey Centre gives, it makes life easier. One of the programs I have recently completed with Massey Centre is S.E.A.M (Success in Employment for Adolescent Moms). They helped me prepare for work by doing mock interviews and helping with my resume and cover letter. They would check in to see how we were feeling when it came to interviews, job search, and life to help us work through things. To help me find a solution.



With skills and confidence, I gained from the S.E.A.M program, I landed my first paid job! I was hired at Massey Centre, as a donation room assistant. My job consisted of sorting the donations, and displaying them for clients in an organized manner. I also help with some social media.

I really enjoyed it and learned a lot. An added bonus is my son was right next door at the daycare.

I am so proud of how much I have accomplished and learned this year. I am capable of doing a lot more than I thought. If it was a year ago, I probably wouldn't have applied because honestly, I didn't think I was good enough, and I didn't want to embarrass myself for even trying. Now I feel more self-assured and I now know I can't be afraid to reach higher goals. Massey Centre is helping me see them, and giving me the opportunity to achieve and grab them.

It's just like life. Growing up is not always easy, but eventually you'll get the hang of it as long as you practice. That's what I'm going to do, and I will accomplish everything I put my mind too.

Program Highlight: 1900 Sheppard Housing Project

1900 Sheppard is a unique housing initiative designed just for young moms and their children! We work in collaboration with Toronto Community Housing and other community agencies to assist young mothers over a 4-year period. The program provides access to life skills and employment training; mental health counselling; a community kitchen and food bank; children's programming and special events throughout the year. This program was started by Humewood House and is now part of the Massey Centre family as we work together as one organization.

Young moms and their children live independently in the apartments. The first floor of the building is entirely dedicated to programs and services for all the clients. There is a real sense of community here as the young moms support each other and work to better their lives. We are thrilled to be able to continue to offer this program in addition to the Integrated Residential and Transitional Housing Program located at our Broadview Campus, broadening our services to impact the lives of even more pregnant and parenting young mothers and their babies.



'Tis the Season – A holiday collage

From ugly sweaters, a baby elf surprise, to whimsical door decorating - the halls at our sites were filled with festivity! Our dedicated staff and donors make the holiday season special for our moms and babies. This year we were overwhelmed by the generosity of the community who pulled together to run fundraisers, toy drives, and connected with us to ask what it is our young families needed for the holidays.

Thank you so much for making the season so bright for our young moms and babies!



Meet Sierra and Dezzare: Humewood Campus School Client

Sierra was struggling to keep up at her regular school when she found out she was pregnant with her son. A worker from Ontario Works, who recognized that she needed additional support, referred Sierra to our school program. Sierra enrolled in our high school treatment program at the Humewood Campus in 2019 when she was 19 years old.

With a personality that lights up a room, Sierra enjoys shopping, styling her hair and trying new things. One of the things she loves most is spending time with her son Dezzare who is now 2 years old, and her infant daughter.



“The programs at Humewood Campus have helped me become more social and friendly with people around me. It has allowed me to self-advocate and express my needs, emotions and rights. It has allowed me to accept changes in life. It has also allowed me to earn some of my high school credits and make me feel like I am able to complete school as a young mother. My biggest struggle in school had been math but with the help of my teacher I was able to complete my math credits. I am currently finishing two courses; English and computer sciences.

My dreams are to complete my high school diploma, go to university and earn my Masters in Social Work. I would like to get my own apartment someday where I can live with both my children.

As a young parent, I want to be a mother that my children can come to at any point, for any reason. I want to be their best friend, but still be there mother. I want them to feel loved and cared for through good and difficult times. I want to empower them to use their voices.

I wanted to give my children the best Christmas ever! This Christmas was all about them. My daughter was 5 weeks old by Christmas and I wanted to make this Christmas special for both of them by getting both of their first pictures with Santa.”

-Sierra

Ewing Morris Volunteer Day

On December 9th we were excited to welcome back our very first group of volunteers since early 2020 from Ewing Morris & Co. Investment Partners Ltd. This enthusiastic group took on sorting toys for families, putting together much needed layette baskets for new moms, and festively decorating our main areas.

We are so grateful to Ewing Morris & Co. Investment Partners Ltd for all their support this year. In addition to volunteering, they held a successful fundraiser for us and contributed over \$6000 to our centre! We look forward to having them back in the New Year!

If you would like to hold a fundraiser for Massey Centre, please contact giving@massey.ca.



A Fresh Donation

We are a lucky recipient of funding from Chickapea Pasta to provide fresh veggies every week for six months to all of our residents at our main Broadview Campus, Humewood Campus, and 1900 Sheppard. We will even be able to distribute these veggies to young moms in the community. This program is a partnership between Community Food Centres Canada, Chickapea Pasta, The New Farm, and 100km Foods Inc.

This food is grown using regenerative agriculture. This is a set of farming practices and principles, that is informed by generations of Black and Indigenous farming practices, that increases biodiversity, builds and enriches soil, improves watersheds, and enhances ecosystem services. Young moms had the chance to learn about these farming practices, learn more about healthy eating, and received fresh food every week from this new initiative. Thank you to everyone who made this possible for our young families!

Staff Spotlights

Staff are the heart and soul of our programs and services. Meet Aleema and learn about the challenges and rewards that come with working with young families.

Aleema is a long-time employee, working in our postnatal transitional housing program at our Broadview Campus as a residential counsellor. This program provides support for our young mothers and their babies where they live for up to a year in apartments and townhouses.

How long have you worked at Massey Centre?

I started working here in 2001 and have been here 20 years.

What are some of the biggest challenges your clients face?

Some of the biggest challenges that clients face are systematic. For example, to get daycare they have to be enrolled in school, and sometimes there are no subsidies available at that time for childcare. Without childcare their schooling can quickly fall apart. Once they leave this program, if they don't have stable housing, all the goals they are continuing to work on crumble because their priority becomes housing. Thus self-care/mental health and education gets dismissed.

What are the biggest challenges in your job?

One of the biggest challenges in this work is not having enough time and resources. A lot of the young moms want to engage and learn but don't because they are so preoccupied with all their other worries and responsibilities as single parents.

How has your program adapted during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Most of our contacts are now done virtually which takes away from building trusted therapeutic relationships especially with newer young moms. Clients who have been here before the pandemic got to work with staff face-to-face so they have built a therapeutic alliance with the staff. Many of clients tell us that they miss the one-to-one contact. Our clients are young women who like to engage on a social level so not having face-to-face contact makes it difficult to support them.

What is the most rewarding part of your job?

It's to see the clients reach their goals whether it's their educational, finding their own apartments, building positive attachment with their children and stabilizing this mental health.



Best Start Monthly Donor Spotlights

Meet Kathleen

When I had my first child in 2011, I gained first-hand experience with the emotional, physical and mental challenges of pregnancy and raising a child. I also started receiving what at the time was the universal childcare benefit from the government. It struck me how small the benefit was compared to the cost of raising a child. I wanted to find somewhere to donate the money where, pooled with other money, it would hopefully be able to make a difference for a new mother. The Massey Centre was the perfect fit. I continue to give monthly. Massey Centre's work is vital, and as a society we need to support each other. Also, the babies in the newsletter are super cute.

Benefits of signing up as a Best Start Monthly Donor

- Convenient – You can donate monthly by credit card, automatic debit from your bank, or cheque.
- Flexible – You choose your monthly donation amount and can change the amount or cancel at any time.
- Effective – Your monthly gift provides us with a steady source of income that allows us to plan and support more vulnerable young families.



Are you interested in becoming a Best Start Monthly Donor? You can sign up online at <https://www.canadahelps.org/en/dn/18722> ,or fill out and send back the included donation form. You can also contact the Resource Development Coordinator at giving@massey.ca or 416-425-6348 ext. 289.

2021 Eat4Eight: Teen Mom Budget Challenge!

You helped us raise \$30,653!



"I thought this was an incredibly eye-opening experience. I found that I had to put a lot more thought and time into finding ideas for healthy but inexpensive meals than I anticipated. It wasn't as easy as I expected. I also thought the timing of this right before thanksgiving was fantastic as it really put into perspective how fortunate we are to be able to create a thanksgiving meal without the need to consider a very tiny budget."

-2021 Eat4Eight Participant

Thanks to all of you, the 2021 Eat4Eight: Teen Mom Budget Challenge was a fabulous success! We had our most successful year ever, raising \$30, 653! Our challenge participants spent \$8/day on food while raising funds for vital services and programs. Thank you to all of our participants for your passion and enthusiasm.

A huge thank you to our sponsors - RBC, State Street, and No Frills! Also thank you so much Sobeys, Loblaws, Costco, Longo's and Farmboy for helping provide fun prizes for our fundraisers. We appreciate having so much support from our community partners.

The Eat4Eight: Teen Mom Budget Challenge will be returning in 2022! For more information, or questions on how to get involved please contact the Resource Development Coordinator at giving@massey.ca

Get Involved

Make a Donation

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

Become a Best Start Monthly Donor

Consider becoming a Best Start Monthly Donor to offer ongoing support to our young families – just \$5 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. Due to storage and resource constraints, we are only accepting new items. Diapers, baby clothes, personal care items, and grocery store gift cards are always needed. For an updated list of items we are currently in need of please visit our website.

Hold a Fundraiser

From corporate fundraisers to bake sales, there are many ways to raise funds to help young families. Please reach out to giving@massey.ca or 416-425-6348 ext. 289 to discuss your fundraising idea. We'd be happy to help with tips, information, speakers, and online fundraising tools.

Leave us 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.

Green4Good

Working from home more often? We've teamed up with Green4Good on a new way you can support us, while updating your home office. 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 colleagues.

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



Your donation provides education, life skills, and self confidence.

☐ 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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