



# THE NEW LIVES NEWSLETTER

Creating new  
opportunities.

Fall 2015



## MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

Each day before 10 a.m., when I look out my office window I see groups of young mothers and children from our Postnatal Transitional Housing walking across the parking lot to the child care centre. I hear laughter and sometimes a crying child who refuses to walk the entire distance. After they've dropped off their children at the child care centre, the young women attend the on-site Section 23 Secondary School.

Later in the day when I walk through the hallways, I see young parents in the classrooms, focused and engaged. Sometimes I see babies there too, in their mothers' laps. In October, the City's Children's Services Appeal Committee approved our request for immediate priority admission into child care programs for the children of parents attending our school. This will free up more mothers to concentrate on school work.

Many poems and stories by students are posted on the bulletin boards in the hall. I love the honesty and candour of accounts like this one by Celeste:

*"I decided to be a mother at the age of 18. I didn't have a good life at the time and figured since I had no real purpose to my life, I chose to keep my growing baby. I knew raising a child would bring purpose and stability and ... hoped that having a little one that needs me to get my life together would help me. I didn't care what anyone else thought. I know it was something I needed to do and knew I was ready for it."*

I am inspired by the young mothers' inner strength and determination to complete high school and succeed, all through the year. In the summer, they were able to attend Financial Literacy workshops facilitated by TD Bank employees, use the Toronto Public Library's bookmobile service, or prepare a communal dinner at the cooking club, with child minding by our extraordinary group of volunteers.

Child development is another area of focus here. Last summer, Chaya Kulkarni, Executive Director, Infant Mental Health Promotion, The Hospital for Sick Children, trained staff in using the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ), with parents of children aged two months to five years. The ASQ helps monitor children's development in communications, gross motor and fine motor skills, problem-solving and personal/social domains. Issues identified in the process are addressed by internal or external resources. The ASQ Assessment is one of the programs most requested by our young parents.

At the end of the day, around 5 p.m., I look outside again and see the same groups of young parents talking and laughing. School is over, and they are on their way to pick up their children. Life at Massey Centre is not without trials and disappointments, but most days our young families leave me with a sense of stability, positive growth and happiness.

**Ekua Asabea Blair**  
Chief Executive Officer

# 100 WOMEN IN HEDGE FUNDS CHAMPAGNE FUNDRAISER

November 5, 2015 was memorable as 100 Women in Hedge Funds continued their celebration of education and investing in the next generation with a Champagne Fundraiser in support of our New Lives Start Here program. This four-year housing and education program is open to parenting young women, aged 18-25 enrolled in postsecondary studies or vocational training.

Kenya, aged 19, is a program participant and the mom of a 14-month old son. She honoured guests by sharing her story—about obstacles she faced starting at age 4. She was abused throughout her life—by her mother who had mental health issues, a foster mother, and later her adoptive mother. She was bullied at school and felt she could not cope with her daily challenges. Many guests were seen wiping tears.

Kenya did not give up hope. She is in college completing a Hairdressing program and acknowledges that “this is just the beginning of my journey.”

The Champagne Fundraiser was held at Pink Tartan in Yorkville, which donated a portion of the evening’s sales to the Centre.



George Pimentel Photography

100 Women in Hedge Funds generously donated all proceeds from donations and ticket sales to the event to create and enhance educational opportunities of the New Lives Start Here program in three key areas:

- *Scholarships: Two annual 100 Women in Hedge Funds Scholarships—\$1,500 each for three years—for academic achievements—have been established.*
- *Incentives: Funding has been allocated for monthly financial incentives for three years for young women who best exemplify program goals and/or academic achievements.*
- *Program Costs: This is welcome funding for other New Lives Start Here program costs.*



George Pimentel Photography



RBC Foundation





George Pimentel Photography



George Pimentel Photography



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*Cheque presentation Greater Toronto Apartment Association Gala Dinner*



*100 Women In Hedge Funds and Massey Centre Board, staff and clients help open the TMX Market*







# CHIFFON'S STORY

Seems like I am always challenged. I have faced so many challenges in my life considering I am only 19 years old! But I still have the strength to manage my future.

My life changed at age 16. I can't quite explain why, but I just didn't want to live with my mother anymore. So, over the next two years I bounced from the streets to youth shelters to friends' couches to my mother. But I never stayed anywhere long.

I became pregnant at age 18 but the father denied fatherhood because he was in another relationship. Needless to say, he has never offered any support to me or my daughter, but he visited us a few times just after her birth.

While I was pregnant I lived in a youth shelter that was not equipped to handle pregnant girls, so they referred me to Massey Centre. I came to live here in March 2014 and gave birth to my beautiful daughter, Destiny in May.

I lived in Prenatal for almost 10 months and learned so much. Any program that was offered—I was there. I was constantly in the offices of the Residential Counsellors, Nurse, and Maternal Infant Mental Health because I wanted to learn. I learned how to take care of Destiny and how to bond with her in Baby Love and Baby Massage sessions. I learned how to cook in the Young Moms' Cooking Club. I learned how to manage my money, and I learned how to save.

I moved into Postnatal in January 2015 and continued participating in programs, including the summer program of educational, arts/cultural and recreational activities.

My goal is to earn a Bachelors' Degree and become a Correctional Officer when Destiny is older. My first step was successfully completing Security Guard training. Working in that field will be good experience to help me achieve my goal.

Finding a job was a big challenge. As an inexperienced Security Guard I could only find night jobs, but I needed to work days, while Destiny is in the Early Learning Centre. Without overnight child care or family support, I have to ensure that Destiny is always safe.

But I did not give up. I had worked a few night shifts at a construction site and really loved it. My supervisor complimented me on my good work, but she could not find me a day shift. So I could not work. I was sad. I asked staff for help finding overnight day care. We did not have any success, but they encouraged me to keep in touch with the supervisor to remind her of my strong desire to work.

In early October, the Manager at Postnatal called the supervisor for me and explained my dilemma. The following day she called and offered me a daytime shift! I was so excited because now I could work Monday to Friday while Destiny is in daycare. I am working hard to save money to move back in the community in December.

So my next challenge is to find a safe and affordable apartment, but I have not had any success yet. The Housing Agency I contacted had no apartments available and a worker there suggested that "Massey Centre should send you to a shelter." That was hurtful because I have worked so hard to turn my life around. I don't want to go back to a shelter—I came from one.

Massey Centre staff is committed to helping find an apartment for me and Destiny. And I know they will not send me back to a shelter!

I will always be grateful for the support I have received in facing my challenges at Massey Centre. And I will continue to work hard.

**Chiffon**



**4554**  
NUMBER OF  
VOLUNTEER  
HOURS



**39**  
VOLUNTEERS  
INVESTED  
THEIR TIME



**79**  
CLIENTS SUPPORTED IN  
THE COMMUNITY REFERRAL  
SERVICES OFFICE



**2412**  
CHILDREN AND  
PARENTS/CAREGIVERS  
ATTENDED FAMILY  
SUPPORT PROGRAMS



**44**  
PREGNANT AND PARENTING  
GIRLS LIVED IN THE PRENATAL  
RESIDENTIAL PROGRAM



**150**  
MOMS AND BABIES RECEIVED  
MATERNAL INFANT MENTAL  
HEALTH SUPPORT



**13**  
BOARD  
MEMBERS



**63** CHILDREN  
RECEIVED CHILD  
CARE SERVICES



**52**  
MOMS AND BABIES  
RESIDED IN THE  
POSTNATAL TRANSITIONAL  
HOUSING PROGRAM



**36**  
STUDENTS ATTENDED  
THE SECTION 23  
SECONDARY SCHOOL  
TREATMENT PROGRAM



**19**  
STUDENTS COMPLETED  
PLACEMENT HOURS

# GET INVOLVED

Here are some easy ways you can help Massey Centre to 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
- Remember Massey Centre in your Will
- Become a member, attend, and vote at the 2016 Annual General Meeting
- Tell others about the work of Massey Centre

Make your donation by **Thursday, December 31, 2015** and receive a 2015 charitable tax receipt!



# Donation Form

YES! I want to help new young moms and their babies start new successful lives!

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. \_\_\_\_\_

## Payment Options

I would like to give by:  Cheque    or     Money Order

My cheque or money order 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 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](http://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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