



The New Lives NEWSLETTER

December 2013

Creating new opportunities.
New Lives.

MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

Welcome back to **The New Lives Massey Newsletter!** We have been away for a while. We are back, and bigger and better than ever.

How do you like our new look?

Massey Centre entered into an amazing partnership with **RAMP Communications: Smart Marketing Made Easy**, a company owned by a former Board member, Shelley Mayer. Ramp provides pro bono marketing and communications support to Massey Centre.

I had the opportunity this spring to meet some members of the United Church Women (UCW) Groups and congregations. I love sharing Massey Centre stories and explaining how their support is making a difference in the lives of our clients.

We are also grateful for the 21 years of service that Darlene Guillet, a Postnatal Transitional Housing Program Residential Counsellor, contributed to the Massey Centre. In April of 2013, Darlene passed away in her sleep. A rose garden was created at Massey Centre this summer in her honour under the leadership of her Prenatal colleague Melissa Furlano. Darlene is sadly missed but our memories of her will live on in our hearts.

We also had a retirement this year. Marjorie Riley retired in November 2013 after 21 years of service. Thanks Marjorie for your authentic personality, your laughter and your wisdom!

I am very pleased that **The New Lives Massey Newsletter** is back. We want to use this as a vehicle for you to learn about the important work we do and the ways that volunteers and donors are helping us to achieve important outcomes for the clients we serve. Happy reading!

Ekua Asabea Blair
CEO



Paulett Ramsey, Director, Resource Development (second right) receiving the \$20,000 cheque at The Greater Toronto Apartment Association's Gala Dinner.

DARLENE'S TESTIMONIAL

Dear Massey Centre staff,

I'm writing you this letter because I really want you all to know just how much each and every single one of you touched my life. I know many girls come in and out of these doors and you've said goodbye many times but I want to remind you how special you guys are and that what I've seen you do for us girls gives me a lot of hope, and I know a lot of hope was brought back into the lives of girls who lost it.

You empowered us, inspired us and believed in us when society did not. I never thought I'd change and mature so much from being there for only so long, and thinking back to when I first walked through those doors, dreading all the new rules and new faces, a little part of me wants to go back and do it all over again. I will never forget the smiles, the tears (both sad and happy) and the lessons. Because of you, I can now be the confident, happy mother I thought I could never be in the beginning.

So thank you, from both me and my daughter, for changing our lives and for truly being the reason I am capable of giving this little girl all of me. I wish I had the words to express just how grateful I am to have met each and every single one of you. There will always be a place in my heart for the family we built here at the Massey Centre.

Please always keep in touch!

With all my love,
Darlene

WHY?

A friend recently asked me why I support and give my time to Massey Centre. I first met the current CEO, Ekua Asabea Blair at Bowling for Babies 2009. I was impressed by her commitment, and that of the Board members at the event. Later on I called on Ekua to help with finding my daughter a place to experience "real life" by volunteering her time at Massey. Without a pause the response was "bring her in!" It showed me the compassion and willingness to help that permeates Massey. Later on an opportunity to give my time as a board member came up and I jumped at it. I have been on the board for two years and my commitment and belief in Massey Centre continues to grow.

For me, the thing that differentiates Massey Centre is the ability to change the lives of young vulnerable teen mothers and their babies for the long term. With the support of the infant mental health team on-site, young mothers are coached in bonding and attachment to their babies. This intervention transforms the life of each baby from an environment of potential toxic stress to a loving and nurturing one. These babies can develop and grow to their maximum potential. The cycle of poverty and abuse is being broken. This is a long term fix.

Susan Guichon
Supporter and Board Member

“ You don't realize how much you received at the Massey Centre until after you move out and live in the community. ”

WHAT IS BABY FEELING? WHAT IS BABY THINKING?

Baby Love - Supporting Infant Security helps to answer these questions while teaching parents about the importance of ensuring that their babies feel secure. It helps parents to recognize when their babies feel insecure and teaches how to change the situation.

The 12-week intervention program fosters the parents' development of healthy bonds so that the babies feel secure in their relationships and surroundings. The program was developed by a team led by Dr. Jean Wittenberg, Head of Infant Psychiatry at The Hospital for Sick Children and helps to foster secure attachment and hopefully to prevent attachment disorders in the babies.

Baby Love – Supporting Infant Security is part of a research project being offered at the Massey Centre's Ontario Early Years Centre under Dr. Wittenberg's guidance.

The weekly 2-hour **Baby Love – Supporting Infant Security** session welcomes up to 10 moms and their babies under 12 months old. "It helps parents recognize that babies have minds, and the experiences that we as caregivers offer our babies actually shape their minds," Wittenberg explained.

"We teach babies from earliest times how to deal with stress, and what to expect in the world. If they get positive, supportive, reassuring kinds of responses from their caregivers in the first year or two, there's a whole lot of very positive outcomes as a result."

"They seem to be able to deal with stress better for the rest of their lives, and it probably has an impact on physical health. They're better with peers, they're more school-ready when they start there, they're probably better parents later on. The babies learn that when they are distressed they can turn to their moms to feel safe and secure."

Security for a baby means that "I know you will come to me when I need you to make me feel safe or to comfort me."

Research shows that approximately 33% of children are insecure. Their insecurity resulted perhaps because their parents did not learn to feel secure. Parents' feelings of security may be affected by traumatic experiences or mental illness and they unknowingly show their insecurity to their babies.

Each **Baby Love – Supporting Infant Security** session consists of a check-in, mindfulness exercise, discussion of the home activity, teaching segment, group activity, infant observation and circle time which includes songs, rhymes and lullabies, and suggestions for home activities. Light refreshments are also provided for participants.

Moms who have completed the 12-week intervention session report having an increased awareness about attachment, enhanced knowledge of developmental milestones and ways to cope with feelings of anxiety, anger, depression and sadness. They are more aware of their babies' feelings. They know when and how to regulate their interactions with their babies and how to stay calm. The moms report they are better problem-solvers as a result of attending the program.

Perhaps most importantly the research that Wittenberg and his team have conducted has shown that mothers who go through the intervention are more sensitive to their babies' cues and are more likely to think about their babies' minds. Both are associated with babies who are more secure.



BUY! CLICK! GIVE AND HELP YOUNG MOMS AND BABIES

We will receive the **profit** from The Little Grape That Could (TLGTC) wines sold at LCBO stores across Ontario when you select the Massey Centre.

Next time you visit a LCBO store, remember to add The Little Grape That Could wines to your shopping cart. Then visit www.thelittlegrapethatcould.com, click on the Choose a Charity drop-down list and follow the instructions to direct the profit to The Massey Centre for Women. You will need to have available the code printed on the back of each bottle of wine. It's that simple. Buy! Click! Give!

Tell your friends, family and others about this new opportunity to support the Massey Centre when they purchase the highly rated red and white wines. You will be helping vulnerable and high-risk pregnant/parenting adolescents and their babies start new lives.

TLGTC is a Toronto-based non-profit wine company that helps other charities raise funds through the sale of its wines by donating all its profits to charities of the purchasers' choice.



SECOND CHANCES

For more than 112 years, the Massey Centre has been providing safe homes, care, treatment and support for single pregnant and parenting adolescents and their babies. The young women arrive unprepared for motherhood. They are poor, often homeless and many have been abused sexually or physically. Frequently they have child protection involvement, dropped out of high school, lived on the streets, have a history of substance abuse, mental health issues, and have little or no support from family or partners.

Eden felt fortunate because she had loving parents, lived comfortably and didn't have to worry about having a warm bed or a roof over her head or her next meal. But she became pregnant at age 17 and was given two choices: have an abortion and stay at home, or keep her baby and make new living arrangements. Eden was torn. She was young, had just returned to high school after dropping out at age 15, and had no money or means to support herself and a child. Eden chose to have her baby.

Three months pregnant, with little support from her parents, Eden moved into the Massey Centre's Prenatal residence. She willingly accepted the guidance and support from staff and never felt she was being judged. She felt, instead, that she belonged, as she was not the only pregnant teen at the Centre.

Eden stayed more than two years at the Massey Centre, where she participated in the Prenatal, Postnatal and Ontario Early Years Centre programs. She learned parenting skills and gained confidence in caring for her baby son, Quentin.

Eden registered at the onsite secondary school and completed the credits she needed to earn her secondary school diploma. She won scholarships from our Scholarship Fund and the United Church. As someone who always loved cooking and occasionally prepared meals for the other adolescents in residence, she completed the Hospitality and Culinary Arts program at George Brown College.

Eden has since changed careers to sales and service. She is now married, and Quentin, age 8, is doing well and enjoying a new brother. Eden is very thankful that the Massey Centre was available for her and remains available for other pregnant teens when they need a second chance.



Prenatal Residential client, Sara, painted the announcement of her daughter's birth.

“Our goals can only be reached through a vehicle of a plan, in which we must fervently believe, and upon which we must vigorously act. There is no other route to success.”
– Stephen A. Brennan

BOWLING FOR BABIES FUNDRAISER EVENT

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2014

12PM - 3PM

PLAYTIME BOWL

33 SAMOR RD.
TORONTO

TEAMS AND INDIVIDUALS WELCOME
LUNCH INCLUDED
SILENT AUCTION UNTIL 2:30PM
DONATIONS/PLEDGES MINIMUM \$120
SPONSORSHIP OPTIONS STILL AVAILABLE



You can help:

- form a team
- collect pledges
- be a Sponsor
- be a Lane Angel and support high-risk young women and their babies



FOR OVER 110 YEARS, THE MASSEY CENTRE FOR WOMEN HAS PROVIDED A HOME, HELP AND REFUGE FOR PREGNANT AND PARENTING TEENS AND THEIR INFANTS. FUNDS RAISED WILL HELP TO CONTINUE PROVIDING PROGRAMS AND SERVICES FOR THE YOUNG FAMILIES.

VISIT WWW.MASSEY.CA EMAIL: INFO@MASSEY.CA PHONE: 416 425 6348



Tessa Foote, presenting Ekua Asabea Blair, CEO with cheque from her lemonade stand event.

GET INVOLVED

There are so many ways **you can help** the Massey Centre to continue providing support, care, treatment and other services for the pregnant and parenting young moms and their babies. Your gift will help them start new successful lives in the community!

You can:

- ①.....Make a donation
- ②.....Become a Best Start Monthly Giving donor
- ③.....Host an event and designate the Massey Centre to receive the proceeds
- ④.....Purchase The Little Grape That Could wines at LCBO stores, visit www.thelittlegrapethatcould.com and select The Massey Centre for Women to receive the profit
- ⑤.....Remember the Massey Centre in your Will
- ⑥.....Become a member and vote at the Annual General Meeting
- ⑦.....Tell others about the work of the Massey Centre
- ⑧.....Volunteer and support the young moms

DONATION FORM

YES! I want to help new young moms and their babies start new 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 **business** 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 Visa MasterCard

Card Number: _____ Expiry Date: ____/____

Name exactly as shown on card: _____

Cardholder Signature: _____

Name for Acknowledgement Purposes (if applicable): _____

Thank you for your support!

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Charitable Registration No 11928 3687 RR0001

Make your donation by Tuesday, December 31, 2013 and get a 2013 charitable tax receipt!



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