



## My view — a mother's story

SPRING 2021

I was admitted into Marillac Place in August 2020 in the middle of a pandemic. I found out about Marillac Place through other women who accessed their services in the past.

I wanted to create a more stable living situation and build a better support system for myself so I could gain custody of my children. I was a shy person, but I felt I was accepted by the girls and staff. I was on the streets and couch hopping before moving into Marillac Place, so being given essentials like bedding, shampoo and stuff for my youngest child made an easier transition for me and I felt safe for once.

The staff were super supportive in everything I was choosing to do. They helped me navigate a housing plan, gain new parenting skills, work on my anger management, and become the voice I needed to support me in gaining more access to my youngest child. They helped me show Family and Children's Services that I was really trying to better myself.

I am extremely grateful for the staff who helped me feel like this was a home and encouraged me to keep going every day! The other mothers were like sisters to me. They all supported me in being a better mom. If I needed someone to listen or lend a hand in parenting, there was always another mom there to help. I accomplished many things while staying at Marillac Place. I attended counselling sessions, attended programming, my access increased for my son, I found housing and set up further supports so when I move into my own place next week I have the support needed to stay successful.



My advice to any mother who is struggling with losing her children, leaving any unhealthy situations, trying to stay clean or just giving up hope is to access Marillac Place because I was able to rebuild myself in such an empowering way. It has me feeling ready to keep going on my journey and to show the world who I truly am, which is a great mother!

Also, please do not give up hope because there is someone out there who will listen and believe in you! You are not alone!



**MARILLAC  
PLACE**

Building Blocks  
for Brighter Futures

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## Counselling supports onsite at Marillac Place



In October of 2020, Marillac Place partnered with Carizon Family and Community Services to provide virtual counselling to all our residents until June 2021. Funded by a generous grant from the Emergency Community Support Fund, the new counselling program provided critical mental health resources to help the women under our roof weather the pandemic. New data suggests that our counselling program could not have come at a better time.

Statistics Canada has tracked how mental health has declined across the country over the course of the pandemic and suggests these declines are most pronounced for youth ages 15-34. They observed

that women, parents, those experiencing financial instability and those with a history of poor mental health are most susceptible. Furthermore, a study conducted in Italy found that new mothers were facing much higher rates of post-partum depression than before the onset of the pandemic.

While the need for help is increasing, Mental Health Research Canada documented a sharp decline in the availability of mental health resources with the onset of the pandemic. While the country continues to adapt mental health services to the new normal, access to counselling has still not reached pre-pandemic levels.

We are very fortunate to have hired our own onsite counsellor to provide support to our residents as they navigate lockdowns with their children. Seventy-three percent of our mom's have chosen to see our new onsite counsellor and 75% report that they would like to see the onsite counselling program continue into the future.

We are currently looking at ways to be able to continue to offer this service beyond June through working with our important partners and funders in Waterloo Region. Please contact us if you would like to learn more.

## Staff highlight – Case Manager, Miriam Hill

Hello, my name is Miriam and I am the Case Manager at Marillac Place. I have been at Marillac Place since 2016, starting off as relief staff and moving into the role of Case Manager in 2018. I have a university degree in social work and have been working in children's mental health for six years.

My role as Case Manager is to help the women at Marillac Place develop a goal plan during their stay that highlights areas such as parenting, housing and life skill development. In my work, I hope to empower women to better prepare them for independent living. Though due to COVID-19 our interactions with the women and children look different, my favourite part of the job remains the same: to watch as the babies grow and develop over time during their stay.

In my spare time I enjoy getting outside and being active. I also enjoy sewing and have taken up my own small business in handmade hair accessories. Marillac Place has played a major part in my social work career and I am hopeful that the organization can continue to provide support to the women and their children for many more years.



## Volunteer spotlight — why I give back, Bristi Deb

My name is Bristi Deb. I am a young mother to an almost 2-year-old; how time flies! I am a Fundraising Committee member at Marillac Place. I want to begin by saying, we are making history and this year is yet another milestone. We are resilient because we have come a long way, and with the vaccine rollout, let us hope for good health for all. When the lockdown began just over a year ago, it was very overwhelming for me as a first-time mother to navigate this new lifestyle, which I had to immediately adjust to with fears of the unknown. I am grateful to have my family by my side to support me every step of the way. Amidst all of this, I am also fortunate to have started pursuing a master's degree while providing optimal care for my child. I say all this because I know I am privileged. I am also aware that not everyone, especially mothers, have the opportunities that I have had.

Marillac Place supports disadvantaged mothers and expectant mothers who are homeless, survivors of abuse and battling mental health issues, which are further exacerbated by COVID-19. As a mother myself, I cannot imagine how they are managing childcare with the added pressures of the pandemic.



I joined Marillac Place as my way to help mother-led families get back on their feet and reduce inequitable access to healthcare, education and career opportunities to self-sustain and live a convivial life. I envision mothers to have equal opportunity as myself to be successful.

This year will be the second year that we do a virtual Baby Bottle Campaign and the funds generated by generous donors like yourself are paramount in providing the necessary supports our clients require.

This Mother's Day, I encourage you to donate and spread the love. It is through your donations that we can help mothers see a brighter future for themselves and their children.

*“A mother is she who can take the place of all others but whose place no one can take.”*

*- Cardinal Mermillod*

Thank you,

Bristi



## Update from the Executive Director



Dear Friends,

It is our hope that despite the many challenges we have faced together over the past year, you are reading this newsletter and feeling a sense of hope and renewed energy for Spring and the times that lie ahead.

At Marillac Place, we have worked hard all year to ensure that the women and their children have a safe and productive shared living experience. With ongoing health concerns and the introduction of new safety measures, this process has been difficult at times. But we have come together, our staff, our volunteers, our board members and our dedicated community of donors and partners to ensure we can continue to support the mothers that come to us asking for help.

Last year, because of you, we were able to, first and foremost, keep our doors open. We were also able to introduce an onsite counsellor, hire a co-op student, implement improved training programs and a sick day policy for staff, make some much-needed renovations to the property, and start work on a new strategic plan. We have made incredible progress together despite the wrench this pandemic has thrown in our paths.

None of this could have been accomplished without support from our generous funders, including the Region of Waterloo, the Lyle S. Hallman Foundation, the Kitchener-Waterloo Community Foundation, the Kitchener-Waterloo Catholic Community Foundation, the Home Depot Foundation, the Covid-19 Community Response Fund, the Emergency Community Support Fund, and the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul. Our community of churches, businesses and individual donors have also been there to hold us up all along the way.

We will be dedicating the 2021 Baby Bottle Campaign in honour of the many women adversely impacted by the unfortunate events of COVID-19: Those who may have lost their homes, those who lost their jobs, those who endured domestic abuse, those who struggled with greater mental health challenges, and the many moms grappling with the demands of childcare responsibilities at an unprecedented time in history.

With present day affordable housing challenges in our Region, we are especially reminded of our vision - *that every mother & child facing homelessness in Waterloo Region has the opportunity to recover and rebuild to ensure a successful future.*

We are eager to see Marillac Place achieve new milestones over the next several years, and optimistic that we will lift many more women and their children out of poverty and into brighter futures. Later in 2021 we look forward to unveiling a new strategic plan, a new planned giving program, some further property renovations that will help keep our residents safe, and much more.

Thank you for standing with us for over 30 years and believing in our mission to *support new mothers and mothers-to-be facing homelessness in Waterloo Region by providing a safe living environment, teaching parenting & life skills and developing supportive relationships.*

Sincerely, Tammy Northam, Executive Director

### Baby Bottle Campaign

*in support of Marillac Place  
Mother's Day to Father's Day*

Marillac Place supports new mothers and mothers-to-be facing homelessness in Waterloo Region by providing a safe living environment, teaching parenting & life skills and developing supportive relationships.



**Baby Bottle Campaign**  
DONATE NOW @ [WWW.MARILLACPLACE.CA/DONATE](http://WWW.MARILLACPLACE.CA/DONATE)

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