



reflections

My View from the House

Winter 2020

I heard about Marillac Place when I was living in a women’s shelter out of Napanee, Ontario. I had a file with the Children’s Aid Society at that time and was trying to be the best teen mom I could be. My son’s father had recently left, leaving me to raise our two-month-old son on my own. At eighteen I thought I knew what I was doing but soon realized there was much more to learn. So, my little boy and I got on a train with two suitcases, a stroller, and a car seat and headed out to Kitchener where my life changed forever.

I was welcomed with open arms by Marillac Place staff and the other mothers there. I made friends that I still have six years later. We were required to do chores and to keep our rooms clean. We attended groups every couple of days which helped us interact with our children. We were required to continue school if we did not graduate already and Marillac Place helped us find childcare for school hours. I only stayed at Marillac Place for about three months but in that time, I not only learned how to be a mother to the best of my abilities, but how to love myself and accept that my situation is not a mistake. The Children's Aid Society closed my file, I received a few credits to add to my high school transcript, and I learned skills I will carry forever.

If you would have asked me before I went to Marillac Place where I thought I would be in five years, I can promise you I would not have said somewhere successful. Taking the little bit I had then and moving three hours away from everything I knew ended up being the best thing I could have done. I went on to be a single mother who put herself through college and became a successful PSW. I am thankful to Marillac Place for believing in me from day one. I am the teen



we're all in this together



This year has presented Marillac Place with unforeseen challenges. We have had to quickly adjust our programming to align with social distancing restrictions brought on by the pandemic, and work harder with less resources. But despite a difficult 2020, our donors have been the heroes that are pulling us through this challenging time.

With the generous support from individuals, churches, foundations, and others, Marillac Place has been able to cover the cost of day-to-day operations and additional expenses incurred due to the pandemic. Most importantly, your support has kept the women and children healthy and safe.

This year, Marillac Place has also been able to hire an on-site counsellor and a co-op student who are playing important roles in helping us support our residents through these trying times.

The staff and board members at Marillac Place want to thank all our supporters for standing by our side during these hard times, and for being flexible as we moved to a virtual fundraising campaign. It’s your kindness that has lifted us all up and kept us going. Thank you from all of us at Marillac Place.



Building Blocks
for Brighter Futures

Young Wes Gives Gifts for his 4th Birthday



Our family began bringing in-kind donations to Marillac Place a few years ago. When Wes was very young we began including him by having him pick out a shampoo or body wash while we did our weekly grocery shopping. This quickly became the highlight of every grocery shopping day for Wes, as he had full say over which item would be picked to send. Over the past couple of years, Wes has helped buy, collect and deliver in-kind donations to the house — sometimes even trying to send his favourite toys.

For Wes's 4th birthday he invited his family and friends to a Paw Patrol themed party in which he asked his guests to bring donations for Marillac Place instead of buying him a present. He was excited to share his love of giving with his guests. Wes's incredibly generous guests responded to his call to action with full hearts and full bags of in-kind donations.

Wes continues his enthusiastic quest to gather donations for Marillac because in his words, he "wants to help the Mommies and Babies".

Thank you Wes and family for your continued support. We are truly grateful.

We express our gratitude to all of our donors. To each and everyone of you who gave or collected donations for Marillac Place through friends, groups, schools, churches and workplaces — we thank you!

This type of community aid is at the heart of our organization. Your show of support to our residents is a true demonstration of a community who cares!

Covid Recovery Fundraising Craft Sale



We had a lot of fun holding this 'pop up craft for charity event'. It was a great way to connect with lots of people and help build awareness for the mission of Marillac Place. The feedback on the event has been so positive that we hope other groups of crafters and artists might be able to do something similar to 'Do More Good'.

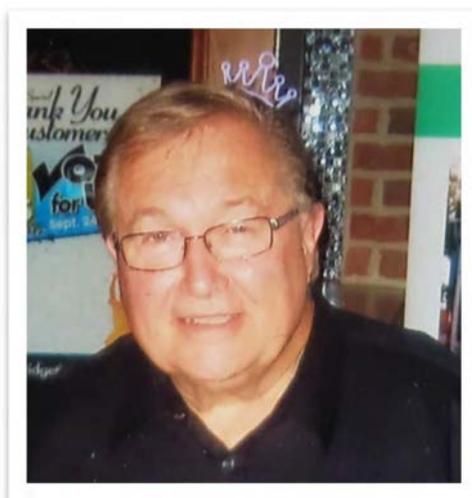
Best,

Dave Rutherord, on behalf of Barbara Hill, Jody Thornback, Sandy Westfall and Adrienne Macfarlane

Volunteer Spotlight—Walt Sowinski

My name is Walt Sowinski. I am a retired Special Education Teacher and a single parent of a son and two adopted daughters. I have volunteered for many community organizations over the years. I joined the Board of Marillac Place twelve years ago. At the time, it was at risk of closing its doors due to lack of funding. The first two years focused on reviewing funding practices and building community awareness. With renewed support from St. Vincent De Paul, regional government, community grants and private and corporate donors, a new hope was established.

Board membership was a challenge at times over the years. The present board represents many years of hard work and follows the commitment the original St. Vincent de Paul Board Members had thirty years ago. The greatest credit goes to the staff within those doors. Their leadership and selflessness has never wavered. So many young mothers and their babies were the beneficiaries.



A few words about Walt from a fellow board member:

As a former member of the Board of Directors, I and others are inspired by Walt's passion. One can always count on Walt's connections to find someone to perform a repair, pick up donations, or be a last-minute public speaker. Walt is a walking billboard and does not miss any opportunity to raise awareness about what Marillac Place provides.

Currently Past President, Walt has served in various capacities on the board. He's witnessed organizational history. He has helped us remember the milestones and sometimes little and bigger Miracles of God's good graces that make up the continuing story of Marillac Place. Walt's ever-present sense of humour (we affectionately refer to as "Waltism's") are part of the character that exudes from him being the man he is.

Mother Teresa said, "The fruit of prayer is Service." Walt Sowinski remains a living example of St. Louis de Marillac's passion & prayer filled service. Like Walt, you are invited to bring your talents to volunteering with Marillac Place.

~ Sharon Penlington

Donor Spotlight—Dr. Amelia Yip

Dr. Amelia Yip, a cardiologist at St. Mary's General Hospital, understands how challenging motherhood can be. As a busy mom of three young boys, she is humbled by the support system in her own life and wishes to extend these privileges to more women in the community. Dr. Yip is a regular Baby Bottle Campaign donor at Marillac Place. She also recently gifted a dresser and crib to a mom who moved out of Marillac Place. In her own words, here is why she continues to support our organization:



"All three of my pregnancies went very well, but I wasn't prepared for how life-altering the experience of parenthood really is. It was a tough transition for me. Each of my kids brought on their own set of challenges, but fortunately I have the necessary support to handle them. Not all women in my community are as lucky and that's why I'm inspired to help them navigate the early years of motherhood through my involvement with Marillac Place."

Thank you Dr. Yip and to all of the generous donors who have supported Marillac Place year over year.

Meet Greta James, Program Developer

I joined Marillac Place in November 2019, as the new Program Developer. I was hired as part of an exciting grant that we received from the Lyle Hallman Foundation which is allowing us to re-examine and re-define all the programming and services we provide to the women and children we serve.

I have been meeting weekly with staff to go over our current programs. Staff expertise has been valuable to help identify our existing strengths and offer insights on how and where we might fill the gaps.

Over the past year, we have conducted a series of interviews with current and past residents of Marillac Place to get their perspectives. They shared what parts of our programming were most helpful in their journey and what other resources they would have found useful. They identified the warmth and connection with staff during their stay as having been critical for them, but they expressed a desire to see a more extensive outreach program, so that they can continue that connection after they have left.

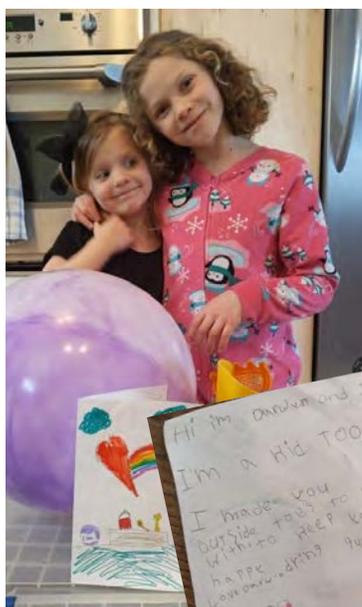
Early in the project I visited other homes like ours and spoke with their staff and some of their current residents. I learned how valuable counselling was in the healing process for their clients. This September through funding from the Emergency Community Support Fund, we partnered with Carizon to start an in-house counselling program. This initiative will help promote mental health through the pandemic and going forward. We look forward to measuring its success.

We look forward to continuing our efforts to redefine our programming for 2021. Thank you to the Lyle Hallman Foundation for making this important project possible.

~ Greta James



LYLE S. HALLMAN
FOUNDATION



While stuck at home during the Covid-19 quarantine, Darwin and Ada thought of the little ones at Marillac Place stuck inside like them. They asked if they could send some toys, so they could play outside during quarantine. The kids hope that the toys will help others feel happier during this time. It certainly made them feel great to help!

Thank you to Darwin and Ada for your special gift of a mini sandbox and outside toys!



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