



Shifra Homes Inc.

Annual Newsletter
ISSUE
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Contact Info

Main:

Office: (905) 681-9633

Fax: (905) 681-9572

Staff:

Nancy Romic –
Executive Director
Ext. 222

Amy Raymond –
Program Manager
Ext. 223

Deline Anthonypillai –
Administrator
Ext. 221

Facebook:

www.facebook.com/shifrahomes

Website:

www.shifrahomes.com

Mailing Address:

3350 Fairview St. Suite
#3-226B
Burlington, ON
L7N 3L5

Funding from The Regional
Municipality of Halton

**Homelessness Prevention &
Intervention Strategy**

Community Investment Fund

We are always grateful to our
corporate sponsorships
including:

Hadrian Manufacturing Inc.

Boehringer Ingelheim

Voortman Ltd.

United Way

Welcome Back Everyone!

So much has happened in the last year that we don't even know where to begin! The most important news to mention is that with your help we supported numerous young mothers through our two main programs.

We had summer picnics with the residents and students, a wine & cheese dinner fundraiser with **Reach Out Burlington**, professional photography by **Julie Rock** and **Robynn Munnings**, and extensive renovations in the home. We have another year of renovations ahead of us, which we can always use help with! The **Burlington Professional Firefighters Association** will be helping us tear down our kitchen for a makeover this summer. And **Home Depot** is helping us with supplies.

IN 2015 YOU HELPED US
PROVIDE INDIVIDUAL
COUNSELLING TO NUMEROUS
YOUNG MOTHERS

Seeds of Hope Program

We implemented our second-stage program a couple of years ago, which we've been developing and expanding each year, and 2015 was our first year to receive government funding. **Halton Region** has been supporting us through their **Homelessness Prevention and Intervention Strategy** and their **Community Investment Fund**. With their support, we are working in Halton to reduce youth homelessness and prevent youth from returning to homelessness. In 2015 we were able to receive funding to assist our young mothers financially for up to one year following discharge. We were also able to send volunteers to visit them and assist them with school work and babysitting. We are very proud to say that with this program, we have guaranteed the success of every single mother and child. We have stopped the cycle of poverty, homelessness, abuse and neglect and started new traditions and new happy families. And that is the impact we make with every single family we support. We could not make this difference without the support of our amazing volunteers and donors, who always provide for us when we need it most.

New Programs of 2016

Counselling:

Partway through the year, psychotherapist **Christina Janiga-Manning** had been contracted to assist our residents with their mental health needs. She has been visiting our Home once a week and conducting individual counselling sessions ever since. Once a month she also holds group sessions that center on various topics including self-esteem, the cycle of abuse, and healthy relationships. For individual sessions in 2015, we have been able to provide 65 hours of psychotherapy for our residents. And in group sessions, we have been able to provide 20 hours.



At the end of the year, we received a very generous donation from the **Mary Kay Ash Foundation** which will allow us to fund an expansion of this service in 2016 so that we may also provide sessions for our previous residents in our Seeds of Hope Program, as well as the clients that are on our waiting list through our Outreach Support Program. This grant is an amazing opportunity to continue to support young women in the community, as waiting lists for mental health assistance are generally quite long and tiresome. We are extremely happy to be able to connect more individuals with the help and support they need.

Art Therapy with the Art Gallery of Burlington:



Lead by art therapist **Becky Hewis**, workshops are held in-house and allow residents to try out and learn different art techniques. Our girls in our Seeds of Hope Program stop by to visit and participate as well. It's a fun space to interact with each other and get creative.

Storytime with Lorna, Julie & Shannon:



TV Personality Lorna Dueck from "**Context with Lorna Dueck**" on CBC, and parishioners from **Burlington Alliance Church** started a weekly program called Storytime for our residents. Lorna, Julie and Shannon have been bringing in women to share stories about the similar challenges that they have faced in their lives and how they overcame them. These women have provided our young mothers with role models and mentors, and most importantly hope for the future. This program is a weekly event that we are so happy to say has been running strong since it started. For our religious residents, it has also allowed those interested to get more spiritual support and interaction as well. These ladies have also taken our mothers on outings during Storytime to places such as a Maple Syrup Farm.

YMCA Employment Workshops:



The **YMCA of Hamilton/Burlington/Brantford** began employment workshops for the residents in-house. Their outreach community workers came and conducted various sessions on different topics for our girls over the span of two months. We intend on making this an annual program so that each group of residents can participate.

Upcoming Events!

Summer Kitchen Renovations



This summer we are tearing out our kitchen and completely redesigning and remodeling it for our residents with help from the **Burlington Professional Firefighters Association** and **Home Depot**.

Annual BBQ



This year we plan on having a BBQ again with our current and previous mothers and babies, along with our volunteers who have selflessly dedicated their time and service to our mission.

Fall Baby Bottle Campaigns



Fall is our second main fundraising season of the year where we hold Baby Bottle Campaigns with participating churches, schools and businesses.

Thank You Volunteers!

Our amazing volunteers have been such wonderful support for our residents and our programs. We've had cooks, donation collectors, teachers, photographers, handymen, doulas, storytellers, hairstylists, babysitters, and more over the last year.

Linda Wright
Lisa Di Palma
Ron Faubert

Dr. Elizabeth Vella
Julie Rock Photography
Heather Vanderkruk
Jennifer Kelly
Kate Bondy
Grace- Kindermusik
Linda Koziol
Louise Giancobbo
Lorna Dueck
Julie Beattie
Shannon Graham
Kathryn Czarnik
Candace Jagt
Louise DesRochers

Aisha's Story

We all come from extremely different backgrounds. Each and every girl bringing about a diverse set of emotional, intellectual and psychological attributes. Some of us have been raised privileged, with a place to call home our entire lives, have attended University and never known the hardship of financial difficulties. Others, quite imposingly, are unfortunately way too familiar with the struggle to keep a roof over their heads and the adversities of poverty. However, no matter the obvious disparities, we all shared one incredibly uniting experience, motherhood. I found out I was pregnant in my second year of University; I had been dating this guy on and off for the past four years. Following my decision to continue on with the pregnancy, the father had left me and I had been kicked out of my home. This was most definitely the scariest and loneliest moment of my life. I reached out to Compass Point and they put me in contact with the Shifra Homes. Nancy, the Executive Director of Shifra, welcomed me in with open arms, both literally and figuratively. She made sure to get to know me, and to make me feel respected, valued and appreciated. She makes sure the house is filled with love, support and opportunity. My little man is the happiest, most patient and content toddler in the world. I truly believe he is this way due to the fact that he never, not for a single second, felt abandoned- and that's in part due to the support that I received from Shifra Homes. The people who generously donate, the health providers who diligently take care of us, the students who encourage us, and the loving, understanding women who run the program all the while standing by our side every step of the way, made this possible. Going back to Shifra isn't unlike going back home, it was and will remain, till the day it stays standing, my safe haven- and for this, I am forever grateful.



Message from the Executive Director



Where does one begin to summarize the beauty of witnessing miracles every day? These last 4 years have passed by so quickly. While my job might not be physically demanding it is very emotionally difficult. During the first couple of years I honestly did not even have a chance at times to take a breath because there was always so much to do and so many young women to help. Not to mention rebranding Shifra Homes, constant renovations, long waiting lists, births and assisting these young women at their time of need.

Shifra Homes is a bustling house in a quiet neighbourhood filled with chatter, laughter, tears and love. Lots of love. Not only are these young women supported throughout their pregnancy, but they are now enveloped with an umbrella of care once they transition back into the community.

Our new program **Seeds of Hope** is one of my greatest accomplishments in changing the future of these young women and babies. Shifra's transformation has not been without hard work. I persevere because of my unwavering belief in the need for the home and my conviction that I am the voice of these young vulnerable women who find shelter under Shifra's roof.

For a woman that had no biological daughters of her own, I can say that I have had the privilege and honour of being a mother to so many amazing young women. Shifra Homes will always be their home and they can always return and visit as they always do. As I have grown and developed Shifra Homes, my time and work is continuous. The most rewarding feeling is watching these young women transform into wonderful mothers.

It is each and every one of you that assists me in this journey of being able to do what I do. While it is my vision and hard work that makes everything come together, I would not be able to have a vision or do the work that I do without the support of each and every person that supports Shifra in some way.

Shifra Homes is where miracles happen. Thank you for helping us make miracles come to life.

With the greatest gratitude!
Nancy Romic
Executive Director



Canadian Million Dollar Roundtable Foundation & Shifra in the Media

Thanks to a sponsorship by Knight Stephen Pustai, we were able to receive a \$5,000.00 grant from the Canadian Million Dollar Roundtable Foundation. Under Stephen's direction, we were able to have Mayor Goldring come in and visit the house, meet our staff and residents and participate in a photo-op where we received the grant cheque.

