



BUILDING BRIDGES

PC: Josh Willink, Pexels.com

It takes various loving and caring hands within and outside every home to build strong families. From the nurturing hands of a mom or dad, to the skillful hands of childcare providers, teachers, doctors, and many other individuals who help support families --- it indeed takes a whole village to raise a child.

At Beginnings, we find ways to connect our families with other local resources. Doing so helps to provide them with every tool they need to move towards creating a positive and nurturing home for their children.

As we listen to the needs of our clients and see how our programs can serve them, we are also exploring possible opportunities to bridge them to other agencies in the community.

A woman who once came with a pregnancy crisis also had a housing challenge which another organization was better equipped to assist. While Beginnings helped her prepare for childbirth, our staff advocated on her behalf to access housing support. Another client came with a parenting concern which was related to other deeper issues, so as we supported her with our programs, we also referred her to a professional psychotherapist. We have heard stories from many of the moms we serve who are now in a much better place in their family life because of the connections Beginnings built for them.

Certainly, every organization sees eye to eye when it comes to the value of collaboration. A number of clients found their way to our Care Centre because an agency

referred them to us. Beginnings is truly blessed to have such strong partnerships with various local organizations, churches, and community groups here in Guelph so that many of our clients receive a holistic sense of support towards building stronger and healthier families.

Our Spring newsletter celebrates the bridges we have built within and around our community --- from partnering agencies, to local donors and businesses, to civic groups, churches, and volunteers.

These bridges have all helped ensure **every baby in our community is fed and clothed, every parent empowered, and every family is connected to other community resources. THANK YOU TO ALL OUR BRIDGE BUILDERS!**

OUR PARTNERING AGENCIES

[Agencies that have referred clients to OR accepted referrals from us]

- Family & Children's Services of Guelph & Wellington County
- Guelph Food Bank
- Immigrant Services-Guelph Wellington
- Lakeside Hope House
- Michael House
- Ontario Works
- Public Health
- The Car Seat Fund of Sanctuary Outreach
- The Drop-In Centre
- The Gabriel Project
- The Life Centre
- Wyndham House
- YMCA TAPPS



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2018 CHRISTMAS HAMPER PROGRAM

By Lynn Ker, Program Coordinator

Smiles, giggles and many expressions of thankfulness abounded in our office this past Christmas holiday.

Continuing the tradition of our Christmas Hamper Program, we were blessed to have the support of our generous donors in making this year a brilliant success. We had 18 families sign up for Christmas Hampers, 10 being new Canadian families!

It's not only our clients who feel blessed by our Christmas hamper program. Our donors feel just as excited when Christmas time rolls around and it's time to give.

When asked how participating in the program has made a positive impact in their family, Joanne noted, "This has become one of the most important traditions in our family at Christmas. Instead of buying presents we don't need, my husband Robert and I, along with our daughter and son-in-law, aunt and uncle, decided to make another family's Christmas brighter. With the family's Christmas wish list in hand, we each shop and then all gather together at my aunt and uncle's for dinner to show what we have purchased and then wrap the gifts! This is so much fun! We agree that it is 'truly better to give than to receive'."

As Christmas time is truly the season of giving in Guelph and here at Beginnings, we were incredibly blessed by a group of amazing donors who chose to make Christmas time a lot brighter for our families. The smiles around our little Christmas tree were definitely merry and bright! ~



"Thank you! God Bless you for this family who gave us these beautiful gifts. This is a lot for us thanks again and again. Wish you a merry Christmas and happy new year."
- New Canadian client

Photo used with clients' permission.


YOUR DONATION AT WORK IN 2018

 Over 180 cans of formula were given away.

 More than 1,300 bags of diapers (close to 16,000 pcs) distributed.

 300 unique clients served.

 49 new clients welcomed.

 18 pregnant moms in prenatal classes.

 107 Newcomer families assisted.

 29 Newborn babies welcomed.

 6 women received pregnancy support counseling.

 258 high school students empowered towards healthy relationships.

MEET BEGINNINGS GUELPH'S NEW ADVISORY COMMITTEE

2018 and early 2019 welcomed four new members to Beginnings Guelph's Advisory Committee (AC).



Mark Brown sits as the AC Chair, but has served as a member of the committee during the early years of Beginnings Guelph. He played an instrumental role in helping provide the agency its first Care Centre. As a local businessman, Mark has since continued supporting the work of Beginnings in various ways.



John Tierra heard about Beginnings, its work, and the opportunity to serve as Treasurer in the AC near the end of 2018. As the Director & Senior Investment Counselor for BMO Private Banking, John saw Beginnings' need for a Treasurer as a meaningful opportunity that matched his interest in giving back to the community as well as his skills in the financial field.



Ricki Lee Bristow serves as the AC Secretary and is not new to Beginnings. For many years, Ricki Lee was the volunteer coordinator of Beginnings' successful annual fundraiser, the Walk/Run. As the owner of Good Samaritan First Aid, Ricki brings to the table her community knowledge and child health and safety skills.



Amy Sonnenberg discovered Beginnings in 2018 as a local donor after her successful ladies' event in St. Jacobs called *Replenish* decided to donate to Beginnings Guelph. A registered holistic nutritionist, Amy sees her role in the AC as an opportunity to use her skills in event planning and social media marketing to give back to the community in a way that positively impacts future generations.

FOR VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES, VISIT BEGINNINGS.CA/GUELPH/

VOLUNTEERS



I have been involved with BFS Guelph in various volunteer capacities over the last 12 years, including holding a position as AC member for 6 of those years. As a not-for-profit organization there is a lot of work and prayer that goes on behind the scenes. For every bit of it there is a client, family and/or baby being supported in a positive, personal and difference-making way. We were designed to thrive in community. Supporting our community is what BFS Guelph and volunteering there is all about.

- Jen D'Elia, past AC Secretary (2012-2018)



Beginnings wishes to thank Jen D'Elia and Tara Kanerva for their years of faithful service in the Guelph Advisory Committee. Both Jen and Tara continue to serve as active volunteers for the annual Family Adventure Challenge (FAC) fundraiser.

GUELPH CARE CENTRE VOLUNTEER STAFF



PC: Camila Taborda

L-R: Barb, Prenatal Class Facilitator; Laurie, Prenatal Class Facilitator; Wendy, Parenting Class Facilitator; Sandy, Care Cupboard staff; Mary, Newcomer Moms English Conversation Circle Facilitator

OTHER VOLUNTEERS

Matt Goodrum, Bookkeeper
Camila Taborda, Photographer
Dennis Forsyth, FAC Committee
Michelle Noble, FAC Committee
Rob van de Pol, FAC Committee
Louis Patrick, FAC Committee



**THANK YOU TO OUR 2018
CHURCH/BUSINESS/COMMUNITY PARTNERS**

- | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| 2241856 Ontario Ltd | Guelph Bible Chapel |
| Allcard Ltd | Guelph Community Foundation |
| Apollo Health & Beauty Care | Guelph Twines Ltd. |
| Bethel Christian Reformed Church | Inspired Outcomes Corp. |
| Bingeman's | J. Wayne Arnott Investments |
| Blue Ocean Office Supplies & Solutions | Lodder Brothers Limited |
| Caissa LLP | Marsman Music Centre |
| Canadian Reformed Church of Fergus North | Miller Thomson LP |
| Car Lane Auto Centre | MSW Plastics |
| Coldwell Banker Neuman Real Estate Brokerage | New Life Christian Reformed Church |
| Crestwicke Baptist Church | Parkview Church |
| DK Philips Consulting Inc. | Resurrection Christian Academy |
| Eden Web Assets Inc. | Riverside Community Reformed Church |
| EDIL Steel Manufacturing Inc. | RJ Burnside & Associates Limited |
| Eramosa Physiotherapy Associates | RM Construction |
| Everton Community Church | Rotary Club of Guelph Trillium |
| Exeter Christian Reformed Church | Schiedel Construction Inc. |
| First Christian Reformed Church | Sportchek |
| Framing Futures Inc. | Strive Inc. |
| Gourmet Meats Limited | The UPS Store # 47 |
| Grace Community Church | Walmart Stone Road |
| Granite Homes East Inc. | |

Thank you to all our 2018 individual donors!

CARE CUPBOARD NEEDS

- Sizes 4-6 diapers (highest in demand)
- Boys' sleepers 6-9 mos, 12 mos, 18 & 24 mos.
- Boys' underwear 18 & 24 mos.
- Boys' outfits 18 & 24 mos.
- Girls' sleepwear and underwear 24 mos.
- Maternity tops and bottoms
- Car seat covers

SAVE THE DATE



Saturday, September 21st

Christmas Surprises from JUST RIGHT



JUST RIGHT

Like most places, December is always the craziest, busiest month at Beginnings Guelph Care Centre, although this time, one may have to add "most fantabulous" to that description. The gift from Grace Community Church's **JUST RIGHT** was exactly that --- just right!

Beginnings staff along with the Advisory Committee decided to use the unexpected donation to come up with an exciting *Scratch n' Win* Christmas surprise for the moms and dads, and families who regularly visit our Care Centre to access vital resources for their children. Scratch cards (as shown here) were quickly made, thanks to a local donor, and clients who came in the middle of the month got the chance to scratch and see what they got. The look on their faces once they found out was priceless!

Little Kara* happened to come with her mom and dad on one of those days, so she picked a card to scratch and see her surprise gift --- a \$50 Walmart gift card! The loud "Whaattt?? Wow! Yay! Woohoo!!" filled the entire centre and added more Christmas joy around all the other families and kids. A total of 14 families received a wonderful surprise gift because of the Christmas donation, ranging from \$50 to \$25 Walmart gift cards to large boxes of diapers.

"I came to receive my monthly supply of a dozen diapers and I get to go home with 1 large box of it instead!" exclaimed Gracie*. It was truly a merry Christmas and one could not help but say the timing of the gifts was **JUST RIGHT!**

*client aliases

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Guelph Care Centre Staff:

Liz Tettman, Operations Asst.
Lynn Ker, Program Coordinator
Cherylynn Lumasag, Director

Advisory Committee:

Mark Brown
John Tierra,
Ricki Lee Bristow
Amy Sonnenberg