



# MELISSA'S VICTORY

**Melissa\* is a petite lady**, with an easy smile and a ready laugh despite the many battles she has had to fight through in life. Some stories just have a way of crawling deep into your heart and soul, and Melissa's is one of those.

For many years, Melissa struggled to overcome substance abuse and because of that, she received a lot of intervention from local agencies to ensure her children and babies grew up in a safe and healthy home. It was then that Melissa learned about Beginnings. Through our parenting support programs, she was encouraged by staff and volunteers to bravely pursue complete recovery. As a result, she was determined to become a better mom so that she can truly nurture her children. With the help of various community agencies including Beginnings, Melissa persevered through the rehabilitation process, beat her addictions and has kept herself sober for several years now.

Melissa's new baby was born premature and realizing that she did not have the right size of clothing prepared for her little one, Melissa came straight to Beginnings from the hospital. She knew we would be able to supply her with the extra clothing she needed to fit her tiny little one and we even found a car seat cover to go over her

new car seat! Today, Melissa continues to check in with Beginnings and access our Care Cupboard as needed. Always cheerful, with her baby and toddler tagging along, one could never surmise the kind of life Melissa has been through.

Melissa's courage is reminiscent of a familiar account in the Bible where Peter, one of Jesus' disciples, dared to step out of the boat in the middle of a storm to walk on water towards Jesus. Her decision to pursue hope and complete recovery from years of substance abuse so that she can be the best mom to her children is not far different from Peter's miraculous feat. Melissa dared to continue taking brave steps forward in the middle of a storm. In moments when she felt like sinking in the process, Beginnings staff, together with other community partners, did what Jesus did to Peter when he was sinking. We all extended our hands with God's grace to pull her up, helped her overcome her fears and doubts, so she can keep on taking small steps forward. We are indeed blessed to be a part of empowering Melissa in her parenting journey, and we look forward to witnessing many other moms like her see their own stories of victory unfold. ~

\*At Beginnings, we respect everyone who comes to us for help --- and many are working toward a fresh start in life. So while their stories are true, client names and images may have been changed to protect their privacy.

# NEWS & UPDATES

## 1-ON-1 PARENTING CLASSES

Last year, Beginnings Guelph was blessed to receive a grant from the Guelph Community Foundation to launch a pilot program called Parenting 101, which is an expansion to the existing *Labour of Love* one-on-one prenatal classes.

Since its launch, 10 parents have gone through the program, learning vital parenting education such as *Baby Basics, Attachment, Child Safety and Nutrition*, and more. Having someone there to guide them in their new parenting journey is a huge benefit especially for many of our first-time parents.

Wendy Willis is the program's volunteer facilitator who works together with our staff. A retired educator, Wendy empowers moms and dads to help them nurture their babies and toddlers in the most positive, healthy way.

If you know anyone interested in signing up for these classes, please contact our office and ask for Lynn Ker, our Program Coordinator. All sessions are offered for free, thanks to the support of our generous donors.



## OVER \$14,000 RAISED THROUGH THE FAMILY ADVENTURE CHALLENGE

### PARTNER SPONSORS



A huge thank you to all our event participants, donors, corporate sponsors, and volunteers for making our annual fundraiser on Sept. 21st a huge success!

Special thanks to our **Family Adventure Challenge Committee** members --- Liz

Tettman (event coordinator), Michelle Noble, Jen D'Elia, Dennis Forsyth, Sandy Brown, Gerry Druif, Louis Patrick, Juan Carlos Taborda, and Beginnings staff!

## VITAL COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

This past summer, Beginnings clients were delighted with the fresh produce donated by our generous partners from **Crestwicke Baptist Church** and **Priory Park Church** community gardens. What a great summer initiative to bless our community!

Beginnings is fortunate to be able to refer clients to **Sanctuary Outreach's Car Seat Fund**, so that families who can't afford to buy a car seat can receive a brand-new one.



## JOIN OUR TEAM

Beginnings Guelph is looking to hire a part-time **Development Officer**. Are you passionate about helping families in need and empowering moms and dads towards building strong and nurturing families? Are you enthusiastic about organizing fundraising events, grant writing, giving public presentations, and engaging with donors? Do you have a long line of experience doing all that? Are you a self-starter with a drive to initiate creative fundraising activities? If you answered yes to all, we would love to hear from you!

For a detailed job description or to apply, visit [charityvillage.com](http://charityvillage.com) or send an email to our head office at [info@beginnings.ca](mailto:info@beginnings.ca).



## Meet Sandy Brown.

Wife of our Advisory Chair, Mark, Sandy's fondly known as our Care Cupboard volunteer staff. She's the reason our baskets are constantly stocked and organized with clothes displayed according to the season.

Having raised 6 children and babysitting her grand kids every now and then, it's easy to see why Sandy has a HUGE heart for Beginnings. "I felt I wanted to reach out to other moms and babies and help in any way I could. I first volunteered as a parent aide with Family & Children's Services for about 2 years," shares Sandy. "During that time, a lady from my church was helping in the Care Cupboard of Beginnings and through her, I began to take bags of donated clothes home with me to wash and mend if needed. This is how I got started helping out in the Care Cupboard."

That was 8 years ago, and what started as 2 hours a week at the Care Centre sorting through donations has turned into 1 full day a week, sorting and helping wherever she's needed. "I'm happy to continue to try to keep the Care Cupboard looking nice for our clients. It's a job not everyone wants to commit to, but I can sort and fold pretty fast now! I like organizing stuff so it's a great place for me," adds Sandy. "I realized that this job is important to our clients, and it is the first thing they see when they come into the Care Centre. I also get to greet the families and chat with them for a few minutes when they come in."

When asked how her volunteering experience has been at Beginnings, Sandy did not hesitate to share her thoughts. "Beginnings has become a place that I look forward to going every week because I want to do my part and the staff are amazing and fun! There are many ways to help --- from donating money, clothes, diapers, formula, etc to giving an hour a week helping with childminding, to volunteering for our annual Family Adventure Challenge. I think everyone at Beginnings is like a piece of a puzzle, where each piece is needed in order to present a beautiful picture." ~ C.L.

# VOLUNTEERS



## LIZ TETTMAN

Former Operations Assistant;  
Current Volunteer



### Q: What got you interested in volunteering at Beginnings?

**Liz:** When I decided I wanted to go into adoption or social services, I googled some local agencies in the hopes of finding inspiration for my future through the multiple opportunities in these fields. I came across a couple local agencies but was blown away by the services that Beginnings offered and had to be a part of it – so I emailed about volunteering. I thought it was best to gain experience to better understand the adoption and social service environment. I was also looking for a mentor, of sorts, to guide me through my experiences and support my research into my future.

### Q: When did you start and how has your role evolved?

**Liz:** I started as a volunteer in September 2018 – supporting where needed. As I was becoming more familiar with my role and the environment, Beginnings was growing and a position for an Operations Assistant became available. Cherylynn knew that I was looking for part-time work and that I loved volunteering so offered an interview. In October, I became the Operations Assistant.

### Q: How would you describe your experience working at Beginnings?

**Liz:** I get a sense of fulfillment with work. Being in school to work in this field, I've been able to implement skills directly in my work at Beginnings. The staff have positively impacted these learning experiences for me as they've supported my growth with constructive feedback. My hopes of finding a mentor came true as the staff throughout the entire agency blessed me with advice, followed up on learning opportunities, and even sat down and looked at options for my future profession. Given the privilege to form trusting relationships with clients has been the most rewarding experience. Watching the children grow healthy and loved as well as seeing the motivation from the parent(s) to provide for their child(ren) in the best way they can is truly inspiring.

FOR VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES,  
VISIT [BEGINNINGS.CA/GUELPH/](http://BEGINNINGS.CA/GUELPH/)



## YOUR DONATION AT WORK

JAN - SEPTEMBER 2019



186 unique clients served in a total of 619 visits to our Care Centre.



23 prenatal classes provided.



Over 165 cans of formula given away.



Over 7,000 diapers distributed



74 new clients welcomed



109 New Canadian families served (unique count)



25 newborn babies welcomed



PC: Tetyana Kovyryna, pexels.com

## SPONSOR A FAMILY THIS CHRISTMAS



Yes, it's that time of the year again! Join us in bringing Christmas joy to struggling families in our community by giving them meaningful presents through our annual Christmas Hamper program.

If you are interested in sponsoring a family, please contact our Program Coordinator, Lynn Ker, at [lynn.ker@beginnings.ca](mailto:lynn.ker@beginnings.ca). You may also reach her at 519-763-7980.

## CARE CUPBOARD NEEDS

Items of current highest demand from our community:

- Diapers and pullups (sizes 4-6)
- Powder formula (Stage 1 Iron-fortified/Low Iron)
- Baby wipes
- Baby cereal and Squeezies drink
- Boys' outfits 18 and 24 months
- Boys' and girls' snow suits and snow boots
- Car seat and stroller covers
- Boys' sleepers 0-3 months
- Boys' and girls' sleepwear & underwear 18-24 months

### Beginnings Family Services

169 B Woolwich Street Guelph ON N1H 3V4  
 www.beginnings.ca/guelph/ T: 519-763-7980 | [guelph@beginnings.ca](mailto:guelph@beginnings.ca)  
 Care Centre Hours: Mon-Thurs, 9:30 am - 3:00 pm

#### Advisory Committee:

Mark Brown, Chair  
 John Tierra, Treasurer  
 Ricki Lee Bristow, Secretary  
 Amy Sonnenberg

#### Guelph Care Centre Staff:

Jannah Kitzman, Operations Asst.  
 Lynn Ker, Program Coordinator  
 Cherylynn Lumasag, Director