



## the way of volunteering

I would like to introduce to you just one of our volunteers with Our Place Peel. His name is Darren Godson and even though Darren works full time as a business consultant with CIBC and lives in Scarborough, he still finds the time to volunteer with Our Place once a week.

Darren has been with us for a year and a half volunteering on special events, bingos and contributing in other ways. Recently, he applied for a donation from his employer for our agency and as a result of his commitment to Our Place, we received a check from CIBC.

When I asked why he chose Our Place Peel to volunteer he said that he had thought about volunteering because of his desire to contribute to the community. At first, he did not know what it was he wanted to do and finding something was the hardest part of volunteering. Our Place was recommended by someone close to him and he responded. His advice to anyone reading this article feeling the same as he did is to find something you want to do and volunteer your time.

I asked Darren what was his reason for volunteering and his response was peace of mind. Knowing that by volunteering, he would be making a difference. Recently, he was selected to become a member of a Community Support working group at CIBC. This working group looks at ways the employees of CIBC can become more involved within their communities. CIBC encourages its employees to volunteer in their community with an Employee Ambassador Program through which CIBC employees can apply for a donation to a charity where they have dedicated their time.

To sum up, Darren says his plan was to volunteer twice per month. However, he found that volunteering is rewarding and more fun than he imagined and finds himself volunteering more often. We would like to thank Darren for his commitment to Our Place Peel which has made a difference with staff, the youth and other volunteers.

Jacqueline Crawford, **development officer**

*"Do not wait for extraordinary circumstances to do good actions; try to use ordinary situations."*

– Jean Paul Richer

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# executive director's message

I am very pleased to welcome you to our winter newsletter. I am delighted to be serving as Executive Director of Our Place Peel for the next year, while Christy Upshall is away on maternity leave.

Other exciting news, this season, we have a bright new logo that we feel really communicates what Our Place Peel is all about. We asked the youth who use our services to tell us what Our Place Peel means to them.

The response was consistent; youth felt that Our Place Peel provides them with **Shelter, Support**, and perhaps most importantly, **Hope**.

Boss Print + Creative is an organization located in Mississauga that specializes in the development of image, print and e-communications.

We were fortunate to partner with them and they generously donated their time and creativity to design our new logo, pro bono. Through the leadership of Vice President, David Gray, Boss Print + Creative reviewed our values as an agency, the words used to describe the shelter by our youth, and created a logo that we feel really reflects our vision statement. Thank you David and your team at Boss Print + Creative for a job well done!

Inside our newsletter, you will find stories of the youth who have accessed our services, updates on our programs, and ways that you can be involved with the work that we do. On behalf of all of us at Our Place Peel, have a safe and enjoyable winter.

Tanya Godson, **executive director**

# resource room

The Resource Room operates within the emergency shelter located in Mississauga. It is visited by many youth from the Region of Peel but also outside of the Region as well. The Resource Room is open to any youth in the community between the ages of 16-21 who require computer/Internet access, support with employment and/or accommodation searching.

The Resource Counsellor provides youth with one-to-one support, information workshops, and individual assistance with resumes and cover letters. Access to computers, a photocopier, fax machine, and telephone free of charge is available to any of the youth. Our Resource Room is equipped with specialized resume software, information on job search techniques, assistance with housing search. Our resources include information on the Residential Tenancy Act, Employment Standards Act, and other relevant legislation, budgeting assistance, and information about other community resources and agencies.

## demographics

The Resource Room has seen many clients throughout the past six months. Here are statistics based on the clients we have seen.

### status in canada

- 74% were born in Canada
- 85% are Canadian Citizens

### area of last residence

- 75% are from the Peel Region (59% from Mississauga, 15% from Brampton, and 1% from Caledon)
- 25% are from outside the Peel Region

### income

- 10% of clients are on social assistance
- 17% are employed full-time or part-time
- 73% have no income from any source

### employment and housing

During the last six months the Resource Room has had 755 visitors.

- 112 youth utilized the computers for resumes cover letters or job searching
- 17 youth secured employment on a part-time or full-time basis
- 125 youth used the computers to search for accommodations
- 50 youth successfully secured housing



# sarah's story

"Sarah" was referred to Our Place 1 Residential Program by her school because she had been without a stable living environment for several years. Since the age of 10, Sarah and her two younger sisters were raised by their mother who struggled with addiction. Their mother was unable to maintain a stable home environment for more than a couple of months. Trying to budget the family's meager income was a challenge for her while providing for adequate care of the younger children. Sarah, as the oldest child took on many adult responsibilities while providing care for her younger siblings.

Sarah came to live at Our Place 1 Residential Program just as she was beginning grade 12. The structure and stability provided by the

Residential Program allowed Sarah to focus on herself and towards her goal of going to college to become a dental hygienist.

Our Place Peel Staff helped Sarah file her college applications, and advocated to Ontario Works for the application fees. Sarah was assisted filing her Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP) application, and advocacy with OSAP on Sarah's behalf was a role our staff fulfilled. Happily, Sarah was accepted into college in the fall of 2006 and OSAP has agreed to cover her living expenses. Several weeks later, Sarah was awarded a bursary that will cover the entire cost of her tuition. Truly, a success story and everyone at Our Place Peel congratulates Sarah for her determination to succeed.

# youth support report

My name is Claudett and I am the Youth Support Coordinator at Our Place Peel. Each day in Canada more than 11,000 youth are homeless. I have the opportunity to experience first hand the struggles these youth face everyday.

Our Place Peel provides the only shelter for youth in the Peel Region serving youth ages 16-21. Our Place Peel has a 14 bed capacity, and operates at a 90% occupancy rate or higher every year. The majority of clients come from Mississauga, Brampton and Toronto; however, some clients are from other countries and have experienced homelessness due to sponsorship or family breakdown.

As the Youth Support Coordinator, I assist clients with acquiring housing and securing financial support. When youth leave the program I ensure that they have been equipped with useful resources to create stability and help reduce return visits to the shelter. We respect the diversity of each client; therefore, we develop unique and flexible case plans to meet their needs.

Youth stay at the shelter for up to three weeks; however, this is always evaluated on an individual basis. Case plans usually center on reconnecting youth with their family, returning to school, entering a long term

residential program, or securing other accommodations. When a youth discloses abuse or severe addictions, we will network with other agencies to provide appropriate referrals.

One of the difficulties with assisting youth between the ages of 16-17 is that they generally do not qualify for financial assistance, making it difficult to acquire housing. Allen was so determined to be successful, he began working a second job and saving his money. One of his personal goals was to continue with school, however he felt challenged with his full time work and school. Allen's 18th birthday was spent in the shelter, where he was given an extended stay at Our Place Peel. He was assisted with filing for financial assistance, which allowed him to search for affordable housing to meet his needs. Allen is no longer homeless and is now able to continue with his educational goals.

Sadly there is a growing number of youth needing support from Our Place Peel. It is our aim to continue to support youth in achieving their personal goals, and most importantly to empower youth to rise above their obstacles and become the authors of their lives.

Claudett Bailey, **youth support coordinator**

## allen's story

Allen arrived at the shelter for the first time when he was 17 years old. Two years before arriving at Our Place Peel his father had sponsored him to Canada for experience and education. Allen's father found an apartment, but due to financial pressures, his father was unable to remain in Canada. Being 17 years old and alone, Allen left school and obtained employment in hopes of maintaining the apartment on his own. After two months of working at McDonald's for minimum wage, the bills began to pile up and Allen was evicted. Homeless and unable to continue school, he arrived at the shelter, seeking support.

*"Last year, we served 543 youth, averaging 17 years of age ~ 67% male and 33% female."*

- Tanya Godson, **executive director**

## our place peel's privacy protection policy

Our Place Peel is committed to ensuring your privacy. We will periodically contact you or send you information about Our Place Peel, funding opportunities, and related events.

If you prefer a specific method of contact or do not wish to receive information; please call us at **905.238.1383** ext. **31** or email us at **jcrawford@ourplacepeel.org**

Thank you for your **support!**

✂ Detach and mail or fax fully completed form back to Our Place Peel. Thank you for your support! ✂

## yes, i want to support our place peel

Please accept my **single donation** to Our Place Peel in the amount of:

\$250  \$100  \$75  \$50  Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please charge my credit card for this amount accordingly or enclosed is my cheque/money order payable to **Our Place Peel**.

**OR** Please accept my **monthly donation** to Our Place Peel in the amount of:

\$40  \$25  \$15  \$10  Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please charge my credit card or withdraw from my bank account (enclosed is a signed, voided cheque) the above indicated amount on the **15th** day of each month.

### contact details

Mr / Mrs / Ms First Name \_\_\_\_\_ Last Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ Prov. \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

### credit card details

Type of Card  VISA  MasterCard  AMEX

Card Number \_\_\_\_\_ Expiry date \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

## help us help you!

Please send me more information on planned giving or a gift of life insurance.

I would like to remain anonymous when Our Place Peel publicly acknowledges its donors.

**guarantee:** You can change or cancel your contribution at any time simply by contacting us by mail, telephone or fax.

**charitable registration number:** 119074136RR0001

# our wish list

Gifts in lieu of monetary donations are always welcome!

- Knapsacks / Bags
- Wallets / Purses
- Day Timers
- Watches
- School Supplies / Pens
- Pads of Paper
- Books / Magazines
- CD's
- Diaries / Journals
- Chocolate Bars / Treats
- MP3 Players / CD Players
- Alarm Clocks
- AA Batteries
- Toiletries (m/f)
- Hats / Headbands
- Slippers
- Socks / Underwear (m/f)
- Pajamas / Nightshirts
- T-Shirts (m/f)
- Sweatshirts (m/f)
- Jeans (m/f)
- Shorts (m/f)

**Gift certificates** are also a great alternative, for fast food restaurants, music stores, clothing stores, bus tickets (adult fare), phone cards and movie passes

Please ensure items are new or in "nearly-new" condition.



## thank you

Our Place Peel would like to thank the following Individuals, Groups, Corporations, and Businesses for their volunteer time, financial support and gifts in kind support to our agency from April 1, 2007 – September 30, 2007.

Allison Gray  
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CIBC Mellon Global Securities Services Company  
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Ray & Leena Cowdrey  
Raymond Cowdrey  
Region of Peel  
Sheridan College – Davis Campus  
Sir Joseph Flavelle Foundation  
St. Aloysius Gonzaga Secondary School  
St. Patrick's Church  
Stephen Rocchi  
Streetsville United Church Women  
Tanya M. Godson  
Tina Gauvin  
The New Apostolic Church  
The Ontario Trillium Foundation  
triOS College  
United Way of Greater Toronto  
United Way of Peel Region  
Youth Dance Theatre



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shelter. support. hope.