



## jennifer's story

Jennifer is a 16-year old girl who came to Our Place Peel because she felt she had nowhere else to go. Jennifer had long been an honour student at her high school and an avid swimmer who competed at a very high level.

Last year, Jennifer was diagnosed with a rare disorder that made her unable to compete in the pool and even made walking up a flight of stairs a hard task. The physical toll did not compare, however, with the emotional toll this took on Jennifer and her family. Jennifer's grades slipped and a once close relationship with her parents was strained as they did not know what to do and she did not know how to communicate her pain.

After a threat of suicide to a youth distress phone line, Jennifer was given the phone number for Our Place Peel. Upon entering the program, Jennifer began to open up to staff about her situation. Through conversations with Jennifer and her mother, it became apparent that Jennifer had a good home to go to but needed assistance in making it work.

A family reconciliation was arranged where an Our Place Peel staff member met with Jennifer and her parents in the family home. It meant a lot to Jennifer to have someone to help her find her voice and Jennifer's parents appreciated having someone help bridge the gap between themselves and their daughter.

Shortly after this meeting, Jennifer returned home. Jennifer and her parents were provided with a referral to a family counselor and, thanks to a relationship between Our Place Peel and this counselor, the normal 2 to 3 month wait period became a mere 3 days. After 2 months, Jennifer continues to meet with the counselor and rebuild her relationship with her parents.

Family reconciliation meetings are a great aspect of the services provided by Our Place Peel. While a large portion of the youth we see at Our Place Peel do not have a safe home to go to, there are those with loving parents who, for one reason or another, have simply run out of options. In these cases, being able to reconnect families and help them see a little bit of light at the end of the tunnel is truly amazing.

## statistics

The **Emergency Youth Shelter** served 261 unique clients who, in total, stayed at the Shelter 425 times. The average age of the youth we served was 18, 64% of the youth were male and 36% were female.

At our **Residential** program in Brampton, we served 13 unique clients who stayed a total of 14 times. The clients were evenly split between males and females. With one exception, the youth we served at the residence were between 16 and 18 years of age, with 17 being the average age.

Our **Resource Room** served a total of 373 clients who used its services 1472 times. Our HYPE program served 62 clients with the top three areas of support being housing, assistance with Ontario Works, and supporting clients to continue their education.

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# executive director's message

I am pleased to introduce Our Place Peel's spring newsletter. It has been a very busy time for us over the past six months as we continue to meet the needs of youth in the community. We continue to provide shelter and transitional housing to youth aged 16 to 21 years of age in the Region of Peel. Last year we began a new program call H.Y.P.E. (Helping Youth Prepare Effectively). This program has helped many youth coming out of the shelter, as well as those in the community who are at risk of becoming homeless, to meet their personal goals with the support of our staff. As you read through the newsletter, you will see statistics and highlights of our activities over the winter months.

As we look into the future, it is very exciting for us to realize that, over the next several months, we will determine how we can enhance the Emergency Youth Shelter located on Dixie Road. We will be going through an exercise with all of our stakeholders to gain feedback and expertise on how we can upgrade the shelter to serve more youth, enhance our programs and to provide increased safety and security to our staff and residents. Ultimately our goal is always to strive to offer better services to more youth which will meet their increasingly complex needs. I look forward to reporting to you about this in the next newsletter in the fall.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all our students who have worked endless hours, dedicating their time to learning about the community and the youth we serve. Our volunteers continue to provide invaluable support to our programs. They have given our houses a much needed clean up as they helped us paint and clean up our yards. The volunteers also help our staff with programs by running workshops, life skills groups and providing administrative support.

## A farewell to our Director, Resource Development – Tanya Godson

In the twelve years that Tanya Godson has worked at Our Place Peel, she has done amazing things with her career and to the programs at our agency. In 1996, Tanya began her career as a placement student; she then became a part-time staff, moving on to full-time staff, Youth Resource Counselor and Shelter Manager. In 2004, Tanya's career path changed as she got into the fundraising field. Tanya was hired as Our Place Peel's first Fundraising Manager. In this role, Tanya was able to increase Our Place Peel's fundraising budget and we were able to expand our current programs and secure funding for new programs.

Tanya's dedication and commitment to the agency has been overwhelming. She has provided leadership, guidance and enthusiasm to her everyday work and to the staff team. Tanya will be greatly missed by our staff, youth, volunteers and the Board. We would like to thank Tanya for the significant contributions that she has made to our agency over the many years. Tanya is leaving Our Place Peel to enhance her career as the Fundraising Coordinator at the Stevenson Memorial Hospital Foundation. I would like to wish her well in her future endeavors and thank her for the years of dedication and commitment to the agency.

I hope you all have a wonderful spring and summer season and I thank you for all of your continued support to our youth. As our services are needed now more than ever, it is because of the generous support from people like you that we can continue to sustain our programs and look ahead into the future to expand.

Sincerely,

Christy Upshall, **executive director**

## a gift

This year Our Place Peel had the opportunity to participate in The Toskan Casale Foundation. The Toskan Casale Foundation was created to give grade nine and ten students the opportunity to learn about the fundamentals of philanthropy. The philanthropy course runs for a semester and, by completion, students will have learned about foundations and charities and developed an understanding on how these organizations with respect to finances, ethics and accountability.

At the end of the course, students are asked to research a charitable organization and prepare a presentation for their classmates in a contest against other classmates taking the course. The class determines who has the best presentation. The winning group then presents again in front of a peer review panel which chooses a winner from all the presentations they have seen. The winner at the end of the competition wins \$5,000 for the charity they did the presentation on.

I had the opportunity to sit down with students from various schools as they interviewed me for their presentations. The students explained their ideas for the presentations and I assisted them in any way that I could.

Fortunately for Our Place Peel, one of the groups that prepared a presentation on us won the \$5,000. This is very exciting for us and we are very thankful to the students at St. Mildred's-Lightbourn School for representing Our Place Peel.

Jennifer Pasquale, **resource counsellor**

## kim's story

My name is Kim. When I got connected with Our Place Peel I was at rock bottom. I felt like I had lost myself, and didn't have anyone or anything. My friend was working at a family shelter at the time and she knew everything that was going on in my life. She gave me the number to contact H.Y.P.E. and I decide to give it a chance.

When I got connected with my coordinator, Mr. Baker, we started talking about everything that was going on in my life and I started working towards making changes and setting goals. Working with the H.Y.P.E program has given me hope, faith in myself, and has helped me become strong minded again.

Just having someone to talk to, listen, understand, guide you, and respect your choices makes a huge difference. I would have to say that H.Y.P.E has brought out my ambition to succeed again, to be able to try.

It is nice to be applauded and to hear "good job". Even when I felt like what I accomplished wasn't a big deal, it was a big deal to H.Y.P.E. It is motivating to have someone that is proud of you; it puts a smile on my face.

I recommend H.Y.P.E. to any youths out there that just want a second chance in life and need support to make life manageable. H.Y.P.E. has made my life fun again.

# paul's story update

In the Our Place Peel Summer 2008 Newsletter, we learned about Paul's story. Paul had come to Our Place Peel after a family breakdown and had been very successful in the Our Place Peel 1 program for 5 months.

Paul's success continues to grow in the program. Paul's goals for himself while staying at Our Place Peel 1 consisted of finding part-time employment, obtaining his driver's license, graduating from high school and securing an Automotive Service Technician Apprenticeship. Paul has achieved all these goals during his stay at Our Place Peel 1. Paul now holds his G1 class driver's license and he had maintained a part-time job for quite some time. He will graduate from high school this June and has secured an Apprenticeship that will begin after graduation. Paul also recently received a silver medal in the Peel Technological Skills Competition in the Auto Service Sector, as well as numerous other automotive awards.

Paul is very active within Our Place Peel, attending all the major functions and volunteering his time as a guest speaker at several different forums. He continues to enjoy cooking and baking at the house for his peers and has a skill for creating new and unique dishes. Paul makes a cheesecake that is absolutely delicious!

When asked what Paul has gained from his time at Our Place Peel 1, his response is a sense of security. "It gave me a base to start rebuilding my life. It is not something you can just go out and find. You have to make it for yourself."

When asked if he would recommend Our Place Peel 1 to other youth in similar situations, Paul didn't hesitate in saying, YES. "OP1 gives you a solid place to get started on rebuilding your life."

**Kimberly Miller, youth worker**



# emergency youth shelter update



During the 2008/2009 fiscal year, the shelter was at a 92% occupancy rate and the average age of clients was eighteen. This has definitely been a trend we have seen at the shelter, with the majority of youth we see ranging from 16 to 18 years old. This age group can be more difficult to serve as youth under the age of eighteen may not qualify for specific programs. Family reconciliations are sometimes more plausible with this age group.

Over the past few months, we have had some great outings for the youth. One of the most exciting was Sgt. Splatters Project Paintball, which allowed them to enjoy an evening of paintball. The youth were also given the opportunity to go to the Mississauga Tomahawks Lacrosse game through a donation of tickets from St. Peter's Anglican Church Erindale. We hope more opportunities such as these will be provided for our youth throughout the year, as they greatly enjoyed them.

One of our long-standing agency relationships is with Humber College. Humber College students come to the shelter to make presentations to our youth. This way, the youth learn about important subject matters in an educational and fun manner, staff have a chance to evaluate students, and the students get to interact with the homeless youth population. It is a wonderful learning opportunity for everyone involved.

Over the past few months, we have begun collaborating with Michael Sykner, a Counselor and Outreach Worker for Family Services of Peel. Michael comes into the shelter on a weekly basis and meets with the youth on issues such as substance abuse, depression and family breakdown. This has been a very effective service for the youth as sometimes they may feel reluctant to go out

into the community to see a counselor. Having a counselor on-site may relieve some of the anxiety they feel about seeing a counselor in the first place.

We would like to say a farewell to Paula Paterson. Paula has worked at the shelter from October 2007 until March of 2009. Paula has been a very dedicated worker and we truly value the work she did with the youth. At this time, we would also like to welcome Chantelle Palmer and Justina Anaab to our team. Both Chantelle and Justina were past students with our organization and have now joined us as front-line staff. Both bring passion for working with youth to our team and we look forward to their continued growth with our organization.

Volunteerism is an important part of Our Place Peel as an organization and we are privileged to receive some wonderful support. During the fall months, volunteers from PCL and DuPont donated their time and effort to assist with various projects around the shelter, through United Way Days of Caring. These volunteers put so much time and effort into cleaning and organizing our donations room, painting offices and our main hallway, and doing some yard work. We greatly appreciate and value the work they have done for Our Place Peel.

**Shana Thomas, shelter manager**

# snapshots

For the short while that youth are in our programs, we help them learn life skills like cooking, build relationship skills with their peers, and connect them with supportive counselors to help them through their journey.



## in honour / in memoriam gift

Winston Churchill once said: "We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give." This saying is especially true when it comes to organizations like Our Place Peel who relies on the generosity of people like you to continue supporting the needs of homeless and at risk youth in the Region of Peel.

Our Place Peel has an "In Honour / In Memoriam" Gift Program. By giving, not only are you honoring the person whose name you have made the donation in, but at the same time you are saving a young person from living on the streets.



***Nobody can do everything, but everyone can do something.***

unknown author

We all have our hobbies, passions or simply a need to make a difference. **Volunteer opportunities** give people this chance of helping others and having gaining satisfaction during the process.

Our Place Peel has many areas where you can help. We organize many fundraising events, where you can sit on the Committee and help us organize it. We provide our residents with different programs and we need your assistance with running them. You can help us to prepare a meal for the residents or organize our donations room. We also have opportunities with our Speakers Bureau where you can be an ambassador for Our Place Peel. You will be provided with training process that will prepare you to go out to the community with a message about our organization.

Help us to help you find "something you can do" and donate your time and expertise so we can provide better services to youth.

To all of our present volunteers a big Thank You; you make a difference in lives of young people who come to us for food, shelter and support.

If you want to know more about our Volunteer Program call Grace at 905.238.1383 ext. 40.

Grace Kopacz, **resource development coordinator**

## our wish list

**Gifts** in lieu of monetary donations are always welcome!

Gift certificates from local grocery stores are needed for extra supplies or unexpected visits for dinner from former youth living in the community. Gift certificates from Walmart, Shoppers Drug Mart, Tim Hortons, and Aurora Meat and Cheese at Dixie and Burnhamthorpe are also appreciated.

We are currently in need of:

- Toiletries (soap, deodorant, shampoo, conditioner, razors, brushes and combs, toothbrushes, toothpaste, and lotion)
- School supplies
- Date books/ planners
- Arts and craft supplies
- Dishes
- Pots and pans
- Hats, scarves and gloves
- Robes and pajamas
- House slippers
- Socks and underwear (men/women)
- Belts (medium, large, x-large)
- Feminine hygiene products
- Wallets for men and women
- Watches
- Batteries
- Gift cards
- Phone cards

We also appreciate the donation of "treat" items such as movie passes, CDs, MP3/CD players, and DVD movies to help us celebrate reward and milestones in our youths' lives.

Due to storage space limitations, we regret that we can only accept new or nearly new items at this time.

We like to thank all of our donors so be sure to leave your information with the staff when dropping off donations.

### **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. 32** or email us at **cupshall@ourplacepeel.org**

Thank you for your **support!**

# our place peel 1

Our Place Peel 1 has been providing a semi-independent living environment in Brampton since 1985. We are one of the few homes in Brampton that serve youth aged 16 to 21, offering the support youth need to help transition to independence.

We deliver our service by providing workshops run by our staff and outside agencies around skills development, employment, and education during the week. Cultural activities, such as visiting museums, attending a community event or going for an afternoon hike, are carried out on weekends. This season we have added volunteers to the program, giving our clients the opportunity to explore recreational activities such as arts, crafts, and sporting events.

The staff at Our Place Peel genuinely enjoys working with youth. They often go above and beyond to assist anyway they can, including helping the youth complete their taxes. We have an experienced, dedicated team, and their hard work does not go unnoticed.

New to our team is Kimberly Miller, who joined Our Place Peel this season as our full-time Youth Worker. She has been in the field for eight years and has proven to be a wonderful addition to our program and a perfect match for our youth.

To our community and friends, a sincere thank you for supporting Our Place Peel and making it possible for us to support our youth.

Claudett Bailey, residential manager



“ Our Place Peel has provided me with the shelter and support necessary to make the positive changes I have made in my life. The staff and youth workers here are able to relate to the youth in a way that I have not seen anywhere else. The management of Our Place Peel has been working on making a comfortable yet constructive environment for residents, and it is evident. ”

Jordan B., youth – emergency youth shelter

✂ 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 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

# thank you

Our Place Peel is committed to protecting the privacy of our donors. If you do not wish to have your name published, please let us know.

Our Place Peel would like to thank the following Community Groups, Businesses and Individuals for their financial and in-kind support in November 2008 – March 2009.

Ernest Ackun  
Alice Fazooli's  
Allan A. Martin Senior Public School  
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Roberta Awde  
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Community Dream Cultural Arts & Resource Centre  
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Zonta Club of Mississauga

**A VERY SPECIAL THANK YOU** to everyone who participated, donated, and volunteered for our annual bowling event. We sincerely appreciate the donations and your time and effort to make this event a huge success.



**ourplacepeel**  
shelter. support. hope.

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