

THE SHEPHERD

Good Shepherd Newsletter

Winter 2022



Yusuf and his daughters settled into comfortable housing in Hamilton with the help of the Good Shepherd Family Centre.

We're committed to helping families find housing

Yusuf, a single father of four girls, aged 8 to 11, left his job in Calgary after suffering a debilitating injury while working on a cattle farm. He had multiple surgeries, including a full knee reconstruction.

The devastating effects of his life-altering tragedies were amplified when he became a single father following his wife's drug overdose death.

"She couldn't stay away from the drugs and alcohol," said Yusuf. "She was in and out of the girls' lives. I am their one constant."

Yusuf and his daughters lived in a large family home in Calgary, but after the accident, and following his wife's death, the family endured major financial struggles. They relocated to Hamilton where he had family that could help him raise his daughters. His brother offered the basement of his family's home, but Yusuf didn't feel it was an appropriate place for his daughters to live.

"I had an image of a homeless shelter in my head that scared

me," said Yusuf. "But, I knew the people there would help me find a safe place to raise my kids."

He was pleasantly surprised by the accommodations at Good Shepherd's Family Centre, and his family quickly settled in.

"The staff checked on us all the time to ask how we were feeling," said Yusuf. "Before we came to the Family Centre, I couldn't sleep at all. Once we arrived, I told the staff: 'I'm comfortable and I'm happy, and it's all because of you.'"

Working with Family Centre staff, Yusuf found an apartment in a building next door to where some of his family lives. He was excited to move in and get his girls back on track. The apartment is close to his daughters' school and is a short drive to his new job where he is now employed full time.

"I didn't think it would be possible to find a place so close to my family," he said. "But, they did it. The people who work at the Family Centre really listened and cared about us."

The Good Shepherd Family Centre is Hamilton's only

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'I'm comfortable and I'm happy'

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emergency shelter for homeless families. The Centre is unique as it keeps families together during crisis, and helps them throughout their journey to find safe and affordable housing.

Like many during the pandemic, Family Centre staff were forced to change their procedures in response to COVID-19. In particular, they found it especially challenging to help the families they serve without the normal face-to-face meetings that used to take place almost daily.

"Working closely with our families and getting to know them personally is very important," said Grace, Family Centre director. "But, during COVID-19, we had to find different ways to provide the same quality service, while also remaining physically distanced."

Family Centre staff assist families with their housing searches by taking them to apartment viewings, and guiding them through the process of signing leases and other legal documents. During the pandemic, staff transitioned to phone meetings, virtual tours and electronic signings.

"The pandemic definitely created barriers for getting families housed," said Grace. "It also made life more challenging for our families on a day-to-day basis."

As a result of strict health and safety guidelines, the children's common playroom at the Family Centre was closed. Regular activities for children were replaced with individual activity kits that staff put together for each family. The homework room remains available for students and their learning, with enhanced cleaning before and after each use.

Good Shepherd's Rapid Rehousing Team secured hotel rooms for families to stay in when the shelter is full. The team saw an increased need for shelter spaces during COVID-19, with many people experiencing relationship breakdowns or unsafe living situations.

Despite the additional challenges, Grace and her team housed more than 50 families in 2021, while the Shelter Diversion program found stable housing for an additional 30 families.

"We remain committed to helping families find housing," said Grace. "During COVID-19, we just learned to do that in a different way."

Five questions for donor Daniella Mercanti-Mulas



Why is supporting Good Shepherd important to you?

What truly matters in life is being a blessing to others. We all can share through either our time, money, help or love. Supporting the Good Shepherd is important to me because I strongly believe that so much good is being done.

Why did you decide to give to Good Shepherd?

We don't live in a perfect world, and there are always people out there in need of help, especially during the pandemic. That is why I believe it is so important to donate to the Good Shepherd.

What experiences have you had with Good Shepherd?

I have seen first hand, people who have benefitted from the Good Shepherd. After volunteering to serve an Easter Dinner and seeing hundreds of people show up. I saw the gratefulness in their eyes for having a place to come to and get a hot meal.

Why is it important for you to support Good Shepherd?

Supporting the Good Shepherd is so important, I love all the wonderful work they do for our community. The Good Shepherd helps so many people and provides such a diverse number of programs and services. By seeing the good in all people, Good Shepherd is the voice for those in need.

Why should others support Good Shepherd?

One of the greatest gifts in all of humanity is giving back. I encourage everyone who can, to support the Good Shepherd. From homelessness to women's shelters, to youth programs, the Good Shepherd does it all. The power of community proves that when people care and come together, change is possible.

WHY I SUPPORT GOOD SHEPHERD

"A few years ago, I had a Christmas party at my home. I decided that the 'price of admission' would be a gift that would benefit the kids whose families come to Good Shepherd during the holidays. Over the years, the party grew to the point where we've been able to donate hundreds of dollars worth of toys every year. The last two years have been a challenge, but we're determined to carry on for the kids."

– Dave DeCoste



How the community benefits

For every dollar YOU invest in
GOOD SHEPHERD...



Good Shepherd Non-Profit Homes

Good Shepherd Centres



\$0.47

helps support
Emergency Shelters,
Food and Clothing

\$0.33

helps support
Affordable Housing



\$0.24

assists our
Homelessness Prevention
and Housing Supports

\$0.26

assists our
Housing Support programs

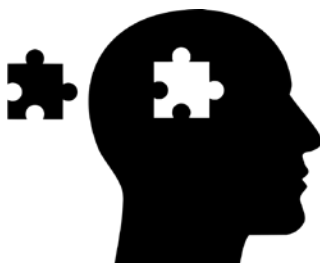


\$0.18

goes to support our
Health Programs

\$0.26

goes to support
our Mental Health
and Addiction programs



\$0.06

helps our Children and
Youth Mental Health
and Substance Use
supports

\$0.07

assists with
Administration costs
(e.g. staffing)



A Message from Jackie Bajus

President, Good Shepherd Centres Board of Directors



A happy, healthy and safe 2022 to all our Good Shepherd friends, donors and partners. This new year brings a spirit of hope for great accomplishments that we all embrace for our community as we move forward.

The success of Good Shepherd's programs and services reflect the caring nature of the people of Hamilton and the surrounding areas. It is you who make our hopes and dreams come to life. The spirit of giving is woven into the fabric of our region and is most evident in the thoughtful generosity of everyone in our diverse community. Whether it be donations of food, clothing and household products, one-time monetary gifts, or regular financial contributions, you continue to support the marginalized women, men, children and youth most in need. Your gifts address the circle of life from newborns to those in palliative care.

This "blanket of giving", despite the pandemic restrictions, has warmed the hearts and lives of so many people and given them new opportunities for better physical, social, medical and mental health supports. Your generosity of spirit has been the key. As the chill of winter is upon us the demands, however, continue to rise. Thankfully, our "faith in people" has proven that our community "never stops loving". We see this in the compassionate actions of our Good Shepherd friends who support our deep-rooted values to treat our brothers and sisters with dignity and to enrich their lives in every way we can. It is your kind generosity that brings that blanket of comfort to the needy. Thank you!

Blessings to all as we welcome a new year of fresh beginnings.

Sincerely,



Jackie Bajus
President, Board of Directors
Good Shepherd Centres

Bringing joy to the holiday season

Volunteers Deanne and Joseph were on hand to help decorate the Marketplace leading up to the holiday season. Grateful visitors to the Marketplace were given the choice of a variety of food, winter clothing and new toys. Once again, we had to adjust to accommodate COVID-19 restrictions.



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