



# Newsletter Summer 2020

**YES works to reduce and prevent homelessness by providing shelter, education and transitional supports for youth and families in Peterborough and the Kawarthas.**

## **Pregnant and in shelter during COVID-19**

Emily was staying at the YES Emergency Shelter in March of 2020, when COVID-19 became a threat to people living in Peterborough. **She was 7 months pregnant.**

Emily came to the shelter for the first time when she was 16, directly from the care of CAS.

Emily grew up in the care of CAS living in foster and group homes.

**She never felt the security and safety that we all need as children.**

Throughout her childhood, there had never been a good fit for her with any of the families who cared for her. As a result, she had never felt the security and safety that most of us feel as children.

She stayed in shelter on and off over two years, but this time around, something was different. Emily was pregnant and she wanted to become a

mom. Emily wanted to provide something to her child that she never had; a safe, warm, loving home.

Caela Latter is Emily's outreach worker at YES. "I began to connect Emily with the resources in town that would help her have a safe pregnancy, birth, and post-partum experience. The younger a person is, the more difficult

hotel in Peterborough. At the hotel, Emily was able to maintain distance from her

**Emily wanted to provide something to her child that she never had.**

peers, so she could keep herself and her baby safe. Caela visited



the healthcare system is to navigate," says Caela. Caela helped Emily make all the right appointments, and they attended those appointments together.

None of us expected the pandemic, and when it became a serious threat, we moved Emily, along with all the other families in the emergency shelter to a

her frequently at the hotel, ensuring she had everything she needed.

On May 8th at 10am at PRHC, 9lb baby Liam was born. Both Emily and baby were amazing. Caela got a call just as Emily went into labour, and by the time she arrived with a coffee for Dad, Liam had arrived.

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Emily got to take Liam back to the hotel on Mother's Day, and her eyes lit up when she began telling Caela about being a new mom.

"She's doing everything right," says Caela. "She even started reading to Liam every day before going to sleep."

### **What Emily needs now, is even more support.**

Soon after Liam entered their lives, mama and baby were supported to find suitable housing. They moved out of the hotel and into a place all their own on June 15th, 2020.

Throughout her life, Emily has struggled. And life won't be easier for her now that she has a baby. What Emily needs now, is even more support.

Emily is planning on going for her high school diploma in the fall. But she will need help getting the childcare necessary for her to accomplish that goal. She will also likely need help with food and basic supplies until she can

get a job. Not to mention the mental health assistance that so many of us need as new moms.



These are the kinds of supports that YES is here to give Emily and Liam with your help. Emily is beginning motherhood, as a teen, after a tough childhood. But we have every confidence in Emily, and know she will be a great mom to baby Liam. With help from us, and with help from you.

## **HELP NEEDED!**

**Emily and Liam still need you. The many homeless youth who are unsure of where they will sleep tonight, still need you.**

**Donating to YES helps keep them safe, and gives them a chance to start life in a supported way.**

**Donate to YES**  
**[www.yesshelter.ca](http://www.yesshelter.ca)**



## **Art to the rescue**

Through COVID-19, many of you knew that young people would need a creative outlet and donated art supplies to help youth get through the pandemic.

As a result, several youth in our RISE Youth Housing Program started a daily art practice and began to work through their emotions with creativity.

Not only was beautiful art created (see below), but making creativity a part of a daily routine has had amazing impacts on their mental health.



# Birthday in the Emergency Shelter

When a young person staying in shelter took it upon herself to decorate the shelter with streamers and balloons, we asked her why she did it.

“Everyone’s going stir crazy because of the pandemic, and it’s fun to decorate, and it brings everyone together. Also, happy birthday Lindsay!”

Beloved YES shelter worker, Lindsay, had a birthday on that day, and one of the young people staying in the shelter wanted to make it a special day for her.

Shelter workers at YES form strong bonds with the young people in shelter. Especially when that young person is in shelter for a while. They cook

for the clients, they help them through personal emergencies, and in a lot of ways, protect them from harm.

YES staff and clients were touched and delighted by the birthday surprise.



# Protecting youth and families though COVID-19

Most YES staff can’t work from home. Supporting youth experiencing homelessness means being there, in person.

We’ve made changes to the way we’re operating though, to ensure that youth and staff stay safe within the recommended guidelines set by Peterborough Public Health.



Emergency Shelter manager, Caitlin Currie with Peterborough Public Health’s Matt Feris

Outreach staff have moved into a space where their work stations are at least 6 ft. apart. Meetings with young people are also physically

distant with outreach staff wearing a mask if they are in closer quarters due to unavoidable circumstances.

Shelter staff, who are working in the shelter with youth, 24/7, have full personal protective equipment should they have to support youth through a medical emergency, and plexi-glass barriers have been installed in the intake office.

The families that were in shelter have been moved into hotels with the support of the City of Peterborough, and now each of the youth can keep distant, even if having to share rooms. Youth still take their meals in our dining hall, but in smaller groups.

We know that being housed is more important now than ever before, so we are always trying to help youth find housing that will work for them, either in the community or in our RISE Youth Housing Program.

From March through June, through the early stages of the COVID pandemic, YES helped to house 7 families and 24 young people.

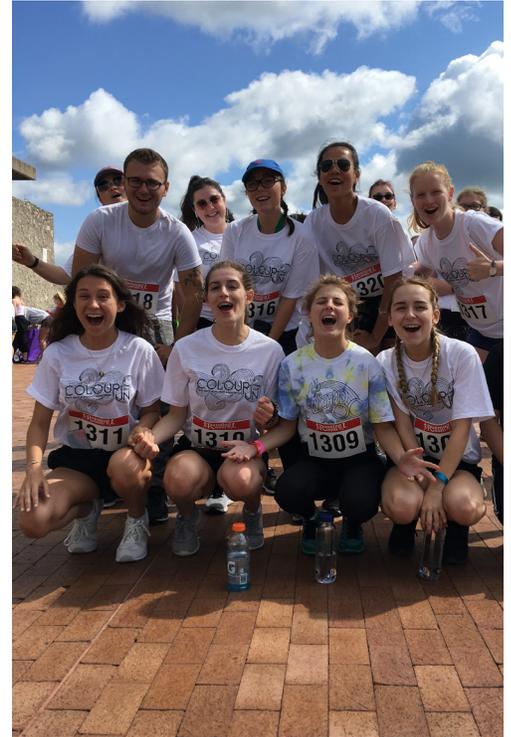
# We couldn't do it without YOU

It's YOU, who are supporting these young people and families through the toughest part of their lives. Because you know that we are strongest together, and that when our neighbors are hurting, they deserve our help. Without your help, it couldn't be done.

## Community Heros

We are beyond grateful to the following people, businesses, and organizations who have come through for youth and families in a big way so far in 2020. These include:

- **Community Foundation of Greater Peterborough**
- **Hydro One Networks Inc.**
- **Harvie Ghatavi for Housing**
- **Trent Central Student Association**
- **In from the Cold Concert**
- **Wild Rock Outfitters**
- **Home Depot Canada Foundation**
- **Micheal Evans and Heather Gardiner Foundation**
- **Peterborough Kawartha Association of Realtors**
- **Lloyd Carr Harris Foundation**
- **The VanDerHerbergs**
- **Mark St. United Church**



Trent students during their 2019 Colour Run which raised over \$3000 for YES!

Ontario  
Trillium Foundation



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An agency of the Government of Ontario  
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United Way  
Peterborough & District

