

FRESH START SUPPORT SERVICES

NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2026



DEAR FRIENDS AND SUPPORTERS,

As we move through the sun and warmth of summer, we want to take a moment to share what God has been doing through Fresh Start Support Services over these past months. **We are continually grateful for your prayers, encouragement, and generous support,** which make this work possible.

This season has been filled with meaningful moments, learning and incredible support from our community. **Our Spring Gala was a wonderful evening of stories, connection, and fun.** Guests enjoyed a delicious meal and participated in our dessert auction, which was a highlight of the night. We are so grateful for our donors, sponsors, and everyone who contributed desserts and helped make the evening such a success.

Our Baby Bottle Drive continues to be a faithful source of support, and we are thankful for all who have participated and given so generously from Mother's Day to Father's Day.

The most significant milestone this season was the **Grand Opening of our House of Homes.** It was truly an amazing day, filled with donors, community partners, and the families we serve. We are deeply thankful for the many gifts, encouragement, and support we have received. **This new space represents hope, stability, and a fresh start for so many women and children,** and we are honored to see it come to life.

Alongside these events, **our programs continue to welcome families into a safe, nurturing environment** where they are supported, encouraged and equipped. While this season has been a time of growth and new beginnings, we are encouraged by the way the Lord keeps providing.

With the summer here we are looking forward to our **Annual Summer Vacation Bible School,** taking place August 10-14. This special week is always filled with joy, learning, and meaningful connection for the children and families we serve, and we are excited to once again offer this opportunity in our community.

As we look ahead, our need for prayer and support continues. **We ask that you pray for the families we serve, for wisdom for our staff and leadership team, and for continued provision as we grow and serve more families.** If you feel led to partner with us financially or through volunteering, we would be honored to connect with you.

Thank you for standing with us in this work. Your support is making a lasting difference in the lives of mothers and children in our community.

With gratitude,

Jaime Cann, Executive Director



SPRING FUNDRAISING GALA

Our 2026 Spring Fundraising Gala and Dessert Auction turned out to be an incredible evening, thanks to the generosity and support of our community. Held on **May 6th at the CASO Station** in St. Thomas, the evening was filled with great food, meaningful connections, and generous giving. Together, **we raised \$39,634 in support of the programs and services** offered at Fresh Start Support Services.

We were honoured to hear from our Executive Director, Jaime, who shared **heartfelt stories that highlighted the impact of our work on local children and families**. We invite you to read some of these stories below.

Thank you to our generous gala sponsors, the talented home bakers, local businesses, and professional bakers who contributed to our dessert auction, Van Dyk Catering for the delicious meal, and everyone who attended, donated, or volunteered. Your support plays an important role in helping us continue our mission, and we are so grateful for your partnership.



STORIES OF A FRESH START

ELLIE'S STORY (AGE 2)



Many kids live with one or two parents, but I live with my grandma and grandpa. **One day, grandma found Fresh Start, and I was able to go and play and make friends.** We do crafts and activities, and sometimes we have a snack too. When I get to play with my new friends, **I learn how to use words and to share.** I am only two, but this will help me be ready for school in two years.

Grandma is making new friends and learning new things at Fresh Start too. **Grandma went to a parenting class to learn new things about parenting and now she understands better how she can help me. Grandma also goes to Bible study at Fresh Start, where she learns about God and how much He loves us.** Every time grandma goes to class, I get to go with her so I can play with my friends.

Maybe one day I can live with my mom again, but for now I am going to stay with my grandma **who gives me a safe place to live** and cooks me meals to help me learn and grow.

LIAM'S STORY (AGE 3)



One day mom's friend told her about Fresh Start and the things they have for kids, so mom decided to take me and my little sister there. When dads not working, all four of us get to go together. There are not very many dads there, but my dad goes anyway.

It's so fun to play with trains and cars, but my favorite thing to do is play with my friends. I am 3 years old and learning and growing every day. **Through playing at Fresh Start, I am learning to share, fight, and even say sorry.**

When we started going to Fresh Start, mom and dad were concerned I wasn't saying very many words, so we went one day and it was just us at Fresh Start. I got to play with all the toys while mom and dad answered questions. I didn't know what they were talking about, but **after that I started going to this place where they teach kids how to use their words.** Now, mom says I won't stop talking.

Sometimes mom and dad play with me, but sometimes they stand around and talk with other parents. It doesn't look like fun to me, but they sometimes smile and laugh so I think they're having fun even though they're not playing with any toys.

The above stories share the experiences of children in our programs. They have been written from the children's perspectives with the help of their caregivers. Names have been changed to protect their privacy.



HOUSE OF HOMES GRAND OPENING

This spring marked an exciting new chapter for Fresh Start Support Services as we **officially celebrated the grand opening of our House of Homes**. This project has been years in the making, and we are thrilled to see it now serving families in our community.

Since opening, **all residential units have been filled**, providing safe, supportive housing for mothers and their children as they work toward stability and independence. Seeing these homes occupied and families settling into their new spaces has been **a meaningful reminder of the impact this project will have for years to come**.

As a transitional housing program, one of our greatest successes is seeing **families move on to more permanent housing**. We have already celebrated several families taking that next step, **creating opportunities for new mothers and children on our wait-list to move into the House of Homes**. It has been encouraging to see families continue their journey toward independence while allowing us to extend support to even more families in need.

We are also pleased to share that **Fresh Start Support Services has relocated our administrative offices to the House of Homes**. Having our offices on-site allows us to better support residents while continuing to provide programs and services for families throughout our community.

We are incredibly grateful to the donors, partners, volunteers, and supporters who helped make the House of Homes a reality. **Thank you for investing in brighter futures for local families**.

A LOOK INSIDE THE HOUSE OF HOMES



Program Room



Kitchen



Living Room



Kitchen in Accessible Unit



Bedroom 1



Bedroom 2

Financial Update

OCTOBER 2025 - JULY 2026 (10 MONTHS)	
Donations	\$271,475.91
Baby Bottle Drive	\$31,665.43
Other Revenue (Grants, Funding, Misc.)	\$68,569.81
Total Revenue	\$371,711.15
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$360,645.43

USE OF DONATIONS AND DESIGNATED DONATIONS: Spending of funds is confined to Fresh Start approved programs and projects. Each contribution designated toward an approved program or project will be used as restricted with the understanding that when the need for such a program or project has been met or cannot be completed for any reason as determined by the Board, the remaining restricted contributions will be used where most needed.

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN HOUSE OF HOMES (UNTIL JUNE, 30, 2026)	
All-time donations and revenue	\$1,717,744.00
Pledged donations	\$10,000.00
City of St. Thomas (recieved)	\$100,000.00
Pledged Community Improvement Plan	\$205,000.00
Pledged Gift in Kind	\$466,780.00
Affordable Housing Fund CMHC Grant (received)	\$900,000.00
Affordable Housing Fund CMHC Loan (received)	\$826,889.50
Affordable Housing Fund CMHC Loan (not drawn yet)	\$1,233,110.50
Total	\$5,459,524.00
BUDGETED COSTS	\$5,215,330
COSTS TO DATE (JUNE 30, 2026)	\$3,940,771



PRAYER REQUESTS

Please pray for our **VBS this summer**—that God would bless the children, volunteers, and staff, and that each child would experience His love and joy.

Please pray for **the families living in our House of Homes**, that they would feel supported, encouraged, and strengthened as they work toward a fresh start.

Please pray **for our staff**, that God would provide wisdom, strength, patience, and encouragement as they serve the families in our programs.

Please pray for **God's continued provision and guidance** for Fresh Start Support Services as we seek to put Christ's love into action.



Please prayerfully consider donating to Fresh Start Support Services so that we can continue to make a difference in the lives of the parents and children in our community. Donations can be made any of the following ways:

- 1 Send an e-transfer to financials@fsms.ca
- 2 Visit www.fsms.ca/ways-to-give or scan the QR code
- 3 Drop-off or mail a cheque or cash



519-637-7775 | info@fsms.ca | www.fsms.ca

Office: 118 Centre Street, St. Thomas, ON N5R 2Z9 | Haven: 797 Talbot Street, St. Thomas, ON

Charitable Registration # 10788 4074 RR0001