



FRESH START SUPPORT SERVICES

ANNUAL REPORT 2020-2021



Dear Friends of Fresh Start,

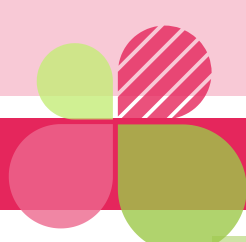
God is great! While the pandemic continues, we at Fresh Start have so very much to be thankful for! From your financial support, to prayers, to grants, to renovations, and to the incredible talents and dedication of staff, we are so thankful to see the hard work make a difference in families' lives.

This past year, we continued to grow as a trauma informed organization focused on putting Christ's love into action. Skilled staff work from a trauma informed lens and provide opportunities for families to heal, grow and build resilience. This past year Fresh Start continued to provide evidence-based programming and has been able to contribute our learnings to academic literature about our community attachment parenting program. We hope these papers help other organizations with similar focuses expand their programming, supporting even more families and breaking the cycle of intergenerational trauma. Programming, such as the Circle of Security Program, Attachment Focused Dyad Sessions, Mom & Me: Regulation & Co-regulation programming, and Campus Housing Program, are key to offering a hope and future to families.

The Campus Housing Program has been the main focus of our strategic plan this year. Families live in these supportive apartments while participating in programs and working closely with staff who provide wraparound supports, enabling residents to eventually transition into independent housing within the community. A renovation to build four additional supportive apartments will complete the transition started in 2020 from group home to supportive apartment housing model with room for eight total apartments. This renovation comes with a large financial cost. We have been blessed with sizeable grants from the Ontario Trillium Foundation and Elgin-St. Thomas Community Foundation to get the renovation started.

The spread of Fresh Start's programming continues as we take part in Project Ujima as an Early Childhood Development Hub. Project Ujima will help extend Fresh Start's reach into the broader community to provide several additional services such as early literacy programming, speech and language supports and referrals, plus a new physical location to provide services out of and additional staff to provide the programming. Ujima means 'collective work and responsibility'. It is the idea that we all have a part to play in the development of children; children who are our future leaders and caretakers. Ujima aligns nicely with Fresh Start's mission of providing families a safe housing community and supporting the families within a community context. Thank you for being a part of Fresh Start's community and for being a part of the collective work it takes to support families in meeting their goals to become their best selves. We very much appreciate your support.

Sincerely,
Carla Matos, Board President



PROJECT UJIMA



We are excited to share the layouts of the four additional apartments that are being built through the *House of Homes* Campaign. We pray that the lives of the mothers and babies living in these new spaces will be blessed with healing; that laughter will fill the halls, and they will be filled with hope.



In January 2022, Fresh Start began the process of implementing early literacy and attachment focused programming as part of an Ontario-wide initiative called Project Ujima. Project Ujima was developed by the Ontario Association of Young Parent Agencies (OAYPA) through a three year, \$5.5 million dollar grant. Fresh Start will be an Early Childhood Development Hub offering Project Ujima to the region with goals to improve outcomes for vulnerable babies born to at risk families by offering programming and increasing access for referrals to developmental specialists at Toronto's SickKids Hospital. This provincial program is anticipated to support 1000 children each year.

Project Ujima will be run out of our new program and office space located at 797 Talbot Street to increase exposure and to reach more families.



FAMILY GIVING PROGRAM

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

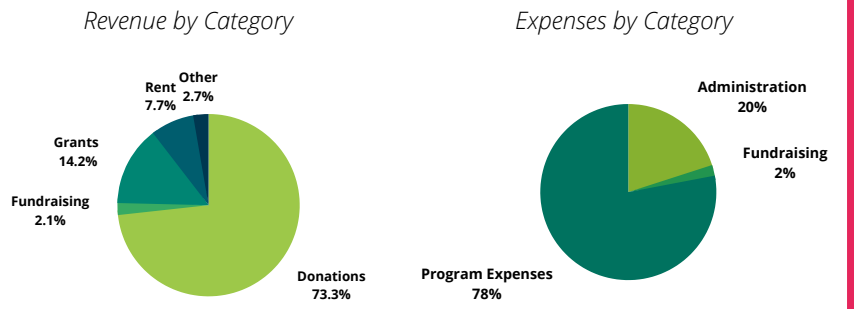
Our Family Giving Program started in August 2021 to give families practical items to help provide financial relief. This program connects families that aren't engaged in our services, but are still in need, to practical items that have been donated to Fresh Start, such as diapers, gift cards for groceries, formula, strollers, car seats, clothing, and bedding. Since starting the program in August 2021, 15 families have received:

 \$500 in grocery gift cards	 1000+ diapers and wipes
 60 items of clothing	 1 Stroller and car seat

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"Fresh Start's Family Giving Program helped me tremendously this past holidays. Because of their generosity my children had presents under the Christmas tree, and because of the grocery gift cards offered my children had a warm Christmas dinner. Their extended generosity helped me so much, and I will be forever grateful."

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You generously donated \$394,524 to help provide housing and programming to the 90 families we supported this year. Fresh Start received \$115,005.61 from the COVID wage subsidy to help reduce expenses this year.

Fundraising efforts were still hindered by COVID, but our virtual Baby Bottle Drive was more successful this year and electronic giving has increase dramatically. Grants were awarded from Elgin-St Thomas Community Fund Don and Helen Black Fund for \$50,000 and the Ontario Trillium Foundation for \$150,000.

We thank the Lord that Fresh Start is financially stable to allow for program spread to better meet the growing needs of local families. We ask that you again prayerfully consider how you can contribute to Fresh Start's ministry to help build more safe housing and provide desperately needed programming.

For more details, please go to fsms.ca/annual-report to review our financial statements.

STORY OF A FRESH START

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



I wasn't in a very good place. I had tried to kill myself several times. My Mom didn't believe in me because of my disability. My partner was really abusive and controlling. But, we were connected by our trauma bond, so I stayed.

When I found out I was pregnant, my Mom and Aunt tried to convince me to get an abortion. They believed I couldn't be a good enough Mom because of my disability; that an abortion would be the best for me and the baby.

I went to live with my Mom after the baby was born. It wasn't healthy for myself or my daughter. My Mom parented over me and I couldn't parent the way I wanted.

I moved to Fresh Start to show my family that I can do more than they think that I can. I wanted to show them that my disability has nothing to do with how I can parent my child. I can be a great Mom even though I have challenges.

At Fresh Start I learned how to be me. Before I didn't know who I wanted to be, but was who others believed me to be.

I'VE LEARNED THAT MY DISABILITY DOESN'T MAKE ME LESS OF A MOM. MY DAUGHTER DOESN'T LOOK AT ME, SEE MY DISABILITY AND LOVE ME LESS.

I continue to set boundaries, learn the dance of being attune with my daughter, and breaking the cycle of trauma. I am working hard every day to help my daughter grow up to be who she was created to be.

PLEASE PRAYERFULLY CONSIDER HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT LOCAL FAMILIES BY JOINING AND SERVING ON FRESH START'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS.



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I joined the Fresh Start Board as a way to serve and support those in our community that need help. I love what Fresh Start is all about - helping Mom's and babies have a fresh start in a supportive, caring and compassionate environment.

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS

LEADERSHIP TEAM

Carla Matos
Board President

Shellie Addley
Lawyer & Notary Public

Jennifer Pennings
Office Administor - STCCS

Karen Schouten
Executive Director

Traci English
Program Manager