



FRESH START SUPPORT SERVICES

Summer 2022 Newsletter

Dear Friends of Fresh Start,

Seasons. They are each unique and special. Some we look forward too, and some we can't wait to end. I get excited each time I see a sign of the next season coming. Signs of the buds growing on the trees pointing to Spring. Signs of flowers coming in the garden. Seeing the first yellow leaf in the fall. And the first snowflakes of winter. I feel fortunate to live in a place that has four seasons. Spring is my favourite season, though. I love walking through my gardens and seeing the green shoots that begin to come through the soil. To see all of my hard work in the gardens during the fall recognized. I love the anticipation and expectancy of spring. To know that the beginnings of what you are seeing will turn into a beautiful mess of full leaves and flowers.

Ecclesiastes 3 so perfectly writes of the "seasons, and time of every matter under heaven". It contrasts opposite, but also highlights that the proper activity taking place at the proper time, according to God's purposes. We might not understand the meaning or why a season comes, but we can rest assured that whatever it is, it is bringing glory to God. The world is exiting a long season of trial, loneliness, confusion, division, sickness, and death. It is hard to see the good that took place during this season, but we can trust in God's sovereignty! Collectively, I think that we are looking for and seeing signs of the next season coming. We are visiting with friends and family, having birthday parties, scheduling vacations, and going on cruises. May we rejoice in the goodness of God's timing.

At Fresh Start, we are also seeing signs of the next season for Fresh Start. During the pandemic we transitioned our housing towards apartments to meet the growing need of the moms and babies that we were supporting. This allowed us to expand our services to support more moms and babies that lived in the community by running group and drop in programming. Last year we were able to support 90 families because of this! We can see signs of God's goodness and his perfect timing. We have opened our new program space, Haven, located at 797 Talbot Street in St Thomas, to help reach more moms and babies in need. And now we have stamped engineered drawings for our new and renovated Campus Housing apartments, House of Homes. Paperwork for a building permit is submitted, and we have an anticipated renovation start date!

Personally, my family and I are also looking forward to a new season. A season of rest, healing, adventure, and learning. And we could not be more excited. My family and I are privileged to go on a six-month sabbatical, starting July 1st and we will be returning in January 2023. The Fresh Start Board of Directors has found an amazing Interim Executive Director in Suzanne Flier (meet her in the Spotlight below) who will be leading Fresh Start while my family and I are away.

As Fresh Start moves into this next season with anticipation and expectancy, having done the hard work throughout the past couple of years, we ask for your continued prayers and support. Fresh Start continues to strive to be a Christ-centred place of healing for moms and babies, and we work hard to do that well. Our mission is to provide hope to moms, regardless of the season they find themselves. We are so thankful for this opportunity to serve and thankful for you to walk alongside.

Sincerely,
Karen Schouten





WELCOME SUZANNE!

I am excited to introduce myself as the Interim Executive Director of Fresh Start Support Services. My name is Suzanne Flier, and I was born and raised in the Netherlands as the youngest of 10 children. Growing up in a Christ-centred home with a loving family has shaped me into the person I am today, and in turn I would like to support others who were not so fortunate.

In 2014, my husband, three sons and I moved to London, Ontario to pursue further education. I am very grateful that I could make a *fresh career start* in my new role as Director, after eight years of working in the hospital environment. I am passionate about supporting "the fatherless, the widows, and the sojourner" Deut. 10:18-19 | Job 29:12-13 | Ruth 2:2 | Psalm 68:5-6 & Psalm 72 | Isaiah 41:17 | Jeremiah 7:6 & 22:3-4 | Zechariah 7:10.

I love to plan and organize, and look forward to using these skills towards our upcoming renovation. Hoping to meet many of you soon, but in the meantime, do not hesitate to contact me at sfliere@fms.ca

RENOVATION UPDATE - HOUSE OF HOMES & HAVEN

Our Campus "House of Homes" at 118 Centre Street was built in the mid 1800's, and needs some rigorous updates. We are excited to share that the application for building permit was approved, and that we have all engineers and builders on board. To facilitate the addition of three apartments and update five existing apartments we moved our offices and program space to our new location "Haven" at 797 Talbot Street. The official opening by MP Karen Vecchio was on May 7th, but please feel free to come by and check out this new space!

Fresh Start was blessed to receive a \$150,000 grant from Ontario Trillium Fund; \$50,000 from St. Thomas Elgin Community Foundation; \$186,000 from the Reaching Home's 'Rural and Remote' funding stream for Ontario; \$78,185 in designated donations; and \$40,000 of Fresh Start's capital funds to allow for this project to take place. With the increasing costs of building materials and labour, the estimated cost of this project has increased, so we will be actively applying for more commercial, provincial and federal funding.

If you would like to learn more about this campaign, or donate your skills or your time to help make a real difference for at-risk families in our community, please visit our webpage at www.ahouseofhomes.ca



Ontario Trillium Foundation



WAYS YOU CAN SHOW YOUR SUPPORT

- Pray for the families who come looking for support
- Pray for our staff and Board members; for compassion and wisdom
- Thank God for three skilled people who applied for Board membership
- Donate:
 - online through our website at www.fms.ca
 - by e-transfer to financial@fms.ca
 - by cheque or cash mailed to:
 - 118 Centre Street, St. Thomas, ON N5R 2Z9
- Consider if you could volunteer your time and skill towards the renovation of our *House of Homes*. Please contact Suzanne at sfliere@fms.ca

FINANCIAL UPDATE

Our Baby Bottle Drive has currently raised just over \$20,000
Thank you so much for your generosity and support!

Year-to-Date
October 1, 2021 - July 31, 2022

Revenue: \$ 420,140.14
Expenses: \$ 380,356.63