

FRESH START SUPPORT SERVICES

SPRING NEWSLETTER 2020

Hello friends of Fresh Start,

I hope that this message finds you and your family happy, healthy and hopeful in this uncertain time. We wanted to update you with some information about how Fresh Start is supporting the infants and mothers living here and to provide some encouragement.

The infants and mothers living at Fresh Start are our number one priority right now; both in limiting their exposure and keeping them housed. The board and I are closely monitoring the recommendations from Southwest Public Health and the Government of Ontario and implementing social distancing measures. Currently, Fresh Start stopped having visitors to the Fresh Start facility including family, service providers, students and volunteers and are screening the health of the residents and staff entering the building. This has been difficult for some mothers to be asked to stay indoors and to not visit with family or partners as having a young infant can already feel so isolating.

We continue to provide hope and encouragement to them, but we wanted to send an encouraging word to you as well.

Let's us all take comfort in the peace the Lord provides during this time of uncertainty. In Psalm 46:1-3 it says, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore, we will not fear though the earth gives way, though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea,

though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble at its swelling." In Luke 12: 25-26 it says, "and which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? If then you are not able to do as small a thing as that, why are you anxious about the rest?" The Word reminds us "do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God" (Phil 4:6) and "fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand" (Isaiah 41:10).

Please continue to pray for the health of the infants, mothers and staff as these young babies just came into the world and are extremely vulnerable to sickness.

God bless you and your family.

Sincerely,

Karen Schouten
Executive Director



Babies babies everywhere!



There are baby boys everywhere at Fresh Start! We are currently supporting four mothers with infants younger than 2 months of age and three of them were only born last week! These four boys add to the streak of boys that we have had living here.

Fresh Start's Need:

Fresh Start has been blessed with donations of food, diapers, wipes and formula over the last few months. We are **very** thankful to a church that dropped off some toilet paper in February! What a blessing!

Fresh Start has been amazingly supported for over 31 years by the local churches who want to provide a 'fresh start' to these mothers. And Fresh Start has come to rely heavily on them for support. Almost half of our monthly revenue comes from offerings organized by churches.

With the cancellation of in-person church services and regularly scheduled giving, we ask that you please continue to give generously.

If 100 people give \$100 then the housing and supports that these mothers need to keep custody of their children and to have the chance to parent will be secure during these uncertain times.

Donations can be given online by going to our website www.fsms.ca, by sending an e-transfer to director@fsms.ca or by mailing a cheque to 118 Centre St., St Thomas, Ontario, N5R 2Z9.

Fresh Start's major fundraiser, the Annual Banquet and Dessert Auction, was scheduled for April 24, 2020. With the current restrictions against having gatherings larger than 50, this fundraiser will not be able to take place as it is currently planned. We will make a decision closer to the date about how and if this fundraiser will be able to take place. We might have the option to hold the banquet and dessert auction virtually.

