



Fifteen Years of *A Place Called Home*: A time to rejoice and a time to grieve

At *A Place Called Home* we live in the tension between good news and bad news. That isn't so strange really. We all live in that tension. But at *APCH* the tension is heightened by the fact that the good news and the bad news are often the very same.

This year *APCH* "celebrates" fifteen years of service to our homeless and most vulnerable neighbours. That's good news! But it is also bad news. You see, there are still homeless folks in our community, and surely that isn't a good thing. In fact, there are more homeless people in our midst today than there were fifteen years ago. So we have seen over that fifteen years the expansion of our homeless shelter from a four bedroom house with only day staff available to assist them to a site with two houses, nineteen beds, and twenty-four hour staffing. As an organization we have grown. Isn't that good news? And our occupancy in those beds is over 85%, which means that we receive increased government funding for each bed that has a body in it. More beds, more people in those beds, more staff, a larger budget. All indications of a success story, right? All of this is good news, isn't it?

Well, yes ... and no. Yes, it is a good thing that this kind of emergency shelter is available every day of the year and twenty-four hours of each day. And yes, it is good when our occupancy rate is high and therefore our funding increases. But is that really good news? I mean, wouldn't it be better if we had fewer homeless folks needing our services? Fewer beds full?

Good news can really be good news while being bad news at the same time. An increase in homelessness, an increase in demand for our services is, at heart, a tragedy. And *APCH* is an agency that enters into tragedy and attempts to transform it into hope.

As we look back on our fifteen years we see two things that haven't really changed all that much. People still find themselves homeless and they tend to find themselves homeless today for pretty much the same reasons that folks ended up homeless fifteen years ago. That's the first thing. Family breakdown, loss of income, increase of housing costs for folks on fixed incomes, bad decisions, mental health issues, injury and illness. Take these kinds of things in people's lives, mix in a serious lack of affordable housing and you have a homelessness crisis. This kind of lack of change in the conditions that render folks homeless can strip us of hope and leave us depressed and paralyzed.

But there is something else that hasn't changed. Our deep conviction that everyone deserves a safe place to come home to every night. That hasn't changed. That conviction, born of a belief in human dignity, the importance of hospitality and the call to justice remains the same and animates everything that we do. That belief is what protects us from cynicism and despair. That belief is what keeps the board, staff and supporters of *APCH* advocating for our friends who have fallen on bad times, begging, and borrowing to get the money necessary to keep us going, and firmly committed to a ministry of hospitality that invites folks who are homeless to be our guests and to have a place for a time that they can call home.

Maybe that is why so many of our guests return as volunteers. They needed a place to call home, and that was provided for them in a way that honoured their dignity and refused to judge them. So they want to make sure that other folks in a similar situation meet the same kind of care and hospitality. Maybe that is why individuals, churches, services clubs and businesses continue to support us with time and money. The people of Kawartha Lakes don't want their neighbours to suffer the indignity of life on the street, or the insult of being shunted off to another municipality to receive help. None of us wants to get used to seeing a certain number of homeless people on our streets. None of us wants to have to avert our gaze from a homeless kid begging on a street corner. None of us want to step over the guy in the sleeping bag stretched out on a hot air grate in downtown Toronto.

A Place Called Home is now fifteen years old. That is a cause for celebration and for sadness. Fifteen years of serving the most vulnerable in our community. That is definitely worth celebrating. But let's dream of the possibility of not having to celebrate a thirtieth anniversary. As the old song put it. "To everything there is a season and a time for every purpose under heaven. A time to weep and a time to laugh. A time to mourn and a time to dance." This year we laugh and dance in celebration of our fifteen years of service. But mourning and weeping is never that far from us.

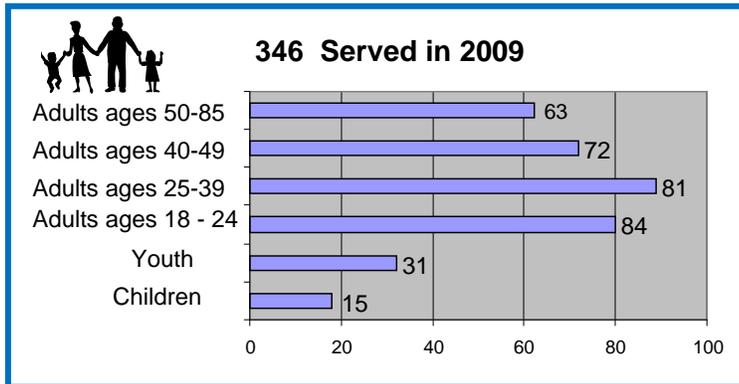


- Brian Walsh, Board Member



Seventeen people were able to call 'A Place Called Home' their home this Christmas; ranging in ages from a one month old baby to a 75 year old man. What did Christmas morning look like for them?

Thanks to our committed staff, volunteers and the generous donations of gifts, food and decorations, their Christmas morning was close to what you might have experienced. Some of the tried and true routines of running a household were put aside; residents were allowed to sleep in if they chose and the usual breakfast of cereal and toast was replaced, again through the generosity of donors, with bacon & eggs complete with fresh fruit and other treats. The days before Christmas, Santa's elves (in the form of our volunteers and staff (who volunteered their time), worked in our Boardroom preparing gift bags for each of our residents. The usual practice of having the kitchen open only during specific hours was put aside while residents and one past resident helped prepare the turkey for the evening meal. A surprise donation that day of a pasta dish complete with caesar salad provided a special lunch. Staff reported it was a great day with music, laughter and lots of chocolate and good things to eat. A heartfelt thank you to all of you who remembered us this holiday season.



A Page from the Past

Excerpt from 1997

'A Place Called Home' has now completed its 3rd full year of operation. There have been many successes at "A Place Called Home" during the 1997 year. We have provided shelter for approximately 58 men, women and children who were homeless in Victoria County, and 168 individuals and/or families, since we opened our doors in January of 1995.

The Board of Directors meets once per month to discuss ideas and operations. Each meeting brings new confidence to the members that our vision of transitional housing is working! Meeting our financial obligations is an ongoing challenge. "A Place Called Home" receives **no government funding**. Our efforts have succeeded only through our fund raising endeavours and through the generosity of those who have donated to our project.

Acknowledging our many Board & Committee Members from the Vision to the Reality

Current Members

Zita Devan	1991 - 2010
Helen Yazdani	1992 - 2010
Lois Hunter	2001 - 2010
Norm Price	2001 - 2010
John Hassan	2007 - 2010
Brian Walsh	2007 - 2010
Anna Friend	2008 - 2010
John Atkins	2009 - 2010
Roger Worsley	2009 - 2010

Past Members

Carol Williamson	2008 - 2009
Art Bartlett	2006 - 2009
George Skerratt	2003 - 2008
Bev Gimbel	2000 - 2005
Don Houser (deceased)	2001 - 2006
Judge Reid Scott	1999 - 2004
Marg Fevang (deceased)	1998 - 2008
Patti Lou Robinson	1998 - 2001
Terry Taylor (deceased)	1998 - 1999
Clarence Kartes	1997 - 2001
Ernie Ruch	1996 - 2007
Chris Ruch	1995 - 2003
Brent Taylor	1995 - 1998
Esme Wjeyesingle (deceased)	1995 - 1996
Laurie Gauvreau	1994 - 1996
Susan Bianconi	1993 - 1996
Michael Robinson	1992 - 1997
Sheila Mayville	1992 - 1998
Colleen Cayley	1991 - 2000
Dave Milling	1991 - 1997
Bob Mark	1991 - 1997
Debbie Richard	1991 - 1996
Dave Parrott	1991 - 1993
Gerry McCarthy	1991 - 2001
Wynne Mosterd	1991 - 1999
Graham Copp	1991 - 1994
Rev John McMurray (deceased)	1991 - 1992



Wear an Empty Safety Pin

Why an empty safety-pin? ...it symbolizes the *EMPTINESS & DESPAIR* of homelessness *But more importantly*, it symbolizes *HOLDING THINGS TOGETHER*

“15 Years - Building a stronger community by meeting a basic need” – Shelter



2003



Before



After supporting the Homeless for eight years in a 5-bedroom house rented from the local Housing Authority, the Board of APCH gave their commitment to establish a 24-hour Emergency House to address the growing number of single men, women, couples and families with children from our community who found themselves Homeless.

Late in the winter of 2001 we began the renovations with the official opening and ribbon cutting in July 2003; offering - 19 beds, 24-hour staffing, three meals a day and the support in assisting our residents in finding permanent and keeping affordable housing.



As we continued to support those in need, gaps in services were soon identified and addressed. Our Board became keenly aware that Homelessness is not confined in a box and that prevention programs were needed in helping reduce homelessness and while our core service is to house and support the homeless of our community, Homeless Prevention Programs were established. These valuable programs resulted in the need for additional office space making our administration building fully accessible; including upgrades to our heating & air conditioning system, energy efficient windows & doors.

2004 - Our Emergency Home Energy & Resources Program was created as a Homeless Prevention Program to help those who were facing disconnections of household utilities, putting them at a great risk of becoming homeless.



2008

2004 - Included the creation of our Outreach and Aftercare Program helping those at risk of becoming homeless and those former residents who may still be struggling.

2005 Our Identification Clinic Program assists those who need to replace their I.D. The lack of proper identification was identified as a barrier for individuals in order to move forward to find permanent housing



Lindsay Legacy C.H.E.S.T Fund



2006 While all who come to us are in crisis and need support, youth require additional supports. Our Youth in Transition Program (YIT) provides support to youth (16-24) who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.



“15 Years - Building a stronger community by meeting a basic need” – Shelter



Not Forgotten

In November we held our 3rd annual Candlelight Memorial remembering those we have lost including; our residents, Board Members and volunteers. Let us not forget the struggles they endured or the contributions they made.



Downtown Christmas Market

We were pleased to participate in Lindsay's 1st Downtown Christmas Market. Special thanks to all our volunteers who weathered the cold and gave of their time. Three cheers for Aaron Young, owner of Bell World for his vision and organization.



On behalf of the Board, staff and our Homeless we thank all those who have supported our efforts these past 15 years and we look forward to your ongoing support.



If you would like to be included on our e-mail list please send us an e-mail at lorrie.polito@aplacecalledhome.org

The Benefits of Donating Securities

Security Donations
GIVING & SAVING

A Place Called Home is set up to receive and properly receipt donations of Securities. For more information call your broker or tax specialist OR A Place Called Home at 328-0905 ext. 222



Make a Tax Deductible Donation Today!

Thank you on behalf of the Homeless in our Community!

A PLACE CALLED HOME IS A REGISTERED, NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION

Charitable Receipts will be issued for All Donations of \$10 and over

Your ongoing Support will ensure that everyone has a safe place to return to at the end of the day

Mailing Address: A PLACE CALLED HOME

64 Lindsay St. South Lindsay, Ontario K9V 2M2 (705) 328-0905 lorrie.polito@aplacecalledhome.org

Many Ways to Give



An on-line alternative to make your donation. Just log onto www.canadahelps.org

Call us to discuss Planned Giving or Bequeaths
A way to leave a lasting legacy

Help the Homeless of our Community



Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ Postal : _____

I would like to make a donation in the amount of: \$ _____ Enclosed are monthly cheques in the amount of: \$ _____

A Place Called Home **does not** sell trade or share mailing lists. We will only use your personal information to send you newsletters, information about volunteer opportunities or other special events/promotions pertaining to A Place Called Home and our operations and to include your name in our list of donors. Please check if you do not want your name published on our list of donors. Please check here if you would like us to remove you from our mailing list.