

News Release

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YWCA NIAGARA REGION CELEBRATES FIVE YEAR ANNIVERSARY

St. Catharines, ON - The YWCA Niagara Falls shelter will celebrate its five year anniversary on January 16th at 1:00p.m at its residence located at 6135 Culp Street. This open house event will celebrate the outstanding accomplishments the YWCA has made to the community by impacting women and children in the region.

The YWCA offers a refuge for women and their children; a safe place to stop the vicious cycle caused by poverty, addiction, mental health and violence. The women and their children are provided with a safe warm bed, nutritious meals and a place to re-assess their options. The organization is dedicated in empowering women and advocating on their behalf.

The 20 bed shelter has been in operation since the not-for-profit organization took over the vacant building in November 2005. This safe haven is home to women 16 years of age or older and their children in crisis.

“I would be on the streets with my children if it wasn’t for the YWCA” says a resident. “I finally have the means to get my family back on our feet again.”

Since the take over, the building has made changes from programming to interior design and is continuously improving to maximize turning points in the lives of women and their children. In August 2008 the Niagara Falls shelter started their Youth Transitional Housing program which opened up 6 beds specifically for youth 16 to 24 who are in crisis and homeless. The youth can stay for up to one year, while receiving support with one to one counseling, taking part in workshops and life skills programming.

“The youth have a great program here” says Sue Chenard, shelter manager. “We’ve tried to make the youth space match their spirit with a spacious lounge that’s bright and cozy for the girls to socialize in - a place they can call home” says Chenard.

Its Onsite Transitional program was launched in January 2010 with the help of volunteers from the Maranatha Christian Reformed Church based in St. Catharines. Volunteers worked a total of 518 hours renovating and soliciting donations to complete this project. The Onsite Transitional program is located in the shelters newly renovated basement where it houses up to 6 women. The Onsite Transitional program houses the women up to one year and is the link between Emergency Housing and Offsite Transitional Housing. The program enables women to live independently while developing life skill training with their caseworker.

YWCA “Empowering women and their families to embrace change at turning points in their lives”

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Elisabeth Zimmermann, Executive Director of the YWCA Niagara Region is available for interviews.

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