



## Finding A Home And Family

Story by *The Nest Maternity Home Client*

I had just travelled to Canada to pursue studies. Barely a month in a new country, where I knew no one, I found out I was pregnant. An unplanned pregnancy for that matter. I was shattered, I felt lost, and I felt dead inside.

As the pregnancy progressed, it became harder to find accommodations that would suit my needs and circumstances. I prayed and hoped God would make it possible for me to find a place I could call home and that would bring me peace. Through God's grace, a friend referred me to the Crisis Pregnancy Centre, where I met Celeste and Sher. They shared about the Maternity Home, and I moved in November 2023. *My life has taken a different turn!*

There is a whole team of dedicated staff that have genuinely held my hand through tough times. I had moved in while pregnant, still devastated and not knowing what the next day would bring me. I have had a chance to be surrounded with people who not only show me love but also pray for me and understand me.

It's been four fruitful months with my baby having arrived at the beginning of February 2024. Celeste, Sher, Ingrid, and Georgia have been there in support of my journey, being the family I can fully rely on. Katrina, the program director at CPC Burnaby, has been part of my transformation, supporting and encouraging me specifically during my birthing period.

At the maternity home, my mental health has started experiencing healing, with the help of, Doreen, one of the staff trained in counselling! I have met amazing volunteers like Heather, that have become part and parcel of my transformation. The mom's group organized by the centre, where new moms and expectant ladies meet and exchange ideas, learning from each other, has been an invaluable information platform. Donors have deeply touched my heart through gifts and support. Having a newborn can be tough on your body and mental health, but God has surrounded me with great people. It feels totally different now.

I can boldly say this centre has been like a REVIVAL HUB for me. What I need, God has provided through this home and CPC. My son is extremely blessed to have been born in a such a loving environment. My son and I not only have a safe home full of love, but we have a reliable family where most of our major needs have been fully met including our basic needs. I have been taught how to love my son as well as myself. I have met incredible mothers and mothers to be, my housemates, and we continue to enjoy the love of God through the staff of this maternity home. Even on my days of worry and doubt, I have received hope and reassurance!

We are grateful to belong here. God bless everyone that is involved in this noble cause.



### Celebrating 35 Years!

This year marks our 35<sup>th</sup> year of serving women in crisis. Since 1989, with your support, we have offered compassionate help and hope to over **22,500** women experiencing unexpected pregnancy, post abortion grief, domestic abuse and sexual assault.

We are grateful that you have joined in the vision to see that every member of the human family be welcomed, respected and upheld.

To celebrate, we will launch a new look and websites. Our CAS banquet will be November 5. *We look forward to celebrating God's goodness with you throughout this milestone year.*

**Doing Justice. Loving Mercy.**

## A Mission Of Life and Hope



This March CAS has been invited to train leaders in Uganda in Sexual Integrity Education and Post Abortion Grief Recovery. Several years ago, due to COVID travel restrictions, our staff were involved in providing an online training to a group of East African Leaders. The March training will be the first opportunity to meet these leaders in person.

Our Ugandan team consists of Norma Cody and Doreen Yung, as well as two Kelowna individuals Kim and Darlene Unrau. We will be helping three groups: Local schools, Life Reform Ministries, and Comforters Centre – a pregnancy help ministry. It is expected that the trainings will equip 62 individuals in post abortion education and ministry, and 100 church and community leaders in teaching sexual integrity. Many youth presentations will also be held in local schools.

Uganda has a high rate of teenage pregnancy. Twenty-five percent of pregnancies are to mothers under the age of 18 years old. Abortion is considered illegal unless provided by a licensed medical professional and the mothers life is deemed at risk.

It is our hope to equip leaders in life-giving ministries and also to educate and empower youth and youth leaders to understand, embrace and celebrate God's design for life, family and sexuality.

## Out of the Ashes

Last November our crisis pregnancy centre in Vancouver was impacted by a fire that started in the building next door. It burned through the centre roof and thankfully the quick work of the firefighters put it out without too much fire damage. However, the fire caused a fair amount of smoke and water damage.

An incredible invitation for us to set up services in couple of rooms at Granville Chapel meant that by January we had a site to see clients at again. The church also set us up with a separate entrance and doorbell. As of March 12, we had seen 55 clients come to our office in this church and have had about 76 individual visits. This is incredible!

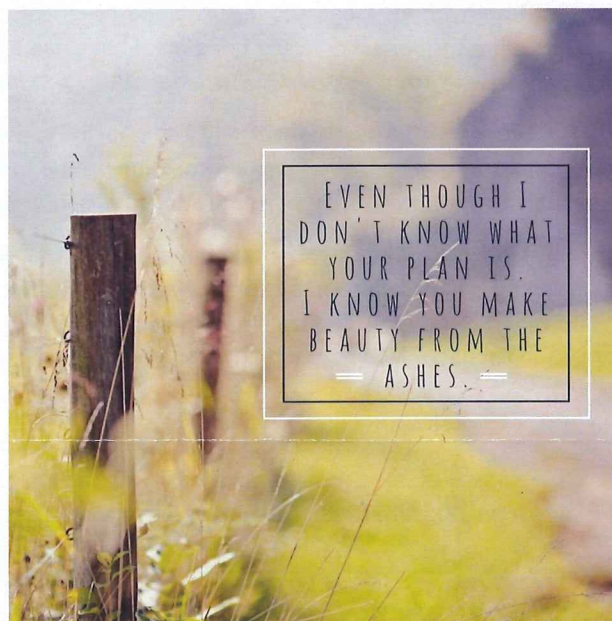
As for our move back into 3809 Main Street, the framing is complete, the roof is repaired, and HVAC plumbing, and electrical are complete. Interior work is underway, and flooring will soon be in as well as cabinetry and finishing. Though grateful for our temporary location, we are hoping we will be back to the Main Street location in April.

In the meanwhile, we are very thankful for the staff and leadership at Granville Chapel. It has inspired us to continue to work hand in hand with churches to be a loving and supportive community to women in crisis. Our clients are appreciative too.

*"I came to the centre in search of options counseling, and I found so much more; I found genuine care, compassion, and perhaps most valuable: community."* – CPC Client

*"The crisis pregnancy centre just helps you realize how strong and resilient you are. They provide the tools, and you get to pick your next move, with their support. No matter what, they will always have your back."* – CPC Client

If you are a church in Vancouver, Richmond, Burnaby, New Westminster, and you'd like to partner with us in supporting women in distress please contact one of our centres. We would love to link arms in creating community for the women we help and have many ideas on how we could do this together.



## One of Her Dreams

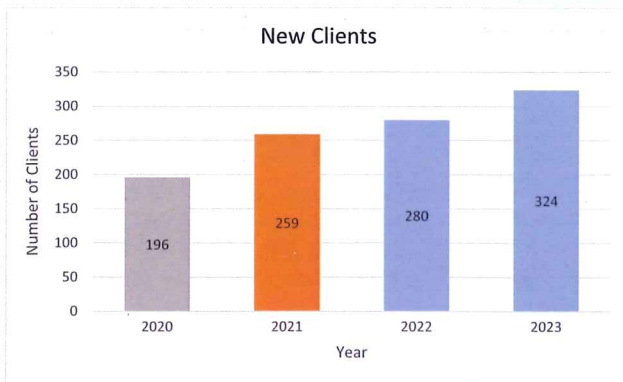
A pregnant woman came to the centre, desiring to be happy about her first pregnancy. Instead, she was surprised at her own confusion and indecision. Being a mom is one of her dreams and yet she doesn't want to distract her partner from achieving his goals. The timing of this baby is too soon.

*"My heart says to have this baby, but my head says to have an abortion."*

This is a familiar story in our centres. An unexpected pregnancy, a potential dream fulfilled early and the apprehension of imminent change to at least three peoples' lives – a mom, a baby and a dad. And often the weight of the decision borne on one more than the other, making the prospect of motherhood as a single journey, lonely and burdensome.

The above client has received information and is welcoming of support as well as hearing the stories of others who faced similar circumstances. She is still undecided about her pregnancy and next steps.

In 2023, our centres saw rising numbers of pregnancy and post abortion clients. We welcomed 56 newborns! A good year.



## New Beginnings

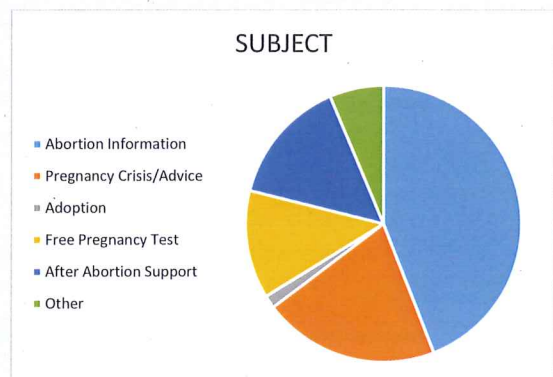


Rosie was the first French speaking client who reached out to OnlineCare after our French website was launched. She was looking for support following a recent abortion. Rosie was hurting and alone. She admitted to using drugs and sleeping a lot. She recognized that she had some depression.

With support online, she started to take small steps in her healing journey. By giving herself permission to face the feelings she had been left with since the abortion, she started to experience healing and began to make positive changes in her life. Rosie started taking care of herself, mentally, emotionally, and physically; setting goals and rekindling important relationships.

Today, Rosie shares that the OnlineCare support person has helped her a lot. While the pain is still there, she has learned some tools to navigate this difficult time. In her words, "You are the first person with whom I shared so much".

OnlineCare exists to reach women and men in areas of Canada where there is little to no local support for unexpected pregnancies or post abortion grief. In 2023, OnlineCare had 1037 new visitors and over 1100 new conversations. There was a 6% increase in clients, and 74% increase in requests for post abortion support. This unique ministry continues to grow.



## Welcome Additions



### Sandra Lopez

Sandi is our new Client Services Assistant at CPC Vancouver.

Sandi is a mother and a grandmother. On top of that qualifying experience, she brings valuable expertise to our team as childbirth educator. We are blessed to have her serve at the Vancouver centre!



### Sherilyn Acheson

Sher joins the CAS team as The Nest Maternity Home Coordinator.

She spent many years in ministry work with her husband in Canada and abroad. She is a mother of two adopted children and has a huge heart to help the women at the home. Welcome Sher!



### Georgia Eldridge and Ingrid Opoku-Mensah

Georgia and Ingrid are live-in caregivers at the Nest Maternity Home.

Georgia is originally from Australia and Ingrid is from Ghana. Their youthful exuberance and genuine care is key to making The Nest a home and a family for single expectant mothers. Way to go ladies!



### Marie-Josée Gravel

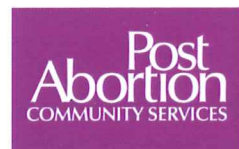
Marie-Josée is the new OnlineCare Client Services Coordinator.

Marie has many years of counselling experience, specializing in grief recovery. She loves music, and is passionate about helping women after abortion. Marie is bilingual and a gift to OnlineCare French clients. Welcome Marie!

## Did You Know?



In the past five years, our education outreach SHARE, has empowered and educated 7555 youth and young adults to understand biblical sexuality and relationships.



The Rachel's Vineyard post abortion healing retreat will be May 24 - 26, 2024. Visit [pacscanada.org/training-retreat/retreat/](https://pacscanada.org/training-retreat/retreat/) for details or call 604-525-0999.

## Moving On



Sara Ghanati has served as our counselling intern with Post Abortion Community Services since June 2023. She also provided counselling support to the Burnaby Safe House clients.

By her big smile, you can tell that she was a joy to have with us the past nine months. The clients appreciated her sensitivity and her ability to be present to their current distress.

Thank you Sara!

## In High Demand



Our two crisis pregnancy centres are in need of diapers sizes 3, 4 and 5 and baby formula.

If you would like to donate these items, please call 604-731-1122 or email [vancouver@optionscentre.ca](mailto:vancouver@optionscentre.ca) for CPC Vancouver, or for CPC Burnaby call 604-525-0999 or email [burnaby@optionscentre.ca](mailto:burnaby@optionscentre.ca).



This year the Operation Baby Bottle campaign will run from **Mother's Day May 12**, to **Father's Day June 16**. All funds raised go to support our crisis pregnancy centres.

Churches can participate by picking up and filling bottles or donating online. If you would like more information or if you are interested in supporting this year's fundraiser, please call 604-525-0999 or email [info@optionscentre.ca](mailto:info@optionscentre.ca).

