



PRESS RELEASE



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Marillac Place Celebrates Renovation at Open House

KITCHENER, Ontario, April 25, 2005 — Marillac Place officially opened their newly renovated building today. The extensive renovation of a century-old coach house provides the facility with more space for its services for young mothers and their children. The federal government provided \$154,846 in funding for the renovation through Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's (CMHC) Shelter Enhancement Program (SEP).

Attending today's open house and making the announcement were Member of Parliament for Kitchener-Centre, the Honourable Karen Redman, on behalf of the Honourable Joe Fontana, Minister of Labour and Housing, and Marillac Place Executive Director, Celeste Donkersgoed.

"The renovation of the Marillac Place shelter demonstrates the Government of Canada's commitment to address housing and support needs for women and their children," said MP Redman. "This project is a prime example that federal support helps give those most in need an opportunity to build a better and safer life for themselves and their families."

Marillac Place provides transitional shelter and support services for up to 10 single mothers between the ages of 15 and 25. Young mothers can live at the shelter for up to a year after their babies are born while they learn life skills that include everything from running a household, menu planning, cooking and budgeting, to job search and interview skills, to parenting and coping skills.

"What we are able to do here at Marillac has a positive impact on not only one, but two generations," said Celeste Donkersgoed, Executive Director, Marillac Place.

The coach house structure was unusable prior to the renovation, but now serves as the children's play room and a program room for residents. This additional space enables the staff to offer more life skills and counselling programs as well as the ability to provide outreach programming for former residents and members of the community.

CMHC's Shelter Enhancement Program assists in repairing, rehabilitating, and improving existing shelters for women and children, youth or men who are victims of family violence, and in acquiring or building new shelters and second-stage housing where needed.

CMHC is Canada's national housing agency with a mandate to help Canadians gain access to safe, quality and affordable housing. CMHC supports the Canadian housing industry and improves the living conditions of Canadians through mortgage loan insurance and securitization, assisted housing, research and information transfer and the promotion of Canadian housing exports.

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Backgrounder — Marillac Place

Inspiring Brighter Futures for Generations

For many young single mothers, a lack of support and encouragement can be all that stands in the way of their success. Marillac Place offers young mothers, many who are victims of abuse, an opportunity to learn the life and parenting skills they need to live happy, healthy, and independent lives.

Marillac Place, in Kitchener, Ontario, provides transitional shelter and support services for up to 10 single mothers between the ages of 15 to 25. They can reside at Marillac during their pregnancy, and then with their babies for up to one year after giving birth. The shelter can also accommodate children up to the age of two years, which allows for a mother who has a toddler as well as an infant to live there.

Marillac's service is unique because it offers long-term accommodation and 24-hour supervision. Having residents stay for up to a year after their babies are born gives the agency the ability to better prepare the young mothers to live successfully on their own. Residents learn life skills that include everything from running a household, menu planning, cooking and budgeting, to job search and interview skills, as well as parenting and coping skills.

When residents complete their stay they are strongly encouraged to continue their education and to attend extensive programming within the community. The young women also benefit through the peer support aspect of community living and gain strength by the support they give each other.

Renovation Means Expanded Services

Marillac Place has been able to achieve its goal of offering more space, and in turn, more services, thanks to an extensive makeover of the century-old coach house located at the back of the residence.

The bright and colourful playroom is staffed by community volunteers who look after the children while their moms take part in valuable coaching sessions.

Marillac Place's unique program is in high demand. Unlike other maternity homes, its residents are not required to leave shortly after the birth of their babies. Located in downtown Kitchener-Waterloo, the shelter's mandate attracts referrals from all over Ontario including Toronto, London, Hamilton, and Cambridge.

Since last fall, Marillac Place has been operating at its full capacity and the staff is required to wear many hats to meet the unique needs of each resident. The shelter helps young women overcome obstacles such as regaining or maintaining custody of her child, helping her find affordable housing, or completing her high school education. It also tries to fill the void many of the residents face due to the lack of family support.