

Greetings from the Board of Directors

We hope you are enjoying the preparation and anticipation of the upcoming Christmas season. Amidst all the hustle and bustle, we also hope you are able to take the time to consider some of the deeper meanings of Christmas, and will be able to remember those who are less fortunate and who are experiencing personal difficulties.

For 20 years Miriam Centre has been reaching out to mothers who are in emotional and/or financial need. This unique ministry has filled an important void as it has provided a place where love and caring are backed up with practical assistance. It is a place of hope and promise where mothers and their families receive encouragement and aid. Unfortunately, government funding is not available, so our staff and volunteers must work very hard to run things very efficiently with limited resources. We rely on some community fundraisers and on the generous contributions of our supporters.

We hope you will consider blessing the Miriam Centre this Christmas with a donation. It is only through God's grace and the generosity of our supporters that this ministry is able to continue its valuable work within our community.

Thank you and God bless you.

Secretary of the Board of Directors.

Sharon Manouchehri



"This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in swaddling-clothes and lying in a manger".

Luke 2 :12

Our Foundation has been established for ten years now and is bearing fruit in a very encouraging way. Thanks to your generosity, the interest generated by the invested capital is disbursed annually to Miriam Centre. Your donation has thereby become permanent. Thank you for contributing to this project so vital to our future. To make your contribution, please see the enclosed flyer.

Miriam Centre Staff



Sr. Rita Lacelle,
Gabrielle Leblond, Lise Lagroix



Miriam Centre News

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20
years of service

Dec. 2008 *"For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb."*

Psalm 139 :13

Celebrating Twenty Years!

Lise Lagroix

In July 1988, Pierrette Dagenais (Penny) opened the door to Miriam Centre for the first time. The name Miriam was chosen to remind us of Moses' sister, in the Bible, who placed her brother in a wicker basket at the river's edge, to protect him from being killed. This would remind people that, through its mission, the new Centre would protect life by helping women faced with a difficult pregnancy. Centre staff could encourage and support mothers in a number of ways such as providing the help they needed and by proposing adoption. Sustaining families grieving the loss of a child through abortion, miscarriage or infant death was also included in its mission.

Equipped with only a few unmatched armchairs and a desk, the reception area was practically vacant. Penny had only three boxes of baby clothes to unpack, and after this was done, she sat down

and waited for the phone to ring. This all took place the same year the Supreme Court of Canada abolished all legislation protecting unborn children. And now, the same year we are celebrating our 20th anniversary, Henry Morgentaler is being awarded the Order of Canada. Perhaps in view of her exceptional courage and patience, Penny should have been awarded that honour instead.

A great variety of families and moms have benefited from Miriam Centre since 1988. They undoubtedly have touched Penny as well as other staff and volunteers that have followed. A huge quantity of maternity clothes, bedding, equipment, food and baby clothes have been distributed to visiting families. From 1990 to 1995, courses were made available to mothers wishing to get their high school diploma. How joyful and proud we were to see these young women who, in accepting their diploma, realized that they had achieved their goal. In 1991, Miriam Centre was expanded and renovated, thanks to the efforts of many volunteers and the numerous donations received.

Then in 1995, some adminis-

trative changes occurred, as Sister Rita Lacelle took over from her sister, Penny, and is still going strong to this day. At the Centre's Tenth Anniversary celebration, Sister Rita emphasized that all the personal efforts she had been called upon to invest in this ministry were well rewarded by way of countless blessings. In 2006, hard times fell upon Miriam Centre, as following a torrential rainstorm, the Centre was totally flooded. However, with the grace of God and lots of help, we came out of it all stronger still!

Finally, I wish to thank you Penny for your vision, your courage and your faith. And may the Lord bless you and all those, women and men, who have been associated with the Centre since its inauguration, whether as employees, volunteers or beneficiaries. Cheers for our twenty years!

In order to continue our ministry, we know we can always count on our faithful supporters for both our regular and unexpected requirements. Please also continue to support us through your prayers and donations. Thank you!

Miriam Centre receives no government grants. We are a registered charity and our number is 11904 2091 RR0001. We issue receipts for income tax purposes. Our fiscal year ends December 31.

Depending on Volunteers for Twenty Years

For 20 years, numerous volunteers have donated their time and person. During that period, their efforts have allowed the Centre to meet its objectives. When we renovated and extended our premises in 1991, 27 volunteers met one Saturday to make this project a reality. Volunteers have always been an inspiring source and I couldn't begin to name the areas where these "Angels" were involved... The Lord tells us to develop and share the gifts with which he endowed us and this is exactly what these people totally accomplished.

As Mother Teresa put it so well: *"It is not how much we do, but how much love we put in that action."*

From the bottom of my heart thank you 20 times over.

Lise



A few volunteers and the staff at Miriam Centre.

Hear ye! Hear ye! Hear ye!

To celebrate our 20th Anniversary, we are inaugurating our new website. Thanks to a gracious volunteer, we can now become known through this medium to promote our services and spread relevant information. Please note that the site is still being developed and should be consulted occasionally for new items. Make sure to tell your friends and acquaintances!

www.miriamottawa.org
info@miriamottawa.org

Life Realities

My Story



I was 32 years old when my life was turned upside down. I had been dating someone for a short time when I discovered I was pregnant. I was faced with huge decisions. I left my boyfriend, which was a good choice. And I thought that at my age I was mature enough to be a mother. So I chose to carry on my pregnancy by myself, although I knew I would be a single parent.

I was 22 weeks on when I had my first ultrasound and told that I was expecting twins. Even before I had overcome that shock, one of the amniotic sacs ruptured. I then had to cope with a very early delivery and babies with compound problems. My two sons were born 10 days later, 27 weeks after conception. In spite of all the sequels and complications, I convinced myself: "They were born on December 25, which means something." Through the incredible care of the General Hospital and my spiritual stamina which was stronger than ever, my two wonderful angels arrived home in April 2007 with a positive future ahead of them.

Their arrival home was a very happy but very difficult one. One of my sons still needed oxygen 24/7. I was soon exhausted from having to care for two premature babies, as was my mother who was such a great help. I was in need of resources. That's

when I discovered Miriam Centre where I was welcomed with love and no judgmental attitudes. I was given items such as a crib, clothing and diapers, but especially I received an attentive ear, something I was in desperate need of. Through Miriam Centre, I met Louise. She was and still is of precious help, being able to hear me out. She is now part of my family. When she comes to visit my sons, their faces light up with happiness and joy. The Centre helped me and allowed me to discover that some marvelous and generous people are living in our community. My thanks to Miriam Centre where I am still welcome and can count on a supportive ear.

My sons are now 22 months old. They are often ill because of their weak lungs and their delicate immune system, but their development up until now is normal. Today, I am very grateful when I look at my sons, who weighed hardly 2 pounds each at birth. I see them run and climb over everything and say "Mommy, Mommy", and I am convinced I made the right choice.

Danielle

We need your Help

- To initiate and coordinate fundraising events for Miriam Centre.
- To serve as volunteer at the Centre or on our Board of Directors.
- To collect used stamps for fundraising purposes. (Please leave a lot of paper around the stamp).
- To collect Canadian Tire money.

Thank you!

Please contact the Centre at 613-830-8623