



Update on Baby Smarts Program

Beginnings Guelph has been supporting teens who find themselves unexpectedly pregnant for 25 years. Nearly 10 years ago, Beginnings decided that it was important to incorporate a prevention initiative into our services. We decided to go into the local high schools to speak to students about healthy decision making. Over the years we have expanded the program to incorporate relevant topics as the issues facing teens change. This program has been rewarding for students and teachers alike,



"[The influences on decision making topic was] engaging and not often addressed well in the healthy curriculum" – Teacher.

On our first day with a class, we focus on healthy decision making. Some of the influences on decision making we discuss are sexual health based, but others are broader in scope. We discuss brain development, media, peer influence, misinformation and goal setting. One student shared;

"I learned to think about things ahead of time instead of making decisions when your emotions take over your brain." – Student.

On the second day, we talk about the challenges and benefits of being a young parent or placing a child for adoption. We work through a group exercise to explore how challenging it is to decide what to do when you find yourself unexpectedly pregnant and how important it is to slow down, think through the decision and to seek support. We also highlight the importance of having compassion for people who find themselves pregnant as teens. This day has been eye-opening for teens.

"I enjoyed options the most because I am adopted and it's nice to know my birth mom gave me the best life she could by giving me up." – Student

On the third day we focus on healthy relationships. Most teachers comment on the importance of the discussions during the third day. They see and hear about a lot of unhealthy teen relationships. It's been encouraging for teachers to see their students learn how to build healthier relationships.

"I learned how to respect myself in a relationship and to slow down and think" – Student

In the 2016–2017 fall school term we went to 13 classrooms and spoke to 265 teens. The program is well received in various types of schools. We work with private Christian schools, Catholic schools, Public and alternative schools. This program has had a wide impact in our community and we're thankful to our Baby Smarts volunteers and the schools that have partnered with us.

Introducing Our Newest Volunteer... Louis Patrick



Having been a single parent in his early adult life, and having to rely on the support of family services organizations during that time, Louis Patrick understands the immeasurable value Beginnings Family Services delivers to the community. As such, Louis made a decision to volunteer with Beginnings in any capacity necessary. As it turns out, his volunteer efforts with Beginnings Family Services would be focused in the area of fund raising.

All of the elements of operations at Beginnings Family Services are crucially important. From Pregnancy testing, to the Care Cupboard, to programs and counselling services, Beginnings offers a comprehensive variety of services which all require financial support. And so with a background in sales and entrepreneurship, Louis is endeavoring to apply those skills developed in the business world to the family support and services world with Beginnings Family Services.

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FAMILY SERVICES

ANNUAL WALK & 5K RUN

Celebrate Mother's Day with us!
Riverside Park Bandshell
Saturday, May 13th, 2017
Registration @ 9am
Walk/Run @ 10am

Visit beginningsguelph.ca
to register or donate

Building strong families,
one step at a time

A Client's Expression of Thanks!

There should be a better name for this wonderful organization other than Beginnings, since they hold your hand through all stages of your child's creation, birth and growth. I had stumbled upon Beginnings when a pregnancy test came up as positive. Not only did their guidance and support help me to make a decision on what to do, but they were set up afterwards to help lend me a hand guiding me into the next stages of my journey.

I have enjoyed the prenatal classes with Laurie. The one on one approach has allowed me to ask questions, and become more personalized with my own areas of concern. Not only are you not rushed through any of the stages; you are welcomed to move at your own speed, leaving time for questions and concerns. The wonderful women at Beginnings give all that they have in making sure that your experience is personalized and special.

I was also given the opportunity to participate this year in the Christmas Hamper/adoption program. I could not believe that amount of love and joy that was shown me, not only by Beginnings itself, but by the wonderful family who wanted to make my Christmas that much brighter. In a world, that is often full of negatives, it was amazing to see an organization take the time to show this much love, respect and concern.

As I quickly approach the birth of my son, and all of the worries that that entails, I know that there is always a home away from home that will have my family's best interest at heart. Thank you Beginnings, for you time, commitment, love and concern; and I hope more women have an opportunity to be welcomed with the same love and respect, as you have had the chance to show me.

Adopt a Family Christmas Hampers

Christmas is an exciting time of year! The holiday season can be very challenging for families in our community. One thing that is unique about Beginnings Christmas Hampers program is that we intentionally come alongside client families who are not receiving support elsewhere for the holiday season. This year we were able to provide 18 hampers full of toys, clothes, food and hygiene products. Here are a few thank you notes written by families while picking up their Christmas Hampers:

"Thank you so much for taking the time and all your efforts to make our Christmas "Merrier" and a New Year happier. My little one loved the gifts and story books! I am able to make healthier restaurant wraps with the Panini press which was very kindly accommodated by you! A sincere and heartfelt thanks for the kindness that you shared with us"

"After a very rough year I am more than overwhelmed with your extreme generosity. I can't wait to see how happy the kids will be Christmas morning. You are truly a blessing!"

"Thanks you for helping make our Christmas special. We really appreciate it so much! Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!"



I want to help Beginnings build strong families!

Your Name & address (if different than on reverse):

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ Postal Code _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Yes, I can donate monthly:

\$20/mo. \$30/mo. \$_____/mo.

Please supply your credit card info below.

I would like to make a one-time donation:

\$50 \$100 \$200 \$_____

Please apply \$40 of my total donation as my membership fee

Cheques payable to Beginnings; gifts of \$20 or more will be receipted.

Please complete for credit card payment:

VISA Mastercard Expiry _____

Card # _____



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FAMILY SERVICES

169 B Woolwich Street, Guelph ON N1H 3V4

519-763-7980

info@beginnings.ca

www.beginnings.ca

Thank you!

To donate online, visit www.beginnings.ca and select Donate

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