

# Hope in Tough Times



Hello everyone,

Thank you. We have a lot to celebrate this year at St. Matthew's House. Its been a great year of change, growth, excitement and hope. This 'gratitude report' is filled with stories from donors, board members, volunteers, staff members, and most importantly, the people we are privileged to support. While we had to close some programs, we were able to dig deeper with your help and not lose any level of service.

We are committed to the pedagogy of "How Does Learning Happen?" and have had a busy year preparing for a major expansion! Our classrooms have been transformed to more naturalized environments and show forward thinking environmentally focused programs. Slugs, bugs, birds and squirrels in the neighbourhood have all produced great opportunities for learning and growing in the world! The City of Hamilton has been a critical partner in helping us deliver child care programs and services to over 85 children from 67 different families in the 2018-2019 fiscal year.

Your contributions have helped 100s of chronically and episodically homeless people retain their housing. You contributed to a drop in meal program that also supported the delivery of 1000s of weekend food bags for seniors living alone that has clients reporting better health outcomes such as lower sugar levels and improved weight maintenance!

Thank you for helping us to develop a pilot program focusing on vulnerable seniors and isolation that is now being integrated into our seniors outreach program. Housing and homelessness remain at crisis levels in Hamilton, and with your support, we've been able to help 100s of folks 55+ either gain, retain or maintain their housing. Your generosity shown to our Adopt a Family/Senior Christmas Program, helped 464 families and 150 seniors celebrate the holidays last year.

You donated over 318,000 lbs of food to our food bank and served over 35,000 visitors. Hunger is real in Hamilton, yet because of you, we have been able to alleviate the pressure that people have in their lives around accessing food.

As the new Executive Director, its been my utmost pleasure and gratitude to serve the community of SMH. I'm most thankful to the board members, each of whom have shared with me their expertise and knowledge. The staff welcomed me warmly and together we created a pathway for change and growth that we can all walk down together. All of you provided me with steady guidance and support, alongside an unwavering commitment to ensuring that this is where hope lives.

Thank you. There are many good things to come from St. Matthew's House in some very tough times.

  
**Renée Wetselaar,**  
 Executive Director

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## STAFF 2018-2019

Renée Wetselaar,  
Executive Director

William Harrison, CPA, CA,  
Financial Director

Shani Doherty,  
Executive Assistant

Mary Lou Stoodley,  
Social Service Worker

Janine Hebert,  
Social Service Worker

Justin Drury,  
Driver/Maintenance

Josh St. Anne  
Carol Wilcox

Charlette Elijah  
Karen Randall

Beryl Holtam

Rob Fitchner  
Sami ALSadi

Cindy Book  
Olubunmi Elizabeth Soneye

Erin Van Wort

## Child Care

**Angela Dauda, Manager**  
**Janis Webster, Supervisor**

Enza Guddemi

Afroza Kazi

Aalamjeet Kaur

Kisha Joseph

Clara Muraca

Ivana Kicic

Julie Crawford

Tammy Williams

Mena Ramm

Abiola Faleyimu

Azra Khan

Iwona Piasek

Connor Van Deventer

Akassi Boa

## Food Security

Madeleine Bond, Food  
Security Supervisor

Debra House,  
Social Service Worker

## Senior's Outreach

Mel Delorme, Supervisor  
Andrew Matthews,  
Senior Centre Support  
Worker

Karen Burson,  
Cook, Senior Centre

Brett Aston,  
Mental Health Street  
Outreach Worker

Cristina Della Pietra,  
Home2Stay Program  
Coordinator

Tania Brown,  
Home2Stay Outreach  
Worker

Mary Matthews Jarvis,  
Senior Crisis Intervention  
Worker

## Past Staff 2018-2019

Alexandra Keller

Sarah Forde

Marie Cantwell

Christine Tosetto

Lillian Young

## VOLUNTEERS

*St. Matthew's House wishes to thank the following volunteers for their service over the 2018-2019 year!*

## Food Bank

Linda Pay

Nanizau Matuvanga

Sylvia Thurston

Alan Parker

Betty Bristol

Dennis Bain

Linda Conroy

Susan Holock

Judith Purdell Lewis

Susan Crawford

Wilma VanderWoerd

Barbara Mason

Kymme Sun

Santiago Alvarez

Shawn Dugay

Angela Mazza

## Adopt a Family Program

Arlene Luke

Kathy Vaughan

Tara Vaughan

Susan Thompson

## Student Placements:

**MOHAWK COLLEGE  
SOCIAL SERVICES WORKER  
PROGRAM:**

Joel Pedlar, Manjinder Kaur,  
Victoria Burbine, Madison  
Rothwell, Emily Alton,  
Jessika Buick-Paul

**MCMASTER UNIVERSITY  
SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM:**  
Rachel Shaule, Halle Uhde

**OFFICE OF COMMUNITY  
ENGAGEMENT &  
MCMASTER RESEARCH  
SHOP:**

Amy Ajay, Jing Chong,  
Yunlong Liang, Vatsal  
Mehta, Aisha Tousif, CA  
Klassen, Dave Heidebrecht

## MANY THANKS TO OUR FUNDERS AND SPONSORS



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# Where Hope Lives

Annual Report 2018-2019

## The Future is Bright!



This is my final report to the community as Chair of the Board of Directors of this small but mighty organization. I am proud of what we have collectively accomplished this past year in particular, and know that the future for St. Matthew's House is bright.

This year we followed through on our commitment to our clients, staff, donors, funders and broader community to implement the strategic plan we adopted last fiscal year. Our plan laid out a 3-year path to becoming a sustainable, healthy organization.

With the hiring of Renée Wetselaar as Executive Director we have seen the plan lift off the page and become real. Some highlights have included completing major renovations to 414 Barton Street to accommodate new child care spaces, make it wheelchair accessible and include community meeting space. Our financial house is now in order, partly due to the selling of 2 houses that we had owned since the 1980's to Indwell, who will be able to now leverage the 9 housing subsidies into 30 when folded into their extensive housing portfolio.

*We have streamlined our programming to excel at what we do best: provide food security, home and community support to vulnerable seniors and early child care. We are grateful that Mission Services has taken over the East End Food Bank, and Niwasa Kendaaswin Teg the St. Helen's Food Bank, allowing us to focus on our core services without loss of service to other communities.*

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2018-2019

Barbara Busing (Chair)

Bill Mous

Bishop Susan Bell (ex-officio)

Brent Bentham

Bryan Powell

David Savage (Vice Chair)

Elizabeth Wensley

James Andrew (Treasurer)

John Watts

Kathryn Anderson

Lil Scime

Mary Burnett

None of this was possible without the support of our donors and funders, especially the City of Hamilton whose support this year in particular was much appreciated. The trust and faith in us shown by Bishop Susan Bell and the Anglican Diocese of Niagara has sustained us while we focused on our core mission: to be a place of hope.

To Angela Dauda who provided executive support before the hiring of our new ED we give our thanks. To our staff please know that we are proud of your commitment and dedication to St. Matthew's House. Thank you for your service.

To my fellow Board members thank you. Everyone of you have worked tirelessly to ensure SMH has a strong, sustainable future. We have made difficult decisions and taken complex actions to ensure that this organization is well grounded to move into the future confidently.



**Barbara Busing,**  
Chair

## CHILD CARE SERVICES



## “How Does Learning Happen?”

Child care is a core part of St. Matthew’s House. We are celebrating a year of delivering care for **85 children** from 67 different families across the City of Hamilton. We served **44,200 hot meals**, had **22,100 nap times** and provided for approximately **2,860 hours of care!** Our team of Early Childhood Educators were here early in the morning to greet children, stayed late in the day to say good bye to the last wee one leaving and were a core part of the capital renewal. We owe them a debt of gratitude for this year of change.

The parents who send their children to our program are owed “thank you’s” as well. While we have undergone renovations they have adjusted where they drop their kids off, parked strollers in a construction zone and witnessed the interior changes as we’ve improved the space on the main floor.

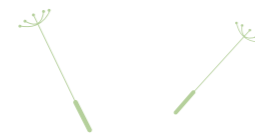
*“...Hallways are brighter, I love the changes in the classroom, I love reading the updates on the bulletin Board. Everything looks great”*

Carrie-Ann Williams, Jordynn’s Mom

This year we hired Janis Webster, a former SMH staff member and program consultant for Affiliated Services for Children and Youth as the new Supervisor in our program. Janis has over 40 years experience in early learning and care and has very quickly engaged with children, parents and staff members to bring her creative spirit and keen understanding of the pedagogy of “How Does Learning Happen?” to the classroom at SMH.

This is the year of capital expansion to the Children’s Centre. With the very generous support of the City of Hamilton we have been able to expand our program to include 30 new program spaces. The renovation, with a budget of just over \$800,000 has been carefully managed by the expert stewardship of our Board of Directors, led by members of the Capital and Projects Committee. We truly grateful to all who contributed to the work of making our Centre even more of a presence on Barton Street!

Finally, 2019 marks Angela Dauda’s 45 year anniversary with St. Matthew’s House Children’s Centre. Angela has been a stalwart to the organization, staying with us through every change. We now have children in the program with parents who were supervised by Angela! This is the greatest indicator of our success....a parent who wishes for their child to have the same experience that they did. Thank you Angela. You are the heart of SMH. ♥



## SENIORS’ OUTREACH

## Providing Hope For Seniors in Need

### Social services are all about hope.

“You’re taking people who are in situations where they feel hopeless, where they feel vulnerable, unable to protect themselves, unable to be heard,” says Mel Delorme, seniors outreach supervisor at St. Matthew’s House. “Our job is to come in and make sure they are heard, give them some hope that the situation can be rectified... Our job is to provide hope to people when they’re in crisis and they don’t know where to go or how to make things better.”

For seniors in need, St. Matthew’s House is a source not only for hope and help, but also for solutions.

### Combating Homelessness

Mel and her colleague Cristina Della-Pietra work on the Home2Stay Program, helping seniors who are at risk of becoming homeless. They develop an individualized plan, which may involve advocating for clients who are facing eviction, helping solve problems with landlords or rent, working with landlords or other housing providers, sourcing new housing for clients, and supporting clients wherever they are living.

“When landlords know that they’re working with St. Matthew’s House.... they’re willing to take a chance on some of our clients when they know that they have a team and that support system behind them to back them up,” says Cristina.

*Staff will support clients for up to two years, helping them to overcome habits that may have contributed to evictions in the past or build their skills to maintain their housing.*

As a result of St. Matthew’s efforts, the team has a good success rate helping seniors feel safe and secure where they’re staying—a key step in rebuilding hope.

### Helping Seniors in Crisis

There are many seniors in crisis in our community. The loss of a home, a job, a spouse, or mental or physical health challenges can all send someone to rock bottom. From there, it’s hard to see any hope.



For the staff in the crisis intervention program, their mission is to help seniors find that hope and climb up from that rock bottom. “People can grow and change for the better,” says crisis intervention and outreach worker, Mary Matthews-Jarvis. “When they see their successes, they begin to feel themselves moving forward.”

Mary describes the experience of working with one senior who had been living on the street. Even after Mary found him a place to live, he didn’t feel comfortable after being outside for so long. Eventually, through Mary’s support combined with efforts from others at St. Matthew’s, he transitioned to his new accommodations.

“Now he’s cooking at home and he’s attending the Senior Centre regularly and I see a huge change in him,” she says.

### Ongoing Support

Ongoing support is essential to help vulnerable seniors. At St. Matthew’s House, the Drop-In Support Centre located at the Eva Rothwell Centre provides seniors with a fun, safe space. The centre provides coffee and water all day as well as breakfast and lunch Monday to Friday, along with activities like pool, cards, painting, arts and crafts, sculpting with clay and more.

Andrew Matthews, a support worker in the centre, describes it as “a place where people feel comfortable being who they are where they are.”

By attending the drop-in sessions, seniors have the opportunity to access additional supports, such as monthly medical, hearing and memory clinics or weekly group discussions.

St. Matthew’s is also working to develop new programs to supplement the freeform activities already on offer.

“If clients come in and need help, anything as basic as setting doctor’s appointments or taxi rides or organizing their DARTS applications, I help them with that,” says Andrew. “We’re basically helping our clients and being that voice for them.”

### Building Connections

A common thread through all of St. Matthew’s programs is increasing connections for seniors. Isolation amongst seniors is very common. It also looks different for each client.

Recognizing the need in the Hamilton community, St. Matthew’s launched a Seniors Isolation Program to connect isolated seniors with services and programs to improve the quality of their day-to-day lives.

Tania Brown, a senior isolation support worker, describes working with clients who need support with medical care, food insecurity or companionship:

*“Hope is very important because poverty takes that away,” says Tania. “We’re going in and we’re trying... to restore that hope back into the lives of these seniors.”*

### Building Hope

Over 55 years, St. Matthew’s House has remained committed to being a place of hope for people in the community.

Brett Aston, mental health & street outreach worker, highlights that the phrase “where hope lives... is different to each individual that we work with.” For him and the rest of the St. Matthew’s House staff, they start with an understanding of the population that they’re working with, a deep commitment to see their clients as individuals and a dedication to inspire hope in all its forms.

Concludes Mel, “When you feel hopeless, it’s not just that your situation’s not going to be better, it’s that you’ve lost your faith in your ability to deserve better. Providing hope gives you that confidence that you deserve to build something in your life, to make things better, to have opportunities. Hope gives you that.” ♥



## FOOD SECURITY

## No One Goes Hungry

In 2018-2019, **more than 26,000 people** accessed the St. Matthew’s House food bank. That’s 26,000 families, children, teens and seniors.

For these people, fresh produce and meals from St. Matthew’s help them to meet their basic daily needs, no matter the size of their family or dietary considerations.

Some of the most-used services include school-safe snacks for children, emergency food deliveries for people with limited mobility who cannot come to the food bank themselves, and the Christmas hamper program, which gives grocery gift cards along with presents for the children.

Madeleine Bond, food security supervisor, says that in tough times, groceries are often one of the sacrifices people make.

“When families come in we like to try to provide as much as we can towards that because children need to eat. They’re going to school during the day. Their tummies get hungry, and [they need] to be able to absorb the information that they’re getting in school.”

Food drives are always important to St. Matthew’s House. Madeleine emphasizes that the food bank wouldn’t be able to operate without the support of the community. Food drives ensure that the food bank has a different range of products, to better meet the needs of the families who use the service.

Other ways that community members can get involved are financial donations, volunteering and spreading the word about St. Matthew’s House.

“Talking about St. Matthew’s House gets our word out there that we are a community agency and we are trying to give back as best as we can to the community members that need us,” says Madeleine.

*“We understand that tough times happen. We want to be that place that you can come and know that you will be okay.”*