

Building Strength & Resiliency during the Pandemic

Supporting Young Families when they need us most

It's been a year like no other. Here we are experiencing COVID-19 Lockdown #3 and we are doing our best to stay safe and well. And even though they remain strong and determined to raise healthy children, the pregnant and parenting young women that we meet, are struggling under the tremendous weight and burden of this long-term pandemic. Youth parents are feeling especially anxious and isolated, and many are having a difficult time financially. That is why Rose of Sharon expanded our youth client age range to 14 - 29 years. We are there every step of the way - to lend a hand, educate, provide food and family resources and be a comforting voice of support.

When it wasn't safe to bring moms and their children onsite in our small spaces, we successfully pivoted our services to provide online resources. Although it can't replace in-person experiences, our online programs are bringing youth together virtually to connect with other young parents who are going through similar experiences. Online workshops focus on topics that benefit health and wellbeing like: prenatal care, parenting and child development, personal wellness, peer support, family nutrition and basic cooking skills. We are building strong partnerships with like-minded community agencies, working together to share resources including workshops for youth dads who want to learn parenting skills and play active roles in their children's lives.

The need for Counselling services has increased significantly as youth learn to take care of their emotional health, set personal goals, and develop self-advocacy skills. Counsellors stay connected through telephone calls, texts, and virtual sessions. High School was offered onsite and online. And despite the irregular school year, students are succeeding with their educational goals.

Feeding and caring for babies doesn't change just because it's a pandemic but having the money and resources to do it has become difficult for many. As part of our Nurture & Nutrition program, Family Care Packages provide fresh produce, pantry staples, baby nutrition and diapers/wipes to families who benefit from some extra help. Our dedicated volunteers safely deliver to an average of 90 local families per month. Young parents also receive personal nutrition consultations and join workshops on cooking skills, family-friendly menus, grocery budgeting, and kitchen safety. We have funding to continue this food security program until September 2021. We are actively looking for financial support and package donations so that we can continue to offer this vital service to young families in need.



1466
Family Care
Packages
delivered to
young families
during COVID-19

340
Young Moms
& Children
receive a helping
hand

May is for Mothers!

Celebrating Motherhood is what we do and when better to do it than in May! We think moms are the best (obviously) and even though we can't celebrate in person, our friends at Shoppers Drug Mart stores in York Region are sponsoring a virtual Mother's Day event on May 13th! Shoppers is bringing a team that will offer fun and informative sessions including makeup tips and easy hair care for busy moms. A pharmacist will answer family health questions, and Human Resources will chat about interview do's & don'ts. Shoppers has generously donated gift bags and moms will be entered into a prize draw.



2184 Hours
of Counselling
for 182
Pregnant &
Parenting
Youth
during the
pandemic



Johansen Larsen Foundation



Sisters of the
Good Shepherd



VOLUNTEER UPDATE

Special thanks to our team of dedicated volunteers for helping us care for our young families throughout the pandemic. From receiving food deliveries from our community partners, sorting through donated necessities & food, and making safe doorstep deliveries of the Family Care Packages to our young families are just a few of the things we can count on our volunteers for! We recently celebrated National Volunteer Week, April 19-25 and got to know our volunteers through daily spotlights. Be sure to check out our social media pages to meet some of our wonderful supporters!

CPG Aerospace - Pivoting Support for Pandemic Safety

Thanks to a generous donation of acrylic barriers custom-made by CPG Aerospace owners & brothers, Matthew and Michael Waddington, we have safer classroom, kitchen and meeting spaces at Rose of Sharon! CPG is a local manufacturer of aircraft detail parts and small assemblies specializing in non-metallic materials. CPG pivoted their pandemic manufacturing to create custom, acrylic barriers that are effective for any area where people interact, and we are very thankful for their help to keep us safe!



HIGH SCHOOL UPDATE

Not even the pandemic could stop our students from continuing their studies and for some who are graduating from high school! Melene, Rose of Sharon's dedicated YCDSB teacher developed and delivered curriculum that was effective for both on-site classes and online learning. Melene ensured that every student had the technology and teaching support needed to participate and complete their courses. We are very proud to share that 8 young women will be celebrating their graduation this year! We can't celebrate in person, but we will host a virtual Celebration Night that will honour the hard work and accomplishments of every student mother. We are proud of our students and respect the strength and courage it takes to continue with education especially while caring for a young child.

Scholarships are generously provided by community partners:

Sisters of the Good Shepherd * Rotary Club Newmarket * Colleen Kelly Memorial
CWL Our Lady of Grace Parish Aurora



Special thanks to our Graduation Sponsors:



Prestige Granite Design Inc.

HELP US TO HELP YOUNG FAMILIES

No matter what happens during the pandemic, Rose of Sharon remains committed to empowering young mothers to embrace their strengths and support the future they envision for themselves and their children. We are asking for your help to support young families who live in our community. Financial donations are valuable because they fund the free Rose of Sharon essential services that every youth receives such as: personal counseling, high school support, food security and practical resources as well as online workshops covering important topics like prenatal care, parenting skills, family nutrition and child development.

Family Care Package Donation Drive

One of the most urgent needs during the pandemic is access to essential family care items like diapers, formula and groceries. We have safely delivered 1466 care packages to young families living across York Region! This is a high-needs support that does not have long-term funding, but we will continue to provide it for as long as we can. We are gratefully accepting donations of: Diapers (all sizes + sizes 5, 6 & pull-ups), Wipes, Baby Lotion, Baby Formula, Non-perishables (pasta, rice, crackers, granola bars, cereals, oatmeal, jam, peanut/almond butter, canned vegetables, fruit & soups, apple sauce, taco kits, etc.). For more information or to book a drop-off, please contact: Justine Kobitowich, Nutrition & Resource Coordinator at jkobitowich@roseofsharon.com | 289-763-3792

"Thank-you so very much for the package that you have sent. Everything you sent is so useful and much needed. I feel so blessed and lucky that I have you all in my life. You are more than family to me... Thanks for always being there for me as a strong support and listening to me"

YOUR HELP IS NEEDED NOW MORE THAN EVER!

Yes, I would like to help Rose of Sharon's young families by providing:

- ☐ 1 month of counselling, programs & care packages for 1 youth parent & their family - **\$450**
- ☐ 1 month of online parent & child development programs for 1 young mom - **\$150**
- ☐ 1 family care package, delivered to 1 vulnerable family - **\$125**
- ☐ 1 personal counselling session for 1 pregnant/parenting youth - **\$60**

☐ A one-time donation of \$ _____

☐ A recurring Monthly Donation of \$ _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email address: _____

I would like to use my VISA / Mastercard:

Card #: _____

Expiry: _____ / _____ CVV: _____

Name on Card: _____

Signature: _____



Please make cheques payable to **Rose of Sharon Services for Young Mothers**. Donations of \$20 or more are eligible for a tax receipt.
Your privacy is important to us. We do not rent, trade or sell our donor lists.