

Providing Shelter, Support and Hope

As Greater Toronto REALTORS® we're fortunate to share in one of life's most important milestones with thousands of our city's residents each year as they become first time homebuyers.

We know that important accomplishments like buying a home are only achieved through hard work and typically, with the help of family and friends who have supported the educational and career successes necessary to undertake such a purchase.

Not everyone though is fortunate enough to have such a support system and recognizing this, Greater Toronto REALTORS® offer assistance to our city's young people in need, helping to put them on a path to success.

One very worthy organization that we sponsor through the Ontario REALTORS Care Foundation is Our Place Peel, an agency that since 1985 has been providing shelter, support and hope to youth who are at-risk or homeless.

Offering short-term counseling, long-term housing options and aftercare support, Our Place Peel is the only shelter in Peel Region that specifically serves youth who are ages 16 to 21.

“As each youth comes through our doors we see a variety of different issues that they come with. Many of them come from abused families. They have graduated from the

Children's Aid Society and they're homeless, they've been abandoned and they are coming through our doors looking for hope," says Executive Director Christy Upshall. "One of the things that the staff work with them on is how to give them hope and how to work with them on moving out and becoming independent citizens in the community."

Our Place Peel prepares its young clients for independent living by imparting essential life skills like budgeting, cooking and setting educational or career goals. Upshall recalls one young client, who at 16 was abandoned by his family. Thanks to counseling services offered by Our Place Peel, he chose return to high school and thereafter, invited her to his graduation ceremony.

While the organization strives to keep its young people in the community, close to any support network they might have, doing so has become increasingly challenging given that since the 14-bed facility was established, the population of Peel Region has tripled, growing to approximately 1.3 million residents.

While last year alone it served 543 clients, it estimates that it was unable to help a further 500 young people due to lack of space. As such, according to Upshall, Greater Toronto REALTORS'® support is vital.

"We truly could not do the work that we do and provide the hope and the support to the youth that we serve everyday without support from Toronto Real Estate Board Members and the Ontario REALTORS Care Foundation."

You too can help make a difference by volunteering your time, organizing a fundraiser, making a financial contribution, or donating essential items like socks, underwear, shampoo and toothpaste. To get involved please visit www.OurPlacePeel.org and to learn more about the many ways Greater Toronto REALTORS® are working to make a difference throughout our city visit www.TorontoRealEstateBoard.com