
MY SISTERS' PLACE FONDS - FOND DESCRIPTION

Last updated December 9th, 2016 ; Includes Accession 16-01 to 16-02

Dates

[1983-2016]

Extent

Textual Records

DVD-R

Compact Disc

VHS

Photographs

Administrative History

In 2002 a coalition of community partners, women of lived experience, donors and volunteers identified a gap in service for women facing homelessness in the City of London. Women attending daytime mixed gender drop-in centres were subjected to harassment and unsafe conditions. The alternative of staying on the streets during the day increased the risk of violence, abuse, self-neglect and isolation. Women needed a safe daytime space and community of support.

A women only centre was borne with the vision to create a community of staff, volunteers and women experiencing homelessness, at risk of homelessness or street involved. In this environment community services could be coordinated while providing immediate supports on site. This approach aimed to stabilize women's lives and embrace each woman wherever they are on their journey. The philosophy at its core is that women are not considered problem individuals that placed a burden on the community, but rather a vibrant population striving to find stability and realize their potential.

With little more than a dream, and tenacity, plans were made to open such a space in the downtown core area. The first step was financial and moral support from The Sisters of Saint Josephs, who provided initial funding to open the doors. Further, they were able to minimize the cost of the actual space by offering up part of their own residence, then located at 534 Queens as the physical space for a one year period. Their generosity included funding for one year to meet the financial obligations toward food, staffing and other necessary expenses. The doors opened on Thanksgiving Day 2004, with a dinner celebration for approximately 50 women.

One year later My Sisters' Place moved to the King Street location. Attendance grew steadily, and with limited space women were fed in 2 sittings at lunch, a situation that caused program space shortages each day. In 2006, recognizing the serious mental health concerns facing many participants, My Sisters' Place merged with WOTCH Community Mental Health Services (now CMHA Middlesex), to better provide for the growing number of women coming through the doors. It was soon obvious that My Sisters' Place was quickly outgrowing its space. During that time staff worked endlessly on fundraising initiatives to pay all the expenses required to feed and support an ever growing number of women.

In 2009, My Sisters' Place was gifted the use of a heritage building on Dundas Street (the former Buchan House) by generous local benefactors, the late David and Noreen Bird. The house is perfectly positioned in the revitalized east side of downtown London and provides a stable, safe home for My Sisters' Place. By the time the Bird's came to visit My Sisters' Place, answering a public plea with their first of many donations, My Sisters Place was seeing approximately 60-70 women a day.

With the Bird family's kind gesture, months of planning, renovating, and moving has led to the permanent home for an organization that supports some of London's most vulnerable women.

In January of 2012, thanks to a generous donation from the Butterworth family, My Sisters' Place began an evening and weekend program. This program has been steadily growing and in the first six months of the year we have had 1,300 weekend visits and 3,000 evening visits. Currently My Sisters' Place sees almost 110-140 women daily. Using a new unique database we have identified that My Sisters' Place is actively involved with over 1,200 individual women.

Custodial History

Through volunteer initiatives, My Sisters' Place established an onsite repository space in 2015 and began collecting documents scattered throughout the offices and basements of workers. These documents have been transferred to the My Sisters' Place Archives sporadically and in several accessions.

Scope and Content

This fonds consists of records created and accumulated from the activities of My Sisters' Place, including administrative and financial documents, collected media coverage, event flyers, scrapbooks, floorplans, and research with community partners or through professional development activities, testimony, and artwork.

Arrangement

This fonds is arranged into the following series and sub-series:

Series	Sub-series
Series 1: Administrative	1.1: Accreditation 1.2: Correspondence 1.3: Funding 1.4: Health and Safety 1.5: Kitchen Table Project 1.6: Meeting Notes 1.7: Planning 1.8: Policies and Procedures 1.9: Professional Development 1.10: Sign-in Sheets 1.11: Statistics 1.12: WOTCH
Series 2: Services	2.1: Addiction 2.2: Housing 2.3: Indigenous Women

	2.4: Sex Work 2.5: Sexual Abuse 2.6: Violence Against Women 2.7: Coffee House
Series 3: Media	3.1: Media Relations 3.2: Newsletter – The Issue 3.3: Advertisements
Series 4: Events	4.1: Fashion show 4.2: Fundraising 4.3: Grand Opening 4.4: Livin’ on the Edge 4.5: My Sisters’ Stories 4.6: Spring Open House 4.7: Sweetheart Tea 4.8: Wine, Women and Shopping 4.9 Programming Events
Series 5: Artwork	
Series 6: MicroEnterprise	
Series 7: Buchan House	
Series 8: Testimony	
Series 9: Celebrations of Life	
Series 10: Photographs	

Finding Aids

Inventory file lists are available.

Conditions Governing Access

Some files have restrictions on access because of the personal information they include. Researchers are required to submit a written request for access to the collection. If you would like to view any of the records from the My Sisters’ Place Archives, please contact us at mysistersplace@cmhamiddlesex.ca and provide as much detailed information as possible regarding the types of materials you are interested in and the purpose of the research you are conducting.