

# Mother's Day 2024



Dear Youville Supporter,

*What does Mother's Day mean to you?*

For me, it's a time to reflect on my journey as a young mom, and now, as my son turns 19 later this year, it's a chance to celebrate how far we've come together. It's a day to appreciate the love and support we received from complete strangers that shaped our path and to recognize the incredible strength of mothers everywhere.

I first walked through the doors of Youville Centre in 2005, when I was just 18 years old and pregnant with my son, Malaki. I came to Youville with a dream for a better future for both of us. I was young and unsure of how I would manage to raise Malaki while finishing my high school education.

But thanks to the unwavering support of Youville and generous donors like you, our story has a happy ending.

**My son and I wanted to take this opportunity to personally thank you for being a supporter of Youville Centre. We want you to know the profound impact you're having on the lives of dozens of young women and their babies every year, just as donors like you did for us nearly two decades ago. We're sharing our story with you today, in honour of Mother's Day, because it's thanks to people like you that I received the vital support I needed 19 years ago that has enabled me to work towards the life that we have today. Simply put, your kindness changed my life trajectory forever. And for that, I can't thank you enough.**

Although I had the support of my boyfriend throughout my pregnancy, who is now my husband, as well as the love and understanding of my parents, I still felt like I was facing significant challenges. I didn't have any hopes or goals for my life. Finishing high school or pursuing post-secondary education wasn't even on my radar at the time—until I found Youville...

I first came to Youville when I was pregnant with Malaki, but I was too sick to continue taking the crowded bus across the city every day. After Malaki was born, a case coordinator from Youville encouraged me to return. It was the best decision I've ever made.



Our story showcases the power of past generosity. Your donation will create a ripple effect for other young moms and their babies for years to come. By giving a gift today, you can ensure that future mothers and their children receive the support they need – just like we did two decades ago.

Will you consider making a special Mother's Day gift to Youville Centre today, to help the young moms and babies currently facing challenges and need the support from Youville?

Your gift of \$25, \$50, or even \$75 will support education for two generations, provide mental health resources for every young mom attending Youville, deliver exceptional care through the child development program for each baby, and offer access to essential items like food and diapers that many young moms struggle to afford.

Youville is a welcoming, judgment-free space where young moms, some as young as 15, 16, and 17, can learn, build friendships, and work towards bettering their lives. It's a community within a community, providing essential support for young women, many of whom face mental health and substance use challenges. Youville's open-door policy gives these young women opportunities they wouldn't otherwise have, thanks to the support of our community. It's a nurturing environment that helps them blossom into the adults who, one day, may share their own success stories with you, just as I am today...



The Child Development Program was incredible. Malaki loved going every day, and it was so convenient to have him downstairs from my classroom, to be able to run down any time he was sick or just needed his mom. I remember how the staff created little photo packages to keep the moms connected to our babies' milestones. They provided daily updates and focused on nurturing the babies' cognitive development, which was truly wonderful.

They had small class sizes in Youville's secondary school, allowing for more personalized support than a regular school. Classes focused on independent learning, letting us work at our own pace. If Malaki was sick, the teachers allowed me to take books home and continue studying. The program was flexible, so you could complete a credit in as little as two months, tailored to individual needs rather than a set curriculum timeline.

And the mental health support was instrumental. At the time, I was involved in a lot of drama with friends and my counsellors helped teach me resilience skills and day-to-day coping mechanisms that I still use to this day.



**I don't know where we'd be today without Youville and the support of people like you. Your donations directly impact the lives of moms at Youville, helping them pursue education and break cycles. You're paving the way for young moms and their children to reach their full potential.**

Looking back, I realize the incredible blessing Youville was in my life. It provided me with a fresh start, support from case coordinators, counsellors, teachers, early childhood educators and cooks who made a huge impact. Youville taught me resilience and gave me the strength to push through tough days.

Youville's support continues to help me navigate life's hurdles. Malaki attended Youville for over two years during his most formative years, and the lessons he learned there shaped him into the capable young man he is today...

A note from Malaki...



Above photo at Christiana's Grad in 2007 and photo below at Grad 2023 where Malaki received a Youville Centre Second Generation Bursary



I'm proud of my mom. I'm 18 and she was my age when she was pregnant with me, having to make all of these huge decisions about her life. She was able to go through plenty of things that I don't think I would be able to go through right now in my current situation.

My main goal today is school. I'm done my first year of university in a program called Bachelor of Arts - Film Studies. My end goal is to become a film director - preferably in the science fiction genre. Last year, I directed my school play and I took my class to the National Theatre School Drama Fest provincials and I won the Provincial Directors Award. In addition to school, I'm working on other small projects to build my film portfolio for the future. And I know that all of this was made possible, thanks to Youville and donors just like you. Youville's second-generation bursary helped to fund a good portion of what I had to pay for the first semester of university last year.

Although I don't remember my time at Youville - I was around two years old when my mom graduated - I've heard all of the stories and mom has shown me so many pictures. I understand the gravity of what this organization has done for our lives and for so many other people's lives in our community. I'm not sure what might have happened to us if mom didn't graduate high school and if she didn't have the support from the Youville staff. I'm really grateful that people like you continue to help this organization and continue to care for other young mom's and their kids.

I think it's important that we share our story - what we've gone through - to help other young moms. So many people give up or don't get the support they need. And I feel like growing up I had a lot of opportunities that many other people didn't have, thanks to the support we received from Youville. My hope is that by sharing our story, other people will reach out for support.



- Malaki, second-generation Youville client, 18 years old

Today, I'm 37 years old and Malaki is 18 years old. I'm married to my high school sweetheart - Malaki's father - and we have another son, Tyson who just turned 11. I work for a government agency dedicated to enhancing the lives of children, youth, and families in need of support, as well as promoting the advancement of women across Ontario. *Talk about a full circle moment!*

Life is incredible, and I have people like you to thank for that.

I'm sharing my story today to hopefully inspire other young moms in our community who are searching for a brighter future for themselves and their children. I remember attending the Youville Centre graduation ceremony in June 2007, listening to an alumna speak. I thought: *that could be me someday*. Fast forward to June 2023, and I watched Malaki receive his second-generation bursary to attend university. In that moment, I realized: *we made it*. **Sixteen years ago, we listened to a woman tell her story of triumph, and now I'm that woman.**

**I hope you will join me in making a meaningful contribution to Youville Centre today, in honour of Mother's Day and all of the moms in our community who are facing similar challenges and striving for a better future for themselves and their children.**

Thank you for considering a special gift that truly makes a difference.

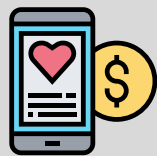
With gratitude,  
Christiana  
Youville Graduate, Class of 2007



**P.S. Please give as generously as you can to Youville Centre today, in honour of Mother's Day. Your generosity will help empower young women to overcome obstacles, pursue their dreams, and create brighter tomorrows.**

Please Donate

Yes, I/We wish to donate to support Youville Centre, to help empower a young mother to build a brighter future for herself and her child



Online donations can be made on our Canada Helps page at:

<https://www.canadahelps.org/en/dn/15999>

To reduce our service fees, please consider making a banking e-transfer for larger amounts; email [info@youvillecentre.org](mailto:info@youvillecentre.org) for details if you wish to donate by e-transfer.



Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ I wish to contribute \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Payment to be made by: ☐ Cheque ☐ Visa ☐ MC ☐ AMEX

Card# \_\_\_\_\_ Expiry (mm/yy) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Designate my funds: ☐ General ☐ Roof/HVAC Project

