



Help us make a difference in the lives of two generations, give the gift of hope today

## Holiday Ways to Give 2025 Madjem's Story



### Dear Youville Supporter,

I'm so grateful to have this opportunity to tell you how *your* kindness changed my life...

Your support is what keeps Youville Centre's doors open for young moms and birthing people in our community. Three years ago, I walked through those doors and everything changed—for me and for my son.

Thanks to *your* generosity, our future is brighter than I ever imagined possible. I'll carry that gratitude with me for the rest of my life. And now I've been given a chance to share with you, firsthand, the difference your generosity makes every day at Youville Centre.

Before I came to Youville, my life was a constant struggle to survive.

I was born in the Philippines, and at only 16 years old, I made the difficult decision to leave everyone in my life behind and move to Canada. Because my father was Canadian, I had citizenship—and I hoped that coming here would finally give me safety, opportunity, and a fresh start to build the life I'd always dreamed of.

But instead, after arriving in Toronto, I faced one hardship after another. And then I experienced an incredibly traumatic incident. My entire world fell apart...

I had nowhere to turn and no one to lean on for support of any kind. I spent the next year homeless—scared, alone, and unsure how my life could ever get better.

Before I continue with my story and show you how your support of Youville changed my life forever, I have an important question to ask you...

**Will you make a special holiday gift to Youville Centre today to help other young moms and their babies who are facing the same challenges I faced when I became a mom at 18?**

**Your donation will help a young mom finish high school, receive mental health care, access parenting support and essential resources, and provide her baby with nurturing, development-focused childcare—giving both of them the chance to grow, heal and build a brighter future together.**

**This holiday season, your donation will change the lives of two generations...  
just like you've done for me and my son.**

When I was struggling to survive in Toronto without a home, I met my boyfriend at the time and soon found out I was pregnant with my son. When my boyfriend was transferred to Ottawa for work, I moved with him.

After I had my son, J.J., I knew I had to go back and finish high school—not just for myself, but for my son's future. ***Everything I do now is for J.J.—he's in every decision I make.***



It was my social worker who first introduced me to Youville Centre. After being out of school for over two years, the idea of starting high school again felt overwhelming. But the moment I arrived, the warmth and support at Youville made me feel welcome.

In just eight months, I graduated! I'll never forget the moment I finished my last course...the teachers and staff were all clapping and cheering as I rang the bell.

***It was a moment of pride, relief and so much hope—one I couldn't have reached without Youville, and without caring people like you who know how important this place is for so many of us young moms.***



When J.J. first joined the Child Development Centre at Youville, he was only six months old and still breastfeeding. The staff would call me whenever he needed to be fed, and it was such a comfort knowing he was close by, surrounded by people who genuinely cared and loved him too.



Being a new mom, without any family support, was overwhelming, but the Child Development Program staff taught me so much—things I didn't even know I needed to learn.

**Every single day, J.J. and I were learning and growing together at Youville.**



When I started addressing the trauma from my past, the entire process was really overwhelming. I was already struggling with my mental health, and I don't know how I would have gotten through it without the support of my Youville counsellors.

They walked with me through every step—helping me navigate the challenges and cope with the emotional weight of it all.

And for the first time in a long time, I felt safe.

*All of this...every moment of safety, support and encouragement is possible for moms like me because of caring supporters like you who believe in us and our potential.*

After I graduated from Youville, I started a part-time retail job and was accepted into college on a scholarship for a Skills for Success administration certificate. When I got my certificate, I started a part-time job at a call centre. But then my boyfriend and I broke up, and he moved back to Toronto. It was a really low point for me again—I wasn't earning enough to support myself and my son, and I felt unsure of where to turn.

Even though I had graduated a year earlier, Youville was still there for me. They offered support once again, reminding me that I wasn't alone and helped me to keep moving forward.

***With Youville and kind people like you by my side, one blessing after another started to come into my life. Each week, each month, something new would lift me up and fill me with hope for the future.***



Today, I'm 22 years old, and J.J. is three—he'll be turning four in February. He's smart, talkative, funny, and full of life. My biggest goal is for him to have a happy, fulfilling childhood. He's in daycare now and will start school next year.

I'm proud to share that I'm now a flight attendant with a Canadian airline—a dream come true!

My brother has also joined me here in Canada, so I finally have family with me, which makes all the difference.

Everything I've accomplished over these last three years has been with J.J.'s future in mind. And I know none of this would have been possible without you...

**This holiday season, will you help transform the future for another young mom and her child with a donation to Youville Centre?**



With the cost of living so high and many young moms facing life on their own, your gift today can make a life-changing difference. It gives them hope and the feeling of being loved and supported—sometimes for the very first time in their lives—making the holidays truly special.

Wishing you and your loved one's a happy holiday season!

Forever grateful,

**Madjem**

Youville Centre former client and mom to J.J.



**P.S. Please make a special holiday gift to Youville Centre today to help young moms like me finish high school and get the mental health and parenting support they need to thrive.**

**P.P.S. This is your last chance to give in 2025!**  
**Gifts made by December 31 qualify for a 2025 tax receipt—please give as generously as you can.**