

# The Mercy Moment

Mercy Canada Quarterly Newsletter



## HAPPY NEW YEAR TO YOU AND YOU

January is now done and here we go into a brand-new month. Time is marching onward, and we didn't want to move forward without sharing some exciting highlights with you. First and foremost, we wanted you to know how grateful we are to each and everyone of you. You are a valued friend of Mercy, and we are grateful for every volunteer, every prayer and every dollar given. Our end of the year 25K match campaign was met and, in fact, exceeded. The total raised was over **39k!** Together we truly are engaging in this precious and much needed mental health ministry work. We need each other and are far more effective as a team. I love what God says in Ecclesiastes 4:9-11 about the value of a friend.

*"Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up the other; but woe to one who is alone and falls and does not have another to help. Again, if two lie together, they keep warm; but how can one keep warm alone?"*

As you know, we launched the Mercy Canada Wellness Centre in March of 2020 and continue to see exponential growth each year. In 2019, we served 19 women, 2020 (52), 2021 (73), and 2022 (106). In 2023 we saw incredible growth at a rate of 91% over 2022, by serving 202 individuals!

In the fall of 2023, we developed a new curriculum enabling us to launch a new support group called *Processing Abuse Through Story*. This is a women's group dedicated to supporting those who have experienced intimate partner violence. All of the services offered are Christ-centred and something to celebrate together for sure. Having said that, it also brings a sobering reality of the growing need for services to help those struggling with their mental health, and associated life controlling behaviours. We want to help more women and are committed to "help the widows and orphans in their distress" just like it says in James 1:17. So many people struggle with abandonment wounded roots and we want to guide those to Christ who can heal and restore them. Thank you for walking with us on this mercy - filled journey.

If you find you are encountering more and more people struggling with their mental health and want to grow in both your awareness and be more equipped to help, we are offering a training day called "Mental Health & the Church." It is free of charge thanks to a generous sponsor.

For further details, please click the link below. We'd love to see you and have you join us.

[Sign up here.](#)

Later in the year we will have more information about our future plans to launch Keys to Freedom weekend retreats! Stay tuned.

Enjoy this winter edition of our newsletter and enjoy thoughts and reflections from our Executive Director, Counsellors Core, and Parents Perspective.

Blessings from the Mercy Canada Team

## Newsletter Highlights

Happy New Year

A Message From Our Executive Director

Parent's Perspective

Counsellor's Core - Insight's from Mercy Counsellor's





## A MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

### Mental Health Matters!

Lately, I have been reflecting on the growing statistics regarding all things mental health. If I didn't know beautiful Jesus, or hadn't experienced his ongoing love, healing, and transformational power in my own life, I'd be downcast and discouraged. Thankfully, I have, and also have, the privilege of walking with hundreds of women who have experienced the same. I truly believe, more than ever, Jesus really is what the world needs today.

#### **Did you know, in Canada...**

1 in 5 Canadians will experience a mental illness in their lifetime. The remaining 4 will have a friend, family member, or colleague who will. (Sources: Statistics Canada. Centre for Addiction and Mental Health.)

**Mental Health matters, it really does!** We all have our own mental health to value and care for. Sometimes, even if we practice all the things we know to do; getting enough sleep, daily physical activity, good nutrition, good boundaries around work and home life, leisure, fun, connecting with healthy friends, belonging to a great church community, daily quiet time with Jesus, reading/meditating on scripture, all good practices and necessary to optimize our well being, but sometimes, we may need more help. In fact, you may need professional help, in addition to all those practices. and that is OK!

I'd like to give us all permission to reach out and ask for the help we need. I often say, **"its ok to struggle but it is not ok to struggle alone."** Talk to someone who is safe in your world and seek services that are available. There is help. Mercy Canada is one, if you are a woman 13 or older. We are here and we want to help. You know, I have the privilege of hearing stories of hope and transformation daily at Mercy Canada and I never take this privilege for granted. These brave women, treasured daughters of God, remind me of the truth of Jesus words found in Matthew 19:28.

*"With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."*

Here is just one of those stories, I hope you too are reminded of this truth!

*"I have been in chains for eleven years. I built up a system of lies that held me in bondage and stripped everything from my life.... including the God who created me and only wanted me to live to the fullest. I [was in bondage to] sex, men, drinking, drugs, and severe bulimia. All the lies and secrets, especially to my family and loved ones, hurt me deeply but I couldn't help it. I was so ashamed. I lost everything - my life, health, stability, balance, and relationships.*

*A year ago, I applied [to Mercy] with the attitude that I had nothing else to lose because all was lost. I was so sick and trapped that it took me almost a year to finish my application. I have now been set free! Through the Mercy program and the Word of God, I can now fight my spiritual battles. I truly believe I am free and have forgiven myself for the first time! God is daily romancing me to my TRUE self and building a new foundation. He is stirring up my gifts, purpose, and plans.... not just for me, but to bless others and especially generations to come. It's no longer a choice. Jesus is the ONLY WAY! I would go through the valleys all over to truly KNOW Him as I do today."*

**There is hope.** If you or a loved one are hurting, and need help, please reach out. You matter and are worthy of getting the help you need.

*Nicola*



## Shift Your Gaze- by Joy Bailey

Have you ever observed a new baby watch its mother?

Not long ago I was out shopping when I saw a woman pushing a baby stroller – the kind where baby faces the person pushing. The baby couldn't have been more than two months old, and what caught my attention was that the little one's eyes never left her mother's face. Her mother was her safety in an unfamiliar place. Mom was her world, her everything. It was a picture of complete trust.

Dear parent, you think you can't look up from this agonizing journey because you don't want to lose your footing. You're looking for the next step in this maze of jagged stones and exposed tree roots. But when you shift your gaze to watch Him, like a baby earnestly gazes on the face of its mother, you'll find safety. There is your comfort. There is your world.

If you don't know how to turn your gaze on Him, begin by reading the Psalms. Let Him be the renewed strength for your journey.

Rest in God alone, my soul, for my hope comes from Him. Trust in Him at all times, you people; pour out your hearts before Him. God is our refuge. [Psalm 62:5, 8]

Those who trust in the LORD are like Mount Zion. It cannot be shaken; it remains forever. [Psalm 125:1]

Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not rely on your own understanding. [Proverbs 3:5]

Let me experience Your faithful love in the morning, for I trust in You.

Reveal to me the way I should go because I appeal to You.

[Psalm 143:8]

Those who trust in the LORD will renew their strength. [Isaiah 40:31a]



## Parent's Perspective

Joy Bailey is the parent of a young woman who suffered from life-controlling issues has a unique and heartfelt position.

As a mom who has walked that road and come out the other side, she hopes to encourage other parents on their own difficult journeys.

## Counsellor's Core

A New Year, but same you? What does growth look like?



## COUNSELLOR'S CORE

by Alexandra Fuller

2024. A new year. Or, perhaps, the year doesn't feel so new anymore. The glossiness has worn off as you manage the whims of your daily life. It is no longer freshly 2024, it is simply 2024. New year, same you.

Our culture is obsessed with forward momentum. We like to move and groove our way up-and-to-the-right. We like growth. We love to measure it, graph it like data and see how we've improved. It makes us feel good. Holy, even. Accomplished.

Prioritizing growth is not bad, of course. The problem is that life does not flow linearly, but cyclically. God is not waiting on your quarterly report at the end of April, ready to give you feedback on your performance. God is waiting with you as you cycle through this season. God is here in the moments of clarity, of mental health wins, of financial provision. God is also here in the moments of self-loathing, of relapse, of struggle. He guides us through it all.

When the focus becomes growth, we sometimes forget to grasp God's grace. Instead, we feel shame when we don't reach the standards, we've set for ourselves. We feel less-than, unworthy, and like we have fallen behind. What if we remembered that life is not linear, but cyclical, and fell into God's grace instead? This is humility, an acknowledgment of our neediness for God, and it is in this space where the true strength, growth, and healing we've been longing for is found.

"But He has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you [My lovingkindness and My mercy are more than enough—always available—regardless of the situation]; for [My] power is being perfected [and is completed and shows itself most effectively] in [your] weakness." Therefore, I will all the more gladly boast in my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ [may completely enfold me and] may dwell in me." 2 Corinthians 12:9 AMP

