



Dear Friend of the Rose,

It's a cool gray November morning. A young woman walks through the front doors at Rose of Durham Young Parents Support Services. Her eyes are cast downward as she asks the receptionist if she could talk to someone. She says, in a barely audible voice, "I just found out I'm pregnant. I don't know what to do. I can't tell my parents, but I want to keep my baby."

"Just give me a moment", the receptionist says, "I'll see if a counsellor is available." One of the counsellors has a few minutes before another client comes in and asks the young woman to come into her office. Together, they begin to sort through the fear and develop a relationship of trust.

There are so many things to take care of before a new baby enters this world. When the baby is unexpected the list of things "to do" becomes longer and more involved. When the parent is still almost a child herself, the challenges, if unsupported, may seem insurmountable. At Rose of Durham our mission is to work with young parents in Durham Region by providing supportive programming so they may build a better future for themselves and their children. The programs are aimed at the parents, but of course, if the parent is supported, so too, is the child. Sarah, the young woman mentioned above, started her programming at Rose of Durham with individual counselling. Her counsellor referred her to other community partners who could help with income support, housing, and nutritious food. At Rose of Durham, Sarah enrolled in prenatal classes offered by Durham Public Health. She had two credits to complete before obtaining her high school diploma and she finished those in the *Teen Mom School* program, offered through the Durham District School Board. She finished one credit before her baby, Nathaniel, was born and brought him with her to Rose of Durham to finish her last course after his birth. As Nathaniel gets older Sarah can take a *Nobody's Perfect* parent education course to learn about her baby's stages of development. She can also attend Rose of Durham's *Mommy and Me* support group and Rose's Ontario Early Years drop-in. Through Rose of Durham's programs Sarah will receive education and important information about parenting, while meeting other young mothers experiencing some of the same challenges as she is. At Rose of Durham Sarah is not alone.

Young parents come from all walks of life, but many have experienced abuse, neglect, or violent relationships. Many have literacy issues and live in poverty. Rose of Durham offers specialized services that focus on issues specific to young parents, ... but in order to continue offering support to our young parents, Rose of Durham needs your support. All of our programs and services are offered without fees to our clients. In schools and the community we provide presentations on the challenges of young parenthood and the need for responsible relationships. Please help us to continue helping our youngest parents who are taking responsibility for their own life and for the life of their child. Your dollars go towards parenting books, nutritious meals and snacks, layette items for new babies, group and individual counselling services. Over this year Rose of Durham has seen a cut to the funding for our Young Parents Resource Centre and we expect another cut in 2008. It is important that we replace the lost dollars in order to remain in our current location. If funding is not replaced Rose of Durham may have to move to a smaller office where fewer services can be provided.

Please send a cheque today or visit our website, www.roseofdurham.com to give online at our *Donate* page. All donations receive a tax receipt. Your donation will make a real difference in the life of a young parent and her baby.

Wishing you a blessed Christmas 2008,

Janet Chappelle

Executive Director

P.S. – Help bring our vision to reality and be a part of, "A community that celebrates the courage of young parents."