



## **Update from Jennifer Lucking March 2021**

*\*Written by Restorations Second Stage Home's Interim Director*

Dear friends,

Despite the pandemic, the Restorations house was fully furnished before Christmas of 2020. We could not have done this without the unparalleled support of our community partners, donors, volunteers, and stakeholders who helped us finish the house renovations and furnish the home. A wonderful faith partnership and donor highlight was the Advent and Christmas faith offering support of Colts Neck Reformed Church (New Jersey) that sponsored the furnishings of the Restorations Den and Dining Room. Thank you!

Restorations is actively involved in key advocacy initiatives that are changing our national and global landscape. For example, Restorations was a member of the group of Canadian agencies and professionals dedicated to fighting sexual exploitation and abuse that have successfully advocated for Visa and MasterCard to enforce their guidelines and rules to cease processing payments for the Montreal based pornographic company Pornhub, and that of its parent company MindGeek. This directly resulted in Mastercard and Visa disallowing their cards to be used on Pornhub.

Despite these wins in 2020, COVID-19 has brought crippling social isolation to Halton and Hamilton (Ontario, Canada) female survivors. Survivors who may not have accessed support before COVID-19 are now self-identifying and more-than-ever need survivor-led group and one-to-one peer support. We wanted to share with you that Restorations has responded in several important ways. Firstly, Restorations quickly moved our peer support programs online. Secondly, in keeping with the importance of providing survivor support through the peer-to-peer model, Restorations has recruited two peer survivor support facilitators to our staff team. The agency is strategically and sensitively investing to increase peer support to the survivors in our community outreach program.

Partnership from supporting churches has allowed Restorations to grow its Advocacy and Awareness initiatives in the last several months. For example, Restorations was able to participate in an international panel discussion for the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Global Initiative. As part of a cross-border education project in Canada and the United States hosted by World Renew and the Christian Reformed Church, and as a lead up to the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based-Violence, Restorations joined three other expert panelists to discuss the current realities of GBV in North American communities on November 19.

On January 29, 2021, Restorations was able to speak about the work we are doing in support of women survivors of human trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation at the EMERGE Women's Conference

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with the New Street CRC (Burlington, ON). This event brought almost 60 women together for prayer, worship, spiritual growth, and development.

### **Your Support Is Greatly Needed**

Through the pandemic, like the church, Restorations has had to find innovative ways to connect, support, and serve. It was very difficult to watch those already facing hardship only to be thrust into even more difficult circumstances due to the social isolation of the pandemic. Your church partnership with Restorations means so much, especially as we have faced the limitations of COVID-19. We continue to need your partnership support in this ministry and deeply covet your prayers so we can remain resilient in responding to the needs of the women survivors of human trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation that we serve.

God has been very faithful in providing for the growing needs of Restorations as the peer support mentorship programs expand and we move forward towards opening the house. Yet with this expansion comes the need to do even more—most particularly to be the hands and feet of Jesus to our participants. We continue to need your partnership support in this ministry and again, deeply covet your prayers.