



Holiday Ways to Give 2024 Crystal's Story



Dear Youville Supporter,

Without your kindness, Youville Centre wouldn't exist.

And without Youville, I wouldn't be where I am today. I wouldn't have the support that has carried me through, and I wouldn't feel as empowered or confident as I do today in my role as a mother to my two children, Dream and Heartlyn.

My future, and my kids' futures, are bright because someone like you cared.

And that's why I'm sharing my story. It's my way of thanking you for believing in young people like me and making brighter futures possible for families like mine. It's also my way of showing gratitude to the incredible staff at Youville who have empowered me to build a better life. Their support gave me the tools, confidence, and hope I needed to move forward.



But I know that Youville can't continue this important work every day without your help. Before I tell you about my journey, I have a question for you...

Will you give a special holiday gift to Youville Centre today, to bring hope and support to young moms and their babies who are facing the same challenges I once did?

This holiday season, your gift of \$25, \$50, or even \$100 will empower young moms to complete their high school education while accessing essential childcare, mental health support, and parenting resources—helping them build brighter futures for themselves and their children.

Before I came to Youville, I was really struggling. I was a troubled teen and I had problems with alcohol and substance use. I was in and out of abusive relationships. I didn't have any friends in high school and I was bullied quite a bit. All of this took a serious toll on my mental health. Eventually, it started to affect my family, too.

My mom has always been one of my biggest supporters, and she still is today. She works in mental health, so she understands just how deeply mental health challenges can shape our lives—and how important it is to have the right support when things feel overwhelming. So, when I found out I was pregnant in early 2018, I knew it was time to turn my life around. I wasn't just living for myself anymore—I had a little one to think about. I ended my abusive relationship and registered at Youville.

And that's when *everything* changed for the better...**Thanks to caring people like you who support Youville, I began building a better life for myself and my daughter—one step at a time. It was the first time in a long time that I felt seen, supported and safe. The whole team at Youville made me feel so welcome.**



Every young mother receives high school education, a mandatory parenting course, and full-time childcare at the Child Development Centre. They also receive dedicated support from a front-line worker in the Intensive Treatment Support Program, who offers assistance with mental health and substance use, guidance, and personalized treatment plans.

Every client also has access to a variety of additional services and resources, including food bank, on-site healthcare at Youville's medical clinic, optional wellness programs including Sources of Strength (SOS) peer leadership, alumni bursaries, summer school, and the YouStore, which provides donated essential items for the girls and their babies, like diapers, wipes and toiletries.

The counsellors and teachers at Youville are exceptional. The counsellors take the time to meet with us individually and ensure we're doing OK. They equip us with valuable strategies that we can apply for the rest of our lives. The teachers focus on personalized support, which made a significant difference for me. I faced many barriers to learning at regular schools, but at Youville, the teachers sat beside me and helped me tackle any challenges I had.

Thanks to the Child Development Centre, I could walk upstairs to my classroom to focus on finishing high school, knowing my daughter was not only being cared for and loved but also meeting all her developmental milestones. She's always been advanced for her age, and I owe so much of that to the amazing child development staff.

Youville offers these vital resources and services all in one place, creating a supportive and nurturing environment where we feel at home. It truly feels like one big family.



I'm proud to tell you that I graduated from high school in 2021 and moved to Prince Edward Island for further education. Today I'm 26 and a certified fine line tattoo artist. I work in retail, which has not only helped me pay off my student loan but is also allowing me to save for a specialized course in permanent makeup. This course will enable me to combine my tattoo certification with the beauty industry.

My daughter, Dream, celebrated her sixth birthday last month, and she is a ball of joy!

She's just amazing. She's a dancer and has participated in competitions and won several awards this past year. She's also involved in Scouts Canada. Dream is adventurous and has a vibrant imagination that brings so much life to our home. I had my son, Heartlyn, this past June, so he's just five months old and his personality is still developing. He's wonderful and has completed our little family perfectly.

When I think back to my first day at Youville six years ago, I remember feeling a mix of nerves and emotions. I can genuinely say that without the unwavering support from Youville, fueled by the kindness of people like you, I wouldn't be where I am today. I've become a better mother—one who is actively engaged with my children. We enjoy daily walks together and we spend hours playing outside. I feel more motivated and equipped to embrace parenthood, and for that, I'm so grateful to you.



Your generous holiday gift today will not only change the futures of countless young moms and their babies, but it will also uplift our entire community, creating a legacy of hope and opportunity for years to come.

I'm really looking forward to Christmas and the holiday season this year. In our family, it's a tradition that we all gather in the living room to finish decorating the tree together, placing the star on top as the final touch. We love watching holiday classics like *Home Alone* and *Christmas with the Kranks*. On Christmas Eve, Dream sets out cookies for Santa and carrots for the reindeer, and we each get to open one gift.

I have such happy memories of past Christmases at Youville. The staff go above and beyond for the parents and babies. Just before school break, they host a big Christmas dinner, and the "PJ Elf" gifts every parent and baby a matching set of holiday pajamas. They always make sure we leave with packages filled with treats like hot chocolate. Thanks to generous donors, each family receives gift cards for groceries and can choose from brand-new toys. This ensures that every child, no matter how challenging their family's financial situation is, gets to experience the joy and wonder of receiving a gift from Santa.

I wholeheartedly believe that Youville and compassionate donors like you saved my life. You helped me see the light at the end of the tunnel and reassured me that a bright future awaited both me and my children. Thank you from the bottom of my heart. _

Please give a special holiday donation to Youville Centre today. Your generosity will be a beacon of hope for young moms, birthing parents, and their babies in our community, paving the way for a brighter tomorrow filled with possibility and opportunity.

Wishing you and your loved one's happy holidays!
With gratitude,

Crystal

Youville Centre client and mom to Dream (6 years) and Heartlyn (5 months)



P.S. Please give a special holiday donation to Youville Centre today to help young moms like me complete their high school education and receive the mental health and parenting support they need to reach their full potential in life. And remember, your kindness today will build a better life for two generations!

P.P.S. This is your *last chance* to give in 2024 and make a *meaningful* impact in the lives of so many young moms and their babies right here in Ottawa. **All donations made by December 31st qualify for a 2024 tax receipt – please give as generously as you can!**



To Donate:

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

Name _____

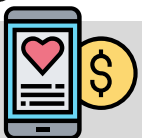
Address _____

Telephone _____ I wish to contribute \$ _____

Payment to be made by: Cheque Visa MC AMEX

Card# _____ Expiry (mm/yy) _____

Signature _____



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; please email info@youvillecentre.org for details if you wish to donate by e-transfer.

