

Support, every step of the way

Leighton Chadwick happily sings a Smurf song and shows off his dance moves, before moving on to do some colouring at his Spiderman table. His mother Deidre proudly watches him, commenting on what a loving, friendly and fun child he is. At 22 months, Leighton is meeting his developmental milestones and Deidre is an enthusiastic, caring and dedicated mom.

Becoming a new mother, however, was quite overwhelming for Deidre. There were medical concerns during her pregnancy and Leighton was born early at 6 pounds 4 ounces. As a young mother at the age of 20 with no family support in Hamilton, Deidre was at-risk for post-partum depression and overall parenting challenges.

“I was hardly grown up myself and then I had to take to take care of someone else. It was hard to be a new mom, especially at my age and not really being ready.” As many young mothers do, she lost her group of friends when she became pregnant and felt alone.

During her pregnancy, her doctor mentioned Wesley’s Family Home Visitors program (FHV)* and at the hospital, after Leighton was born, a nurse referred her. In those beginning months, a FHV worker met with Deidre weekly and a Public Health Nurse met monthly as part of the Healthy Babies, Healthy Children’s program.

This support was critical as there were initial challenges with Leighton’s feedings and lack of weight gain. Deidre remembers Leighton crying and not always knowing why.

“Initially I wasn’t sure if I wanted or needed the FHV program. I put off the visits, and was anxious about having people in my apartment.”

With time and encouragement, Deidre became more comfortable with the FHV worker and the nurse. “They always answered my questions, offered support when I was worried. All those little questions you have.”

It also helped that Leighton loved spending time with the FHV worker and even had his first laugh, a very memorable giggle, during their eight month visit.

The FHV program uses a research based curriculum that empowers parents, helping them to build strong emotional connections with their children and ensuring that developmental milestones are met. Singing, reading and dancing are used to help with each child’s development and to model positive parenting techniques.



Deidre and her FHV worker have also ventured into the community, exploring parks, libraries and play groups.

One of Deidre's favourite places to visit is Wesley's Beasley Child and Family programs.

"Beasley has great literacy and play activities. And the hours are great too so Trent, Leighton's dad, can come with us after he gets off work."

Deidre registered for Wesley's Christmas Store, receiving food and new gifts during the holiday season. Leighton loved his new toy!

Deidre is now considering post-secondary education and her Public Nurse is helping her find daycare and funding subsidies.

"I want Leighton to have a mom he can look up to. I had to change my plans for post-secondary education when I became pregnant but don't want having Leighton to stop me from getting more education. I don't want to live pay cheque to pay cheque the rest of my life."

For now, Leighton is done colouring at his Spiderman table and eagerly grabs the FHV worker's hand to play with toys. It is clear they have a special connection. Deidre smiles and with much enthusiasm reflects,

"I don't know what I would have done without the program! I am 100% more confident and have greater parenting skills!"

The FHV staff each year support 500 families and new moms, like Deidre, who are at-risk due to age, poverty and lack of supports. Our FHV program ensures that babies and moms have support, every step of their way.

This spring season please give generously and bring new life to people just like Deidre, John and Tenaw! Our fundraising expenses are only 4% and you can be assured that we will use your donation to directly make a difference in the lives of adults and youth living in poverty.

When you donate, you can sign up for Wesley's quarterly e-newsletter to learn more about the people you help and support, through their moving success stories. John and Tenaw's full stories were both featured recently in Wesley's newsletters.

A donation to Wesley Urban Ministries can also be the perfect gift for an upcoming birthday, anniversary or special occasion. You could even consider a gift for a friend or family member to celebrate the joy and hope of new life this Easter and Spring! We will send a card to the recipient as our way of saying thank you!

For more information about making a donation for a gift or if you have any questions about supporting Wesley Urban Ministries, please contact us at 905 528 5629 or by email at info@wesley.ca