

April 8, 2020

Dear Theresa Pastore,

Birkdale Residence and Toronto Plaza Hotel are City of Toronto operated shelters providing services to homeless women, men, two parent families with children and single led families with children.

Families are often admitted into our shelters as a result of fleeing domestic violence, having left unsafe living conditions in the community, having fled their country of origin in fear of persecution, having a parent whom suffers from mental health and/or substance use addictions or having lost their home as a result of devastation.

At Birkdale Residence and Toronto Plaza Hotel we do our best to provide year-round enriched programming to the children who reside at the shelters. We focus on building life skills, social skills, resiliency and aim to provide these children with as many educational and recreational experiences as possible in hopes to reduce some stress and anxiety during their time residing in shelter. Unfortunately due to the recent COVID-19 Pandemic Birkdale Residence and Toronto Plaza Hotel has paused all programming and families are encouraged to follow the provincial guidelines by remaining in their rooms unless essential.

As you may imagine homelessness is a traumatic experience that comes with many stressors for both the parents and their children and the COVID-19 Pandemic is an added stressor for all. On behalf of the staff, families and children at Birkdale Residence and Toronto Plaza Hotel we would like to take this opportunity to express our gratitude to the Parents Engaged in Education team for providing all of the school age children at Birkdale Residence and Toronto Plaza Hotel with "Learn at Home Kits" by their school grade. As all School Boards and all Shelter programs are currently closed these kits are extremely valuable to the children. Thanks to the Parents Engaged in Education these children now have a variety of fun and educational activities that will keep them busy and hopeful during this time.

Regards,



Sunita Persaud and Elizabeth Milot
Program Supervisors

