

Family Transition Place celebrates 40 years of empowering and supporting survivors

By Paula Brown

Family Transition Place (FTP) is marking a milestone in the organization's history as it commemorates four decades of providing support to the community.

'It's a bit bittersweet in a lot of ways. We talk about how we wish... the community didn't need the services we have, but we're really proud and appreciative of all the work we've done over the years, of the support of the community, the support of our donors, and the trust our clients have put in us,' said Lynette Pole-Langdon, Executive Director of Family Transition Place.

Family Transition Place (FTP) was founded in 1985 by a determined group of community members committed to creating a safe space for families in transition. The organization was originally based out of a small home on Hillside Drive, where it got its first namesake, Hillside House.

In 1997, after a successful capital campaign and receiving funding from the province, Family Transition Place moved to its current Bredin Parkway location and consolidated all of its services under one roof. Since then, the organization has expanded to operate two satellite locations based out of Bolton and Shelburne.

Today, the Orangeville facility has 12 independent units in their emergency shelter and can accommodate upwards of 28 people, both women and children, at any given time. Pets are welcome as well.

Over the past 40 years, the agency has also grown beyond simply providing a safe space for individuals leaving intimate partner violence, as it also advocates for the prevention of gender-based violence through counselling services and education outreach programs.

Some of the services FTP provides include emergency shelter, rural response outreach, women's abuse counselling, sexual violence counselling, addictions counselling, 24/7 crisis support line, support for friends and family members of survivors, and youth education.

While FTP has spent four decades expanding its services to address its clients' needs, it is the clients themselves that FTP holds the most pride towards.

'Every day, the people who access our service show such remarkable strength and courage. It takes such bravery to reach out for help and find a way to rebuild their lives when they're going through hard times and trauma,' said Pole-Langdon. 'They demonstrate resilience and determination, and that's what inspires a lot of us that work here. It's their courage that really is at the centre of our work.'

Speaking with the Citizen, Pole-Langdon said, despite their hopes of one day not needing to exist, Family Transition Place has continued to see an increase in the demand for the various services they provide.

'Unfortunately, organizations like ours continue to be needed in communities, and in fact, we've seen that the need for services has really had to expand,' said Langdon.

According to statistics from FTP's annual report for 2024-2025, the organization assisted 60 women and 33 children through their emergency shelter, supported 5,385 calls through their 24/7 crisis line, aided 139 women and 24 men with sexual abuse counselling, and reached 2,139 students through their youth education program.

?The numbers solidify that there's still a real need for our services in the community,? said Pole-Langdon.

As they look toward the future, Pole-Langdon said FTP will continue to focus on collaboration and partnership with other local groups to provide services to their clients.

?We know that we can't continue to do the work as a silo. We're very dedicated to working with our community partners and making sure clients are getting the services they need, where they need them.?

To learn more about Family Transition Place and the many services they offer, visit familytransitionplace.ca.