



Building healthy
communities



Carina Urbani
Y Family Shelter

I was starting my last year of high school when things started to unravel at home. After returning to Ottawa from a stay out west, my parents couldn't find a place to live. For a while we stayed with family members, but we soon found ourselves with nowhere to go.

That's when we found the Y. My mom, dad and I lived in the Y's Family Shelter while I finished school and my parents worked towards finding a permanent home.

It was difficult living in a shelter, but everyone at the Y was so nice, it made us feel normal again. They treated us with dignity and respect. Sometimes the stress of school and our living situation was too much.

But my family pulled together. We supported one another and also found encouragement from Y staff. It was tough, but I worked hard and studied at night in the lobby of the Y, where I could access Wi-Fi.

After five months at the Y, we found a home of our own. My mom now has a fulltime job and I will be attending university this fall on a \$12,000 scholarship. I'm pursuing my passion for visual arts because I know I can achieve my dreams.

The Y supported us through a difficult time in our lives, helping us reach our goals and believe in ourselves again. Now, we're excited about our future.