



# THE FACES OF HOME SUITE HOPE:

2022 Staff Edition

HOME SUITE  
**HOPE**



# THE FACES OF HOME SUITE HOPE

## Part One: The Staff

The Faces of HSH series launched in 2020 to give the community a glimpse of the faces behind Home Suite Hope. It is a four-part series, in which you will be introduced to: the staff, the board, participants, and mentors and community members.

In this booklet, you will meet the Home Suite Hope staff. Bringing in an array of personal experiences, professional knowledge, academic achievements, skills, and more, the Home Suite Hope team collectively is a group of individuals that not only complement each other, but strive towards the ultimate goal of supporting single-parent families experiencing homelessness and moving from poverty to stability.

As a community, we want you to know who you are entrusting your resources, time and financial contributions to. We may be the team on the ground, but the community and our funders make our work possible. Thank you for your continuous support and getting involved with making our community a better place.

~ The Home Suite Hope Team

## OUR MISSION

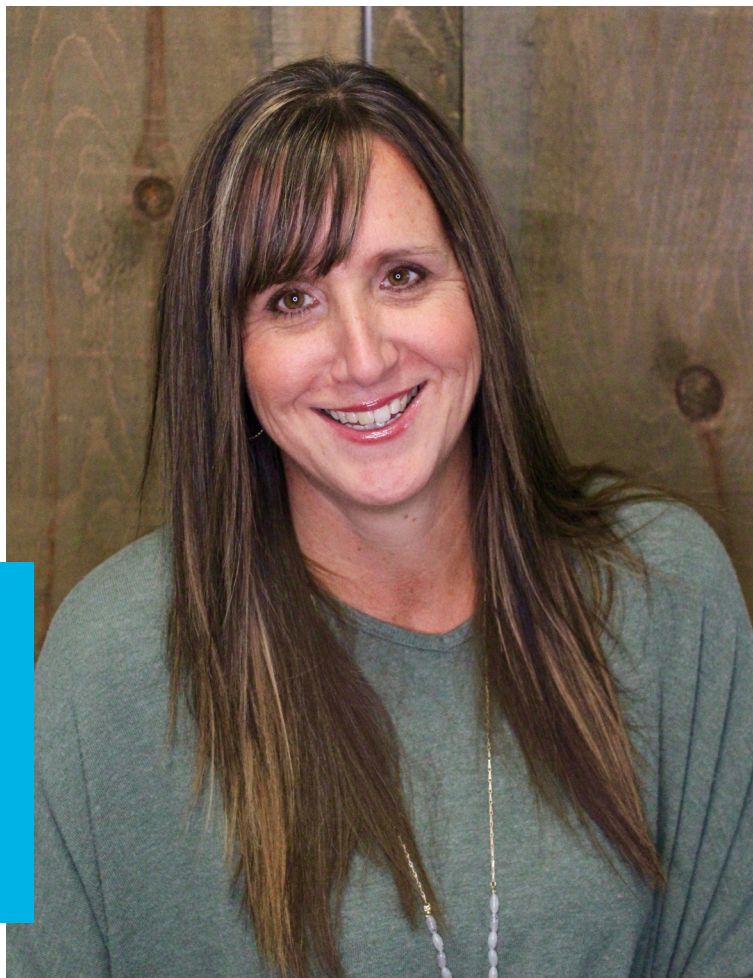
Home Suite Hope unites a network of vital support services for our families on their journey from poverty to stability.

## OUR VISION

Lives permanently changed for the better.







*By training, Sara is an Applied Sociologist and Professor of Sociology with over two decades of research experience that focuses on lone mothers and social policy. This is in addition to her personal resilience as she raised her own children as a single mother while completing her PhD in Sociology. Sara shares a wealth of knowledge and expertise as she leads Home Suite Hope.*

# SARA CUMMING

## Executive Director

I was raised by a teenage single mother receiving social assistance in a rural area with no access to transportation. My childhood was defined by poverty and dysfunction happening around me. Eventually I was a young, single mom. Thanks to several mentors who cared enough to show me that there was another way — a new world that included education, OSAP and, ultimately, bigger opportunities — my children now have a better projection for life and pursuing their own post-secondary education and careers.

My involvement with Home Suite Hope started in 2016. It began with being the first researcher to do a study on the Homeward Bound Halton program, then it evolved to being a member of the Program Advisory Committee and coordinating Sheridan College's Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences' annual participation in the Hope 4 Holidays campaign. I then moved into providing consultancy work and helping with redesigning the program in 2018 and, in 2019, I took on my current role as Executive Director.

### Why do you think HSH is so important in our community?

People are struggling to make ends meet every day in this affluent community. Two-parent families get to share household and earning responsibilities, whereas single parents are expected to do both. Home Suite Hope helps protect the latter from long-term homelessness and patterns of generational poverty. These families are given the tools to build self-sufficient and resilient lives; skills that are then passed on to their children.

### What is something you wish more people knew about HSH?

We don't just provide charity — we arm people with the tools to build strong lives and our success rate is extremely high. I wish that people understood how much the current housing situation limits our ability to have more impact. Housing is ridiculously expensive in Halton — the average monthly rent for a two bedroom in Halton is approximately \$2800. Our participants can't afford that even with our housing allowance. Soon this may impede our ability to have the same kind of impact we are used to having.

### COVID was a curveball no one expected, how did HSH stay resilient through this time?

We were very fortunate to have such an amazing community of supporters around us who stepped up quickly. Physical donations of household and personal hygiene items flooded in the door and current donors allowed us to divert funds to COVID relief while new donors stepped up to the plate. I have never been so thankful to be located within the Halton Region as I was during this pandemic. However, the after effects of the past three years are now starting to catch up to us. Most everyone is now feeling those effects which in turn impacts our donor base. Lower donations means less services.

### How has the current housing market impacted HSH participants and programming?

HSH's programming may become obsolete if we don't either acquire our own affordable housing build, or partner with builders and property managers who understand what deeply affordable housing looks like. We work hard to provide wrap services around our clients while they actively work to improve their family's circumstance. This is dependent upon us being able to provide a transitional housing subsidy while they go to school/training and obtain their full-time employment. We cannot transition families into self-sufficiency if their full-time employment still can't cover the cost of rent in Halton.

## OVER THE PAST YEAR...

Outside of Home Suite Hope, I continue to work in Academia. I am currently working on the second year of two large 3-year grants- one to help guide Technical Vocation Education Training (TVET) centers in Kenya to gender equality in education and the workplace, and the other focusing on building life skills in the Halton Region and surrounding areas. I am also sitting in my 2nd of 3 terms on Sheridan College's Board of Governors and Research Ethics Board. I will celebrate my tenth anniversary as a Professor of Sociology at Sheridan College in 2023! In my 'spare' time, I am currently writing the second edition of my textbook Sociology Unlocked due for publication by Oxford University Press in 2024.



### FUN FACT

I have a genetic disorder called Alpha One Anti-Trypsin Deficiency (not-so-fun) which has propelled me to be very conscientious of my health and wellbeing. I lift weights and do HIIT training 6 days a week, practice meditation and yoga and eat primarily whole foods.



*With a Certified Fund Raising Executive (CFRE) accreditation, a Bachelor of Social Science, and a Non-Profit Management graduate certificate paired with her wide range of fundraising and event planning expertise, Krystal is equipped and determined to secure the funding necessary to help the families Home Suite Hope serves.*

# KRYSTAL VALENCIA

## Director of Development

I worked in political fundraising for some time and then decided to transition into the non-profit/NGO sector. I've been in it ever since. I love the adrenalin of being chosen to receive a grant, getting eager community members involved in the great cause of Home Suite Hope and seeing participants improve their situation. I have seen what it's like to be a single mother and struggle and it's not easy. I have also seen the negative impact it can have on the children. Everyone deserves to be supported and not left high and dry — our programs do that.

Fundraising is such a crucial part for non-profit organizations like Home Suite Hope. Without funding, we can't run our programs, which means we can't help the families in need. This is where I come in. It's my job to make sure that we have secured funding so we can run our programs. I joined Home Suite Hope in 2019 and it's a privilege to work with our amazing donors and supporters. It's incredible how the community wraps around our families in need.

### What is the biggest funding gap that you are tasked to fulfill?

The nearly \$10,000 funding gap we need to raise every year, for each family we support. This is why we developed the Partners in Change fundraising campaign, to provide corporations and community members a chance to get involved and sponsor a family at Home Suite Hope.

In the coming months, we are going to be trying to fill a multi-million-dollar funding gap to provide even more families with affordable housing in Halton.

### What type of partnerships do you feel offer the best support to the organization?

The partnerships that include individuals who want to be involved with us in a meaningful way. It's more than just a donation. The "donor experience" at Home Suite Hope is becoming a part of an HSH family's support network, as the parent rises from their difficult journey from a state of homelessness to self-sufficiency.

### What's one thing that needs to change about our current housing climate to better support single-parents?

Housing is more than a structure – it needs to be an ecosystem that empowers each other to improve. Our ideal scenario is that women who receive support when they first enter the program will pay it forward by helping those who enter the programs later.

## OVER THE PAST YEAR...

I have led our first fundraising campaign Running on Empty featuring HSH participant Robin Bedminster - conceptualized by our summer student Celsa and designed by Leah, written grants with Katelyn and Angela and our new board member Emma, and was recognized as a 30 Young Social Impact Leaders through Future of Good. I also managed to Pass with Distinction in my first course of a six-course program at Harvard University!

I have shared our housing work at several Urban Economy Forum and UN-Habitat events about our Gender-sensitive Affordable Housing Cooperative model where we are proposing a new model for Affordable Housing for Single-Mother Led Households - for single-mothers, by single mothers which seeks to understand the everyday needs and patterns of single-mothers and incorporate them into every level of the home design to make housework, care work, and maintenance easier.



### FUN FACT

I went skydiving at 15,000 feet – the highest altitude drop zone in Europe.





*Catherine is a Registered Social Worker with a minor in Sociology. She has always had a strong desire to work within the homelessness sector and make a long-lasting change in her community. With her array of experience and determination, working with Home Suite Hope has always been a perfect fit.*

# CATHERINE VILLASEÑOR

## Program Manager (on maternity leave)

After immigrating here with my family from The Philippines at a young age, I grew up watching my parents rebuild their lives in Canada. I watched them work hard at odd jobs with odd hours to set up a pathway for success that included giving my siblings and I the chance to obtain our own educations and eventually build our own careers. Recently I learned that this pathway set before me was made possible because supports, like those provided at Home Suite Hope, were shared with my parents. Providing families with a hand up today as they build (or rebuild) their lives has an intergenerational impact that lives far beyond the length of the supports and services. I am an example of that.

I joined the team as a Program Coordinator in 2016 and later accepted the role of Program Manager in 2020. In each role, I have had the privilege of working alongside hardworking, dedicated staff and participants. When the organization shifted to implement program improvements and further build community connection, the organization only grew to be bigger and better. This is the strongest version of Home Suite Hope I have seen to date and I see so much potential for further growth.

### What makes HSH programming so innovative?

It's a program that deals with present barriers, but with a simultaneous focus on improving the future. Every milestone of the program is purposeful. This is done by stabilizing participants' basic needs and then intensively working with them to help mitigate existing barriers to education and employment. All of this is paired with programming that covers other key life skills such as budgeting, taxes, professional development and more. The programs HSH offers are not solely focused on just opening up doors and opportunities. It also aims to ensure that participants are equipped and ready to grab those opportunities confidently! From that point on – they don't really need us, which is exactly what we want.

### How has the community contributed to the success of the program participants?

The community is such a huge part — from providing donations, to helping participants network and find job opportunities, to mentorship, to cheering them on. Every time the community reaches out, it's a small investment to the success of our participants.

### What does affordable housing look like?

Affordable housing is having accessible housing. Accessible in that there are available units that are intentionally targeted for low-income or single-income households. This means units with prices that are reflective of not only the actual living wage, but the monetary supports that are earned on social assistance or as a single income. Also, accessible in that these units are consistently being built at the same rate new units are being built, and dispersed throughout centralized communities that have access to essential needs such as transportation, grocery stores, schools and parks, doctors, etc.

## OVER THE PAST YEAR...

I was pregnant! Which has come to a surprise for many community members that did not realize because you wouldn't have been able to see my baby bump during video meetings and there haven't been too many in-person events. My husband and I welcomed our beautiful baby boy, Caidan Jeremiah, on July 3, 2022 and we could not be happier! We're a little sleep deprived, but also in awe of his overwhelming cuteness.



### FUN FACT

My son was born with Trisomy 21, commonly known as Down Syndrome. While diving into the new world of parenthood, I am simultaneously learning about Down Syndrome, being a parent of a child with a disability, community resources, therapy supports, and so much more. Lots and lots to learn!



*Sharing her experience in the social services field along with her knowledge as a graduate of a Bachelor of Arts in Human Rights and Equity Studies and a Diploma in Community and Justice Services, Nikkian is on the mission to break barriers and create equitable opportunity for marginalized and vulnerable individuals.*

# NIKKIAN HANSON

## Interim Program Manager

My mom showed me what a strong, independent, hard-working woman looked like as she raised my siblings and I as a single mother working full-time. She raised me with strong Caribbean roots and encouraged me to build a career that would allow for generational wealth and bring change for the black-afro community. In my pursuit of education and employment, I learned how real the “ism’s” (for example: racism, ageism, classism, sexism) was, both personally and through my education. This sparked a fire in me to help others break through societal and systemic barriers and to help create more equitable opportunities for marginalized and vulnerable individuals.

I joined Home Suite Hope in 2018 as a part-time Caseworker and then moved to full-time Case Manager. I play the role as a navigator, connector and (my favourite role) the cheerleader. Additionally, I sit on various committees in the community that strive to reduce homelessness and address the challenges that exist within systems that are geared to support vulnerable populations. I also work in partnerships with other community organizations to improve supports and services. Too often the door is closed for individuals experiencing poverty and I am in the business of opening up those doors.

### How has the housing crisis impacted your participants?

Participants’ motivation to transition to independence has decreased because their income, with or without a rental subsidy, is insufficient for some to cover their monthly expenses, pay debt and save for future planning. The cost of living has increased overall; this means childcare, basic needs, and transportation have increased, and entry-level positions salaries have stayed the same or decreased.

### What are common “Calls to Action” that are needed from community members?

On a grand scale, we need community members helping us fight for more affordable housing, transportation support and childcare support. These are the most important supports participants need to be successful in Home Suite Hope programming. As an everyday call to action, we are in need of donations of commonly used products such as hygiene products (i.e. unscented feminine products, shampoo, conditioner, baby wipes, etc.), first aid essentials (i.e. PPE, Polysporin, Tylenol, etc.), and cleaning supplies. We also need advocates, who are willing to connect participants to services and provide equitable opportunities to meet their needs, such as counselling services, interview opportunities and employment.

### When looking for agencies to partner with, what supports and services are often requested for by participants?

The supports often requested by participants are always surrounding their ability to advance their employability and reduce their limited monthly expenses — from food programs, to clothing, to transportation, to securing childcare to allow them to participate in after-hours programs, etc. If we had more agencies or partners that could assist with offering these additional supports, we would be able to either free up time or money for our families. Ultimately giving them the ability to participate in other activities or to put more money away in their rainy-day funds.

## OVER THE PAST YEAR...

I have been in professional development and increasing my knowledge and skills in Social Work as I work towards my RSW designation. I recently became the Interim Program Manager while Catherine is on maternity leave. It has been an exciting and great learning opportunity to tap into other areas of HSH.



### FUN FACT

I am learning to speak German. Ich Lerne Deutsch.



# OUR PROGRAMS

There are 5 main programs that Home Suite Hope offers:

## Stabilizing First Halton

A stabilizing program to prepare participants to pursue a pathway towards employment, education and/or training, including Homeward Bound Halton

## Homeward Bound Halton

An up to 4-year program that includes a housing rental subsidy, life skills programming, a college scholarship that includes tuition and books, professional development, mentorship, employment supports and more.

## Homeward Bound Halton Youth (Pilot)

An up to 4-year program designed to help young parents, ages 17-24, obtain their secondary school requirements, attend post-secondary school and secure employment. The program also includes programming with life skills and food literacy workshops, mentorship opportunities and intensive case management.

## Step Forward

An up to 2-year program that provides individuals with intensive case management, life skills programming, community connections and goal-oriented services plans to maintain housing and increase one's quality of life and community engagement.

## Life Skills Programming & Community Outreach

Individualized Life Skills training with a Community Outreach Worker that covers topics such as managing your bills, organizing and maintaining a home, identification and more.

# PROGRAM OUTCOMES

Since 2012, Home Suite Hope has served more than **225 individuals**.



In 2014, Home Suite Hope was selected to replicate the award winning Homeward Bound program by Woodgreen Community Services. Homeward Bound Halton (HBH), now an award-winning programming itself, was launched and has **served more than 39 families**. It is the first replication of the program in Canada and is projected to continue to grow.



**86% of participants** that completed the HBH program exited with employment



**15 participants** have obtained their post-secondary diploma through the HBH program



**\$48,000 is the average salary** of the participants that completed the HBH program and obtained FT employment



**100% of participants** that completed the HBH program no longer receive social assistance



*Leah is a Registered Social Worker, with a Masters and Bachelors of Social Work. With Leah's social work and research skills, paired with her own personal experiences, she is working alongside HSH families to help permanently change lives for the better.*

# LEAH BURTON-SALIBA

## Case Manager

While I have my education to thank for my critical thinking and social work skills, I have the influence of my parents to thank for my decision in choosing social work. Growing up, I watched my mom share her time, money and support helping others. She continues to be a role model in my life that I admire and I aspire to be more like her. My dad had experienced various childhood traumatic events in his life, and over time I witnessed him face both moments of challenges and moments of healing. Seeing his journey and the sheer resilience he portrayed has always been inspirational to me.

I was a student when I was first introduced to Home Suite Hope in 2017. I completed my 3rd year placement — and then never left! As I continued to pursue my Bachelor of Social Work and later my Masters of Social Work, I held part-time positions with Home Suite Hope. From Camp Coordinator to Program Assistant, to Intake Caseworker I often joke that HSH never let me go, but you can argue that I just couldn't let go of HSH. In 2020, I joined the team full-time as a Case Manager. It has been incredible working alongside the HSH team, the participants, and the community.

### What are some challenges you have faced when supporting participants?

At this time, some main challenges are the lack of readily affordable housing units, the stigma surrounding renting to single parents, transportation costs and barriers and the lack of timely and affordable mental health services. Participants are often stuck with limited resources, a lack of funding and long waitlists to get the supports that they need.

### What would you say are the top 3 things that are essential to a participant's success?

1. Open communication. The ability to ask for help is hard but when participants do, this is where we find the most success! We always say, if we do not know, we cannot support you holistically in getting the support that you need.

2. A strength-based approach. All individuals and families have strengths, and it's important to identify what they are to encourage participants to further develop them and also use them throughout their journey to stability.

3. Community support. The saying goes - it takes a village to raise a child. In the same way, Home Suite Hope cannot adequately help our participants without the support of community partners, agencies and individuals.

### How has the housing crisis impacted your participants?

Many of the referrals we receive come directly from the shelter. This means that when families begin in HSH programming, they must search for and successfully secure a market-rental unit in their price range. A single parent with one child receives \$642.00 from Ontario Works for their rent. Paired with an HSH rental subsidy, and often, a portion of their child tax credit, our families need units for \$1500-\$1600.00 a month. These units do not exist in our communities. This means that finding housing is stressful, and participants are often finding themselves in units that make their already difficult financial situation even harder. Pair these rising housing costs, with the current rate of inflation and our participants struggle to make ends meet, even with HSH support.

### OVER THE PAST YEAR...

Over the past year, I sought to upgrade my skills and officially received my Trauma Certificate through Laurier University, after completing a series of credits! I am now working on my Dialectical Behavioural Therapy certificate through Laurier, and I am learning so much.

“**FUN FACT**  
This year I got married to my best friend! We had a small wedding to accommodate the COVID protocols, and I wouldn't change it for the world.





*Sarah is a Registered Social Worker and an Ontario Certified Teacher. She holds an Educational Assistant Diploma, Bachelor of Social Work, and a Bachelor of Education. With her experience working with vulnerable populations across multiple systems, Sarah brings an intersectional and empathetic perspective to her approach with Home Suite Hope's families and community participants.*

# SARAH GILLEN

## Program Coordinator

My mother is my biggest inspiration in this world. For years, I watched her devote everything to my two brothers and I, often working multiple jobs (even now) to make ends meet and provide us with the best life she could. My mother always believed in me and pushed me to pursue post-secondary education to the extent that I have. I owe all of my educational and employment achievements to her.

I started at Home Suite Hope in 2018 as a Bachelor of Social Work placement student. After my internship, I continued to stay involved in a volunteer capacity, helping with research work and offering tutoring supports to participants. Then, in July of 2021, I was offered a contract to work with Home Suite Hope as the Community Outreach Worker. I was thrilled. All my hints of wanting to come back to work with the team paid off. We always joke that once people join HSH, they can never leave — well, I can confirm this is true!

### What life skills are needed the most?

Most community participants that I am working with are furthering their skills in money management and financial planning (budgeting, efficient grocery shopping on a budget and bills), health and nutrition, cleaning and maintaining a home and education and employment supports.

### If you could offer any other supports to your participants, what would they be?

If I had the resources available, my participants could benefit most from transportation and technology supports.

### When participants ask for extra assistance, what are the most common requests?

Oftentimes, when participants request additional support, it is in the form of gift cards to offset some of their monthly costs. These gift cards range from grocery gift cards to gas gift cards and each participant I have supported with this has expressed how much these supports mean to them. Participants have also asked for support with getting household supplies and products that meet basic needs.

### What's one thing that needs to change about our current housing climate to better support single-parents?

Over the past few years, we have seen many unprecedented societal barriers in the realm of affordable housing and the economy. These barriers range from the astronomical housing market increases and subsequent housing shortages, and Covid-19 which limited individuals' ability to work or maintain stable income throughout the pandemic. Barriers like these have disproportionately affected single-income families, making it increasingly difficult to make ends meet in today's housing and economic climates. I think one of the biggest changes in the housing climate that would better support single-parents would be more access to affordable housing units. These units are extremely limited, and access to these resources have become scarce with the market increases and housing supply shortages. We need to see more affordable housing units being built or developed, and less investments into infrastructure that benefits the middle and upper classes, so waitlists are reduced, and affordable housing is more accessible to single-parent led families.

### OVER THE PAST YEAR...

I hit two major milestones in my professional career: I have transitioned from the Community Outreach Worker to the Interim Program Coordinator with HSH, and I have been continuing to develop my Mental Health Therapy practice, called Lakeview Counselling!



### FUN FACT

I recently got engaged to my partner, Taylor, and we became first-time homeowners! Now we spend a lot of our spare time wedding planning in our new condo.



*As a recent Event Management graduate from Humber College, Katelyn is eager to bring her knowledge of events and fundraising experience to help better serve the Home Suite Hope families and change the trajectories of generational poverty.*

# KATELYN ZAORAL

## Assistant, Events & Community Outreach

I have always had a passion and love for event planning. Doing all of the behind the scenes work that brings an event to life and seeing people come together, have a great time and enjoy themselves in something that you've helped them create is very addictive. A few years ago, I created and organized a charity event which I called "Stickin' it to Diabetes" which was a charity ringette and hockey game followed by a fun skate to raise awareness and funds for type 1 diabetes research, with all money raised donated to JDRE. Seeing the success and fun I had coordinating the event, I knew that I wanted to pursue event management as a career in the future. I really enjoy being able to immerse myself in environments that allow my creativity to thrive, but that also have a greater purpose; a purpose of supporting and advocating for individuals who may not be able to support or advocate for themselves fully – which is why Home Suite Hope has been a perfect fit.

What would we do without mothers? Really? Not only do they give us life, but they then make it their life's mission to create and give the best life to their children – even when their children sometimes can't see all the sacrifices made, and how hard they work to escape a pattern of poverty. I am honoured to be working with Home Suite Hope to help secure funding that will ultimately make a positive impact on the lives of the single parent families HSH supports. Having started at HSH in January of 2022, I'm the newbie on this small team of very hardworking ladies! I am excited to continue working with the HSH team to meet the needs of single parent families and execute successful community events for HSH.

### What is one of the largest funding needs of HSH?

Empty Bowls is our signature fundraising event that helps to support the sustaining of our Community Engagement programs. We rely on the community rallying together at this event to build our programs and make them thrive. We loved seeing all of your beautiful faces at this year's Empty Bowls and hope to see you all at the event in years to come! There is still time to donate to help us reach our \$70,000 fundraising goal!

### How would you like to see the community involved with HSH?

There is nothing better than seeing the community come out to our fundraising events or volunteer opportunities, connecting and sharing stories of their involvement with Home Suite Hope, and what drives them to be a part of Home Suite Hope's community. It is quite fascinating to hear all of the different ways people have been drawn to HSH. While we know the effects of the last couple of years have made it more difficult for people to make it out to in person engagements and/or affected some people's comfortability of immersing themselves back into community events, we would love to know how you, as community members, would feel more comfortable and open to coming back out into the community to support HSH.

### What does affordable housing look like?

I'm sure we all have an idea of how housing affordability should look. So, I won't tell you what it is, but I will tell you what it isn't. Affordable housing is NOT \$1,800 for an illegal basement apartment, paying more than half of your monthly income on rent/mortgage, and housing affordability will not be achieved if housing remains in the current state of over using it as an avenue for investment and profit. Housing is a necessity and no one should be forced to pay far outside their means just so they can try to avoid homelessness.

## OVER THE PAST YEAR...

I graduated from Humber College despite almost the entirety of my studies being online. I guess you could say my dogs Bowie and Archie are just as edumacated as I am seeing as they sat through every class with me.



### FUN FACT

I played competitive ringette at the AA level for 8 years prior to COVID. I took a break, and have just started to get back into it this year – I feel like myself again!





*As a Halton resident, Angela shares the passion and drive to help those in need in her community. Following a lengthy career as a writer and editor, Angela shares her skills as she captures the organization's news and participants' success stories while providing administrative support to staff.*

# ANGELA BLACKBURN

## Administrative Assistant

I was looking for a new opportunity and found one at Home Suite Hope. I've lived in Oakville most of my life. I'm glad to be able to work for an organization proactively addressing some major needs in the community. It is frustrating to see these single parents struggle. They really are trying. I see their hard work and determination, but challenges are plentiful — yet, they never give up!

I joined Home Suite Hope in 2019 as the Administrative Assistant. I ensure the office is running smoothly, manage the general email and office phone and assist with major projects including the Back-to-School drive, Hope 4 Holidays, Empty Bowls and more. Over this time, my role evolved to include capturing and communicating news and updates on the organization and participants across Home Suite Hope's social media platforms.

### What's one thing that needs to change about our current housing climate to better support single-parents?

I believe a greater range of housing options – those that are decent, safe and suitable for families – at reasonable costs for a range of income levels would offer greater opportunity for single parents and single-wage earners. Additionally, arrangements by which individuals could rent a home and have a portion of the rent put toward a down payment would also be beneficial to single parents as this could offer a stable home for single-income earners to provide for their family today while providing the opportunity to invest for tomorrow.

### How can the community get involved with Home Suite Hope?

There are many ways to get involved with HSH: apply to the board or a board committee; donate financially or become a Partner in Change or a sponsor; volunteer in our garden; donate (toiletries, gift cards, specific calls to action); sponsor a family for Hope 4 Holidays, purchase tickets for the annual Empty Bowls fundraiser; become a mentor or Industry Council representative; or, reach out with a new idea.

### Can you share any advice to individuals in the community looking to get involved?

There's always work to be done and new needs come up sporadically! Whether it's high-level involvement, or everyday needs, such as gift cards, moving supports, or household needs — there's always something. So, it never hurts to reach out and ask.

To inquire, you can reach out to [info@homesuitehope.org](mailto:info@homesuitehope.org). Donors and sponsors should contact HSH Director of Development, Krystal Valencia at [krystalv@homesuitehope.org](mailto:krystalv@homesuitehope.org). Interested volunteers can contact [volunteers@homesuitehope.org](mailto:volunteers@homesuitehope.org).

### OVER THE PAST YEAR...

I watched proudly as my daughter navigated the job sector and worked full-time for the summer in a field that she loves but required her to work so very, very hard, which she did!

**FUN FACT**  
An avid gardner, or rather hopeful grower of grass under trees, I managed to stow four Big Yellow Bags of soil into my garden this summer... and took time out to catch the newest superhero movie featuring Thor, my all-time favourite superhero.



*After being involved with Home Suite Hope for over a decade, Izabel is no stranger to the organization or the funding gaps present. Izabel shares her expertise in numbers and finances as she supports Home Suite Hope manage funds and transactions.*

# IZABEL RADER

## Bookkeeper

I love to read and if I had a chance, my dream vacation would be to go to Europe. I love all the history and culture that comes with it. Arguably, you can also say I love Home Suite Hope. I have been with Home Suite Hope since 2004 as the Bookkeeper, and if you asked me where I see myself in five years, the answer will be right here. The team is so hard working, always trying to serve our participants in the best way possible with whatever resources and funding that can be secured. There are so many families out in the community that need supports and services like those shared at Home Suite Hope. Halton is a thriving region, but there are families that are struggling.

As the “numbers person,” I am very aware of the finances and budgets of the organization and there are always funding gaps. Whether it be for staff or participants, the finances are tight and so often the team is tasked with trying to be as resourceful as possible. It makes the job difficult and it’s not a great feeling knowing we cannot afford to help everyone. I think it would be wonderful if HSH could expand their programs further than Halton and eradicate homelessness and poverty in other communities — some day in the future.

### What areas of funding do you often see a gap in?

Donors love to donate to the programs, however, the shortage I find is in general operating expenses. There are no programs if there are no staff, buildings, materials, etc. We need funding to be able to give the support that we need to give.

### What is the biggest lesson you have learned about poverty in Halton?


I have learnt that there is poverty in every town and city in this world and Halton is no exception. It may look different, but it’s there.

### What is your favourite memory working at HSH?

There’s too much to count! I have so many with the people that I have worked with, all have been so special.

### OVER THE PAST YEAR...

My husband and I celebrated 25 years of marriage, yet it seems like yesterday.



#### FUN FACT

I am a total Coffeeholic, I can drink it by the jug loads!

## GET IN TOUCH

### Connect with Us

Home Suite Hope loves to stay in touch with the community. Connect with us on any (or all) of our social media platforms to stay up to date with everything HSH!

### Join our Mailing List

Receive our monthly newsletters and be the first to know exclusive news. Visit our website homepage to subscribe at [www.homesuitehope.org](http://www.homesuitehope.org)

### Instagram, Facebook and LinkedIn

Follow us on Instagram, Facebook, or LinkedIn for updates, live stories, calls to action and more!

**IG:** [homesuitehope](https://www.instagram.com/homesuitehope) | **FB:** [www.facebook.com/HomeSuiteHope](https://www.facebook.com/HomeSuiteHope) | **LinkedIn:** [Home Suite Hope Shared Living](https://www.linkedin.com/company/HomeSuiteHope)

### Blog

Read our weekly blog posts that cover a range of topics from homelessness in Halton Region, to the non-profit sector, to updates on our community partners. Visit our blog at: [www.homesuitehope.org/blog](http://www.homesuitehope.org/blog)



