

This non-profit for single moms is a lifeline for many, but access to it can be a challenge ^[1]

Mères avec pouvoir has a waitlist of about 50 women and says it can take up to a year to get social housing

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EXCERPTS

Cherley Durand proudly shows pictures of her almost two-year-old daughter Makayla, whom she's been raising by herself.

Since February, the pair has been living at Mères avec pouvoir (MAP), which provides affordable housing and child care for young single mothers.

"You have a lot of kids the same age as my daughter, [mothers] with the same story as me and the same struggles," said Durand.

MAP offers 30 transitional social housing units for single mothers, along with a daycare and one-on-one support so they can reach their goals.

But while the organization has been a lifeline for many mothers in situations similar to Durand, access to it can be a challenge.

Durand waited seven months before securing a spot, and she says without it, finishing her studies to become an auxiliary nurse wouldn't be possible.

"You have a lot of people behind [you]. You have a lot of opportunities, you have a lot of things to try to help you. You are not alone," she said of the organization.

Need is large, but resources limited

MAP was created 20 years ago after founders saw a growing need in the Centre-Sud neighbourhood.

It currently serves roughly 50 women in total, 30 living in its transitional housing apartment units.

"It means a lot to them to have a roof over their heads that they can afford, and a support system because when they come here, most of the time they had been isolated," said Thay Keo, an outreach agent at the group.

Keo is also a single mother, and she says the organization helps to build women's confidence and follows them on their journey of being a parent anywhere from three to five years.

But she says the need is huge.

"Right now, there's a waiting list of 50 moms and it can take anywhere from six months to a year [to get a spot]," she said.

"The need is present every day. I receive calls from mothers who need support to improve her situation."

The organization is hoping to get more funding from the government to create more affordable units.

No decision on funding made yet

In a statement, the Société d'habitation du Québec (SHQ) says it can't comment on individual applications. But officials say it received more than 100 groups asking them for funding for subsidized housing.

"We will analyze all the projects submitted over the next few weeks and we will soon announce the first buildings to be financed through the Programme d'habitation abordable Québec (PHAQ)," the statement reads.

A spokesperson for Quebec's minister of municipal affairs and housing, Andrée Laforest, says the government has built more than 8,000 social and affordable housing units since 2019.

The need is present every day.

- Thay Keo, outreach agent with Mères avec pouvoir

It will also soon announce the affordable housing projects under the new Quebec Affordable Housing Program.

But Durand hopes some of the province's money will go to MAP – so other moms can benefit from the resources that have been helping her.

"I want to be an auxiliary nurse, and provide for my child and be able to give her everything she wants," said Durand.

"To have my own car, property and everything I dream of having."

Region: Quebec ^[3]

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waitlist ^[5]

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