



SHEENA'S PLACE
Support for eating disorders

SHEENA'S PLACE ANNUAL REPORT 2017



To make a donation, please visit
sheenasplace.org/donate

“Sheena’s Place has made such a
difference in my life. Thank you.”

Client



A message for our donors

People struggling with eating disorders need easy access to care. Eating disorders have the highest death rate of all the mental illnesses so it's no exaggeration to say that proper and timely intervention can save lives. But there are barriers. No publicly funded eating disorder support programs exist in Ontario, and waiting lists for hospital treatment programs are often long. More than half our clients cannot afford private therapy.

Eating disorders are the 3rd most common chronic illness in youth in Canada

At Sheena's Place, we are pleased to say there are very few barriers to accessing support. In 2017, we offered a wide variety of free group therapy programs to our more than 1,200 clients, including 20 brand new groups, all led by mental health professionals in fields such as psychology, social work and art therapy. This is made possible by our donors.

To give you a better idea of the impact we have, in this annual report you will meet 3 amazing people — Kelsey, Lara and Mary — and learn about their special connections to Sheena's Place. We are extremely grateful to them for sharing their stories.

Looking ahead to 2018, our board members, who serve as advisors, problem-solvers and advocates, will be joining our in-house team as we embark on an exciting strategic planning process. We will keep our clients and communities informed about developments and changes to come.

Finally, we would like to remind you that we do not receive funding from government and we are not a United Way member agency. We rely solely on the generosity of donors, foundations and corporations to keep our doors open and our programs free. Your gifts allow us to provide much-needed therapy and hope.

On behalf of our clients, we thank you.

Your opinion matters to us and we invite you to call, email or meet with us.

Deb Berlin-Romalis, BSW, MSW, RSW

Executive Director

and the Sheena's Place Board of Directors



Our mission

At Sheena's Place, we offer hope and support to anyone 17+ affected by an eating disorder (ED) by providing professionally led therapy groups, completely free of charge. We are committed to inspiring hope, reducing stigma, raising awareness and offering meaningful help and information at all stages of recovery.

What sets us apart

- We provide support quickly to men and women with eating disorders and their support networks
- There is no need for a referral or a diagnosis
- Our services are free
- Our group programs are led by mental health professionals
- We offer a warm, home-like, non-institutional, non-residential environment
- We are a bridge between treatment centres and clients
- Our staff reached thousands through visits to schools and universities to talk about relationships to food, body image and eating disorders.

Did you know?

- Up to 86% of people with an ED experience depression
- Approximately 64% of people with an ED experience anxiety
- At least 30% of people with anorexia nervosa and bulimia nervosa experience substance abuse during their lifetime
- Approximately 25% of those with anorexia nervosa or bulimia nervosa are men
- Approximately 40% of those with binge eating disorder are men

“

Thank you for giving me a space to be supported, to learn new skills, and to recover.
Client

Our people

Our team is made up of a small, dedicated staff, experienced facilitators, hard-working volunteers and a skilled board of directors. We share a passion for our mission that keeps us focused and motivated.

Sheena's Place 2017 Board of Directors

Inka Bari	Dr Debra Katzman
Ian Bies (secretary)	Nikki Moffatt
Dr Patricia Colton	Rose Porter
Leeanne Comish	Rose Savage
Marissa Fabiano	Gavin Swartzman (treasurer)
Dr Arthur Haberman	Susan Walker (vice-chair)
Janine Hopkins	Krista Webster
James Jewett (chair)	

Sheena's Place is the only ED support centre in Ontario offering programs free of charge



Our staff



Our facilitators



Our volunteers



Our board

Meet one of our clients



Mary's story

Mary was 18 and in first year university when her eating disorder began. "I think I set very high and unrealistic expectations for myself as I entered university. It was this imaginary goal of perfectionism that I felt I needed to achieve, and with that came binge eating to relieve some of that anxiety and pressure."

"My eating disorder was something I had kept private for many years."

Her habits became very restrictive to the point where food and exercise were the priorities in her life. She took up competitive running during university and felt pressure to fit a particular body image. "From my flawed perspective, I figured I could only be loved and recognized if I looked a certain way or if my weight fell within a certain range."

Mary's eating disorder got worse when she graduated and started her demanding nursing career at The Hospital for Sick Children. "I used my eating disorder as a way of coping and of remaining in control. Instead of addressing my issues, it was easier to ignore them out of fear of others finding out." Mary eventually sought professional help and was diagnosed with major depressive disorder and bulimia. While in treatment, she heard about Sheena's Place.

"When I first arrived at Sheena's Place, I was very anxious about sharing my experiences in a group setting. My eating disorder was something I had kept private for many years, and so to even consider speaking about it with a group of strangers was intimidating." But as time went on she began to look forward to her weekly groups. "The facilitators were so knowledgeable, and their honesty and empathy in engaging in difficult conversations was so evident."

"It was this imaginary goal of perfectionism that I felt I needed to achieve."

Sheena's Place also provided support to her partner by connecting him with others going through similar experiences.

Mary is now 24 and has recovered. "I am so grateful that Sheena's exists, for the connections it nurtures, the skills it teaches, and the hope it inspires."

What our clients say

Every year, we conduct surveys to find out whether our programs are meeting the needs of our clients. Here are some results for 2017.

“

I am glad I came and wish I had made this decision years ago.

“

I felt really alone in what I was dealing with and now I realize I'm not! I have also learned so many skills that I am using to help me in my recovery of my addictions.

“

Filled with gratitude for all that Sheena's Place offers.

“

I learned a lot. My symptoms have reduced. I feel safe here.

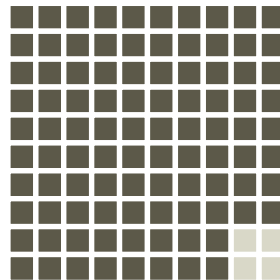
“

I genuinely look forward to attending group each week.

“

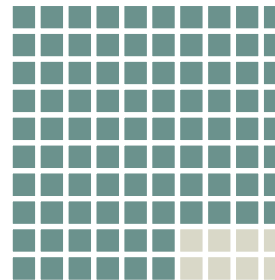
I drive almost 2 hours for this group each way. It's THAT good.

96%



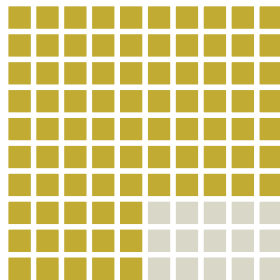
said that they learned a new coping strategy, skill or insight from our groups and facilitators

92%



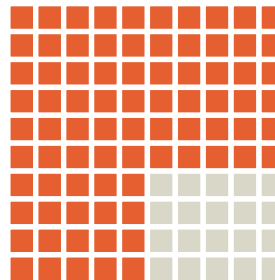
felt connection and support from group members

85%



said that our groups meet their needs

80%



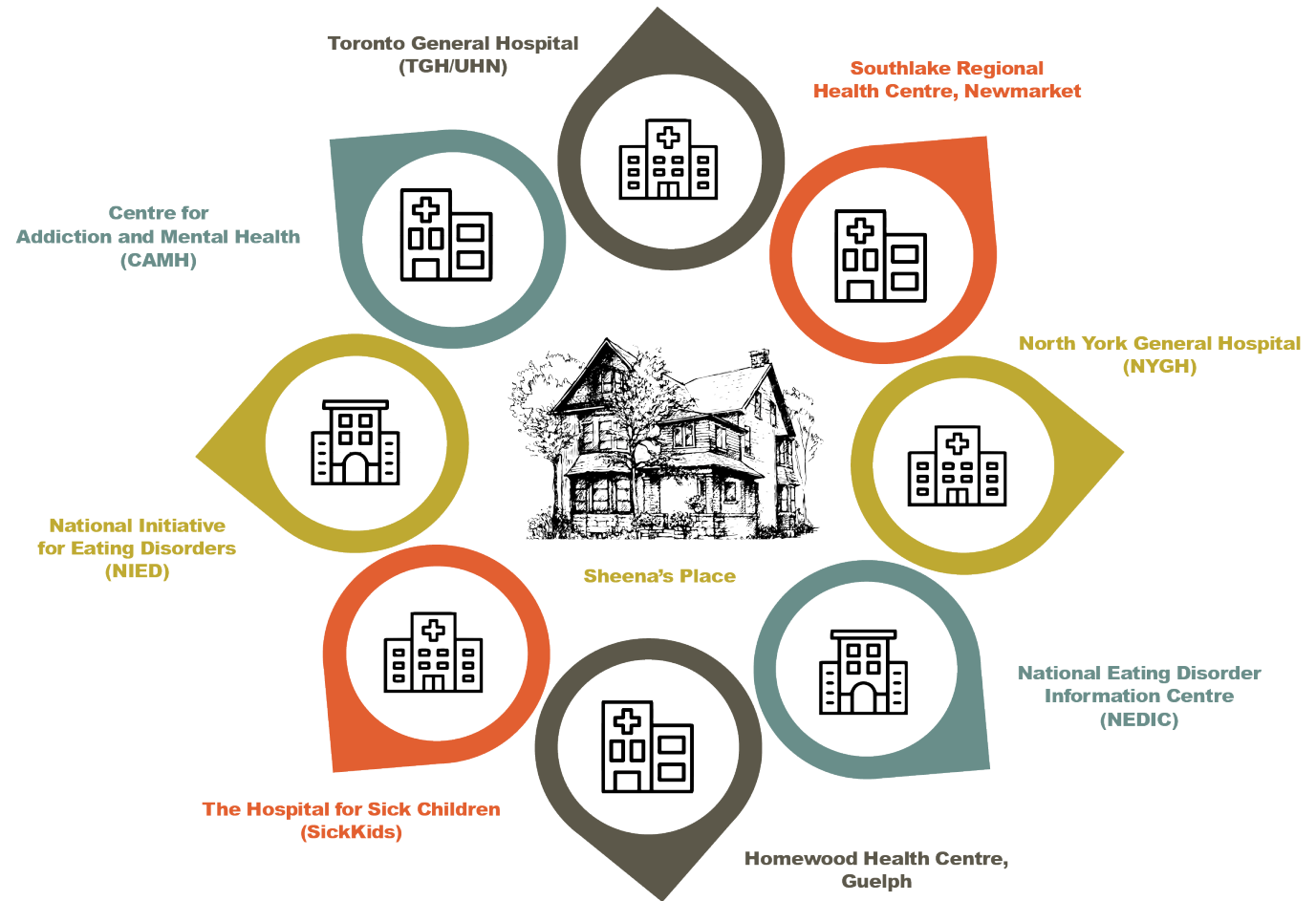
said that the group they attended increased their motivation for change and towards recovery

We are the bridge to and from treatment for eating disorders in Ontario

Sheena's Place is in a unique position of helping connect clients to eating disorder treatment and support centres, and also receiving client referrals from these centres.

We offer group therapy programs that no one else provides – before, during and after treatment – as well as for those who don't go into treatment.

Over 80% of our members say that attending our groups increased their readiness for change or for treatment.



*All are in Toronto unless noted otherwise.

Kelsey's story

Every year, Sheena's Place program staff provides clinical supervision to master's level students from the faculties of social work, medicine, nutrition and occupational therapy.

Kelsey Johnston was doing her master's in social work at the University of Toronto when she started her placement at Sheena's Place in 2017. During her 8 months with us, she became a valued member of the team and helped design and facilitate several groups. When she graduated with her MSW, she pursued a position at the National Eating Disorders Information Centre where she works as the outreach and education coordinator. In 2018 she will again be facilitating a group at Sheena's Place.

**"[I] feel
extraordinarily
proud to be
a part of this
organization."**

Kelsey's experience at Sheena's Place made her more aware of the challenges and complexities of eating disorders. "There's still a lot of stigma surrounding mental health issues and eating disorders in particular," she says. "I hadn't known how pervasive EDs are or how commonly they co-occur with other mental health disorders."

More than anything, she was inspired by the people at Sheena's Place. "I love the warm and open atmosphere and the friendly staff, as well as the clients and families who come here. I am blown away by their resilience and their compassion for each other. Group work can be challenging and I am so impressed by their bravery and strength."

"The self-referral, the free programs, and the desire to create accessible and safe spaces make me feel extraordinarily proud to be a part of this organization."



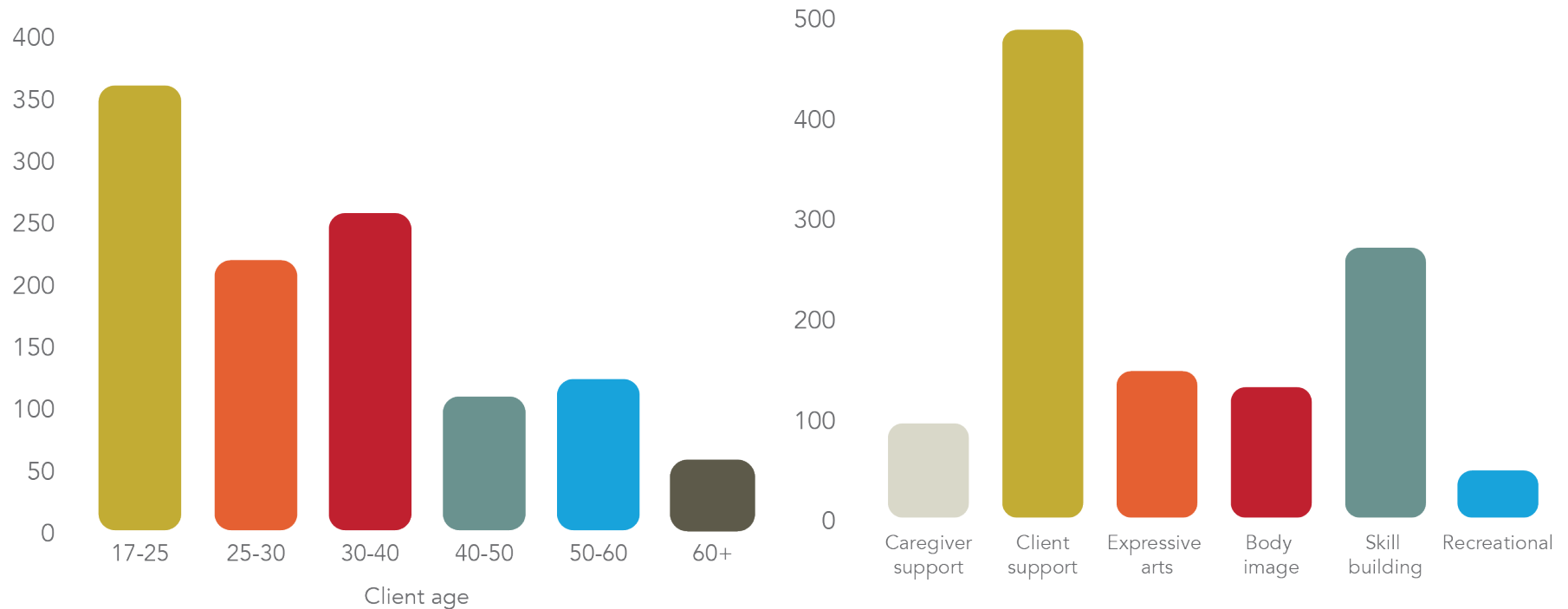
Meet one of our students

People who are not treated within the first 3 years for their ED can battle the illness for 15-20 years or more

Client ages and types of groups

Did you know that eating disorders affect people of all ages?

We offer a wide variety of programs so there is something to help everyone



2017 by the numbers

We are a small charity with a big impact!

6

staff

24

group facilitators

440

new clients

1,200+

total clients

1,972

hours of therapeutic groups



Meet one of our donors



Sheena's Place is
a warm, home-like,
non-institutional, non-
residential environment

Lara's story

For longstanding Sheena's Place donor and former board member Lara Nathans, overcoming anorexia was the biggest challenge of her life. "It was harder than training dozens of hours every week as a competitive athlete or pursuing partnership at my law firm," says Lara, now in her 40s.

It started when Lara was in her late teens. She was studying, doing gymnastics and competing in synchronized swimming while also facing all the typical young adult pressures. Her eating disorder was triggered when, as a competitive swimmer in university, she was sidelined by a shoulder injury and had to stop training.

"I want to make a meaningful difference in the lives of people who struggle with eating disorders."

"For me it stemmed from a lack of control over my body and the absence, at least temporarily, from doing something I loved. At the time it felt like a coping strategy, a way of maintaining control. But after a length of time, the eating disorder took over and was very hard to escape from."

With help, Lara did recover and she went on to law school, a successful career, marriage and children. She is extremely grateful for all the support she received in achieving her recovery, including from Sheena's Place. One way she gives back is by supporting Sheena's Place, first by chairing the annual fundraising gala, then as a longtime board member, and now by donating generously to help ensure that the programs at Sheena's Place can continue to be offered free of charge.

"I feel lucky to have a sustained recovery and I want to make a meaningful difference in the lives of people who struggle with eating disorders. If it guides one person to see that a full recovery is possible, it's worth it."

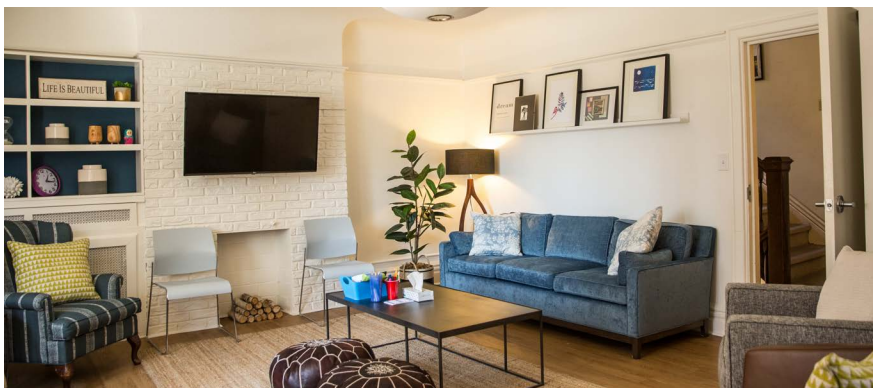
NEW at Sheena's Place in 2017

Thanks to our donors

Beautiful reno'd meeting room

This year, we were thrilled to receive an anonymous donation that allowed us to completely renovate one of our large meeting rooms (The Library).

Complete with comfortable and contemporary furnishings, carpet, paint and curtains, the room is now a beautiful, calm and welcoming space for groups to meet. With this donation we were also able to update our lending library of books on eating disorders and related topics. Thank you!



New groups in 2017

Every season, we update our program offerings based on client demand, facilitator input, and the best available evidence. Here are some new groups we launched in 2017.

- Combatting calorie counting
- Combatting comparisons
- Creative writing
- Exploring EDs through theatre
- Exploring motivational enhancement (pros & cons of treatment & recovery)
- Exploring within using CBAT (cognitive behavioural art therapy)
- Healthy boundaries
- Intro to dialectical behavioural therapy (DBT) mindfulness
- Intro to DBT distress tolerance
- Navigating sexuality with EDs
- Support while we wait for treatment

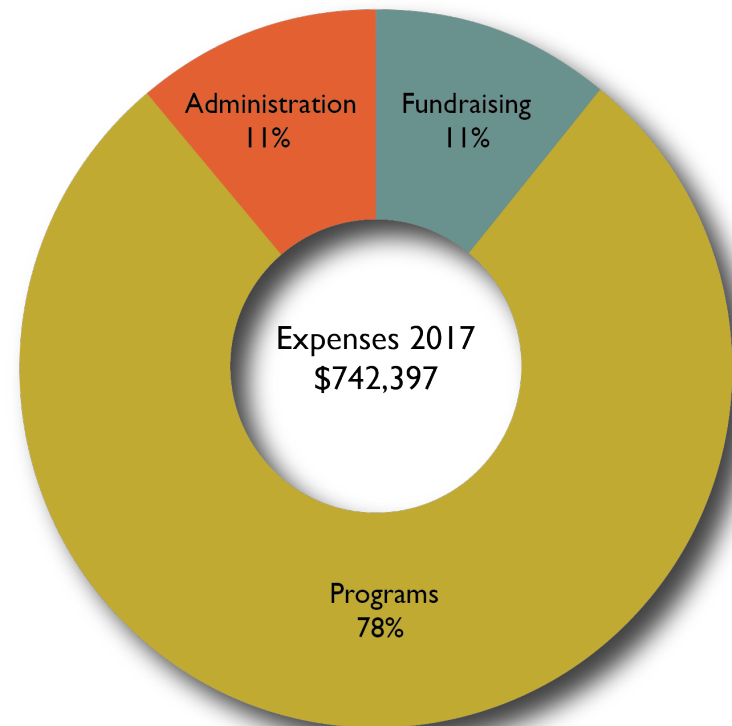
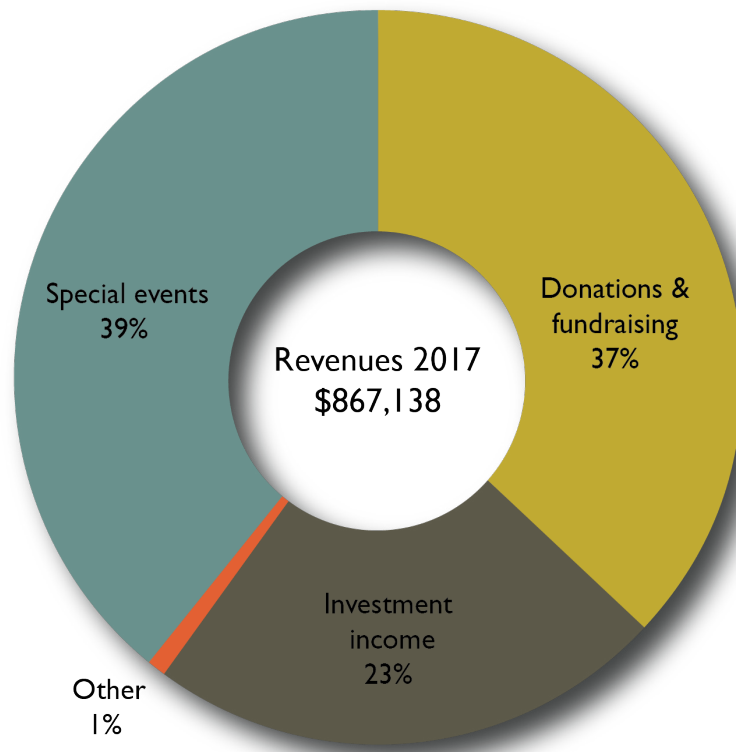
TIFF partnership

We partnered with the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF) on some amazing and innovative programs. We took a group of clients to TIFF's digiPlaySpace to explore their award-winning technology playground. The exhibition featured interactive games and art making, mind-bending augmented-reality installations and innovative coding activities.

TIFF also came to Sheena's Place to help us facilitate a mixed-media digital arts series for men called "Experimenting with Film." Our male clients participated in a variety of activities, including personalized GIF making and "lost film" exploration. TIFF also donated tickets for our members to see a new film called "The Rider". Thank you, TIFF!

Revenues and expenses 2017

We are committed to accountability and transparency. Here is a snapshot of where our money came from in 2017 and how we used it. For more details, please see our audited financial statements at sheenasplace.org



Everything we do is made possible because of you!

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Shannon Wright

We thank all our supporters. Every donation matters.

To make a donation, please visit
sheenasplace.org/donate

“I don’t know where I would
be without your support.”

Client



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