



**be seen,  
be heard.**



**PROVINCIAL YOUNG  
WORKERS COMMITTEE**

**PYC**



**Mackenzie Hills**  
OPSEU Local 148

**REGION 1**

Hello Ontario! My name is MacKenzie Hills and I am a Residential Counsellor at the Chatham-Kent Women's Centre. I have an Honours Bachelor Degree of Science in Psychology with three minors and a Certification in Addictions from Wilfrid Laurier University, and a Child & Youth Care Diploma from St. Clair College. I am also entering my final year of Teachers College at Windsor University and I'm currently working on an application for my Masters of Social Work, Fall of 2021.

I have been active within the field of social services advocating for women and children experiencing domestic violence for the past two years. I absolutely love my job. It is both the hardest and most rewarding opportunity I've ever been presented with. The survivors I work with have been through a lot more than most, with many unhealthy relationships being underlined or a result of generational abuse, substance abuse, mental illness, sexual assault, and homelessness. Yet, despite the trauma, they have the courage to pick up the phone or come to our shelter with resiliency. It's my responsibility as a Residential Counsellor to meet our clients where they're at, safety plan and come up with an action plan in hopes to create positive change and instill hope. I would like to recognize my mentor at work who recommended me for the Provincial Youth Committee campaign, Darlinys Diaz Pages. She is a powerhouse, and truly emulates what it's like to be a fighter in the face of adversity, bringing passion to every aspect of frontline work in mental health; an inspiration to both myself and the clients we assist.

## **COVID-19 Impact Statement:**

A large part of my job at the Chatham-Kent Women's Centre is centered on crisis supports. Women and their children who are fleeing domestic violence in Chatham-Kent or out of area for safety, rely on our shelter to stay open for emergency housing and supports. With COVID-19, how our centre operates looks quite different. Women who contact us for residential services are first brought to a temporary alternative location for safe housing where counsellors are still expected to provide services over the phone on a daily basis. Ultimately, our goal during COVID-19 is to provide the same services to clients, but with a different delivery method which has changed and adapted with each stage of COVID-19. At first, it was a challenge. Everyone was scared. Clients who were already in shelter had to stay quarantined inside, new clients were placed at alternative locations, and staff numbers fell drastically due to the risk COVID-19 posed. Yet, reflecting on the past 6 months of COVID-19, I am incredibly thankful of my fellow co-workers pulling together as frontline workers to keep the shelter afloat during all this uncertainty; continuing to support women and children in need during some of the most vulnerable times in their lives.