



**“MY SON HAS BEEN SUPPORTED. BEFORE COMING TO MÈRES AVEC POUVOIR, HE DIDN'T KNOW HOW TO INTERACT WITH OTHER CHILDREN. HERE, THERE ARE 30 OTHER CHILDREN AROUND, FROM AGES 0 TO 5.”**

— Dalia, a resident of transitional housing at **Mères avec pouvoir**

Single parents with young children have the highest poverty rates.

## Getting a new start to give your child the best life

**D**alia moved out of her family's home and headed for Montreal when she was still a teenager. “I was 17 when I came to Montreal. I was leaving the escort industry, so I had no social network and support system around me. I was still very unstable at the time. I still had a problem with substance abuse.”

Dalia discovered **Mères avec pouvoir** that helped her when she was separating from her son's father. She spent a year on its waiting list before moving into one of their transitional housing units. “It's brought me a lot of stability,” she tells us. “I'd moved ten times in five years. Affordable housing is hard to find, especially in the Montreal area. And the resources for single mothers and the services I need are in Montreal.”

Here, she has five years to work on a life goal. Meanwhile, she has access to affordable housing, a spot in a daycare for her son in a nearby building, psychosocial support, and a range of workshops to help her strengthen her social and parenting skills.

“The Mères avec pouvoir workshops are very interesting because they really help building the self-esteem of mothers. For me, that's the hardest thing to work on when you first get here. We don't know our value as mothers or as women.”

In addition to their goal of improving the well-being of the mothers who live on site, the agency also provides a living environment for the children. Living together in the same place also had an impact on the relationships Dalia could have with other adults. “I've learned to trust other women. It was very hard for me given my past. I now have a friend with whom I've formed a strong bond, and I know that I can count on her. We will definitely stay in touch.”

In two years, Dalia will have to leave her transitional housing unit so that another small family can move in. By then, she'll be able to finish her studies. Given the housing crisis, however, she fears she won't find an apartment that she can afford. She would love to live in a co-op where she could also get involved.