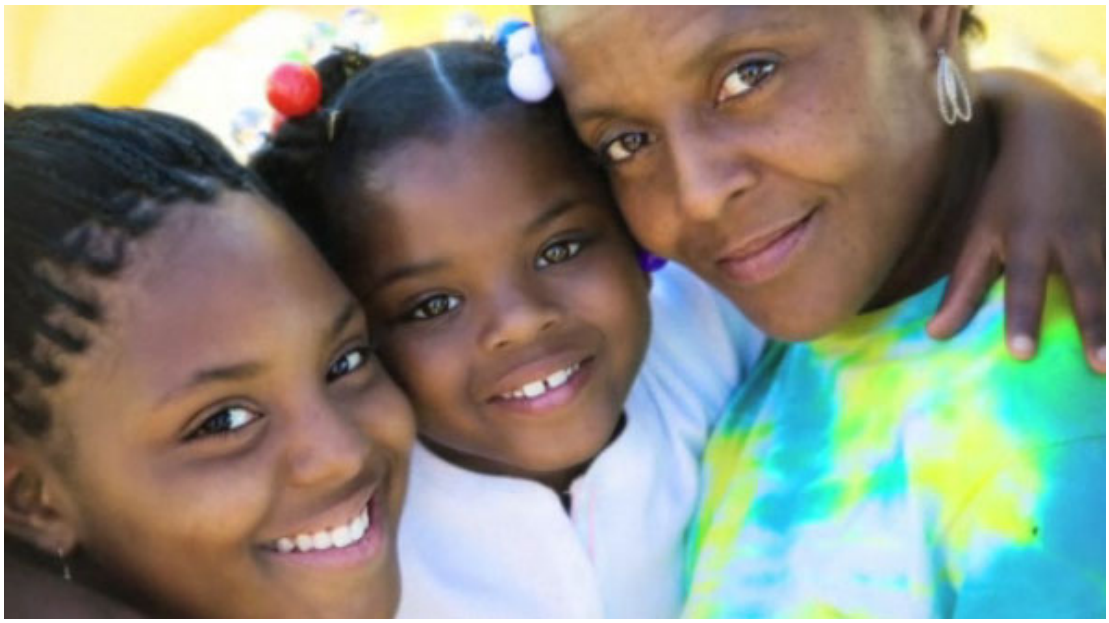

Click here to watch a video about Plates

The mission of Saint John's Program for Real Change is to support homeless women with children to advance from a point of crisis to a position of self-sufficiency. During Saint John's 90-day program, confidence and hope are restored while independent living skills are developed and goals are set. However, when our women from the Program, three major barriers to employment remain -- 'employable skills', affordable child care and transportation.

Plates Café and Catering Project is an innovative response that addresses these three barriers. Plates trains women for careers in the food service, catering, retail and hospitality industries--industries that offer some 'hours flexibility' which is crucial component for a working single mother with children. Moreover, they are industries where jobs are readily available.

The Saint John's graduates who participate in this six-twelve month learning program will, by definition, have successfully completed St. John's highly structured and regimented program. They will have completed Saint John's On-the-Job (OJT) training program during their time at the Shelter. They will be in stable housing and will be progressing regularly towards the goals they developed at the Shelter. They are women who have been homeless, but they have demonstrated that they are far from helpless. By assisting them to develop the skills required to gain AND maintain employment, not only are we helping these women to sustain their families and fulfill their potential, we are lessening the burden on "our system's" increasingly precarious and scarce resources.

Child Care is underwritten for those participating in Plate's Volunteer Learner program at First Steps, located next door to the Café, and through independent providers as needed. Transportation will be provided using one of two 20-passenger shuttles which were donated to the Shelter by Thunder Valley Casino in December 2009.