



In Transition

August 2011

Recognizing your strengths

When all was quiet and dark, he would slip into her bed and touch her. When she cried out for her Mom, he threatened to beat her if she told anyone. He said no one would listen to her anyways. She was six years old, he was her father, so she believed him. Things only got worse when her mom left their home in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines for Canada to seek a better future for the family. While away her mom felt it would be best for her young daughter to live in the care of her grandmother and aunt. In their home she found it hard to fit in. When she did not excel at school or speak appropriately she was struck repeatedly with a belt.

At the age of 14 she was reunited with her mother in Canada. Soon afterwards her dad and four brothers followed. Together the family of seven lived in a two bedroom apartment. The nights of touching began again with her father. Further tragedy struck when her mom fell ill with cancer and passed away. The family scattered. She landed for a while with another family, sleeping on their couch.

A boyfriend entered her life. At first she felt loved. But he hit and raped her. And that is when a social worker brought her to Youth Without Shelter. It is here at YWS that for the first time she felt at home: "The staff was so concerned with my safety and willing to help." With the support of a YWS...

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Volunteering at Canada Day with Etobicoke
North MP Kirsty Duncan

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Our vision

To end homelessness, one
youth at a time, one step at a
time



A United Way member agency



Recognizing your strengths

Case Manager she slowly began to rebuild her life. Together they established goals and met regularly to see how she was progressing towards her next steps. With the Housing Coordinator she began to explore housing options. However, the stress of all that had happened to her in her young life began to grow. She abruptly left the shelter to move in with friends. Looking back she shares that she engaged in some risky behaviours that she is now not proud of.

Several months ago she returned to Youth Without Shelter. In her soft spoken voice she says: *"I know I can rely on the staff here. I so appreciate the help. When I need to talk, there is always someone who is willing to listen"*. Her Case Manager is working with other speciality agencies in a team approach to help her recognize her strengths and acknowledge the pain of the past. Each day she leaves smiling to volunteer at a nearby community agency. Her immigration status was backlogged. YWS Planning and Evaluation Manager, Art, worked closely with the office of Etobicoke North MP Kirsty Duncan to successfully complete her permanent residence status. Their guidance was invaluable.

Today, she is ready for the future. She would like to finish high school. Her first case manager at YWS encouraged her to take time each day to write down her thoughts in a journal. To this day she continues to do so, finding comfort in the words. One day she would like to be a professional writer and share her story in a book. Youth Without Shelter is very happy that we were able to provide a positive direction that will make the ending a happy one.

Your help is needed

Greatest needs of the youth at this time are for:

Socks, socks, yes and more socks

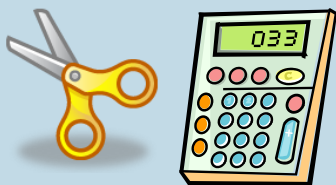
Back to school supplies drive for YWS at Woodbine Shopping Centre

Until September 4th
Woodbinecentre.ca

Donate 5 school items for YWS youth and receive a FREE movie pass for Rainbow Cinemas (while supplies last)

USB drives
Highlighters
Alarm clocks
Scissors

Scientific calculators



Reach for your dreams



MP Justin Trudeau spent time chatting with YWS youth this summer to learn the challenges they face each day. In turn he inspired the youth to reach for their dreams. Thank you MP Kirsty Duncan for introducing Justin to YWS. Photo: centre Justin Trudeau; on right MP Kirsty Duncan surrounded by YWS youth.

YWS youth will now be equipped to get fit in our new Wellness Program thanks to a seed grant from the Junior League of Toronto. Basketball and yoga are some of the healthy living options in the program. From left to right: Gerri McAskil (Junior League), Art Tsang (YWS), Kathy Jacques (Junior League).



Families for YWS

Over the last eight months our group of ten families from central Etobicoke have been thrilled to be supporting Youth Without Shelter in a number of unique ways.

It all began at the end of 2010 when the moms of our families felt that we could truly make an impact with a charitable organization and provide our kids (ages 9 - 17) with the opportunity to get more involved in their own community.



"Families for YWS" keeping warm at Islington subway station, raised \$2,000 for Tokens4Change

After researching potential organizations, it became very clear that YWS was the organization for our families to support since it fit our criteria to a "t".

Our next step was in January of this year when we had an information evening - we brought our families together and met with Judy Leroux of YWS. It was at this gathering that we learned more about the great work YWS is doing, and had a brainstorming discussion with our kids to come up with creative ways to help YWS. We decided to focus on 3 areas:

1. To support and volunteer at YWS events throughout the year.
2. To make holidays special for the YWS youth.
3. To help celebrate the birthdays of the 20 youth in the "Stay in School" program.

Here are some of the more specific ways we have helped the youth at YWS.

- On Feb. 11th a group of our kids and parents spent the entire day volunteering for the first annual Tokens4Change event at the Islington subway station.
- On Valentine's Day and Easter we provided dinner along with cards and treats for all the 50 youth at YWS.
- We held a garage sale on June 3rd to raise money to support our birthday gifts of 2 movie passes for each of the youth, and our kids have been making personalized birthday cards for each of the birthdays to give that personal touch.
- One of our eldest kids organized a local concert with his band to raise money for YWS.

After these eight months of supporting YWS with plenty of energy and creativity, we look forward to strengthening our relationship knowing that we are making a difference in the lives of the youth at YWS and letting them know that people in their community care about them a great deal.

Halinka Dybka



25 years of changing young lives

1986: YWS opened its doors as a 22 bed emergency shelter for homeless youth. This was the beginning of the **Residential Program**.

1996: A day program is introduced. Today youth attend over 600 life skills and pre-employment training workshops in this program now known as the **Steps to Success Program**.

2000: The **Housing Program** is implemented. This past year, 75 young residents transitioned to independent living.

2007: The **Stay in School Program** opened providing specific supports such as school supplies and transit passes for homeless youth focused on completing their education.

2011: Full-time **Employment Program** launched



Photos credit: Chris Bodnar

**Save the date for next year:
Sunday May 27, 2012**

On The Right Track... Racing Towards A Solution

The trackside tent at Woodbine Racetrack filled with nearly 300 guests on a warm May afternoon raising funds to support YWS youth in their transition to independence. Tables were adorned with hand painted flower pots filled with mouth-watering cookies; all created by the hands of YWS residents. 150 mystery bags sold out within an hour and 108 auction items were rigorously bid on. Thank you to all of the corporate and community partners for their tremendous support: UPS Canada Ltd. (Turf Champion Title Sponsor); Lakeview Lodge #272 Independent Order of Oddfellows and Yamana Gold Inc. (Front Runner Presentation Sponsors); Toronto Community News and The Jewel 88.5 Lite Hits (Media Sponsors); Woodbine Entertainment Group (Silent Auction and Mystery Bag Sponsor); and the many mystery bag and auction donors. Visit <http://www.yws.on.ca> for more photos.



Yes! I/We would like to provide a safe haven for a youth tonight at Youth Without Shelter. Here is my gift to build a better future for youth:

- \$25 will provide a youth with a safe place to sleep for one night at YWS
- \$35 will provide a food/hygiene package for one youth as they move out
- \$50 will provide TTC tokens for one month to help a youth look for a job, visit a doctor and find a place to live
- \$100 will provide a TTC pass for one month for one student in the YWS Stay in School Program to go to school
- \$150 will provide one "On the Move" moving package for one youth with the basic necessities such as bed linens
- \$200 will provide juice for one week for Youth Without Shelter's 50 youth residents

I prefer to contribute \$ _____ I would like to Adopt-A-Bed by contributing monthly \$ _____

Name: _____ Address: _____

Credit card: circle MasterCard/VISA no. _____ Expiration date: _____

Signature: _____ E-mail: _____ Phone number: _____

To make a donation on-line, please visit www.yws.on.ca and click on **CanadaHelps.org**
You can make a difference in a youth's life by returning this form with cheque (payable to Youth Without Shelter) or credit card information to: Youth Without Shelter, 6 Warrendale Court, Etobicoke, ON M9V 1P9.
YWS respects your privacy and adheres to all legislative requirements with respect to privacy. We protect your personal information and do not rent, sell or trade our mailing lists. From time to time YWS will send you updates on our solutions to homelessness and other opportunities for your involvement. If at any time you would like to be removed from our list, please call 416.748.0110 ext. 26. Thank you for "ending homelessness, one youth at a time, one step at a time."

