



In Transition

November 2011

From a home under a bridge

The first time he had ever slept in a bed was at Youth Without Shelter. His life began thousands of miles from Etobicoke. His mom died giving birth to his sister. He tried to live with his new step-mother but she wanted no part of him in her family. Beatings were common. She made sure he did not share in the family food. For his own safety he ran away. Home became a covered space under a bridge. Meals were scavenged out of garbage cans. From the age of 12 he lived on the streets of an African country where half the population exist below the international poverty line. He made a living by scouring the streets for bottles to return. He did have dreams. He loved to learn but he knew he had no future on the street. Gradually, he saved his money from the bottles. He even sold the last connection to his mother: four cattle. At age 17, he had saved enough for an airplane ticket to Canada.

The Red Cross brought him to the safety of Youth Without Shelter. Yes, he knew English but spoke little those first weeks. Rarely did he smile. He kept his room immaculate. Treasured sleeping in a bed rather than on the pavement. In his short life he had never experienced a living space of his own. By quietly



Sharing his day with Stay in School Case Manager, Yesica

listening the YWS Case Manager began to build a relationship with him. She empathized with his fortitude. She remembered how it felt to arrive in Canada alone at a young age, far from her home, with no family and friends.

A circle of care surrounded him at Youth Without Shelter. The housing coordinator connected him to immigration resources so that he was able

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Youth Without Shelter

6 Warrendale Court
Etobicoke, ON M9V 1P9

Tel: 416.748.0110

Fax: 416.748.2169

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www.yws.on.ca



Charitable Reg. No.
11930 7817 RR0001

Our vision

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





Recommended Charity 2011

For the second year Charity Intelligence has named Youth Without Shelter as a charity top pick.

Charity Intelligence recognizes exceptional charities doing highly innovative work which is producing excellent results in addressing the social needs of Canada. Through research and analysis, Charity Intelligence recommends to donors charities that have been proven to meet the highest standards in effectiveness.

For the full report on Youth Without Shelter, please visit www.charityintelligence.ca under the "At-Risk Youth" category.

From a home under a bridge

to secure school and work permits. His case manager recognizing his desire to learn, helped him enrol in an English literacy class. She introduced him to a volunteer position where he could practise his English. Slowly he began to open up. Together they identified his goals. He wanted to finish high school.

Late this summer he moved out of the emergency residence into the Stay in School Program. He is now enrolled in Grade 10. His case manager describes him as *"Very focused on getting an education and going to college. He would like to be a pilot."* School is a struggle. He has many gaps in his education. Volunteer tutors are helping him catch up. He has involved himself in the community by helping out seniors near the shelter with yard work. You frequently see him in the Stay in School Program office, sharing his day with the case manager. He is 18 and he is resilient. *"Everything is so much better in my life than before. Thank you."*

Amplify... "tuning in" to the voices of homeless youth through the arts

Each Tuesday in October a drum beat echoed throughout YWS. This fall Youth Without Shelter in collaboration with Arts Etobicoke launched "Amplify", featuring ongoing multi-media arts workshops for youth living at YWS. Workshops are designed to build youth self-esteem and support the life and social skill building objectives of the Steps to Success Program. The first series of workshops kicked off with instruction in song writing led by performer and community arts educator Amy Campbell-Noseworthy. The youth worked together to write and produce their own song. Amy shared: *"The participants were energetic and creative, had a ton to say...worked really well together."*

Now underway is African Drumming and Dance. Laura, Steps to Success Program Coordinator, sees the impact of this programming: *"It allows the youth to have an avenue for stress relief. It provides a very therapeutic environment where individuals can drum to a rhythm in unison to create a relaxing but steady beat."* Hear the beat at: www.yws.on.ca, click on the YouTube Channel.



Instructor Roshanak Jaberi shares the rhythm with a YWS youth.

You slept on the street last night...

today you have a job interview

Have you ever considered how difficult it would be to get a job interview if you don't have a telephone number or an address? What if you don't have access to clean clothes or a pair of work boots for your first day on the job? What if you slept on the street last night and you can't take a shower before that interview? What if you have literacy issues and can't understand the job description or instructions for applying? What if you lived with a constant feeling of being worthless and helpless? These are just some of the many barriers youth at YWS face when it comes to finding and keeping employment.

This summer YWS initiated an on-site Employment Program for YWS residents. This new program is about more than pumping out resumes. It aims to build confidence, help youth to identify and use their strengths and abilities, and assist youth to understand the barriers they face in order to begin to overcome them. Abigail, the new Employment Counsellor, shares: "Youth come to me every day and say "I have no skills, I've never done anything, I'm not good at anything." "And they believe it."

Opportunities the Employment Program aims to connect youth to are: employment programs where youth can gain skills and experience; job shadowing; and training and certifications.

Working behind the scene to support this initiative are two community volunteers: Linda and Susan (pictured below left). In their hands a storage area has been made over into the "Employment Connections" Room. The goal is to have a one-stop shop where youth with the guidance of the employment counsellor will have access to: steel-toed boots, specialized work wear for a range of employment, and clothing for an interview. This October eight youth secured employment through the program.



"The employment program helped me to do a lot of things. I wrote a resume with Abigail's help that looks great. I had someone to talk to about problems I was having with my boss. Through the program I was able to get several professional outfits for work. Now I feel prepared and confident." (YWS youth, age 20)



YWS youth prepares for a job interview



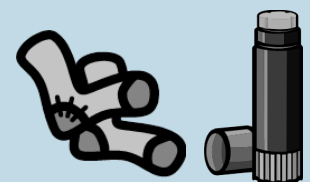
"Home & Hope" Holiday Wish List

Our greatest needs:

- Socks (new)
- Slippers (new)
- Twin bed sheets
- Lip balm
- Winter coats
- Sweatshirts (L/XL)
- Sweatpants (L/XL)
- Male deodorant
- Body lotion
- Movie passes
- Gift certificates

Our youth can also use:

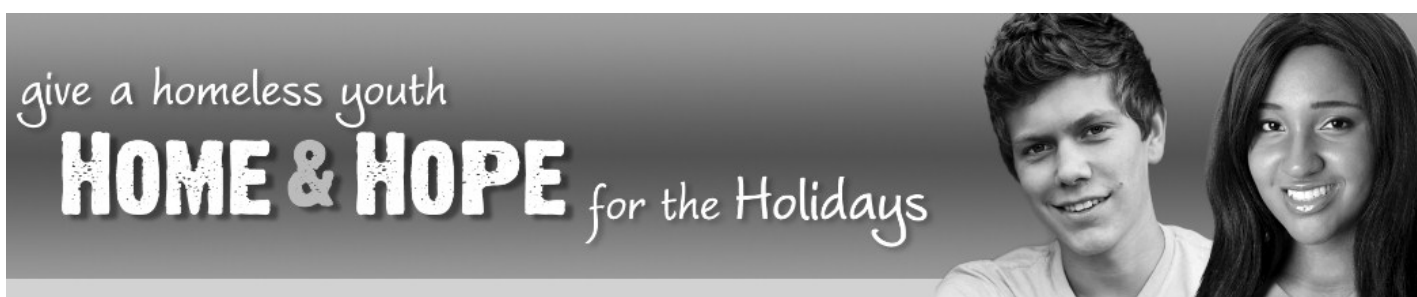
- Male/female nightwear
- Running shoes
- Facial tissues
- Hair brushes
- Combs
- Feminine hygiene products
- Bath/beauty sets
- Male gift sets
- Forks and spoons
- Cereal bowls
- Mugs
- Pens



You can make change

Last February, students from schools across the GTA brought TTC subway stations to life through song, dance and poetry raising awareness of youth homelessness. Student volunteers canvassed for TTC tokens to enable homeless youth access to public transit to get to school, find housing and employment.

Tokens4Change returns Friday, February 10, 2012. **Sign your school up today:** tokens4change@gmail.com. What is T4C? Go to www.yws.on.ca and click on the YouTube Channel.



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."