

YSB's COMMUNITY SERVICES *Housing and Homelessness*

In Ontario, unlike some other jurisdictions, youth aged sixteen and seventeen are considered adults. If they do not live with their families, they are expected to live on their own. Youth at this age are usually in school, have very few resources to support themselves, and still need to learn many life skills. It is estimated that there are 65,000 homeless youth across Canada, although this number could be higher since many youth are not counted.



Many homeless youth have unique stories to tell about their lives. Abuse, family conflict, addictions and violence are some of the factors that have led them to live outside their families. Last year, YSB served over 1500 youth who are homeless or at risk of being homeless and had 900 youth registered at its Drop-in Centre.

The YSB operates two emergency shelters, one for young women and one for young men. Staff at the shelters work with youth to help them meet many of their immediate needs. Once these needs are met, staff will work with youth while they're in transition for up to a year. During that time, youth are able to live in transitional housing where a healthy, non-judgmental environment and access to various programs can help them to develop independence and life skills.



The Young Men's Emergency and Transitional Housing Program and the Evelyn Horne Emergency and Transitional Housing Program for Young Women operate from two centrally located 30-unit buildings. Each building has 12 emergency beds, 12 transitional beds and 6 swing beds that can be used for either emergency or transitional purposes. Residents have access to meals and food banks, as well as community services, crisis counselling and much more.

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YSB also offers services for street-involved youth at its Downtown Services & Drop-In facility centrally located at 147 Besserer Street. Open every day of the year, it offers a safe place for young people with complex needs. This centre offers daily lunches, a place to shower and wash clothes, health care, crisis intervention and needs assessment, as well as other services.

The YSB also addresses the problem of youth homelessness by offering affordable housing. This includes 7 bachelor, 45 one-bedroom and 13 two-bedroom units in three apartment buildings, in different parts of Ottawa near bus routes. Some of these units are open to single parents and children. Rent is kept affordable.

But the YSB Housing Continuum is about much more than a place to live. The housing programs connect young people who lack family support with youth workers who will help them develop a full “community plan” to get the skills they need to live independently. The shelters also help young people remain healthy by offering information on sexual health and addictions, within a safe, healthy and non-judgmental environment.

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