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Ottawa's Youth Need to be Home Safe

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There's no place like home – especially when you're a kid who doesn't have one. In Ottawa, lots of kids don't have one. There are young people from Kanata and Orleans, south Ottawa and other neighbourhoods who don't have the stability – right now – of a bedroom, a choice of cereals for breakfast and the expectation of family dinnertime at the kitchen table.

These aren't someone else's kids, Dan Sabourin points out. They're our local kids: "brothers and sisters; somebody's son and daughter." Dan is director of community services for the Youth Services Bureau and an advocate for local youth who are homeless. "There are a lot of young people who have faced histories most of us couldn't imagine," he explains.

And although rates of youth homelessness are rising in Ottawa, the YSB is dedicated to breaking that cycle and to helping young people gain the skills they need to achieve stability for their future.

Already in their young lives, they've had to cope with a variety of tough circumstances: family breakdown, addiction, mental health issues, poverty and abuse. Some have been through the child welfare system. Most lack the age-appropriate life skills and know-how to be self-sufficient. They haven't had the guidance, support and experience.

However, one area of strength is resiliency. "They're able to bounce back very well," Dan mentions. The YSB works with them in a comprehensive way to help them get back on their feet. It's a gradual approach that encompasses street outreach, the YSB Drop-In, emergency shelter, transitional housing and, finally, long-term housing. "It's a transition process."

Once they have some stability and security, the vast majority of street-involved youth are able to focus on empowering stuff, such as school, employment and life skills. They can and do experience plenty of success. "When given an opportunity by the adult world, they really can do something special. It's pretty amazing ... they go from hopelessness to hope," Dan Sabourin says.

He urges employers, landlords and others in the community to give these kids a chance. It might require a little more effort on your part, he says, but "it really pays off in the long-run."

You can support the YSB's efforts by attending the lawyer play fundraiser tonight, May 9, Friday night, May 10, or Saturday night, May 11, at the Irving Greenberg Theatre Centre. The show is Gore Vidal's political drama *The Best Man*, the cast includes Ottawa lawyers and judges and the curtain rises at 7:30 p.m. Tickets are \$100 and include a \$50 tax receipt. They're available from GCTC. Call 613 236-5196 or visit www.gctc.ca.

You can also support the YSB's efforts by clicking [here](#).

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CAMEO APPEARANCES

Wednesday, May 8: Judith Allen and Ken Gillespie

Friday, May 10: The Honourable Louise Charron, CC and Councillor Mark Taylor

Thursday, May 9: Councillor Katherine Hobbs and Justice Charles Hackland

Saturday, May 11: The Honourable Sheila Copps and The Honourable Yasir Naqvi

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THE BEST MAN
BY GORE VIDAL
Directed by Patrick Gauthier

Preview Performance May 8th at 7:30pm \$35.00 Gala Performances May 9, 10 & 11th at 7:30pm \$100.00 (\$50.00 tax receipt)

Proceeds support GCTC and 2013 Charity Partner: Youth Services Bureau of Ottawa

Call today for tickets at GCTC box office 613-236-5196 or online at www.gctc.ca

Stage Managed by Chantal Hayman • Set Props and Costume Design by Sarah Waghorn • Sound Design by AL Connors • Lighting Design by Guillaume Houet •

The Irving Greenberg Theatre Centre, 1233 Wellington St. W

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The Snooze Button Look | Ottawa Family Living Magazine
www.ottawafamilyliving.com
I have a hair confession. Some mornings (okay, most mornings)

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