



SPRING 2021

# OUR YOUTH OUR FUTURE

## This is what happens when we support youth in crisis

Samuel Brazeau knows what it means to struggle with a mental health issue. Now a happy, healthy 24 year-old, it was only 7 years ago when he felt a weight hanging over him like a dark cloud. When he chose to stop dirt biking – a passion he had developed in childhood – and his parents divorced, he found himself feeling lost, confused and slipping into what felt like depression. “I was a regular kid, from a regular family. And, I was happy...at least on the outside.”

In the summer of 2014, at a time when Samuel felt like there was no light in his life, he got connected to YSB and to a trained mental health counsellor with whom he

worked regularly as he explored his feelings and learned coping strategies. With his counsellor’s support and encouragement, Samuel went from experiencing extreme anxiety and suicidal thoughts, to feeling grounded and more like himself.

As a way of giving back, Samuel recently raised more than \$1000 for YSB’s youth mental health programs by challenging himself to run 4 miles every 4 hours for 48 hours. He successfully completed his 4x4x48 challenge and funds raised will support other young people to ensure they have support and resources when they need them most. “Mental health issues can affect people at any age. I want to make sure that no young person ever feels alone in their journey.”

**Your support of YSB means supporting youth like Samuel. Thanks Samuel, and thank you for helping generations today and tomorrow live safe, happy and healthy lives.**

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## Life Interrupted: Supporting youth & families during unpredictable times

More than a year into the global pandemic we're all dealing with, YSB remains focused on serving vulnerable youth and their families in the safest, most immediate ways. Within 48 hours of the start of the pandemic, YSB had adapted many of its services to operate within a virtual environment to address the Covid-19 safety risks while meeting the needs of youth and families.

## The Coldest Night of the Year delivered warmth and comfort to youth

YSB joined the national Coldest Night of the Year virtual event on February 20th, and welcomed more than 170 walkers who chose to head out into the cold weather to raise funds and awareness for youth homelessness in our community. Families and individuals chose to walk 2K or 5K in their neighborhoods in support of YSB, while encouraging family and friends to support them through donations. Together, we raised more than \$30,000 for YSB's two youth shelters and four long-term housing residences.

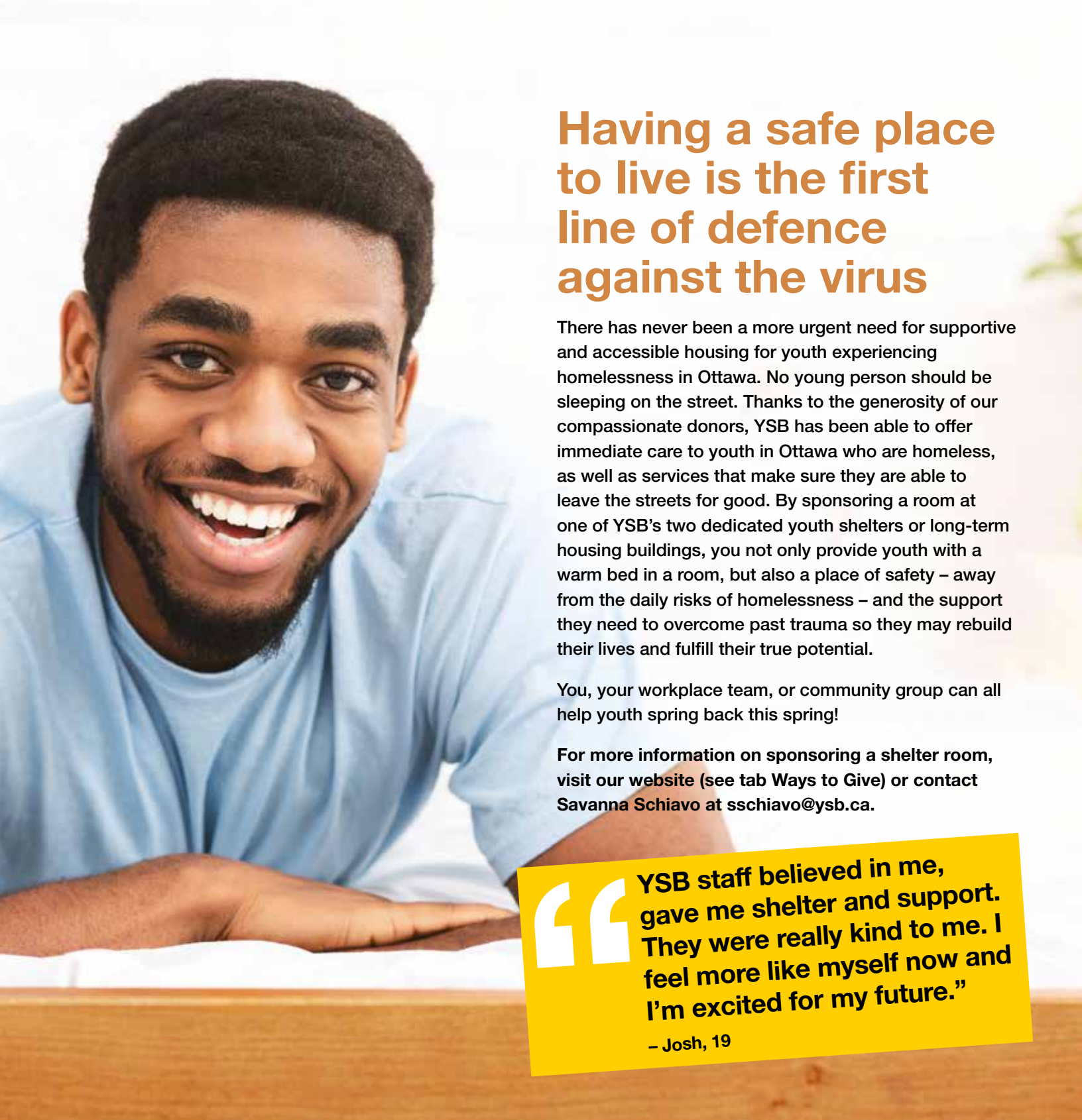
**Will you join us next year in support of YSB's efforts to house homeless youth? Mark your calendar for February 26, 2022 and walk (hopefully in-person!) with YSB.**

- YSB transitioned its Youth Mental Health Walk-In Clinic to a Virtual Walk-In Clinic, enabling youth to access a trained counsellor by phone or video, 613-562-3004.
- YSB is one of 20 agencies that formed Counselling Connect, offering rapid access to a phone or video mental health counselling session for youth, children, adults and families in Ottawa and the surrounding area. There's no waiting list, you select the appointment time, and services are available in English and French for a range of concerns. [www.counsellingconnect.org](http://www.counsellingconnect.org)
- YSB's Employment Services also moved to offer training and support within a virtual environment. Visit our website to learn more about our Employment Services.

While many of YSB's programs – including shelters, housing and justice support – continued in-person, each site has extensive PPE and safety procedures, ensuring youth and staff are kept safe and protected at all times. We've continued to document all our learnings throughout the pandemic which – as it is for us all – ongoing.

Our supporters have played a significant role in this past year's support of vulnerable youth and their families. In times of great change and challenge, a community makes it through when we work together. **Thank you!**





## Having a safe place to live is the first line of defence against the virus

There has never been a more urgent need for supportive and accessible housing for youth experiencing homelessness in Ottawa. No young person should be sleeping on the street. Thanks to the generosity of our compassionate donors, YSB has been able to offer immediate care to youth in Ottawa who are homeless, as well as services that make sure they are able to leave the streets for good. By sponsoring a room at one of YSB's two dedicated youth shelters or long-term housing buildings, you not only provide youth with a warm bed in a room, but also a place of safety – away from the daily risks of homelessness – and the support they need to overcome past trauma so they may rebuild their lives and fulfill their true potential.

You, your workplace team, or community group can all help youth spring back this spring!

For more information on sponsoring a shelter room, visit our website (see tab Ways to Give) or contact Savanna Schiavo at [sschiavo@ysb.ca](mailto:sschiavo@ysb.ca).

“

YSB staff believed in me, gave me shelter and support. They were really kind to me. I feel more like myself now and I'm excited for my future.”

– Josh, 19

### HOW YOUR GIFTS ARE MAKING A DIFFERENCE:

**\$45** provides one counselling and support session to a struggling youth

**\$65** provides a youth in our shelters with meals for one week

**\$100** provides one start-up kit for a once-homeless youth leaving our shelter

**\$500** provides a vulnerable youth with a warm and safe bed to sleep in



## Corporate Partner Spotlight: KPMG

KPMG Ottawa partners and employees have long been champions of many causes locally, and YSB is fortunate to benefit from their support.

- Now virtual, KPMG associates provide a complimentary income tax clinic each year to youth in YSB's care.
- Each International Women's Day, KPMG associates ensure thoughtful gifts are received by the youth residing in our Young Women's Shelter.
- KPMG has also invested in YSB's Youth Housing Hub, ensuring once-homeless youth not only have a safe place to live, but also the services they need to create the lives they want.
- As a partner of YSB, they also support our organization by sharing their expertise, allowing us to tap into their knowledge base that in turn benefits our strategic development.

Our KPMG Ottawa partners work alongside us each day, helping the youth we serve to build stronger futures. We're grateful for our partnership with KPMG Ottawa.

## Important Dates:

**MAY 3-9: MENTAL HEALTH WEEK:** Engage with YSB on social media and learn more about resources supporting youth in Ottawa.

**MAY 5: YOUR MIND MATTERS,** a YSB mental health event, this event's theme is: Listening to, learning from and supporting racialized youth. Stay tuned to YSB's social media channels for event details.

## AUGUST - STAY UP OTTAWA SUMMER EDITION:

Pick a date to Stay Up in your backyard or at the cottage and raise funds and awareness in support of homeless youth and the programs YSB offers to help them. Registration opens in July.

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