

# OUR YOUTH OUR FUTURE

EDITION 1 2024

## Jamieson's story as a former client and now champion

Life was very difficult for me growing up. I knew from a young age that I was gay, but so did my father and he unfortunately was not shy to express how he felt about it. This was the 1980s and society as a whole was not nearly as accepting as it is today. My father was a very abusive man and he himself grew up in an abusive household.

My mother left home when I was only three years old. I don't blame her, had she stayed with him I'm not sure she would be alive today. By the time I was 16 I could no longer deal with the abuse and I left home. I didn't know where I was going to go but I knew I needed to leave.

At first, I was able to stay with friends. These were often not ideal situations, but at the time I would take what I could get. During this period of my life I met a new friend on the street. This new friend was named Sunshine, and as luck would have it they introduced me to YSB's Drop-In Centre.

The Drop-In Centre was a lifeline for me and I still smile when I think about it. It was the first place where I didn't have to be afraid to be gay. YSB was a haven at a time when it wasn't safe to be gay, proud and open about it. People I met there were a family to me, and I still talk to Sunshine and others to this day.

In addition to providing me with safety, the staff also supported me by helping me find a place to stay as well as employment. A particularly incredible staff person also helped me discover my love of writing and I'm proud to say that to date I've written over 70 novels.

With the stability and freedom these supports gave me, I was able to set my sights on further education. I attended the University of Windsor where I studied Theatre before I returned to Ottawa to work for the government.

Today my life is really positive. My husband and I have been married for 7 years and share a cat who owns our apartment (we just pay the rent!). I have a job where I get to help people every day, and I have time to work on my writing and painting.

I'm also incredibly proud to say that I now support YSB as a monthly donor. **I want to give back to the people who helped me find myself and come into my own.** YSB gave me an island amidst of sea of turmoil when I was younger, and my hope is that my donation will go toward helping someone just like me. **I hope you will consider joining YSB as a monthly supporter as well. - Jamieson**

# Staff Spotlight: Eduardo



Can you tell us a bit about yourself and your role with YSB?

My name is Eduardo Burgos and I'm YSB's Employment Services Program Coordinator. The core of my role is supporting our staff team as they help our clients achieve employment readiness and potential schooling opportunities.

How did you get involved with YSB and working in Employment Services?

Funny story, I came to YSB as a client when I was impacted by a lay-off in 2008. A few months later, I joined YSB in a contract position and then moved into a full-time opportunity. And, here I am 14 years later, sharing this story.

Is there a specific story about a young person you've worked with that stands out to you?

I recall a young person who was a newcomer at the time, and who had a strong vision of where they wanted to go but didn't know where to start. That started our journey together of working with them on their CV, and providing coaching, mentorship and interview preparation support. This journey was tough for the youth, and there were low points along the way as the first few responses from potential employers were not positive due to their lack of work experience. However, four months later, the timing and opportunity came together and we were able to find this client the perfect role.

What is your favourite part about working in Employment Services?

I like the opportunity to transform lives today, without understanding the full impact it will have down the road. It's all about how we help a youth or family regardless of their other struggles. Employment brings dignity, pride and security, among other things.

## Introducing the YSB Foundation's Young Professionals Network

The YSB Foundation's Young Professionals Network (YPN) is a group of young leaders who are passionate about supporting and amplifying YSB's work with youth. Members of the YPN are participating in YSB events, advocating for the lives of young people, helping to raise awareness, rallying their networks around YSB's work, and investing in this work as donors themselves.

The YSB Foundation is honoured to have this passionate group of young professionals working alongside us. To learn more about the YPN, please contact Oliver Saner, Fundraising Coordinator at 613-600-6426 or [osaner@ysb.ca](mailto:osaner@ysb.ca).



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 one **week of shelter**, counselling and healthy meals



# Room to Grow

GENEROUSLY SUPPORTED BY LEAD SPONSOR



## Offering youth stability and a sense of community

We're proud to announce that our Room to Grow campaign – presented by the Taggart Parkes Foundation – raised \$160,000 in 2023, representing the sponsorship of 40 shelter rooms in our two downtown Youth Shelters.

These funds will ensure that YSB continues to be there when young people need a safe, supportive and inclusive place to call home.

A huge thank you to our incredible sponsors comprised of so many generous community members, local businesses, family foundations and more! We could not do this important work without your support.

In 2024, we hope to secure room sponsors for all 64 of YSB's shelter rooms! If you, your organization, family or group of friends is interested in sponsoring a room (\$4,000 for one year) please connect with Oliver Saner, Fundraising Coordinator at 613-600-6426 or [osaner@ysb.ca](mailto:osaner@ysb.ca). Thank you to Taggart Parkes for their continued lead sponsorship.

## CRISIS CHAT AND PHONE SERVICE YSB IS HERE FOR YOU

24 hours a day, 7 days a week, by phone or online chat, YSB services are here to support young people in crisis as well as their families. Please share the following contact info far and wide. It just might save the life of a young person in our community.

[chat.ysb.ca](https://chat.ysb.ca)  
**613-260-2360** (Ottawa)  
**1 877-377-7775** (toll-free)

## Upcoming Events supporting YSB's work:

**Mind Matters** May 8th, 6 to 8 pm at Morning Owl Kanata. Topic: The importance of parent engagement in support of youth mental health

### Ottawa Father-Daughter Ball

Saturday, April 20<sup>th</sup> Infinity Convention Centre. For details and tickets visit [OttawaFatherDaughterBall.com](https://OttawaFatherDaughterBall.com)

### Chalk It Up for Youth Mental Health

Thursday, May 9<sup>th</sup> Join us to raise funds for YSB's youth mental health programs. Save the date – details and registration coming soon



# Corporate Partner Spotlight



Accenture Canada and its Ottawa employees are one of YSB's Employment Services longest standing and most generous partners. Since 2013, Accenture's support has helped to ensure youth have access to critical employment services, including one-on-one job coaching, employment workshops, mentorship programs, job placements and more.

Accenture's commitment to YSB's work extends to pro bono consulting services, employee volunteer engagement, and access to Accenture programs.

Currently, Accenture – through its Community Consulting Projects (CCP) Program – is performing a comprehensive review of YSB's Long-Term Housing Tenant Committee programming. This generous pro bono support will provide YSB with a guiding document containing insights into opportunities for improvement, best practices from similar programs throughout Canada, as well as suggestions for program expansion.

YSB and the YSB Foundation extend their deepest appreciation to Accenture and its Ottawa team members for their unwavering commitment and investments in YSB's work.

## Empowering Communities: The Impact of Tenant Committees on Youth Housing

YSB recently created Tenant Committees at its four long-term housing buildings to elevate youth voices, dismantle stereotypes, and empower its members to be active contributors to their communities.

Youth-led and staff-supported, these Tenant Committees are comprised of 4 to 6 youth tenants who are united in their work to create a powerful shift in the narrative surrounding social housing. Tenant Committee members work to address challenges stemming from the intersection of identity and homelessness, while fostering a sense of belonging, empowerment and community engagement with tenants at each of their respective buildings.

One significant outcome of this work led staff and tenants from the long-term housing programs to participate in restorative practices training. Centred on community building, open communication, empathy and conflict resolution, these practices and learnings have not only fostered a culture of understanding and accountability, but also empowered all members of the community to participate in active community building.

**“We’re not just clients, we’re part of a community and it’s powerful to be working from that perspective.”**

“There’s often a stigma attached to social housing, but being part of the tenant committee and our work together has shown me we can change that narrative,” says one Tenant Committee member.



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