



MAR 2025 | SPRING

SPRING NEWSLETTER

SPRINGING INTO 2025

MONIKA FOX - DIRECTOR OF PHILANTHROPY

As we wrap up another incredible year at Youth Without Shelter (YWS), I find myself reflecting on the lives we've touched, the milestones we've celebrated, and the challenges we've tackled together. This past year, over 150 young people found safety, support, and a renewed sense of hope within our shelter. Beyond offering a secure place to stay, we provided life-changing programs and services to help our youth build a brighter future.

One of our most heartwarming moments? Wendy's red carpet celebration, with support from Kiara and Jon, for nine of our SIS (Stay in School) secondary and post-secondary graduates. It was an unforgettable night of joy, pride, and new beginnings—a memory we hope these graduates will carry with them as they step into the next chapter of their lives.

Under Moe's outstanding leadership, Rashoy, Zung, and Emme provided nearly 2,000 hours of individual case management, guiding our youth through critical moments. Moe also led our Banana Muffins soccer team to many winning games, building confidence and camaraderie along the way.

Despite the ongoing housing crisis, Laura G. and Raychel worked tirelessly to find stable housing for nearly 80 youth, while our incredible after-care specialist, Andrea, met with former residents daily to ensure they stayed housed. Thanks to the generosity of our corporate and individual donors, Tiru distributed nearly 600 food packages to former residents, ensuring they had the nourishment needed to focus on their futures.

This year, we welcomed Carah, our new mental health specialist, whose compassion and expertise have already made a profound difference. With her support, our youth are learning that mental wellness is a cornerstone for success.

Our employment team, led by Laura L., alongside Jonathan and Latoya, built partnerships with local employers, securing steady jobs for 25 youth, with 17 more ready to enter the workforce. Meanwhile, Khaleah, our life skills guru, brought her mom's philosophy of "tough love" into her work—kind but firm, guiding our youth toward independence.

Of course, none of this would be possible without our frontline staff—the quiet force behind everything we do. Jenny, Pashan, Kelly, Delali, Shania and Rabia work around the clock to ensure every youth's immediate needs are met, always with patience, wisdom, and unwavering dedication.



Our kitchen is the heart of our home. Art and Grace ensure our shelves are stocked, while Richelle and Rebecca prepare three hot meals a day—often alongside volunteers and donors. Despite cooking for 53 youth daily, they always serve up meals (and kindness) with a smile.

Behind the scenes, Chris keeps our shelter running smoothly, even in the face of multiple floods and ongoing repairs. His determination ensures that every young person who walks through our doors has a comfortable and safe place to rest.

At the helm, Ben, our Director of Operations (who hates titles and oatmeal), manages all of this and more. He's not just a leader—he's a steady, father-like figure for many of our youth. Steve (our Executive Director) and Anastasia fiercely advocate for solutions to youth homelessness, working to change the narrative and push for more affordable housing. Professional development and new hires are vital to us, so Lindsay spends hours sifting through resumes to find the right candidates to grow our team.

Behind the scenes, Alexandra, Brittany, Francesco, Heather, and Lisa secure the over \$3 million in funding, in-kind donations, and countless volunteer hours that make our work possible.

This is us—a 53-bed shelter, a leader in the system, and a team dedicated to transforming lives. But none of this happens without YOU. Your support—through donations, volunteering, or simply spreading the word—fuels everything we do. As you read this, know that every success, every milestone, every story of resilience is thanks to you and the incredible youth we serve.

From all of us at YWS, thank you.

Monika

(with her trusted canine assistant Beno)



INSIGHTS: END OF FISCAL

As a charity committed to financial and operational transparency, we want to share insights into our funding sources, which will be detailed in our upcoming Annual Report and Audited Financial Statements. Since the end of the pandemic, we have witnessed the effects of economic decline, increased food insecurity, and a worsening housing crisis—not only on the youth we serve but also on our dedicated donors and volunteers. While we have seen fewer donors overall, those who are able to give have stepped up in remarkable ways, demonstrating their deep commitment to our mission. The number of Major Gift donors - those contributing over \$1,000 - has remained steady over the past two fiscal years, with the average gift increasing from \$3,168 in fiscal year 23 (FY23) to \$4,481 FY25. Our monthly donors have also increased their contributions, with the average monthly gift rising from \$45 to \$50. The most significant growth has come from Foundations, where the average donation has increased from \$11,251 to \$18,264 and this group accounts for our largest source of income, outside of the City of Toronto. Meanwhile, community and faith groups, along with corporate giving, have remained relatively unchanged, as many continue to stand by our cause and provide vital support.

Our annual giving program, which represents the majority of our donors, has experienced the greatest impact. The number of donors has declined in the last two years, a shift we deeply understand as many individuals have had to prioritize their own families during these challenging times.

We sincerely appreciate every person and group who has supported us, whether through financial contributions, volunteering, or advocacy. Your generosity and commitment continue to make a lasting difference, ensuring that we can provide the critical resources and support our youth need to rebuild their lives.

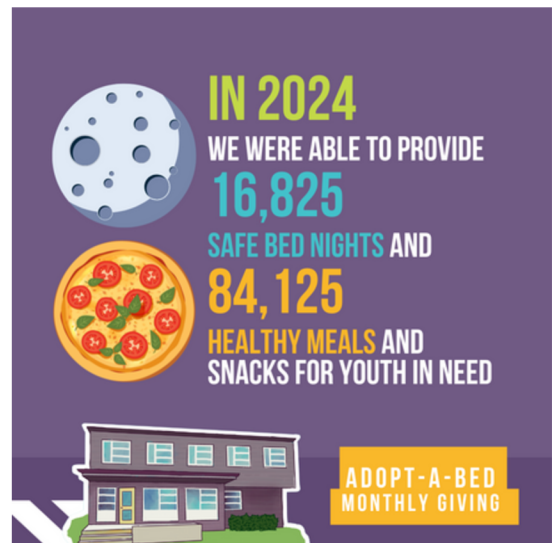
ADOPT-A-BED



The YWS monthly giving program provides crucial, ongoing support for the youth we serve. With our user-friendly and flexible Adopt-A-Bed program, you can easily sign up to provide essential resources on a regular basis. Your monthly donation will directly contribute to supporting day-to-day expenses and program costs within Youth Without Shelter.

WHY GIVE THROUGH THE ADOPT-A-BED MONTHLY GIVING PROGRAM?

Giving monthly is the easiest and most convenient way to give, ensuring you provide our youth with the support they need 365 days a year.



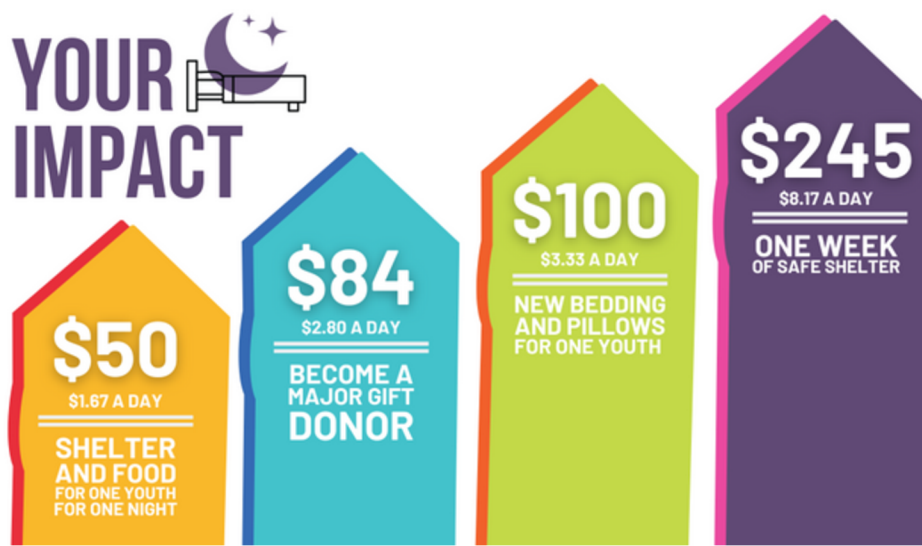
Easy: your gift is processed automatically for peace of mind, knowing you will be making a difference supporting the longevity of YWS each and every month.

Flexible: you are in control of your impact and can easily make changes to your donation at any time.

Efficient: Your monthly donation provides a stable, reliable source of funding year-round so that YWS can plan ahead and provide the resources to change the lives of youth.

Informative: Once you become a monthly donor, we'll keep you informed on the impact you make!

Your monthly donation is a cornerstone of our shelter's sustainable operation, and we are incredibly grateful for your ongoing support.



HEART-TO-HEART WITH SYLVIA MANTELLA

For the past 13 years, Mantella Corporation, under the leadership of Sylvia Mantella, has been a proud Presenting Sponsor of Time4Change, our annual art activism event. Mantella recognizes the power of activism and engagement in driving meaningful, lasting change. As a corporate leader, community champion, and philanthropist, Sylvia Mantella exemplifies the spirit of giving, with a deep commitment to supporting the communities where we live and work—so that we can all thrive together. Thank you, Sylvia, and the entire Mantella team, for your unwavering support!

Q: What inspires you to support this organization? What makes YWS stand out to you among other causes?

A: I love the grassroots nature of YWS. It is very important to me personally, as well as to Mantella Corporation, to support and give back to our community organizations. YWS stands out to me because it is more than just an emergency shelter—it provides wraparound support for youth experiencing homelessness by building their self-esteem, resilience, and personal strengths. Approximately three years ago, one of our team members at Mantella Corporation advised me that YWS was a lifeline to one of her young family members. That made a significant and lasting impact on me.

Q: How do you decide where to focus your philanthropic efforts? What are your top priorities when it comes to giving?

A: Deciding where to focus philanthropic efforts comes down to impact, alignment with values, and sustainability. The top priorities when it comes to giving often include:

Creating Lasting Change: Empowering marginalized communities and prioritizing causes that uplift underrepresented or vulnerable groups, ensuring they have the resources and opportunities for lasting success.

Transparency & Accountability: Choosing organizations that demonstrate measurable impact, financial responsibility, and clear outcomes for their programs.

Personal Connection & Passion: Focusing on causes that resonate personally, whether through lived experience, community ties, or a deep belief in their mission.



Q: Which of our programs or initiatives resonates with you the most, and why?

A: One of the most impactful programs at YWS is the Stay in School Program. It stands out because it directly addresses the barriers that prevent youth experiencing homelessness from continuing their education. Many young people in unstable housing situations are forced to drop out due to financial stress, lack of support, or the need to prioritize basic survival over school. This program provides them with safe housing, academic support, and mentorship, ensuring they can stay in school and work toward a better future. Education is a powerful tool for breaking the cycle of poverty and homelessness, so this initiative feels especially meaningful.

Q: What impact do you hope to achieve through your generosity?

A: The ultimate goal, whether through time, resources, or advocacy, is to create meaningful, lasting impact. When supporting an organization like YWS, the hope is to empower young people with the tools, support, and opportunities they need to overcome barriers and build independent, fulfilling lives. Ultimately, YWS works to break cycles of inequality and helps disadvantaged youth access a way to a better life. I hope my support inspires others to give back. Generosity has a ripple effect. Supporting a cause can encourage others to get involved, creating a stronger, more compassionate community.

Q: If you could share one thing about this cause that everyone should understand, what would it be?

A: If I could share one thing about YWS, it would be that the organization goes beyond just providing a bed - they provide a real pathway to stability and independence for youth experiencing homelessness. Their programs don't just focus on short-term relief; they help young people build self-sufficiency through education, employment, and life skills training.

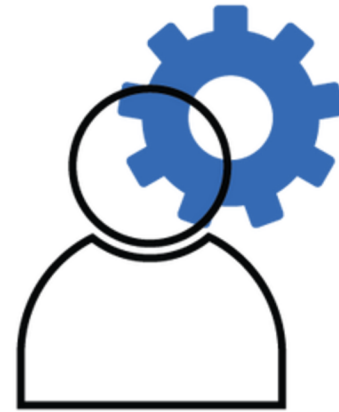
Q: What aspect of YWS do you think more people should know about?

A: More people should know that YWS is not just a shelter; it is a stepping stone to a brighter future. Many assume youth homelessness is just about lacking a place to sleep, but YWS understands that stable housing is only the beginning. They offer comprehensive support, including education assistance, job training, life skills workshops, and mental health resources - each tailored to empower young people and help them break free from the cycle of homelessness for good. More people should recognize that when you support YWS, you're not just providing emergency relief; you're investing in real, lasting change.



YWS LIFE SKILLS PROGRAM: ESL CLASSES

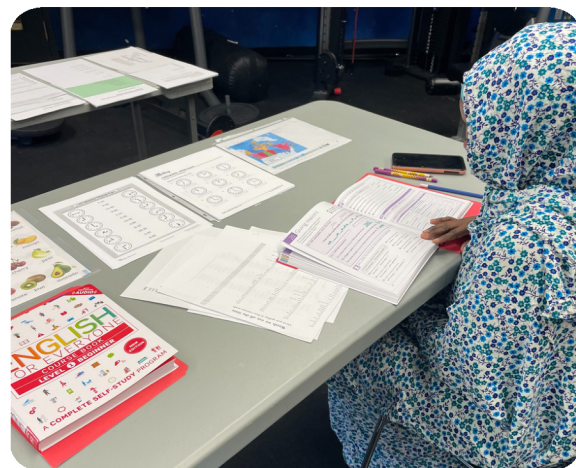
On February 3rd, 2025, we launched an in-house English as a Second Language (ESL) program to support the residents of YWS. The program currently runs three afternoons per week and is open to all who wish to attend. Initially, we focused on a Level 1 ESL grammar textbook but soon realized that we needed to broaden the scope of the program to meet the needs of the students. Areas of study now include family and community, food groups, health and nutrition, numbers, time and calendar management. We have prepared verbal and written exercises designed to improve vocabulary and develop the reading and writing skills they will need to confidently navigate life in their new environment.



58 HOURS
ESL TRAINING
FEBRUARY AND MARCH 2025

"I had called YWS last fall, to inquire about volunteer opportunities regarding the "Stay in School" initiative. I retired from my full-time position in 2023 and wanted to find something on a part-time basis, utilizing the skill set I had acquired through my positions in business, not-for-profit and the education sector. I had taught Adult upgrading at a community college for four years including some ESL, and recognized the importance of these programs and how vital they were to finding success in a new community. I was thrilled when Laura called me to discuss the need for an in-house ESL program at YWS and the design of a curriculum. The students are nothing short of amazing, as they are engaged and committed to further learning. Most noticeable to me is the increase in their level of confidence, particularly when reading aloud. They always help one another in class and now understand that it is "ok" to make a mistake. I wish them continued success!!!"

- Donna-Lynn, ESL Instructor



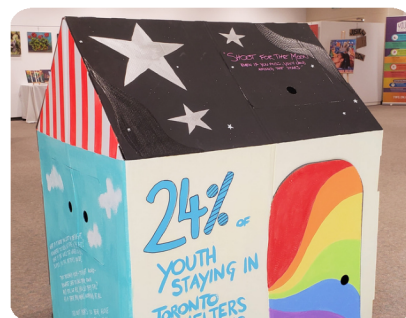
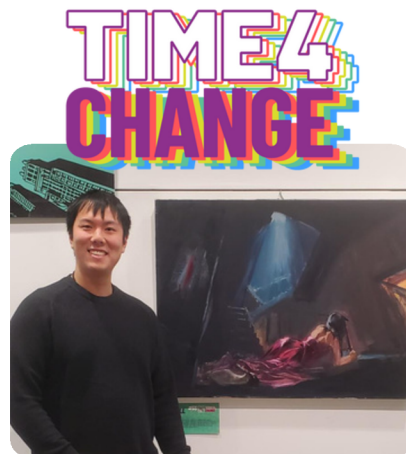
"ESL HAS BEEN VERY HELPFUL AND HAS HELPED ME TO IMPROVE MY SPELLING, READING AND VOCABULARY. IT ALSO HELPS ME WITH MY PRONUNCIATION." - YWS YOUTH

TIME4CHANGE 2025

As we wrap up this year's Time4Change event, we want to extend our heartfelt gratitude to everyone who made it possible. The gallery at Neilson Park Creative Center was filled with incredible artwork from artists in our community — artists who share our vision of empowering youth, amplifying their voices, and pushing for real change. Your work doesn't just hang on the walls of those who won them in the silent auction - they will forever tell stories, spark conversations, and inspire action. Thank you for turning art into advocacy.

A special thank you to our presenting sponsor, Mantella Corporation, and our T4C sponsors: Tangerine, Pattison Outdoor, Category 5 Imaging, and Lactalis. Your generosity and commitment to supporting youth experiencing homelessness are truly remarkable. Because of your support, YWS can continue to provide emergency shelter, vital resources, and hope for a brighter future. We are also deeply grateful to Neilson Park Creative Center for welcoming us into your space. Art has the power to challenge perceptions and ignite meaningful change, and this incredible community has stood with us in advocacy and support. A very special thank you to Robin, whose dedication and countless hours of hard work made this event possible. And thank you to all of our volunteers - T4C wouldn't have been the same without you!

And finally, thank you to each and every one of you who visited the gallery, joined us for our closing event, donated, and bid on artwork. Your generosity fuels the work we do, and your support reminds us that change is possible. But the work doesn't stop here! We challenge you to continue changing the narrative—to speak up, advocate, and take action. Together, we can build a future where every young person has the support they deserve.



PRESENTING SPONSOR



LEGACY GIVING

YOUR WILL: A POWERFUL WAY TO MAKE A LASTING IMPACT

"I AM MAKING A GIFT IN MY WILL TO YOUTH WITHOUT SHELTER AS AN INVESTMENT IN THE NEXT GENERATION. YOUTH ARE THE FUTURE OF OUR COUNTRY, AND WE NEED TO SUPPORT THEM."

- YWS Legacy Gift Donor

Legacy giving allows you to create a lasting impact by helping vulnerable youth build brighter futures. If you have a will, consider adding Youth Without Shelter (YWS) as one of your beneficiaries. By including YWS in your estate planning, you ensure that youth experiencing homelessness have access to the shelter, support, and resources they need to transform their lives. Your will can be a powerful way to support organizations like YWS and create a legacy of compassion. Thanks to the generosity of donors like you, YWS can continue breaking the cycle of homelessness and empowering youth to reach their full potential.

If you do not have a will, YWS has partnered with Willfora, a free online resource that makes creating a legal will simple and secure. With Willfora, you can complete your will in 20 minutes or less, at no cost. Whether you choose to designate part of your estate to a charity close to your heart or not, this tool empowers you to plan your future with confidence and ease.

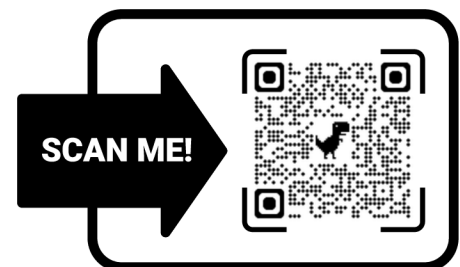
Breaking the cycle of abuse, neglect, and poverty—the root causes of most youth homelessness—is a significant challenge. With your legacy gift, YWS can continue to provide safe, supportive spaces, caring individuals, and services that guide youth toward independence.

Thank you for being part of our youths' inspiring journeys to self-sufficiency and empowerment.

To discuss your legacy in confidence, please contact:

Monika Fox, Director of Philanthropy

416.748.0110 x 26 or **communications@yws.on.ca**



LEGACY GIVING

YOUR LEGACY, THEIR TOMORROW



GREATEST NEEDS FOR SPRING



DONATIONS NEEDED

- Water bottles
 - Sneakers
 - Spring / light jackets
 - Long sleeve/ short sleeve T-shirts
(graphic tees, dry-fit, basic)
-



Due to limited storage space and cleaning facilities, we are not able to accept used or gently used clothing or lightly used towels or bedsheets

CALL US FOR MORE INFORMATION

Food Donations:
416-748-0110 EXT.62 or
communications@yws.on.ca

Financial Donations:
416-748-0110 EXT. 36 or
lhayman@yws.on.ca