

# SUMMER NEWSLETTER

## LET'S GET GROWING

STEVE DOHERTY - EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

I am proud to share that YWS is expanding our Helix Project by taking the lead on and becoming the future operator of a transformative new supportive housing development at 7-9 Wardlaw Crescent in Rexdale. In partnership with the City of Toronto and a collaboration of trusted community organizations: Midaynta Community Services, Delta Family Resource Centre, Rexdale Women's Centre, and Albion Neighbourhood Services, this initiative is fully funded through all three levels of government. This four-storey, 51-unit building will offer deeply affordable, self-contained apartments with onsite supports tailored to youth, seniors, newcomers, and others experiencing housing instability. This opportunity will allow some of our former residents facing a housing crisis in this city to move into independent living while offering comprehensive support services. With wraparound services, 24/7 staffing and security, and a strong focus on wellness and community integration, this "Made in Rexdale" solution to supportive housing is rooted in compassion, collaboration, and the belief that everyone deserves a safe place to call home.

To kick off the summer, we brought a long-standing tradition from our YWS neighbourhood to our new one: a community cleanup. Four YWS staff joined five residents on June 13th to clean up the surrounding area and nearby local shops, helping to make shared spaces clean and welcoming for all.

We look forward to sharing more updates on the Wardlaw Supportive Housing Project as construction progresses over the next year.



View of proposed building from Wardlaw Crescent



Community cleanup

# UPDATE FROM HELIX HOUSE

On May 1st, one of our Helix House youth moved into a place she can finally call her own. After navigating significant challenges around housing and finances, A.J.'s journey is a powerful reminder of what's possible when youth are met with care, consistency, and community.

Thanks to priority housing, ongoing support, and a full team effort across departments at Youth Without Shelter, A.J. now has the stability she needs to continue thriving in university and work.

*"The Helix Program supported me through my struggles with housing and finances as a youth studying at university. It was a lovely place to live with helpful staff and I felt I was able to put more into school and work. I'm very grateful for what YWS has done for me and I hope that more youth can be supported as well."*

**— A.J., Former Helix House Resident**

This success didn't happen overnight, and it didn't happen alone. The Helix House staff showed unwavering commitment to building trust and providing steady, client-led support. Our YWS kitchen team played a vital role, ensuring A.J. and other youth in the program were well-nourished. And our Housing team worked closely with A.J. to secure housing, navigate logistics, and provide an "On the Move Package" filled with essentials to start a new life in a new home.

This is what YWS is all about: collaboration, compassion, and creating the conditions for youth to succeed on their own terms.

To A.J., we're so proud of you! And to our YWS team: thank you for showing what it means to walk alongside youth every step of the way.



# WELCOME TO THE TEAM!

We're thrilled to welcome two incredible new team members to Youth Without Shelter! Please join us in giving a warm YWS welcome to Heather and Varagi as they officially join our mission to end youth homelessness, one youth at a time.

Heather has fit in seamlessly as our new Community Engagement Coordinator, working with resident youth over the past few weeks. Together, they have enjoyed art sessions, bracelet-making, board games, and even some martial arts. Heather also coordinates day trips, like visits to see the cherry blossoms at High Park. Her role will be working directly with youth to support their growth and well-being through meaningful connections and activities, building trust, confidence, and creating moments of joy for the young people we support.

With a passion for community connection and empowerment, Varagi will be working closely with our amazing volunteers and generous donors as our new Volunteer and Gifts-in-Kind (GIK) Specialist. This role truly is the heart behind the helping hands - connecting passionate volunteers with meaningful opportunities to support our youth. From organizing group visits to managing donation drives and guiding new volunteers, Varagi's leadership will help ensure every supporter feels welcomed, engaged, and empowered to make a difference.

Both are already bringing great energy, dedication, and fresh ideas to their roles - and we're so excited to have them on board!



*"I'm excited to share that I've joined Youth Without Shelter as the new Community Engagement Coordinator! As a Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist, I'm passionate about creating safe, inclusive spaces where youth can connect, express themselves, and experience joy—no matter what they're going through. In this role, I'll be designing and leading meaningful, engaging recreation programs that support well-being, build confidence, and foster community. I'm truly honoured to be part of a team that believes every young person deserves dignity, support, and the chance to thrive."* - **Heather**



*"I'm excited to share that I've joined Youth Without Shelter as the new Volunteer and Gifts-in-Kind (GIK) Specialist! With a background in community programming and volunteer coordination, I'm passionate about planning and organizing meaningful initiatives that bring people together for a purpose. In this role, I'll be supporting our incredible volunteers and managing in-kind donations that directly impact the lives of youth experiencing homelessness. I'm grateful to be part of a team that values authenticity, believes in the power of community, and creates spaces where young people can feel safe, supported, and free to be themselves."* - **Varagi**

# CORPORATE WORKSHOPS

## LOOKING FOR A MEANINGFUL WAY TO ENGAGE YOUR TEAM WHILE MAKING A REAL IMPACT?

Get your company involved in our fight to end youth homelessness!

Our Educational Outreach Program offers interactive, eye-opening workshops that help corporate teams understand the realities of youth homelessness in the GTA.

We'll dive into:

- The size and scope of the issue
- Common myths and harmful stereotypes
- The lived experiences of youth navigating homelessness
- How your organization can drive change in your community



Together, we can end youth homelessness in Canada - one conversation at a time. Support our mission. Be part of the change!

**Contact our Educational Outreach Manager, Anastasia:**

416.748.0110 ext. 39 | [education@yws.on.ca](mailto:education@yws.on.ca)



## GREATEST NEEDS FOR SUMMER



# DONATIONS NEEDED

- Swimwear
- Flip flops
- Tank tops
- T-shirts (graphic tees, dry-fit, basic)
- Shorts



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 and Clothing Donations:  
416-748-0110 EXT. 62 or  
[varagi@yws.on.ca](mailto:varagi@yws.on.ca)

Financial Donations:  
416-748-0110 EXT. 36 or  
[lhayman@yws.on.ca](mailto:lhayman@yws.on.ca)