



YOUTH  
WITHOUT  
SHELTER

# 500 IN five

STRATEGIC  
PLAN

2019 — 2024



---

## INTRODUCTION



Youth Without Shelter, which is also commonly referred to as “YWS”, has been located in the community of North Etobicoke for over 30 years. It provides a safe refuge for youth ages 16 to 24 who – often through circumstances beyond their control – have found themselves without a home to call their own.

Since our grassroots origins in 1986 we have become known as a welcoming and empowering place. YWS is now a house where a youth’s culture and needs are understood, and where each youth can receive practical support, guidance, mental health and wellness supports and training through a wrap-around model of programs. This model includes:

- > **33-bed residential program with safe shelter and nutritious food**
- > **20-bed, best-practice Stay in School Program that supports youth as they strive for their educational goals**
- > **Life Skills and Employment Program that includes newly-introduced culinary stream**
- > **Stabilizing Housing and After-Care Program**
- > **Preventative Awareness and Educational Outreach Program.**

Each youth comes to YWS with their own story and their own needs – and it is the youth voice that guides everything that we do. Over the past year, YWS has worked through a

five-year strategic plan, to define both our intended impact and a theory of change, as well as a new mission and guiding principles. The driver for this work was evidence that YWS had moved far beyond being an emergency shelter, and that our mission statement no longer captured the scope of services and supports in place. Ensuring youth lived-experience voices were heard throughout the process was key. Both primary quantitative and qualitative research was completed with current and past youth residents, allowing the organization to get a deeper understanding of the key youth stakeholder groups, their experiences, and their ongoing needs. The process brought the entire organization together to focus on what YWS is achieving on a day-to-day basis, and what we want to strive for in the future.

The culmination of this work is the YWS Strategic Plan 2019 – 2024. It is an exciting and ambitious plan that balances the need to grow with the needs of our youth clients. It is optimistic and innovative – truly reflecting the spirit of the organization and all those involved with it.

---

## OUR GOAL



From 2019–2024, 500 youth impacted by YWS will exit out of homelessness to stable living. Stable living is defined by lived voices as “income, a roof, a support network and the opportunity to pursue interests or goals”.

---

## GLOSSARY



### CLIENT SEGMENTATION

#### BRIDGE

Youth who require a “bridge” (i.e. YWS and wrap-around supports) underneath them and beside them as they move from a negative situation to stability. This bridge to independent living is generally accomplished through one stay at YWS.

#### CHRONIC

Youth who experience multiple stays at YWS, have been homeless for a period of more than one year, and require longer-term support and more in-depth intervention.

#### REFUGEES

Displaced youth, generally unaccompanied, who have been forced to cross national boundaries, and cannot return home safely.

### WRAP-AROUND SUPPORTS

Emergency Residential Program, Life Skills & Employment Program, Housing & After-Care Program, Stay in School Program, Educational Outreach Program, and other support programs that may be introduced.

### IMPACTED BY (HOMELESSNESS)

Refers to youth accessing YWS supports. Does not include youth who due to full occupancy are referred to other shelters.

### HOMELESSNESS (as defined by the Parliament of Canada):

#### ABSOLUTE HOMELESSNESS

Is a narrow concept that includes only those living on the street or in emergency shelters.

#### HIDDEN OR CONCEALED HOMELESSNESS

Includes people without a place of their own, who live in a car, with family or friends, or in a long-term institution.

#### RELATIVE HOMELESSNESS:

Includes those who are housed but who reside in substandard shelter and/or who may be at risk of losing their homes.

### LIVED VOICES

The voices of youth with lived experience with homelessness.

### STABLE LIVING

Having income, a roof, a support network and the opportunity to pursue interests or goals (as defined by lived voices).

---

## PRINCIPLES

The following six principles guided the creation of the strategic plan and will continue to guide the execution of all we do.

**WE WILL**

be adaptive and agile

**WE WILL**

be informed by lived voices

**WE WILL**

recognize the distinct needs of our client segments

**WE WILL**

be innovative and take calculated risks

**WE WILL**

be open to change

**WE WILL**

work in partnership when necessary to obtain best outcomes



# Empowering youth facing homelessness to reach individual potential

**STRATEGIC PLAN**  
2019 — 2024

From 2019–2024, 500 youth impacted by YWS will exit out of homelessness to stable living. Stable living is defined by lived voices as “income, a roof, a support network and the opportunity to pursue interests or goals.”

5  



### PROVIDE QUALITY WRAP-AROUND SUPPORTS FOR YOUTH LIVING AT YWS

Provide a comprehensive range of support services, customized through individual case management, from intake to transition



### PROVIDE QUALITY TRANSITION AND AFTER-CARE SUPPORTS

Provide a comprehensive range of after-care support services



### EDUCATION, AWARENESS & ADVOCACY

Expand leadership role in educating community on youth homelessness  
Enhance YWS public profile through public relations and marketing  
Advocate on issues and policies that impact youth homelessness independently or through appropriate coalitions



**MISSION SUPPORT**

# STRATEGIC AREAS



---

## STRATEGIC AREAS



# PROVIDE QUALITY WRAP-AROUND SUPPORTS FOR YOUTH LIVING AT YWS

### GOAL

Assess current resources including mental and physical health through the lens of client segmentation. Identify gaps and make recommendations on most impactful enhancement and additions to ensure we provide the supports needed at the right time, in the right way to enable youth to exit out of homelessness to stable living.

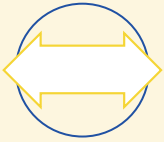
### WHY

To ensure a flexible system that promotes effective case management and mental health support through evidence-based practices and outcome measurement.



---

## STRATEGIC AREAS



# PROVIDE QUALITY TRANSITION AND AFTER-CARE SUPPORTS

### GOAL

Provide quality transition and after-care support services to ensure we provide the supports needed at the right time and in the right way to ensure that youth who have transitioned into stable living are able to thrive.

### WHY

Research reinforces the need for strong after-care support for the long-term success of those transitioning out of homelessness.



---

## STRATEGIC AREAS



# EDUCATION, AWARENESS & ADVOCACY

### GOAL

Provide public education about the issue of youth homelessness, with a particular emphasis on prevention, by focusing on schools and corporations.

### WHY

School-based programming supports the focus on prevention by intervening quickly when youth are at risk, and *before* they become homeless. Corporate education enables both heightened awareness and partnership solution development.

---

## STRATEGIC AREAS



# EDUCATION, AWARENESS & ADVOCACY

### GOAL

Advocate (alone or in partnership) on issues directly related to the youth we serve.

### WHY

YWS, although not a national agency, does have an important local voice to add to the youth homelessness sector coalitions. We are uniquely specialized to add expertise in areas such as education (Stay in School), youth refugee support needs and the challenges of being outside the city core.

---

## STRATEGIC AREAS



# EDUCATION, AWARENESS & ADVOCACY

### GOAL

Ensure YWS has a consistent, identifiable and understood public face.

### WHY

YWS has 32 years of equity in our name. Both internal and external feedback, however, indicates the need to strengthen both brand positioning and visibility to drive giving and engagement raising.



---

## STRATEGIC AREAS



# MISSION SUPPORT

### GOAL

Within 12 months, complete a feasibility study of the physical and operational expansion, based on priorities within the three strategies of the Strategic Plan, in a phased timetable.

### WHY

The physical space at #6 Warrendale is a barrier to YWS achieving our goal of transitioning 500 youth out of homelessness.

---

## STRATEGIC AREAS



# MISSION SUPPORT

### GOAL

---

Develop 5-year (long-term) fund development plan to provide a blueprint for sustainable funding for both existing and planned innovative program growth.

### WHY

---

Changing funding models and increased spending surrounding growth drives the need for a new fund development plan.

---

## STRATEGIC AREAS



# MISSION SUPPORT

### GOAL

Enhance the development team to ensure appropriate level of support to fund strategic initiatives and to continue to grow existing donors at public and private level.

### WHY

Restructure the existing teams to better reflect strategic priorities and workload.

SUCCESSFUL STRONG TALENTED THOUGHTFUL  
UNDERSTANDING UNIQUE VIBRANT WISE WITTY  
WONDERFUL...YOU



---

## STRATEGIC AREAS



# MISSION SUPPORT

### GOAL

---

Build feasibility plans for social enterprise by piloting a lead idea.

### WHY

---

“Poverty, homelessness, violence are all examples of social problems that need dedicated solution-seeking space. Social innovation addresses these challenges by applying new learning and strategies to solve these problems.”

- SIG Canada





Thank you for your interest in the future growth of YWS.  
To learn more, to get involved or to donate funds or time to provide the foundation for each youth to reach their potential along personalized pathways, please contact us.

To discuss how you can help build a foundation for each youth's future please contact the Development & Engagement Office: 416.748.0110 ext. 26 or [communications@yws.on.ca](mailto:communications@yws.on.ca)



Youth Without Shelter  
6 Warrendale Court  
Etobicoke, ON M9V 1P9  
416.748.0110  
[communications@yws.on.ca](mailto:communications@yws.on.ca)  
[www.yws.on.ca](http://www.yws.on.ca)

Follow the conversation on:



MoneySense 2019  
Top 100 Charity:  
**#1 in youth category**

Charitable Registration No.  
119307817 RR0001

