

Summer Newsletter 2015



A Big Step Forward

A 20 year old youth arrived at YES wearing shoes much too small for his size 15 feet. So many of you responded to YES' Facebook post seeking shoes that we were able to buy him both sports shoes and safety boots to equip him for work. Then YES staff took him to Grady's where he was fitted with orthotics, which were needed due to years of wearing improper footwear. Your generous donations of shoes and funds means this client and other homeless youth can maintain healthy feet and participate in our weekly gym trips.

Thanks to you, a young man can play sports and get a job. Some of you donated because you also have size 15 feet and know the high cost of larger shoes. Your generosity made a simple fix. Many of the youth YES serves are struggling with problems that most of us can relate to from our own teen years – stress, relationship challenges and health questions, all compounded by isolation, poverty, and a lack of a home. These complex problems take many hours of listening, help to navigate systems, accompaniment, and hope. Your support means YES staff can be there for these youth to help them move forward.

Volunteers Welcome

Even a few hours a month can really help YES offer more to our clients.

We have rewarding and clearly defined volunteer jobs including:

- Staffing our food cupboard for 3 hours
- Accompanying clients to the gym on Wednesday evenings
- Helping with special events
- Cooking with clients on the weekend
- Caring for our garden

If you would like to volunteer, please contact Wyatt at wlamoureux@yesshelter.ca

Youth at YES Have a Voice

Early in 2015, *The Home Depot Canada Foundation* granted the YES Shelter for Youth and Families an award of \$25,000 to support the development of educational arts based programs for youth wrestling with homelessness here in Peterborough. YES has a great opportunity to use the arts to develop safe and creative spaces for youth to express themselves. Clients have incredible stories of resilience and a lot of expertise to share on what is needed to prevent and reduce youth homelessness. We're excited to have the means to tap into their knowledge in creative ways and to find positive outlets to have the voices of youth heard. YES will be using the grant to bring artists in the community right to YES. Film maker Sarah DeCarlo is working on a series of workshops that will allow YES clients to interact and learn from professional photographers, dancers, circus artists, woodworkers and visual artists in the coming months.

Local writer and arts educator Janette Platana immediately stepped forward to do her part in supporting the development of these programs. Janette says "We want to assist youth in developing long term and sustainable art practices that require little materials or space. We can do storytelling anytime and anywhere, with just ourselves and our words." Janette and local slam poet Wes Ryan have been using drama and creative writing techniques to support youth in developing ways to tell their stories. "It's such a privilege to work with these kids. They are brave and funny and smart. They are gifted in surprising ways, and very articulate. Their stories are fascinating, and could be anyone's story." says Janette.

If you have experience working with youth and some form of creative expression you'd like to share, please contact arts@yesshelter.ca

YES Needs Your Support

YES relies on support from the community to provide much needed assistance to youth and families. Donations by cash or cheque can be mailed or dropped off to the shelter. To donate on-line click on the Canada Helps link at www.yesshelter.ca
Donations over \$20.00 are issued a tax receipt.

Learning to Live Independently

The YES shelter facility offers temporary housing to youth and families aged 16-24. Learning to live independently is often a challenge for youth. Abbott House, our transitional housing facility provides a place where youth can live in safety and stability for up to a year, with the support of a mentor to move forward on their life goals. Here are some thoughts and feelings from a recent resident:

"The main reason that I decided to go to YES was because I was having family problems. I didn't know anyone else that I could stay with. The only person I felt comfortable talking to was my teacher and she told me about YES, so I decided to go. I was scared and I was nervous, mostly because I didn't know what was going to happen with me. I had never lived in a shelter before. I cried, and I was really upset because I thought I wasn't going to have anyone to talk to and no one to be around. That was not the case. The staff were helpful, easy to talk to. Whenever I had problems, they were fast at helping me out, and they always made everyone feel comfortable. I appreciated being given goals that I had to do, and making me get up and get moving. Because you can only be there for a little while.

Moving over to Abbott House was a great next step for me. The mentor helped me to set goals for myself and I thought that if I was living anywhere it would be most beneficial to have goals and someone to help me make those goals happen. I was nervous and excited at the same time! Coming to Abbott House from the YES was a lot easier for me in comparison to going somewhere where people wouldn't understand. I think Abbott House has shown me that it's a lot more difficult to live on your own. There is a lot you have to do to make sure your life goes well and that you're living right. Before I moved to Abbott House I thought everything would be easy forever. It gave me the opportunity to be an adult, but I didn't get thrown into it in a harsh way. There have been people to help me going through it and learn about living on my own.

I have had a newfound freedom after maintaining a job and working hard. Right now I feel I am in a very good position in my life. The last year I have lived at the YES Shelter and Abbott House has changed me completely for the better. I am stronger and happier now than I have ever been. Thank you for everything!"

Your support makes a difference! YES is grateful to:

- Everyone who donated camping gear and funds for a 12 year old family resident to go on her school field trip. Mom and daughter now have matching rain coats!
- Reba Harrison and the Trent Fashion Show, and The Gap here in Peterborough. Their March fashion event raised funds for YES and awareness of our services
- St Peter's and Holy Cross Secondary schools for once again hosting their amazing Youth for Youth Campaign in support of YES
- The Ontario Trillium Foundation for awarding YES funds to strengthen our volunteer and funding base
- Griffins Greenhouses and Garden Centre for donating a portion of their customer appreciation card sales to YES
- All our donors and supporters whose generosity allows us to stretch to better meet the needs of homeless youth and families

Homeless? We Can Help

If you, a youth or family you know is at risk of being homeless, YES can help. We provide emergency and transitional housing for youth aged 16-24 and for families, as well as a variety of related programs and services. The shelter never closes. We are across from FreshCo in downtown Peterborough.



Growing Possibility

Thanks to staff from Northern Lights who recently planted a vegetable garden at YES' transition house. This will provide nourishment and a great learning experience for residents.



Student Arlayna Curtin & employment counsellor Karen Pegler at Abbott House.

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