

YES NEWSLETTER WINTER 2016

YES works to reduce and prevent homelessness by providing shelter, education and transitional supports for youth and families in Peterborough and the Kawarthas.



HOMELESS TO HOME OWNER



Josh and Natasha were homeless youth who met at YES' high school classroom just over a decade ago. This coming spring, their family of four will move into their own home, thanks to a Habitat for Humanity build in Warsaw. Youth from YES have helped with the build, along with associates from the local Home Depot store.

The couple were pleased that youth from the shelter wanted to help, considering how important YES was to them. Josh and Natasha both stayed in YES' emergency shelter and transitional housing and studied at YES' high school classroom. Josh also participated in an employment training program at YES. Natasha says: "They helped us with what to look for when finding our first apartment, they helped us budget, they helped us learn to live on our own 'cause we hadn't done that before".

Natasha shared that with the right help, anything is possible. "When we were young, we didn't think we'd ever own a house. This provides hope for those kids in the shelter that it's possible to own a home even if you think you can't." YES also believes anything is possible for the youth and families we serve. With your support, we can help them thrive.

THE HOME DEPOT OPENS DOORS



The local Home Depot Store raised over \$13,000 for YES in their Orange Door Project campaign this year. Associates also erected a wall in our shelter and installed a bright, new floor in our high school classroom. The Home Depot Canada Foundation has pledged \$20 million by 2018 to improve housing options, support life-skills development programs, and invest in research that ensures funding is directed to the most effective solutions to prevent and end youth homelessness. Their exemplary corporate citizenship and generosity is truly helping youth build brighter futures.



SUNDAY ROAST



In our work at YES, there is always an interweaving of tragedy and hope. We thank you for being part of this journey with us.

Recently YES staff intervened in time to prevent a shelter resident from taking her own life. Sadly, this is not an isolated incident. YES regularly supports people at their lowest moments.

Understandably, the worker who had attended to the client until paramedics arrived felt too shaken to continue her

shift. An administrative staff who was acting as 'on-call' support came in to calm the place and relieve the worker from her duties.

There's a sixteen year old who has been at YES for months as we struggle to find a safe place for him. He desperately wants to be good and is always offering to help.

And he constantly makes poor choices such as provoking others and defying requests. Through a lot of sleuthing, we've found assessments that show he lives with cognitive delays and struggles with impulse control.

But on this night, when help was needed, he helped the evident "newbie" staff on the floor. He'd been around long enough to be the best advisor and told the staff what needed to get accomplished before morning. He even knew that the roast we serve every Sunday had to be taken out of the freezer.

Our workers brave all kinds of chaos and sadness, for these moments of individuals being their best selves, despite all the hardship they've experienced. Happily, their shining, however brief and incremental, is common enough to keep us all doing our best as well.



STRENGTHENING FAMILIES TO PREVENT YOUTH HOMELESSNESS



Ten families with teenagers are learning how to improve their communication skills, stress management and family relationships through the Strengthening Families for Parents and Youth Program. The weekly sessions start with a shared meal lovingly prepared and served by volunteers. Then, the youth (12-16) and their caregivers do separate interactive activities and games for an hour and come back together to discuss what they've learned. Transportation, child care and incentives are provided to make sure everyone can participate. A new 9 week session starts February 2. To get more information, email admin@yesshelter.ca or call/text 705-768-5197.

Teens age 12-21 (or their caregivers) who need support at home or to transition into independence can get supports from a new Youth Outreach Worker at YES and a more clinically focused Outreach Worker at Peterborough Youth Services. These workers provide short term supports to help mediate conflicts, strengthen relationships, connect youth and families to resources, and nurture natural supports. Email outreach@yesshelter.ca

Family breakdown is cited by 45% of youth using the YES Shelter as the reason they became homeless. These new programs and services are part of a collective impact effort YES is leading to prevent youth homelessness, with a particular focus on supporting youth within their family context.

EYES ON THE FUTURE



By Peter Newnham, Youth Outreach Worker.

My role as YES' new Youth Outreach Worker is to engage the "hard to reach". YES is the perfect place for this work because unlike other services, we will continue to reach out, even when people don't reach back. Even when people push us away. Often youth we work with are interested only in a roof over their head. Nothing else feels possible to them. We see more.

One youth I've worked with is just such an example. He is unemployed, has legal problems, lives with a learning disability and several mental health diagnoses, and has no known close supports - he is the picture of resilience, surviving in a town not well set up to support him and his choices. At first, staff at the shelter

were just another authority to scoff at in the long line of dismissed adults in his life. He tried to prove himself to be every negative label he's been assigned by others over the years. YES staff focused on his strengths, stayed consistent with boundaries and always helped him develop a stabilizing path. Now, that he is living elsewhere, staff see him almost daily, checking in and reminding him that he knows caring adults. This trust took time, but eventually it allowed him to start seeing opportunities presented by YES staff as something worth considering, something that would suit him and work in his favour.

This young man starts an employment program next month. For the first time since meeting him, he is articulating goals, reaching towards things that his strengths could accomplish. He has looked up from his feet and has his eyes on the future. It used to be, after some

YOUR GIFTS MAKE A DIFFERENCE

YES thanks the volunteers and donors who make a difference every day for the youth and families YES supports, including:

Gabe Robinson Contracting volunteered to build new shelving in our donation room.

The **Trent Fashion Show** offered \$5 manicures to fundraise for YES. Check out their show Jan. 26!

Paul Davis Systems remediated a plumbing back-up at our shelter, free of charge.

Sean Corkery sold pumpkins and raised over \$800 for YES

The **Trent Central Students Association**, the **Lion's Club of Peterborough**, and **Jo Anne's Place Health Foods** all made generous donations.

Visit www.yesshelter.ca to donate.

misfortune like violence in the streets, theft of his few belongings, cold nights sleeping outside, holidays and birthdays spent uncelebrated, he would shrug and say "That's life." I would always respond as any YES staff would, that that doesn't have to be life; that he deserves much more than that. Lately, he is starting to believe it.

YES believed in his strengths and possibilities, cared enough to not judge and took the time to build trust. In that time, he slowly caught up with us and is trying out the language of strength and possibility himself. He hardly says "That's life" anymore or stops himself because he knows what the response will be. He finishes the thought himself and tells himself it doesn't have to be. Lately, he is starting to see in the mirror the young man we see and that's leading to a hopeful path he didn't know was open to him. Together, we reached him.

