

OPERATION COME HOME



MAPPING HOMELESS YOUTH NEEDS WITH PROGRAMS AND SERVICES OTTAWA

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MARCH 2010

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March 2010.

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MAPPING GAPS, OVERLAPS AND UNIQUE PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

In order to understand the gaps, overlaps, and unique programs and services offered to homeless youth in Ottawa, a mapping plan was conducted as a part of a strategic planning process for Operation Come Home (OCH).¹ The central guiding criteria for including organizations in the map was the identified needs of homeless youth. Gaps, overlaps, and unique programs and services were mapped according to the needs of homeless youth in the city of Ottawa as identified through two sources: (1) stakeholder consultations and (2) secondary literature.²

Needs of Homeless Youth:³

- 1) Outreach.
- 2) Basic Services: meals, shower, laundry, and clothing.
- 3) Homeless Youth Drop-in Centre: hours of operation, recreational and social activities.
- 4) Health Services: mental health, addiction services (counselling, residential treatment, detox), other (dental, sexual health, physical health, sexual orientation supports), needle exchange.
- 5) Shelter and Housing: emergency, transitional, long-term, housing supports – advocacy & retention.
- 6) Employment: assessment & career planning, referral to community employment programs, job search preparation (résumé, interview), job postings, job placement and co-op placements, job retention supports, computer access.
- 7) Legal Supports: legal advice, other supports for youth in conflict with the law.
- 8) Education and Life Skills: high school completion, job skills training, and life skills (domestic, parenting, financial literacy).
- 9) Early Intervention, Family Supports, and Community Awareness: preventative programs.
- 10) Culturally Sensitive Programs.

There are a variety of community organizations supporting homeless youth in Ottawa. According to the Community Information Centre of Ottawa's online database of community services (the 'e-Blue Book'), 33 community-based programs indicate that they serve Ottawa's homeless youth.⁴ In general, we sought to identify organizations whose programs and services met the following criteria:

Selection Criteria:

- ⇒ Were offered in areas that homeless youth frequent (e.g. downtown core).
- ⇒ Do not mix the adult homeless population with homeless youth population.

¹ For more information on Operation Come Home (OCH), please visit their website, www.operationcomehome.ca.

² Six stakeholder groups were consulted: (1) homeless youth in Ottawa, (2) organizations that serve homeless youth in Ottawa, (3) funding organizations and corporate sponsors, (4) OCH staff, (5) OCH Board of Directors, and (6) expert practitioners in the U.S.A. and British Columbia. See also, Alliance to End Homelessness, "Annual Report Card: Jan-Dec. 2008"; Raising the Roof, "Youth Homelessness in Canada: The Road to Solutions"; Aubry et. al., "Panel Study on Persons Who are Homeless in Ottawa: Phase 2 Results" (Ottawa: Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ottawa, March 2007).

<http://www.spcottawa.on.ca/Documents/Other/Literature/Panel%20Study%20on%20Persons%20Who%20are%20Homeless%20Final%20Rpt%20March%2007%20-07-04-16.pdf>.

³ The needs are presented in no order of priority.

⁴ See, Community Information Centre of Ottawa, e-Blue Book.

[http://ottawa.cioc.ca/bresults.asp?UseCICVw=13&STerms="homeless+youth"&SType=A&CMType=L&GHID=](http://ottawa.cioc.ca/bresults.asp?UseCICVw=13&STerms=)

- ⇒ Offer health services to homeless youth without an OHIP card, or provide assistance in applying for an OHIP card.
- ⇒ Offer services to youth without requiring a guardian signature or accompaniment.
- ⇒ Were frequently identified by homeless youth stakeholders.

Some organizations that did not meet these criteria remained on the list because youth stakeholders reported using their services, albeit reluctantly, as there were no other comparable youth-focused services available. Also, organizations that provided culturally sensitive programs remained on the list.

A more in-depth study might have included more organizations and/or fewer criteria; however it was beyond the scope of this mapping process to include all possible programs and services. The goal was to identify a landscape of programs and services that genuinely met the needs of homeless youth in Ottawa so that strategic goals could be developed to address key gaps.

The organizations on our list were categorized into three groups: (1) organizations that do not exclusively support homeless youth but will accept youth into general programs; (2) organizations that do not exclusively support homeless youth but have homeless youth-specific programs; and (3) organizations that support homeless youth exclusively. We have specified eligibility criteria in brackets, where applicable.

Category 1 Organizations:

- 1.1. Anglican Social Services, Centre 454 (eligible age:18+)
- 1.2. Capital City Mission
- 1.3. Centre 507 (eligible age: 16+)
- 1.4. Cornerstone – Le Pilier
- 1.5. Inner City Ministries
- 1.6. Jewish Family Services
- 1.7. Montfort Hospital/Montfort Renaissance (some programs 18+, some for francophones)
- 1.8. Rideauwood Addiction and Family Services
- 1.9. Sandy Hill Community Centre
- 1.10. Shepherds of Good Hope
- 1.11. The Ottawa Mission (eligible age: 18+)
- 1.12. The Well (women only)

Category 2 Organizations:

- 2.1 Causeway
- 2.2 Centretown Community Health Centre
- 2.3 City of Ottawa programs
- 2.4 Eastern Ontario Resource Centre
- 2.5 Elizabeth Fry Society of Ottawa (justice-involved women)
- 2.6 John Howard Society of Ottawa (justice-involved men and women)
- 2.7 Maison Fraternité
- 2.8 National Capital Region, YMCA-YWCA
- 2.9 Odawa Native Friendship Centre (aboriginals)

Category 3 Organizations:

- 3.1 Aboriginal Youth Non-Profit Housing Corporation, Tewegan Transition House (aboriginal youth)
- 3.2 Alwood Treatment Centre
- 3.3 Dave Smith Youth Treatment Centre
- 3.4 Eastern Ontario Youth Justice Agency
- 3.5 Kids Help Phone
- 3.6 Operation Come Home
- 3.7 Rideau Street Youth Enterprises
- 3.8 St. Mary's Home (primarily young mothers)
- 3.9 Youth Services Bureau of Ottawa
- 3.10 Youville Centre (primarily young mothers)

Only ten community-based organizations fall into the third category. Our mapping exercise has identified few overlaps, and several gaps, in the programs and services available to homeless youth. Furthermore, there are a number of organizations that provide unique services.

Gaps, Overlaps and Unique Programs and Services:

The primary gaps include sporadic street outreach done on weekend evenings. This gap, coupled with youth stakeholders reporting that they had no recreational and social activities on weekends to keep them off the street, is problematic. Furthermore, weekend meals are underserved overall; especially breakfast. The availability of showers is limited with only YSB offering this service seven days a week.

As substance abuse and mental illness are two major health issues for homeless youth, it is highly significant that a shortage of a full range of addiction and mental health treatment and supports specifically geared for youth was found. An important aspect of this shortage is the lack of professionals that can do assessments right at the time a youth makes the decision to go "clean." There is also a shortage of stabilization beds for youth who have undergone detox. Furthermore, there is a 2-3 year waiting list for psychiatric services and a shortage of psychological counselling. One community stakeholder noted that most homeless youths' mental illness goes undiagnosed, including post-partum depression amongst teen mothers.

Other health services (e.g. dental care) are not readily available, especially if the homeless youth lacks an OHIP card. Sexual orientation supports and counselling is also lacking, with only one organization (YSB) catering to youth who require these services. (Youth must first identify themselves as part of the GBLTTQ community).

Emergency, transitional, and long-term housing services specifically geared towards younger youth and lower functioning youth is inadequate. Higher functioning homeless youth want to be integrated into the community, but our research has identified long-term housing search support, advocacy with potential landlords, and financial supports to secure and maintain housing as another gap. Homeless youth in Ottawa who require housing retention supports including emergency funding, financial literacy, and domestic lifeskills are insufficient in these areas.

Employment supports are readily available in Ottawa except for job placement, co-op placements, and employment retention supports. One of the successful service delivery models

in Ottawa is social enterprise development. All stakeholders see this approach as a unique way of providing homeless youth with both work experience and the social supports they need outside of working hours. Only two organizations (Operation Come Home and Rideau Street Youth Enterprises) currently offer these types of jobs specifically geared to homeless youth.

Because many homeless youth are involved in the justice system they require legal advice, advocacy to gain access to legal aid, and support through the justice system. Most are unaware of their rights and have a negative relationship with law enforcement officers. Programs could be developed or better adapted to meet these needs.

Youth requiring life skills coaching, including financial literacy, are generally underserved in this area. Furthermore, as pregnancies amongst homeless youth appear to be on the rise, there is a need for educational programs that address prevention, pre-natal, and post-partum skills.

Stakeholders reported that some of their homeless youth participants have attended multiple high schools. Our school boards do not, at present, appear to have a system for tracking missing youth. The result is that homeless youth 'fall through the cracks' of the educational system when they leave a school.

Community awareness of homelessness amongst youth is sporadic and often it relies on the availability of volunteers. Although there are a number of initiatives both national and local that address this requirement, it is presently insufficient. One important component of this work is the availability of crisis intervention supports for parents who are concerned that one of their teens might run away. This is an essential service that helps to prevent homelessness amongst youth.

Finally, more research is required to identify the sub-groups amongst homeless youth in Ottawa, their cultural profiles, and their needs. This would include, but not be limited to, three specific groups: (1) higher functioning youth, (2) those with substance abuse issues, and (3) those with severe health problems.⁵ Additionally, stakeholders were concerned that programs and services might not be sensitive to the needs of newcomers to Canada.⁶

Stakeholders frequently expressed a belief that community-based organizations need to partner and specialize. Although there are many examples of partnerships in Ottawa, the reality is that organizations are competing for the same limited funding which can create a competitive environment.

⁵ These groups were identified by Aubry et. al. The first group is more successful in achieving stable housing after a homelessness event than the other two subgroups. See, Aubry, et. al, 50

⁶ There was no indication by stakeholders that there was a homelessness problem amongst newcomers to Canada youth.

MAPPING HOMELESS YOUTH NEEDS WITH PROGRAMS AND SERVICES IN OTTAWA

NEED/ ORGANIZATION	GAPS	OVERLAPS	UNIQUE PROGRAMMING
<p>OUTREACH: Street outreach services provided by staff and volunteers include distribution of basic items (e.g. food, clothing, bus tickets) and referral to other community services.</p> <p><u>Category 3 Organizations:</u> Operation Come Home (OCH) Youth Services Bureau (YSB)</p> <p><u>Category 2 Organizations:</u> Centretown Community Health Centre (CCHC)</p> <p><u>Category 1 Organizations:</u> Capital City Mission (CCM) Inner City Ministries (ICM) Jewish Family Services (JFS)</p>	<p>Street outreach is done primarily in the evenings and ends between 9:30 & 10:30 pm.</p> <p>Sat. and Sun. evening outreach is insufficient.</p>		<p>JFS and OCH target “hardest to reach” homeless youth.</p> <p>JFS is the only organization that provides outreach services Sat. and Sun. evenings.</p> <p>OCH, in partnership with Ottawa Police Services, addresses issues of aggressive panhandling in the downtown core in summer months. This is done weekday mornings only.</p> <p>JFS hires former addicts/street experienced people who have been in recovery for at least 6 months to do outreach in teams of two.</p> <p>OCH street outreach workers are professionally trained.</p> <p>YSB will take youth back to their organization to do “needle exchange.” This is not done on the street.</p>

NEED/ ORGANIZATION	GAPS	OVERLAPS	UNIQUE PROGRAMMING
<p>BASIC SERVICES: Meals, Shower, Laundry, Clothing</p> <p><u>Category 3 Organizations:</u> Operation Come Home (OCH) St. Mary's Home (SMH) Youth Services Bureau (YSB) Youville Centre (YC)</p> <p><u>Category 2 Organizations:</u> Ottawa Native Friendship Centre (ONFC)</p> <p><u>Category 1 Organizations:</u> Capital City Mission (CCM) Centre 507 (507) Inner City Ministries (ICM) Jewish Family Services (JFS) Shepherds of Good Hope (SGH) The Ottawa Mission (OM) The Well (TW)</p>	<p>Week-end meals are underserved overall; especially breakfast.</p> <p>Shower availability is limited. YSB provides showers Mon.-Sun., whereas OCH provides them during weekdays only and this is limited to times when staff available to supervise youth (monitor for drug use).</p>	<p>Lunch is available broadly during weekdays.</p> <p>Dinner is available broadly during weekdays.</p> <p>NOTE: CCM, SGH, OM, W offer meals but these are offered to youth and adults.</p> <p>Clothing is offered broadly during weekdays.</p> <p>NOTE: SGH, OM offer clothing and hygiene products but these are offered to youth and adults.</p> <p>Hygiene products are offered broadly during weekdays.</p> <p>NOTE: CCM offers laundry coupons for the laundry co-op.</p>	<p><u>Meals:</u></p> <p>OCH is the only category 3 organization that provides a breakfast on weekdays. It also offers a lunch program for homeless youth registered in afternoon programs.</p> <p>SMH offers a food bank for young women, mothers and fathers.</p> <p>YSB is the only category 3 organization that provides lunch on weekdays and weekends.</p> <p>YC offers breakfast and lunch for young mothers and their children who are registered in their programs.</p> <p>ONFC offers three meals daily for aboriginal youth.</p> <p><u>Showers:</u></p> <p>ONFC offers showers to aboriginal youth.</p>

NEED/ ORGANIZATION	GAPS	OVERLAPS	UNIQUE PROGRAMMING
<p>BASIC SERVICES: cont'd</p>			<p><u>Laundry:</u> YSB is the only category 3 organization that provides laundry facilities. ONFC offers laundry facilities to aboriginal youth.</p> <p><u>Clothing:</u> YSB offers clothing. OCH offers seasonal clothing. YC offers a clothing swap for young mothers and their children who are registered in their programs. 507 offers clothing for 18+.</p> <p><u>Other:</u> OCH offers pet food and vet services four times per year. 507 offers clothing repairs for 18+.</p>

NEED/ ORGANIZATION	GAPS	OVERLAPS	UNIQUE PROGRAMMING
<p>HOMELESS YOUTH DROP-IN CENTRE: Recreational and Social activities</p> <p>Category 3 organizations Aboriginal Youth Non-Profit Housing (AYH) Operation Come Home (OCH) Youth Services Bureau (YSB)</p> <p>Category 1 organizations Anglican Social Services, Centre 545 (545) Capital City Mission (CCM) Inner City Ministries (ICM) Shepherds of Good Hope (SGH) The Ottawa Mission (OM) The Well (TW)</p>	<p>Recreational and social activities geared towards youth are insufficient; especially in the evening and on weekends.</p> <p>There is a shortage of a full range of addiction treatment and supports specifically geared for youth</p> <p>There is a shortage of professionals that are available to do assessments</p>		<p>YSB is the only category 3 organization to provide GLBTTQ sensitive drop-in and young women only drop-in.⁷</p> <p>YSB has a ping-pong club on Tues. evenings.</p> <p>OCH offers social programs in the afternoon. Occasionally it offers recreational outings.</p> <p>OCH has baby playgroups in the afternoons.</p> <p>AYH offers only residential artwork and crafting to homeless aboriginal youth.</p>
<p>HEALTH SERVICES: Mental health, Addiction services (Counselling, Residential Treatment, Detox), Other (Dental, Sexual health, Physical health, Sexual orientation supports), Needle exchange.</p> <p>Category 3 organizations Alwood Treatment Centre (ATC) David Smith Youth Treatment Centre (DSYTC)</p>		<p>OCH and YSB offer crisis intervention; sexual health; HIV/AIDS testing.</p> <p>Needle exchange is provided broadly.</p>	<p><u>Addictions:</u> ATC provides 4-mth residential treatment program for drug/alcohol addictions for aged 16 and up; however youth must have an OHIP card.</p>

⁷ GLBTTQ refers to gay, lesbian, bisexual, transsexual, transgender, two-spirit and queer.

NEED/ ORGANIZATION	GAPS	OVERLAPS	UNIQUE PROGRAMMING
<p>HEALTH SERVICES: con'td</p> <p><u>Category 3 organizations cont'd:</u> Kids Help Phone (KHP) Operation Come Home (OCH) St. Mary's Home (SMH) Youth Services Bureau of Ottawa (YSB) Youville Centre (YC)</p> <p><u>Category 2 Organizations</u> Centretown Community Health Centre (CCHC) City of Ottawa programs (COO.) Eastern Ontario Resource Centre (EORC) Maison Fraternité (MF) YMCA-YWCA Odawa Native Friendship Centre (ONFC)</p> <p><u>Category 1 Organizations</u> Anglican Social Services, Centre 454 (454) Centre 507 (507) Inner City Ministries (ICM) Montfort Hospital /Montfort Renaissance (MH-MR) Rideauwood Addiction and Family Services (RAFS) Sandy Hill Community Centre (SHCC) Shepherds of Good Hope (SGH)</p>	<p>at the time a youth decides to go "clean." Equally, there is a shortage of stabilization beds for follow-up once a youth has undergone detox.</p> <p>Mental health services specifically geared for youth is insufficient. Currently there is a 2-3 year waiting list for psychiatric services and there is a shortage of psychological counselling.</p> <p>Dental services specifically geared towards youth are insufficient.</p> <p>All services geared towards youth who do not have an OHIP card.</p> <p>Sexual orientation counselling is insufficient.</p>		<p><u>Additions cont'd</u></p> <p>DSYTC provides substance abuse counselling; however youth must have an OHIP card. Residential centre planned but services will not be available for 3 years.</p> <p>SMH provides addiction counselling and supports for young mothers.</p> <p>YSB provides fulltime addictions counselling; weekdays.</p> <p>YC provides counselling for registered young mothers.</p> <p>MF provides francophone youth addictions and outpatient treatment.</p> <p>RAFS offers addiction counselling with dual mental and addiction diagnosis not specifically geared towards youth.</p> <p>MH-MR offers short-term detox and support (only 20</p>

NEED/ ORGANIZATION	GAPS	OVERLAPS	UNIQUE PROGRAMMING
<p>HEALTH SERVICES: con'td</p> <p><u>Category 1 Organizations cont'd</u> The Ottawa Mission (OM) The Well (TW)</p>			<p>beds avail.); no OHIP card required.</p> <p><u>Mental Health:</u></p> <p>YSB provides mental health (and addictions) support group; individual psychological counselling; mobile crisis intervention.</p> <p>MH-MR offers mental health clinical services for 16+ but OHIP card is required.</p> <p><u>Other Health:</u></p> <p>SMH provides health clinic including breastfeeding supports for registered young mothers.</p> <p>YSB offers daily health clinic; harm reduction counselling and education (HIV/AIDS & Hep. C); dental hygienist one day per week specifically geared towards youth.</p> <p>YC provides health clinic weekly for registered young mothers.</p>

NEED/ ORGANIZATION	GAPS	OVERLAPS	UNIQUE PROGRAMMING
HEALTH SERVICES: con'td			<p>KHP offers telephone counselling.</p> <p>OCH offers telephone referral to appropriate agencies across Canada to reunite run-aways with their families.</p> <p>CCHC provides assistance for youth to obtain OHIP card.</p> <p>COO provides a full range of health testing services; needle exchange and free dental services.</p> <p>EORC provides crisis intervention and short-term counselling.</p> <p>SHCC provides counselling, dental dams, stop smoking programs not specifically geared towards youth and only in their catchment area.</p>

NEED/ ORGANIZATION	GAPS	OVERLAPS	UNIQUE PROGRAMMING
<p>SHELTER AND HOUSING:</p> <p>Category 3 organizations Aboriginal Youth Non-Profit Housing (AYH) St. Mary's Home (SMH) Youth Services Bureau (YSB) Youville Centre (YC)</p> <p>Category 2 organizations John Howard Society (JHS) YMCA-YWCA</p> <p>Category 1 organizations: Cornerstone – Le Piliier (CP) Montfort Hospital / Montfort Renaissance (MH-MR) Shepherds of Good Hope (SGH) The Ottawa Mission (OM)</p>	<p>Emergency, transitional, long-term housing specifically geared towards younger youth and lower functioning youth.</p> <p>Long-term housing search, advocacy with potential and existing landlords, and financial supports for higher functioning youth. This is specifically geared towards youth finding and maintaining a rental unit that is not a part of a “shelter” program.</p> <p>Housing retention supports for “housed” youth including emergency funding, financial literacy, and domestic life skills.</p>		<p><u>Emergency Housing</u></p> <p>YSB provides emergency shelter program for young women (18 places); transitional housing for young women (18 places); long-term housing search supports.</p> <p>YSB provides emergency and transitional housing for young men (24 places).</p> <p>YMCA-YWCA provides emergency overflow housing for youth, adults and families.</p> <p><u>Transitional Housing</u></p> <p>AYH provides transitional housing for aboriginal women (aged 16-29) – 12 places.</p> <p>YMCA-YWCA provides temporary shelter for homeless youth involved in full-time work, school and/or volunteer work - 18 places.</p> <p>SMH provides a residential program for 15 young women and 5 newborn babies.</p>

NEED/ ORGANIZATION	GAPS	OVERLAPS	UNIQUE PROGRAMMING
<p>SHELTER AND HOUSING: cont'd</p>			<p><u>Long-term Housing</u></p> <p>YSB provides long -term housing shelter for 65 youth.</p> <p>JHS provides housing for young women at risk (17-21).</p> <p><u>Housing Supports</u></p> <p>SMH provides housing supports for young mothers registered in their programs.</p> <p>JHS provides housing supports including LEAP for young women at risk (17-21).</p> <p>YC provides housing search supports for young mothers registered in their program.</p> <p>MH-MR provides housing supports for 16+ who suffer from mental illness.</p> <p>Note: CP, YMCA-YWCA, and SGH offer shelter for 18+.</p>