

YouthLink Inner City Centre

"... a place like YouthLink Inner City exists to help keep the street kids fed, clothed, safe, and sometimes even alive, even at the times we didn't care to be."

J.R., Inner City youth participant



Our Inner City Centre at Queen West and Spadina serves over 1,000 street-involved youth each year. Our Inner City Centre at Queen West and Spadina serves over 1,000 street-involved youth each year.

Every year thousands of street-involved youth struggle to survive in Toronto. Some don't make it. But with the right support, many not only survive, but thrive.

YouthLink's Inner City Centre helps over 1,000 street-involved youth each year to access support, housing and life skills training to leave the streets and build a positive future.

Please join us in reaching out to these young people today, before it's too late.

YouthLink

www.youthlink.ca

The facts on youth homelessness

- **Over 1,000 youth under the age of 25 are homeless and/or street-involved in Toronto** at any given time.¹
- **Street life carries many risks to health and safety.** Street youth may panhandle, squeegee, deal drugs or be involved in sex work. They are far more likely to be assaulted, become seriously ill or unknowingly contract HIV/AIDS or Hepatitis C.²
- **Street-involved youth have a 13% higher mortality rate** than other youth, often due to drug overdose or suicide, and many live with chronic physical and mental health issues, including depression and post-traumatic stress disorder.³ 75% of all mental illnesses have their onset in youth, before the age of 25, with a peak in the volatile adolescent years.⁴
- **70% of street-involved youth have experienced some form of sexual, physical or emotional abuse.** Many of them have lost touch with their families and have lost any hope of a better future. Often youth lack identification, are coping with addiction, have a limited education and have little or no employment history.²
- **Early intervention is critical.** The longer individuals have been homeless, the less hopeful they become that stable housing is a possibility for them and they are less likely to access housing services.¹
- **Dedicated programs that address their multiple needs help these youth** build on inner strengths to turn their lives around and become happy and productive citizens.³
- **Funding programs for street-involved youth is a good social investment.** Comparative costs:⁵
 - ⇒ youth in detention: \$250/day
 - ⇒ youth in shelter: \$75/day
 - ⇒ youth in affordable housing: \$25/day (with rent subsidy)
- **Individuals who have not completed high school face much higher rates of unemployment and incarceration** and earn up to 70% less than high school graduates.⁶

Funding social programs to help street-involved youth find housing, upgrade their education and develop employable skills is a good social investment.

It is also the mark of caring and compassionate community.

The crisis is real. Since April 2009, four street-involved youth known to Inner City have died from suicide or overdose.

Sources

1. Estimate based on Toronto Street Needs Assessment statistical survey, April 2006
2. "No Way Home" Fifth Estate Documentary, CBC Production, 2004
3. Youth Homelessness in Canada: The Road to Solutions, Raising the Roof/Chez Toit, 2009
4. "Kids Get Better", Globe and Mail, September 26, 2009, pg F8
5. Gordon Laird, Shelter: Homelessness in a Growth Economy, Sheldon Chumir Foundation Research Report, 2007
6. Pathways to Education Fact Sheet June 2008



Drop-in Centres are a proven way to connect with these youth in Toronto's downtown core. **Inner City** is the only full-time youth drop-in centre west of Yonge Street.



YouthLink's Inner City Centre for street-involved youth helps over 1,000 youth each year to leave the streets for a positive future.

Internationally recognized for innovative and successful services, our programs:

- 1. Engage and motivate marginalized youth** to overcome immediate barriers and plan for the future.
- 2. Help youth find and keep stable housing** with guidance and support of full-time housing workers.
- 3. Develop employable skills** and support additional education, job training and employment opportunities.
- 4. Encourage healthy living and reduce harmful risks** by offering nutritious food, on-site health services and essential information about HIV and Hepatitis C prevention, healthy sexuality and drug use.

2008-09 Results

- Provided services to over 1,000 street youth who made over 5,000 visits to the Drop-In for basic support, crisis counselling, health care and help with legal, employment and housing issues.
- Connected with 2,000 youth on the streets including 286 young people new to the street, bringing basic supplies and inviting them to the Drop-in Centre.
- Housed 90 youth and provided follow-up support. 54 of these youth went from sleeping outside to stable housing.
- Accepted 80 youth including 20 Aboriginal youth into our 10 week computer training and lifestyle stabilization skills program. 48 youth graduated and received their own computer.
- Hired 10 youth to work as part-time Peer Educators and 1 youth to work as a full-time Advanced Peer Educator in the Drop-In.

... this is one of the first programs that actually helped me. I have never really cared before but I actually wanted to be here."

2008 graduate from our computer training program now working part-time and completing a three year college diploma.

Street-involved youth need your help to sustain these programs. Your gift will make a difference.

Your gift sends a message to our youth that you believe in their future and the changes they are making through Inner City programs.

Your gift can accomplish so much. Here are just a few examples of what your gift can do:

- \$500** Provides **fresh, healthy food** for one week
- \$1,000** Provides **grocery cards** for 25 newly housed youth
- \$2,000** Provides a **year's supply of soap, towels and detergent** for Drop-In showers and laundry
- \$5,900** Supports a youth to enroll in our **Peer Educator** or **Computer Training** program and build employment and life skills
- \$10,000** Sponsors a **weekly recreation or arts program** at the Drop-In for three months—an effective way to reach very marginalized youth and begin a conversation about their future.



How to give

On-line

Visit youthlink.ca

By phone

Call 416-967-1773

By Mail

Send cheque to:
YouthLink Inner City
7 Vanauley St.
Toronto, ON M

Please indicate that your donation is for the Inner City Centre. All donations will receive a tax receipt.

When you make a Leadership gift of \$1,000 or higher, your name will be included on our **Community Wall of Hope.**

For over 90 years, YouthLink has helped tens of thousands of youth overcome challenging circumstances and develop the life skills, confidence and drive they need for a positive future. We offer programs and services in downtown Toronto and Scarborough.

YouthLink is a registered Canadian charity, a United Way member organization and an accredited youth mental health agency through Children's Mental Health Ontario.

For more information or to donate, visit www.youthlink.ca



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