



ABOUT YOUTH HOMELESSNESS

THE FACTS ABOUT YOUTH HOMELESSNESS:

- It is estimated that there are at least 6,000 homeless youth in Toronto during the year, and as many as 2,000 on any given night.
- Approximately 20% of the homeless population are young people between the ages of 16-24
- There is a perception that youth leave home for the “fun” and “excitement” of the streets. The reality is that the majority of youth are running “from” something rather than “to” something .
- Almost 70% of youth identify fighting, physical abuse, psychological abuse, parental drug and alcohol-related issues and sexual abuse as the major reasons for them leaving home (Kufeldt, Durieux and Nimmo, 1992).

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE HOMELESS, YOUNG AND ALONE

- The most common characteristics of the youth are their steadfast determination to overcome the situations and circumstances that lead to their homelessness, and their desire to improve their lives and learn the skills they need to live independently in the community.
- Homeless youth come from every socio-economic background and walk of life.
 - Family breakdown is the leading cause of youth homelessness.
 - Most have experienced physical, sexual or emotional abuse.
 - Most are scared, feel alone and lack the confidence that comes with growing up in a caring environment.
 - All have faced the constant threat of violence, exploitation, drugs and illness every day on the streets.
- Difficulty in accessing income assistance, decline in community social services after youth reach age 16 and shortage of affordable rental housing force them to live on the streets – streets that somehow seem less threatening than living at home.
- The youth unemployment rate is estimated at more than 20% in Toronto making it hard even for a young person who has completed college or university to find a job. It is almost impossible for a youth who has not completed high school and has been living on the streets for some time.



ABOUT EVA'S

- Eva's is an innovative and award winning organization that operates three unique facilities in Toronto, providing safe shelter and diverse programs and services to help homeless and at-risk youth reach their potential to lead productive, self-sufficient and healthy lives.
- Eva's is the largest provider of youth-only shelter beds in the city, between our three shelters – yet we are not the first organization people think of when they turn their minds to homeless and at-risk youth.
- Eva's provides one-third of the safe shelter geared for homeless youth in Toronto.
- We are known as leaders within the sector for providing award-winning programs and services that are being replicated across the country.
- We are leading the charge in ensuring the specific issues facing homeless youth are being brought to the forefront of local and nation-wide strategies around homelessness.
- The three shelters - Eva' Place, Eva's Satellite, and Eva's Phoenix - engage and support 114 homeless youth (aged 16-24) each night in distinct ways, designed to help youth with their unique circumstances transition out of homelessness and on to independent living.

Eva's Place is a 32-bed emergency shelter. It is home to the Family Reconnect Program which offers proactive, long-term solutions to prevent and reduce homelessness by helping youth re-establish and maintain contact with their families. Its Early Intervention component supports families staying together rather than having at-risk youth enter the shelter system.

Eva's Satellite was the first, and remains the only youth shelter in Canada operating from a Harm Reduction perspective. It provides emergency shelter for up to 32 youth each night who may have lost their housing or access to other shelters and services due to behavioural problems associated with substance use. Satellite can be a pivotal turning point for youth struggling with addiction.

Eva's Phoenix houses 50 youth for up to one year in townhouse-style units. What sets Eva's Phoenix apart is its innovative, partnership-based employment programs that train and find employment for homeless youth in jobs that offer the potential for a long-term career. We recognize that youth cannot be self-sufficient if they have housing without a decent job to pay for it, or have a job with no place to live. Our focus is on providing youth with the support they need to secure both sustainable housing and meaningful employment.



HOW EVA'S SUPPORTS YOUTH

Eva's staff work with each homeless youth to develop a personalized action plan. This plan is designed to empower each young person to achieve both short- and long-term personal and career goals. This intake, assessment and screening process considers the whole person – mental, physical and aspirational.

Youth are also encouraged to participate in:

- **Employment & Training** – offers focused employment support through hands-on training, internships, on-the-job training, and access to meaningful employment
- **Phoenix Print Shop-Social Enterprise/Commercial Print Shop** – the Fundamentals of Print Training Program prepares youth for entry-level employment in the print and graphics industry through hands-on training in computer graphics, offset printing, digital imaging, and bindery along with internships and job development support
- **Independent Living Skills** – teaches basic life and work skills to empower young people in challenging situations (e.g. financial literacy, cooking, housing searches/stability, conflict resolution)
- **Family Reconnect** – helps homeless youth reconnect with their families and keeps youth, through prevention/early intervention, from leaving home in the first place
- **Harm Reduction** – provides peer programming, counselling on alcohol and drug use, safe sex and healthy relationships, distributes safe supplies, and educates on safe use practices
- **Recreation** – encourages fitness, health and wellness and allows vulnerable youth to have fun, build healthy relationships, develop skills and build community connections, and work on healing in a safe, non-clinical, non-judgmental environment
- **Education** – supports our youth's re-integration into academic programs including access to alternative programs and financial resources, while prioritizing academic and housing goals
- **National Initiatives** – works to build the capacity of the youth-serving sector across Canada, as well as foster systemic change



“Eva’s stands out because they create a connection with the kids, and they’re actually able to demonstrate the impact they have.”

- Greg Thomson, Research Director, Charity Intelligence Canada

“Eva’s Place helped me to understand and recognize my goals and what I would like to do in the future. I think Eva’s was the place where I learned more about myself and helped me realize what relationships I really want and how I would like to pursue my future.”

- A former resident