

SEPTEMBER 2022

YESS NEWSLETTER

MESSAGE FROM MARGO



Hello everyone, and welcome to our September Newsletter.

Our theme this month is **change**.

September has always been a time of change for me—leaves turn, school goes back into session, new activities start, and we prepare our minds and bodies for the quiet rest of winter. Change is also

afoot at YESS this September, as we clean out

our spaces, plan new programs, and look ahead to what is next and what it is time for. Change also is a major theme within the work we do with young people as they learn to acknowledge that many of

the things that have happened to them were out of their control, but that they have the choice, autonomy, and freedom to change their own stories in the future. In this edition, we spotlight our Youth Education and Employment Program and the incredible support we get from the Home Depot Foundation, we showcase Edmonton Civic Employees and their support of the Graham's Place renovation project, and we kick off our support of the annual United Way Campaign as one of their chosen funded agencies.

Have a wonderful September,

SPOTLIGHT ON THE YOUTH EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

The YESS Youth Education and Employment Program provides youth between the ages of 15–24 with skills and knowledge to help them identify career goals, access job-specific training, and learn job readiness skills like cover letter writing and interview skills.

This year, we are so grateful for the support of **The Home Depot Canada Foundation** and their grant of \$150,000 in support of the Youth Education and Employment Program! The Home Depot Canada Foundation is committed to preventing and ending youth homelessness in Canada. Together with community partners across the country, they work to remove barriers, break cycles of inequity,



and enable at-risk youth facing homelessness to achieve positive development outcomes and realize their full potential.

We talked to YESS staff members Caitlin Parker, Karley Spelrem, and Juwayriya Abdullahi, who run and support the Youth Education and Employment Program, about what they see youth learn and achieve in this program.

Describe your role at YESS!

Caitlin and Juwayriya: We are the Employment Coordinators. We facilitate the Youth Education and Employment Program. Before the program begins, we provide information to youth about what the program entails and complete the intake for each of the youth who are interested. We also reach out and form connections to agencies throughout Edmonton to support the youth during their placements. During the program, we teach youth for three weeks about life skills that can help them obtain employment. An example of this would be discussing employability skills and mental health. After this takes place, each of the youth complete the 12-week employment/practicum portion of the program. We support both the youth and the employers throughout these weeks. Finally, we work with the Transitional Worker to form a plan for what comes next after each youth has completed the entire 15-week program.

Karley: I am the Transitional Worker at YESS where I work with our Supportive Housing Program to transition youth out of our group homes and into independence. I also work with community youth as well as Children Services youth to transition them into our group homes. I support youth in the Youth Education and Employment Program with their transition out of the program, whether that is getting hired onto to work full-time or finding alternative job placements that work with their schedules.

Describe the Youth Education and Employment Program.

The Youth Education and Employment Program is a 15-week program that assists youth between the ages of 15-24 with building skills to enter the workforce. The first three weeks entails in-class lessons with the Employment Coordinators where the youth learn life skills such as

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resume building and how to be successful in an interview. Following that, the youth are placed with an employer for 12 weeks while being provided with the support needed to ensure they are successful at their work placements. Finally, a transition plan is created to provide the youth with a clear path for what their life will look like after the employment program is complete.

What are the training/opportunities/outlets that this program provides for youth who access YESS?

The Youth Education and Employment Program provides youth with three weeks of in-class training, followed by 12 weeks of work experience at a place of employment. Youth are trained in basic safety courses such as First Aid and food safety, as well as employment-specific training by obtaining licensing, that is required by employers at their work placements. Youth are led through different courses during the initial 3 weeks which include employment skills, mental health, sexual awareness, and finances. The program supports youth in their placements of choice by seeking to eliminate barriers that might cause inconsistency.

How is this program part of the YESS mission to walk beside youth on their journeys towards healing and appropriate community integration?

Within our Youth Education and Employment Program we provide youth with training on mental health, relationships, boundaries, advocacy, health and safety, basic hygiene, cooking skills, etc. We prioritize the first three weeks to class time where we enhance each of these skills before entering the workplace. We also ensure the youth are housed or have housing set up prior to attending the program to eliminate any barriers while in the work field. With this wraparound support from Employment Coordinators and Transitional Workers, we are able to ensure the success of each youth after the eight-week mark of completing our employment program.

What is one thing you wish the community knew about youth who access YESS?

Juwayriya: The youth who access YESS did not choose to experience the barriers they face. They are survivors who are fighting to break the cycle of violence and trauma they have been entrenched in. They are inspiring because of their motivation to help improve their circumstances. They are resilient because they are persistent in their resolve despite setbacks.

The youth at YESS have experienced trauma throughout their lives, yet they are tenacious in their pursuit of healing, community integration, and reaching their full potential in life.



Staff at the Skyview, South Common, Westmount, and Windermere Home Depot locations with The Home Depot Canada Foundation grant amount of \$150,000 in support of YESS

Thank you so much to the Youth Education and Employment Program work experience partners!

Atlantic Fence

Evergreen Recycling

Habitat for Humanity – ReStore South

Bottle Depot Windermere
(Windermere, 3515 Allan Drive)

FIND Edmonton

Habitat for Humanity – ReStore West

Bottle Depot Winterburn
(West End, 21410 100 Ave)

Habitat for Humanity – ReStore North

Little Caesars (McConachie Edmonton)

Habitat for Humanity –
ReStore Sherwood Park

Pita Pit (104 Street NW, Whyte Ave)

YESS Kitchen

The Youth Education and Employment Program is funded in part by the Government of Canada's Youth Employment and Skills Strategy



A HUGE THANK YOU TO THE EDMONTON CIVIC EMPLOYEES CHARITABLE ASSISTANCE FUND!

The Edmonton Civic Employees Charitable Assistance Fund (ECECAF) donated \$34,000 to our recent project of renovating the laundry room and bathroom space in Graham's Place, one of our supportive housing programs.

The remodeling of Graham's Place bathroom space and laundry room has provided a comfortable home-like environment for youth to thrive and achieve their personal goals. The new laundry room has provided a sustainable way for our staff to teach life skills, and the remodeled bathrooms have created a space of self-care and privacy. The new setup for bathrooms has also taken away the notion of gendered bathrooms and has created a safe and neutral environment for all.



Tell us why you choose to support YESS?

YESS is a locally based, grass-roots organization that aligns with many of the values ECECAF strives to uphold. We recognize the desperate situation of traumatized youth in Edmonton and applaud the tireless dedication by YESS to mitigate and heal this issue. We especially realize the importance of supporting youth as they are our future.

How does ECECAF give back to the community?

ECECAF gives back to the community by helping our contributing members to help others on a larger scale through collective donations.

We choose to support local organizations which in turn tend to support the community we live in, our members, their families, and their neighbours.

Why is it important for ECECAF to support the community?

With our motto being "Impacting Lives and Promoting Healthy Communities," ECECAF was formed in 1941 to address three main concerns:

- To contribute to the comfort of military patients in Edmonton hospitals
- To provide assistance to soldiers and their families during WWII
- To give financial assistance to charitable and welfare organizations formed for the purpose of scientific research into the causes and cures of diseases

We still believe that by helping those in our community who need help the most, we help the entire community in turn.

2022 POINT-IN-TIME HOMELESS COUNT VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY WITH HOMEWARD TRUST



Homeless Counts have been conducted in Edmonton since 1999, providing a snapshot of homelessness in our community, while monitoring changes and trends in the homeless population over time. The results of these counts are used by community agencies, researchers, and government to inform ongoing efforts to prevent and end homelessness.

The Point-in-Time Homeless Count is returning to Edmonton on September 28 and Homeward Trust is looking for volunteers.

What will be required of you?

You will be sent out to a quadrant of the city, in pairs, where you will ask people you encounter questions about homelessness provided by Homeward Trust. Shifts are 4 hours depending on the assignment and walking is required. As you will be outside for the duration of your shift, you need to dress appropriately for the weather.

Volunteers must be over the age of 18 and training/orientation is provided.

If you are interested in this opportunity please [sign up here!](#)

YESS IS A PROUD PARTNER OF THE UNITED WAY OF THE ALBERTA CAPITAL REGION

Do local good at myunitedway.ca



Illustrations by Jonathan Busch

