



What's new under the sun - Spring 2009 Newsletter

Career Horizons - Creating Jobs, Changing Lives

Since Career Horizons first opened its doors at 37 Varna Drive in February 2008, we have experienced a great deal of change and much growth. Our very first session graduated a total of four youth from our workshops, and from there, our numbers grew. To date, a total of 26 youth have successfully completed Career Horizons' 3-week, Pre-vocational Life Skills workshops, which focuses on concepts critical to successfully obtaining, and retaining employment. Initially, Career Horizons had set out to offer 3, 8-week Sessions; in the end, we held a 4th, additional 8-week session in the Fall-Winter of 2008, in an effort to serve more youth seeking employment training. To date, Career Horizons has created 46 job opportunities for our youth in competitive employment.

In addition to employment and life-skills training, Career Horizons' holistic approach focuses on ensuring that the basic needs of our youth are met. Career Horizons' staff provides intensive case management to each client and connects with a range of community agencies that are able to support our participants in accessing legal services, housing, health and, wellness resources, ID clinics, or social/recreational activities. It is our hope that with these basic needs met, our participants are truly 'job-ready' and thus, more likely to have a positive experience in the world of work

As we settle in to our new location at 411 Duplex Avenue and excitedly begin preparations for our first session of 2009 (and our 5th as a program!), Career Horizons' goals remain the same: to serve youth experiencing homelessness by providing them access to the tools, resources and supports in the community

crucial to their success. We hope that with the new location at 411 Duplex Avenue (conveniently located in the Yonge Eglinton Centre), we will have the ability to tap into even more employment opportunities for our youth, as well as reaching those who access services in the downtown core.

We look forward to the year ahead and positive growth. Most of all, we are excited for the opportunity to continue to coach and prepare youth who wish to contribute to their communities in a variety of ways; namely, through employment and volunteerism. Career Horizons continues to provide pre-vocational life skills training, connect with agencies and employers in the community, and provides on-going support to our clients in an "outreach" capacity. Career Horizons continuously adapts to address the unique challenges faced by our participants. This has proven to be key to our clients' success not only as participants in the program, but most importantly, as contributing members of their community.

Rehana Logel, Career Horizons Program Coordinator, Job Developer and Employment Consultant

Horizons for Youth is a 35 bed emergency shelter and resource centre for homeless and at-risk young people aged 16 to 24. At Horizons, we offer shelter and valuable services in a safe and supportive environment. In addition to beds, meals, snacks and personal hygiene items, we also provide supportive counseling, life skills training, referrals, advocacy and after shelter support. These services assist youth as they strive to establish themselves at school, at work and in the community.

Around the Shelter

THANK YOU!

During the 2008 holiday season Horizons for Youth received a tremendous outpouring of support from community members in terms of cash, clothing and food donations. These donations made the holiday season enjoyable for our youth staying in the shelter over the holidays during these tough economic times.

If you are able, please consider holding a food or clothing drive amongst your friends, family or in your workplace.

Day Program Services

Horizons for Youth's Day Program is undergoing some innovative changes. We are beginning a homework club and resource centre that will be available to residents during the evening hours, including access to more computers, books and encyclopaedias, as well as staff and volunteers to assist with school work. We have continued our art outings, including a recent visit to the Columbus Centre and the Art Gallery of Ontario, and are looking forward to a showcasing our clients artwork in the community in the next few months. We have also been developing a partnership with the JJP Community Centre over the past few months. This relationship has provided access to the gymnasium and a classroom two days a week for offsite programs. Residents also have the opportunity to get a one year free membership under the Welcome Program, giving them access to the weight room, pool and fitness classes the centre has to offer.

This year we are excited to have the Regency Dental Hygiene Academy returning to Horizons for Youth in the 2009 calendar year. Senior Regency students present educational programs to our youth on a variety of oral health topics. The previous sessions were interactive, upbeat and well attended by our residents.

The Day Program provides education to their "students" to increase their awareness and control over their health and well being. One of the Day Program's prime objectives is to provide relevant and learning centred experiences for our "students". The hope is that all residents completing our programs will have a greater understating of themselves and a better appreciation of the environment, their society and world that they are a part of.

- Dwight Miller, Programs Manager

Housing Report: Feeling Helpless and Useless to Constructive and Valuable

Providing the basic needs for clients while they are residing at Horizons for Youth is Horizons' main service. The housing department is one of the other services available. Housing services are not only necessary to end long-term homelessness, but crucial in assisting them to become successful members of society.

The realities of what our youth want when they come to meet with the Housing Worker, versus what they actually can attain is as follows:

Wants		Reality
1 Bedroom apartment	V	Room
Over \$700 from Ontario Works	E	\$572/month (max \$400 for Rent)
A TSHC (Toronto Social Housing Connections) unit	R	7-10 year waiting list
To be housed in a Supportive Housing environment depending on vacancies, 1-2 within weeks	S	Month waiting list
The perfect landlord	U	Being discriminated against because of age & income status

My challenge as a housing worker is to house youth in a safe, affordable unit. However those challenges are outweighed by the youth who secure housing in the community and share their success stories and delight at being on their own and appreciating the Shelter service.

Since September 2008, the housing department has serviced 77 youth. Out of those youth, 56 stated they wanted private market housing. Seven youth were interested in applying to Supportive Housing and 17 youth were housed in the community. The number of people who added their names to the TSHC waiting list was 6 people. The decrease in number of applicants is positive, as this means that most of our youth are on the waiting list at intake, and will wait less time for housing to come up for them.

This year we have fulfilled the need to extend our services and provide a lot of case management and referrals. This means that not only have we been able to assess a youth's housing needs but we have ensured that a client's challenges and barriers have been addressed.

One of the most rewarding things about being a Housing Worker is being able to say that you've helped a homeless youth go from a place of feeling helpless and worthless to a place where they take pride in their accomplishments and feel they have moved ten steps forward.

Luisa, Housing Worker

Development News

Horizons for Youth's Sixth Annual Umbrella Day Campaign

On April 2, 2009, Horizons for Youth kicked off their 6th annual Umbrella day, a successful city-wide public awareness and fundraising campaign in support of the homeless youth. Staff, volunteers and corporate sponsors set up information and donation booths in various locations throughout the TTC and PATH systems. Those who made a donation of \$20 or more received an umbrella and information about HfY's emergency shelter and programs.

"Horizons for Youth is looking for ways to raise awareness of the issue of homelessness. The idea was that you could shelter yourself from the rain while you are helping shelter youth from being homeless," Kelly Ferguson, the shelter services manager at HfY explained. Ferguson holds out a yellow bucket, donning her spring hat as she called out, "Help us, help youth!"

With the economic crisis lingering over the city, belts are tighter, and peoples' income far more limited. Still, volunteers managed to raise over \$16,000 during this one day event.

The volunteers who came out and took time from their busy schedules are making the most of it. And they came back to do it again. "The first time I did it, I realized I was doing it more for High School volunteer hours. But it turned out to be really fun. You get to meet people. You can become more outgoing and you make friends," Francey Forster exclaimed.

The donations help over 1, 100 youth who walk through Horizons for Youth's doors every year. Horizons for Youth is doing more than just providing food on the table, shelter over their heads and clothes on their back. Donations go to various programs and services.

Horizons for Youth's programs were designed to help youth realize their potential and to become contributing members of society. "It gives youth extra skills and boosts their confidence because a lot of them have self-esteem issues and there are various reasons for coming into the shelter, including family breakdown and mental health issues. So having something else that can actually add to their repertoire of skills is good for their self-esteem." said Day Program Coordinator, Nina Rice-Pannel.

This year, some outreach clients came out to give back. "This year's Umbrella Day was different because we had more outreach clients volunteering and it increased our donations greatly. They encouraged patrons to come in and learn more about Horizons for Youth. They made a big difference," said Makini McLeod, Community Support Worker.

Keith Clarke, the Development Associate at HfY couldn't agree more. "Horizons for Youth is a small agency and we really need to utilize the staff and resources that we already have and do it well for future success. In the future we really need to push for even more volunteers to help us raise much needed funds and create awareness, as volunteerism is the backbone to any good charitable event," he explained

For more information on our development activities or to volunteer please e-mail Keith Clarke at keith@horizonsforyouth.org or call 416-781-9898 x 27.

- *Rachelle Cruz, Development Committee Member*



Nina, our Day Program Coordinator volunteering during Umbrella Day.

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CIRQUE DU SOLEIL®



Cirque du Soleil has generously donated 300 premium seating tickets for their OVO performance. All proceeds from tickets sales will be going to Horizons for Youth's programs and services.

This year's event will take place on Friday, September 25th, 2009 at 8 p.m. Tickets are \$125 each and a tax receipt for \$25 will be issued to those purchasing tickets.

For more information or to make reservations for the performance, please call Keith Clarke at 416.781.9898 ext. 27, or send your request via e-mail to keith@horizonsforyouth.org

Thanks to our Corporate and Foundation Donors

September 2008– May 2009

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Horizons for Youth
is proud to be a
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For more information about Horizons for Youth contact:

*Filomena Williams - Executive Director
Kelly Ferguson - Shelter Services Manager
Dwight Miller - Programs Manager*

*Horizons for Youth
422 Gilbert Ave Toronto, Ontario M6E 4X3
Phone (416)781-9898 Fax (416)781-1933
www.horizonsforyouth.org
Email: info@horizonsforyouth.org*

Ways to Help Homeless Youth

- **On-line donations** can be made directly from your bank account or credit card. Go to: www.horizonsforyouth.org and click on "Donate Now". Using this method monthly donations can also be made. Horizons makes it simple by issuing one tax receipt at the end of the year, reflecting all your donations.
- **Mail us** your donation to our address listed above.
- **Call us** at 416-781-9898 ext. 27 and ask for Keith Clarke to give a credit card payment over the phone.
- **Donation Drive:** For a list of the most needed items, **please visit our website.** You can directly support our youth by holding a donation drive for items at your work place, in your community, or at an event.
- **Estate Planning:** Bequests can be made in your will. Other planned giving options include: Endowments and Trusts, Securities, Charitable Gift Annuities and Life Insurance Policies.
- **Tribute** a gift in memory of someone or in celebration of a birthday or anniversary.
- **Employer gift match:** Find out from your human resources department if your employer matches employee contributions – challenge them to match your generosity!

Our Mission

Horizons for Youth is dedicated to our mission to shelter, prepare, and guide at-risk youth to be contributing community members. We help them to take responsibility for their lives, make positive choices about their future and establish themselves in the community. In conjunction with community partners, Horizons seeks to identify ways to address the causes and effects of homelessness. We help over 1,100 youth each year.

We do not sell, trade or otherwise share our mailing lists. We hope that you find this newsletter enjoyable and informative. However, if at any time you wish to be removed from this or another mailing, simply contact Keith Clarke by phone at 416-781-9898 ext. 27 or via email at keith@horizonsforyouth.org. Please allow us 15 business days to update our records accordingly.