



What's new under the sun - Winter Edition 2006

A Tale of Survival

Horizons for Youth supports over 1000 youth each year. Youth who need food, shelter and a little extra support. Each youth has a different story that brought them to us. The common thread is that every youth we support is treated like they have come home.

Below is a creative writing piece and a short story from one of Horizons for Youth's courageous residents.

A True Survivor, I am

I was sexually assaulted at the age of twelve. I became pregnant that was the result. It was something I've lived with for many years, not wanting to live to wipe so many tears. I have so much pain that nobody understands. To know that me at twelve years old was violated by such a wicked man. I was abused growing up by a mother that never showed me love. It wasn't fair what happened to me. To have an evil man take my privacy. And also my virginity. I walk around like I am happy, while inside I feel so crappy.

It got to the point where I didn't want to live, not knowing that I have so much to give. I've been through a lot and I am still here. Wanting to take my life to the point I didn't even care. I was sitting on the bus and a thought came to my mind. Although I listened to at the time. I swallowed a blade to cause the pain, afraid to lose my life which was very insane. The ambulance was called and I was taken to the hospital, having to go for surgery, something I didn't like. I don't cry for pain, but I cry for emotion. I suffered so much mentally, it is my only option. I am a strong, loving, caring person – always wanting to give even though I am left with nothing. I am a gift to life and that is what I know. I've tried so much to kill myself and God never let me go.

I will walk this day with courage and strength. I came a long way in life, I am not going to give up the fight. I will not give up, I might fall, but I will stand right back up. I am a gift and a miracle. And I am a caring and forgiving person who didn't deserve what happened to me. I love myself. I am a good person. I say that every day and I try to believe it.

Anonymous, Aged 23

When I was 16 years old, my social worker brought me to Horizons for Youth. It was my first time in a Shelter. I was very scared. I still come here, this is surprising to me. I learn a lot by coming here. They care about us. They help us get back up on our feet. They help us believe in ourselves. They have a Day Program, these workers do everything they can to teach us.

To me, there is no other place like Horizons for Youth in the youth system. There is a great schedule in the morning. From 6:45 in the morning we are up, brushing our teeth, signing up for Day Program. We have a plan, we need a plan to be successful. At Horizons for Youth, every resident has a life plan. This is important to me because not all shelters have these things in place. It helps us get somewhere in life. Get a job, go to school. It gives us hope.

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.

Horizons for Youth ~ Art Program ~

You likely know that Horizons for Youth offers several programs to its residents to help foster independence through the Day Program. You may not know that Horizons also has programs that help youth to access their creativity, like the Visual Arts Program. It's programs like these that help to build self-confidence and allow youth to express themselves in their own way.

Youth get to express and develop their creative potential every Thursday Morning through the Visual Arts Program. Isabel Mazzotta, our Volunteer Art Instructor, helps youth to develop their artistic ability in a warm, friendly environment. The classes explore various areas of art, including simple drawing, sketching, and painting techniques. Youth get to express themselves using various types of media such as water colours, pastels, acrylics and mixed media. Crafts such as Origami (the Japanese art of Paper Folding) have also been demonstrated.

This program has been quite successful since it's beginning at Horizons for Youth one year ago. The expert instructor works closely with youth with a focus on helping them to stimulate their creativity.

Thank you Isabel for being such a reliable and outstanding volunteer!

If you have a program you would like to run on a volunteer basis at Horizons for Youth, please contact our Day Program Manager, Dwight Miller at 416-781-9898 or dwright@horizonsforyouth.org.

On October 25, 2006 "lululemon athletica's Charitable Giving Program gave the power of choice back to their guests by letting customers choose where to donate charitable funds. lululemon partnered with 6 proactive, health oriented charities who make an impact on the local community. For each purchase, customers could choose which of the 6 charities to donate their \$100 charity bonus to. Thank you to lululemon and their customers for raising over \$6,000 for Horizons for Youth.

Tribute Gifts—A great way to make a difference through celebration!

Horizons would like to extend a warm thank you to Mikki Fox, Susan Anderson and Jacqueline (Jack) Guest for choosing Horizons for Youth to benefit from their celebrations. Guests at their celebrations were asked to make a donation to Horizons for Youth instead of giving presents.

Happy Birthday Mikki

Congratulations to Susan and Jack on your commitment ceremony.

Holiday Giving Made Easy!

Do you have someone who is difficult to buy for this Holiday Season? Consider making a Holiday Gift in their name to Horizons for Youth. We provide a card recognizing the gift of hope you will be making in the name of someone you care about. Call Carol (416-781-9898).

Paint the Halls with Acts of Kindness

Telus and Operation Kindness



This past summer we received a phone call from a group of staff at Telus who volunteer their time to make a difference in their community. It is always exciting to see how many wonderful opportunities can come about through one phone call. Telus extended its support through a matching program, making a \$250 donation for every 40 hours their staff volunteer and a dollar for dollar match through payroll deduction. A team of volunteers even came to Horizons for Youth and painted our resident's bedrooms in bright, inspiring colors: purple, green, and yellow.

On November 9, Telus Operation Kindness hosted 'Fall Into Fashion, Where street meets fashion' with proceeds to Horizons for Youth. The evening showcased the talents of diverse Canadian fashion designers. This event was part of Telus' ongoing commitment to making a positive difference in the communities where they live, work, and service. Telus as a corporation will also be matching funds raised at this event.

Many Horizons for Youth staff and volunteers joined the Telus team along with Ms. Canada, Ms. Teen Canada, and Ms. Junior Teen Canada. Thank you to all of you for all your hard work.

Deloitte Consulting: In another stroke of fortune, this fall a group of volunteers from Deloitte Consulting came to Horizons for Youth to paint our Common Areas.



Thanks to everyone who donated their time and energy to help "spruce up" the shelter with a new coat of paint. It is greatly appreciated by all the staff and residents!



Horizons' Youth Show they Care

By Lisa Mollagholamali, Horizons for Youth Volunteer

I am a volunteer for Horizons for Youth and Annex Cat Rescue. My volunteer role is not one where I get to interact with the wonderful Youth that use the services at Horizons. That is until today. I was called by a Horizons staff about a little cat befriended by the 'kids' that was hanging around the shelter. They named him Onyx. They wanted find a safe home for Onyx and other animal rescue organizations would charge a fee to take the cat. Annex Cat Rescue would take him in as soon as we could find a foster home.

On my way to Horizons for Youth, I thought I would feel really good about getting this forgotten cat and taking him to a home with lots of love and care. I walked away from the experience with a hole in my heart. I was shown the shelter and wonderful facilities offered to the 'kids' that live there. Once my tour was completed we got to work catching Onyx. I was taken to the back yard and met several Horizons 'kids' who were very reluctant to see their friend being taken away by a stranger.

We tried to ease the 'kids' minds by telling them Onyx was going to a good home, then it hit me; here I am, taking this cat to a home where he will be fed, loved and cared for. Probably better than any of these 'kids' had been in their lives. It was a very crushing feeling to say the least.

These kids face many challenges each day and through it all they managed to befriend and care for a cat that had no one else to turn to. I was humbled by the way the kids cared for Onyx. This day and the experience with these kids will be seared in my mind and my heart forever! They are a wonderful bunch of youth who deserve much more than what life has given them so far. I would like to thank the kids at Horizon's for Youth for taking the time to feed and love Onyx!

Winter Warm up Wish List

Winter is a particularly busy time for Horizons for Youth and there is a great need for items to keep Youth warm.

Winter coats
Boots
Hats/Gloves/Scarves
Shoes
Warm Clothing
Comforters
Fire Retardant
Pillows

New Horizons for the HFY Website!

The Horizons for Youth website underwent a redesign this fall. The redesign brings the site up to date using a clean, user-friendly interface with new graphical elements and information that can be updated more efficiently by our staff and volunteers. Increasingly, the site will be used to promote news and events as well as information about programs and other Horizons for Youth initiatives.

This redesign optimizes the shelter's use of its existing technology to communicate to potential clients and residents as well as new and existing donors. The project involved implementing the design by Brendyn Zachary; creating manageable templates; and updating the site's content to reflect a current snapshot of the shelter. The site will be another platform that the shelter uses to generate awareness about Horizons for Youth and its endeavours to help youth in our community. **See for yourself!**

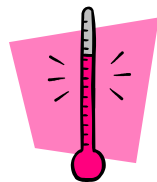
www.horizonsforyouth.org

Special thanks to Brenda Kritsch for helping us manage the conversion.

Volunteer with cooking skills needed!!!

We are looking for a lunch cook who can volunteer
11 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Monday to Friday

If you are interested, call
Allison Ferguson
416-781-9898



Help us Reach Our 2006 Fundraising Goal

Thanks to the kind and generous support of our donors, Horizons for Youth has raised almost 90% of our fundraising dollars goal. Support this year came from several generous Corporations and Foundations and Horizons for Youth events. New this year were three successful 3rd party events held by the Advertising Club of Toronto, Telus, and lululemon athletica raising a combined total of over \$20,000 for Horizons for Youth!

As always, it's our individual donors who make the most impact to our fundraising efforts. Every donation, no matter what size, makes a very big difference. Your generosity this holiday season will help us reach our goal!!

Thanks to our Corporate and
Foundation Donors
August 24, 2006 - November 15, 2006:

Elementary Teachers Federation of
Ontario
Iululemon atletica
York Memorial Presbyterian Church
Greater Toronto Apartment
Association
Apex Public Relations
Deerpark Consulting
Brix Napa Valley Restaurant
Kodak Employee Chest



Horizons for Youth
is proud to be a
United Way
Member Agency

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Megan Harris Erin Robertson

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For more information about Horizons for Youth contact:

Jeannette Campbell - Executive Director
Carol Murray - Director of Development
Allison Ferguson - Program Manager

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Phone (416)781-9898 Fax (416)781-1933
www.horizonsforyouth.org

Ways to Donate

- **On-line donations** can be made directly from your bank account or credit card. Go to: <http://www.horizonsforyouth.org/help/index.html> 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 using the reply card and envelope provided with this newsletter.
- **Call us** at the number above and ask for Carol Murray to give a credit card payment over the phone.
- **Donation Drive:** We are always in need of personal hygiene items and TTC Tokens. You can directly support our youth by holding a donation drive for these items at your work place, in your community, or at your 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!

For information on our giving plans, contact Carol Murray

Horizons for Youth Development Committee - Gratitude from Development Director Carol Murray

It is with great pride that I thank the Development Committee at Horizons for Youth for their tireless volunteer efforts. The Development Committee works with me on raising funds and awareness for Horizons for Youth. As many of our dedicated supporters and partners know, in 2005 we downsized the Horizons for Youth Development Staff to only one full-time employee with a very dedicated, very part-time administrative support. Without the support of this group of volunteers, these savings would not have been possible. Although everyone on our Committee helps out in all areas - from strategizing, to event logistics, to advice - below is a special thanks for what I call their 'areas of specialization'. Thank you all so very much for all you do, I can never thank you enough.

Susan Anderson: Project Manager, Alex Clark: Advisor, Lindsay Dutton: Case for Support Development, Brenda Kritsch: Website, Dee MacLeod: Event Volunteer and Prospect Researcher, Lisa Mollogholamali: Event Volunteer and Proposal Writer, Tracy Pryce: Proposal Editor/Writer, Nicole Tighe: Event Volunteer, Maria Tsikrikis: Development Assistant, Event Volunteer
Anastasia Vogt: Newsletter Editor