

Operation
Come Home



Opération
rentrer au foyer

December 2013 Newsletter





A word from our Executive Director...

Dear Friends and Supporters,

It has been almost three years since we moved to our new location at 150 Gloucester Street. This new space has provided us with many more opportunities to assist the youth who walk through our doors every day. Each year we assist more than 450 youth in Ottawa and an additional 100 youth across Canada. This past year, Operation Come Home (OCH) has expanded some of our programming to include much needed services. Among these are, EntrepreneurshipWorks, and FarmWorks. These programs provide new employment and learning opportunities for our youth, including the option to create and develop their own business model. In addition, our traditional programs such as Reunite, the Drop-in and Resource Centre and Outreach continue to support our youth. The social enterprises (BottleWorks, BeadWorks, FarmWorks, Buy Your Beau's Online and re: Purpose) are thriving and provide much needed work experience and job training to a number of our youth. All of these programs are supported by many community partners and volunteers who offer their financial support, time and expertise with us.



OCH won the Turning Lives Around award from the United Way this year for our work with at-risk youth in Ottawa. It was a true honour to be selected and we performed a presentation at the gala that highlighted the many successes of our youth. We also had the pleasure of being recognized for our partnership with the United Way for Project S.T.E.P at the Eva's Initiative event. With the help of Measured Outcomes we have completed a third Reunite report. This is part of a longitudinal study on the success of the Reunite program over a number of years.

A highlight this year was the graduation of seven of our youth who attended our high school class. Four of those students achieved their Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD), two received their Ontario Secondary School Certificate (OSSC), and one student earned his General Educational Development certificate (GED). We are all very proud of their perseverance and dedication. Another highlight was the Drop-in and Resource Centre renovation. We received funding to redecorate, re-floor, and rejuvenate the figurative nucleus of our organization.



A new initiative that we have launched this year is the "Back the Fight" campaign where we ask community members how they would like to help Back the Fight. This can be through cash donations, volunteering or dropping off basic necessities for our youth. As part of this campaign, we hosted a Breakfast on Rideau event with George Chuvalo as our guest speaker. Youth, staff and volunteers also gathered to perform a flash mob on Sparks Street featuring a poem written by one of our youth. There will be more Back the Fight events in the new year and I encourage you to look into them as they are always fun and interactive.

It is increasingly difficult for at risk and homeless youth to gain access to much needed supports and services. OCH provides such a place for these youth to call 'home'. Operation Come Home prevents homeless youth from becoming homeless adults and we are successful in turning the lives of young people around so that they can accomplish their hopes and dreams. Please support us in reaching out to those who need it the most, the next generation of young people who are full of ideas and motivation to succeed. Joy and peace to all of you and thank you for supporting our vital cause.

Elspeth McKay, Executive Director



Job Action Centre

In 2013, the Job Action Centre introduced a new approach to our programming. We began offering a 10 week subsidized work placement for participants in conjunction with 6 weeks of in-class pre-employment skills training. This year, we worked with 19 individuals over 2 rotations with 12 securing employment and 2 returning to school. Once again this year, the program offered certification workshops to assist youth in competing with other applicants in the job market. As a result, 26 participants completed Financial Literacy training, 21 became certified in Smart Serve, 25 in WHMIS, 22 in Conflict Resolution, and 24 in Emergency First Aid/CPR-C/AED.

We have been very fortunate to have created some excellent job matches where participants have secured meaningful full-time or part-time employment in industries such as warehouse, retail, customer service, hospitality and tourism. Some of our successes include but are not limited to, gelato production with Stella Luna Gelato Café, supervisor of the Frozen Foods

Department at Giant Tiger, Administrative Assistant at an Ottawa Chiropractic clinic, Sales Associate at Bulk Barn, Warehouse Associate at SAIL, and Customer Service Representative for Air Canada. One individual is now attending the University of Ottawa for Nursing.

Rogers Achievement Centre



The Operation Come Home Rogers Achievement Centre (RAC) provides opportunities for high school credit achievement, the general equivalency diploma, Independent Learning Centre credits, guidance, referral services, and life skills to street-involved youth. Credit accumulation is available due to our continuing partnership with Lester B. Pearson High School of the Ottawa Catholic School Board. In 2013, over 3000 school hours were completed by the students. In RAC, the students gained access to social and recreational activities, social supports and literacy support. Eighteen “Students Taking on

Prevention” presentations have been delivered to various local schools and organizations this year giving a realistic look at life on the streets to over 500 students. Sage Youth partnership provides 100 volunteer hours for individual tutoring in the RAC on a weekly basis. The Ottawa Network for Education provides funding for the School Breakfast Program, which allows the staff of OCH to prepare food daily. Rogers continues to fund RAC through its Youth Fund in order to serve the youth in overcoming the literacy barriers they face. Success is celebrated each June for all the youth who participate in furthering their education.



Finance Matters

Finance Matters provides a six week workshop series to street-involved youth that focuses on budgeting, banking, saving and investing, credit and debt. The program’s flexibility allows youth to participate in group classes and one-on-one coaching in order to cater to the individual’s goals. In 2013, 39 youth successfully completed the Finance Matters program.



Reunite

“Please give me the opportunity to better myself and show my world my full potential. With that said, pay it forward is all I ask. With you helping me I could help hundreds in my situation one day”. This is an excerpt from an email sent by a previous Reunite participant. It is just one of the many individuals who have used our services in the past in with the hopes of improving their future. Reunite is our founding program that reunites runaway youth with their families across Canada. Our program helps families reconnect and reestablish relationships to foster nourishment and positive growth for the youth.

This year the Reunite Program has received 130 calls and has helped over 48 youth return home. Of those 48, 28 were female and 20 were males. Thanks to our National Affiliate Partnership the Reunite program is able to reach youth all over the country. Thank you to Dans la Rue, House of Nazareth/Refuge Nazareth, Our Place, Choices for Youth, Christie Ossington Neighbourhood Centre, Youth Centre for Social Enterprise and Innovation as well as Kingston Youth Shelter for your ongoing support in reuniting runaway youth with their families.



BottleWorks

BottleWorks was launched November 29, 2008. Since then, BottleWorks has employed 45 at-risk and homeless youth. Youth employed with BottleWorks receive one-on-one social support from the OCH staff with whom they work. Such supports include housing support, helping find a family doctor, conflict resolution, stress management, job skills development and financial literacy.



Since BottleWorks' launch in

2008, BottleWorks has collected \$198,014 from returning empties.



Buy Your Beau's Online (BYBO)

Buy Your Beau's Online (BYBO) is a unique partnership with Beau's All Natural Brewing company we have created a delivery service for Beau's products. Having worked with Operation Come Home in the past, it was established that a delivery service which provides at-risk youth with employment opportunities and one on one support would be the best method of supporting youth.

Operation Come Home delivers the Beau's products for a fee of \$15. Since its inception, BYBO has delivered over 1,000 orders to customers in the Ottawa area. BYBO has employed eight youth throughout the program and helped each of them attain their SmartServe certification and completed the Finance Matters budgeting program. The youth have achieved a variety of personal successes through this program including registering for post-secondary education, moving on to jobs in the community, and stabilizing their lives.



Entrepreneurship Works

The Entrepreneurship program is new to OCH in 2013. What started this program was the realization that many youth have great ideas for their own businesses but, like many, lack some of the business acumen to push their ideas forward.

To capture the youth that might be interested, we held a series of awareness sessions. Over 20 youth attended these sessions. For those interested in moving on we have held workshops that delve more into areas such as sales, marketing and operations. We are now at the point where we have assigned mentors to youth who have presented specific business ideas and have committed to weekly "homework" to drive their business plans. We have four mentor / youth partnerships to date with another 3-4 in the discovery stage.

Whilst the program will draw to an end with two winners receiving funding to help start their businesses, we feel that all youth involved in this program are winning through the training they are receiving and the commitment and enthusiasm that they are demonstrating.

BeadWorks

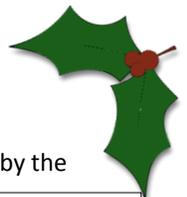
Beadworks is a social enterprise linked to Operation Come Home and re:Purpose. Beadworks was founded by Judi Tedi five years ago. Ever since then it has been a huge part of Operation Come Home. Beadworks provides youth aged 16 – 30 on going work during the hours of 12 – 4pm every day at our drop in beading program located within Operation Come Home. The youth involved in the program are paid every two weeks based on sales – they will receive 60% of the listed price & the other 40% goes back into materials and other program oriented expenses. In the last three months we have had a great deal of outstanding youth with wonderful talent involved in Beadworks. We have been able to provide them with a safe creative space and a chance for their artistic skills to shine.



re:Purpose

At re:Purpose we are dedicated to creativity and the community that surrounds us. Three youth are employed at re:Purpose where the youth are responsible for: sales, creations, social media and networking, display merchandising, as well as daily operational tasks. While working in the store all the youth get a chance to not only gain basic business skills but are also learning about our community. The shop is open to the public 5 days per week from 11-4.





FarmWorks is Operation Come Home’s newest social enterprise. In collaboration with Just Food, funded in part by the Ontario Trillium Foundation, we train at-risk youth in how to farm organically on a small-scale, within an urban environment. We sell our heirloom produce using the community supported agricultural (CSA) share model to local residents, and through corporate sponsorship to community-minded businesses, including restaurants. One of the most common things heard from the 18 youth who worked the farm in 2013 is that teamwork makes it a better program. Our goal is to provide a broad range of skills and experiences to our youth to ensure food-related options for future employment or education. Like all of our programs at OCH, our youth are given social supports to assist with any challenges to employment that they may face.



Drop-in Resource Centre

2013 was a big year for the Drop-in Resource Centre. We increased from 350 unique clients in 2012 up to just over 475 unique clients for this year. Our Drop In Centre also underwent a facelift this autumn. We ripped up carpet and put in beautiful new hardwood laminate flooring, we painted, brought in some new furniture, and purchased a TV for movie days. A foosball table was also generously donated and is used daily by the youth. In addition, this year the Drop In has been offering some new programs and services, including movie and hair cut Fridays, and bacon breakfast Mondays (which have become extremely popular). We also continue to partner with Vet Outreach. This year 29 youth were able to access veterinary care for their pets, including vaccinations, microchip implants, and spay/neuter services.



Substance Use Support

In 2013, Operation Come Home was able to provide a variety of formal substance use supports to 29 clients through United Way’s project S.T.E.P. program that has a significant focus on support, treatment, education and prevention. Of the 29 unique clients, 7 were referred to outside treatment, 60% identified harm reduction as a strategy of “stepping off to softer drugs” and 71% reduced frequency of drug use since receiving support. When a youth was asked to comment on what they liked about Project S.T.E.P., this is what a youth had to say:



“The staff and just being able to talk knowing it was safe”

Outreach

During the 2013 year Operation Come Home had 1,154 encounters, 66%male and 34% female, through its day and evening street outreach program. The program was able to distribute 680 water bottles, 518 pairs of socks, 887 granola bars and other basic needs supplies to youth residing on the streets of Ottawa. As well numerous housing supports were provided with the continued focus of preventing homeless youth from becoming homeless adults.



HousingWorks

Housing Works is a program that provides at-risk or homeless youth age 16 and up to work with a housing worker in order to find and maintain safe and affordable housing. Many at-risk or homeless youth cannot save enough money for first and last month’s rent, furniture, move-in costs and other incidental expenses. Therefore, Housing Works provides up to 10 youth per year with a matching subsidy based on what they save up to a \$1,000 for their housing expenses.



Preventing homeless youth from becoming homeless adults



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Thank You!

Operation Come Home would like to acknowledge the following donor categories:

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Thanks to all of our donors for your annual support!

And to our volunteers,

**“Volunteers are not paid – not because they are
worthless, but because they are priceless”**

Thank you for all that you do!

Operation Come Home



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I'M A FIGHTER



"I have the pleasure of advocating for homeless and at risk youth everyday by empowering them and building confidence through various opportunities. Marginalized youth also have hopes, dreams and future aspirations, and it is my goal to ensure they believe in themselves, their abilities and their worth!"

-Ashley Mathieu, OCH Staff

BACK THE FIGHT

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I'M A FIGHTER

"At Operation Come Home, I found a place which empowered me to begin to change my life. I have started college, found stable housing and have been employed as staff in re: Purpose. I have developed strong relationships with staff that have been constantly helpful in ensuring I remain positive about the future."



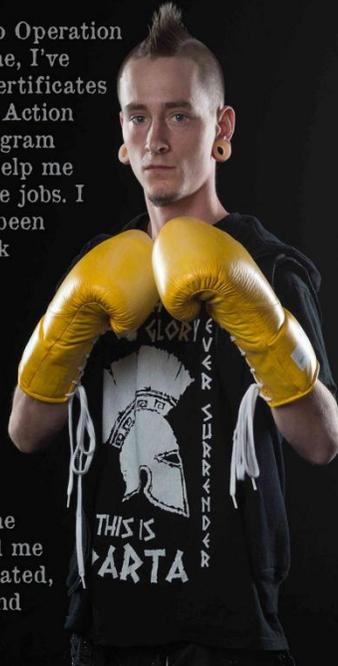
-Sarah Leyton Glimcher

BACK THE FIGHT

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I'M A FIGHTER

"Coming to Operation Come Home, I've received certificates in the Job Action Centre program that will help me with future jobs. I have also been able to talk to staff about personal struggles that I've bottled up for a long time. Operation Come Home has helped me stay motivated, on track and focused."

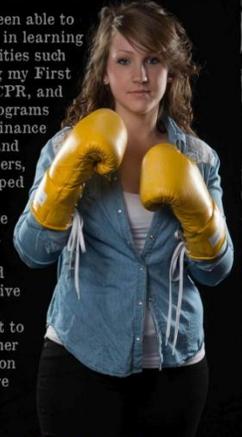


-Terrance Wilson

BACK THE FIGHT

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I'M A FIGHTER



"I have been able to take part in learning opportunities such as getting my First Aid and CPR, and joined programs such as Finance Matters and Self Matters, which helped me gain confidence in myself. I have completed co-operative education placement to help further my decision in a future career."

-Tara Freeland

BACK THE FIGHT

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I'M A FIGHTER

"OCH actively engages youth in their process of change through innovative programming. If we can act as one of the many stepping stones in their fight for change, I feel privileged to be a part of the process."



-Melanie Savage, OCH Staff

BACK THE FIGHT

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*Preventing homeless youth
from becoming homeless adults*



How will you #BacktheFight?

MONTHLY GIVING

Pre-authorized payment on a monthly basis with a tax receipt
info@operationcomehome.ca

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We accept Visa or MasterCard

CASH OR CHEQUE

We accept cheques and any cash donations in Canadian Funds

CONTACT US:

Office Address
150 Gloucester Street
Ottawa, Ontario
K2P 0A6

Mailing Address
P.O. Box 53157
Ottawa, Ontario
K1N 1C5

Toll Free 1 800 668 4663
Phone 613 230 4663
Fax 613 230 8223
Email
info@operationcomehome.ca



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