2022 was a challenging year due to difficulties caused by the omicron wave, the convoy, and widespread inflation. We are proud to have continued our work without interruption, and to expand our services in response to rising need.

THANK YOU FOR HELPING OUR YOUTH

Dear friends of Operation Come Home,

If you visit me at Operation Come Home, you will find my office right next to our entranceway. Each day I see every youth that comes into our building.

One of the hardest things is seeing the number of youth carrying all of their things with them – in rolling suitcases, backpacks, and sometimes even garbage bags – some young clients arrive with everything they own.

It’s a sign that they have no one else they can trust, or depend on, at that moment in their lives. Through no fault of their own, they are confronting one of the most difficult situations anyone in our society can face. They deserve our empathy for the challenges they endure, and our respect for the perseverance they show each day.

As you will read in this newsletter, with your support this year we have been able to find homes for many of our youth. We have helped clients with basic necessities, mental health counselling, and crisis support. Others have finished high school or found their first jobs.

Your continued generosity has made all of this possible. Thank you. Before year-end, I hope you can give again to support our continued work in 2023.

With gratitude,

John Heckbert
Executive Director

More than 50 Years Preventing homeless youth From becoming homeless adults
LOCAL IMPACT OF THE HOUSING CRISIS

Staff at Operation Come Home work on the front lines providing help to youth directly. Because of this, we see the effects of national trends before they reach broader public awareness. Over the past year we have seen the impacts of Canada’s housing crisis first-hand.

Last year our organization served a total of 525 unique individuals. This year we exceeded that total by the end of August, and are on track to help more than 650 youth before December 31st.

Our numbers are growing for several reasons. Part of this can be attributed to longstanding trends, as homelessness has been increasing in Canada for the past twelve years. According to Statistics Canada data, the number of people experiencing homelessness has more than doubled since 2010.

This year has been particularly tough. Economic trends, changes in policy, and the lingering influence of the pandemic have all contributed to rising homelessness. The closure of the Canada Emergency Response Benefit program caused many to fall deeper into poverty. The extreme inflation of the past year put added strain on families. And youth exiting from foster care, a trend which slowed during the pandemic, has started to rise once more.

At the same time, the supply of affordable homes has fallen. Developers, real estate speculators, and property managers have been converting properties into higher-income homes. Fewer affordable homes are being built.

The result has been a tremendous strain on people living with low income. Financial stress on families worsens existing conflicts and tensions. Mental health challenges rise. A large number of youth get caught up in these trends, with many losing their homes or being kicked out.

TESTIMONIALS

700+
The number of youth served by Operation Come Home in 2022

1400+
The estimated number of Ottawa youth who experience homelessness each year

0.4%
The current vacancy rate for affordable apartments in Ottawa

Operation Come Home has been a rock for me for the past year. I am new to Canada and was in the employment program. The staff are incredible and will go above and beyond to help you. I had an amazing experience here.

-Taha

I started in the housing program in 2021 and loved and enjoyed my time here. The staff are world class! I would recommend the housing program to everyone. Thank you OCH!

- Ali
FOODWORK GROWS

FoodWorks is a catering business owned and operated by Operation Come Home. Its mission is to employ at-risk youth, helping them build skills in culinary techniques, customer service, logistics, time management, and retail operations. They are led by Tim Stock, our Red Seal Executive Chef.

The organization received a boost in 2022, thanks to the continued support of Knifewear in Ottawa, and new partners the Alva Foundation and the Ontario Trillium Foundation.

With their support, FoodWorks purchased new equipment for take-out offerings in our kitchen at 571 Gladstone Ave. This has enabled FoodWorks to increase sales and hire more youth in the business.

To see our menu or place your order, visit FoodWorksOttawa.ca.

NEW INITIATIVES

OCH launched a new Equine Experience Program during the summer of 2022. Experiences in nature can have significant benefits for youth with lived experience of trauma. Avery, shown here, is one of the program facilitators.

Visitors to 379 Gilmour can see a new mural, chosen by residents of Options Bytown and painted by Ottawa artist Dan Martelock (right), Cecil Aguila (left), and youth at OCH. Crime Prevention Ottawa provided support for this urban improvement project.

In response to the challenges caused by dangerous opioids, we launched our Street Outreach project, which was developed by people with lived experience and supported by Health Canada. The team is visiting critical Ottawa neighbourhoods and sharing resources to prevent harms from substance use.

KEEPING IT COOL

Ottawa experienced record-breaking temperatures this summer as heat waves spread across the country. This caused our rooftop unit to fail, leading to growing temperatures in our building.

To keep programs running, our employment team held workshops at the Dominion Chalmers Centre. A local construction company, JP Gravel, also helped make emergency repairs that provided temporary relief, to ensure our drop-in program could continue onsite.

At the end of the summer, we were able to purchase a new HVAC unit, thanks to generous online donors. This picture shows the new unit being lifted into place in September of 2022.
**BY THE NUMBERS**

700+ youth will visit Operation Come Home in 2022

456 will get help to find or maintain housing

268 will receive support for their Mental Health or substance use goals

30 youth will move into new apartments

41 will be reunited with family

197 will join employment programs and find jobs

36 will work in our social enterprises

$0.93 of every dollar donated to Operation Come Home will support programs that help our youth

Full program results and audited financial statements for the organization are available online at operationcomehome.ca.

**BACK TO BASICS CAMPAIGN 2022**

Any gifts made during the final six weeks of 2022 will be automatically directed to our "Back to Basics" campaign, supporting drop-in programming at Operation Come Home. Through the drop-in we provide warm meals, clothing, personal care products, and basic necessities. Donor support will ensure this program can continue in 2023.

To make your gift, you can visit operationcomehome.ca/donate, send your contribution to the address provided below, or call us at 613.230.4663.

**CONTACT US**

Operation Come Home
www.operationcomehome.ca
PO Box 71026 Laurier West
Ottawa, ON K2P 2L9

Phone Number: 613-230-4663
Toll free: 1-800-668-4663

Charitable B/N: 11906 8997 RR0001