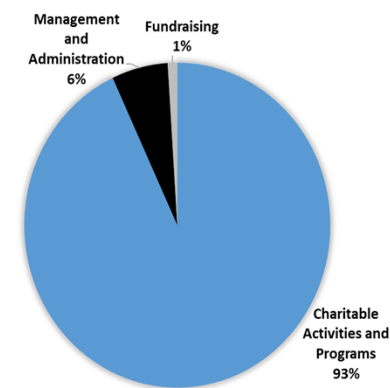


FACTS AND HIGHLIGHTS

- 752 individual youth were supported at Operation Come Home during 2023
- 14,352 hot meals were served so far
- 103 received ongoing mental health or substance use support
- 694 youth were engaged through street outreach
- 30 youth obtained housing in new apartments
- 11 landlords signed agreements with HousingWorks, to lease units for youth
- 16 youth were reunited with family
- 73 youth enrolled in our education program, the John Bosco Achievement Centre
- 249 youth received help to find employment
- 79 youth achieved stable, full-time jobs
- 33 youth were employed in one of our social enterprises



We are proud to maintain low administration and fundraising costs. Full program results and audited financial statements for the organization are available at operationcomehome.ca

MATCHING GIFT CAMPAIGN 2023



Any gifts made during November or December will be automatically matched, dollar for dollar, by our wonderful friends at Knifewear. This support will help our resource centre, where we provide warm meals, clothing, personal care products, and basic necessities.



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 56036 Minto Place
Ottawa, ON K1R 7Z1

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

Operation Come Home

@ochottawa

@ochottawa

Operation Come Home

Operation Come Home

Charitable B/N: 11906 8997 RR0001



Operation Come Home staff members Alicia, Coralie, Brittany and Allie participate in our 2023 reality campaign

Dear friends of Operation Come Home,

The news in Ottawa has been concerning. Many in the media are reporting a significant rise in homelessness. Shelters are full, programs are stretched, and resources are scarce. As the winter gets closer, these challenges are expected to grow.

Yet there is another side to the story, one that I am proud to be a part of. Here at Operation Come Home we are making tremendous progress helping our youth succeed. And though our problems will grow, I know we can get through it with the help of our community.

We have been able to persevere. Each day, youth in our programs are finding housing, obtaining employment, and working towards graduating high school. Our singular goal is to help our youth achieve their goals, and move into stable, permanent housing.

To keep going, we need your help. If you have a winter coat you no longer need, we will gladly accept it. If you can provide new socks, shampoo, toothpaste or soap, we will pass these things along to our youth. And if you can help with a donation this year, we can put it to use help one of our youth realize their potential.

We could not do this work without your wonderful support. Thank you,



John Heckbert
Executive Director

NEWSLETTER 2023

RISING HOMELESSNESS IN OTTAWA: CAUSES

Why is homelessness increasing? It is a question we are often asked, and one that can be explained by a few factors at work in our City and others across Canada.

Loss of Affordable Units: Ottawa, like many cities in Canada, is facing a shortfall in affordable rental housing. Over the past twenty years, many previously affordable units were lost due to building renovations, often referred to "renovictions". Demand for apartments also increased at the same time. These factors enabled landlords to charge higher rents. According to CMHC data for Ottawa, the average rent for a two-bedroom apartment increased 22% in the past year. People living with low income now face significant trouble finding or maintaining housing, leading to increased homelessness.

Foster Care: Youth exits from foster care have increased in the past year. During the pandemic, governments placed a moratorium on youth exiting care, leading to a backlog in the system. The moratorium was lifted last December. In the months since, youth have gradually been leaving the foster system. Many have moved on to stable housing, but some have fallen behind.

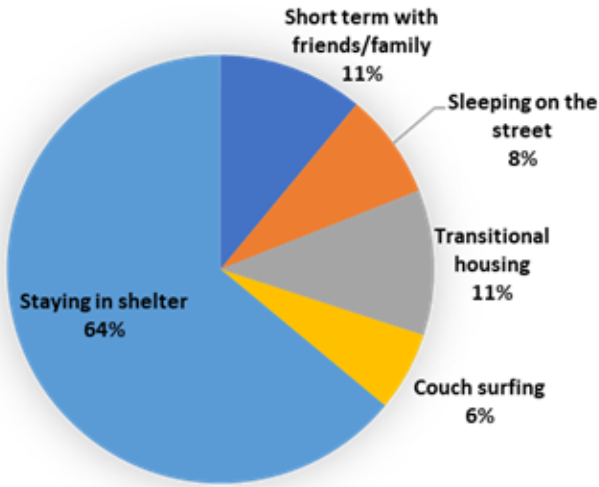
Newcomers: Newcomers coming to Ottawa have also increased over the past year. Like many cities in Canada, Ottawa is seeing record levels of immigration. Many newcomers, particularly those who arrive as refugees, experience the same challenges finding affordable apartments. Without other options, they often turn to the shelter system for short-term stays. As many as 40% of the available beds in the shelter system are occupied by refugees and other newcomers.

Universities Resuming Post-Pandemic: Ottawa has several large post-secondary institutions, and more than 20,000 students arrive in our City each year seeking places to live. Many live in residences, but others seek affordable places to live off-campus. During the pandemic, most students arriving from out of town were able to stay at home. Now that restrictions have lifted, these students are back in Ottawa seeking places to stay, leading to increased pressure on the system.

Inflation: Price increases have affected rent costs, but also living costs such as food and basic necessities. This has increased levels of stress within low-income families, increasing the rates of family conflict and leading to increasing numbers of youth leaving home, either by choice or involuntarily.

Together these factors have contributed to record levels of youth homelessness in Ottawa.

WHERE YOUTH ARE STAYING



Youth participating in programs at Operation Come Home often stay in a variety of places while they experience homelessness.

The majority of our youth are staying in shelters downtown, with an increasing proportion now staying in adult shelters, putting them at greater risk of harm.

During the fall, we have noticed an increase in the number of youth sleeping on the street or in encampments, leading to worries about their well-being with winter coming. We will work closely with shelters and other housing providers to ensure youth are supported during the winter months.

OUR WORK IN 2023



Housing

Our Housing Team continued work to help youth find or maintain their housing. Since January, 562 youth have sought help with housing in our resource centre. Of these, 65 youth have worked one-on-one with members of our housing team to obtain new housing.

With record-low vacancy rates, finding affordable apartments has been our biggest challenge as an organization. To address this, we have grown our efforts to work with landlords through our HousingWorks master leasing initiative. To learn more about this, visit HousingWorks.ca.



Employment

When youth achieve full-time employment it increases their ability to maintain long-term stability. Over the past year our team provided help with resumes, cover letters, and job search skills. We also hosted facilitators who delivered sessions focused on first-aid/CPR, safe food handling, and other certifications that help our youth increase their qualifications.

Employers who are interested in hiring our youth can visit our new employment website at www.employmentworksottawa.ca to get in touch with our team.



Education

Our education team works in partnership with the Ottawa Catholic School Board and youturn, an organization that supports youth involved in the justice system. Youth in our classroom can complete classes and graduate while on-site at Operation Come Home.

Over the past year, youth have experienced additional challenges maintaining attendance at school. These challenges have increased due to hardship with rising living costs, and difficulties while staying in shelter. To address this, our team increased the supports we offer youth, by providing more food and other social supports to students in our classroom.

In addition to these core programs, Operation Come Home continues to operate our drop-in resource centre. Thanks to City of Ottawa support, we are now open 7 days a week, offering hot meals, clothing, shoes, and other basic necessities. We also reach youth in community settings through our street outreach team, ensuring they know where to access services. While at OCH, youth can access mental health and substance use counselling by appointment or during drop-in hours.

YOUTH TESTIMONIALS*



Operation Come Home has been incredible. The people are nice and have helped me with everything - food, clothes, a job, everything. I tell everyone I know to go to OCH.

-Javier



I started in the employment program in 2022 and loved and enjoyed my time here. The staff are world class! I would recommend the housing program to everyone.

- Jessica

*youth names and personal details have been changed to protect their confidentiality