

Media Release



For Immediate Release:

Coalition Calls for More Supported Youth Housing

Victoria, BC, August 29, 2012—It is estimated that more than 600 youth and young adults face the challenges and risks of homelessness in Greater Victoria. Service providers working with youth agree this number is increasing. The Greater Victoria Coalition to End Homelessness (Coalition) says more supported, youth-specific housing will help to address this issue.

“As families across the region buckle their kids into their car, or send them on the bus with backpacks full of books, we want them to realize there are youth in Greater Victoria with a different kind of pack,” said Mark Muldoon, Executive Director of the Threshold Housing Society and partner of the Coalition. “One with a few odds and ends, maybe change of clothes if they are lucky, and maybe nothing if they are not.”

Homeless youth make up over one-third of Canadian homeless population. Homelessness compromises the physical and emotional health of youth, who are in a crucial developmental stage and require different services and supports from the adult homeless population. Many youth experiencing homelessness do not sleep rough on the streets, but are hidden. They may sleep in cars, at friends’ homes or couch surf. Because of this, it’s difficult to get an accurate account of the scope of the issue.

“I’m one of the lucky ones who got into housing,” said one youth, who goes by the name of “Jack”. “When I aged out of foster care last year I got one of the eight beds in Pandora Youth Housing. It taught me things like how to cook, how to live with neighbours and to look after my stuff. Most of all it gave me stability and structure. If I hadn’t got one of those spots I would have been screwed.”

“With everyone taking their own children back to school it seemed an ideal time for the public to be thinking about those in our community who don’t have the same opportunity,” explains Andrew Wynn-Williams, Executive Director of the Coalition. “One obvious step to solving the challenge of youth homelessness is to build more supported youth housing.”

The Greater Victoria Coalition to End Homelessness is a partnership of local service providers, non-profit organizations, all levels of government, and the business, post-secondary and faith communities. The Coalition’s vision is to end homelessness in Greater Victoria by 2018. For more information visit, victoriahomelessness.ca

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