

ANNUAL REPORT 2019

**HORIZONS
FOR YOUTH**

LEAVE THE STREETS BEHIND



A LETTER FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

2019 was an incredible year for Horizons for Youth!

Throughout the year, hundreds of youth experiencing homelessness found refuge at our agency. They escaped from traumatic situations like parental abuse, living on the street or sexual violence, and began healing at Horizons for Youth.

Last year, Horizons for Youth provided shelter to 365 at-risk youth and our beds were full 99% of the time. Five years ago, we provided emergency, short-term shelter to over 1000 youth in one year. Our agency has changed the way we provide services to residents in the last few years to better meet their needs. Most residents are choosing to live with us for many months, some close to a year. Youth want to stay at Horizons throughout their entire journeys from crisis to independence. They need stability and intensive support in order to work towards their goals. Horizons for Youth, therefore, gives this stability to youth. For some, our shelter is the most stable place they have ever lived.

I look back on 2019 and I am proud that Horizons for Youth's dedicated team has created an environment where youth feel safe, supported and motivated. We offer youth a tight-knit, caring refuge where residents can form close bonds with each other, staff members and volunteers. In addition to basic needs, we prioritize giving youth the support they need to prepare for life in the community. We provide them with many supportive programs to help them find employment, improve their mental health, learn important life skills and secure stable housing. I love watching our youth grow in their time at our agency and I am so happy that we can be part of their successes.

With support from our Board of Directors, donors, volunteers and staff members, we will continue to strive towards our goal of helping our residents achieve wellness and become contributing community members. We look forward to seeing what our youth accomplish in 2020 and the years ahead.

Sincerely,



Filomena Williams
Executive Director



MICHAEL'S STORY*

No child should ever experience violence at home. Unfortunately though, child abuse happens every day in our community.

Michael* was raised by a single father in northeast Mississauga. They lived in poverty – his dad lost his business when Michael was a child and he struggled to find work afterwards. “Our living conditions were really bad,” Michael explains. “We rented a basement apartment and there was a lot of mould in my room. There was a flood when we first moved in and the landlords never dealt with it.”

To make matters worse, Michael’s dad was extremely violent. “He would beat me with whatever he could find...a belt, a computer wire, anything.” His dad’s girlfriend was also really abusive. “She called me dirty and sometimes, would hit me and scratch me. My dad just laughed when this happened.”

When he was 14 years old, Michael slept outside for the first time. He did not want to face his dad, so he spent the night alone on the roof of his elementary school. He did this a few more times that year.

Michael’s dad kicked him out when he was 18 years old. With nowhere to go, he lived on the street for three months. He sometimes was able to sneak into a mall and sleep there overnight, but more often than not, he slept outside.

Michael began to experience severe mental health distress while living on the street because of the trauma of homelessness and untreated and undiagnosed mental health challenges. In December of 2019, a police officer took him to the Centre for Addictions and Mental Health (CAMH). He lived at CAMH for three months, accessing much needed support. He was referred to Horizons for Youth by CAMH when he was discharged.

“I really like it here,” Michael says about Horizons for Youth. “It feels so safe – the staff and the other residents are great...I have appointments with Horizons for Youth’s psychiatrist every two weeks and I get help from the staff with everything I need.”

Michael has lived at Horizons for Youth since March 2020. He is able to think about his future now that he is finally in a stable living environment. “I really want to finish high school. One of the staff members has given me a few options of how I can do this. I also want to go to college or university one day and become a computer technician.”

“I’m happy I have this support. So many people on the street don’t have food, clothes, shelter, anything... support is so important. People literally die without it.”

**Name changed to protect the confidentiality of this resident*



2019 IN REVIEW

UPDATED MISSION STATEMENT

Horizons for Youth modified our mission statement to add two important words that encapsulate an important element of our work. Our mission statement is now “to shelter, prepare and guide homeless and at-risk youth to **achieve wellness** and become contributing community members.” Many of our youth have experienced trauma in their lives and need a space to heal before they are ready to transition to independent living. Horizons for Youth provides youth with critical mental health services and offers many active living programs, all intended to promote health and wellness.

LAUNCH OF PRE-EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

Horizons for Youth launched a new pre-employment program in 2019 that is designed to address the complex challenges our clients face when looking for jobs. Approximately 75.7% of homeless youth in Canada are unemployed(1), compared to 10.8% of the average Canadian youth population(2). There is no evidence that homeless youth lack motivation to work or are avoiding employment. Instead, there are many barriers to a homeless youth finding employment.

Our new pre-employment program provides a critical intervention in reducing unemployment rates among the youth residing at and associated with our shelter. This holistic program helps youth prepare for, find and maintain employment, empowering them to build fulfilling and bright futures. This structured program focuses on pre-employment training, self-discovery, job certifications and job search assistance.

1. Stephen Gaetz, Bill O’Grady, Sean Kidd & Kaitlin Schwan. (2016). *Without a Home: The National Youth Homelessness Survey*. Toronto: Canadian Observatory on Homelessness Press.

2. Duffin, Erin. (2020, 01, 22). *Unemployment rate of 15 to 24 year olds in Canada from 2000 to 2019*. Statista. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/440853/youth-unemployment-rate-in-canada/>



2019 CHAMPIONS CELEBRATION: AN INCREDIBLE EVENING

Horizon for Youth's Champions Celebration in September 2019 was a great success! This event celebrated our incredible donors and dedicated volunteers who make our agency's work possible. Our local Member of Provincial Parliament, Marit Stiles, and Deputy Mayor, Ana Bailao, helped us recognize our supporters. We are looking forward to continuing to work with our Champions in the upcoming year and together, helping our residents achieve their dreams.

NEW FURNITURE IN OUR HOME

In 2019, Horizons for Youth received a grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation to replace most of the furniture in our facility. Our agency has made concerted efforts in the past few years to make our shelter more 'homey' and feel less institutional. We aim to provide a caring and supportive environment, and the appearance and feel of the shelter is an important element of this. The youth also asked for more comfortable mattresses and couches. With the grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation, we purchased new beds, lockers, mattresses, pillows, dining tables, dining chairs, couches, and a table and chairs for our program room. The youth really like the new furniture and say they are "sleeping way better!"

“ The staff really really care. They literally will do anything in their power to make life easier... I requested some activities from a staff member because I was feeling under the weather and she found me three things to do in like half an hour. Frontline staff really care about their job and they put in 110% ”

-Female Resident, age 22



HORIZONS FOR YOUTH BY THE NUMBERS

In 2019, Horizons for Youth provided:



365

at-risk and homeless youth with safe shelter



754

life skills development activities, which help youth build the skills they need to live independently



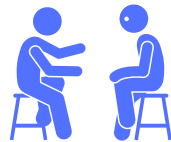
2426

one-on-one housing meetings, helping youth prepare for and find secure housing



98

former residents with Community Support services, which help youth successfully transition to independent living



635

youth with one-on-one wellness counselling services



233

hours of active living programming, including boot camp classes, basketball clinics, yoga instruction and gym work-outs



73

clients with in-house psychiatric services



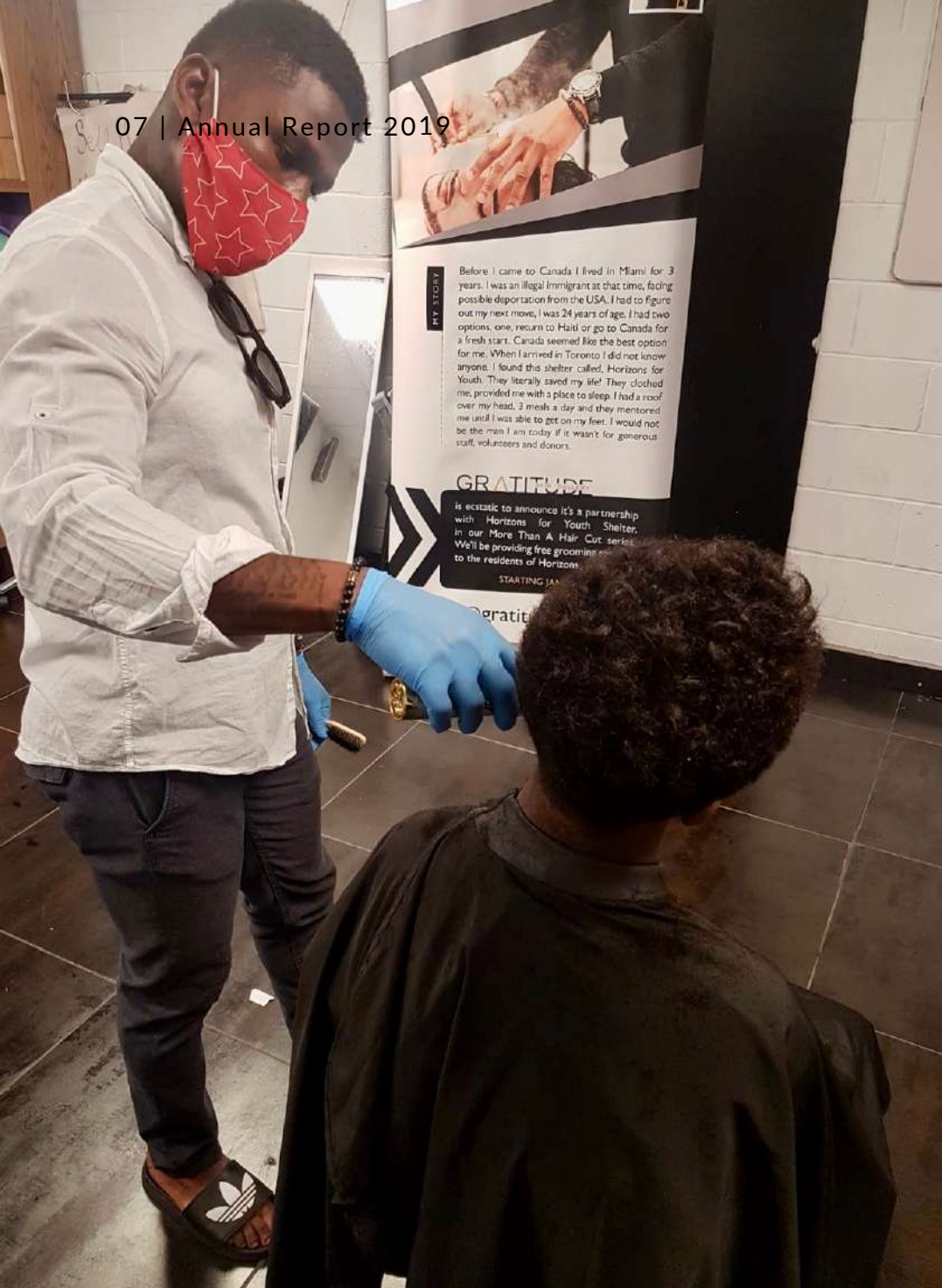
108

hours of Cooking 101 classes, which teach youth how to make healthy meals on a budget



90

hours of pre-employment programming

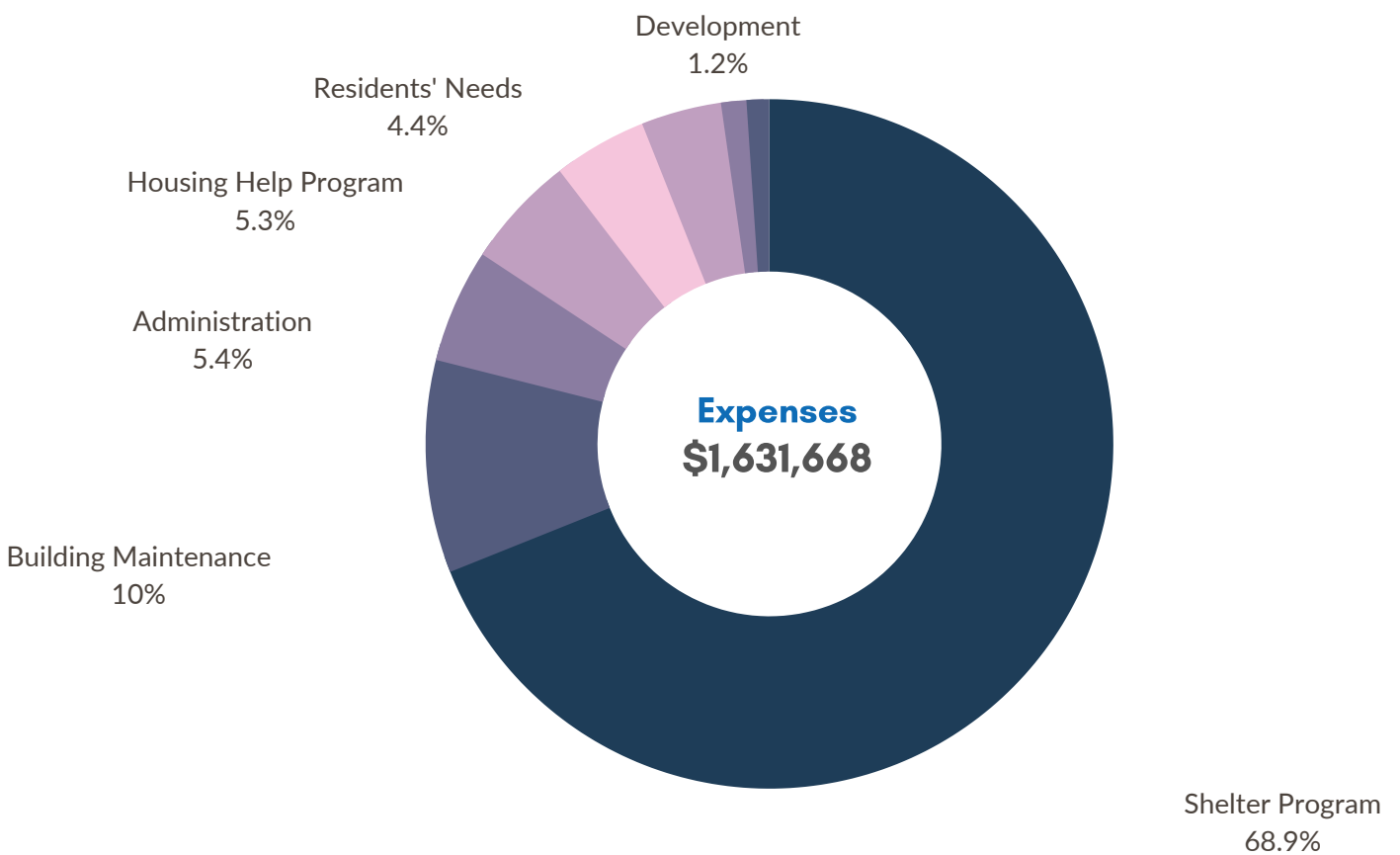
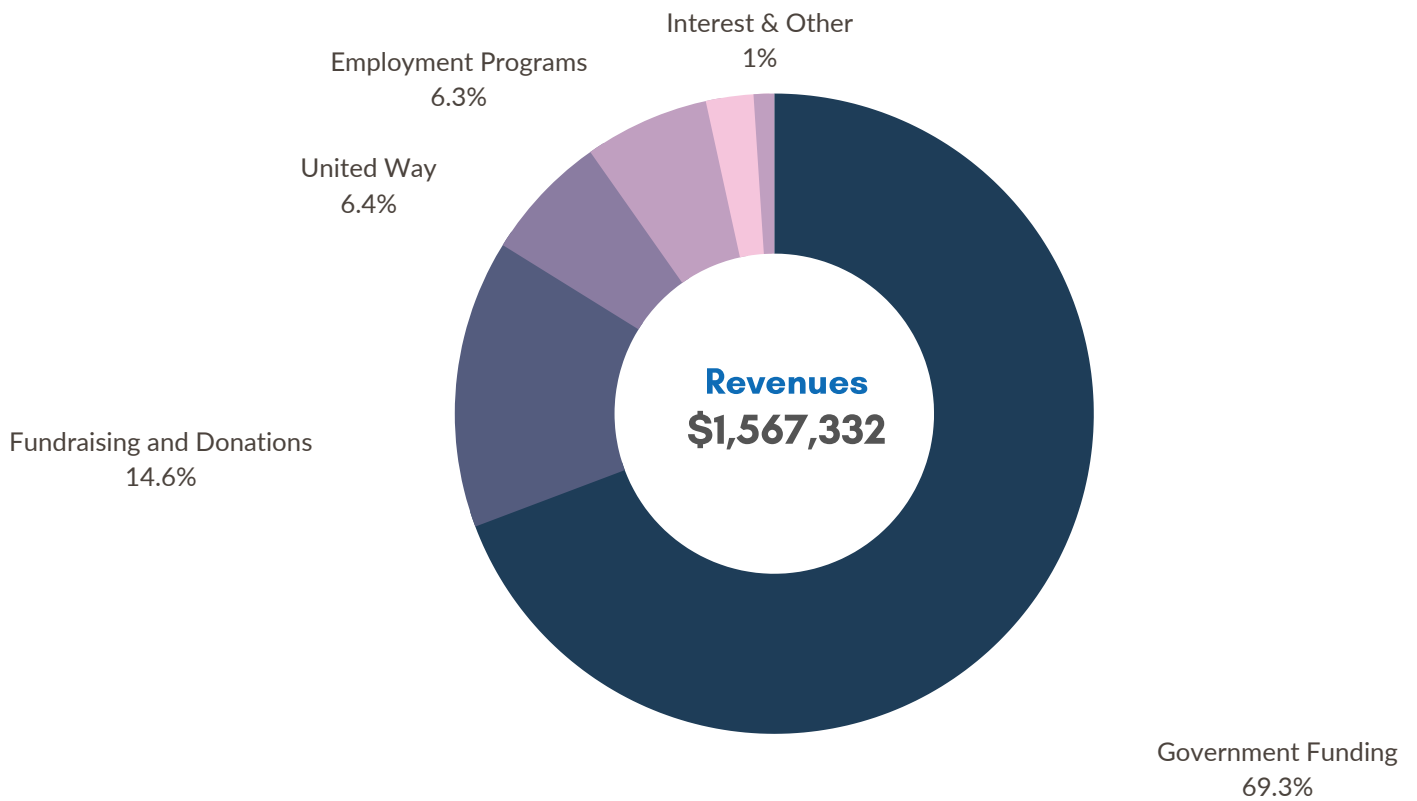


470

individuals
volunteered
their time at
Horizons for
Youth in 2019



FINANCIAL INFORMATION



OUR SUPPORTERS

Thank you to Horizons for Youth's incredible donors who help hundreds of homeless youth each year access needed services, work towards their goals and ultimately, leave the streets behind.

\$1,000,000+

- The City of Toronto

\$100,000+

- The Ontario Trillium Foundation
- United Way Greater Toronto

\$25,000+

- Green Shield Canada

\$10,000-24,999

- The Catherine and Maxwell Meighen Foundation
- MLSE Foundation
- Aston Family Foundation
- Fondation Echo
- Frederick and Douglas Dickson Memorial Foundation
- Hodgson Family Foundation
- J.P. Bickell Foundation
- LoyaltyOne

\$5000-9999

- Rotary Club of Toronto
- The Home Depot Canada Foundation
- Altas Partners
- The Ben and Hilda Katz Charitable Foundation
- Erik Parnoja
- Hustler Young Men's Bible Class Foundation

\$1000-4999

- Saro Creative
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- Traquair Family Foundation
- Digital Business Systems
- Discovery Wealth
- Forest Hill Lions Club
- PwC Management Services
- Unifor Social Justice Fund
- Walmart Canada
- Woodbine Cares
- Alan Moody
- Ontario Realtors Care Foundation
- Richard Wilks
- TD Bank York Mills Branch
- A & A Optoelectronics Ltd
- Bernardi Human Resources Law LLP
- Just Energy
- Minto Corporate Services
- Richardson GMP
- Nicholas Skrypek
- Brian Courtney
- Dean Levitt
- Evercore
- Karen Phillips
- Jo's Snowflake Fund at Toronto Foundation
- Marilyn Cook
- RBC Stockyards Branch
- The Delivery Group
- Tower Litho Company Ltd





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