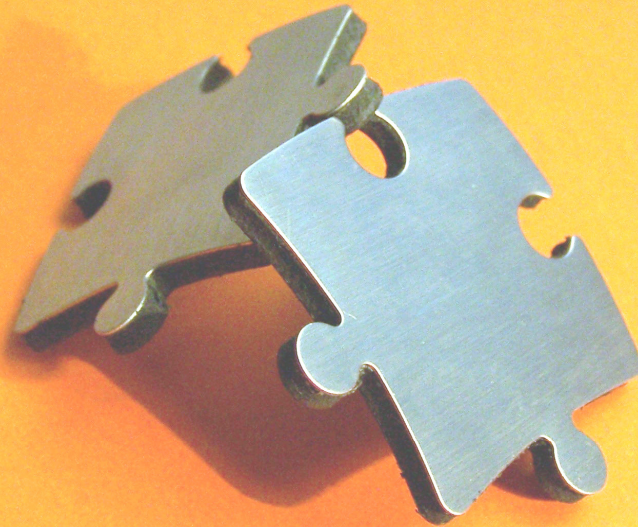


More Than A Roof



**Best Practices for Transitional Housing Models
for Homeless Youth in Halton**

January 2007



With the
Halton Transitional Housing Study for Homeless Youth Steering Committee

Project funded by National Homelessness Initiative – Regional Homelessness Fund



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Acknowledgments

It is with great pleasure that we present the **More Than A Roof: Best Practices for Transitional Housing Models for Homeless Youth in Halton** report to the community. **More Than A Roof** is the outcome of a community research project undertaken by the Halton Transitional Housing Study for Homeless Youth Steering Committee. The objective of the project was to develop a “made-in Halton” model(s) of transitional housing for homeless youth.

We would like to thank the transitional housing programs across Canada who responded to our numerous questions. The research expertise provided by Community Development Halton was also greatly appreciated. We would like to express special thanks to the youth from across Halton who participated in focus groups and shared valuable insights into their needs and desires related to transitional housing. The project would not have occurred without the generous funding from the Regional Municipality of Halton through the Federal government’s National Homelessness Initiative Regional Homelessness Fund.

Finally I would like to thank the Steering Committee members who have patiently worked through a complex research process in a very short period of time. Without input from each of their varied perspectives **More Than A Roof** would not have resulted in the development of a model designed for all parts of Halton Region.

More Than A Roof provides the community with a unique overview of transitional housing models for homeless youth. It also provides the community with an overall framework for transitional housing for youth in Halton that includes a clearly articulated Goal, Objectives and Values. In addition, a variety of transitional housing physical settings and supportive components relevant to both the North and South parts of Halton are identified.

We hope **More Than A Roof** will become an active document that generates innovative programs for transitional housing for youth across Halton.

Ellis Katsof
Chair
Halton Transitional Housing Study for
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Executive Summary

The report, **More Than A Roof: Best Practices for Transitional Housing Models for Homeless Youth in Halton** represents the discussions and findings of a community research project undertaken by the Halton Transitional Housing Study for Homeless Youth Steering Committee. The objective of this project is to develop a “made-in Halton” model(s) of transitional housing for homeless youth. This document discusses the journey of the Steering Committee in their attempt to develop transitional housing options for homeless youth in Halton.

Section 1 is an introduction to the context of this work in the area of housing needs in Halton. It describes the genesis of this study.

Section 2 provides insight from a review of the literature that focuses on transitional housing and supports for youth. It outlines the key themes and activities that have been found to be important for the success of transitional/supportive housing programs for youth. Also identified are key elements in both the housing models (physical structure) and service models (support structure) deemed important to the well-being of youth.

The literature indicated that there must be a focus on the youth and their needs, with an individualized approach recommended as opposed to a “cookie-cutter” approach. Providing physical shelter is important but the key to success lies in transitional housing needs being framed as part of a larger response to meeting housing needs that is part of a continuum, with emphasis on the need for an adequate supply of affordable permanent housing. However, social supports are critical in addressing the range of issues of a young person which go far beyond housing. Addressing these issues is intricately linked to improving their housing status. Practical assistance (such as education, skill training, food, money) and professional intervention were identified as important elements in transitional housing strategies.

Section 3 describes the efforts and initiatives that have been developed in Halton to address housing issues across the entire continuum of housing need. The work has shown a need to develop strategies for youth, for while there are homeless youth in need, housing and support services are not adequate to meet the demand. The transitional housing programs developed to date have shown the need for a combination of shelter provision and ongoing supports to allow residents to develop the life skills necessary to move towards independent living.

Section 4 discusses examples of transitional housing developed to respond to the needs of homeless and at-risk youth. Although there are varied approaches to meeting these needs, each program recognizes the complexity of the issues of youth homelessness and that the responses need to go beyond the simple provision of housing. Common elements emerge from the case studies that speak to successful programming for youth. They are:

- A physical location that is available, accessible, and safe
- Youth involvement, ownership and choice
- A holistic approach to meeting needs

- Developing community partnerships with a variety of stakeholders (private, public and voluntary sectors) in service delivery
- Developing relationships between people and communities

Section 5 summarizes a series of youth soundings where participants articulated the issues facing Halton youth who are homeless or at the risk of homelessness. They clearly indicated that housing options that allow youth to stay in their own community is very important, but that there are currently few programs that facilitate this.

Youth identified the need for structure and support in housing options, with capable support staff who had the skills and experience to support youth in stabilizing their lives. Many of the youth indicated a preference for apartment-style arrangements, with sites located in each of Halton's local communities. The issues of security, safety and privacy were identified as critical for success. Also, supports that address education, job skills and employment experience were identified as central to success, as well as supports that allow youth to develop life skills essential for independent living.

Section 6 provides the recommendations based on the findings of the literature search and interviews and conversations with transitional housing providers presented in this report. The Study Steering Committee established a goal of transitional housing for youth in Halton that reads:

To provide transitional housing and support to the youth of Halton where they can safely overcome difficulties, address the issues that have led to their homelessness, and rebuild their lives as they transition into stable housing.

The Committee deliberated on the values and objectives that they believe are essential to guide the implementation of transitional housing for youth in Halton. In addition, the Committee outlined the physical and social supports necessary to fulfill the goal, to give life to the values and to transform the objectives into individual and community outcomes.

Transitional housing for homeless youth in Halton is an important component of the continuum of housing needs. The desire to provide not only shelter but also a broad spectrum of support for youth at a critical stage in their lives was evident in the Steering Committee's deliberations. An approach that puts youth first and offers residents the structure and support they need to address housing and homelessness issues within Halton will go a long way to creating an environment where young people can develop into productive and contributing citizens. These recommendations provide the framework for generating innovative programs for transitional housing for youth across Halton. These recommendations, when implemented, provide "more than a roof".

1.0 Introduction

The Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative (SCPI) was introduced in 1999 as part of the \$753 million National Homelessness Initiative. The SCPI goal is to create a more integrated and inclusive, local needs-based approach to addressing homelessness in Canada. By providing financial support, SCPI encourages communities to work together with government, private and non-profit sectors to identify community needs and develop new responses to homelessness. Sixty-one communities across Canada were awarded SCPI grants. Within Halton, Phase I (2001 – 2003) saw Halton awarded \$1,000,835 and for Phase II (2004 – 2006), Halton was awarded \$1,005,500.

In 2006, the Federal government announced an extension of the SCPI funding for 2006 to 2007. Halton was awarded \$334,647. On December 19, 2006, the Federal government announced a new Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS) to replace SCPI. The HPS will provide \$270 million over two years to "designated" communities to alleviate homelessness. Further details about the program will be forthcoming.

Within Halton, the Regional Municipality of Halton was designated the Community Entity responsible for allocating the SPCI funds and a SCPI Community Advisory Committee was established to facilitate community consultations and assist in establishing local funding priorities. The creation of a community plan entitled *A Journey Home: A Community Plan for Halton* identified the following local priorities:

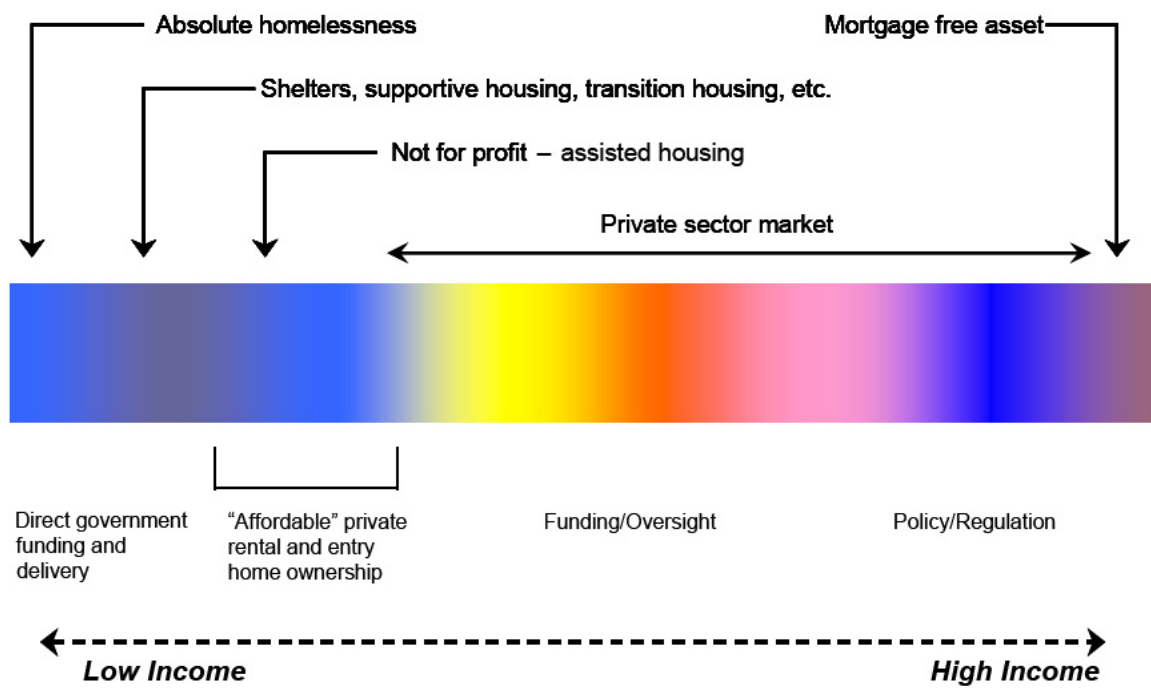
- Emergency housing with supports
- Transitional housing with supports for individuals and families
- Development of support and advocacy resources
- Strategies to increase community awareness of homelessness
- Enhancement of community capacities to ensure the development of effective programs and affordable housing alternatives

The first phase funded initial transitional housing services for homeless families and youth across Halton, additional shelter beds at Halton Women's Place and the development of the first permanent emergency homeless shelter in Halton. As well, activities to increase community awareness through Town Hall meetings; research on best practices and innovative approaches, resulting in a report called *Building Hope Together: Strategies for Creating Housing in Uncertain Times* (Community Development Halton, 2003); and an Accessible Housing Inventory rounded out the funded projects. However, as the first phase was assessed, it was noted that more needed to be done, particularly in the areas of homelessness prevention, the provision of longer-term transitional housing and services to meet the needs of at-risk youth.

The second phase of SCPI funding encouraged communities to go beyond the immediate emergency needs, to transitional interventions to create more stable living environments for homeless people. Within Halton, a number of projects focusing on transitional and supportive housing were funded, providing services to a number of different groups. Seven agencies were funded to provide emergency/transitional housing and staff support for individuals and families, and four agencies also received rent supplement subsidies. These programs include transitional

housing for newcomer families; supportive housing for individuals with serious mental illness; shared living for single males; and support for the Bridging the Gap Program which provides a broad range of supports to homeless and at-risk youth throughout Halton, including transitional housing in Host Homes with Host Families.

In November 2005, the Regional Municipality of Halton announced that \$99,000 would be available through the Government of Canada’s National Homelessness Initiative (NHI) to community groups currently working with homeless and/or at-risk youth. Three priority areas for funding were identified by Halton’s Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative (SCPI) Community Advisory Committee. One of the priority areas was feasibility studies for youth housing. The rationale for these studies was that youth housing has emerged, in the development of Halton’s *Comprehensive Housing Strategy* (2006), as a pressing need throughout Halton Region and that this one-time funding could jump start initiatives to meet this need. Figure 1 displays the Housing Continuum as developed in the *Comprehensive Housing Strategy*, which locates transitional housing at the left side of the continuum. It was hoped that future funding through the SCPI program or other sources of funding could provide the funds to implement the housing models identified in this research.



Adapted from Pomeroy & Mawby, 2004

Figure 1. The Housing Continuum, *Comprehensive Housing Strategy* (2006)

Through the Request for Proposal (RFP) process, Transitions for Youth (TFY) was successful and contracted Community Development Halton (CDH) to undertake research related to two feasibility studies. The studies are to identify best practices related to transitional housing models for homeless youth living in Halton’s large urban communities (Burlington and Oakville) and

small urban/rural communities (Milton and Halton Hills, the latter comprised of Acton and Georgetown).

In the fall of 2006, final agreements were in place and the research started, including the convening of a steering committee (see Appendix A). This report summarizes the results of the scan of current practice in transitional housing for homeless youth, conducted between September and December 2006. It is based on a review of the literature and focused discussions and interviews with transitional housing providers across Canada. It identifies challenges to developing and maintaining transitional housing, the key factors influencing the success of these initiatives, and provides considerations for best practice for service providers, policy makers and funders. The report also documents discussions with youth in Halton regarding housing, homelessness and supports needed to address issues of housing and homelessness for youth.

2.0 Learning from Experience

2.1 Introduction

There is no universally agreed upon definition of “best practice.” In reality the term “is often used less than rigorously, and may not always refer to practices that have been evaluated and compared to others in terms of...outcome indicators” (Leavey et al., 2000, p.5). Best practices are often used to describe various initiatives or projects that others can learn from, usually with the goal of adapting the practices to their own situation.

There are limitations when it comes to documentation of best practices of transitional housing for youth. There is little evaluation and research documenting specific approaches and methods, along with short term and long term outcomes. When using standard scientific standards for evaluating effective programs and services that include rigorous experimental design, evidence of significant deterrent effects, and replication of these effects at multiple sites (Collaborative Community Health Research Centre, 2002), the literature regarding transitional housing for youth is sparse. Also, this report indicated that there is little in the literature that provides good information on issues such as peer mentoring and accommodating ethno-cultural diversity and LGBTTTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual, Transgendered, Queer) sexual identities.

For the purposes of this report on transitional housing and services to youth as a response to homelessness, the focus is on key themes and activities which have been found to be important for the success of transitional/supportive housing programs for youth. Also identified are key elements in both the housing models (physical structure) and service models (support structure) deemed important to the well-being of youth.

2.2 What is Transitional Housing?

Transitional housing is an “intermediate step between emergency crisis shelter and permanent housing” (Novac, Brown and Bourbonnais, 2004). Under the National Homelessness Initiative (NHI), transitional housing is defined as “temporary or interim accommodation (in the form of multi-unit apartments, single room occupancies, scattered site apartments, etc.) for homeless or at-risk of homelessness individuals and/or families that is combined with case managed support services, aimed at helping these individuals to transition to long-term and permanent housing, self-sufficiency and independence” (Halton Region, 2006).

Transitional housing is usually more long term and service intensive than emergency shelters, but still is time-limited, lasting anywhere from several months to several years. Transitional housing is different from supportive housing because it is time limited – supportive housing is permanent housing.

2.3 Best Practices

A review of the literature reveals that there are few publications that provide information regarding best practices for addressing housing and homelessness issues, especially for the sub-population group of youth. However, there is research on broader programs and services directed at youth, as well as research on homelessness, that provide a foundation for identifying elements in addressing the needs of homeless and at-risk youth.

In 1997, Beavis and Klos conducted a survey of the best practice protocols of three urban-related international programs: UNCHS-Habitat, MOST (UNESCO), and MUNICIPA. Their purpose was “to gain insight into how to identify and document best practices in initiatives addressing homelessness” (Beavis & Klos, 1997). Their report, *Protocol for the Collection of Best Practices Addressing Homelessness*, lists 18 criteria for identifying best practices.

Criteria for Identifying Best Practices that Address Homelessness

Meeting the Needs of Homeless People

1. Homeless people help develop solutions, programs and policies
2. Homeless people are empowered as individuals to access services and develop skills to acquire long-term housing and employment.
3. Homeless people actively pursue the goal of finding and maintaining short or long-term independence, and/or people are supported in defining and working toward their own solutions.
4. The project provides safety and security for clients, especially vulnerable groups such as women, children and youth.
5. Project or program is accessible for persons with disabilities.

Overall Philosophy or Approach

6. Front-line service providers participate in the development of programs and policies
7. Project takes a multi-dimensional approach to meeting the needs of the homeless
8. Services designed to meet the particular needs of and diversity of the subpopulations of the homeless
9. Project challenges current beliefs and norms about the nature of the problem and solutions to homelessness.

Administration and Management

10. The project or program is cost-effective, while maintaining quality service, including innovative use of existing resources...responsible use of public resources, and partnerships between non government organizations, governments and the private sector.
11. The project takes an innovative approach to management/administration
12. The project or program is sustainable, with mechanisms in place to ensure the stability of ongoing operations and funding.
13. The project or program is accountable to clients, funders, employees and volunteers...

Replicability/Adaptability by Other Organizations

14. Action, initiative or project, or elements of it, could serve as a model which others could learn from and adapt to their own situations.
15. Access to information regarding the initiative.

Measurement/Verification

16. Concrete and measurable positive impacts on the quality of life of clients.
17. Empirical research, case studies or other external evaluation documenting the impact of the activity or program.
18. References from other agencies and/or users of the program

An extensive literature review of models of service delivery for high-risk youth conducted by researchers at the University of Victoria in British Columbia titled *Research Review of Best Practices for Provision of Youth Services* includes a section that focuses on transitional housing. According to their terms of reference, “Before a program is best, it is important to show clearly that it has a significant, sustained deterrent effect and that it can be expected to have positive results in a wide range of community settings” (Collaborative Community Health Research Centre, 2002, p.10). This report describes the characteristics of various specialized sub-populations and examines effective approaches within various program areas. According to this study, best practices in transitional housing for homeless youth include:

- Developing a network of semi-supervised apartments that convert to subsidized permanent housing
- Developing community networks to foster acceptance of transitional housing programs to enhance safety and stability for residents and neighbours
- Implementing transitional housing in the context of a continuum of services that includes adequate permanent housing and the supportive community-based services that can prevent returns to homelessness
- Adding outreach or drop-in services to transitional housing
- Connecting youth with employment opportunities
- Matching of youth skills and interests with employer needs and offering to intervene when workplace issues arise for program youth
- Housing facilities can vary, ranging from converted warehouses or hospitals to renovated hotels, apartment buildings and newly constructed buildings
- Providing directly or by referral a full array of support services (CCHRC, 2002, p. 28)

A review of 50 American programs, conducted by the American Youth Policy Forum, titled *Some Things DO Make A Difference For Youth: A Compendium Of Evaluations Of Youth Programs And Practices* (1997) indicated some principles that seem to provide effective programs for youth. The principles involve adult support, structure and expectations; creative forms of learning; a combination of guidance and rich connections to the workplace; support and follow up; youth as resources; and implementation quality (AYPF, 1997, iv). The report goes on to offer some conclusions as to elements that contributed to successful outcomes for youth. These include:

- A focus on “key job-readiness skills” such as basic mathematics, problem-solving, reading at higher levels, working effectively in groups, oral and written communication skills, and computer literacy
- The centrality of paid work and internships as a motivator and venue for learning job readiness skills and gaining access to employers
- Intensive, hands-on experiential occupational training in areas of labour market growth, supported by active employer involvement
- Continuity of contact with caring adults – teachers, employers, community members, others
- Financial incentives and recognition of achievement
- Post-placement support and leadership development

This document also provides examples of factors that have led to less successful programs and outcomes for youth and which organizations would be want to avoid. These include:

- Single-component interventions that address only one dimension of a young person's developmental needs
- Short-term or low-intensity interventions
- A narrow focus on remediation of deficiencies rather than building on strengths
- Overlooking the importance of family, peers and community in providing the supports and positive reinforcement to sustain forward progress in the program and outside it
- Insufficient investment in building infrastructure and staff capacity to support youth programs

According to the CMHC report *Innovative Housing For Homeless Youth* (Serge, 2002), homeless youth identify four types of help as important:

- compassion (individualized and unconditional attention)
- limits and consequences to their actions
- practical assistance (housing, food, money)
- professional intervention

This report, aimed at identifying innovative housing projects for homeless youth, goes on to identify some common characteristics for successful projects from the case studies reviewed. These include:

- The project must be centred on youth and their needs
- Youth must demonstrate their desire to do something about their situation
- Methods for reaching young people must be in place at all levels to carry them from one stage to the next
- Relationships of trust are essential
- An individualized approach is recommended, with a range of services or links to such services to help the young person
- Programs must offer more than shelter
- Neighbourhood involvement that connects young people with available services and activities
- Many projects include some kind of family mediation
- The use of existing services, often in partnership, is a common element among many of the projects
- The “sliding” lease makes it possible for youth to have permanent housing right away and seems to be a successful formula
- “Ordinary” housing that is distributed throughout the community seems to be most people's preference, when it is safe and includes access to flexible and long-term support services, training and meaningful activities, as well as social connections including friends and family

Finally, the 2004 CMHC report *Transitional Housing: Objectives, Indicators of Success and Outcomes*, identifies that transitional housing models range from high demand (congregate, strictures, service intensive) programs to low demand (dispersed, flexible criteria, optional services). There is very limited experience and research on transitional housing in Canada but there are some experiences that help in understanding the landscape. This report found that transitional housing programs are more effective than services alone and that there is evidence

that they improve housing status. However, transitional housing programs are more effective if there are available options in the community for permanent (affordable) housing, as well as ongoing supports through community services (Novac, Brown and Bournbonnais, 2004). Transitional housing is an important part of the continuum and requires appropriate funding support.

2.4 Rural Homelessness

In reviewing the literature, it is apparent that the focus is on transitional housing in urban settings. That being said, there is some documentation regarding homelessness issues in rural settings. This can inform the development of transitional housing in the urban/rural mixes found in Halton Region.

In a report titled *Hard to Reach: Rural Homelessness & Health Care* (Post, 2002), the recommendations on dealing with rural homelessness focused on seven areas:

- Provide transportation assistance
- Expand health coverage and facilitate access to covered services
- Stimulate the development of a comprehensive service delivery infrastructure in rural communities that is responsive to the needs of homeless people
- Coordinate rural service delivery systems
- Increase outreach to “hidden” homeless people in remote rural areas
- Promote cultural competence among homeless assistance providers
- Focus on homelessness prevention

Housing Needs of Low-Income People Living in Rural Areas (Bruce, 2003) identifies some of the characteristics and barriers of persons facing a housing crisis in rural areas. This report suggests that rural homelessness is less visible because as people lose their housing, they move in with other people, move around or migrate to urban centres. Also, there are fewer support services available, so there is greater reliance on family and friends or people go without, which further exacerbates their situation. There is also a migration to urban centres when the support systems are not available in the community. Some of the other factors creating rural homelessness identified by the report include:

- High building costs
- Not in my back yard (NIMBY) syndrome
- Uncertain economies
- Lack of community services
- Poor social conditions
- Lack of community leadership
- Public policy and regulations

The study concludes there are four major factors that shape the housing circumstances of rural low-income households: economic context; distance from a large urban centre; population size; and the size of the seniors population. The shortage of affordable, quality housing for low-income households is a major challenge in rural areas. The researchers concluded that the assumption that, with sufficient income, a household can resolve its housing crisis may be true in

an urban context but in rural areas, where supply is much smaller, even financial resources may not result in adequate housing. Many factors must be taken into account when assessing the housing needs of low-income households in rural areas.

2.5 Summary

Transitional housing is usually more long term and service intensive than emergency shelters, but still is time-limited, lasting anywhere from several months to several years. The review of literature provides an overview of some of the key themes and activities which have been found to be important for the success of transitional/supportive housing programs for youth. Also identified are key elements in both the housing models (physical structure) and service models (support structure) deemed important to the well-being of youth.

The literature indicated that there must be a focus on the youth and their needs, with an individualized approach recommended as opposed to a “cookie-cutter” approach. Providing physical shelter is important and a key element is that transitional housing needs to be part of a larger response to meeting housing needs along the continuum, with emphasis on the need for an adequate supply of affordable permanent housing. However, social supports are critical in addressing the range of issues of a young person which go far beyond housing. Addressing these issues is intricately linked to improving their housing status. Practical assistance (such as education, skill training, food, money) and professional intervention were identified as important elements in transitional housing strategies.

3.0 Current Transitional Housing Issues in Halton

3.1 Introduction

Within Halton, there has been much effort and many initiatives have been developed to address housing issues across the entire continuum of housing need. This section will provide an overview of some of the key initiatives over the last number of years.

3.2 Relevant Halton Research

The 1998 report *Oakville – An Audit of a Community in Transition* by Community Development Halton (Halton Social Planning Council) was released. This document gathered information from social, cultural and business organizations and residents in Oakville to better understand the issues facing the town. The report pointed out the need for more affordable housing in Oakville and also focused on the needs of youth in the town. In particular,

The respondents believe that the young people of Oakville have been left aside in the planning of social supports and activities which would incorporate them into the community as important young citizens with rights and responsibilities. The list of the gaps in supports to Oakville's youth is extensive and ranges from: i) empowering youth to participate in the identification and solution of their problems; ii) developing programs that respect and reflect the lifestyle and social integration needs of youth; for example, activities that remain open after midnight; iii) training and employment programs that face head-on the high unemployment rates of young people; iv) crisis services such as emergency shelter; v) substance-abuse programs; and vi) community activities that incorporate and view youth as a community asset that is a much-needed resource in building a better community (Community Development Halton, 1998, p. 46)

In 2003, a report entitled *Truth About Youth: Making Services Better for Youth in Halton* (Regional Municipality of Halton, Youth Services Steering Committee) listed a number of strategic directions, one being the development of “appropriate housing alternatives for youth in Halton Region.” One part of this strategic direction indicated continuing a process initiated by the Truth About Youth Housing Working Group “to explore and potentially develop options for second stage housing for youth leaving emergency shelters” (p. iv). Second stage housing is another term often used for transitional housing.

In 2006, Halton Region released its *Comprehensive Housing Strategy*, looking at the full continuum of housing needs, from emergency shelters to home ownership. Strategic Direction 5 – Retaining and Regaining Housing will “focus on eviction prevention, and advocate for adequate housing related support” (p. 55). It identifies youth as one of the most at-risk groups and goes on to say,

Halton Region will support and consider funding potential community projects that provide modest transitional and supportive housing for those who might otherwise be homeless. Based on experience this approach does two things: it

leads to the creation of additional modest supportive housing units while taking pressure off homeless facilities and services. (p. 55)

It is within this environment that the work to develop strategies to address the housing and support needs of youth in Halton is developed.

3.3 Homeless Youth Statistics

To put some numbers behind the issue of youth homelessness in Halton, statistics were gathered from two programs that provide support services to youth who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. The tables below provide data for the last full fiscal year (April 2005 – March 2006). In Table 1, statistics from the Transitions for Youth Bridging the Gap program are shown and indicate that 155 homeless youth accessed the program for full service and nearly 200 youth, who were at risk of homelessness, were provided with information and referrals to appropriate services. Table 2 provides data from Peer Outreach Support Services and Education (POSSE). There may be some overlap in the statistics provided for these two programs as some POSSE youth eventually end up using Bridging The Gap services. Nevertheless, the statistics give us a sense of the overall need in Halton.

Table 1. Bridging the Gap Statistics (April 1/05 – March 31/06)

	Burlington	Oakville	Milton	Halton Hills	Total
# Full Service Youth	57	73	16	9	155
# Information & Referral	98	52	22	26	198

Table 2. Peer Outreach Support Services and Education (POSSE) Statistics (April 1/05 – March 31/06)

Homeless	29
Couch Surfing	11
At risk of being homeless	10
Abusive home	29
Conflict	70

3.4 Case Studies of Current Transitional Housing in Halton

This section provides an overview of some of the transitional and supportive housing currently being provided in Halton. Some of the lessons learned as to what has worked well and what has not are discussed.

Programs for Adults and Families

Home Suite Hope Shared Living Corporation

Home Suite Hope, located in Oakville, provides transitional housing with staff support for single men in Halton utilizing five rent supplement units. The men can reside in a unit for up to eight months and then reapply for another term. Each person has their own private room and is either working or in school. There are several common areas and the residents share the kitchen and

household duties. There is no on-site support worker, but staff support is provided through a life coach who meets with each individual for several hours a week.

What has worked well: It has created a sense of community for the residents. The residents are of varying ages and this age mix has been a more positive experience than first anticipated. Connecting with the community is important, as there are minimal in-home supports. Examples of this are working with Ontario Works and having a relationship with the YMCA for recreational services.

Challenges and lessons learned: Initially Home Suite Hope provided support to both males and females, but found that this created tension and conflicts, particularly for women with a history of physical and emotional abuse. It was also identified that a shared living document/contract might better prepare residents for this kind of living arrangement. Providing support for more intensive needs such as mental health issues and learning disabilities can quickly overwhelm resources; the residents need better food preparation/cooking training; finally, follow up work and keeping a strong connection after leaving is a challenge, as any such work is currently unfunded.

The Salvation Army Oakville

The Salvation Army Oakville Church offers a family shelter program that provides short term emergency shelter to families. This program comprises 14 beds operated in two different locations, 1 unit in Oakville with 4 beds and 2 units in Burlington with 10 beds. Motels are also used in order to extend services to homeless families when existing units are filled. Motels are a safety valve to deal with overflow issues. This program serves on average 3.5 families in the shelter units and 5.5 families in motels in any given month. Case management services are offered to the families in the transitional units only, with humanitarian aid offered to the motel families. Sixty-five percent of the clients are children under the age of 12. One full-time equivalent staff is assigned the responsibility to oversee the families in care and to further develop the program. They have served over 84 families in their units in the past year and had an 87% occupancy rate. In total, 241 persons were served.

What has worked: Hard work and dedicated staff along with wonderful agency partners have made this program work. The current setup does not allow for significant life skills programming while clients are with them. There is much work to be done and The Salvation Army believes that they are just scratching the surface of existing need.

Challenges and lessons learned: Challenges exist with the de-linked nature of this program. North Halton remains seriously under-served with minimal resources available to homeless families in the North. As a matter of fact, three families have been displaced from the North as a result. Ideally, the Salvation Army would like to have a four- to six-plex rental unit/building where families could be served in one location to limit the amount of commuting and provide greater opportunity for client contact. They would also like to offer life skills programs to clients while in care.

Summit Housing and Outreach Programs

Summit Housing and Outreach Programs' townhouse in Burlington provides transitional supportive housing for five individuals 16 years of age and older with serious mental illness, who want support and housing. There is daily staff support where staff assists with daily living skills, goal setting, linking to resources and other activities. It is not a clinical setting as all tenants must be involved with a treatment plan through a family doctor or psychiatrist and must be able to manage their own medication. Tenants are responsible for shopping, cleaning, cooking and other household duties and must be willing to participate in a meaningful activity outside the home such as school, work, volunteer work and/or recreational activity. Presently, the house has a mix of male and female residents, with an age range of 17 to 38 years old. The house is located near a bus route and local amenities and the maximum stay is two years.

What has worked well: The daily staff support is an important element in the success of the program and the progress of the residents. An intake assessment to determine the level of support an applicant potentially needs is important to residents moving forward. A good working relationship with other community agencies provides the best possible services for clients in reaching their development goals.

Challenges and lessons learned: As staff is not at the house all the time, it can be difficult to enforce house rules, such as a ban on alcohol on the property and on smoking on the front porch. Due to minimum supervision, the staff is not able to monitor medication. Sometimes, when clients are non-compliant with medications, they must be transferred to a higher support home or another facility to get them back on track. Summit Housing and Outreach Programs focuses on serving adults only, as their experience has been that when 16 to 19 year olds have been placed, they need more than the minimum supervision/structure that is offered in this setting. Finally, staff at Summit Housing and Outreach Programs believe that having more flexibility regarding the length of stay would be beneficial because some people find the two year deadline stressful. However, some of the residents like the deadline, as they feel it helps them with goal planning for independent living.

Support and Housing – Halton

Support and Housing – Halton (SHH) provides transitional supportive housing for five individuals in Halton with serious mental illness with the goal of “transitioning” stable persons with mental illness from supportive housing to independent living. The project consists of providing enhanced support services and rent-geared-to-income apartment units. They have partnered with other organizations support services (Canadian Mental Health Association Halton and STRIDE – Supported Training and Rehabilitation in Diverse Environments) to provide assistance to clients in achieving independent living. In 2006, five adults were served in Oakville, for a total of 1,825 days in housing.

What has worked well: The enhanced partnership support services – involving SHH staff for case management, CMHA-Halton and STRIDE staff for community resource development, social/skills workshops and pre-employment training in small groups – has benefited the clients. This partnership of agencies has created a program that has given clients a well-rounded, comprehensive knowledge base to cope with independent living. Through the TEACH (Teach,

Empower, Advocate for Community Health) program, SHH has developed a peer mentorship training program where volunteer mentors connect with clients in maintaining limited support and connection to the agency.

Challenges and lessons learned: Challenges to the success of this program are related to staffing changes and shortage of mentors. Peer mentors are very much in demand and it has been difficult to provide all clients with a suitable match. The interruption and shortfall in funding has also been identified as a challenge, as it is difficult to retain staff with “project” as opposed to “ongoing” program funding. Additionally, until a client can be transferred to regular subsidized housing units, no new clients can move into the program to replace clients occupying a unit, but who could live independently. Success is ultimately dependent on the availability of rent-geared-to-income housing. However, no new rent-geared-to-income units were made available throughout the course of the project to date.

Links2Care

Links2Care has a transitional housing program for homeless families funded through the SCPI program. This program has three furnished apartments available for Halton Hills families, two in Georgetown and one in Acton. Families can stay for a period of two months. A community support coordinator provides family support services to assist families to stabilize and find permanent housing. Links2Care also provides three rent supplement units through Halton Region. In 2006, nine adults and seventeen children were housed for 975 days in housing (one adult and two children from Milton, others from Halton Hills). A total of 114 clients received information and referrals.

Halton Multicultural Council

The Halton Multicultural Council received SCPI funding to operate two Burlington-based apartments for immigrant and refugee families who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. The Halton Multicultural Council also has two rent supplement units available through Halton Region. Residents receive essential settlement services as well as housing through this program. Six families (9 adults and 13 children) used the apartments for 730 days in housing (4 families from Burlington and 2 from Oakville) in 2006. Forty-seven clients received one-on-one information and referral services.

Programs for Youth

Transitions for Youth – Bridging The Gap

Bridging the Gap was developed by TFY to meet the needs of Halton youth who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. The target group is youth ages 16-24 who live in Halton and are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. The Host Home model is designed to provide transitional housing to youth within their own community, so they can retain their jobs, schooling, and social supports.

All outreach services are provided based on the individual needs of the youth and may include:

- Assistance in finding emergency housing;
- Assistance in looking for and finding suitable, safe housing;

- Individual and/or family support;
- Development of youth advocacy skills;
- Referrals to counselling and other services, as appropriate;
- Connections to youth employment and other youth programs.

Services are provided based on individual needs.

TFY has developed Host Home placements with community volunteers who work closely with Bridging the Gap staff to support youth involved with the program. These volunteers offer youth a safe place to stay in their homes while TFY staff assist the youth in finding suitable housing. Host Home volunteers receive financial support to help with the costs associated with having a young person in their home.

In a survey of homeless youth that had utilized Transitions for Youth programs in 2004-2005, it was found that:

- 90% had been in the Mental Health System
- 85% had been in the Youth Justice System
- 30% were at high risk of suicide
- 30% were at high risk of violence
- 90% used/abused drugs and/or alcohol

In 2005-2006, 155 homeless youth were supported in finding emergency and transitional housing as well as in accessing other services required to stabilize their lives (57 – Burlington, 73 – Oakville, 16 – Milton, 9 – Halton Hills). Six youth were housed in Host Homes in Halton for a total of 498 days in housing (Host Homes – 3 – Burlington, 2 – Oakville, 1 – Halton Hills). In addition, 198 youth, who were at risk of homelessness, were provided with information, referral & support (98 – Burlington, 52 – Oakville, 22 – Milton, 26 – Halton Hills).

Halton Child and Youth Services – My Place

My Place, located in Burlington, is a co-ed residence that can house up to nine young people (ages 16 to 21 years) who are expressing a desire to work towards independent living. For various reasons they are unable to remain at home or have already been out of their home, living in alternate accommodations. Each youth has their own private bedroom. They must have full-time programming, either working full-time or in school full-time. They also pay a room and board fee. Some youth leave the program and return home or to family, others go on to living independent, or on to college or university. Some youth also live at My Place while attending college.

On-site staff provides support and assistance to residents by providing life skill coaching, counselling, advocacy referrals, assistance with accessing housing, educational options, and employment. Youth have access to support from Halton Child and Youth services during their stay. The program is voluntary.

From April 2005 to Dec. 2006, the My Place program had 32 referrals, with 13 referrals being admitted to the program. A total of 3,177 days of care were provided to the 13 youth admitted to My Place.

Halton Child and Youth Services also has a 24 hour Crisis program, which can be accessed by children, youth and their families, 24 hours a day 7 days a week. Twenty-five percent of the calls to the Crisis program are about “homelessness.” This is mostly kids who are in conflict with their parents and who do not want to follow the rules. Most of the work done in this program is working with youth to sort out conflict between the parents and child. In the past year, this program has dealt with approximately 132 cases where family breakdown was happening due to parent/child conflict and where “homelessness” was eminent.

3.5 Summary

Within Halton, there has been much effort and many initiatives have been developed to address housing issues across the entire continuum of housing need. The work has shown a need to develop strategies for youth, for while there are homeless youth in need, the support services are not adequate to meet the demand. The transitional housing programs developed to date have shown the need for there to be a combination of shelter provision and ongoing support to allow residents to develop the life skills necessary to move onto independent living.

4.0 Case Studies of Transitional Housing for Youth

4.1 Introduction

This section provides some examples of transitional housing that have been developed to respond to the needs of homeless and at-risk youth. This information was gathered from a review of the literature, Internet searches and conversations with transitional and supportive housing providers. Although there are varied approaches to meeting these needs, each program recognizes the complexity of the issues of youth homelessness and that the responses need to go beyond the simple provision of housing. Shelter is simply not enough. “The response to homelessness... is as diverse as the population served” (Serge, 1999). This section concludes with common elements found in these case studies.

4.2 Foyer

The Foyer movement started in France after World War II to enable young people to move from rural to urban settings. The Foyer movement is now primarily in the United Kingdom, although it has spread to other countries. UK Foyers tend to work with a more disadvantaged client group than their French counterparts, with an even greater focus on employment and training. There are Foyer projects right across Europe, from Spain to Denmark to Romania, and more recently groups in Australia and the USA have developed foyers.

Foyers are an innovative service delivery model focusing on helping disadvantaged young people, aged 16-25, who are homeless or in housing need, to achieve the transition from dependence to independence. The approach to the young person's needs is holistic. In addition to accommodation, residents have access to a wide range of training and educational opportunities as well as one-to-one advice, guidance and support to enable them to undertake the personal development required to make the transition from dependence to independence. Foyers provide:

- A stable and secure community in which young people can support one another and achieve independence
- Help with finding appropriate employment, training or education to make this possible
- Training in basic skills and independent living skills
- Help with finding permanent accommodation and ongoing support when the young person has left the Foyer

The relationship with the young person is based on a formal agreement as to how the Foyer's facilities and local community resources will be used in making the transition to independence, commitment to which is a condition of continued residence in the Foyer. The average stay in a foyer is nine to twelve months.

In the traditional foyer model, one-third of the residents have high needs, one-third medium needs and one-third low needs, although there may be a much higher percentage of high-needs youth in the initial stages. Nonetheless, the heavy level of support needed in the beginning quickly drops, and the longer-term residents mentor the new ones. If residents have income, they pay 30% of it for rent. Usually residents have some form of government subsidy when they arrive. Some find jobs, while others continue their education.

Currently, there are no foyers in Canada, although the YMCA in Toronto would like to implement a network of Foyers adapted to the needs of different neighbourhoods. The two issues they are currently facing are the acceptance by the community of this type of housing for youth (NIMBY issue) and current lack of funding support for transitional housing.

4.3 Eva's Phoenix (Toronto)

Eva's Phoenix is a transitional housing and employment training facility located in Toronto. It is one of three programs operated by the lead organization Eva's Initiatives. The other programs are Eva's Place, a 32-bed emergency shelter for youth and Eva's Satellite, a 30-bed harm reduction shelter.

Eva's Phoenix is a transitional housing and employment training facility that focuses on homeless and at-risk youth between 16 and 24. Residents in the transitional housing program can live there for up to a year. The program is housed inside a converted warehouse building in downtown Toronto. It has ten townhouse-style housing units, each with 5 bedrooms and shared living, dining, kitchen and shower facilities. This self-contained "village" boasts inner streets, a food market, administrative offices and training workshops.

Eva's Phoenix was conceived as a facility where staff could work with youth for a longer period than the typical emergency shelter stay, and youth would have the opportunity to learn hands-on life skills in an environment that mirrored independent living. Support could be offered in a holistic way, recognizing the interplay of many aspects of the youth's life when working towards self-sufficiency. A primary goal was to create opportunities for youth to experience career related employment as an alternative to part-time, minimum wage jobs (Eva's Phoenix, Shared Learnings on Homelessness website).

Youth involvement has been a priority right from the beginning. Part of the philosophy of Eva's Phoenix is the need to establish clear, concrete goals with the youth in key areas: sense of community, housing, counselling, education and employment. Through partnership with various trade unions, youth received hands-on training and were involved in the actual construction of the Eva's Phoenix housing units. This connection with the construction trades continues. Also, there are onsite employment training opportunities, such as the Web Design Employment program that resulted in the Eva's Phoenix website and the development of its own social enterprise called the Phoenix Print Shop.

While participation in education or job training is mandatory, programs are individualized and youth develop their own goals. The program has many community partners, particularly in regards to employment training.

Eva's Phoenix has developed several different mentorship programs to help create new networks for youth and to assist with the transition to independent living. These mentorship programs include:

- One-to-One Mentorship: Matches youth with adult mentors based on common interests, support or background for three to six months, although longer relationships are common

- Project-Based Mentors: People with expertise in various fields guide youth through the planning and implementation of special projects
- Peer Mentors: Graduates of Eva's Phoenix who faced similar life experiences are paired with current participants
- Workplace Mentorship: Youth are teamed with a peer for information and support to help the youth acclimatize to his/her work environment

A formal impact evaluation of Eva's Phoenix was completed in 2003 and highlighted the following from interviews with youth:

- 97% said Eva's Phoenix had helped them, and that they would recommend the program to friends
- 86% said the one year time-frame was enough to address their issues
- 71% noted improvement in their housing conditions
- 59% were employed or in school nine months after graduation

The evaluation also identified some of the challenges that the program faced. These included issues such as: many youth leaving the program before completion; the need for better follow-up with graduates (difficult due to lack of funding support); and the need for better participant accountability.

Lessons from Eva's Phoenix's experience have been articulated. Most important is the need to talk to youth about the supports they need and want so that programs respond to them and are not created in a vacuum. It has been identified that youth need to define what will work for them and the process helps communities identify where there are gaps in services. As there may already be supports in place for youth in a variety of areas, the experience of Eva's Phoenix indicates that innovation is vital so as not to replicate what is already available. Finally, at-risk youth have many abilities and talents. The focus on providing support and a stable environment within Eva's Phoenix provides youth with opportunities to realize their goals.

4.4 Peel Youth Village (Mississauga)

Peel Youth Village (PYV) is a four storey building that serves as a housing, recreation, training and education centre for up to 48 youth and young adults aged 16-35. It was designed to provide affordable housing for young people unable to secure stable housing, with a support programming component. It provides a blend of short and long term housing for youth in transition and re-employment skills to stabilize their lives. The Regional Municipality of Peel took the lead in developing, constructing and managing the site, with support services provided through the YMCA. The community centre component of the facility opened in the summer of 2005, with the housing component accepting the first residents in early 2006.

Peel Youth Village is a 48 room, three floor structure. Thirty-two of the rooms are organized into four-bedroom apartment pods (four pods to a floor), with shared kitchens and lounge. These are intended for mid-term or long-term stay. Each resident has their own private, single room with a bed, small sink, desk, drawers and mini fridge. The remaining 16 rooms have either one or two beds and are intended for short-term stay.

The shared kitchen/living room in each pod is designed to maximize support and social interaction. The space is integrated in terms of gender and age and this arrangement challenges the program staff as the youth adapt to communal living. There are regular diversity workshops because the level of diversity is significant amongst the residents.

Youth are referred to the program and assessed to make sure that the young person is ready for the program. This includes factors such as determining if the youth is eligible for income supports (Ontario Works, Ontario Disability Support Program) as well as a review of the history of housing and program participation. The focus is on goals related to education, employment and income (financial) stability, with youth involvement a priority from the beginning of the process. If accepted, the resident enters into a 30-day orientation for a true lived assessment and then a six month occupancy agreement is developed. The resident may apply for one extension for a total stay of one year minus a day, after which time the resident would fall under the provisions of the Residential Tenancies Act.

The residential program for youth employs a wraparound philosophy with collaborative and intensive case management. Components of the program include:

- Housing (short and long term)
- Life skills development – maintaining tenancy, budget and financial management, conflict resolution, cleaning, shopping, etc.
- Health supports, including an on-site health clinic with a full-time public health nurse providing flu clinics, health prevention and promotion and referral and advocacy.
- Employment skills development and employment placement supports include an Employment Resource Room with a computer bank, resume assistance, interview skills, job search groups and an Ontario Works Employment Support Worker on site
- Harm reduction philosophy (harm reduction is defined as an approach that focuses on the risks and consequences of substance use rather than on the use itself)
- An industrially-equipped kitchen for training. A social enterprise using this facility is to be implemented in 2007.

The facility also has a community centre that includes:

- 2 floors of community space
- Recreational programs (half basketball court, organized activities)
- Access to the health clinic for area residents
- Access to employment centre programs for area residents

One of the challenges faced by Peel Youth Village is dealing with community concerns, as the Acorn community where the facility is located is a densely populated area with existing issues and a lack of community supports. Some of the existing community issues include high crime rate, high rates of unemployment and underemployment, low income, lack of green space and limited access to support programs. It is also a challenge for the youth to learn what it means to live communally within Peel Youth Village and the staff works with the youth in developing strategies and resolving issues. The staff has also been dealing with the task of developing appropriate programming for the youth, which has been a challenge as staff attempts to meet the wide variety of needs of youth coming into Peel Youth Village.

One of the innovations at Peel Youth Village is that it is a mixed-use development incorporating both housing and a community centre. This also brings challenges for both community and resident relationships, as well as staff and resident relationships. Also, Peel Youth Village built on the experience of Eva's Phoenix and the Foyer model, although it differs from the Foyer model's insistence on youth clients working or being in school. The program recognizes that some of the youth at Peel Youth Village are on income assistance and need parts of their lives stabilized before moving onto further education or job training. The staff is very supportive in working toward the goals as determined by the youth.

4.5 Mustard Seed Project (Calgary)

The Mustard Seed Calgary is a non-profit, Christian humanitarian organization dedicated to the development of "programs and services of excellence" that will engage and bring hope to the homeless of Calgary. All of the programs encourage individuals to be empowered to lead a healthier, productive, stable and meaningful life. The Mustard Seed is a multi-service agency, providing a range of services related to food, street level services, housing programs, health and wellness, employment and training, education and recreation and arts.

The Mustard Seed Transitional Housing project is an apartment-style, long-term program for people who require a longer period of support than is available in the Step-Up Housing program (a short-term housing program). There is bed space for 26 residents. Each apartment has a kitchen, living room, bathroom and three or four bedrooms. Individuals are expected to learn to live in a community and share daily chores to maintain their apartment and common areas on their floor. Program supports include an assigned support worker who meets regularly with transitional residents for the purpose of goal setting, providing necessary support and determining what advocacy may be necessary by staff on behalf of the resident. Transitional Housing residents pay rent equal to 30% of their gross monthly earnings, as well as electricity, telephone and cable on monthly basis. Residents are responsible for providing their own food and daily needs items.

4.6 SHY – Supportive Housing for Youth (Cambridge)

In late 2002, Cambridge Kiwanis Village Non-Profit Housing Corporation (CKVN) in partnership with Argus Residence for Young People (a local shelter for homeless youth) introduced a supportive housing program for homeless youth in Cambridge. Supportive Housing for Youth Project (SHY) was developed, with the primary objective of the SHY model program being to "create a [stable], supportive housing environment for youth whereby they [can] learn to be responsible tenants within the context of actually being a tenant" (SPC CND 2006).

The main goal of this project is to provide a 'bridge' for youth in the housing continuum to other forms of housing and transition from a structured housing environment to other more permanent housing options. This helps youth gain personal independence, and successful reintegration back into community.

The project has four apartments in two Kiwanis non-profit housing complexes in Cambridge. The SHY apartments are integrated, with typical standard tenancy arrangements and up to eight youth (aged 16-24) at any given time (four males and four females are matched with a same-sex

roommate). Rents are geared to income and a supportive housing worker is employed full-time and is available to provide 24-hour on-call services to all youth in the program.

Examples of supports provided for youth include:

- crisis intervention
- life skills coaching/problem solving
- obtaining furniture, food, and household items
- studying for G1 driver's licences
- accompaniment to appointments
- assistance with entering school/work/training programs
- liaison with Ontario Works
- transportation to job interviews
- referrals to/case conferencing with roommates and other support systems/institutions
- assistance with the tribunal process
- one-on-one emotional support

In an evaluation of the program, it has been described in predominantly positive and hopeful terms. SHY's supportive component has been identified as being critical to the success of the youth in the program. The model has also been received well, in that it is different because it is not a group home situation. There is the feeling that youth in the SHY program have more independence and more responsibilities and develop a distinct sense of ownership and pride through this independence. The 24-hour accessible support worker was identified as a key component to this model in providing the youth with needed supports and connections to services.

4.7 LOFT Community Services (Toronto)

LOFT (Leap of Faith, Together) Community Services is a community service organization which offers permanent housing, community outreach and supportive housing services to nearly 4,000 vulnerable and homeless people at over 60 sites in the Greater Toronto area and York Region. LOFT has become one of Ontario's most diverse organizations dealing with homelessness, and one of the largest providers of supportive housing. Programs are specifically designed to meet the housing and support challenges of youth, adults, and seniors with special needs. LOFT's housing portfolio currently serves over 900 people per year, its community support services reach an additional 650 people, and its outreach services another 2,000.

LOFT provides several types of services to youth. The focus here is on some of the transitional housing programs directed at youth. Beverley Lodge provides residential support programs for young men, aged 14-18, which includes three semi-independent residences for 15 youth and supports for up to 20 additional youth in the general community. The Etobicoke Girls Residence is a residential support program for young women aged 14 to 18 years with services including a 24 hour, staffed group home for seven young women and affordable cooperative housing for 15 young women at three large houses in Toronto's West End. Ingles House provides recovery and support services to young women with serious substance abuse issues by providing a supportive atmosphere with strong peer support, where residents break with their old life style and develop new skills. Ingles House is the only high-support residence in Toronto serving women aged 16-

24, with residents being referred to it from various addiction treatment centres, hospitals, shelters and Children's Aid. While they live at Ingles House, the women attend high school or college, are employed, or are involved in day treatment programs.

The ultimate goal of the program is to provide the skills that will allow these young people to function as independent members of society. The program works with these youth to improve their skills in the areas of employment and schooling and encourages them to stabilize their lives and family relationships. The program focuses on preparation for independent living, empowering youth to redefine themselves and to see their own strengths, rather than see themselves constantly as victims. They are supported to continue with their education or participate in job training programs.

The semi-independent houses consist of 5 residents each, housing persons aged 16-24. The houses are all single gender homes. The rent is geared to income and each resident has their own locked room with mini fridge. There is no on-site staff, but residents have access to housing support workers that provide the initial intake assessment and meet with the residents individually, as well as through house meetings on a weekly basis. The houses follow a senior resident model, where a senior resident provides the main contact with staff and is responsible for extra duties in exchange for free rent. The youth take ownership of their place and are involved in house rules and decisions as to who is accepted into the home for residency. The residents sign a contract when they enter that includes goals in stabilizing their lives (schooling, job readiness, etc.)

One of the reasons for the success of this program has been the partnership with the youth. The experience has demonstrated how the necessary supports allow youth to recognize and achieve their potential. Also it is important that the support workers are flexible in dealing with the issues as they arise within the house context.

Some of the challenges to this program are that it cannot accommodate seriously challenged youth, given the minimal supervision structure of the homes. Also, zoning issues have been a challenge in the past and liability issues for the homes (e.g., fire, safety) need to be dealt with by the board of LOFT.

4.8 Choices for Youth (St. John's, Newfoundland)

Choices for Youth is a youth focused organization that continually strives to improve the quality of service so as to enhance young people's lives and enable them to meet their goals. This organization was formed in 1990. From 1990 to 2000, Choices operated on a quasi-group home model which emphasized a greater degree of choice on the part of youth. In 2000, Choices began to revamp its housing program from a "live-in" to an outreach model (Supportive Housing Program) due to changes in provincial legislation governing youth.

Choices for Youth operates several core programs. One is a shelter for young men from 16 to 29 years old who stay for up to one month. Choices follows a harm reduction model in assessing the ability of youth to stay at the shelter.

Choices also has a supportive housing program for youth (male and female) between the ages of 16 and 21. They do not own the housing directly but, in partnership with landlords, place up to 45 youth at a time in the community in independent living situations, receiving support from Community Youth Workers. The program serves approximately 65 to 75 youth a year. As defined by program funders and provincial legislation, youth do not continue to receive support beyond age 21. The program is block funded by the provincial system, whereby income supports are provided to the young people to pay for rent, groceries, and bus passes.

An advantage in this model is that youth have a greater say in the type of housing they live in. This is more of an outreach model, with a central office that provides the connection to the support workers. Another advantage is that the supports are not tied to the housing. As opposed to programs where exiting the program means exiting the housing provided, because Choices accesses the private rental market, youth have the option of maintaining housing beyond involvement with Choices.

A drawback to this model is working with youth who struggle with independent skills. The program has found that shared arrangements do not work as well as board and lodging, bed sitters or staying with a distant relative. Choices for Youth is looking to replicate the Eva's Phoenix model in the future as another method of meeting the needs of youth.

4.9 Summary of Case Studies

As summarized in Etmanskie (2004, p. 17), when looking at best practices for transitional housing for youth, one

...must go beyond what is tangible and measurable to include a spirit, vitality, and a commitment that is essential but not so easily captured. It would appear that "best" programs are run by people who:

- *Have an in-depth understanding of the needs in their community*
- *Are visionary and creative and can maximize the use of local resources*
- *Can build networks of support and work collaboratively with others*

Common elements emerge from the case studies as being desirable. They are:

- A physical location that is available, accessible, and safe
- Youth involvement, ownership and choice
- A holistic approach to meeting needs
- Developing community partnerships with a variety of stakeholders (private, public and voluntary sectors) in service delivery
- Developing relationships between people and communities

5.0 Youth: Their Experience and Understandings

5.1 Introduction

Discussions were held with youth in order to understand the experience of youth in Halton in regard to issues of housing and homelessness. Sessions were held with youth that were contacted through Peer Outreach Support Services and Education (POSSE) in North Halton, Secondary Teenage Education Program (STEP) at the Burlington YMCA and Kerr Street Ministries in Oakville. These youth are young people that have either directly experienced homelessness or have friends who have experienced homelessness. A total of twenty-one youth provided feedback and insight in Georgetown, Burlington and Oakville.

5.2 Causes Of Homelessness For Youth

When the youth were asked about the causes of homelessness amongst youth, they indicated that many of the reasons centred on family/home conflicts. Issues such as substance use (drugs, alcohol), loss of parent(s) due to death or family breakdown and lack of money/income were identified as common problems. Youth also identified that many lack the skills to live on their own.

Youth in all communities had similar experiences when it came to finding housing. They indicated expensive housing, age discrimination and lack of choices as the main issues that youth face when seeking housing. Some people have to move out of the community because rent is cheaper somewhere else. Participants also indicated that youth, especially at a younger age, may not have the skills to live on their own, or may feel uncomfortable on their own.

Often when seeking housing, youth indicated that their age was a barrier to securing housing. The participants indicated that no one wants to rent to a youth and that lack of references constitutes a barrier to housing. Youth talked about feeling that landlords don't trust youth as tenants and that they need an adult, such as a parent, for a signature and to lend credibility. This is problematic when family conflicts are the reason for seeking housing. The participants indicated that many times youth have to go outside of Halton to find affordable housing and services. For example, in North Halton youth are often referred to Guelph or Peel, while in South Halton, youth are referred to Hamilton, Peel or Toronto.

5.3 Housing Options

When asked how homeless youth found shelter, the participants indicated a variety of ways in which this was accomplished. They identified the lack of emergency shelter options as a barrier. Although there is one emergency shelter in Halton (located in Oakville) that does accept youth, many youth indicated that this was not always the best choice. Transportation from North Halton was one factor, as there is no direct bus service to Oakville and taking a cab is expensive. Youth also indicated that because of certain restrictions placed on entry to the shelter, such as refusing admission to those with substance use issues, a criminal record or mental health issues, youth have to look at other options for finding shelter. Youth also identified difficulties getting into social housing due to long wait lists. As one participant stated, "time is of the essence in getting housing." Getting the word out about housing options was mentioned and youth indicated that

people choose not to live in shelters because they resist living under any authority. The youth described themselves as stubborn and also noted that Halton is so geographically diverse that each community has unique issues.

The youth identified other strategies employed by those who have difficulty securing housing. Some youth stay at friends' houses (couch surfing), in tents in backyards, garages, Paper Mill pond, school roofs, restaurants, stair wells, grates, Tim Horton's coffee shops, etc. Links2Care in Georgetown has couches where youth rest during the day. Some youth who have cars or vehicles use them as their shelter. Some of the youth participants indicated that youth do not want to leave their community, perhaps because they work or study there, so the feasible housing choices are limited. They also spoke about friends who had decided to drop out of school so that they could earn enough money to afford the housing they were able to find. Another example was of one youth who had to drop out of school and quit work to go to a shelter.

Many of the youth suggested that there needs to be better housing options geared specifically to youth. The shortage of options in Halton was clearly identified as a challenge for youth who want to stay in their own community because of peer supports, school or work.

5.4 Help/Support Systems for Youth

When youth were asked about the kinds of help or support systems that would be useful for youth in stabilizing their lives and securing housing, the most common response centred on the need for structure and support. As one youth in Georgetown stated, "It needs to be more than just a roof." Youth who have been demoralized and need supports require services such as counselling and life skills. Some youth have never been on their own before and would benefit from knowing, before leaving an abusive situation, that they could access a transitional plan, instead of living in an emergency shelter. Youth should be represented at all stages of decision making: "Who knows youth better than youth?"

Good information on housing options and supports was also identified as being important. Information on how to find apartments, with maybe a number listed for youth in the housing section of the newspaper and information on services such as welfare were some of the suggestions brought forward by the youth.

Youth also pointed out the need for support staff who could identify with the issues youth are facing and be able to get along with them. They suggested that staff should be close in age to the youth they are serving and quite possibly be someone that was formerly homeless. Youth thought that having someone available for people who need someone to talk to was important and suggested the possibilities of peer mentoring.

Career counselling and supports regarding employment were also highlighted. Youth talked about the need for experience to secure a job and that skills training and employment supports would be helpful.

Transportation came up as a significant issue, particularly for those in North Halton. Suggestions such as bus passes for areas served by transit, or a posting of people with cars so they can car-

pool, were provided. Transportation is needed in order to access support services and any strategy requires funding for transportation.

5.5 Transitional Housing

After being provided with a definition of what transitional housing is, the youth were asked to provide some feedback on the elements of transitional housing that would be important for the development of such housing in Halton. The youth needed clarification on what typical transitional housing involves in order to help them work within the framework. They were provided with an explanation on the level of support that transitional housing implies.

When talking about the form that transitional housing could take, many of the youth indicated a preference for apartment-style arrangements, which might look like a townhouse for people to live co-operatively and might be subsidized. They envisioned that each person would have their own room but share the common elements, such as the kitchen and bathroom. Youth participants felt that common living areas are good, as residents have to work to learn to share with someone else, but that residents should also have their own private space. The youth thought that there could be multiple sites, connected by the same agency, to forestall community complaints that might arise over one central site with many residents. Youth stressed the importance that there be a community feel to the housing itself.

All of the youth agreed that support staff is necessary, but there were differing opinions on whether the staff should be on-site or not. If staff is living at the transitional housing site, they would not want an older person, but also not someone who is too young; the staff might be a youth worker. Staff might be needed so that things could run smoothly and things could get done. They indicated that the staff needed to be people that the youth could get along with, so they suggested that the staff be in their age group (20s). They also suggested that ideally staff would be persons who had similar experiences to the youth being served. A number of the youth mentioned peer mentoring/support as a desired component of support. This would provide the youth with someone to talk to for guidance. This counsellor would be someone who is not seen as an authority figure, such as someone with high status, someone who is controlling, judgmental, closed minded, or biased. The personality of the staff is important.

Part of the support would be the resolution of difficulties presented by different people living together. Some suggested that over-mediation might create more conflict, but did indicate that a weekly check-in facilitated by a worker or a staff member would be good. Some thought that mandatory daily meetings at set times like mealtimes to talk and problem solve together would be conducive to conflict resolution, and that talking to people face-to-face is preferable because it is a life skill. Some youth suggested that, for those who are not comfortable addressing issues personally and directly, something like a comment box might work (with the provisos that it should not be used for “snitching” and that, in the end, dealing directly with issues is inevitable). Youth saw support staff as having a role to play in mediating, advocating and empowering discussion of issues.

The soundings revealed that security, safety and privacy were significant issues for youth. They indicated that there must be secure access, which seemed to be why many youth leaned towards an apartment style living arrangement over other forms. Youth participants stressed that youth

housing should be located in a safe neighbourhood; recognized that there may be a gender differential requiring that there be a choice of single-gender or co-ed housing; and, noting the presence of racism, stated that there must be respect for people's diversity.

Youth participants indicated that the residents would need to deal with conflict and safety and asked how easy it would be for people to get in and out. Some suggestions included surveillance and a security code to enter the building, and that security might work better in an apartment building than a townhouse. They strongly advocated that there be a lock on each individual's room and that physical safety is important. The youth talked about issues of who should be allowed into the housing setting and how to control access by friends; that residents should be able to tell roommates not to let specific people in and not to let in other peoples' guests and, because family conflicts are often a part of the reason for youth seeking housing, that to let parents in would be a personal decision. Soundings participants felt these issues of access should be resolved by group decision of the residents, rather than by managers.

Linked to issues of safety is the issue of diversity. Youth identified the need for staff to have high levels of diversity training and that the setting of transitional housing needed to be a safe place from multiple "isms" such as racism, sexism, ageism and homophobia. The setting had to be a place where respect for diversity was held to a high standard.

Supports regarding employment and job skills experience were identified as important. This was often linked to securing a stable income base. It was suggested that the transitional housing program should look at what a person makes and hold a portion of their earnings for them as savings, so that residents would have a lump sum at the end of their stay. Youth indicated that appropriate job training, such as driving skills and various types of licences would be good. They suggested that partnerships with local employers would provide the first step to well-paying jobs and the house could provide the reference. Also, part of the support structure would be connections to appropriate programs, such as Secondary Teenage Education Program (STEP), an alternative high school for students 16-21 years old offered by the Halton District School Board.

Among the different supports that youth identified, they listed such things as

- Daily living skills – money management, cooking, chores
- Help with food – maybe a common garden
- Child care
- Health, medical access
- Addiction issues

Some of the youth indicated that services should pay attention to the needs of young mothers. Some suggested that perhaps a special facility for families could be created so that young families could live together and help one another out. Linked to this is how to deal with different kinds of arrangements when it comes to gender and couples, as services may want to separate them. The youth noted that couples often would rather be on the street than separate, as is often required by shelters. Some youth thought that there should be no couples within a transitional housing program, while others suggested that the physical setup should be more like apartments so you can live with your partner. The youth also suggested that different genders should not live together and that some should be able to live alone, rather than co-operatively, and learn life

skills on their own. In discussing how to accommodate the different needs of different people, some suggested that there might be different options – such as one home for males, one for females, one co-ed and one family residence – all in each town in the Halton Region.

When the youth were asked about the type of structure and rules that might be part of the transitional housing, they indicated that, although drugs and other illegal activities would be unacceptable, a “clean and sober” environment might not be realistic – most advocated for a harm reduction environment. In terms of youth being empowered through this process, they wondered if the guidelines could be decided by residents establishing their own rules, or if the major rules could be made by the funding organization and house rules by residents.

When youth were asked about location options for transitional housing, they stated that it would be better to have multiple sites throughout the region, rather than one site in one town because of transportation costs. They suggested that the housing be located in the centre of each town. Transportation was a critical element in this discussion and youth suggested that the transitional housing program link with volunteers to provide transportation. They also suggested that residents could carpool or share the cars of other residents. It was felt that, although support staff might be able to help residents switch schools if they had to re-locate, most youth would not want to do this.

Youth noted that, as people come into the transitional housing, there needs to be a limit on the length of stay, but that it is essential that subsidized housing be available, in order not to thrust departing residents back into crisis. Youth suggested something like a match-making service for subsidized housing to match roommates, to counteract the extreme difficulty of finding one-bedroom units and to allow sharing of domestic tasks. They felt that perhaps staff could advocate for youth in getting an apartment, and that there should be continued outreach and aftercare support available after moving out for those who require it.

Participants in the youth soundings stressed the need for youth to be involved in the full process of planning and decision-making.

5.6 Summary

The participants were articulate in identifying issues facing Halton youth that have found themselves homeless or at the risk of homelessness. They clearly indicated that having options that allow youth to stay in their own community is desirable, but that there are currently few programs that allow for this.

Youth identified the need for structure and support in housing options, with capable support staff that had the experience to support youth in stabilizing their lives. Many of the youth indicated a preference for apartment-style arrangements, with sites located in each of Halton’s local communities. The issues of security, safety and privacy were identified as critical for success. Also, supports that address employment and job skills experience were identified as important, as well as supports that would allow youth to develop the life skills for independent living.

6.0 Recommendations – Envisioning Transitional Housing for Youth in Halton

6.1 Introduction

Based on the findings of the literature search and conversations with transitional housing providers presented in this report, the Study Steering Committee established a goal to guide the development of transitional housing for youth in Halton. The Committee deliberated on the values and objectives that they believe are essential to implementing transitional housing for youth in Halton. In addition, the Committee outlined the physical and social supports necessary to fulfill the goal, to give life to the values and to transform the objectives into individual and community outcomes.

6.2 Goal Statement

To provide transitional housing and support to the youth of Halton where they can safely overcome difficulties, address the issues that have led to their homelessness, and rebuild their lives as they transition into stable housing.

6.3 Transitional Housing Values and Objectives

Values

- Put youth participants first – setting is conducive to youth being successful and productive
- Encourage and empower participants to take responsibility in stabilizing their life situation
- Increase self-sufficiency
- Increase self esteem
- Apply a harm reduction philosophy
- Youth are able to stay in their own community, where appropriate

Objectives

- Safe place to live for youth
- Offers residents the structure and support they need to address housing and homelessness issues
- Increase access to services in the community by residents
- Transition to stable housing
- Increase access to training, education and employment
- Respect for all diversities
- Resolve family issues/conflict resolution (family reunification where appropriate)
- Increase life skills
- Encourage healthy decision making

- Supports to maximize Developmental Assets (see Appendix B).
 - These Developmental Assets are based on the Search Institute survey of over two million youth across the United States and Canada since 1989. Researchers have learned about the experiences, attitudes, behaviours, and the number of Developmental Assets at work for these young people. Studies reveal strong and consistent relationships between the number of assets present in young people’s lives and the degree to which they develop in positive and healthful ways. Results show that the greater the numbers of Developmental Assets are experienced by young people, the more positive and successful their development. These Developmental Assets include *External Assets* (support, empowerment, boundaries and expectations, constructive use of time) and *Internal Assets* (commitment to learning, positive values, social competencies and positive identity).

6.4 Transitional Housing Model for Halton

Factors to be Considered for all Models

Discussions at the Steering Committee meetings based both on experience and on information from various models informed the Committee’s review of a number of physical site models and approval of the following types that reflect the need for a diversity of transitional housing solutions.

The Steering Committee concluded that given the geographical diversity of Halton, two types of physical site models would be appropriate in Halton:

- Single/central location (university dorm type model (single rooms), 30-50 youth), which might be more suitable to the larger urban areas of Halton like Burlington and Oakville
- Multiple locations (3-5 youth per location/unit), which might be more suitable to the urban/rural mix of north Halton in the communities of Milton, Acton and Georgetown as well as being suitable in south Halton for specific target populations.

During the discussions, the following factors were considered critical to the design of a model of transitional housing for homeless youth in Halton:

- The site is:
 - accessible
 - safe
 - secure
 - affordable
 - a private place to live
- Sites – at least one in each community. Five is ideal (Burlington, Oakville, Milton, Georgetown, Acton)
- Graduated living situations, as youth will be at various stages of readiness to be on their own
- Providing youth with a variety of affordable transitional housing options.

The Steering Committee also discussed and approved the following forms in which transitional housing for youth be developed.

Physical Components

Apartment

The Committee indicated that a range of apartment options could be developed to deliver transitional housing for youth. The apartment sites could be sites that are semi-supervised, with no on-site staff but regular staff support through regular meetings with residents and a 24/7 connection. Apartments could also be developed where supervision is provided on-site. Apartments might be provided as a series of one-bedroom units, or apartments with several roommates living together in one unit. The Committee also suggested that, where appropriate, flexibility exist so that apartments can be converted from supervised transitional housing to subsidized permanent housing. Finally, a model of having a duplex, four-plex or six-plex with a mentor in one of the units and residents in the other units was suggested.

House

The Steering Committee suggested that if the transitional housing model were located in a house, it might take the form of a shared home with appropriate on-site supervision. They also suggested that a house could be a group home linked to treatment facilities.

Host Model (Boarder)

Another model suggested by the Steering Committee is a volunteer Host Home where the resident is a boarder. The success of this model has been demonstrated locally through Transitions for Youth's program, *Bridging the Gap*. The Host Home model is designed to provide transitional housing for youth within their own community, so they can retain their jobs, schooling and social supports.

Support Components

Implementing transitional housing in the context of a continuum of housing options that includes adequate permanent housing and the supportive community-based services that together prevent a return to homelessness is a necessary condition for success. The greater the freedom afforded to the youth, the higher the probability that necessary skills will be acquired and practiced. On the other hand, it is also true that the greater the freedom, the greater the likelihood that problems will develop (Collaborative Community Health Research Centre, p.122). It is clear from the research that providers must have a willingness to innovate and adapt in order to provide successful transitional housing for youth. There would have to be an initial intake assessment of risk factors (e.g. health/medical needs; substance use; reason for housing crisis, etc.) to determine the level of attention/supports required and a comprehensive assessment of each individual to ensure individual needs are being met.

The Committee recommends that a range of different supports be offered to homeless youth during their stay in transitional housing as part of a philosophy that responds to the multiple needs of youth. The discussion concerning the philosophy that provides the foundation of supports included:

- the need for a holistic approach

- a wraparound philosophy, a dynamic process based on individualized, strength based, needs-driven planning and service delivery
- services and supports that need to be individualized (fluid) to meet the needs of the youth
- services and supports that are inclusive of diversity and build on the unique values, preferences and strengths of youth
- community involvement (informal supports)
- building relationships with other service providers (formal supports)

The Committee also acknowledged that there could be a range in regards to the level of support provided within the transitional housing model. Low level of supports could include practices such as peer mentors or a “don” arrangement within a transitional housing setting. High levels of support could be modelled on case management or treatment strategies when more significant intervention is required.

Support components for transitional housing for homeless youth, recommended by the Steering Committee, include:

- **Enhance living skills**, including how to maintain a residence; home management; shopping; money management; utilization of community services; utilization of leisure time; safety & security
- **Education and training**, which would include evaluating personal education and training needs
- **Employment**, which would include job readiness skills, career development, access to on-the-job training, volunteer placement and employment with work mentoring.
- **Health**, including personal care and hygiene, medical care, mental health supports, substance abuse supports
- **Mentor relationships** to support relationships with family and others
- **Mentor relationships** to support sexual orientation and gender identity
- **Self-image and self-esteem** including personal decision-making and communication skills
- **Cultural, spiritual and recreational** programs and services
- **Parenting and prenatal** supports
- **Transportation supports** that take into consideration the unique geography of Halton and its communities
- **Personal security and safety** in the residence
- **Youth ownership, involvement, and choice** in their program of transition
- **Develop relationships/connections** between people/communities

Target Populations

The Steering Committee discussed a range of issues related to providing service and support to diverse populations within the homeless youth population. The focus was on how to deal with diverse populations amongst youth, based on characteristics such as age, sexual orientation, gender identity, mental health challenges, substance use issues and ethnic/cultural diversity. Based on the literature search and discussions with transitional housing providers, many organizations provide transitional housing programs to a broad range of ages and needs. For those organizations that do provide targeted options, they do so primarily based on gender. While

many of the transitional housing providers provide service to a broad age range (often 16-24), those that provide programs to narrower age ranges usually do so because of restrictions based on funding criteria. Some organizations, such as LOFT Community Services, do provide transitional housing options that include sites that are gender specific or targeted to specific issues such as substance abuse. However, other transitional housing models, such as Eva's Phoenix and Peel Youth Village, provide services to a broad range of ages and needs. In these cases, the focus is on comprehensive diversity workshops and hiring experienced staff to deal with the fine balance required for the intimate setting of shared living space.

The Steering Committee was cognizant of the potential issues and ramifications of bringing together people of diverse backgrounds into a shared living arrangement. They stressed that this is a critical component in any development of transitional housing for youth. The Committee felt that any organization proposing a project needed to be fully knowledgeable about these challenges.

The Steering Committee identified that the group(s) developing the proposal for transitional housing for youth would have to take into account any of the liability and legal issues involved in providing this support. Also, there needs to be careful consideration of the values of the potential provider, experience in providing housing and supports and how this service fits within the mandate and existing programming of the organization.

One of the issues identified was eligibility criteria to receive service. The practice for most of the programs studied is for residents to undergo an initial assessment to ascertain the suitability of the resident for the demands of the transitional housing program. It is at this point that residents are either accepted into the program or referred to other programs and services that are more suitable to their needs.

An issue discussed by the Steering Committee was related to service to youth in a couple relationship. For many, it was important to note that the couple relationship might be the one stabilizing factor in the youth's life. For some, concerns around philosophical and potential legal issues, such as the recognition of common-law status, were raised. In discussing the issue of service to couples with some of the transitional housing providers, it appears that the common practice is to provide service to people as individuals, not as couples. The housing is primarily designed for singles (one bed per room), although providers did indicate that this is a grey area. Some programs take the position that two individuals should be able to put their financial resources together and afford market rents.

In the case of one provider, the response was to support a young person in having their partner stay with them for a negotiated period of time to ensure that the relationship is healthy before requiring them to seek other housing. This would give the youth a chance to see what it would be like to live together without giving up their housing, thus supporting informed choice. Although the focus is on providing services to individuals, most providers do not discourage couples applying to their programs, although each partner will be assessed separately. Also, relationships that start up in the context of the communal housing program do not impact their eligibility. The residents are admitted, case managed and discharged on an individual basis and their status as a couple does not impact those other decisions. One example provided was that if a youth, part of a

couple, is being discharged because of too many warnings about drug use in the facility, it will not impact the housing of the other half of the couple.

6.5 Conclusion

Transitional housing for homeless youth in Halton is an important component of the continuum of housing need. The desire to provide not only shelter but also a broad spectrum of support for youth at a critical stage in their lives was evident in the Steering Committee's deliberations. An approach that puts youth first and offers residents the structure and support they need to address housing and homelessness issues within Halton will go a long way to creating an environment where young people can develop to be our fruitful citizens of the future.

The transitional housing Goal, Values and Objectives, developed by the Steering Committee, provides a broad framework for the development of transitional housing for youth in Halton. The Steering Committee also recommended a range of Halton appropriate physical settings and support components that should be considered when organizations are developing proposals for transitional housing for youth in Halton. The needs of different target populations, available housing stock and funding will influence the final selection of physical settings and support components that are incorporated into any specific proposal that is being prepared for Halton youth. These recommendations provide the framework for generating innovative programs for transitional housing for youth across Halton and allow the community to respond in making this "more than a roof".

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Appendix A – Transitional Housing Study Steering Committee Membership

	Member	Agency	Position
Members:			
1	Ellis Katsof, Chair	Transitions for Youth (TFY)	Executive Director
2	Brenda Symons-Moulton, Vice-Chair	Transitions for Youth (TFY)	Director, Community Programs
3	Noel Draper	The Gathering	Coordinator
4	Cathy Gerrow	Links2Care	Community Support Coordinator
5	Shawn Kelsey	Halton Children and Youth Services (HCYS)	Community Program, Coordinator
6	Kimm Kent	Peer Outreach Support Services and Education (POSSE)	Program Manager
7	Michael Kingston	Halton Regional Police Service	Deputy Chief
8	Susan Lazzar	Region of Halton	Ontario Works
9	Iain Leithead	Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA), Halton Branch	Consultant
10	Joanna Matthews	Halton Multicultural Council (HMC)	Managing Director
11	Emma Millward	Halton Youth Justice Services – Ministry of Children and Youth Services (MCYS)	Probation Officer
12	Lisa Minnett	Summit Housing	Manager
13	Sally Pincock	Region of Halton	SCPI Co-ordinator
14	Michele Singleton	Region of Halton, Health Department	Manager of the Mental Health Liaison Nurse Team
15	Jennifer Speers	Halton Alcohol, Drug and Gambling Assessment, Prevention and Treatment Service – ADAPT	Supervisor – Youth Program
16	Don Neill	Halton Children’s Aid Society (HCAS)	Manager
17	Kjeld Thomasen	Community Youth Programs (CYP)	Executive Director
18	Joy Thompson	Town of Halton Hills	Manager of Recreation Services
Secretary:			
	Catherine Dove	Transitions for Youth (TFY)	Acting Supervisor, PULSE and Bridging The Gap
Researchers:			
	Joey Edwardh	Community Development Halton (CDH)	Executive Director
	Ted Hildebrandt	Community Development Halton (CDH)	Director, Social Planning

Appendix B – 40 Developmental Assets® for Adolescents



40 Developmental Assets® for Adolescents (ages 12-18)

Search Institute® has identified the following building blocks of healthy development—known as Developmental Assets®—that help young people grow up healthy, caring, and responsible.



External Assets	Support	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Family support—Family life provides high levels of love and support. 2. Positive family communication—Young person and her or his parent(s) communicate positively, and young person is willing to seek advice and counsel from parents. 3. Other adult relationships—Young person receives support from three or more nonparent adults. 4. Caring neighborhood—Young person experiences caring neighbors. 5. Caring school climate—School provides a caring, encouraging environment. 6. Parent involvement in schooling—Parent(s) are actively involved in helping young person succeed in school.
	Empowerment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Community values youth—Young person perceives that adults in the community value youth. 8. Youth as resources—Young people are given useful roles in the community. 9. Service to others—Young person serves in the community one hour or more per week. 10. Safety—Young person feels safe at home, school, and in the neighborhood.
	Boundaries & Expectations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 11. Family boundaries—Family has clear rules and consequences and monitors the young person's whereabouts. 12. School boundaries—School provides clear rules and consequences. 13. Neighborhood boundaries—Neighbors take responsibility for monitoring young people's behavior. 14. Adult role models—Parent(s) and other adults model positive, responsible behavior. 15. Positive peer influence—Young person's best friends model responsible behavior. 16. High expectations—Both parent(s) and teachers encourage the young person to do well.
	Constructive Use of Time	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 17. Creative activities—Young person spends three or more hours per week in lessons or practice in music, theater, or other arts. 18. Youth programs—Young person spends three or more hours per week in sports, clubs, or organizations at school and/or in the community. 19. Religious community—Young person spends one or more hours per week in activities in a religious institution. 20. Time at home—Young person is out with friends "with nothing special to do" two or fewer nights per week.

Internal Assets	Commitment to Learning	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 21. Achievement Motivation—Young person is motivated to do well in school. 22. School Engagement—Young person is actively engaged in learning. 23. Homework—Young person reports doing at least one hour of homework every school day. 24. Bonding to school—Young person cares about her or his school. 25. Reading for Pleasure—Young person reads for pleasure three or more hours per week.
	Positive Values	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 26. Caring—Young person places high value on helping other people. 27. Equality and social justice—Young person places high value on promoting equality and reducing hunger and poverty. 28. Integrity—Young person acts on convictions and stands up for her or his beliefs. 29. Honesty—Young person "tells the truth even when it is not easy." 30. Responsibility—Young person accepts and takes personal responsibility. 31. Restraint—Young person believes it is important not to be sexually active or to use alcohol or other drugs.
	Social Competencies	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 32. Planning and decision making—Young person knows how to plan ahead and make choices. 33. Interpersonal Competence—Young person has empathy, sensitivity, and friendship skills. 34. Cultural Competence—Young person has knowledge of and comfort with people of different cultural/racial/ethnic backgrounds. 35. Resistance skills—Young person can resist negative peer pressure and dangerous situations. 36. Peaceful conflict resolution—Young person seeks to resolve conflict nonviolently.
	Positive Identity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 37. Personal power—Young person feels he or she has control over "things that happen to me." 38. Self-esteem—Young person reports having a high self-esteem. 39. Sense of purpose—Young person reports that "my life has a purpose." 40. Positive view of personal future—Young person is optimistic about her or his personal future.

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