

## SHYFT (Supportive Housing Youth Focus Team) – FACT SHEET

- Over the past decade, the Tri County Community has seen a steady increase in the need for supportive housing options for at risk and homeless youth.
- In 2008, a group of 27 service providers and 6 community volunteers came together to try and find a solution to this need. The group became a committee and we called ourselves SHYFT (Supportive Housing Youth Focus Team).
- As SHYFT was still a committee in 2008/2009, the Tri County Women's Centre applied to CMHC (Canada Mortgage & Housing) for a small amount of funding on behalf of SHYFT, to carry out a number of community development activities including; a community scan of the need, youth leadership and youth engagement. This information was used for the development of a Business Plan dated December 2009.
- In January/ February 2010 youth leaders developed a 12 minute video on the issues that at risk and homeless youth face.
- In that same period of time SHYFT Committee Members presented their Business Plan to the community, Departments of Community Services, Health, Justice, and Education, all 11 Town and Municipal Councils, and our local MLA and Cabinet Minister, The Hon. Sterling Belliveau. A copy of the Business Plan was also sent to the other 4 Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) in the Tri County area.
- On behalf of SHYFT, the Tri County Women's Centre (TCWC) applied to the Federal Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS) to enable us to move in the direction of providing a safe and supportive housing to homeless and at-risk youth. This project was from April 1, 2010 to March 31<sup>st</sup>. 2011. We were able to purchase the house at 6 Trinity Place, furnish the home, carry out repairs, develop an office, promote the service, and carry out a number of fund-raising activities. The HPS funding was not to fund the operation of the service but to assist in the community development piece.
- With the financial generosity from the community we opened our service in January 2011.
- Again, with the leadership of TCWC, we were able to get another project funded under the HPS process for this current fiscal year April 1<sup>st</sup>. 2011- March 31<sup>st</sup>. 2012.
- SHYFT became a registered society and hosted their first Annual General Meeting in June 2011.
- In the second year of operations we were acquiring a financial deficit. As we were housing clients from a number of government departments, we appealed to the Department of Community Services (DCS) to assist us in addressing our deficit.
- The Department of Community Services (DCS) said they would cover our deficit if we signed an "agreement". This "agreement" had conditions, with one being we would close our overnight service. In other words, not be a safe and supportive home for youth. We clearly stated to DCS that we were signing this agreement **against our will**. We were forced to sign under pressure, as we were in partnership with the Tri County Women's Centre, and the deficit was going to impact both organizations.
- As part of this "agreement" we were told we would be given annual funding of \$61,400.
- Over the last 14 months (January 2011 – March, 2012) we have housed 34 homeless youth and worked with another 20 through our Outreach Services, for a total of 54 youth, both female and male between the ages of 16-22.
- SHYFT has been able to have such success by working together with the community and front line workers from DCS, Mental Health and Addiction Services, Restorative Justice, Legal Aid, School Administration and Guidance Counselors, Housing and numerous other agencies.

SHYFT Youth Services - Phone: 881-3111 - [www.shyft.ca](http://www.shyft.ca)

How Can I Help?

**SHYFT is important to the youth of Digby, Shelburne and Yarmouth**

**This is a community based model, designed and supported by our communities to help our youth.**

**This is what SHYFT Does EVERY DAY and has been doing for 14 months!**

- Improves access to basic needs (food, shelter, and transportation).
- Improves problem-solving, life and communication skills.
- Gives Access to other caring and supportive adults.
- Increases in positive engagement/attachment with community.
- Increases in positive, healthy relationships (with peers and caring adults).
- Decreases high risk behaviors.
- Supports achievement of academic/vocational success.
- Increases opportunities to experience success and build self-esteem.
- Increases “sense of belonging.”

*These outcomes are in keeping with the Nova Scotia Standards for Youth Outreach Program Funding Department of Community Service*

**Express your concerns to your friends and family, contact members of the government, contact the media.**

**Our Nova Scotia Government**

**Premier Darrell Dexter**

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**THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!**