



Addictions Counselling Program Report to The Funding Network August 2013

The Addictions Counselling Program has completed three years at our Evergreen Centre for Street Youth and is expanding to reach adult clients from other areas served by the Mission. The program's overall completion has held at 75% throughout the third year and it is now a permanent program, available across all Yonge Street Mission locations.

Youth completing the program have been given the opportunity to grow into a mentorship role. Over the past year three youth mentors have worked a variety of hours. They have accompanied youth in the program to detox, AA meetings, and otherwise promoting the Addictions program. They have been reimbursed with TTC tokens and gift cards for any tasks performed.

There is one area of critical concern – the growing influence of crystal meth. Addictions counsellor Fred Ellerington reports: "There has been an increase in meth usage, and certainly meth use as a percentage of clients has increased. This drug is a plague on our youth. It is destroying lives as it is highly addictive and difficult to stop using. I have adapted the model for meth users, by being much more intentional and increasing the frequency of meetings."

Current Program Activities:

- Monday night addictions discussion group at 6pm at Covenant House, 20 Gerrard Street East. Covenant House is a youth shelter and partner agency.
- Wednesday afternoon AA meeting at Evergreen 1 pm.
- Tuesday night Serenity, group based on the Alcoholics Anonymous model, at 6:45pm at the Mission's Community Centre at 270 Gerrard Street East brings addictions counselling to youth and adults in Regent Park.
- Clinic hours in Evergreen Health Centre – Friday 1-4:30pm.
- Mentor opportunities available with successful program completion.

Program Promotion:

- Addictions counsellor will contact and do site visits with all Toronto youth shelters.
- Addictions counsellor will make contact with each downtown probation and parole office.
- Referrals will be solicited from current client base through weekly programming at Evergreen – Wednesday 2:30-3:15pm.

Future Growth:

- Referral and contact is being made with all YSM programming areas.
- Clinic hours at the Mission's Community Centre to be arranged.
- Addition of student placements in Addictions from university & college social work programs.

Outcomes:

2011-2012		2012-2013	
Structured program registrations:	75	Structured program registrations:	85
Informal counselling:	1250	Informal counselling:	1350
Program graduates:	54	Program graduates:	60
Signs of success:		Signs of success:	
Clean and sober – 3 months:	30	Clean and sober – 3 months:	38
Clean and sober – 6 months:	19	Clean and sober – 6 months:	22
Actively engaged in goal setting:	33	Actively engaged in goal setting:	38
In stable housing:	18	In stable housing:	20
Pursuing education:	7	Pursuing education:	9
Employed/in employment program:	20	Employed/in employment program:	24

Addictions Program Budget:

Salary and benefits for 1 counsellor, 2 part-time peer mentors	\$51,000
Program costs – refreshments, materials, TTC fares	\$ 4,000
Total	\$55,000

Addictions Program Outcomes:

Stacey is 23-years-old and has been a poly drug user for the last eight years of her life. Heroin, crystal meth, alcohol, and anything else she can get her hands on has caused her life to spiral out of control. She was mandated by the courts to take drug counseling. Although she was somewhat reluctant at first, she began to open up.

Now Stacey has set a realistic goal around her substance use and, halfway through the structured program, she has not touched hard drugs. She does continue to use alcohol and marijuana, but has begun to limit the quantity and frequency. I look forward to continue working with Stacey on her journey to change.

Blake has severe FASD, Hep C and is an intravenous drug user. He has never had his own housing. He has lived rough on the streets, with the exception of infrequent stays at shelters, since he was 16. He has recently been accepted into the ASH (Addiction Supportive Housing) program. He moves into his own place August 1st, 2012; this has been made possible through the hard work of MDOT (Multi-Disciplinary Outreach Team) and myself to bring Blake to a place where he will be able to keep and maintain his housing.

Over the last two years, Blake has changed from a very difficult, dangerous and explosive client, to a more stable, enjoyable person to be around. His drug use has shown a marked reduction and can go for extended periods of time without injecting. We are very excited to see the transformation continue as Blake finally gets housed.

Fred Ellerington, Addictions Counsellor
August 2013