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**Covenant
House**
VANCOUVER

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**Covenant
House**
VANCOUVER

**Opening
Doors**
for Homeless Youth

Covenant House

opened in September 1997 in response to a study revealing that short-term transitional shelter for street youth was virtually non-existent in Vancouver.

Since then we have been in a perpetual state of expansion as the need for our services grew. During our first 10 years, we expanded our Crisis Program from 12 beds to 18, then from 18 to 22 beds, and we introduced our transitional living program, Rights of Passage (ROP). In 2009, due to overwhelming need, we more than doubled the capacity of our Crisis Program expanding to 54 beds. In 2014 we began offering gender specific spaces in both our residential programs.

During this past decade we have seen an explosion in the number of youth presenting with serious mental health and addictions issues. Likewise, we continue to identify an increase in the number of youth who have aged out of foster care (19 years old) and have nowhere to live and no source of income.

The young people who come to Covenant House face many obstacles to achieving independence. The majority of street youth have experienced physical, sexual and/or emotional abuse, often at the hands of the adults that were responsible for taking care of them. Vancouver's downtown streets can be dangerous: sexual exploitation, drug abuse, poverty and illness are commonplace on the streets and many of our youth are re-victimized there.

Combined with these traumas and often because of them, is the prevalence of mental illness amongst our youth. Post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), bi-polar disorder and drug-induced psychosis, plague our youth in growing numbers and are often left untreated with devastating impacts. In addition, our young people also struggle with substance abuse, often using drugs and alcohol as a way to "numb" the pain they experience in their lives.

In response to the enormity and severity of the issues facing our youth, Covenant House has developed three core services:



Residential Crisis Program

Our 54-bed Crisis Program offers safe housing, food, clothing and counselling to young people aged 16–24 on a first-come, first-served basis. We offer gender specific programming for both our young men and young women to provide the special consideration they both require. When a young

person comes to us, we see to their immediate needs first, which is usually medical attention, food and rest.

After three days, a youth worker sits down with the young person to learn about what brought them to Covenant House and to see how we can help. An individualized plan is created, and young people meet with a youth worker twice daily to ensure progress is being made and that the young person's needs are being met. Plans vary from substance abuse counselling, to treatment for mental illness, to finding a job and a safe place to live.



Community Support Services (CSS)

Street Outreach

The goal of the Outreach team is to seek out those young people who are living on the streets, in SROs (single room occupancy) hotels, or those who are at risk of becoming homeless. The Outreach team builds trusting relationships with young people, meeting them where they are: on the street.

Travelling on foot, Outreach workers are often the "face" of Covenant House and they take great care to connect with youth; always encouraging them to come to our Crisis Program or Drop-In program, or helping youth to access other programs as needed.

Drop-In

At the Drop-In space, young people can get help with whatever they need in the moment: something to eat, a pair of socks or a referral to any service Covenant House provides. For some young people it is as simple as arranging for a plane ticket home whereas for others, it is getting a birth certificate or SIN number so that they can apply for government assistance. More complex services include securing a mental health assessment for a youth who is displaying unhealthy behaviour, or referring a young person to a detox facility or other social services.

Rights of Passage (ROP)

Rights of Passage (ROP) is a transitional living program that provides supported living to young people who need guidance, structure and support as they strive towards independence. Many of the young people we serve are not ready to live independently; they lack the basic life skills most of us take for granted: budgeting, cooking, cleaning, goal setting, etc

Likewise, most of our youth require counselling and additional support as



they attempt to heal from the abuses of their past.

To address this need, ROP provides youth workers who are available 24 hours a day to ensure that participants are following their plans and keeping well.

These core programs are supported by several in-house services including:

- drug and alcohol counselling
- mental health clinicians
- pastoral care
- housing support workers
- access to psychiatrists

Yes I want to help Vancouver's street kids

- Cash Credit Card: MasterCard
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Amount: _____

Name: _____

Number: _____

Expiry Date: _____

Good Samaritan Club (monthly giving), please attach a void cheque or credit card # and expiry date. I would like to contribute \$_____ each month to Covenant House Vancouver.

[Signature and date must be filled out for Credit Card and Good Samaritan Club]

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Please complete information in full to receive a tax receipt:

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Address: _____

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- Please send me your most recent annual report.
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