



June 12, 2024

**360°
kids**

Surrounding kids
in crisis with care

www.360kids.ca

Regional Council

Re: Homelessness Service System Plan

360°kids strongly supports the Recommendations put forward in the **2024-2027 Homelessness Service System Plan** as it focuses on the key elements that we believe are critical in addressing the current challenges faced by so many young people and their families in York Region.

360°kids

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For more than 35 years, 360°kids has provided services to young people throughout York Region and has developed leading edge solutions to help prevent youth homelessness as well as provide a range of solutions to support those who become homeless. The partnership with the Region of York has been critical and we are grateful for the flexibility and creativity they have allowed us to have in order to evolve our programs to meet the ever-changing needs of those we serve.

We saw this with the unique approaches with housing and isolation requirements for youth during the pandemic as well as with outreach opportunities to connect with and engage youth with lived experience to help reach and support unhouse youth dealing with the challenges of COVID-19. We appreciated the opportunity to pilot family intervention initiatives to help advance a Prevention focus. As a result of the ongoing collective efforts and responsiveness, we were able to implement new approaches to meet needs in real time.

Now, post pandemic, with the growing numbers of individuals and families experiencing homelessness, we need to continue to explore bold solutions to addressing this complex issue. The affordability crisis is putting huge stresses and strains on families we see this regularly in our work.

Bold solutions therefore include a continued focus on homelessness prevention- an important pillar in the Service System Plan. Providing short term supports to families can go a long way to preventing youth homelessness which we know is a leading contributor to adult homelessness. Diversion Programs that we provide like Nightstop and Family and Natural Supports are important in this space.

Increasing the capacity in our facilities was enabled during the pandemic and during the past winter season, and we see this as another critical short-term, dignified solution to reduce the risks of being on the streets. The youth have appreciated the warmth, the access to facilities, regular meals and the important social supports that increases their sense of belonging. Increasing the capacity in the Region to provide short-term housing is critical and provides dignity to some of the most vulnerable.



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Lastly, the importance of longer-term investments in housing- deeply affordable housing cannot be overstated. We have appreciated deeply the partnership with the Region of York, United Way Greater Toronto, Hockey Helps the Homeless, Kylemore, Home Depot Foundation, and so many other individuals, groups and organizations that has allowed us to provide innovative and affordable housing solutions to young people. One of these initiatives is the recently announced Black Youth Housing program that will not only provide longer term transitional housing but will address issues of equity for a group of young people who are continuously over-represented in homelessness in York Region.

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Solving complex issues require creative, bold and sustained solutions. We believe that the Homelessness Service System Plan has these elements and we look forward to the continued support of Regional Council to help us address the needs of vulnerable community members. Thank you.

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With gratitude,

Clovis Grant
Chief Executive Officer