



eVas 2019 - 2020

Annual Report

Charitable Registration Number: 13223 9013 RR0001

Table of Contents

A Message from Eva’s Interim Executive Director	1
A Message from Eva’s Board Chair	2
It’s Time to End Youth Homelessness	3
Eva’s COVID-19 Response	4
By the Numbers	5
The Impact of COVID-19 on Youth	6
How We Responded	6
Keeping and Creating Connections	8
How You Responded	9
Building a Better Future	10
Financial Details	12

What We Do

Eva’s is an organization that provides shelter, transitional housing, and programming to help young people build brighter futures free of homelessness. We give young people the tools to transition out of homelessness and we collaborate and innovate to end youth homelessness.

Our Principles

- We are a reflective, learning organization
- We put young people at the centre
- We are relationship focused
- We have a justice-doing approach





It's Been a Year Like No Other.

We experienced heartbreak; we saw the strength and resilience of the young people we serve and the heroic efforts from staff to ensure they were cared for and kept safe.

We were thrust into COVID. Our goal for 2021 is to come out of it in a measured and thoughtful way.

In our 2019-2020 annual report, we'll share the highlights and the low lights of the fiscal year and give you a sense of our roadmap in a post-COVID crisis era.

Louise Smith, Interim Executive Director

A Message from Eva's Board Chair

Over a year ago, we didn't have a roadmap to deal with the full impact of a global pandemic.

I'd like to reflect on what we've achieved together in responding to youth homelessness during the pandemic with resiliency, tenacity and courage. We learned quickly how to adapt our programs and services. We came together to be there for those most impacted by COVID-19: youth at risk of and experiencing homelessness.

I want to specifically thank Eva's staff who support the young people in our care. You showed up when the science of what to do to protect yourselves and the youth was quickly evolving. You showed up and offered care, compassion and reassurance to the young people you served when you did not have any more answers than our health care professionals did. We are grateful for your willingness to face the unknown head-on and your commitment to helping our youth, at a time when the pandemic has heightened their needs greatly.

We are proud of and humbled by your efforts. Thank you.

Graeme Young, Chair, Board of Directors



Despite the fear of the unknown, we came together to be there for the most impacted by COVID-19: youth experiencing homelessness.

It's Time to End Youth Homelessness

Homelessness is a symptom of social injustices. Ultimately, the only way to end it is to get at its root causes and take on our all-encompassing responsibility to foster social justice.

- **2,000** youth are estimated to be homeless every night in Toronto (Gaetz & O'Grady, 2002)
- **63.1%** of homeless youth identified physical, sexual or other forms of abuse as contributing to their homelessness (Gaetz et al., 2016)
- **29.5%** of homeless youth identify as 2SLGBTQ+ (Gaetz et al., 2016)
- **57.8%** of homeless youth indicated some kind of involvement with child protection services (Gaetz et al., 2016)
- **85.4%** of homeless youth fall into the 'high symptom/distress' category for mental health (Gaetz et al., 2016)
- **59.6%** of homeless and street-involved youth reported violent victimization. They are six times more likely to be victimized than the general population (Gaetz et al., 2016)
- **74%** of homeless youth in Toronto identified themselves as racialized (City of Toronto, 2018)
- **39** years is the average life expectancy for a person experiencing homelessness in Canada (Trypuc & Robinson, 2009)
- **\$4.5-6** billion is the annual cost of homelessness in Canada. This figure makes a strong case to shift our focus from an emergency response to prevention and rehousing (Gaetz, 2012)

Our Solution

Eva's works collaboratively with homeless and at-risk youth to actualize their potential to lead productive, self-sufficient and healthy lives by providing safe shelter and a range of services.

In 2020, 821 youth found safety and shelter at Eva's.

Eva's Programs

Eva's programs are designed to help youth exit homelessness and give them the skills, tools and strengthened networks they need to build brighter futures.

- Employment training in high demand fields, including construction, building maintenance and print and digital communications
- Educational support to help youth access educational opportunities and achieve academic success (e.g., high school diploma, post-secondary studies)
- Family Reconnect counselling support to strengthen youth/family relationships and prevent youth homelessness
- Independent living program that provides critical skill-building to help youth find and maintain housing and their health (i.e., cooking, financial literacy, conflict resolution)
- Recreation program that provides opportunities and engagement in sports, health and wellness, and arts and culture

Eva's COVID-19 Response

Despite the fear of the unknown, we came together to be there for those most impacted by COVID-19: youth experiencing homelessness.

"The young people we serve know what it's like to feel alone with no one to rely on. But it's a testament to how deep the relationships between young people and Eva's staff are," says Shequita Thompson-Reid, Senior Site Manager (in 2019-20, now Director of Programs) at Eva's says. "Staff showed up for them, both physically and emotionally."

"Is it scary? Absolutely," says Thompson-Reid.



Shequita Thompson-Reid
Senior Site Manager 2019-20
Photo sourced from The Toronto Star

It's scary for many, many staff who are coming into work daily and feeling those anxieties because as they are supporting (young people), they are supporting family members and child care and navigating those pieces.

”

Being in the throes of responding to the pandemic WAS scary. We were operating with rules that changed as science's understanding of the virus evolved. The safety and well-being of our youth and staff were paramount, and we shifted to keep up with the definition of well-being.

OUR IMPACT IN 2019-2020



This has been a challenging year for Eva's due to COVID-19. We had to cancel programs in response to the pandemic and move other programs to a virtual setting in order to keep youth and staff safe. As a result, we saw a decrease in our output numbers for the year.



Eva Maud Smith (1923-1993)



158

youth served by Eva's
Family Reconnect
Program



633

life skills
programming
sessions offered

821

YOUTH FOUND SAFETY AND SHELTER AT EVA'S

333
at Eva's
Place

284
at Eva's
Satellite

116
at Eva's
Phoenix

64
at the
Hotel

24
at YOUTH
Belong



Nearly
40
youth
completed
high
school



Nearly
30
youth
attended
post
secondary



Nearly
15
youth participated
in graphic
communications
and print
technologies



More than
75
youth
succeeded in
the
employment
program

The Impact of COVID-19 on Youth

The pandemic flipped everything around. Eva's COVID-19 protocols require staff and young people to practice physical distancing. But in shelters, space is at a premium. Youth who would normally be outside of the shelter during the day were expected to stay in 24-7, as we aimed to reduce the spread of the virus. Their school, placements and, in some cases, jobs were put on hold.

Many of the drop-in programs youth attended pre-pandemic were forced to close, cutting them off from community and social support.

How We Responded

Prioritizing Physical Well-Being

At first, we were concerned for the physical health of our young people and staff. We worked quickly to ensure that physical distancing measures and rigorous cleaning protocols were enforced. We opened and safely transitioned 34 of our youth to our hotel shelter site. Youth at the hotel shelter, those who remained at Eva's, and our staff were better able to practice physical distancing, while still receiving Eva's services and supports. And because young people were with us 24-7, our food program increased as we began feeding 126 young people three meals and two snacks each day.



Meal being prepared at Eva's Place.

Enhanced Mental Health Supports

Once physical safety was protected, we quickly shifted our focus to address the young people's mental health. Staying in their rooms and isolating was putting the youth at risk. They were frightened. The uncertainty and fear were re-traumatizing and stressful. So, we adapted. We held weekly resident meetings to keep the young people informed. We added wellness checks and internal programming that aimed to maintain a sense of routine and normalcy.

Centralized Intake System

Last year, Eva's became the first youth shelter in the city to create a centralized intake system. For youth looking for help, this makes an already stressful situation much easier, while allowing Eva's staff to create a circle of care around them. For youth facing precarious circumstances, the new system allows for simplified and easier navigation, which has been especially important during COVID-19.



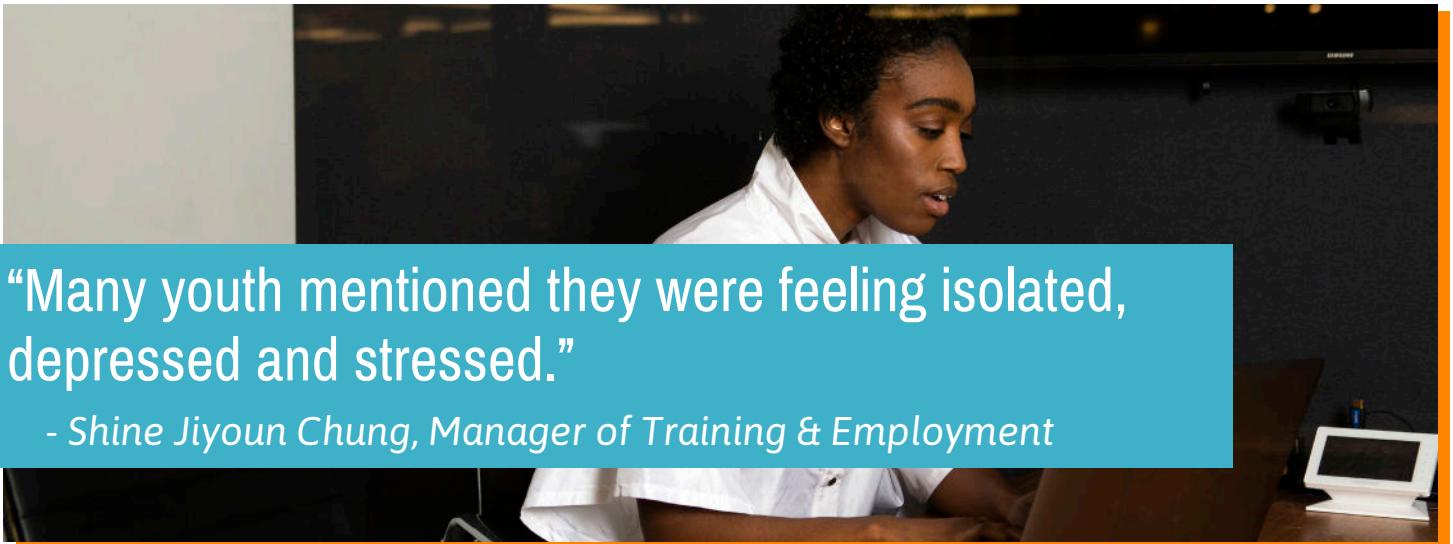
We tend to see a rise in youth needing mental health services when external resources decrease, so we are here for them.

”

- Shequita Thompson-Reid, Senior Site Manager at Eva's

Keeping and Creating Connections

Being a youth experiencing homelessness has never been easy, and the COVID-19 crisis has made it more challenging than ever. So, when the pandemic forced people to physically distance and retreat into their homes, the staff at Eva's encircled youth with care.



“Many youth mentioned they were feeling isolated, depressed and stressed.”

- Shine Jiyoun Chung, Manager of Training & Employment

During COVID-19, the young people at Eva's have been able to access programming online, including our Graphic Communication and Print Training Program.

Staff realized they needed to make sure young people did not feel abandoned and hopeless. They wanted to connect with the youth and figured the best way to assist them was to move their programming online.

Before COVID-19, Eva's Youth in the Graphic Communication and Print Training Program would combine in-classroom graphic arts design and hands-on learning of the print equipment. When thinking about moving this and other Eva's programs online, Shine knew it wouldn't be easy. "Online learning is a luxury," she says. "The young people we serve may not have a physical space where they can join a session even if they have a laptop. Some of the youth we serve may be on the streets, or they may be couch-surfing and may not have a private space where they can work."

Setting up a remote learning environment was challenging to turn around quickly, but it has been well-received. "Participants are quite tenacious. This program was not easy. They had to overcome accessibility and connectivity issues while dealing with isolation issues. The program is eight hours long, and the course load is quite challenging, but the youth log on, on time every day," says Shine. "One youth shared that she feels very supported by her Eva's worker and that checking in every morning gave her a much-needed routine, purpose and connection.

Even during a pandemic, the youth at Eva's are resilient, determined, and on their way to brighter futures.

How You Responded

You were amazing. As a community, you really stepped up.



Eva's Satellite front desk.

We were moved and inspired by your willingness to take action. Your support during an uncertain time allowed us to address the immediate challenges with certainty. Because the challenges were many – and costly: increased food costs because young people were staying with us 24-7; personal protective equipment; transportation costs to ensure staff could get to work safely; increased cleaning costs to adhere to safety protocols; COVID-19 pay for staff working on-site; the costs of transitioning programs virtually; the costs of moving some youth to hotels and the additional costs of adding check-ins and enhanced mental health supports.

Thank you for stepping up with your financial support and your outpouring of care and concern. Along with donations, we also had so many notes and calls, demonstrating your thoughtfulness. While we still have a long way to go, we are grateful for the support you showed and know that we have a community of supporters who we can count on the way young people count on us. Thanks for being one of them.

Thank you for your generous support during a frightening time. We couldn't have supported young people without you.

Building a Better Future

We were thrust into COVID. Our goal is to emerge from it thoughtfully, with a measured response.



Our organization’s innovative approach to supporting youth experiencing homelessness started with our founder, Eva Maud Smith, a Black community advocate. Her legacy remains central to the work we do today.

“Eva touched the lives of many and her single-minded focus on giving of one’s self to help others continues to echo in our hearts as we hear her name.” - Mavis E. Burke

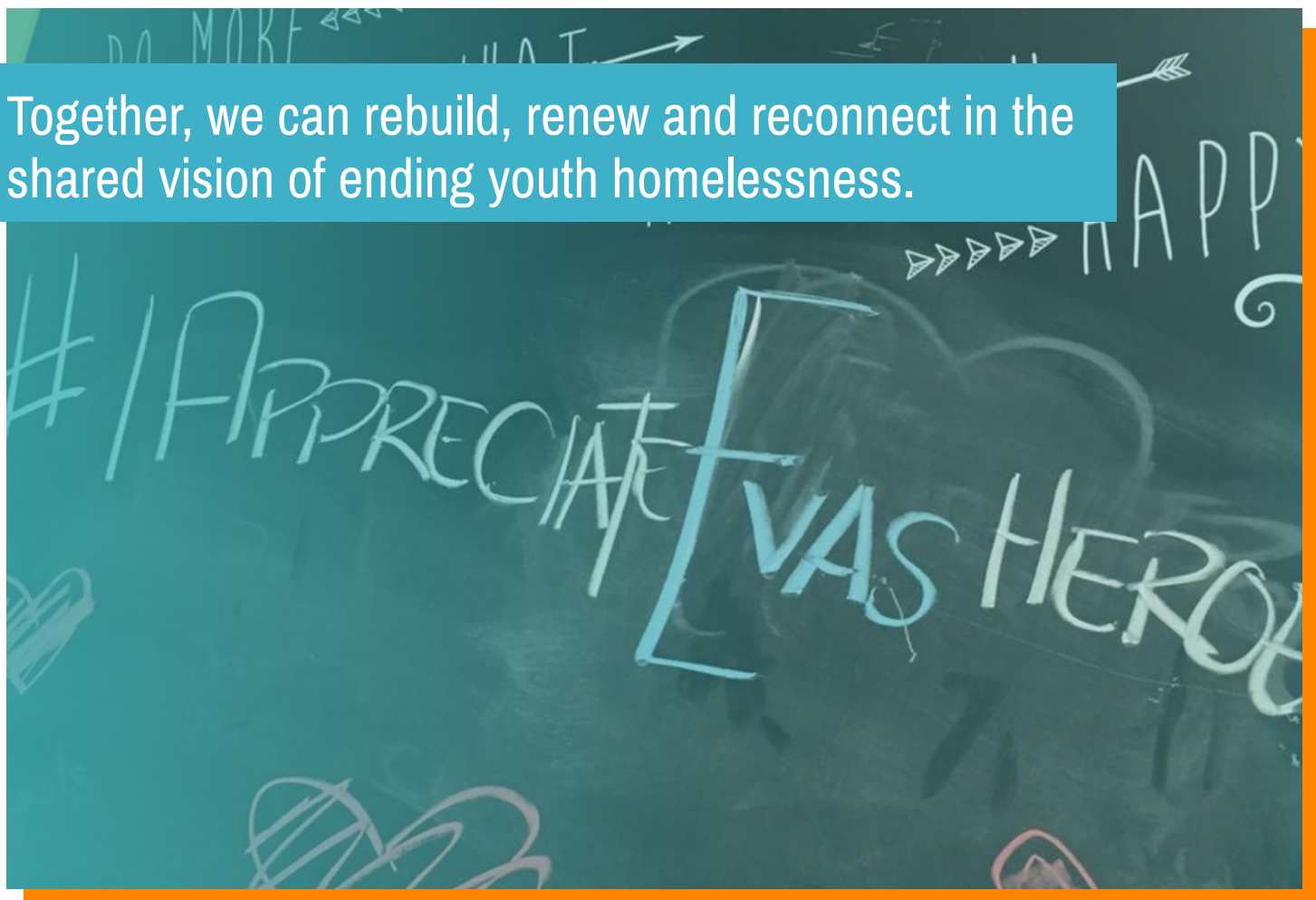
Eva’s heart was drawn to our city’s young people, and she realized that the experience of homelessness had become a barrier for some. A trailblazer, Eva shed light on hidden youth homelessness, showing decision-makers the scope of the problem and rallying supporters to do something about it. She demonstrated that adult shelters were missing the specialized supports youth needed to avoid chronic homelessness in the long term.

Although Eva Smith passed away in 1993, her spirit lives on. Today, Eva’s serves hundreds of young people and their families every year, offering a unique combination of safe shelter and housing, street outreach, counselling, training, and life skills programs.

Our focus in the coming months is:

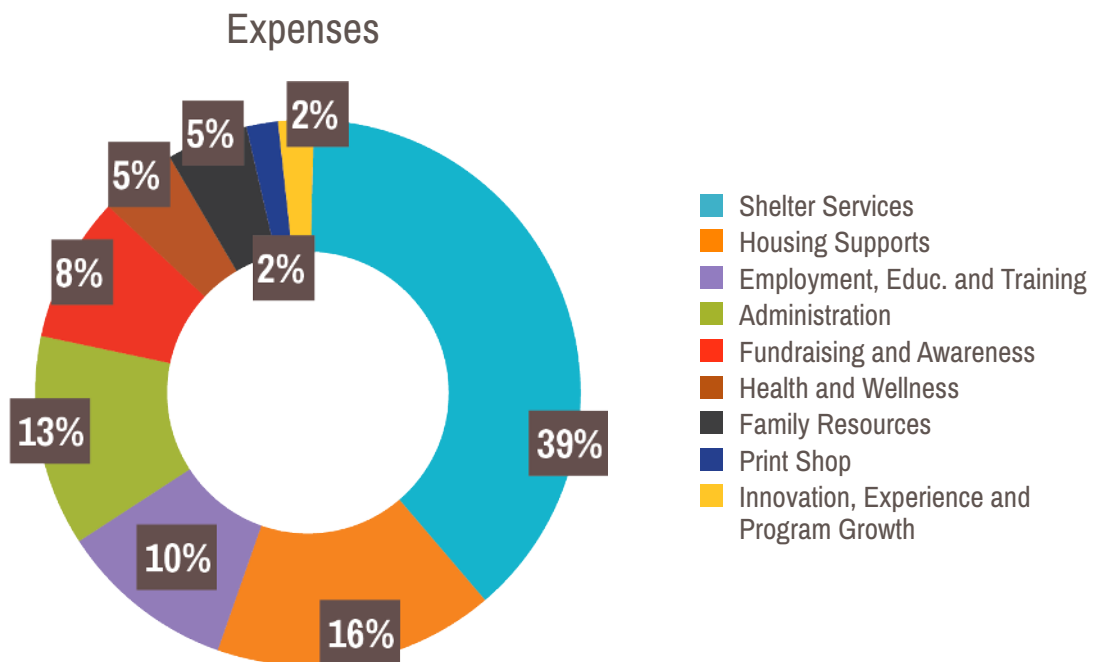
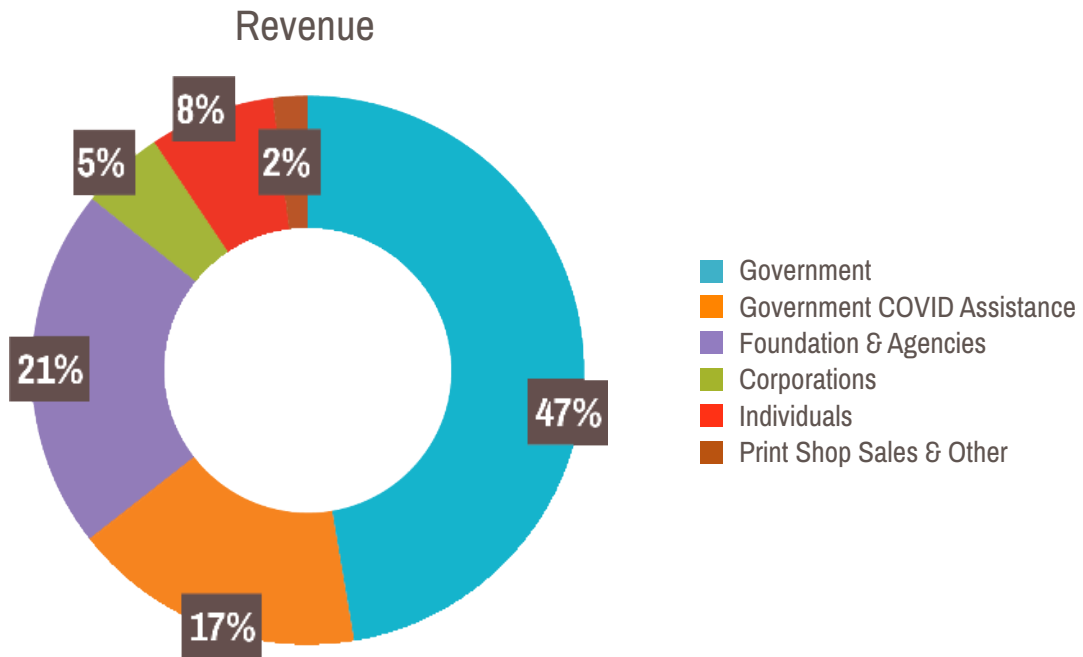
- Developing and implementing an organizational-wide Equity, Diversity, Inclusion (EDI) strategy, centering the needs of Black youth, so that all people are treated equitably in the work of Eva's mission.
- Enhancing technology solutions so that crucial services can continue to reach and help the youth we serve.
- Strengthening services for young people who have experienced trauma and are in need of specialized trauma therapy
- Reconnecting with essential community partners so that young people have a continuum of care in their communities

The months ahead will continue taking us on an unprecedented journey. But just as we could not have weathered the storm this far alone, we will continue to rely on the support of our staff, community and generous donors to help young people create a brighter, more prosperous future for themselves.



Together, we can rebuild, renew and reconnect in the shared vision of ending youth homelessness.

Financial Details



Revenue this year was a mix of our historical sources: individual, foundation and corporate donors; government support and social enterprise. We also received additional government support to address the increased costs due to COVID-19: personal protective equipment, increased food costs, enhanced cleaning protocols, moving young people into a City of Toronto-funded hotel to accommodate physical distancing measures and additional staff costs.

For full Financial Statements, visit evas.ca and click [About Us, Publications](#)

Sources

City of Toronto. (2018). *Street Needs Assessment 2018*.

Gaetz, S. (2012). *The Real Cost of Homelessness: Can We Save Money by Doing the Right Thing?* Toronto: Canadian Homelessness Research Network Press.

Gaetz, S., & O'Grady, B. (2002). Making Money: Exploring the Economy of Young Homeless Workers. *Work, Employment and Society*, 16(3), 433–456.

Gaetz, S., O'Grady, B., Kidd, S. and Schwan, K. (2016). *Without a Home: The National Youth Homelessness Survey*. Toronto: Canadian Observatory on Homelessness Press.

Trypuc, B., & Robinson, J. (2009). *Homeless in Canada: A funder's primer in understanding the tragedy on Canada's streets*. King City: Charity Intelligence Canada.