

# THE SOLUTION

By bringing youth who are staying in shelters and living on the street into the housing program, our ultimate objective is to move the youth from the “street” to permanently housed and independent individuals in our community. The Wesley Youth Housing Program offers the street-involved or homeless youth (ranging in age from 16-21 years) access to safe, affordable, one-year housing with on-site support programs to aid the youth in building the skills necessary to reach their ultimate goal.

## Stage One

The first stage of the program brings youth into the housing complex (youth are referred from an agency providing outreach services or through self-referral). To enter the program, youth must meet the criteria: they must be attending school and/or be employed, have a source of income (be employed or receiving Ontario Works income), be willing to live with other youth in Stage One, and set and work toward individual goal achievement.

Stage One of Wesley Youth Housing is on the fourth floor of the apartment complex. Youth will first move into the program in a “pod” living environment. Each youth has their own locking bedroom, a shared kitchen, eating area, living room and two bathrooms with two other pod mates. Youth live in this stage for approximately six months. During Stage One, youth will:

- Be assigned a Program Mentor to assess their immediate and individual needs and situation
- Work closely with mentors setting and working towards goal achievement
- Spend one-on-one/group time with a Life Coach to work on life skills (such as budgeting, grocery shopping and time management)

## Stage Two

After approximately six months in the first stage of the program, youth will be skilled and resourceful enough to graduate to the second stage of the program and move into a bachelor apartment.

This stage of the program moves the youth toward the ultimate program objective – the transition to a life of permanent housing and skill development to live independently in the community. The second stage is on the fifth floor of the apartment complex and consists of 10 bachelor apartments.

Youth in this stage continue to have access to support from Program Mentors, but are provided with an increased opportunity to practice their newly developed skills and independence before venturing out on their own. Youth are expected to be in Stage Two of the program for approximately six months as well.

## Transition to Independence

A key element of their ultimate objective is the ongoing development and achievement of a final independence plan. The youth, in conjunction with Program Mentors, will work to discover housing options and make responsible decisions, work on obtaining essential living needs such as furniture and house-wares, as well as a clear plan on how to remain housed after graduating the program.

Upon completion of the program, youth will have built the necessary confidence in maintaining their permanent housing and developed the skills necessary to live a life of independence in the community.