

## Legislation Text

---

**File #:** 19-A-041, **Version:** 2

---

**PRESENTATION BY MS. LUCY GOWERS CONCERNING YOUTH HAVEN**

Ms. Lucy Gowers, Executive Director of Youth Haven spoke to Council regarding the programs and services offered by Youth Haven.

Ms. Gowers shared a variety of statistics and background information concerning youth homelessness in Simcoe County. She advised that 1 in 3 people using emergency shelter services in Simcoe County are youth and close to 400 at risk and homeless youth sought help from Youth Haven through the emergency shelter and outreach offices in 2018. Ms. Gowers noted that young people between the ages of 13 to 24, who are experiencing homelessness make up approximately 20% of the homeless population in Canada.

Ms. Gowers spoke to the many factors that can lead to youth homelessness, including family conflict, substance abuse, gender and sexuality, youth unemployment and unaffordable housing. She described the various programs and services offered by Youth Haven for at-risk and homeless youth including, crisis intervention, counselling, care management, outreach services, basic life skills training and health care. Ms. Gowers advised that Youth Haven provides youth experiencing homelessness with the opportunity to socialize in a safe, non-judgemental setting and provides them with the support they need to rebuild their lives.

Ms. Gowers shared her thoughts regarding how Youth Haven is able to take the lead in providing safe and respectful solutions to youth homelessness in collaboration with the community and other community agencies. She described a story from a Youth Haven resident about the stigma associated with homelessness and how she believed no one, let alone a young person should feel that way.

Ms. Gowers provided information concerning additional services and programs offered by Youth Haven, including emergency care housing, case management, referral services, counselling, life skills training, health care and continuing care. She described how she believes these programs work together to provide the necessary support, mentorship, advocacy and care that is required to support youth when they move back home or into their own place.

Ms. Gowers described the Transitional Housing Program and how it assists with transitioning from living in a home or group setting to living independently. She shared how the program includes five on-site transitional beds for youth who may require extra time and skill development to become successful adults in the community.

In closing, Ms. Gowers highlighted the story of a youth that was in the Transitional Housing Program with Youth Haven and continues to access the programs and services of Youth Haven when they need support. She remarked that the youth described how important the programs are and the profound positive impact Youth Haven has had on their life.

Members of Council asked a number of questions related to the presentation and received responses from Ms. Gowers.