

# Winter Emergency Response 2010–11 Funded Projects Report





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## Highlights

- Total funding for the Winter Emergency Response Plan 2010–11 amounted to \$931,740. Homeward Trust administered this funding to four drop-in locations and a winter bus outreach service. These projects were funded from November 8, 2010 until April 30, 2011.
- The Government of Alberta provided \$162,013 in new dollars, in addition to \$487,987 of provincial funding carry-over dollars from previous seasons of WER funding to support the 2010–11 Plan.
- \$281,740 from the Government of Canada’s Homelessness Partnership Strategy (HPS) was used to cover the remainder of WER costs for the 2010–11 season.
- 81,421 visits were made to the WER projects and 143,307 meals were served during the WER 2010–11 season.
- Services offered through the five funded projects included: rides to shelters, warm meals, referrals to other agencies, calls for medical aid if needed, dry clothes and winter gear as available, and perhaps most importantly—warm welcoming places to take shelter from the cold.
- Agencies did not report any major incidents over the course of the WER period.
- Shelter usage was down during the WER season as compared with previous WER seasons.
- 77% of visits were made by male visitors and 23% of visits were made by female visitors.
- 59% of visits were made by Aboriginals, 37% were made by Caucasians, and 4% were made by individuals of other ethnicities.
- 33% of visits were made by individuals observed to have mental health issues, 62% were made by those observed to be under the influence, and 32% were made by those with suspected addictions. (It should be noted that these numbers were based only on the observations of staff members at the WER agencies. No clinical assessment tools were used in this arriving at these numbers.)

## **About Homeward Trust Edmonton**

Homeward Trust Edmonton is a not for profit organization that uses a community-based approach toward the goal of ending homelessness in Edmonton. Our primary role is to coordinate response to housing needs by working together with local agencies and all orders of government.

A comprehensive organization, Homeward Trust increases access to housing by:

- Funding the development of new housing units and accessing market housing units;
- Coordinating the provision of support services;
- Undertaking community planning and research; and
- Raising awareness in the community through events and initiatives that promote ending homelessness in Edmonton.

Since 2001, Homeward Trust has provided funding for more than 80 capital projects, creating in total more than 1900 new units. An additional 1300 people have found housing through the housing first support program since 2009. Homeward Trust has also funded more than 80 support projects at agencies across Edmonton. In total, we have disbursed over \$100 million in funds, and succeeded in attracting better than 1:1 return investment from partners, community organization, and orders of government. Leveraging our resources, we are able to attract a greater investment in housing and initiatives to end homelessness.

In 2010, Homeward Trust received funds through the Government of Canada's Homelessness Partnering Strategy, Government of Alberta, City of Edmonton, and proud community partners.

# Winter Emergency Response Program Overview

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## About Winter Emergency Response

In October 2010, Homeward Trust presented the Government of Alberta and the Winter Emergency Response (WER) partners with its Winter Emergency Response Plan. The plan outlined the types of activities and services required to provide emergency warming services in support of people experiencing homelessness during the harsh winter months in our city. The plan also included a contingency strategy for extreme weather conditions.

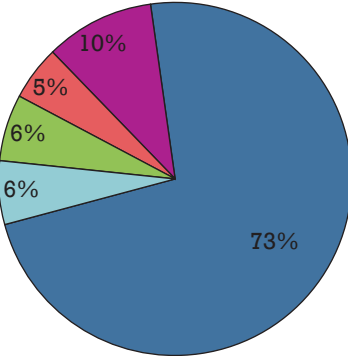
The 2010–2011 Winter Emergency Response period ran from November 8, 2010 to April 30, 2011. During this time, Homeward Trust administered \$931,740 in funding provided in part by both the Government of Alberta and the Government of Canada (Homelessness Partnering Strategy). The five projects funded by Homeward Trust during the WER 2010-11 period included the drop-in centres at Boyle Street Community Services (BSCS), Jasper Place Health and Wellness Centre (JPHAWC), Mosaic Centre, and Salvation Army Edmonton Crossroads Community Church (E3C), as well as the Boyle Street Community Services Winter Warming Bus. The funding received for the WER program ensured that staffing, food, and other important services provided through the drop-in warming centres and the winter warming bus were available to serve homeless and at-risk-of-homelessness individuals throughout Edmonton during the cold winter months. Over the course of the WER season 81,533 visits were made to the five WER projects and 143,307 meals were served.

In support of the 2010–11 WER program, Homeward Trust played a key leadership role by overseeing the program planning and execution and acting as the administrative and fiscal agent. Homeward Trust administered the financial contracts with each of the four drop-ins and the winter warming bus, coordinated monthly meetings of the Winter Emergency Response Committee, compiled and analyzed the data provided by each of the agencies, and completed reporting for the program.

The Winter Emergency Response Committee consisted of Homeward Trust staff, representatives from the agencies participating in WER 2010–11 (Boyle Street Community Services, Jasper Place Community Centre, Mosaic Centre, and Salvation Army Crossroads Community Church), representatives from the Edmonton Do Likewise Society, and a representative from the provincial government. The committee met monthly throughout the WER season in order to discuss emerging trends, data collection issues, the progress of the response program, and any other issues experienced by the agencies. The discussions held at these meetings helped to coordinate WER efforts throughout the season, and will also help to guide the planning of future WER services.

“ The funding received for the WER program ensured that staffing, food, and other important services provided through drop-in warming centres were available to serve homeless individuals throughout Edmonton during the cold winter months ”

Total Visits During WER



- Boyle Street Drop-In
- Boyle Street Winter Bus
- JPHAWC
- Mosaic Centre
- Salvation Army



“ 81,421 total visits were made during the course of WER 2011 ”

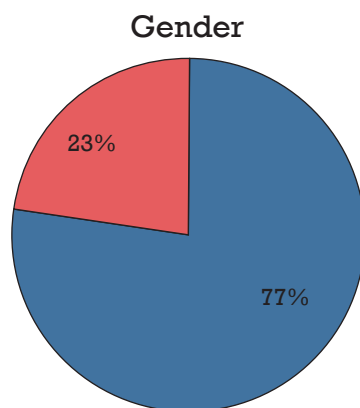
## Demographics

The WER projects served some of the most vulnerable populations within Edmonton during the harsh winter months—this included not just homeless individuals, but also those who are at-risk-of-homelessness. While the overall number of visits made during the WER 2010–11 period (81,533 visits) was down as compared to the number made during the 2009–10 period (102,316 visits), the demographics of visitors to WER projects during this past winter season were largely similar to the demographics of the overall homeless population identified in the 2010 Edmonton Homeless Count conducted in October 2010.

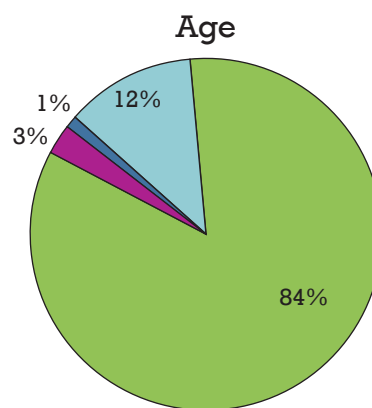
Of the 81,421 total visits made to WER projects during the 2010–11 WER season, 77% of visits were made by individuals observed to be male and 23% were made by individuals observed to be female. 89 visits were made by individuals observed to be transgendered; however this number reflects less than 1% of all visits made. These numbers are comparable to the demographics of the Edmonton homeless population as assessed in the 2010 Edmonton Homeless Count in which 75% of individuals counted were observed to be male and 25% were observed to be female.

During WER 2010-11, Aboriginal individuals accounted for 59% of visits; Caucasians for 37%; and individuals of other ethnicities for 4%. Visits made by Aboriginal individuals during the 2010-11 WER season increased to 58% from 51% during the 2009–10 season. This number is higher than the 38% of the homeless population identified as being Aboriginal in the 2010 Homeless Count, and is significantly higher than the overall population of Aboriginal individuals living in Edmonton—during the 2006 City of Edmonton Census only 5.6% of the total Edmonton population was recorded as being Aboriginal.

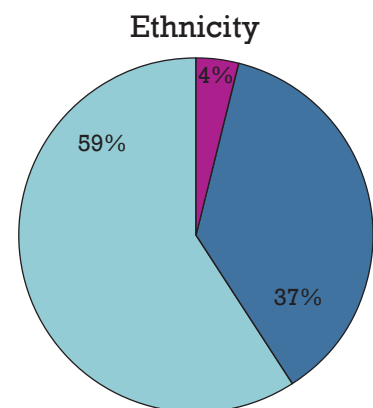
New Immigrants individuals accounted for 110 visits during the WER 2010–11 season. However, as this number is less than 1% of all visits made during the program it is not reflected on the chart below.



- Male
- Female
- Transgendered



- <14
- 15-30
- 31-64
- 65+



- Caucasian
- Aboriginal
- New Immigrant
- Other

## Data Collection

Data was collected daily from the agencies involved in the WER program through the use of Survey Monkey. Survey Monkey is a free online survey software and questionnaire tool which allowed Homeward Trust as the WER administrative agent to customize the questions through which WER data was collected, reviewed, and edited. The final data sets were able to be downloaded from the Survey Monkey site into a usable format for analysis.

Questions were asked about the number of daily visits; gender, ethnicity, and age of the visitors; the services provided (meals, van rides, etc.); whether visitors included families with dependant children; whether the agencies observed visitors to be under the influence, or were perceived to have mental health issues; where visitors had slept the previous night; as well as the number of client requests for first aid supplies, winter gear (hats, mits, coats, socks, blankets) , footwear, and food hampers.

## Winter Warming Bus Service

The winter warming bus run by Boyle Street Community Services provided many services for its clients throughout the winter months. The bus had a consistent route throughout the city, but the schedule was flexible enough to allow the individuals staffing the bus to drive through various areas of Edmonton that the homeless population is known to frequent, and look for those in need of assistance. The bus staff also responded to any phone calls they received from individuals who were sleeping rough and were in need of supplies such as blankets, candles, and tins of soup.

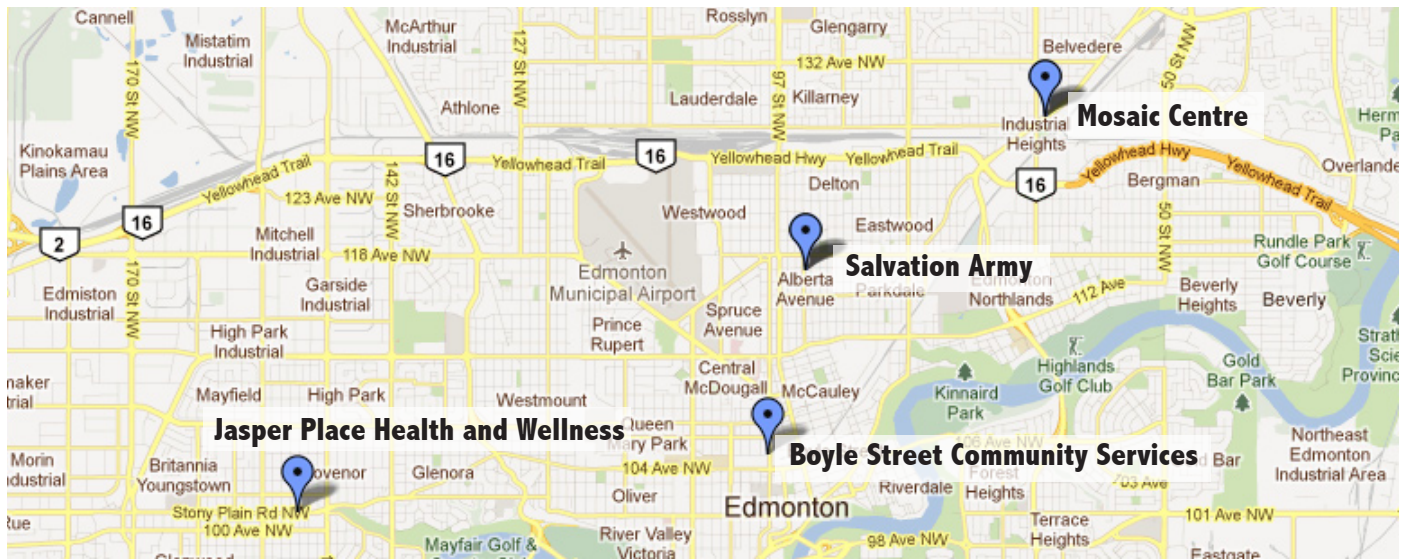
The core function of the winter warming bus was to ensure the safety of individuals who were sleeping rough throughout the winter season and provided clients with rides to shelters and warming centres, referrals to other agencies, soup and sandwiches, and other food, clothing, and blankets as available. The bus was also able to act as transportation to the hospital if the need for this arose.

The warming bus served an important secondary and complementary function of allowing the bus staff an opportunity to create and build meaningful, trusting relationships with clients who were often less likely to visit the drop-in warming centres. Staff members indicated that, through the trust- and relationship-building that occurred during the course of the season, they were able to work with clients and encourage them to enrol detox and rehabilitation programs and to seek assistance with finding housing programs, medical treatment, and employment opportunities.

“ The core function of the winter warming bus was to ensure the safety of individuals who were sleeping rough throughout the winter season ”

**Right:** A map depicting the route taken each day by the winter warming bus. The bus navigated the city over the course of each shift; making stops at regularly scheduled meeting points (shown here) as well as actively seeking clients by exploring new territory.





## Drop-Ins

The agencies funded to extend their drop-in hours over the course of WER 2010-11 included Boyle Street Community Services (BSCS), Jasper Place Health and Wellness Centre (JPHAWC), Mosaic Centre, and the Salvation Army Edmonton Crossroads Community Church (E3C). The drop-in warming centres provided clients with a place to go for a hot meal, entertainment, community, and a warm, welcoming place to stay out of the cold. Each of the agencies mentioned that a key aspect of the winter warming project was a strong commitment to building relationships with the clients who participated in their programs. Through these relationships, agency staff members were able to refer clients to other services, including housing.

**Above:** The locations of the four drop-in warming centres that were funded during WER 2010-11

The extension of hours at the drop-in centres helped cover the critical times during which shelters and other agencies in the city were not open, therefore keeping more people inside and warm, away from the elements and harsh winter weather. The funded drop-in locations were scattered throughout the city, ensuring that various communities (including the North East, West End, and downtown area) had access to the drop-in services.

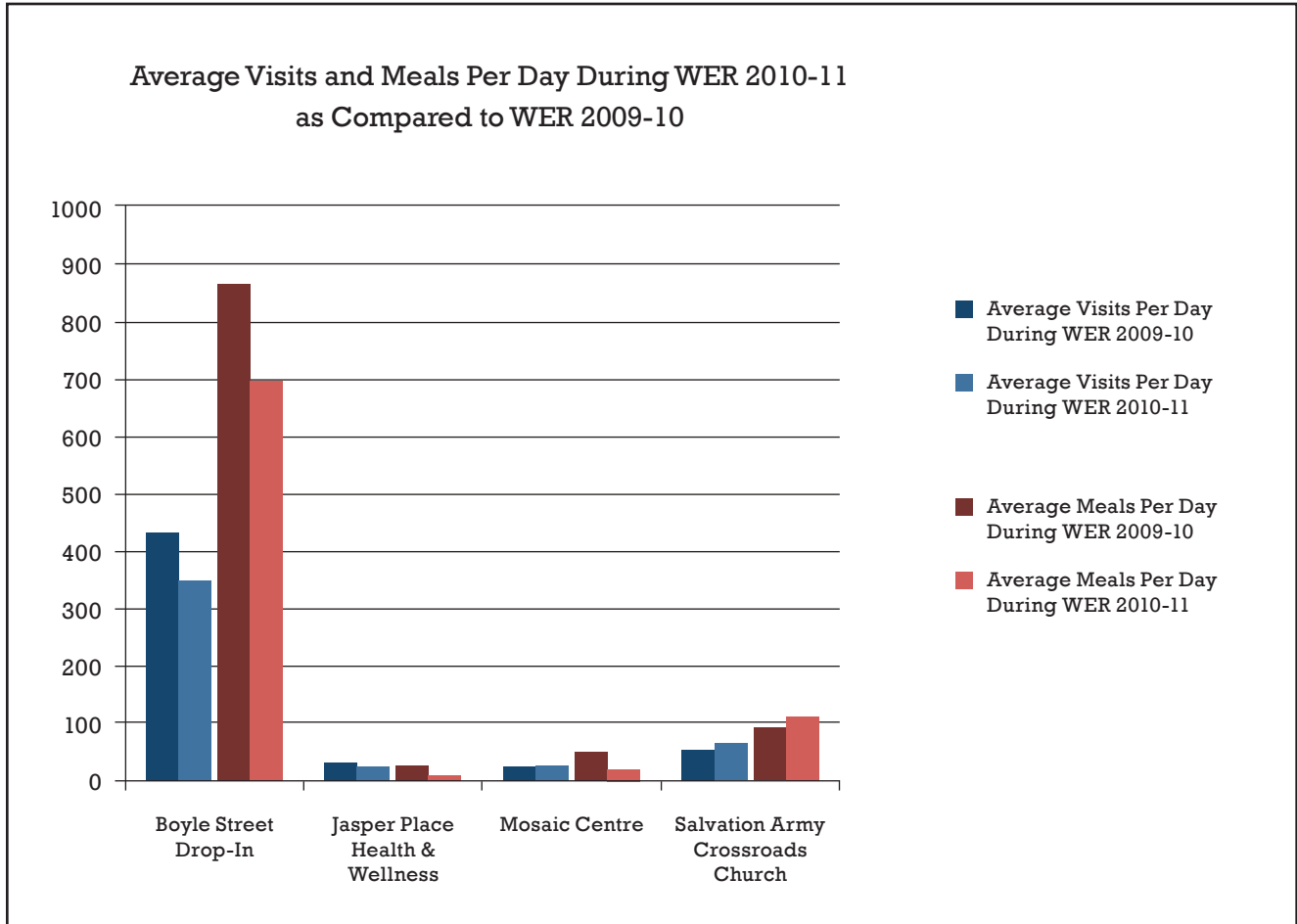
While each of the funded drop-in warming centres operated at a different capacity from the other drop-in centres, most indicated that they operated towards the upper end of their capacity throughout the winter months, though at a slightly lower average number of visits than they saw the previous year.

The Boyle Street Community Services (BSCS) drop-in averaged 348 visits per day (down 86 visits per day from 2009-10) and Jasper Place Health and Wellness (JPHAWC) averaged 26 visits per day (down 6 visits per day from 2009-10). While this was the first year that Mosaic Centre participated in WER, their operation is roughly comparable in size and location to Fort Road Victory Church which participated in WER 2009-10. Mosaic Centre averaged 25 visits per day as compared to an average of 26 visits per day at Fort Road Victory Church the previous year. Salvation Army was the only drop-in to see an increase in average daily visits from the 2009-10 year – the Crossroads Community Church saw an average of 67 visits per day during WER 2011-12 as compared to 53 visits per day the previous year.

The following graph represents the average number of visits per day as well

as the average number of meals served per day at each of the four drop-in locations that were part of WER 2010-11 as compared to the average number of visits and meals served during the previous year's WER period. For the purposes of comparison, Mosaic Centre has been compared with Fort Road Victory Church.

**Below:** A graph comparing the average daily visits and meals during WER 2010-11 and 2009-10



## Services and Referrals

Services provided through WER 2010-11 operations included hot meals, referrals to other agencies and programs, rides to the nearest shelter, and winter clothing as available. Meals tended to include soup, sandwiches, coffee, tea, and juice. The warming bus transported the clients to shelters to ensure that they would be sleeping in a warm, safe location. Referrals to other agencies would have included everything from contact information for Housing First programs, detox, shelters, health services, as well as other locations where clients could receive a meal. Drop-ins also collected data on the number of trips to the hospital and calls to EMS that were made on behalf of clients.

The chart on the following page displays the range of referrals and services offered by the WER projects.

### Services and Referrals During WER 2010-11 By Service Provider

Agency	Number of Meals Served	Number of Van Riders	Referrals to other Agencies	Trips to Hospital	Calls to EMS
<b>BSCS Drop-In</b>	119,661	n/a	3,019	89	109
<b>BSCS Bus</b>	3,873	1,541	647	5	1
<b>JPHAWC</b>	1,533	632	76	3	3
<b>Mosaic</b>	3,262	283	70	1	1
<b>Salvation Army</b>	14,978	575	118	0	1
<b>Total:</b>	<b>143,307</b>	<b>3,031</b>	<b>3,930</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>115</b>

#### Number of Clients Asking For:

Agency	First Aid Supplies	Winter Gear	Footwear/Boots	Food
<b>BSCS Drop-In</b>	1,291	5,136	1,228	2,611
<b>BSCS Bus</b>	3	902	160	3,369
<b>JPHAWC</b>	63	364	159	508
<b>Mosaic</b>	39	126	35	1,478
<b>Salvation Army</b>	7	93	26	195
<b>Total:</b>	<b>1,403</b>	<b>6,621</b>	<b>1,608</b>	<b>8,161</b>

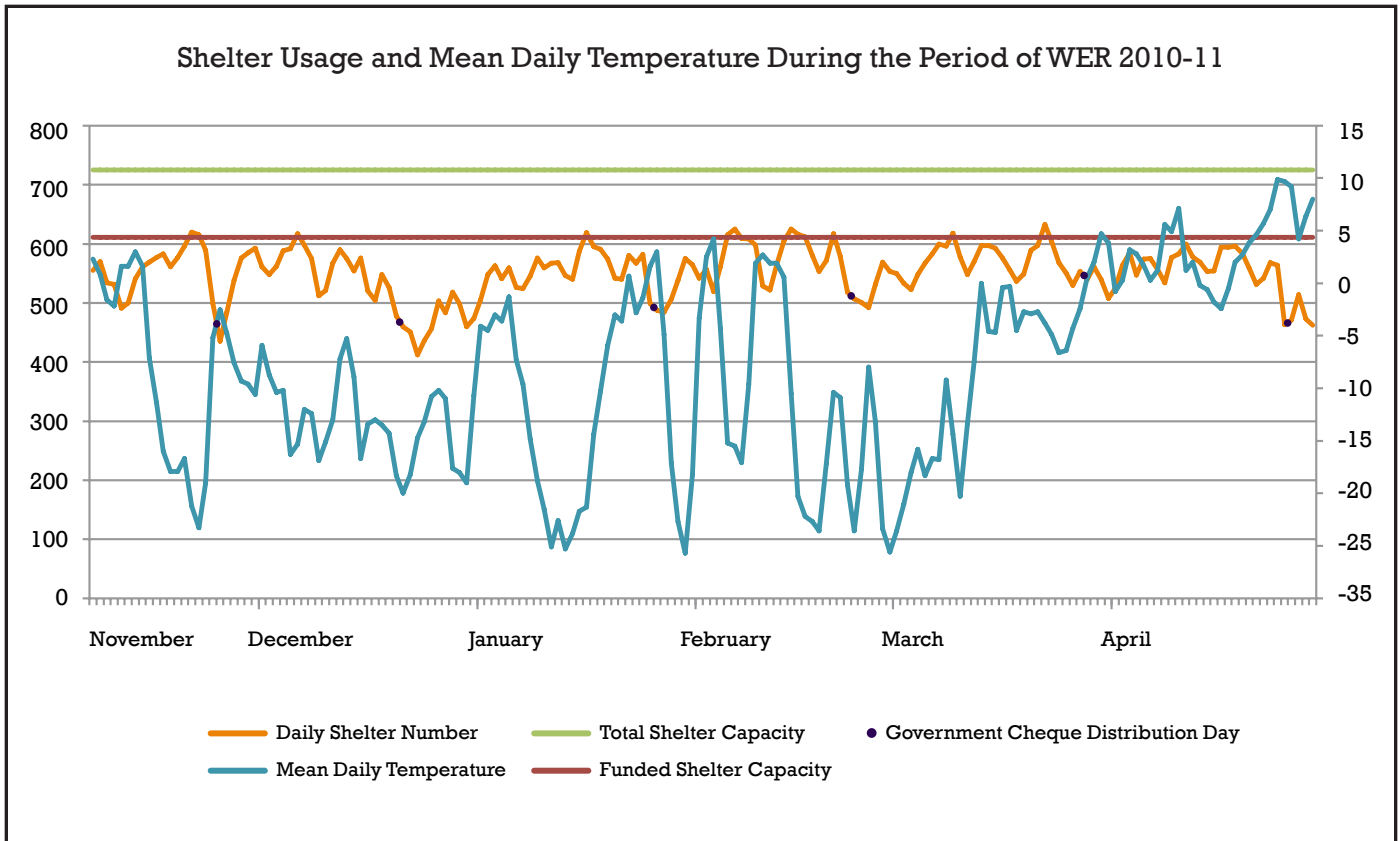
#### Number of Clients Observed with:

Suspected Addictions	Mental Health Issues
7,681	20,933
3,125	1,417
503	788
2,162	1,591
2,918	2,261
<b>16,389</b>	<b>26,990</b>

## Major Incidences

No deaths were reported due to extreme weather. The majority of the agencies indicated that they had to contact police or ambulance in order to obtain the appropriate level of support for various smaller incidences throughout the winter months. Fortunately no agencies reported deaths; however, agencies did report that clients entered the facilities with injuries obtained outside of the warming centres.

While no major incidences were reported, all of the projects involved in the Winter Emergency Response program saw high numbers of weather-related medical needs. Clients coming to the drop-in warming centres and winter warming bus had many minor injuries associated with living outside in the harsh winter months. Footcare and treatment of near-frost bite injuries were among the highest need for attention.



### Shelter Usage and Mean Daily Temperature

**Above:** A graph depicting the relation between Edmonton’s emergency shelter capacity, the usage of shelter spaces during the winter season, and the mean daily temperature during WER 2010-11. The temperatures shown on the graph were recorded by Environment Canada at the Edmonton City Centre Airport Weather Station.

When comparing data sets, look for the lines to be moving in opposite directions. As temperature goes down shelter usage tends to go up, showing a correlation between shelter usage and colder temperatures. Shelter usage also noticeably decreases in the days following disbursement of government cheques (unemployment insurance and workers’ compensation board) which are indicated by the purple dots on the graph above.

Total Shelter Capacity reflects the number of available spaces at all shelters in the city which can be made available if needed due to severe weather conditions. Funded Shelter Capacity reflects the number of total spaces for which agencies receive government funding to operate.

Shelter usage during the 2010–11 WER season was down as compared to usage during the 2009–10 WER season. This continues a trend of decreasing shelter usage during the winter season in Edmonton from year to year. Many factors could have contributed to the continuation of this trend including a warmer than average winter and the continued success of the Housing First program.

As of April 30, 2011, Edmonton’s Housing First Program had housed 1,386 individuals, making up a total of 1,032 households. Of these 1,386 individuals, 50% were previously considered to be chronically homeless—sleeping in a place unsuitable for human habitation and/or in emergency homeless shelters. This information is tracked through Homeward Trust Edmonton’s *Efforts to Outcomes* (ETO) database. Chronically homeless, as defined by the Edmonton Homeless Commission, is: *homeless persons or families who have been continuously homeless for a year or more, or have experienced at least four episodes of homelessness in the past three years.*

“ Shelter usage during the 2010-11 WER season was down compared to during the 2009-10 season. This continues a trend of decreasing shelter usage during the winter season in Edmonton ”





# **Winter Emergency Response 2010–11 Funded Projects**

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The following overviews of the projects funded through WER 2010–11 were compiled from information provided to Homeward Trust in each of the agencies' final reports for the WER season.

# Boyle Street Community Services: Community Drop-In Centre

## Project Description

Extended drop-in hours at Boyle Street Community Services were funded for 26 weeks of operation commencing on November 8, 2010 and ending April 30, 2011. The primary purpose of the WER program at BSCS was to enable the facility to be operational for extended hours during the weekdays and to stay open during the weekend. The extended hours that were funded through the agency's contract with Homeward Trust were 6:00am–9:00am and 5:30pm–9:00pm Monday through Friday, and 6:00am–9:00pm Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays.

The drop-in provided a safe, welcoming, warm refuge for predominantly homeless individuals who may be vulnerable to illness and possible death due to exposure during Edmonton's cold winter months. The primary task of the BSCS WER drop-in was to address short-term survival issues (e.g. personal crisis, emergency housing, first aid) however, the extended hours also allowed drop-in visitors to connect with other much needed supports and services such as mental health counselling, housing initiatives, outreach workers, family support, safe needle exchange, and other inner-city connections. The drop-in offered breakfast and lunch every day as well as a range of recreational activities including games, books, crosswords, movies, sports nights, special events (dances, Valentine's Day activities, etc.) and access to telephones on evenings and weekends.

## Who Was Served

Community members of the BSCS drop-in are, for the most part, homeless individuals who have limited financial and emotional supports and who are struggling with alcohol and/or drug dependencies. Members typically fall into one or more of the following groups:

- Unemployed or temporarily employed individuals who use the city's shelter system for accommodation
- Single, unemployed persons coming to Edmonton in search of work
- Recent discharges from correctional or mental health facilities
- Immigrants or others who have not connected with any resources in their own communities

A total of 59,876 visits were made to BSCS during the winter warming program, the largest percentage of which were made by males and individuals between the age of 15 and 30. Aboriginal individuals accounted for 62% of all visits made to the drop-in. 78% of visits were made by males and 22% of visits were made by females. 88% of visitors were between the age of 15 and 30.

### Project Details

**Address:** 10116–105 Avenue

**Phone:** 780.424.4106

**Clients Served:** All

#### Hours

Monday to Friday 6:00am–9:00pm

Weekends (incl holidays) 6:00am–9:00pm

#### Food

Breakfast at 7:00am

Lunch at 11:30am

(meals served 7 days a week)

Web: [www.BoyleStreet.org](http://www.BoyleStreet.org)

Twitter: @BoyleStreet

Photos (opposite) from Left to Right:

- A drop-in guest and BSCS staff member share a laugh during WER hours
- Kitchen staff work on preparing lunch for drop-in guests
- A staff member and a drop-in client pose for a picture



## What Went Well

- Hiring a Volunteer Coordinator, Inner City Recreation Coordinator (in partnership with Bissell Centre), and Artist in Residence greatly improved the community's ability to access City of Edmonton recreation opportunities and express their artistic perspectives freely and without censorship.
- Due to extended drop-in hours, clients had more opportunity to participate in Fine Options—a program that allows individuals convicted of certain offences to work off their fines through community service at places such as Boyle Street.
- Hiring an Adult Outreach Worker who was assigned to work with the Winter Warming Bus personnel helped to better and more immediately serve the BSCS population.
- Through working with the BSCS Safe Communities program manager, Edmonton Police Services beat police committed to more periodic visits to the drop-in.

## Challenges

- Maintaining a continuous supply of clothing, gloves, and winter footwear proved challenging due to unpredictability of receiving donations. Supplies were purchased on a monthly basis, but demand constantly exceeded supply. BSCS coordinated its clothing effort through Bissell's Community Closet and Hope Mission.
- An increase in visible gang activity and drug dealing caused safety of community members and staff to be at the forefront of everyone's thinking.
- The behaviour of guests to the drop-in was sometimes challenging as many found it difficult to manage during the winter and their frustrations were not always far from the surface. This often required staff to use de-escalation skills to maintain a safe environment.
- On a daily basis, staff to community member ratio was 1:75, which increased concerns surrounding the safety of the work environment.
- An increase in older people with physical (wheelchair, walkers, and canes) and mental disabilities and addictions who require assisted living was noted this WER season. Housing facilities are limited for these populations, and if evicted, options to house them are extremely limited.

## Client Services & Community Partnerships:

- A wide range of recreational and cultural activities were offered. This included such activities as round dances, pow-wows, yoga classes, board games, beading group, karaoke, painting classes, nature walks, cooking classes, making dream catchers, a knitting club, and musical groups.
- Eye glass repairs, tax services, AA meetings, AADAC counselling, sweat lodges, and women's group meetings were available to drop-in clients.
- Legal assistance was available through Student Legal Services.
- Partnership with Edmonton Public Library to provide music and film access. The EPL representative visited twice monthly to help community members get a library card.
- Cultural groups provided and prepared lunches; school groups came to sing, serve lunch, bring items such as socks, gloves, backpacks, and baked goodies and nutritional food items for drop-in clients.
- Coats for Kids provided approximately 300 adult winter jackets for guests at the start of the 10/11 winter season; Edmonton Pipefitters Union donated 30 turkeys during the Christmas break and Stantec delivered hamburgers, hot dogs and refreshments for one of the other events during the winter.

**Homeward Trust Approved Contribution:**

**\$424,902**

# Boyle Street Community Services: Winter Warming Bus

## Project Description

Winter Warming Bus operations were funded for 26 weeks of operation commencing on November 8, 2010 and ending April 30, 2011. The warming bus ran each day from 2:00pm to 10:00pm and navigated the city over the course of each shift making stops at regularly scheduled meeting points as well as actively seeking clients by exploring new territory.

The primary function of the warming bus was to provide survival resources to its client population. This included food, clothing, blankets, hygiene products, first aid supplies, transportation to shelters, and information about other available resources such as housing programs. In addition to providing transportation to shelters, the bus was available to transport clients to the hospital or other service agencies, and offered a place to warm up from the cold for a few minutes. The bus provided a place where individuals who may not typically use drop-in services were able to access referral information and also provided homeless individuals with a place where they could feel welcomed as compared to many other places in the city where they are typically not. The relationships of trust that developed on the bus were often what enabled clients to navigate their way off of the streets and into more secure housing situations.

Three individuals were hired to staff the warming bus during the WER season. A minimum of two staff members were always on the bus for each shift. Once a week an outreach worker from Boyle Street would ride along in the bus to provide outreach and referral services.

## Who Was Served

The winter warming bus served a diverse client base throughout the season, however, there was some statistical consistency as to who was served. Approximately 56% of visitors were Caucasian and nearly 90% of these were males between the age of 31 and 64. 86% of all visits were made between individuals in this age range.

Unlike the drop-ins which have continued to see a year-over-year decrease in the number of visitors served per season, this year saw an increase in the number of individuals using the services provided by the winter warming bus. Among those visiting the bus layoffs, evictions, delayed Unemployment Insurance and Workers Compensation Board cheques, fires, and break-downs in relationships were common contributors to vulnerable housing situations.

Clients suffering from addictions and mental health issues continued to be a strong trend this year, however, this year also saw a significant decrease in extreme levels of intoxication on the part of bus clients.

A total of 4,493 visits were made to the BSCS warming bus during the WER season. In past years the bus would average 20-25 contacts per night. This year, the number of contacts per night was up to around 30-35 individuals. It also became common to see 40 or more clients per night, and in some cases even 50 or 60 individuals.

## Project Details

**Address:** not applicable

**Phone:** 780.554.2795

**Clients Served:** All

### Hours

2:00pm–10:00pm daily

### Food

Soup and sandwiches available

### Pickup Schedule

2:00 - South West Campsite location

3:30 - Centennial Bottle Depot

4:30 - South East Bottle Depot

5:00 - Strathcona Bottle Depot

6:00 - Mosaic Centre

7:15 - 7-11 on 109th Street

8:00 - JPHAWC

9:00 - Memorial Chapel and  
Strathcona Youth Co-op

Web: [www.BoyleStreet.org](http://www.BoyleStreet.org)

Twitter: @BoyleStreet

## What Went Well

- Incidents of violence went from being a common occurrence in past years to being rare during the 2010–11 year.
- Bus staff were able to help clients enter recovery facilities through referring them to daytime outreach workers at Boyle Street Community Services and the George Spady Centre. While this is an ongoing process, often requiring repeated efforts, this year saw some long-term struggles with addictions stabilize into enduring sobriety. Some of these changes came to fruition through relationships lasting over several years.
- The relationship between the warming bus personnel and Boyle Street's daytime outreach workers was much improved this year. Having follow-up support available during business hours and outside of the downtown area made it possible for clients to access a new range of supports. Making and attending doctor's appointments, navigating the steps to securing identification, and accessing social assistance and housing became easier for bus clients because of integrated outreach efforts.
- Participation of the warming bus in the Inner City Health Elective course for first-year medical students was seen as a step forward for both bus clients and health care professionals. It would be advantageous to have medical staff available on the bus in future years as many community members noted their difficulty in accessing the healthcare system.

## Challenges

- The increase in client numbers this year created operational challenges for the bus staff. The amount of time spent per community member diminished and after basic information was gathered and material services (food, clothing, etc.) were provided, there was little time for the essential personal exchange that builds and sustains relationships.
- A general lack of available mental health outreach services was noted. Addressing significant mental health issues requires trained professionals in the psychiatric field. After addictions, mental health is the most significant barrier to the client population the bus encounters.
- The major obstacle to clients of the warming bus achieving significant changes in lifestyle is the bottleneck in services to which they are referred. Large caseloads for housing support workers at various agencies made accessing the Housing First program extremely difficult for clients referred by warming bus personnel. The same is often true of addiction services. Encountering a waiting list for support while suffering the most acute stages of withdrawal symptoms renders the most crucial steps to recover the least supported.

## Client Services & Community Partnerships:

- The warming bus had an ongoing relationship with the Hope Mission Van, Mosaic Centre, Jasper Place Health and Wellness, and the Salvation Army.
- The bus also connected frequently with the Hope Mission Van and the Salvation Army Mobile Kitchen at client meeting spots.
- Through establishing relationships with other agencies involved in providing winter emergency services, clothing, food, and information inter-agency supports were mobilized.
- The Edmonton Food Bank supplied much of the food that was distributed by the warming bus.
- The Edmonton Emergency Relief Society donated an ongoing supply of blankets to the bus.
- The warming bus had access to the Bissell Centre's Community Closet for clothing and had a connection to the Mustard Seed Church for obtaining winter coats.
- Partnerships with various medical services and a doctor from the Royal Alexandra Hospital Emergency Department helped to fill the need for mobile medical support.

**Homeward Trust Approved Contribution:**

**\$223,239**

# Jasper Place Health and Wellness Centre (JPHAWC)

## Project Description

Extended drop-in hours at Jasper Place Health and Wellness Centre were funded for 26 weeks of operation commencing on November 8, 2010 and ending April 30, 2011. The primary purpose of the WER program at JPHAWC was to enable the facility to be operational for extended hours during the weekdays and to stay open during weekends. The extended hours that were funding through the agency's contract with Homeward Trust were 7:00pm–9:30pm Monday through Friday and 5:00pm–9:30pm Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays. The main goal of the program was to give people a safe, warm, friendly place to stay for a few hours, while also meaningfully engaging clients and building relationships. This is the fifth year that JPHAWC has been involved in the WER program.

## Who Was Served

The drop-in served a variety of people including the homeless, people with mental illness and/or addictions, lower income individuals, and families. A number of the individuals who visited JPHAWC over the course of the season expressed that they were currently unemployed, but would be interested and able to go back to work should they find employment. This trend is in keeping with reports from the winter warming bus which indicated that many of the individuals who were encountered on the streets this winter were new to unemployment.

About 15% of visitors to JPHAWC were part of a couple. However, the drop-in saw relatively few families and youth visiting when compared to other drop-ins participating in the WER program. At the start of the season, JPHAWC staff were aware of about 100 visitors who were homeless and at risk as the winter season approached. Poor health status—in particular, mental health—was a concern for about 80% of these individuals.

A total of 4,502 visits were made to JPHAWC during the winter warming program. The largest percentage of visits were made by Caucasian males between the age of 31 and 64. Of the visits made to JPHAWC during the WER 2010–11 season, 60% were made by Caucasians, 37% by Aboriginals, and 3% by individuals of other ethnicities.

69% of visits to JPHAWC were made by males and 31% of visits were made by females. 71% of visits were made by individuals between the age of 31 and 64.

### Project Details

**Address:** 15210 Stony Plain Road

**Phone:** 780.481.4001

**Clients Served:** All

### Hours

Monday to Friday 7:00pm–10:00pm

Saturday/Sunday 5:00pm–10:00pm

### Food

Tuesdays 6:00pm–7:00pm

Web: [www.JPHAWC.ca](http://www.JPHAWC.ca)

Twitter: @JPHAWC



Photo: A volunteer at JPHAWC drop-in ladles fresh, homemade soup into bowls for lunch

Photo (opposite): Volunteers, staff, and drop-in visitors prepare for lunch at JPHAWC

## What Went Well

- Extending the evening hours at the drop-in made it possible for many groups to volunteer that would otherwise not have been able to.
- The overall environment of the centre was safe and respectful. Community rules that were put in place were generally observed which added to both staff and clients feeling secure.
- A large number of volunteers and donations during the Christmas season contributed to a memorable holiday season. One of the highlights was the annual “Hope in a Bag” event, where guests received a holiday meal and a backpack filled with hygiene items, clothing, and treats.

## Challenges

- Most of the challenges arising during the WER season were attributed to intoxicated clients. Additionally, some challenges arose when dealing with clients suffering with mental illness.
- There were several occasions where clients became verbally abusive or threatening and were thus instructed to leave the drop-in. On a few occasions clients were assisted in vacating the premises.
- Another challenge the drop-in faced this season was the uncertainty of funding at the beginning of the season. This could be an area for improvement next year as it caused some issues with the hiring of staff.

## Client Services & Community Partnerships:

- Laundry facility (weekends only)
- Showers
- Clothing and food (as available)
- Referrals to other services
- Sandwiches, coffee, and soup
- Volunteer came in on a weekly basis to provide free haircuts
- Health clinics provided by public health nurses
- Narcotics anonymous meetings
- Alcoholics anonymous meetings
- Women’s group meetings ran during daytime hours
- Phone and computer access (computers for job and housing searches, resume writing and budgeting (often with staff help) and for contacting family and friends)
- Storage of bags and backpacks for up to 90 days under a storage agreement (not shopping carts)
- Christmas dinner served on December 25th and 26th with about 50-60 people attending
- Partnerships were made with many churches and other organizations. While the majority of these were church groups that served a regular weekly, biweekly, or monthly meal, there were also some groups from local businesses as well as a Muslim community group
- The Beulah Alliance Church youth group served a monthly meal and planned fun after-dinner activities for visitors including karaoke, games night, and a magic show



**Homeward Trust Approved Contribution:**

**\$ 95,710**

# Mosaic Centre

## Project Description

Extended hours at the Mosaic Centre were funded for 26 weeks of operation commencing on November 8, 2010 and ending April 30, 2011. The primary purpose of the WER program at Mosaic Centre was to enable the facility to be operational for extended hours during the weekdays (Monday to Thursday) and to stay open during the weekend (Friday to Sunday). The extended hours that were funding through the agency's contract with Homeward Trust were 2:00pm–9:00pm Monday through Thursday, and 4:00pm–9:00pm Friday to Sunday and holidays. The main goal of the program was to give people a safe, warm, and friendly place to stay for a few hours, while also meaningfully engaging clients and building relationships. This is the first year that Mosaic Centre has been involved in the WER program.

## Who Was Served

Mosaic Centre served individuals challenged by poverty, hunger, and housing issues in Edmonton's northeast and saw a wide variety of clients including single adults, families, and youth, as well as both the homeless and those at risk of becoming homeless.

Since Mosaic's inception a year and a half ago, the main focus has been on building relationships with visitors to the facility. During the course of the WER program, it was noted that clients came in seeking the aspect of social contact provided by the centre in addition to emergency warming services. Guests to the centre were often slow to trust others, including staff members at Mosaic. By offering clients assistance with their immediate needs and building long-term, trusting relationships, Mosaic staff began to break down these barriers.

A very different group of individuals visited the centre during the extended WER hours than those usually seen during the morning programs offered at Mosaic. As word-of-mouth spread about the extended hours, an increase in visitors was seen with as many as 50 plus individuals visiting on some nights. On average, a minimum of half of the individuals coming into the facility received some sort of immediate physical needs-based help, be this food, clothing, blankets, or transportation. Starting in February, Mosaic Centre noted a quickly increasing number of single mothers and youth visiting the drop-in. This trend continued through April and was also affected by high numbers of elementary to junior high aged children coming in during spring break. Mosaic staff worked to respond to these changes in demographics by increasing the number of female staff/volunteers present in the drop-in and finding volunteers who could run a Sunday night kids program.

A total of 4,222 visits were made to Mosaic Centre during the winter warming program, the largest percentage of which were made by males and individuals between the ages of 15-30. Aboriginal individuals accounted for 61% of all visits made to the centre. 67% of visits were made by males, 31% were made by females, and 1% were made by transgendered individuals. Of the warming centres participating in WER this season, Mosaic saw the highest number of visits made by transgendered individuals (59 visits) and youth guests (10% of visits were made by individuals under the age of 14).

### Project Details

**Address:** 12758 Fort Road

**Phone:** 780.722.3247

**Clients Served:** All

#### Hours

Monday to Thursday 1:00pm–9:00pm

Friday to Sunday 4:00pm–9:00pm

Holidays 4:00pm–9:00pm

#### Food

Fruit, soup, bread, and other food available depending on donations

**Web:** [www.mosaiccentre.com](http://www.mosaiccentre.com)

[www.e4calberta.org/mosaiccentre.html](http://www.e4calberta.org/mosaiccentre.html)

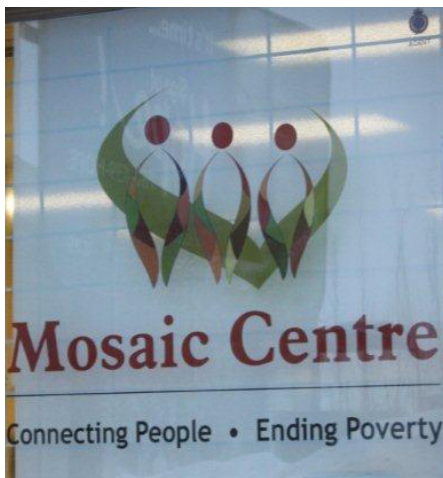
“ One of our clients who lived in a tent would come in every night to keep warm and have something to eat. After months of this and a slow building of a trusting relationship, he began to open up about his situation and the causes of these additions. We were able to talk with him on many different occasions and eventually see him into a housing program. He is currently working in his trade and living in an apartment. ”

- Mosaic Staff Member



## What Went Well

- The staff that were hired to run the WER program contributed significantly to the overall success of the winter warming operation at Mosaic Centre. These individuals worked to create meaningful, trusting relationships with clients and helped support the start-up of the program in its first year at the centre.
- A strong relationship was built with the local Edmonton Police Service beat officers and their regular presence aided in client relationships.
- Extended hours at the drop-in meant that many new faces were seen at Mosaic Centre. Meaningful, lasting relationships with individuals requiring various levels of support was of primary focus for staff and volunteers alike.
- Spring break brought a number of elementary to junior high youths—as many as 12 daily—to the facility. Mosaic Centre adapted quickly and found volunteers who could run a Sunday night kids program.



## Challenges

- There were many challenges associated with being a first-time WER provider that Mosaic Centre worked to overcome by relying on support and mentorship from JPHAWC, as well as researching other facilities that provide similar services.
- Initially hiring staff to run the centre during the extended hours was challenging as it was unclear whether or not funding had been secured. Mosaic was able to find staff who were understanding with this issue and who agreed to start work with the knowledge that their positions were only secure upon receiving funding.
- The diversity of people within the population using the evening warming centre was not something that had previously been seen when offering the morning programs at Mosaic. A more immediate, needs-based clientele became visitors of the centre, the intoxication count dramatically increased, and the centre had a different atmosphere than usual. Prompt adjustments in the tolerance of alcohol, phone use, people wearing coats and taking bags into concealed areas, and the implementations of bans needed to be made in order to respond to these challenges.

## Client Services & Community Partnerships:

- Winter clothing & blanket distribution
- Medical and nutrition care
- Access to laundry, haircuts, and basic toiletries
- Referrals to agencies involved in housing placement and follow-up support services
- Mailing address, telephone, email access, resume development and job search support
- Computer and language skills, educational upgrading, assistance with tax preparation
- Mosaic staff were available to talk with guests to the centre about their alcohol and drug use habits and about making positive life-style changes
- Starting in January, two meals a week from two different community partners were provided for visitors to Mosaic Centre
- Four churches supported Mosaic Centre through donations, financial contributions, and volunteers
- Two schools organized clothing and food drives to support the centre
- Mosaic Centre is an organization that runs on a donation basis, and was greatly supported through volunteer efforts and corporate partners in hosting extended hours throughout the winter months. Two Starbucks stores donated their daily leftovers to the centre and a Sobeys store donated their excess produce twice a week.

**Homeward Trust Approved Contribution:**

**\$ 79,630**

# Salvation Army: Edmonton Crossroads Community Church (E3C)

## Project Description

Extended drop-in hours at Salvation Army Crossroads Community Church (E3C) were funded for 26 weeks of operation commencing on November 8, 2010 and ending April 30, 2011. The extended hours that were funding through the agency's contract with Homeward Trust were 8:00am–10:00am and 4:00pm–6:00pm Tuesday through Friday, Mondays from 8:00am–6:00pm, and Saturdays 10:00am–4:00pm.

The funding provided through the WER program allowed E3C to provide a safe, welcoming and warm refuge for predominantly homeless individuals that may be vulnerable to illness and possible death due to exposure during Edmonton's winter months. Extended hours at the Crossroads drop-in also enabled people to connect to needed services (medical support, housing initiatives, treatment programs, outreach workers, community, and other supportive connections).

Community Support Groups were offered during the day and spiritual counselling and a safe place (prayer room) were offered all day as well. AA meetings were scheduled throughout the week. Friday nights saw a community coffee-house with fun events such as karaoke, cards, games, barbecues, and movies for those looking for a safe place to have fun. Many drop-in clients also regularly contributed and participated in the Salvation Army church activities. These included support groups, bible studies, prayer groups, art classes, stretch classes, and services.

In addition to participating in the winter warming program funded through Homeward Trust, the Salvation Army spearheaded an organization-specific initiative which saw the creation of late-night women only drop-in hours. This initiative helped in part to fill some of the demand for much needed women-specific services.

## Who Was Served

Community members of the Salvation Army Crossroads drop-in are, for the most part, homeless individuals with limited financial and emotional support who are struggling with alcohol and/or other mental health issues. This year, E3C noted a 50% increase in visitors with observed mental health issues and a 68% increase in visitors observed to be affected by addictions. Another notable increase was seen in the distribution of emergency food hampers during the 2010-11 WER season which was up by 95% as compared to the previous year.

A total of 8,328 visits were made to Crossroads drop-in during the winter warming program. The largest percentage of visits were made by males and individuals between the age of 31. Aboriginal individuals accounted for 56% of all visits, Caucasian individuals for 38% of visits, and individuals of other ethnicities for the remaining 6% of visits. 76% of visits were made by males and 24% of visits were made by females. Salvation Army Crossroads Community Church had the highest number of visits made by individuals over the age of 65 (1,450 visits) of the drop-ins participating in the WER 2010-11 program.

### Project Details

**Address:** 11661-95 Street

**Phone:** 780.474.4324

**Clients Served:** All

### Hours

Monday to Friday 8:00am–6:00pm

Saturdays 10:00am–4:00pm

Sundays 2:00pm–5:00pm (church service and refreshments only)

Fridays 7:00–10:00pm Street Ministry

### Women Only Hours\*

Mondays 8:00pm–3:00am

Fridays 8:00pm–3:00am

(\*not funded through the WER program)

### Food

Breakfast and hot lunch served daily

Web: [ab.salvationarmy.ca](http://ab.salvationarmy.ca)

Twitter: @tsaedmonton

## What Went Well

- Partnership between PAAFE (now called CEASE - Centre to End All Sexual Exploitation) and E3C in offering a safe place for women suffering from sexual exploitation was very successful. It is expected that this service will continue to expand and provide a space that is much needed by the neighbourhood surrounding the E3C drop-in.
- Staff with a heart for mission and a connection to the realities of the clientele, but with enough time away from these life situations, provided good examples for community members.
- Seeing participants in the programs move into volunteering capacities was encouraging. Entry-level volunteer spaces have been created in order to make these transitions possible.
- The Salvation Army E3C drop-in benefited greatly from partnerships with a number of community and youth groups who provided and prepared meals for community members. These groups also came to serve, interact with drop-in visitors, and offered items such as socks, gloves, backpacks, baked goodies and other other nutritional food items.
- Christmas day and the Easter weekend saw a great host of volunteers and donations which enabled E3C to give out a good number of hampers, meals, gifts, and clothing.

## Challenges

- Finding treatment and detox beds when needed was often difficult in terms of timing.
- The safety of community members and staff was an ongoing issue which the drop-in tried to address through more staff training, but which remained a challenge when dealing with the population that visits the drop-in.
- Specific needs of women in crisis, especially issues related to children, addiction, and sexual exploitation proved challenging. There are little to no immediate services for women in crisis, particularly those who have children. Creating a safe place for women while serving a population with a majority of male clients is also challenging.
- The need for sufficient mental health supportive housing is a consistent challenge faced by community members of the drop-in.

## Client Services & Community Partnerships:

- Nurse on Tuesday afternoons
- PAAFE peer support on Tuesdays and during women only drop-in hours
- AA support groups evenings (Monday/Thursdays at 8pm) Space for up to 50 individuals
- A limited number of emergency food hampers were available every Friday afternoon
- Blankets, clothing, food and a range of other items that offer considerable emergency relief are available to drop-in visitors through the generous donations of many community partners.
- Referral services, computer stations, and local phone access
- Art classes on Tuesday mornings
- Movement and stretching therapy on Monday and Wednesdays at 9:00am
- Haircuts available for drop-in guests
- Free spiritual counselling and prayer during open hours
- Place to rest and warm up with warm beverages and breakfast and lunch served daily
- An ongoing and helpful relationship with the Edmonton Food Bank and the Emergency Relief Centre contributed significantly to the services that E3C was able to provide.
- A partnership with the Edmonton Public Library was initiated this WER season. An EPL representative visited the drop-in once a week to help initiate a program on adult story-telling with the members of the drop-in.

**Homeward Trust Approved Contribution:**

**\$106,400**

## Joint Learnings & Recommendations

The Winter Emergency Response Committee held a meeting at the end of the WER 2010–11 period in order to discuss what was learned during the season and suggest recommendations for future years of the program to strengthen service provision and better meet the needs of clients.

### Training, Orientation, Resources, and Networking

There was an identified need for a comprehensive training program for WER staff that is consistent across agencies. In addition, a centralized orientation session should be offered within the first few days of, or prior to, the start of the WER season for all staff participating in the delivery of WER services. It is also recommended that “refresher” trainings and networking sessions be offered throughout the course of the season to share information and skills in areas like harm reduction, de-escalation, service access, and crisis intervention. Because contact with clients affords an opportunity to connect them with available housing and supports options, information on how to access these supports should be available in the form of booklets and guides for staff reference and distribution.

### Reaching People in Need

The fact that females are underrepresented among the population served through WER raised the need to address this gap. Women-only hours and specific services geared towards them, like family- and child-related programming, were offered as possibilities for future years of the program. Also, some members of the committee indicated that a warming and access centre was needed south of the river to reach homeless people who avoid the inner-city or sleep in parkland.

### Integration of Linkages to Other Services

It was noted that the harsh weather of winter can provide strong motivation for people to decide to make significant positive life changes and seek help for problems they would otherwise ignore. As an example, the participation of the warming bus in the Inner City Health Elective course for first-year medical students was seen as a significant step towards providing access to primary health care that many clients would otherwise not have. The need for stronger integration of primary care outreach as well as housing links, mental health care, addictions services, and emergency services was stressed as a priority area to address critical needs of clients rather than simply giving them a place to warm up. This requires discussion among a much wider group of stakeholders to facilitate these linkages and mobilize resources outside of the WER program.

“It boils down to a lifestyle—these people are your friends—you don’t transition out of a friendship.”

– WER Committee member on the difficulty of saying goodbye to clients at the end of the WER season

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## **Continuity Planning**

Difficulties associated with the start-and-stop nature of the WER program were highlighted by many of the agencies participating in WER 2010-11. The bus staff noted that starting up at the beginning of each WER season is difficult because the places frequented by their clients change on a continuous basis. Time and effort is required to find many of the individuals with whom the bus staff had established relationships in the previous year. There was consensus that funding for a “winter” response must obviously cease at the end of winter. However, the trust built over the course of the WER season between staff and clients, particularly with respect to helping people make progress in confronting barriers like addictions, necessitate some way of maintaining contact beyond WER. The committee is eager to explore possibilities for a year-round initiative that allows for continuity with clients.

## **Coordinated Campaign for Supplies and Volunteers**

Each agency generally requires a stock of items such as coats, toques, and gloves, and volunteers to provide meals, first-aid, and assistance to staff. Winter warming centres tend to rely on their own relationships and contacts in the community to acquire what they need for each season. Committee members want to take a coordinated approach for collection of supplies and solicitation of volunteers, ideally building on existing strengths in the community and strategizing around the harder-to-acquire donations. A joint winter clothing drive, perhaps in collaboration with non-WER agencies that already have them, could do a better job of bringing in critical gear for clients. Volunteers offering first aid and services like foot care could be coordinated centrally and made available at winter warming centres on a regular basis. There may be other identified basic needs of clients that could be addressed through WER collaboration with other agencies, community groups, and businesses.

# WER Project Financials

## Revenue

	GOA Funds Administered by HTE	HPS Funds Administered by HTE
Balance Forward WER 2009–10	\$ 487,987	—
2010–11 Government of Alberta Commitment	\$ 162,013	—
2010–11 Homelessness Partnering Strategy Commitment	—	\$ 281,740
<b>Total WER 2010–11 Funding</b>	<b>\$ 650,000</b>	<b>\$ 281,740</b>

## Expenditures

	Approved Maximum	Actuals Spent	GOA Contribution	HPS Contribution
BSCS Winter Warming Bus	\$ 223,239	\$ 207,368	\$ 207,368	—
BSCS Extended Drop-In	\$ 424,902	\$ 424,902	\$ 424,902	—
JPHAWC Extended Drop-In	\$ 95,710	\$ 94,450	—	\$ 94,450
Mosaic Extended Drop-In	\$ 79,630	\$ 77,227	—	\$ 77,227
SA E3C Extended Drop-In	\$ 106,400	\$ 106,400	—	\$ 106,400
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$ 929,881</b>	<b>\$ 910,347</b>	<b>\$ 632,270</b>	<b>\$ 278,077</b>
Uncommitted Funds	\$ 1,859	\$ 21,393	\$ 17,730	\$ 3,663

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## **Thank You to the WER 2010-11 Committee:**

### **Boyle Street Community Services**

- David Berger, Deputy Director
- Jeanne Donnelly, Drop-In Support Worker
- Diane Johnnie, Drop-In Centre Coordinator
- Stephen Inglis, Winter Warming Bus

### **Jasper Place Health & Wellness**

- Scotti Coles, Program Director
- Terri Wagner, Administrative Assistant

### **Mosaic Centre**

- Linda Deveau, Director
- Arnie Szabo, Drop-In Coordinator
- Rebekah Szabo, Drop-In Coordinator

### **Salvation Army - Crossroads Community Church**

- Danielle Strickland, Major
- Corry Frost, Drop-In Coordinator

### **Edmonton Do Likewise Society**

- Pam Reichenbach, Associate Pastor, Strathcona Baptist Church
- Steve Koehn, Edmonton Do Likewise Representative

### **Government of Alberta**

- Norma Chitrena, Senior Shelter Advisor, Homeless Support and Alberta Secretariat for Action on Homelessness

### **Homeward Trust Edmonton**

- Susan McGee, Executive Director
- Dave Ward, Director of Aboriginal Relations
- Giri Puliganla, Director of Planning & Research
- Tamara Turgeon, Funding Facilitator
- Jessica Montgomery, Finance Assistant
- Kyla Fisher, Community Initiatives Coordinator
- Beverly Eastham, Community Initiatives Coordinator

... and to the many dedicated organizational volunteers who contributed to WER operations this winter!