

## Homeward Trust Edmonton funds two Youth Warming and Access Centres

**Edmonton, Alberta – February 18, 2015** – Homeward Trust Edmonton is providing funding to Youth Empowerment & Support Services (YESS) and Boyle Street Community Services in order to open two Youth Warming and Access Centres, which have been operating since December 22, 2014 to April 30, 2015.

“The Warming and Access Centres reflect the filling of an immediate need for high risk youth shelter, and we are excited to work with YESS and Boyle Street Community Services again,” says Susan McGee, CEO of Homeward Trust Edmonton. “We are working towards a permanent Youth Hub, to open later this year. The Youth Hub will be part of a community strategy on youth homelessness in Edmonton that will complement and work within the provincial 10 year plan to end homelessness.”

Some of the immediate priorities for the Winter Emergency Response Strategy, and the Youth Warming and Access Centres are:

- Basic services (such as warm clothing, winter gear, food, first aid, showers, laundry, and personal storage)
- Safety for at-risk youth
- Direct access to Edmonton’s agencies and resources for youth (including addiction and mental health services, shelter or short-term accommodation, housing, and income support).

“This funding has reopened the Connaught Armoury on the south side, providing much needed space for youth,” said McGee. “The provincial youth homelessness plan and the final 2014 Homeless Count, both released last week, reflect an ongoing need to support our homeless youth population.”

To date, so far the Armoury have an average of 27 youth visiting a day, with a total of 1, 111 youth drop-ins since it opened. Boyle Street Community Services average between 30 and 40 youth during the hours that they are open.

Both of these Warming and Access Centres tie into our Winter Emergency Response strategy, and will incorporate in-agency and external youth services into their programming. Both Boyle Street Community Services and YESS Armoury have programming for high risk youth, as well as programming tailored for Aboriginal youth and youth engaged in high risk behaviours.

The 2014 Homeless Count estimates a total number of 340 independent homeless youth (aged between 13 and 24) in the City of Edmonton. The full report as well as the Winter Emergency Response Guide can be found at [www.homewardtrust.ca](http://www.homewardtrust.ca)

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