



**News Release – 17 January 2020**

## **Former homeless youth pledges \$13,000 to boost urgent funding appeal**

Recognizing fundraising challenges, a former homeless youth has handed Windsor Residence for Young Men (WRYM) a guaranteed bank draft for \$13,000 to boost its Transitional Housing Program – the program that helped him and so many others build new lives. The money will be used as matching funds to kickstart an urgent community fundraising appeal. For more information, visit *WRYM's January 2020 Urgent Funding Appeal* at [www.wrym.ca](http://www.wrym.ca) or contact Windsor Residence for Young Men.

“WRYM depends almost entirely on community donations, and he heard that our year-end fundraising was not as successful as we had hoped,” said WRYM’s Chair of Donor Development Dave Freeman. “He wants to inspire others to help, and he wants to remain anonymous.”

“This young man had nothing,” said Freeman. “He was on the street with no shelter, family or income. And yet, once in the Transitional Housing Program he saw a future for himself. He worked, paid for a university education, and is now building a successful professional career. He wants to help others do the same.”

The Transitional Housing Program provides young men 16 - 24 years with a supportive home and individual counselling. It teaches basic life skills such as hygiene, food acquisition and preparation, budgeting, social responsibility and work ethic. The residents reconnect with their community, education and employment. They become empowered and productive full citizens. WRYM’s 2019 statistics show an average 95 percent success rate over the past three years. In 2019, WRYM assisted 96 clients in its Transitional Housing, Aftercare and Outreach programs. Of these, 42 young men were enrolled and successfully graduated from the Transitional Housing Program.

“This is the only supportive transitional housing program for young men in Windsor,” said Freeman. “It’s not an emergency shelter, drop-in centre or subsidized housing. It is an essential community program that diverts young men with potential from the streets at the earliest possible age. Overall, WRYM is a lifeline to about 20 percent of the local homeless population. Without it, not only will many of these vulnerable youths be lost to unemployment, substance abuse, sickness, violence, sexual assault and other crimes, but our community’s social agencies, emergency services, courts, families and taxpayers will face the consequences of not dealing with the challenges early on.

“The basic problem is that, although WRYM provides an absolutely essential community service, unlike other social agencies it receives very little government funding. When we opened our doors in 2012, many people did not want to recognize that young men could be vulnerable victims, that some demoralized victims can also become perpetrators, and that early intervention can benefit the entire community. Three agencies were providing good and essential transitional housing services for women, but there was nothing for young men. Senior government had frozen funding for any new agencies and so this basic inequity has been frozen in time for the past eight years.

*MORE...*

“WRYM’s Transitional Housing Program is highly successful even though operations and staffing are cut to the bone. All funding goes directly to the program – we do not duplicate the services of other agencies, and administration and fundraising are done entirely by volunteers. Yet, every year we risk the collapse of transitional housing services for homeless young men in our community. We are doing our best to raise awareness of what WRYM does among elected officials and government funding and program administrators, while also continuing to appeal to citizens. I think Windsor can do better!”

For more information, visit WRYM’s website at [www.wrym.ca](http://www.wrym.ca), Facebook site at [www.facebook.com/windsorresidenceforyoungmen](https://www.facebook.com/windsorresidenceforyoungmen), or telephone 519.981.9917.

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*Editors:*

- *a photo is attached, caption - Dave Freeman, Chair of Donor Development, Windsor Residence for Young Men*
- *WRYM Program Statistics for 2019 are attached\*

*Media liaison:*

*Brian Worrall, Pres.  
Windsor Residence for Young Men  
Tel 519.255.7930/226.280.7203  
E-mail [jbrianworrall@gmail.com](mailto:jbrianworrall@gmail.com)*