

# IF NOT NOW, WHEN?



We transform lives  
and build community

RECOVERY HOUSE | CASE FOR SUPPORT  
*An Okanagan Treatment Program for Children and Youth*

[www.youthrecoveryhouse.ca](http://www.youthrecoveryhouse.ca)

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“At its very core, youth treatment is all about prevention: if we invest in people who are struggling with addiction when they are young, we will impact the safety, vibrancy and health of the Okanagan for years to come.

– Celine Thompson, Executive Director

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Based in Kelowna, British Columbia, The Bridge Youth & Family Services Society is a non-profit, charitable organization that since 1969 has been actively supporting families and individuals who experience poverty, substance misuse, family conflict, homelessness, mental illness, sexual exploitation, abuse and trauma.

As an accredited agency, we achieve and maintain the highest international standards of professional practice and are the largest provider of publicly funded substance use treatment and recovery services in the Central Okanagan. Our current substance use services include Adult Residential Treatment, Adult and Youth Withdrawal Management (Detox), Adult Supported Recovery Housing, Youth Outreach, and Street Outreach with the Mobile Overdose Prevention Unit.

It is with this confidence borne of experience that we present this Case for Support. With your assistance, we can build an Okanagan Youth Recovery House to help our children and youth overcome an increasingly dangerous dependence on illicit drugs and alcohol.

**HELP CHANGE THE STORY** – together we can build a life-changing program for youth struggling with addiction.

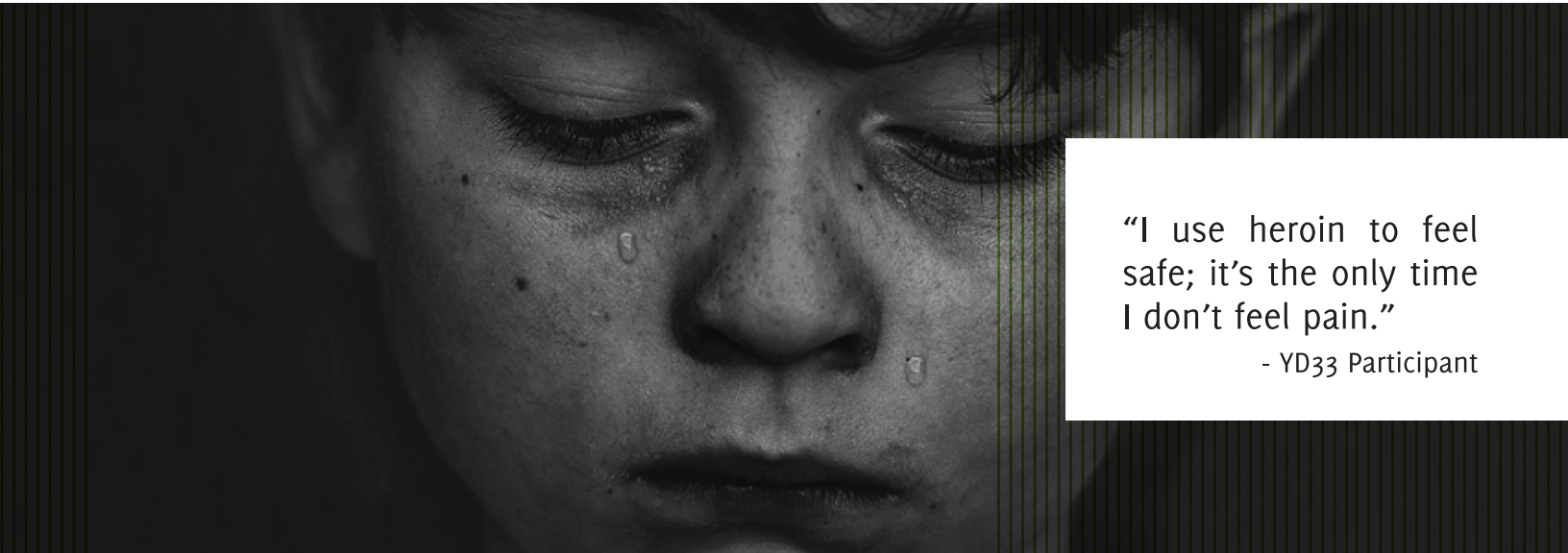


# IF NOT NOW, WHEN?

2018 saw BC suffer more than 1,500 fatal overdoses in a single year.

## YOUTH CASUALTIES RISING

The Interior witnessed 231 overdose deaths in 2018 with 55 of these occurring in Kelowna, our own backyard. 17 of those who died due to illicit drugs in our province last year were between the ages of 10 and 18. The rate of young people dying from overdose doubled from 2016 to 2017.



“I use heroin to feel safe; it’s the only time I don’t feel pain.”

- YD33 Participant

## THERE IS AN ALARMING GAP

There are fewer than 50 publicly funded substance use treatment beds for youth in all of BC. Just four of those beds are designated for the Okanagan’s young people, between the ages of 17 to 24, and there are NO beds available to children under 17. Yet Statistics Canada reports 68,000 youth in Canada meet the diagnostic criteria for problematic substance use. While the majority of these youth will not need intensive treatment, the limited number of beds available does not come close to meeting the need.

At The Bridge, we have supported children as young as 12 through YD33, our Youth Withdrawal Management program. Here, they spend a mere 15 days housed with us. Many return to poverty, homelessness, and life on the streets because treatment beds aren’t immediately available.

## CHILDREN ARE STRUGGLING TO COPE

The majority of participants at Bridgeway, our adult treatment program, tell us their addiction began in their youth. This reported age of onset is typical and consistent with the literature. Due to systemic inequalities, cultural and structural factors, indigenous youth, youth in care of government and youth who belong to the LGBTQ2S+ community are at increased risk to experience the negative consequences of substance use and mental health challenges.

### YD33 Statistics 2018

#### 62 Youth Served

#### Substances Used

- 41% Methamphetamine
- 24% Heroin / Fentanyl
- 15% Alcohol
- 11% Cocaine
- 9% Cannabis / Hallucinogen



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**If we had access to a youth treatment facility, I believe the devastating outcome of our son's death by overdose would have been averted. I absolutely support and encourage getting our youth into treatment before they become adults... before the sting of stigma shapes their self values, and the harm is more difficult to reverse.**

**Let's help encourage our youth before it is too late to change and to turn back the clock.**

**- Arlene Howe**

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# THE YOUTH RECOVERY HOUSE

## BUILDING PLANS ARE UNDERWAY

We are working with Meiklejohn Architects Inc. to design the Youth Recovery House. It will be a thoughtfully designed 16-bedroom, live-in facility with healing spaces dedicated to expert care, recreation, education, counselling and contemplation.

We are seeking a one-to-two-acre property in the Okanagan. The site will offer a natural setting that promotes optimum recovery and healing for youth, with an emphasis on those individuals and families who are unable to afford private long-term treatment.

Here, our intensive, goal-oriented, live-in treatment program will inspire recovery through evidence-based practice.

**Our program will provide the tools, skills and resources these young people need.**

## OUR PROGRAM

The goal of the program will be to improve the health and wellness of each youth so they can reach their full potential. Youth will be supported to foster healthy relationships and create connections to community, nature and those who genuinely care for their well-being. Life skills, education and job readiness training will be an integral part of the recovery process. Activities will be tailored to meet psychosocial, biological and cultural needs for families and youth during and after treatment.

The treatment and recovery program at the Youth Recovery House will be strongly rooted in our expert knowledge to address factors underlying addictive behaviour. All elements of the program will incorporate safety, choice, collaboration, trustworthiness and empowerment to ensure the physical and emotional safety of an individual is always considered. The Bridge will also seek and incorporate feedback from participants to guide the work and modify programming as needed, and will include individual and group based supports for youth and their families.

Family members and caregivers face unique challenges when supporting a loved one struggling with substance use disorder and can be an extremely valuable resource in a person's addiction care and recovery. They will therefore be involved in the recovery process and receive knowledge, skills and support during and after treatment.



*Proposed Youth Recovery House Facility*

# IF NOT US, WHO?

When it comes to the harsh reality substance use imposes on children and adolescents, The Bridge team is well-seasoned and unshakable, but our adversary is evolving. We see children we have cared for die outdoors and alone, and it shatters us. We are firm in our resolve to rally the community to build and provide long-term rehabilitative housing and care for youth in our area addicted to illicit drugs and alcohol.

Together, we can make a difference. Our young people are struggling; yet, **they are children**. Their futures are decades ahead and can be rewritten. They need the opportunity to heal, learn and change course. We are the catalyst for their resurgence. **Our children and youth are relying on us to help change the story.**

## ALLIES

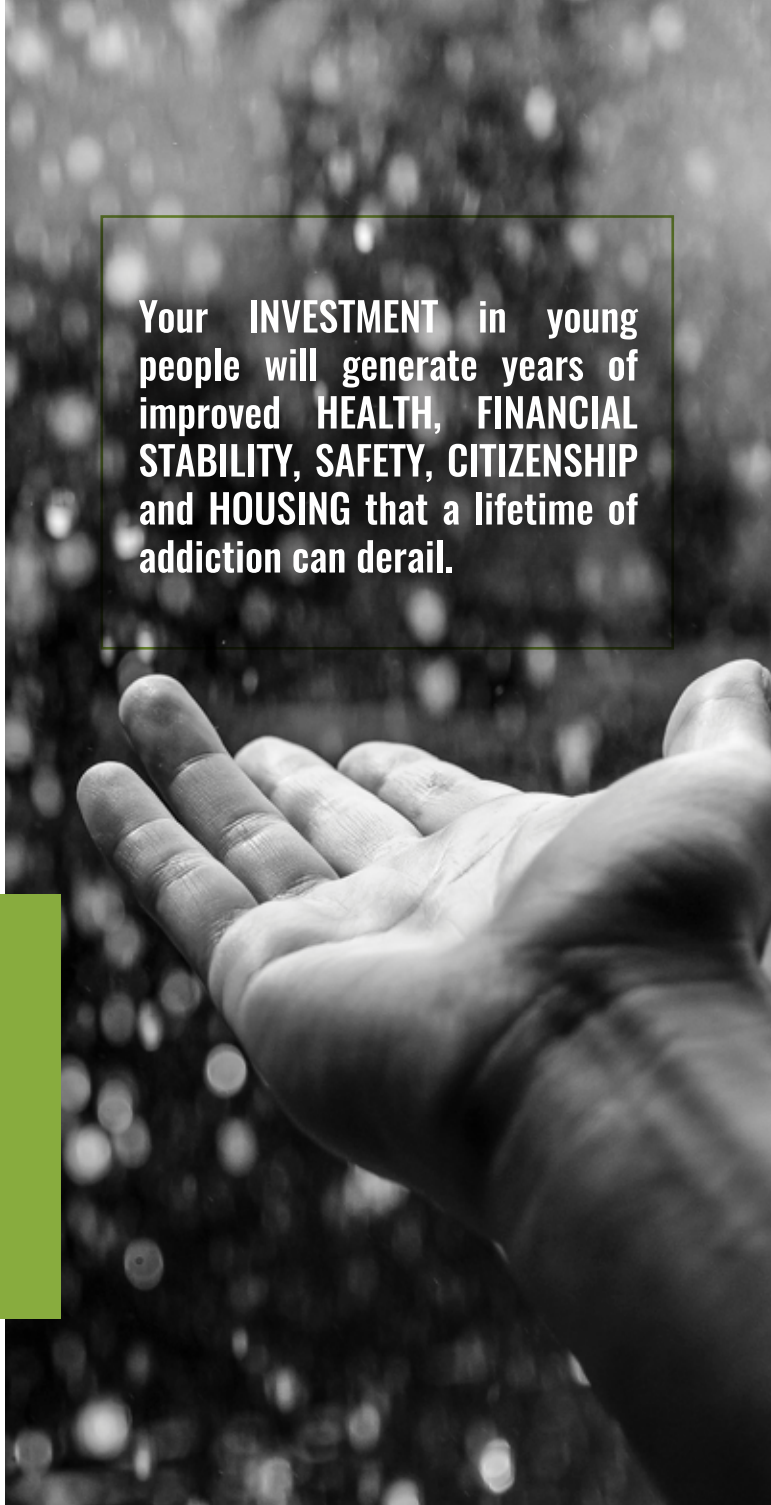
The Bridge is working with a core group of local individuals of influence who possess the leadership, resources and contacts we need to make the Youth Recovery House a reality. Some of our earliest and most committed allies include the Local 953 Kelowna Professional Firefighters Charitable Association, Valley First Insurance, KPMG, Tolko, Foundry Kelowna, Moms Stop the Harm, Mayor Colin Basran, and Councillors Ryan Donn, Loyal Woolridge, Luke Stack and Mohini Singh, with more individuals and organizations joining us each day.

Together we are rallying the community to take action to generate the resources and funds necessary to create a safe, healing space to ensure that our children affected by substance use disorder receive the care and support they need to recover.

**PLEASE JOIN US!**

“They’re our future and we need to ensure they’re going to be healthy enough to sustain our future. So we need these things in place and we need them now.”

– Helen Jennens  
*Moms Stop The Harm*



Your **INVESTMENT** in young people will generate years of improved **HEALTH, FINANCIAL STABILITY, SAFETY, CITIZENSHIP** and **HOUSING** that a lifetime of addiction can derail.



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“Like most, if not all families, mine has been negatively impacted by youth addiction and mental illness, which typically run hand in hand. When I moved back to Kelowna in 2017, I had the opportunity to sit down with Celine. Her commitment and dedication to bring a Youth Recovery House to Kelowna inspired me. The next generation are more at risk than ever and we have an obligation to provide them with a safe environment to heal and recover. I am proud to support this crusade.”

– Garrett Jones  
*Regional Sales Leader*  
Commercial Lines Valley First Insurance

## HELP CHANGE THE STORY

Together we can build a life-changing program for youth struggling with addiction.

### Contact us today.

Kelly Paley  
*Director of Fund Development*  
kelly.paley@thebridgeservices.ca  
#8-2604 Enterprise Way  
Kelowna, BC V1X 7Y5  
Local: 250 763 0456  
Toll free: 1 855 760 0456

 TheBridgeServices  thebridgeserv  thebridgeserv

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