

eva's

Community

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Eva's serves all youth regardless of race or background, focusing on the distinct needs of Black youth. Our mission is to dismantle anti-Black racism and fight for systems of change. Together, our legacy continues.



Message from our Executive Director

Dear supporters and friends,

This spring, we are celebrating a significant milestone in our organizational history: the 30th anniversary of our first shelter site, Eva’s Place. While our founder, Eva Smith, passed away before the site opened, her spirit lives on, and this anniversary is an opportunity to celebrate her enduring legacy.

We are wholeheartedly embracing the legacy of Eva Smith and stepping boldly into our identity as a Black youth-focused organization with the recent launch of our three-year strategic plan. This comprehensive road map outlines our updated mission, vision, and values statements, and four strategic priorities that will shape our future. To learn more about our strategic plan, visit <https://stratplan.evas.ca>

Eva’s is committed to fostering an inclusive and equitable environment for all youth, and we are putting the infrastructure in place to serve some of the most vulnerable in society: Black youth

experiencing homelessness with all their intersecting identities. Our first and foundational strategic priority is Centring Black Youth. In doing so, we can ensure our programs and services will be beneficial to all who need them regardless of race or background.

This strategic direction will inform all aspects of our work, guiding our content, processes, and outcomes. We are dedicated to engaging in extensive capacity building within our organization to ensure that our efforts are not only inclusive but also deeply impactful.

Thank you for your continued support as we embark on this transformative journey.

With gratitude,

Louise Smith

Executive Director
Eva’s Initiatives for Homeless Youth



Premiering our New Video

Eva’s serves all youth regardless of race or background, focusing on the distinct needs of Black youth. Our mission is to dismantle anti-Black racism and fight for systems of change. Join us in empowering young leaders and inspiring powerful change. Together, our legacy continues.

<https://www.evas.ca/blog/stratplanmissionvideo/>

Watch Now!

“The message Eva’s has is so powerful, Eva’s legacy, a woman who saw a problem and sought a solution. It’s not a government-owned program. It’s a Black, woman-initiated non-profit: this is really connected to the community and finding the root of the problem...”

—YOUTH LEADER CONSULTED DURING THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN



Invaluable Life Skills Prepare Youth for Independent Living

If you need to know how to fill out a student financial aid form, find mental health support in Toronto or get familiar with your rights as a tenant, ask Elise Yusef.

As a follow-up support worker, she knows how to navigate the many challenges of living in Toronto—and she shares it all with the youth she works with.

“I’m a trans Black woman and I was precariously housed for a period of time, so I have an understanding of how difficult independent living can be” she says.

Working exclusively in the community, Elise has a caseload of youth new to living independently. Some come from the shelter system, while others are refugees or new immigrants. She works with each person for about a year, helping them with the specific life skills they need.

That might mean learning how to budget for common expenses, save for the future and live within their means.

“A lot of times, I play the role of an aunty. Talking to youth about cleaning up their place, sharing tips for success, and encouraging them to take advantage of other programming available at Eva’s.”

She often explores neighbourhoods with youth, connecting them to affordable cultural food sources and other necessities.

“There are a lot of resources that many people don’t know exist, whether that’s how to access government funding for a gym membership or find ESL courses and recreational activities” she says.

When it comes to finding community, she seeks to understand what matters most to youth.

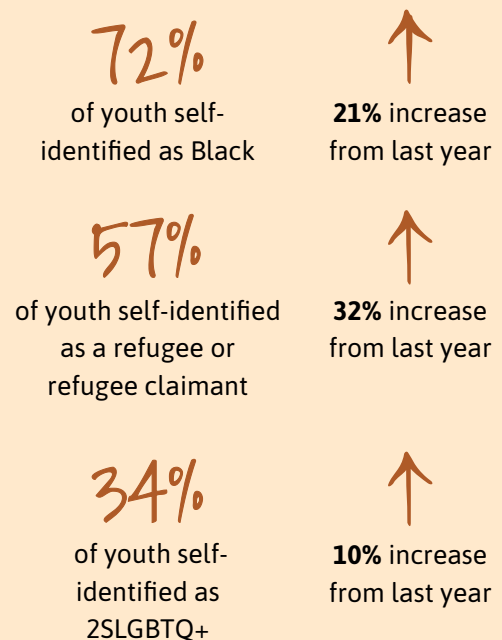
“I try to give youth the tools they need to function in society and build a satisfying life for themselves.”

Who We Serve

We recently conducted our second annual youth survey to deepen our understanding of the demographics of those we support, ensuring our services align with their evolving needs.

The survey results underscore a significant increase in the number of Black, newcomer, and 2SLGBTQ+ youth seeking assistance from Eva’s.

Top Three Survey Trends



With our new strategic plan, we will leverage our history and experience to expand innovative youth-led programming, addressing systemic issues that contribute to the over-representation of Black, newcomer, and 2SLGBTQ+ youth at Eva’s. We are committed to actively involving youth in designing, evaluating, developing, and delivering programs to meet their needs.

To learn more about the youth we support, visit <https://www.evas.ca/who-we-serve/>



New Road Map Dismantles Barriers and Empowers Young People to Thrive

Eva's Youth Journey Map (YJM) supports young people, particularly Black youth experiencing homelessness in Toronto, by integrating Africentric principles that centre their cultural heritage and individual challenges, empowering them as authorities in their own lives.

Community Support Critical to Positive Youth Outcomes

Long-time supporters, the Aubrey and Marla Dan Foundation, contributed to the early development of the YJM. It aligns with their youth homelessness organizational priority by providing Black youth with practical, customized wraparound supports.

“Our partnership with Eva's underscores our commitment to eliminating systemic barriers and cultivating inclusive environments for all youth. We eagerly anticipate watching as the Youth Journey Map makes a positive and meaningful impact on Toronto youth,” says Tamara Haberman, Acting Executive Director with the Foundation.

Breaking Down Systemic Barriers and Building Community

The YJM serves as a blueprint for designing and implementing Eva's programs and services for Black youth. The YJM ensures our support is intentional and culturally responsive, guiding youth towards stability, housing, and independence. It acts as a tool for continuous evaluation and improvement, allowing us to remain attuned to the evolving needs of Black youth in Toronto.

Our approach recognizes young people as the experts in their own lives and celebrates their strengths.

The YJM is firmly grounded in the following Africentric principles:



Thank you to the Aubrey and Marla Dan Foundation and our other committed supporters for their investments in this important service delivery model.

Support Eva's and scan the QR code to donate today.

Help us celebrate the 30th anniversary of Eva's Place with a \$30 monthly donation.

Your donation will help us ensure every young person has the targeted supports they need to build a brighter future.



Call: **416-977-4497** ext. 2025

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