YOUCAN

YOUTH SERVICES

2025/26

ANNUAL REPORT

Fiscal Year · April 1, 2025 – March 31, 2026

RELENTLESS · Inclusive · Accountable · Patient

Welcome

We are: Relentless, Inclusive, Accountable, Patient and we will continue to Build Momentum

YOUCAN Youth Services exists to walk alongside young people as they move out of harm's way and onto a path of economic independence. This report shares what that looked like in 2025/26.

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WHO WE ARE

About YOUCAN Youth Services

YOUCAN Youth Services is a charitable organization dedicated to empowering youth to obtain the knowledge, support and skills they need to remove themselves from at-risk lifestyles. We assist young people in transitioning into employment or back into education.

We believe in a 50/50 attitude and a **"Relentless"** approach when working with young people. We work very hard for them, but we expect them to work hard for themselves as well. Our end goal for the youth we work with is to stay in school, return to school, or secure and maintain employment. If these end goals are achieved, this will help to ensure prolonged, sustainable economic independence for the youth in our programs.

OUR VALUES

- **Be Inclusive:** We work with any young person seeking to change their lives.
- **Be Relentless:** We are persistent, we do not give up.
- **Be Accountable:** We encourage people to own their decisions.
- **Be Patient:** We focus on the plan and realize that change takes time.
- **Build Momentum:** We celebrate with people and help them strive toward improvement.

MISSION

To help young people out of harm's way and onto a path of economic independence.

VISION

All youth feel valued, recognize their potential, and embrace opportunities to experience success.



LEADERSHIP

Executive Director Annual Review



KATIE KITSCHKE

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

It is my privilege to present the Executive Director's Report for YOUCAN Youth Services for the 2025–2026 fiscal year. The previous year was about preparing for transformation, and this year has been about stepping into it. One of the most significant milestones in YOUCAN's history was our move into our new home at 10315 109 Street. Originally home to the International Harvester Truck Company in 1929, this historic Edmonton building has been transformed into a welcoming space for employment training, outreach, connection, celebration, and possibility. With additional classrooms, meeting spaces, hands-on training areas, and expanded program space, we now have the capacity to strengthen what we do today while creating new possibilities for the future.

Through the year, our programs continued to evolve in response to the needs of young people. Increased support for Road to Work allowed for expanded employment programming that combines practical training, certifications, work readiness, employer connections, and hands-on opportunities. Across employment programs, young people gained workplace skills and experience, and also confidence, relationships, and a stronger belief in their own potential. At the same time, Relentless Youth Outreach continued to deepen its work with young people experiencing some of the most significant barriers in our community. Through additional staff capacity, stronger partner coordination, and continued collaboration with Edmonton Police Service, our team remained present for young people navigating crisis, justice involvement, housing instability, substance use, family challenges, and other complex circumstances.

Our ability to do this work continues to depend on strong relationships. Partnerships with Edmonton Police Service, WrapEd, Children's Services, employers, schools, funders, donors, volunteers, businesses, and community organizations ensure young people do not have to navigate complicated systems alone. Growth brings increased responsibility, and throughout the year we remained focused on careful financial stewardship while managing the realities of expanded programming, increased operating costs, and a larger facility. The continued commitment of government, foundations, donors, businesses, and community partners has allowed us to invest in growth and keep long-term sustainability at the forefront.





LEADERSHIP

Executive Director Annual Review (cont.)

As we enter 2026–2027, our goal is not simply to become bigger—it is to become stronger, more connected, and more effective. Our renewed strategic direction for 2026–2029 will connect our vision to measurable outcomes, operational priorities, and sustainable growth. We will continue expanding employment pathways through Road to Work, employer partnerships, certifications, work experience, apprenticeship connections, and practical skill development. We will strengthen Relentless and its referral pathways so we can reach more young people who need intensive, relationship-based support. Our new building also provides an incredible opportunity to welcome the broader community into YOUCAN and deepen relationships with donors, volunteers, employers, businesses, neighbours, and community champions who believe in creating better possibilities for young people.

None of this happens because of one person or one program—it happens because people choose to show up. I am grateful to our Board of Directors for their leadership and trust; to our staff for the resilience, compassion, humour, and determination they bring daily; and to our funders, donors, partners, employers, volunteers, and supporters for investing in our mission. Most importantly, thank you to the young people who allow us to be part of their lives and remind us that potential is never defined by someone's hardest moment. This past year has shown us what can happen when vision becomes action, and I am incredibly excited about what lies ahead.

"Our goal is not simply to become bigger — it is to become stronger, more connected, and more effective."

Katie Kitschke
Executive Director, YOUCAN Youth Services



LEADERSHIP

Board Chair Report

This report covers the fiscal year from April 1, 2025, through March 31, 2026. It also highlights several accomplishments achieved between the end of the fiscal year and the Annual General Meeting taking place on September 22, 2026.

ORGANIZATIONAL GROWTH AND ENGAGEMENT

This year marked Executive Director Katie Kitschke's second year at the helm of YOUCAN and the organization's first year in its new building. The new facility has hosted several engagement events that have both showcased the space and generated new interest in YOUCAN.

The new building has given the organization the space needed to continue expanding in response to the growing needs of young people in the Edmonton area. Increased funding has supported the expansion of current programs and the exploration of new opportunities.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

As YOUCAN continues to grow in both staff numbers and the number of young people it serves, the organization's management needs have become increasingly complex. Katie has done a tremendous job developing her staff and enabling them to adapt to a changing environment. She has also identified gaps in current practices and is working to adapt them to meet the needs of a growing organization.

REFLECTIONS ON BOARD SERVICE

As I write this report, I reflect on my time on the YOUCAN Board. I joined the Board hoping to make a difference in the lives of young people. While I am not certain how much of an impact I had, I can say that, from my perspective, YOUCAN has exceeded its mandate.

This will be my final Board Chair report, as I will be passing the torch at this year's Annual General Meeting. I wish my successor nothing but the best and offer my support during the coming year to whoever takes on the role.

YOUCAN is an organization unlike any other I have been involved with. Its commitment to the young people it serves and to its staff is unparalleled.

LOOKING AHEAD

As we move into the next fiscal year, we look forward to working with Katie and the YOUCAN management team to continue the legacy left to us by Kyle Dube. Progress will bring challenges, but the Board is committed to supporting the important work YOUCAN continues to do and looks forward to the innovations that will accompany change.

Sean Anderson
YOUCAN Youth Services Board Chair





STRATEGY

Strategic Plan 2026–2029

Six strategic intentions guide our work, our decisions, and our growth through 2029.

As we enter 2026–2027, our goal is not simply to become bigger — it is to become stronger, more connected, and more effective. We will continue expanding employment pathways through Road to Work, employer partnerships, certifications, work experience, apprenticeship connections, and practical skill development. We will strengthen Relentless and its referral pathways so we can reach more young people who need intensive, relationship-based support. Our new home also provides an opportunity to welcome the broader community into YOUCAN and deepen relationships with donors, volunteers, employers, businesses, neighbours, and community champions who believe in creating better possibilities for young people.

01
Excellence in Operations

Create an environment where staff are empowered, supported, equipped, and appreciated so they can thrive in their roles and deliver high-quality programming.

02
Employment Pathways

Fulfill contractual obligations while building sustainable employment programming, strong youth outcomes, streamlined data tracking, and labour-market aligned pathways.

03
Relentless Outreach

Strengthen relationship-based outreach services to improve youth outcomes, responsiveness, advocacy, case management, and long-term engagement.

04
Financial Sustainability

Build financial stability and increase fundraising capacity to support organizational growth and long-term sustainability.

05
Increased Awareness

Increase community engagement and awareness of YOUCAN by targeting youth, funders, partners, supporters, and the broader community through an elevated marketing and engagement plan.

06
Facilities, Accessibility & Organizational Growth

Maximize the downtown facility, improve accessibility, support program expansion, and build the infrastructure needed for sustainable organizational growth.



PROGRAMS

Relentless Youth Outreach Program

DEVELOPED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE EDMONTON POLICE SERVICE



The Relentless Youth Outreach Program effectively addresses the unique needs of the highest-risk young people in the City of Edmonton. The program offers a non-traditional approach built on Relentless outreach, diversion from the traditional justice system, and customized individual interventions.

High-risk youth may have unpredictable living conditions and complex needs, and are at increased risk of being victims of violence and exploitation. They often require support well beyond what is currently provided through the youth criminal justice system.

Our Outreach program supports homelessness, education, employment, court support, addiction, and mental health. A pillar of our work is engaging youth through transformational relationships, creating a sense of belonging while advocating for youth to successfully navigate the complex issues impacting their lives.

Our RELENTLESS Outreach team worked tirelessly to support the needs, wants and goals of dozens of Edmonton's highest-risk youth this year. Understandably, for many of our clients, crisis is the norm. For some youth, it is easier to measure when they aren't in crisis.

OUR SUPPORT LOOKS LIKE

- **Daily outreach efforts**
- **Weekly visits in custody**
- **Daily assistance in court / probation compliance**
- **Meeting basic needs with advocation and referrals**
- **Safety planning**
- **Suicide intervention**
- **Family conflict navigation**
- **Collaboration with services like PSECA where exploitation is a concern**
- **Recreation**
- **Housing support**
- **Employment support**

SUPPORTED BY

Alberta

EDMONTON POLICE SERVICE

REACH EDMONTON Council for Safe Communities

PROGRAMS

Relentless Outreach Program Highlights

33,600+ Outreach Efforts

of transformational relationship building and pro-social engagement delivered over the course of 2025.



90+ Distinct Youth

received Relentless outreach and partnership, alongside their support teams.

KEY REFERRAL PARTNERS

Edmonton Police Service — Y:FIVE-O Unit

Edmonton Police Service — Youth Diversion and Intervention Unit

Edmonton Police Service — Missing Youth

WrapEd





2025 SUCCESS STORY

“

Youth C joined his worker’s caseload in January of 2025. He was initially very hesitant to work with a youth worker and refused to meet … Moving forward they were able to build a strong relationship; the youth opened up about himself, his struggles & challenges, and his hopes and goals for the future. While working together, he attended school full time and was able to gain employment at Tim Hortons to work full shifts on the weekends. **He was the first youth from the Y50 list to get employed through the Employment Coordinator at YOUCAN with a partnering agency.** The location that he was hired at was a two-hour one-way bus ride from his house; he never missed a shift. His worker supported him in navigating family conflict, loss of housing, and other life challenges … Youth C did not accrue a single charge while he was working with her, and attended every court date and probation appointment. He is a very motivated, kind, intelligent and charismatic individual who hopes to attend post-secondary and to thrive independently when he is an adult.”

– Relentless Youth Outreach Worker, 2025

PROGRAMS

Employment Programs

Earn while you learn! Youth in our employment programs receive a $15-per-hour living allowance while participating in our in-house training.



At YOUCAN Youth Services, we believe employment is more than a job. For a young person, employment can be a turning point — a first step toward stability, confidence, purpose, and economic independence. Our employment programs are designed to help young people become ready, willing, and able to participate in Alberta's workforce, and our work supports the goals of WorkFirst Alberta by helping young people overcome barriers, develop skills, connect with employers, and move toward sustainable employment.

The VERTO Project

Over the past three years, VERTO has continued to evolve in response to what we have learned from young people, employers, and our frontline team. This year, YOUCAN restructured the program to strengthen the connection between employment preparation, workplace experience, and ongoing community-based support. VERTO is designed as a minimum five-month employment journey, and the program will serve 200 youth through March 2028.

The first **eight weeks** take place at YOUCAN, where youth receive a $15-per-hour living allowance while participating in employment preparation, career exploration, skills development, certifications, and personal and professional development. Youth then transition into **12 weeks** of employment with an employer, hired directly and paid wages by their workplace.

One of the defining elements of the restructured model is continuity: when youth move into employment, their Employment Coach moves with them from the classroom into the community. The goal is not to create dependence on support — it is to provide the right support at the right time while helping young people build greater independence.

> “
>
> I was in a drought from employment for 8–9 months … I was also feeling like I am in a pit that I honestly didn't know how to get out of. Until I was directed … to check out the YOUCAN website … So, you can imagine the shock I had when I got told I was accepted into the Verto Project … Only until I was told by one of the facilitators that '…if you put in 100%, we'll give you 100%…,' did it dawn on me that it was on me to make this program work for me, not the other way around. Over time, with the help of the counselor that YOUCAN provides, I was able to break out of that shell … I appreciate the hard work and support provided to me alongside the banter that was exchanged which has allowed me to correlate this place as a second home.
>
> **– Youth M., VERTO Project**

SUPPORTED BY

Canada Alberta Royal Bank RBC TELUS let's make the future friendly co-operators

PROGRAMS

VERTO Project Highlights

88 Youth
were served and worked with as unique participants over the course of 2025.

8 Intake Groups
were successfully recruited, facilitated and completed within the year of 2025.

94%
of the 88 participants completed the in-house learning component of the project.

73%
acquired a quality employment opportunity, or pursued further education and training.

200 Youth
will be served by the restructured VERTO Project through March 2028.









PROGRAMS

Road to Work Program

The Road to Work program is designed to support youth in obtaining the skills and safety training they need to enter the construction, road work, and traffic safety sectors. Through partnerships between YOUCAN Youth Services and these construction industries, youth have a direct route from training to employment.





The first **seven weeks** of Road to Work focus on helping youth become ready, willing, and able to pursue employment in the trades. During this in-house phase, participants receive a $15-per-hour living allowance while participating in hands-on career development and employment preparation. Rather than simply being told what a career in the trades looks like, participants have an opportunity to experience it firsthand.

After completing the in-house phase, youth transition toward employment opportunities where they can continue developing their skills. Employment Coaches remain connected during this transition, supporting participants as they enter the workplace and navigate the expectations of employment.

THE SEVEN-WEEK EXPERIENCE INCLUDES

- **Hands-on tool time and practical learning**
- **Worksite visits and exposure to real working environments**
- **Road safety and traffic-related training**
- **Introduction to labour and construction environments**
- **Opportunities to interact with tradespeople and employers**
- **Workplace safety and industry certifications**
- **Team-based activities and problem solving**
- **Employment readiness and workplace expectations**

> “At the time, I had a minor interest in trades and construction, but I did enjoy working with my hands … I started to learn some important life lessons, like how you need to work hard if you want results, and that things won’t always go your way, so it’s best to stay resilient and adaptable … I learned a lot through the Road to Work Project. I can confidently say I’ve come out of my shell a bit. I now know what resources are available to help me advance in life and my career … I no longer feel stuck living a semi-miserable life on minimum wage, part-time jobs. I’m incredibly grateful to the program for taking a chance on me.
>
> **– Youth B., Road to Work Project**

SUPPORTED BY

Alberta

60 ATS Traffic

Milwaukee

GRAHAM

PROGRAMS

Road to Work Program Highlights

46 Youth
were served and worked with as unique participants over the course of 2025.

4 Intake Groups
were successfully recruited, facilitated and completed within the year of 2025.

98%
of the 46 participants completed the in-house learning component of the project.

78%
acquired a quality employment opportunity, or pursued further education and training.



The current Road to Work grant was not fully in place and approved until May 26, 2025, which is when the first cohort began programming.



A PROGRAM THAT GREW WITH THE NEED

110 → 187 Youth
approved participant target, following a program amendment received during the past year.

77 More Opportunities
for young people to explore careers, develop practical skills, connect with employers, and take steps toward economic independence.



FUNDRAISING

Comedy Nights Fundraiser



YOUCAN Youth Services does some very serious work dealing with some very serious issues that our young people struggle through daily. We do our best to have fun and bring laughter into the lives of everyone involved with our organization — in fact, we are **Relentless** about it. It is only fitting that our major yearly fundraiser involves comedy.

YOUCAN's annual Comedy Nights continued to be a cornerstone of our fundraising and community engagement efforts. Beyond the funds raised, Comedy Nights provided an important opportunity to share the experiences of young people, celebrate the impact of YOUCAN's programs, and introduce hundreds of new people to our mission.

We thank all who support this endeavour: our sponsors, table and ticket buyers, silent and live auction donors, raffle and 50/50 ticket buyers, one-time donors, new monthly donors, and the participants of our very popular Heads or Tails game.

THE 2026 EVENT

1,000+ Guests
welcomed to the 2026 event, with over half attending a YOUCAN event for the first time.

100+ New Donors
supported YOUCAN through the event.

$200,000+
raised by our community through sponsorships, donations, ticket sales, auctions, raffles, and gifts in kind.

25+ Volunteers
helped make the event possible.

COMEDY NIGHTS 2026 SPONSORS

ATS Traffic
Daytona Homes
Milron
Tim Hortons
Graham
Aqua Air
Legacy Heating & Cooling
CLAC
Crystal Glass

FUND DEVELOPMENT

Our New Home & Capital Campaign

The 2025–2026 fiscal year was a significant year of growth for fund development at YOUCAN Youth Services.

Our focus extended beyond raising funds to strengthening relationships, growing our community of supporters, and building the systems and partnerships needed for long-term sustainability. A major milestone was the purchase of YOUCAN's new **16,000-square-foot** home in downtown Edmonton. Following the purchase in **July 2025**, YOUCAN began developing a **$2.5 million** capital campaign to support the mortgage, renovations, accessibility improvements, and equipment needed to transform the space into a welcoming and functional home for youth.

CAMPAIGN PROGRESS

$785,000+ committed as of January 2026 **$2.5 million goal**

Throughout the year, we engaged donors, businesses, foundations, and community partners in the vision for YOUCAN's new home, and new sponsorship and naming opportunities were developed. We are especially grateful to the **Stollery Charitable Foundation**, **Starlight Casino** and **Tim Hortons**, who were the first sponsors to step forward and invest in spaces within our new home. Their early support helped bring our vision to life and build momentum for the campaign.

Corporate and community partnerships also continued to grow, including financial contributions, sponsorships, gifts in kind, volunteer engagement, and event participation. This included **Lexus South Pointe**, with YOUCAN selected as the beneficiary of the 2025 Lexus South Pointe Charity Golf Tournament.

As our fundraising efforts grew, we also strengthened the systems behind them — improving donor tracking, stewardship, gift processing, charitable receipting, and reconciliation through Keela, and developing new and updated policies including gift acceptance and gifts-in-kind.



COMMUNITY

Volunteers

This year granted the opportunity to relaunch YOUCAN's volunteer program as the organization continues along the path of growth and development. YOUCAN's volunteer program seeks to provide opportunities for community members, employment and community partners as well as alumni and current youth, to give back while fostering new relationships and connections.

This past year, these opportunities included fundraising during our annual Comedy Nights Fundraiser and the Great Outdoors Comedy Festival, as well as representing YOUCAN at Youth Day Edmonton.

In the year ahead, we look forward to growing our volunteer community while celebrating what we have accomplished. We express gratitude to all of those who donated their time and effort. You are a true representation of YOUCAN's mission and values!





27
new volunteers joined us.

147.5
total volunteer hours contributed.

Statistics cover January 2026 – August 2026.

IN THEIR WORDS

> We believe in big dreams and bigger opportunities for the next generation. That's why we're proud to support YOUCAN Youth Services, which empowers youth through outreach, job-readiness training, and employment support. By working together, we're helping remove barriers and create pathways to confidence, independence, and long-term success.
>
> **– Community Partner and Volunteer**

> Volunteering with YOUCAN has shown me what RELENTLESS commitment looks like in the real world. Seeing that kind of unyielding energy put toward empowering youth and building peace is incredibly inspiring. It's a reminder that when we truly show up for each other, we're doing more than just fixing a problem in the moment—we're building a future that's resilient and kind. I'm just proud to be a small part of the work this team does every single day.
>
> **– Youth Alumni Volunteer**

FINANCIALS

Financial Statements

STATUS

Awaiting Board Approval — audited financial statements to follow.

Our audited financial statements for the fiscal year ended March 31, 2026 were not finalized in time for the publication of this report.

Year-end statements are prepared with our accountants and must be reviewed and approved by the Board of Directors before they are published. We would rather bring forward figures that have been properly audited and approved than publish numbers that may still change.

Once approved, the Statement of Financial Position and the Statement of Revenues and Expenditures will be shared with our members, funders and community partners, and will be made available on request.

Growth brings increased responsibility. This past year saw expanded programming, increased operating costs and a larger facility, and careful financial stewardship remained a priority throughout. We are committed to full transparency in reporting how the funds entrusted to us are used, and we look forward to presenting a complete financial picture of the year as soon as it is available.

To request a copy of the audited financial statements once they are approved, please contact us at **youcan.edmonton@youcan.ca** or **(780) 444-3348**.



GOVERNANCE

Board of Directors

SEAN ANDERSON
CHAIR

ANDREA WHEATON
VICE-CHAIR

LORYN MARCELLUS
TREASURER

RON DICKSON
BOARD MEMBER

ALVIN NGO
BOARD MEMBER

KAMEE GILMORE
BOARD MEMBER

ALISON MATHISON
BOARD MEMBER

Contact Us

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As we close this chapter and look ahead, we celebrate the resilience, progress, and impact made possible by our dedicated team, partners, and supporters. Every success story, every milestone, and every life changed is a testament to the power of community and collaboration. While there is still work to be done, we remain committed to overcoming barriers, creating opportunities, and empowering those we serve. Thank you for standing with us — your support drives our mission forward, and together, we will continue to build a brighter future for our at-risk youth communities.



For more information please contact:

YOUCAN Youth Services
Phone: 780.444.3348
www.youcan.ca
www.youcancomedy.ca

BE RELENTLESS

Charitable Registration Number: 14097 9915 RR0001

YOUCAN
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