

SAFE AT HOME

**Ending and Preventing
Homelessness**
in Yukon

Our Progress

2017 - 2020



JULY 2020



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to all the organizations and government partners who took the time to send us action highlights in Spring 2019 and updates again in 2020. A special thank you to the individuals with lived/living experience of homelessness for sharing your stories. Your words give context to why this work is important and shed light on what is possible when we work better together to end and prevent homelessness in Yukon.

Safe at Home would like to acknowledge the key contributors to this report:

- Government of Yukon (Health and Social Services, Yukon Housing Corporation and Department of Justice)
- Kwanlin Dün First Nation
- City of Whitehorse
- Ta'an Kwäch'än Council
- Built for Zero Whitehorse and the Coordinated Housing Access Team
- Yukon Community Advisory Board for Reaching Home/Safe at Home
- Voices Influencing Change
- Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition

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SAFE AT HOME INTRODUCTION

Since coming to the position of Implementation Manager in May 2018, I have seen our community come together around the issue of homelessness in unprecedented and remarkable ways. Safe at Home is truly a community-based plan in action. This report celebrates our collective momentum towards ending and preventing homelessness since the adoption of the Safe at Home Plan, 2017. As our first progress report, it is a snapshot of progress and achievements in housing and support within Whitehorse as well as some key housing projects and activities in rural Yukon. It also demonstrates how much coordination work has been done across sectors and between service providers that is improving the lives of vulnerable Yukoners. As the Safe at Home goals are being realized, we are better at identifying and understanding gaps in service, we are mitigating duplication and we are implementing evidence-based data-driven solutions.

Image: Kate Mechan, Implementation Manager speaking at Safe at Home Community Action Forum, April 2019.



Safe at Home has evolved to become much more than a plan, it is 'Mission Control' where community dialogue and calls to action are centred. Unique to Safe at Home is that no one government, agency, or person is responsible for ending homelessness but rather every single government, agency and person is collectively responsible. Safe at Home and partners are working towards an implementation plan to complement the original Safe at Home Plan and the community will be engaged as we work towards adopting the refined strategies.

This progress report reminds us of and renews our shared commitment to upholding the critical role that people with lived/living experience play in priority-setting and informing solutions. This will always be the heart of this work. I am looking forward to the next chapter for Safe at Home.

In Solidarity,

Kate Mechan, Implementation Manager
Safe at Home

GOVERNMENT PARTNER COMMITTEE MEMBERS

- Kwanlin Dün First Nation
- City of Whitehorse
- Ta'an Kwächän Council
- Government of Yukon (Yukon Housing Corporation, Health and Social Services and Department of Justice)

UNDERSTANDING HOMELESSNESS

Homelessness is...

the situation of an individual or family without stable, permanent, appropriate housing, or the immediate prospect, means and ability of acquiring it.

- Canadian Observatory on Homelessness

Homelessness is a complex and often ever-changing experience, where one's housing situation may shift with changing structural, individual and systems-level circumstances (see Figure 1).

In Yukon, we recognize homelessness as involving various living situations, including those who are at-risk of homelessness (see Continuum of Homelessness below).

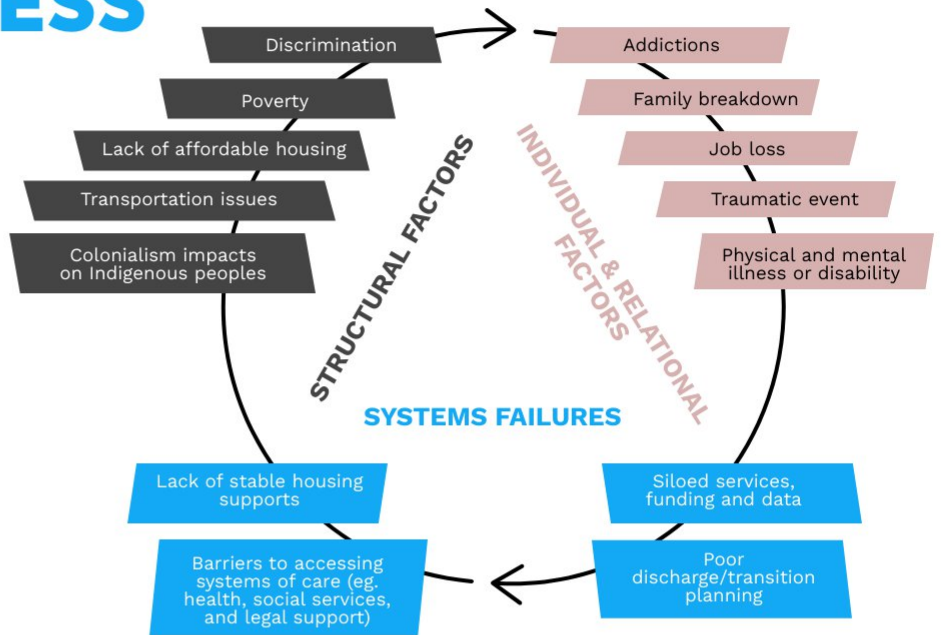


FIGURE 1. CAUSES OF HOMELESSNESS
(adapted from Canadian Observatory on Homelessness' A New Direction: A Framework for Homelessness Prevention)

There is no single effort that will end and prevent homelessness and there is no one government, organization or person responsible to implement all the solutions. Coordinating actions rooted in community values, lived/living experiences, and the best available research is the way forward.

CONTINUUM OF HOMELESSNESS



ABSOLUTELY HOMELESS		PROVISIONALLY ACCOMMODATED		
Unsheltered	Emergency Sheltered			At Risk of Homelessness
living on streets or places not intended for human habitation	staying in overnight shelters on temporary basis	living in accommodations that are unsafe or where tenure is insecure (i.e. transitional housing, hotel and public systems*)	housing situation is unknown (e.g. couch-surfing, staying with family or remaining in unsafe relationships)	economic or housing situation is precarious or does not meet public health and safety standards

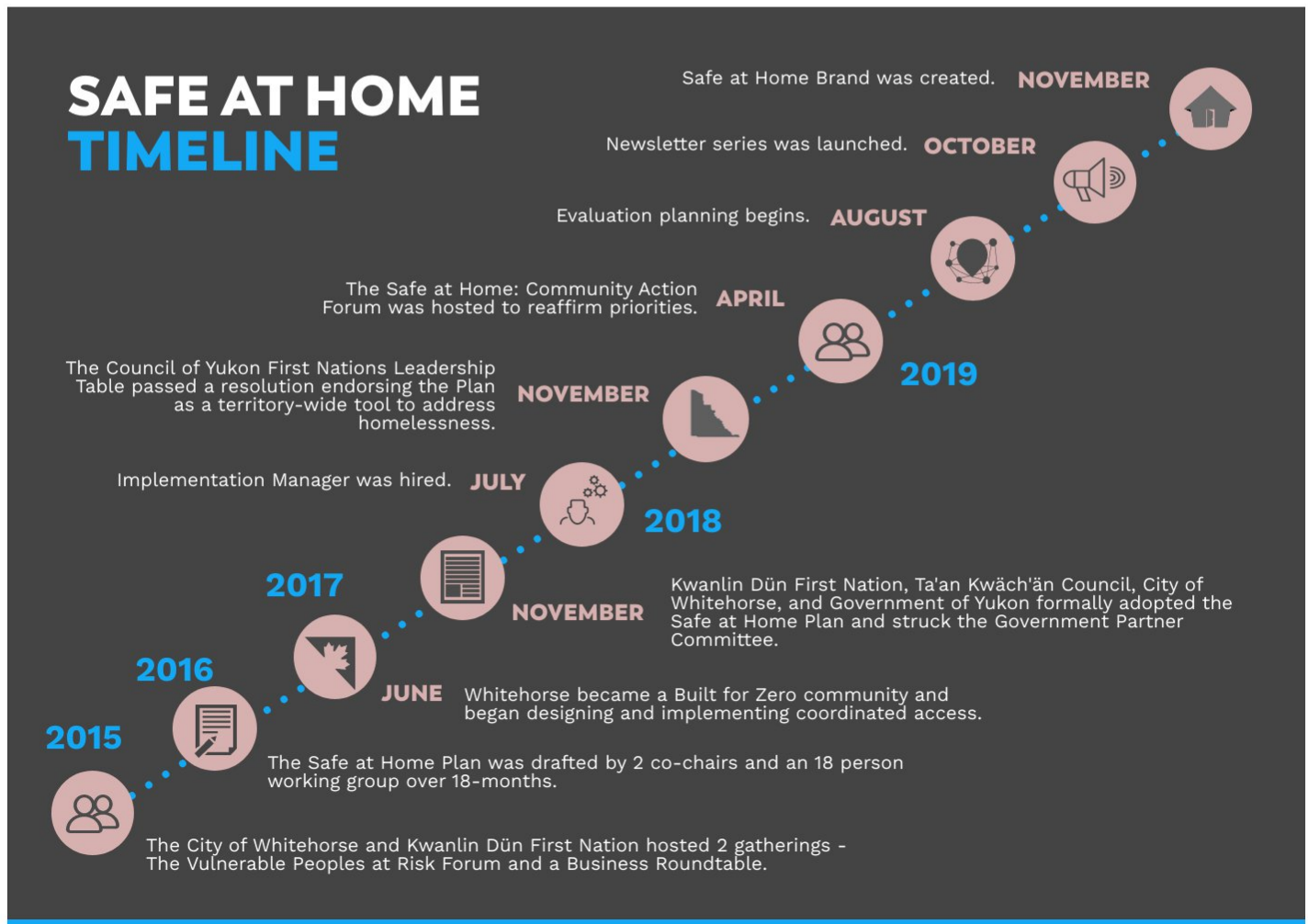
* Public systems include hospital, corrections, and mental health and addictions treatment. Please note that it does not include continuing care facilities.

REFINING OUR PLAN

Safe at Home is a multi-year action plan well supported across sectors, championed by all levels of government, and driven by the voices of individuals with lived/living experience of homelessness. The Safe at Home Plan reflects an ongoing community-based engagement approach to planning, implementation and evaluation.

‘Safe at Home’ provides a working framework that will evolve over time as governments and community partners work collectively to end homelessness in Whitehorse. It will require a multi-year implementation period supported by stakeholders and driven by community champions.




- Safe at Home. A Community-Based Action Plan to End and Prevent Homelessness in Whitehorse, Yukon, 2017




STRENGTHENED GOALS

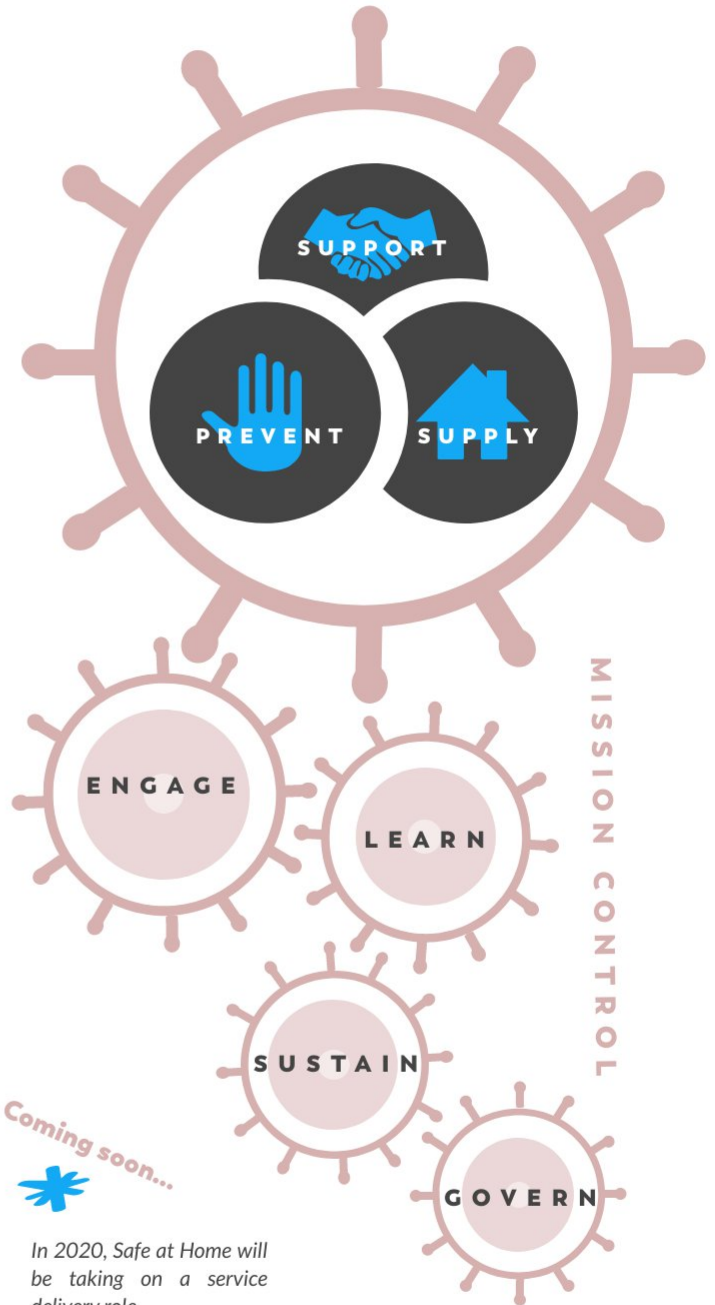
The Safe at Home Plan has 3 core goals centred on improving and increasing programs and infrastructure, preventing homelessness, and improving outcomes and 1 systems coordination goal.

CORE GOALS

-  PRIORITY #1: Preventing homelessness
-  PRIORITY #2: Increasing supply of safe, stable and affordable housing
-  PRIORITY #3: Ensure access to housing and programs and services within a system of care

SUPPORTING GOAL

-  Establishing a Mission Control to guide planning, implementation and coordination of Safe at Home



OUR SYSTEMS CHANGE EFFORT

THE APPROACH

Safe at Home challenges the status quo of how we're used to working. It is rooted in community values of participation, inclusion, collaboration, learning, and action with a goal to work differently and change and challenge the system as needed. Safe at Home has become the backbone in our pursuit to end homelessness, acting as a highly coordinated mission control hub. This involves an iterative process where the entire community participates in governing, sustaining, engaging, and learning to address and respond to homelessness in the Yukon.

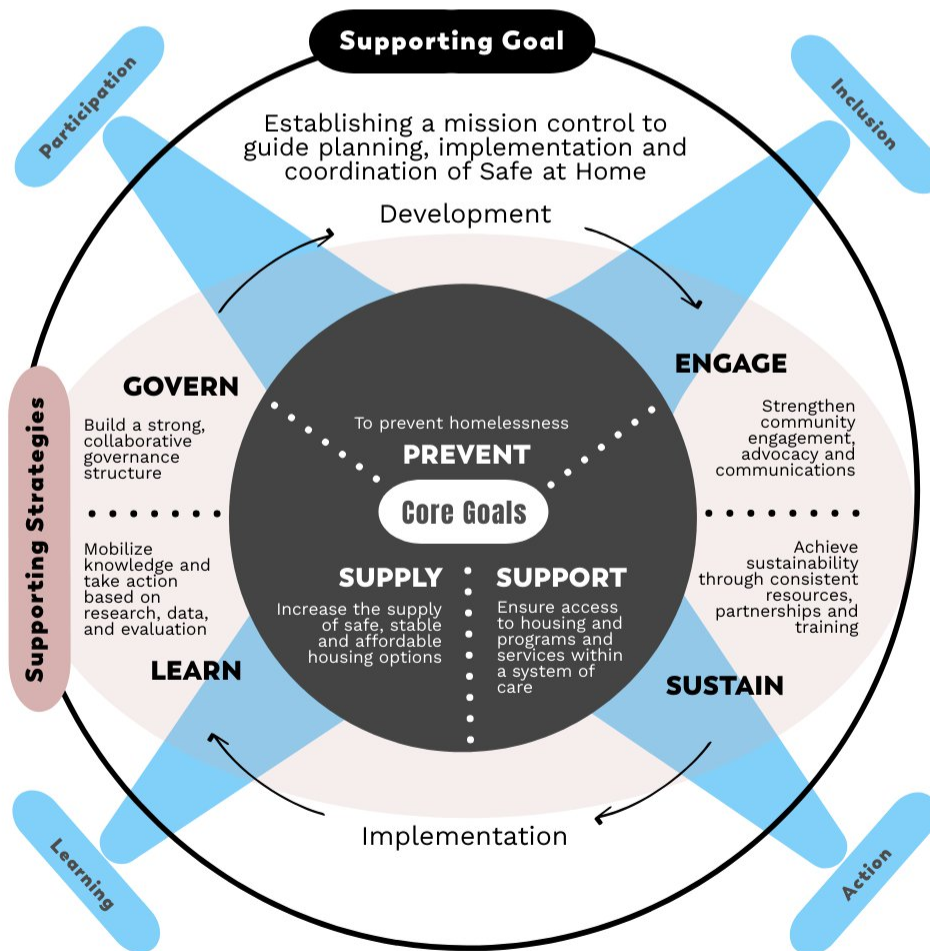


Image: Safe at Home - A Model for Systems Change

TRACKING HOMELESSNESS

TRACK. SUPPORT. ACT.

We are now able to respond more effectively to community needs through the introduction of tracking systems and inter-agency collaboration.

Whitehorse participates in 2 national efforts to track homelessness: the Point-in-Time (PiT) Count and Built for Zero Canada (BFZ-C).

POINT-IN-TIME COUNT

Every 2-years Whitehorse conducts a count and survey of people experiencing homelessness in a single 24-hour period.

BUILT FOR ZERO CANADA

BFZ-C is an ambitious change effort focused on optimizing local homeless systems, accelerating the adoption of proven practices and driving continuous improvement.

The goal of BFZ-C is to reach "**Functional Zero**". Functional Zero is achieved when there are 3 or fewer people experiencing chronic homelessness, sustained over 3 months as measured by the community's By-Name List.

BY-NAME LIST

A By-Name List (BNL) is a real-time list of all people experiencing homelessness in a community. This real-time actionable data supports triage to services, system performance evaluation and advocacy for the policies and resources necessary to end homelessness.

BNL's rely on service providers working together to actively support individuals and families to find and maintain permanent housing AND to maintain reliable data. Whitehorse's BNL started in 2017 and has **8 participating agencies** actively updating the list on a monthly basis.



According to the 2018 PiT Count

195
Homeless

at least 195 people experienced homelessness on the night of April 17th in Whitehorse.

As of May 2020,

72

72 people experiencing homelessness consented to be on the By-Name List.



*When **90% of our homeless-specific service providers** are adding or referring individuals to the BNL and when **our BNL captures 90% of all known and consenting people experiencing chronic homelessness**, we will have a quality and reliable BNL.*

Building a quality BNL involves a commitment to systems change on the part of all service providers. As we co-design a new approach to housing and support, the BNL is a work in progress.

Built for Zero Whitehorse:

Team Lead and Data Support: Safe at Home Coordinated Housing Access Team (CHAT):*

- Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition
- Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Society of Yukon (a.k.a FASSY)
- Blood Ties Four Directions
- Yukon Women's Transition Home Society
- Victoria Faulkner Women's Centre
- Government of Yukon (Health and Social Services' Community Outreach Services and Whitehorse Emergency Shelter)
- Kwanlin Dün First Nation

Champion: Yukon Housing Corporation



CHAT is the coordinated team committed to supporting individuals and families to access safe and permanent housing.

“Ending homelessness does not mean that no one will ever experience homelessness. It means that systems are in place to ensure that any experience of homelessness is *rare and brief when it occurs.*”

- Built for Zero Canada

As a Built for Zero community, we use chronic homelessness as a key indicator to assess progress. By starting with those with the greatest need we can work across demographic groups and target interventions where we can have the greatest impact.

ALIGNING OUTCOMES

Built for Zero Whitehorse is aligned with Reaching Home - Canada's national homelessness strategy. We are working to streamline our community progress indicators and are committed to 4 outcomes:

- 1 **Chronic homelessness in the community is reduced**
- 2 **Homelessness in the community is reduced overall and specifically for Indigenous populations**
- 3 **New inflows into homelessness are reduced**
- 4 **Returns to homelessness are reduced**

Better outcome measures and reliable bi-annual PiT Count data will improve our understanding of homelessness and help us to make data-driven decisions and evaluate progress.

Image: "House on Wheels" by Kathryn Watson





Images: Kate Mechan (Safe at Home) and Kerry Nolan (Voices Influencing Change) delivered a presentation about homelessness to grades 1 and 2 students at Christ the King Elementary School in December 2019. This selection of students' artwork is their interpretation "home."

OUR PROGRESS HIGHLIGHTS

*“It was a good feeling to know that homelessness is being acknowledged made aware in our schools as this a huge issue in our community, one we are trying to **end together.**”*

- Kerry Nolan, Voices Influencing Change Facilitator on her reflections about homelessness presentation at Christ the King Elementary School

Safe at Home is a system and community-based plan with multiple agencies and groups involved. Since 2017, across Yukon, there have been many successes and noteworthy projects. The following section highlights some of these initiatives and successes.

SUMMARY OF KEY AREAS OF PROGRESS

Prevention - Progress towards preventing homelessness is complex. This being said, investments in this area are seeing great success in helping us reduce new entries into homelessness and facilitate stability upon exit into housing. There has been a greater focus on education programs and financial and social supports for tenants and landlords to help prevent evictions. In addition, momentum is building to support the programming that is assisting youth transitioning from care.

Increasing supply - Increasing the housing supply along the continuum is a key priority of Safe at Home. In particular, we have seen significant increases in the number of new supportive units as well as increases in housing options in rural Yukon.

Stronger coordination - Improvements to the coordination of our systems of care have included meaningful collaborations between service providers and the active involvement of individuals with lived/living experience in policy, program and peer support work. This has improved access to both supports and housing for vulnerable persons who have typically struggled to navigate a complex system.

Establishing a 'Mission Control' - The need for a backbone organization or Mission Control to support the end and prevention of homelessness has become clear since the adoption of the Safe at Home Plan. There has been significant investment in Safe at Home by all levels of government and community partners. The capacity to coordinate, communicate and facilitate systems change through both planning and action has grown.

PREVENT

PREVENTING HOMELESSNESS



STRATEGIES

- To ensure that community, especially youth/young people and families, are aware of and have access to a system of care that prioritizes support and safety
- Ensure adequate discharge planning for people leaving treatment facilities and public systems
- Increase community awareness and education around homelessness to reduce stigma
- Explore leverage points within the system, which facilitate or impede housing for low-income populations and those from rural communities

**KEY ACTION PILLARS STRENGTHENED: SUPPORTIVE NETWORKS/STRUCTURES • RESEARCH & EVALUATION
FINANCIAL SUPPORTS • EDUCATION & TRAINING**

IMPROVING FAMILY & YOUTH SUPPORTS

Supporting youth in need of housing, especially those who are transitioning from care is a key preventative action of Safe at Home.

Nts' äw Chua Transition Home for youth is an alternative to the traditional group home approach and helps young people (aged 15-19 years) to be more independent. The program includes live-in and outreach services for youth currently receiving, or eligible to receive, services from Yukon's Family and Children's Services division. Since the opening of the home in 2019, **5 youth** have applied to the Residential Program and **4 youth** are currently living in the home. The total occupancy is 10.

DISCHARGE PLANNING

From January to March 2020, Safe at Home looked to identify issues experienced by rural Yukoners exiting Whitehorse-based public systems. These systems include for example, hospitals, corrections, and mental health and addictions treatment. The report – Coordinated Discharge Planning for Rural Yukon Citizens* - highlights **6 thematic gaps** related to discharge planning and proposes **9 recommendations** to better support rural Yukoners.

THEMES - GAPS IN DISCHARGE PLANNING



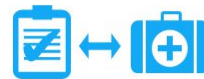
TRANSPORTATION



REGIONAL ASSUMPTIONS



KNOWLEDGE OF RESOURCES



PROGRAM CONSTRAINTS



RELATIONAL DISCONNECTION



COMMUNITY-SITUATED BARRIERS

RECOMMENDATIONS - A CONSOLIDATED SUMMARY

- Build a Yukon-wide coordinated access system
- Reflect citizens' chosen 'home' community in the By-Name List
- Use telehealth technology to support rural citizens
- Create targeted communications materials to explain what is needed from clients and service providers as it relates to sharing personal data
- Strike a working group to ensure safe and consistent transportation options are available between communities and Whitehorse
- Create safe and temporary aftercare accommodations in Whitehorse

* This report is meant to complement existing work happening across sectors and within Government of Yukon to better understand and streamline discharge planning for all Yukoners.

PREVENTING EVICTIONS AND RETAINING TENANTS

A number of organizations provide support and education programs with a focus on housing loss prevention.

General Information and Public Education

Residential Tenancies Office created the Residential Landlord and Tenant Handbook in 2019 and offers support to tenants and landlords on their rights and responsibilities.

Tenant Wisdom Workshops & Tenancy Retention

- Victoria Faulkner Women's Centre
- Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition
- Blood Ties Four Directions Centre

Between 2018-2020:

3 workshops *
16 participants

**Most housing support programs offer frequent interactions with clients that result in life-skill development. These numbers are not reflected here.*

Housing Support Programs

Support navigating the housing system, eviction prevention, maintaining housing and resolving conflicts are offered through various housing support programs in Whitehorse.

At least **112** * individuals experiencing homelessness were housed in 2018/19 by 5 organizations (below).

ONGOING HOUSING SUPPORTS FOR INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

- **Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition**
58 clients supported (Nov 2017 - May 2018)
- **Health and Social Services - Community Outreach Services**
123 clients supported (2019)
- **Blood Ties Four Directions Centre**
52 clients supported (2019 - 2020)
- **Victoria Faulkner Women's Centre**
44 clients supported (Oct 2019 - Jul 2020)
- **Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Society Yukon**
26 clients supported (current caseload)

We are pleased to have been a partner with FASSY's Landlords' LWEH Supportive Housing project, for a year now and we would like to continue our relationship with their efforts to alleviate homelessness in the Yukon Territory.

- Simukai Mutiwekuziwa
Landlord and Executive Director, 536761 Yukon Inc.

Landlords Working to End Homelessness (LWEH)

The LWEH program, established in 2013 by Blood Ties Four Directions, has grown to include Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Society of Yukon and Victoria Faulkner Women's Centre. The program creates a three-way partnership between the community agency, the client in need of housing with supports, and a private sector landlord. The agency assumes the lease and supports the client in having a successful tenancy. In 2018 through 2019, a total of **19 people** were housed through LWEH arrangements.

- Victoria Faulkner Women's Centre: **1 unit/1 landlord**
- Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Society Yukon:
8 units/5 landlords
- Blood Ties Four Directions: **4 units/4 landlords**

In 2019 an **After-Hours Crisis Support Service** was introduced for vulnerable persons who are housed through an LWEH-supported unit or the Steve Cardiff Tiny Home community.

70
In 2019,
the After-Hours Crisis Support
Service responded to 70 calls.

Financial Supports for Families and Individuals

As of fall 2018, Yukon Housing Corporation (YHC) offered **4 rent supplements** to clients supported and housed through the By-Name List (**2 of these** rent supplements are currently in use). Through the Victims of Violence Funding, YHC invested **\$345,000** in 5 organizations* who support clients fleeing violence with basic needs costs, rental subsidies, emergency and temporary accommodations, repairs to damaged units, and capital projects.

* Blood Ties Four Directions Centre, Yukon Women's Transition Home Society, Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Society Yukon, Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition, and Victoria Faulkner Women's Centre

* This number is reflective of work done independently by Community Outreach Services and collaboratively across the NGO community. Not all individuals housed to date are on the By-Name List.

SUPPLY



INCREASING THE SUPPLY OF SAFE, STABLE AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING

STRATEGIES

- Improve housing options along the continuum, based on most immediate needs/gaps highlighted in the community
- Support/incentivize housing supply chain and implement upstream solutions to increase the supply of a range of housing options, including a variety of sized units

ACTION PILLARS: SUPPORTIVE NETWORKS/STRUCTURES • FINANCIAL SUPPORTS • POLICY CHANGE

SNAPSHOT: FUNDING SUPPORT

In 2019-20, the Yukon Housing Corporation delivered



13 HOUSING PROGRAMS



8 of which were targeted to help Yukoners in core housing need gain and maintain housing



49 NEW UNITS BUILT

Through the Municipal Matching Rental Construction Grant

350 NEW UNITS BUILT (past 3 years)

Through the Housing Initiatives Fund

Community Housing & Loan Programs

700 RENT-GEARED-TO-INCOME UNITS YUKON-WIDE

100% targeted to low-income occupants



100 renters

RENT SUPPLEMENTS currently support over 100 low-income Yukon renters in the private market through the YHC's rent-geared-to-income program

14 families



RENTAL HOUSING ALLOWANCE FOR FAMILIES program currently supports 14 families



67

Yukoners helped to buy, build and fix their homes through **6 YHC loan programs**



These programs have been revised for 2020-21 to support those in core housing need.

City of Whitehorse - New Incentives (2017-2020)

463 NEW HOUSING UNITS approved through the City of Whitehorse's **Development Incentives Policy**

The new incentive policy (Feb 2020) focuses on supporting smaller and denser housing as well as rental and supportive housing.

Units Supported through Incentives

127 Minor/Suite Units

48 Standard Units

288 Major/Rental and Supportive

\$571,268 The total value paid out between 2017 - 2019* is **\$571,268.07**

*2020 grants have yet to be processed



Image: Steve Cardiff Tiny Home Community; credit: Government of Yukon

SUPPORTIVE HOUSING PROJECTS

Steve Cardiff Tiny House Community (completed in 2019)

An initiative of Blood Ties Four Directions Centre, the Steve Cardiff Tiny Home Community is a community of **5 small homes** providing supported case management housing to people with addictions, complex health challenges, and histories of homelessness.

Options For Independence (OFI) - Aurora (completed in 2018)

A partnership between Options for Independence and Yukon Government Disability Services. OFI – Aurora is a group home model that supports **3 women** with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD). This project adds to the longstanding 14 supportive units for individuals with FASD on 4th Ave.

Max's Place (completed in 2019)

An initiative of Yukon Government Disability Services in partnership with Challenge Disability Resource Group, Max's place is a group residence based on the principles of being a low-barrier, harm reduction model. The program supports **3 men** with FASD.

TRANSITION HOUSING A SNAPSHOT

In 2019/2020, there were

480 intakes to the Women's Transition Home;



..... **347** were women
..... **133** were children

3726 requests for support and services for those responding to violence or in crisis, who were not staying in the Transition Home.

4 intakes to the new Youth Transition Home (Nts' äw Chua) since January 2020



Betty's Haven (second stage housing)

All 10 apartments were fully occupied

A COMMITMENT TO AFFORDABLE HOUSING

RiverBend Affordable Housing Project (Phase 1 completed 2017; Phase 2 in progress)

RiverBend is a partnership between Da Daghay Development Corporation, Ta'an Kwäch'än Council, Yukon Housing Corporation, City of Whitehorse, and Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. Phase 1 consists of **3 buildings** with a total of **42 units**. These affordable units are home to **60 Ta'an citizens** and Yukoners.

Housing First (Not Housing Only)

Housing First is a philosophy that values flexibility, individualized supports, client choice, and autonomy. It never has been housing only, and it never should be. There are five core principles of Housing First:

- 1 **Immediate access to permanent housing with no housing readiness requirements**
- 2 **Consumer choice and self-determination**
- 3 **Recovery orientation**
- 4 **Individualized and client-driven supports**
- 5 **Social and community integration**

Yukon Housing Corporation and Health and Social Services opened the territory's first **Housing First residence** on Wood Street and Fifth Avenue in Whitehorse in December 2019. The residence is staffed 24/7 and offers a variety of supports. There are 16 self-contained units, two of which are accessible, barrier-free units.

Occupancy began January 2020 and the 16 units are now home to 19 individuals with histories of homelessness. The Referred Care Clinic is currently providing drop-in nursing services twice a week and Mental Wellness & Substance Use Services is offering drop-in counseling once a week.

Additional Housing First Units

The 20 units attached to the **Whitehorse Emergency Shelter** which were previously transition housing were converted to permanent housing in alignment with housing first principles.



These units combined have had a huge impact on the reduction of Whitehorse's chronic homeless population.



Image: Yukon's first Housing First Residence in Whitehorse; credit: Government of Yukon

RURAL COMMUNITY HIGHLIGHTS

The Building Stability Pilot Project (Haines Junction)

The Building Stability pilot project, initiated by the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations and Yukon College and funded by the Government of Yukon, brought participants together with an instructor at Yukon College to build a tiny home. Over 18 months, participants learned construction skills and gained hands-on experience to help them overcome educational and employment barriers. The tiny home is now located in Haines Junction, where it serves as transitional housing for people in need.



Images: (above) Klondike Development Organization's 8-Plex, 2019-20 added affordable units to Dawson City's housing stock; (below) The Building Stability Project, Haines Junction; credit: Government of Yukon



The Eliza Building (Dawson City)

In 2019–20, the Chief Isaac Group of Companies opened the Eliza Building, which expands affordable housing options in Dawson City. The building includes 1 commercial and 13 residential units (**9 of which are affordable**). These new builds were supported by the Yukon Housing Corporation's Municipal Matching Rental Construction Grant and the Affordable Rental Construction Grant (program now ended) as well as the Government of Canada's Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation.



RURAL COMMUNITY HOUSING PROJECTS

In rural Yukon, a number of new building projects and retrofits have taken place.

81 HOUSING PROJECTS



31 AFFORDABLE UNITS

- 17 in Dawson City (Chief Isaac Group of Companies & Klondike Development Organization)
- 8 in Teslin (Teslin Tlingit Council) - two of which are accessible
- 4 in Haines Junction (Champagne and Aishihik First Nations) - for seniors
- 2 in Watson Lake (Liard First Nation) - social housing

28 RETROFITS

- 10 in Carcross (Carcross/Tagish First Nation)
- 8 in Old Crow (Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation)
- 8 energy upgrades in Pelly Crossing (Selkirk First Nation)
- 1 in Mayo (First Nation of Na-Cho Nyak Dun)
- 1 in Watson Lake (Liard First Nation)

SUPPORT



ENSURE ACCESS TO HOUSING AND PROGRAMS AND SERVICES WITHIN A SYSTEM OF CARE

STRATEGIES

- To ensure we have an effective, streamlined and co-ordinated service structure
- To ensure program and services, where possible, reflect a client-centered, trauma-informed and culturally relevant approach
- To encourage a collaborative effort between all levels of society in finding creative solutions and resources towards ending and preventing homelessness

ACTION PILLARS: SUPPORTIVE NETWORKS/STRUCTURES • EDUCATION/TRAINING

PRIORITIZING FIRST NATIONS CULTURAL AWARENESS

A number of organizations require that their staff complete First Nations cultural and historical training.

- Ta'an Kwäch'än Council (Yukon First Nations 101 & Lateral Kindness Workshop)
- Grey Mountain Housing (Yukon First Nations 101)
- Yukon Housing Corporation (Yukon First Nations 101 & The Blanket Exercise)
- City of Whitehorse (Yukon First Nations 101)

CHANGING THE MODEL OF CARE

The **Whitehorse Emergency Shelter** (a.k.a. **The Shelter**) under the management of the Government of Yukon's Health and Social Services since 2019, is a low-barrier shelter. The Shelter has **25 beds** and can accommodate overflow on the ground floor. **Ten** of the 20 converted transition units are now a permanent home for individuals with a history of chronic homelessness and complex health and support needs.

From February to December 2019 (inclusive)



The Shelter provided approximately 15,763* **shelter stays**;

15,763



representing a daily average of 47 guests.

*These are not unique individuals.

EMPHASIZING COMMUNITY SAFETY & WELLNESS

Increasingly, **mental health, harm reduction, and trauma-informed care** are being integrated into governments' policies and practices.

- Kwanlin Dün First Nation (mental health first aid training offered to all employees)
- City of Whitehorse (approximately 100 staff have taken mental health training)
- Ta'an Kwä'chän Council (Naloxone training offered to employees and citizens)
- Mental Wellness and Substance Use Services (offers regular in-service training for staff on mental health issues)

Also at the Whitehorse Emergency Shelter - Health and Social Services has been working to address the community safety challenges that are posed by the size and location of the Shelter and have engaged in a Community Safety Planning process with the Department of Justice, guided by Public Safety Canada.



Paramedics and Mental Health and Substance Use Services offer on-site support to guests and residents.



COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

VOICES INFLUENCING CHANGE PROGRAM

The Voices Influencing Change Program was established in 2017 and emerged from the need to recognize, honour and include people with lived/living experience of poverty, homelessness and other forms of social exclusion into the policy and program delivery landscape in Whitehorse. Participants are trained in storytelling, advocacy and leadership.

Voices Influencing Change plays a key role in the oversight and priority setting of the Safe at Home Plan.

19 PROGRAM GRADUATES

Graduates remain actively involved in social change efforts including Poverty and Homelessness Action Week, the Social Assistance Task Force, Food Network Yukon, and Safe at Home.

Image: Voices Implementing Change Program graduates planning for the Community Action Forum, April 2019



WORKING TOGETHER TO BUILD A COORDINATED ACCESS SYSTEM TO BETTER SUPPORT HOUSING CLIENTS

Impact of Built for Zero Whitehorse

The following impact statement from Wenda Bradley, Executive Director of the Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Society Yukon (FASSY), captures the experience of one of the participating organizations in Built for Zero (BFZ) and the ways that it has impacted their work. Wenda has been on the BFZ team since its inception in 2017.

FASSY is an organization (est. 1996) dedicated to fostering accepting and educating communities, where individuals with fetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD) have equal access to opportunities to reach their full potential.



“By bringing things to the BFZ table, it is not putting the onus on the individual to connect the services but it puts the onus on the services to connect.”

- Wenda Bradley, Executive Director, FASSY
(May 13th, 2020)

Wenda's statement has been summarized into 3 key areas of impact and a message for the future.

Greater Alignment and Awareness of Services

Built for Zero has opened us up to different facets of community housing needs. We were focused on serving people with FASD specifically and were aware of other organizations but not working in partnership, per se. [BFZ] has helped us align work within the agency and with others.

Strengthened Partnerships, Collaboration & Trust

It has strengthened existing connections and offered some new connections. The main success is that there is now an understanding of collaboration and the need for it...there is growing security that people feel of bringing that information [different opinions] forward; that trust seems to be increasing.

Better Able to Address Community Needs

Built for Zero has resulted in more consultation with us before decisions are being made for example, we were offered the chance to weigh in on the design of a new residence for men with complex health and housing needs.

...

We were able to house 3 people who were the most difficult to house; now they have been out of the justice system for 6-months. These are men with a disability who weren't recognized as having a disability with specific housing needs. They were pushed into independent housing when they really needed supportive housing. We pushed for supportive housing for a man who'd been in jail for most of his adult life and since getting the supportive housing that he needed, he has had no contact with the justice system for 8-months or so. He's so happy to have a house that is safe to go home to and invites us over.

Key Message - Lessons for Safe at Home

It takes a while for systems to change and I think we've come a long way in getting the right agencies at the table to make it work. By bringing things to the BFZ table, it removes putting the responsibility of making the individual find the right service and moves it to the community services to connect to the individual. This is an important shift in how we deliver services to people in need.

A MEANINGFUL IMPACT



The following impact stories were submitted by housing recipients on the By-Name List who were supported by various agencies to find stable housing. The immense and meaningful impact that housing can have on a person's life is clear. Housing offers **stability, independence, employment retention, safety and security, and improved health.**

Home

By Michael Loewen

Home. That's where you started and that's where it ends!

I left home at the age of 12 for the first time, because I could not handle what was happening there. There was a lot of anger and drinking and I just could not understand why and it scared me sometimes and hurt me in my heart so I just left home. I did have a Mom and Dad who had lots of money and I never went hungry, had lots of toys, bikes and a nice home. But too much fighting, drinking, and being scared to be there...

[It was] no joke living on the street. I lived on the streets all over Canada, all the provinces, everywhere, and had all kinds of jobs that I could not keep because I had no home to go to and a drug and drinking problem. I did this for a long time, up until the age of 30.

Then I met a girl I fell in love with. [I] went to jail for the umpteenth time, did my time here in Whitehorse. When I got out, the girl I fell in love with was still there for me...

I did 2 months in [treatment] and while I was there, I met people who wanted to get me a place - and they did!

Well, that changed my whole life.

I was able to get a job at Off the Hook Meat and do it. My boss was a good man and put up with lots of stuff, but kept helping me and was there for me. I was able to not have to go down to the Sally Ann to eat and see all the drugs and alcohol that is being done there, so I could go to work and home. Being able to go to a home and feel safe and choose who came and went in my home let me work on staying clean and sober. It also let me get some mental help to start working on other underlying traumas, ADHD, impulse disorder, anger disorder and PTSD. So I'm doing better than I ever have been in my whole life.

Now I have this home these people set me up with, it's still a long road ahead and lots more to work on to make myself right. At least I have this roof over my head.

[I'm] doing things for myself and it's so important to have independ[ence], it makes you feel like someone and you just want more of that and the more you start to feel like [that], you have a reason to live and not just give up on yourself and everything around you.

I thank God and the ones who gave me my home.

Reason to live and not just give up on your self and every thing around you I thank god and the ones who gave me my home.



Michael Loewen has been in his home for 14 months; Blood Ties Four Directions was the organization that placed him there and is supporting him.

IMPACT OF HOME



I am so happy to have my own space! I feel safe here, comfortable and relaxed. I am my own boss. I have the freedom to make my own choices now, such as cooking, cleaning, bedtime, TV, company, etc., without having to consider another party.



This is a quote from Ronnie, a widowed professional woman in her early 70's with health and mobility issues. Prior to being housed in a Yukon Housing Corporation senior's complex, she was couch-surfing for close to 2 years, with family and friends.



MISSION CONTROL



ESTABLISHING A MISSION CONTROL TO GUIDE PLANNING, IMPLEMENTATION AND COORDINATION OF SAFE AT HOME

STRATEGIES

- Strengthen community engagement, advocacy and communications
- Build a strong, collaborative governance structure
- Mobilize knowledge and take action based on research, data and evaluation
- Ensure sustainability through consistent resources and training opportunities

ACTION PILLARS: RESEARCH & EVALUATION • COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT/COMMUNICATIONS • SUPPORTIVE NETWORKS/STRUCTURES • FINANCIAL SUPPORTS



Engaging the Community

In April 2019, the **Safe at Home Community Action Forum** was hosted. Up to 150 delegates from across Yukon representing multiple sectors attended the 2-day forum. It was an opportunity to reaffirm priorities, renew vision and mission and explore the Safe at Home Plan moving forward.

Communicating Progress

Up to **1500 copies** of Safe at Home's Newsletter Series (6-issues) were distributed between October 2019 and March 2020.



Government and Community Support

The Government Partner Committee who adopted Safe at Home in 2017 has collectively invested **\$307,702** to support Safe at Home's work and leadership in the community. There has also been substantial community support.



Increasing Capacity to Lead

As a Built for Zero community, the Whitehorse team has attended **6 intensive face-to-face learning sessions** outside Yukon since June 2018. This is where our community team enhances problem-solving and decision-making, celebrates bright spots, and adapts planning to reflect data and evolving priorities



Linking Reaching Home and Safe at Home

November 2019: A revitalized Community Advisory Board (CAB) representing 25 organizations, people with lived/living experience of homelessness, and levels of government was formalized. The CAB is responsible for:

- Aligning Reaching Home* directives and the Safe at Home Plan
- Providing advice on priorities, targets, timelines, resources, data and strategic direction of Safe at Home
- Monitoring the implementation of the coordinated access system

Through Reaching Home, **\$768,947** was invested in projects in Dawson City, Ross River, Old Crow, Watson Lake, and Whitehorse in the 2019/20 fiscal year.

GET YOURS!



Coast Mountain Sports donated **\$23,567** from their 'Home' merchandise (pictured left).

Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition contributed **significant in-kind support** including phone, office, space, internet and a computer for the Implementation Manager.

* Reaching Home is a federal strategy aimed at preventing and reducing homelessness by providing direct support and funding to Designated Communities (urban centers), Indigenous communities, territorial communities and rural and remote communities across Canada.

OPENING DOORS FOR NEXT STEPS

What follows are areas within the Safe at Home Plan that need strengthening based on an analysis of the progress and lessons learned from community engagement activities over the past 2 years. These next steps reflect Safe at Home's commitment to work with partners across the community to mobilize around gaps, priorities and strategies and to work toward a clear and measurable implementation plan.

SUPPORT **ACTION PILLARS TO STRENGTHEN:** SUPPORTIVE STRUCTURES/NETWORKS

- Work to establish a "Quality By-Name List" with faster data streamlining and getting more agencies to participate
- Increase opportunities for those with lived/living experience to participate in policy/planning, peer mentoring programs, peer-to-peer advocacy and support programs attached to housing

SUPPORT **ACTION PILLARS:** FINANCIAL • RESEARCH & EVALUATION • SUPPORTIVE STRUCTURES/NETWORKS

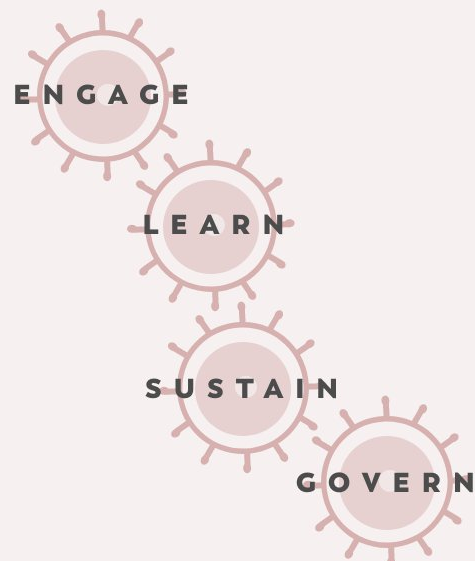
- Explore specific incentives for micro-home development
- Consolidate research on existing gaps in housing and quantify additional transitional and supportive housing needed (perform gap analysis using the Housing Action Plan)
- Support community infrastructure (along the continuum) as well as administrative needs as it relates to access to funding (especially in rural communities)

PREVENT **ACTION PILLARS:** FINANCIAL • RESEARCH & EVALUATION • POLICY CHANGE • SUPPORTIVE STRUCTURES/NETWORKS

- Improve financial partnerships with traditional lenders to protect those most vulnerable to financial exploitation
- Evaluate programs to ensure they are meeting needs
- Monitor and enforce minimum rental standards
- Reduce gaps in transportation and improve discharge planning

MISSION **ACTION PILLARS:** RESEARCH & EVALUATION SUPPORTIVE STRUCTURES/NETWORKS COMMUNICATIONS & ENGAGEMENT

- Build a Hub - to strengthen the mandate for coordination of actions and leadership in our coordinated access system
- Complete the branding and launch website of Safe at Home
- Launch multi-year communications campaign to share progress and educate the community; if possible link this up with schools
- Build an evaluation framework which is linked to the implementation plan
- Investigate how Safe at Home can support efforts already underway in rural communities and establish rural community Memorandums of Understanding
- Map assets, roles and gaps to facilitate navigation, engagement and reduce program redundancies



THE FUTURE LOOKS BRIGHT

SOME EXCITING INITIATIVES IN DEVELOPMENT:

FURTHER EMPHASIS ON AFFORDABLE AND SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

Cornerstone Project

(expected completion September 2021)

An initiative of Challenge Disability Resource Group, Cornerstone will offer **45 affordable and supportive housing units** (20% are supportive units) for persons with disabilities, persons in need of affordable housing and those experiencing barriers to long-term housing options.

Normandy Supportive Seniors Housing Project

(estimated Summer 2020 construction start)

KBC Developments Inc. in partnership with the Government of Yukon will be building the Normandy Project, which will include up to **84 units** of independent living with supports to seniors.

The remaining 10 of 20 available housing first units attached to the Whitehorse Emergency Shelter will be occupied in the near future. As mentioned, these units are permanent units reserved for people with a history of chronic homelessness and complex health and social support needs.

Kwanlin Dün First Nation (KDFN) has recently retrofitted a duplex to include **7 units** of supportive housing for men with alcohol addiction and complex care needs. The **7 guests** invited to stay in the permanent housing units are all Residential School Survivors. The residence will be staffed 24/7. Once funding for staff and ongoing operations is secured, the project will open.

IMPROVING OUR DATA LITERACY

The homeless-serving sector has an opportunity to **integrate the Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS) across our system of care.** HIFIS is a comprehensive data collection and case management system that supports greater coordination across service providers and enables client-centered care.

A RURAL FOCUS

Recognizing the need for **new housing in Watson Lake,** Yukon Housing Corporation is planning the construction of a multi-unit housing complex (2021-22). The type of housing and project partners are still in development.

INCREASING PEER-BASED SUPPORTS

The **Whitehorse Emergency Shelter** is developing a peer-based approach to supporting guests and is exploring offering low-barrier paid employment opportunities.

LAUNCHING MISSION CONTROL

Safe at Home is a Plan in action and at the same time, is evolving to become its own organization. The Implementation Manager is working towards building a team to support this work. The team will lead the building of a coordinated access system, expand our ability to use data for better client-centered care, and engage in frontline service delivery to address gaps in the system of care. Safe at Home will continue to engage community partners in priority-setting and the writing of an implementation plan, communicate about the complexities of homelessness and build on lessons from other jurisdictions.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Since 2017, Safe at Home's partners have concentrated efforts on expanding our knowledge about what works, and what is still needed to end and prevent homelessness across Yukon. There is no denying that ending homelessness is a complex and bold undertaking. By the same token, communities across Canada are realising this end. Jurisdictions seeing the greatest success are leaning in to their data, concentrating efforts on prevention and diversion, and building on innovative partnerships.

Minimal housing stock does not need to be our stumbling block. It presents us with an opportunity to be thoughtful about matching individuals and families to the appropriate housing and supports. It also affords us the opportunity to embrace the legitimacy of seeking support, to build on the experience of those with lived/living experience and to celebrate the unsuspecting champions who come to this work with open hearts.

The Safe at Home Plan is our roadmap to achieving transformational change and our persistence will drive us toward shared accountability and outcomes. When we look outside of our own mandates, initiatives and roles, we will gain the momentum we need. This Report affirms our commitment to celebrate our successes, learn from stories and data, and strive for continuous improvement. We do this by building a system of care that is integrated, adaptive, responsive, and agile.

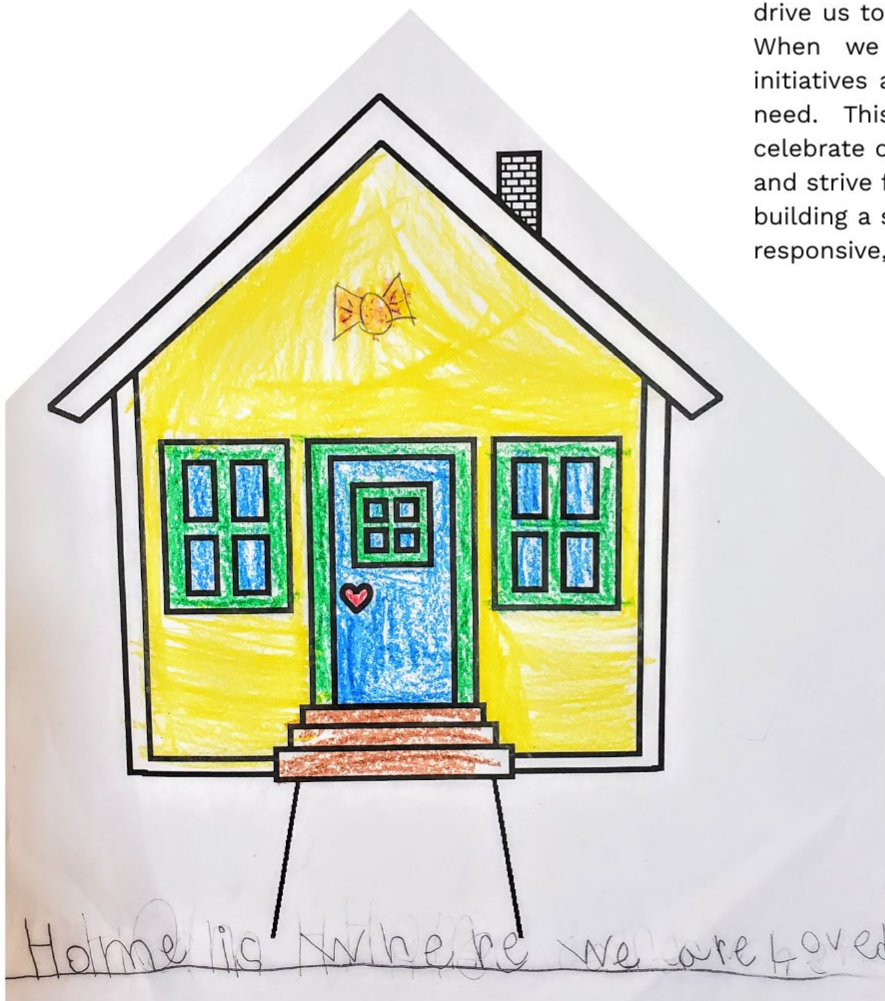


Image: "Home is where we are Loved" by Christ the King Elementary School Student, December 2019

We need to know where we are in order to know where we're going. Let's celebrate our successes and learn from our mistakes. Systems change takes time, persistence, collaboration, and most of all, heart.

We can end and prevent homelessness.



SAFE AT HOME

ending and preventing homelessness
across the Yukon