

Terrace Women's Resource Centre Survival Guide makes Terrace Standard News 2017

Homeless youth now have a survival guide

Homeless youth now have a guide to help them with obtaining food to eat, services and safety tips.

The Terrace Women's Resource Centre designed and created a Youth Street Survival Guide, which aims to connect youth with available resources, said Jessica Gaus, youth community coordinator, Terrace Women's Resource Centre.

"We hope the guide can provide answers to some of their questions if they are on their own," she said, adding the guide has been a work in progress over the last nine weeks and was printed for the first time Aug. 1.

For example, the guide indicates what are a youth's rights, locations to get food, clothing and household items, mental health services, low barrier washrooms and more.

Low barrier means the washrooms that have as few barriers as possible to allow more people to access, said Gaus.

For most people, going to the washroom is no big deal but for an example, for trans people, using a public washroom can be complicated and/or dangerous because they may experience dirty looks, snide comments, or physical violence, she added.

The guide came about as a response to youth homelessness, which isn't taken into account very often, even in the annual homeless survey

done by the city and the Terrace and District Community Services Society (TDCSS).

"It was recognized by various community members, as well as organizations, that youth homelessness is not only prominent, but there are a lack of youth-specific services, specifically housing," said Gaus.

"Unfortunately, even with TDCSS's homelessness count done each year, it is incredibly difficult to estimate the prevalence of youth homelessness."

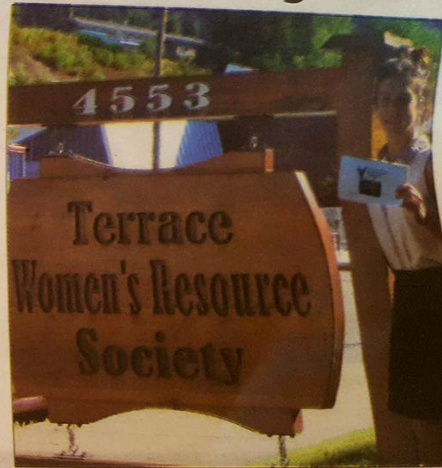
One of the main reasons is that methods for counting homelessness do not accurately capture survival strategies common among youth, added Gaus.

For example, youth who are homeless are often jumping from couch to couch (couch surfing), rather than living on the street or in a shelter, thus making them largely invisible to the community, she said.

Additionally, many youth do not want to be found because they may be fleeing abuse or fear being placed in foster care, added Gaus.

Hard copies of the Youth Street Survival Guide are available at the Terrace Women's Resource Centre, Ksan House Society, Volunteer Terrace, Skeena Diversity Society and the Terrace Youth Engagement Strategy (part of TDCSS).

Electronic copies can be requested at twrc@telus.net.



Jessica Gaus, youth community coordinator at the Terrace Women's Resource Centre, put together the first Youth Street Survival Guide.