



Annual Report 2010 - 2011



Empowered. Engaged. Independent.

Programs

Transitional Housing
Lilly Building
Supportive Housing
Strong Mamas
Moving Forward
Shelter for Young Men
Outreach & Youth Engagement
Train for Trades
Jumpstart

Events

Sleep Out 120
Hot Soup, Cool Jazz

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Vision

Choices for Youth is a dynamic, progressive youth-focused organization that continually strives to improve the quality of service so as to enhance young people's lives and enable them to meet their goals.

Mission

A Community-based, not-for-profit organization which provides youth with a range of supportive housing options, access to a variety of services that promote healthy personal development and a sense of belonging within an environment of respect, tolerance, peace and equality.

Operating Principles

Based on an empowerment philosophy, the operating principles of Choices for Youth state that: programming must meet the needs of young people, promote flexibility and innovative response, and be designed and evaluated in partnership with them.

Board of Directors

Kevin Harnum, Area Manager, Business Banking
TD Canada Trust
(Chair)

Donna O'Grady, East Coast Supply Chain Lead
Suncor
(Vice Chair)

Michelle Ward, General Manager
Reddy Kilowatt Credit Union
(Treasurer)

Ken Byrne, Solicitor
McInnis Cooper

Denise O'Keefe, Chartered Accountant
Deloitte

Kathy LeGrow, Business Owner
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Jim Murray, President
JSM Electrical

Ed Wade, Educator/Consultant

June Layden, Superintendent
RNC

Jonathan Duke, Account Director
m5

Message from our Executive Director and Chair of the Board of Directors

As Choices for Youth celebrates its 20th anniversary, it is the perfect opportunity to reflect on our past, celebrate the present, and plan for the future. Since 1990, the organization has evolved and expanded to meet the diverse needs of our young people. Thousands of young people have turned to Choices for support, and given our rapid growth, we expect to touch the lives of even more youth over the coming years.

Over the past 20 years, Choices has grown from a one-program model to seven core programs. Our programs are spread over three buildings with a staff team of nearly 70 energetic people who are dedicated to helping the hundreds of youth who walk through our doors each year. At the core of this growth is the knowledge that no one program or approach will help every young person – Choices offers a continuum of supports, programs and services to meet the unique needs of the young people we work with. We now offer an array of safe housing options, innovative and meaningful employment and training opportunities, as well as a range of support programs designed to help young people have success with their housing, education and employment goals.

As an organization committed to remaining responsive to the needs of young people in our community, Choices will continue to look for ways to improve our existing programs while exploring innovative initiatives to address gaps and new service needs. For example, the Supportive Housing program is currently undergoing a review and reversioning process. This will help us determine if the program goals, objectives and service delivery model continues to be responsive to the needs of young people who require this type of community based outreach support. In addition, Train for Trades is building an evaluation framework in partnership with Memorial University's, Department of Psychology doctoral students. These students are also helping us to develop a research agenda for the whole agency.

Over the past year, Choices for Youth has continued the work required for the development of a new resource and housing facility for young parents in St. John's. Safe housing and integrated services for young parents and their children has been identified as a significant gap in our community. Choices for Youth, along with Daybreak, Eastern Health, government and other community partners will continue to build on the success of the national and local research, community consultations and design and program charettes that have been guiding this process.

Choices for Youth continues to be a leader in addressing youth homelessness in Canada. As an active member of a number of national and provincial boards, research and learning initiatives and advisory groups, Choices contributes to and learns from the housing and homelessness sector across the country and at home. As a leading community-based agency, we remain committed to offering programs and services that are rooted in shared learning and best practices while continuing efforts to end homelessness in Canada.



Sheldon Pollett
Executive Director



Kevin Harnum
Board of Directors, Chair

Affordable Housing

"It's so hard when you're young looking for a place to live. People look down on you because you're a troubled teen — a child out on your own. Landlords aren't going to rent their nice apartments to young people — you're stuck with bedsitting rooms that aren't well maintained... it's just not safe." – Former Supportive Housing participant

Everyone needs a safe place to call home. Choices for Youth has been hard at work trying to create safe homes for youth for the past 20 years. This past year we have made significant strides through the operation of the **Lilly Building** as well as the expansion of housing options with the creation of the **Transitional Housing** program. Choices is also continuing to work toward creating a housing option for young mothers through the proposed development of the Young Parents Resource Centre.

By providing a safe place to live, combined with a spectrum of supports necessary to help youth maintain their housing, Choices is providing youth with options that help them stabilize their lives and begin building their futures.



Lilly Building, Bond Street

Creating Safe Homes & Community Living

Finding safe, affordable housing for youth has become very challenging with increasing rent costs and decreasing vacancy rates. Choices for Youth, in partnership with Eastern Health and Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation (NLHC), recently created the **Transitional Housing** program, which provides communal living arrangements for youth in four NLHC units. The program also works with private landlords to create housing opportunities for young people in the broader community. The program provides safe housing options, combined with mentoring and staff support to encourage and develop the ability of youth to live independently.



Transitional Housing at Livingstone

As part of the program, staff and mentors help create a sense of belonging and community-living through weekly house meals and meetings. This helps to maintain a basic standard of safety and cleanliness in all four units, while teaching and encouraging life skills. The program successfully housed 11 young people this past year, and assisted many others to find and maintain safe, affordable housing in the community.

Celebrating One Year of Success at the Lilly Building

In May, 2011, the **Lilly Building** (St. John's first affordable housing facility for male and female youth facing homelessness) celebrated one year of operation, and as a result, celebrated the successes of its first 'Graduates'.

The team at the Lilly Building works hard to develop an individualized support plan with youth, based on their needs and barriers to housing. Often, it takes connections with other organizations and service providers including health professionals, employment and education supports as well as other Choices' programs for a youth to build the support and skills needed for independent living. The Lilly Building team strives to cultivate positive relationships in the community. The benefits of this collaboration can be seen in the progress and successes of our youth.



Bruce Pearce, President of the Canadian Housing & Renewal Association, shakes hands with Hon. Susan Sullivan at the official opening of the Lilly Building, October 2010.



Official opening of the Lilly Building

Troy's Story

I moved into the Lilly Building last Spring, and I stayed for the better part of a full year - that small timeframe did wonders.

After being with the staff and the other residents for such a short period of time I had grown from someone who wasn't ready for life to someone who ended up getting a job at a call centre and paying rent effectively. I owe everything to the Lilly Building staff, and I hope that so many more people can take advantage of that place and get their lives back on track.

Proposed Development for Young Parents Resource Centre

Healthier Moms. Healthier Babies. Healthier Communities.

The **Supportive Housing** program is an outreach-based program that provides support to youth as they access housing through the private rental market. Many of the young people supported in this program are pregnant and parenting young women who require intensive support at this critical time in their lives.

Over the past year, the program has supported 11 new moms and each one of them is successfully parenting their child.

This is largely due to the proactive support they have been receiving from the Supportive Housing team coupled with an increased capacity to embrace other supports and services in the community such as the Healthy Baby Club offered at the Youth Services site by Daybreak, Strong Mamas support group, programs of Child, Youth and Family Services and prenatal care.

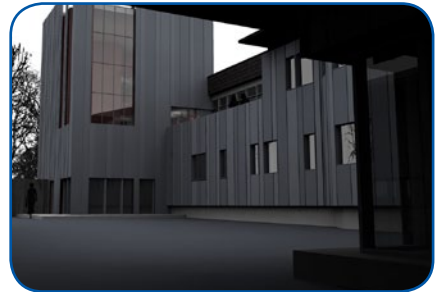
The support they receive at Choices helps them initiate and build trusting relationships, thus enabling them to welcome the support that is offered and necessary to become successful parents.

Supportive Housing Fact:

The Supportive Housing program provided support to 59 youth over the last 12 months, 11 of these youth were new moms, all of whom have been successful with parenting, and welcomed any supports offered.

Child care support, an education, a job, a warm shoulder – things all women need in order to provide the best possible care for themselves and their children. The reality is that not all women who are pregnant or parenting have these kinds of supports. This can make the role of motherhood even more challenging and overwhelming.

The Young Parents Resource Centre will provide housing and support services to young parents and their children including a child care centre, education/employment programming and counseling, as well as an outreach/drop-in centre.



Architectural concept - Courtyard



Architectural concept - North East Aerial

The Icing On the Cake

In the Spring of this year, Choices was approached by Blair Pritchett, a member of McInnes Cooper's collective social responsibility group, who expressed interest in contributing to the **Strong Mamas** support group. Strong Mamas operates through a partnership with Choices, Eastern Health, and the Community Youth Network- St. John's, and provides opportunities for young moms to come together thereby reducing their social isolation. The group provides a safe environment for these young women to engage in healthy social, recreational and self care activities while their children are being cared for by qualified child care providers. Pritchett called on his colleagues and family to help meet the needs of the 13 young mothers and their 18 children connected with the Strong Mamas support group.

The firm began with a baby supplies drive within their office. Staff collected clothes, baby toiletries such as wipes and diapers, strollers, high chairs, play pens, and toys. The response was incredible. This was followed by a huge birthday party for all of the children complete with decorations, games, food, and presents for each child. The birthday celebration was made complete with an enormous birthday cake decorated with popular kids' characters made by Pritchett's wife, Paula French. The young mothers and Strong Mamas' staff were overwhelmed by the incredible display of generosity, kindness, and community spirit. The children left the party with arms full of presents, bellies full of food, and gleaming faces.

The firm's commitment has not stopped here. Choices has received a \$500 donation to fund a Family Fun Day for the young moms and children at the North Park Lodge. This event, complete with bouncy castle, is scheduled for the summer 2011. A heartfelt thank you to the staff of McInnes Cooper for supporting our young families!



"I learned so much... I feel like I can accomplish so much. I know what I want now." - Glen

"I'd like to thank Choices for Youth for everything they've done for me. I really appreciate all the help and support throughout the years when I was in need." - Nicole

"It's changed my life. I don't know where I'd be without it." - Jordan

"I'll never forget what this program has done for me." - Josh

"It was the best experience of my life. I feel like I can do or be anything I want now." - Scott

"Choices helped me discover the resources that I needed to secure a future for both my daughter and myself." - Jesse

"If it wasn't for Choices for Youth I couldn't have done it. I'm happier now and I'm going somewhere. I'm determined." - Alex

"Everyone deserves a chance. We've got to be the one to give it to them." - Luke

"When I left home I was without home or guidance. Now, through the help of Choices I finally have my life on track." - Justin

"I now feel independent and know that it is possible to make the right choices in life." - Julia

"It was the best learning experience I've ever been part of." - Steph

"I can see the steps that I've taken bringing me closer to my goals." - Desiree

"This program has shown me that I need to do something with my life, and it's made me want to." - Jason

"Through this program I've become a stronger person." - Jennifer

"I'll never forget what this program has done for me, and all the hard work the staff has put in to get me this far." - Adam

"This was one of the best things that happened to me... it made me proud of myself." - Kyle

"Each and every day I see myself and other youth from these programs get one more step closer to their dreams." - Brittany

"Thanks for the help to get my life back on track." - Michael

"I've learned to love myself as a person." - Melissa

"Not only do I know what I want out of my life now... but I know how to get there" - Jen

20

reasons

to smile,
celebrating

20
years

Complex Needs

"I'd like to thank Choices for Youth for everything they've done for me. I really appreciate all the help and support throughout the years when I was in need." – Former Outreach and Youth Engagement participant

The struggles and challenges that face many of the youth we work with are varied and complex. Specialized programs with intensive support options and resources are often necessary to help these young people successfully live independently. The **Moving Forward** program provides intensive support to youth struggling with mental health challenges and helps them obtain housing, connect with health services and stabilize their lives. The **Outreach and Youth Engagement** program—which is often the first point of contact for youth at Choices—received much needed funding from Canada's Drug Treatment Funding Program (DTFP) to supplement the existing resources they provide for youth who are facing drug addictions. The program is now able to provide much more intensive support to youth with complex needs.

Moving Forward Numbers to Note:

- 5 youth received intensive support via the Moving Forward program
- This resulted in 2 young people transitioning into the Choices for Youth employment programs and 3 youth successfully moving into educational programs.



'Success' Has Many Definitions - Big and Small

Staff and youth participants in our **Moving Forward** program celebrate successes of every size and shape. This program provides intensive support to young people with complex mental health needs to help them overcome significant obstacles as they move towards creating more stability in their lives.

Some of the successes of young people in this program this past year can be attributed to tangible community-engagement strategies, such as the Monday night cooking group. The well-attended group engages youth in learning essential life-skills, and also challenges their social comfort level in a safe and friendly environment. The program also measures a young person's many successes through the use of the "Outcomes Star System" (Learning Academy). This innovative system effectively measures the changes young people make in their lives, ranging from daily social interactions, to developing life-skills, to finding and maintaining employment or housing.

Access to Support

"Thanks for the help to get my life back on track."
– Former Shelter resident

When a young person is in crisis, with limited support and few options, they need a place to go where they can find emergency support – a place to stay, a hot meal and a much-needed friend to talk to. The **Outreach and Youth Engagement** program and the emergency **Shelter for Young Men** at Choices for Youth provides that support.

These programs give youth access to emergency supports—food, shelter, and clothing—and bring youth closer to resources that can help them transition out of crisis in a highly supportive environment. The relationships built here through the thousands of conversations that take place between youth and staff provide the basis for support that helps hundreds of young people begin their journey from a street-entrenched, crisis-filled life to a healthy, stable future.

Sleeping Out, So Others Can Sleep In

From April 25 to 30th this year, 10 enthusiastic Child and Youth Care Workers, Social Workers, and students dedicated their time to living homeless for five days and five nights (120 hours).

The purpose was to promote social awareness of housing and homelessness issues, and to gain support for those without a home. As such, for the second consecutive year, participants went without food and slept outside to create awareness around the approximate 1,200 individuals without homes, and 10,000 adults and children that are at risk of becoming homeless. The campaign participants raised over \$13,000 for Choices for Youth.



Outreach & Youth Engagement Numbers to Note:

- Through the Outreach and Youth Engagement program over **18,600** contacts were made with young people providing them with basic needs, advocacy, crisis intervention, and referrals – more than **double** the contacts in 2008.
- **40-50** youth come daily to the drop-in centre for a hot meal and help from our staff.

Young Men's Shelter Numbers to Note:

- **272** young men stayed at the shelter this past year resulting in a **90%** occupancy rate
- **135** youth received support from the shelter to find housing
- **356** young men were given help to find alternative shelter in the city when the Young Men's Shelter was at full occupancy.

Warming Homes with Train for Trades

In Spring 2011, 10 youth completed the second round of the **Train for Trades** program. The training program was redesigned to focus on increasing home energy efficiency by completing basement retrofits on social housing units. Through a three-way partnership between Choices for Youth, Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation, and CUPE, we have been able to offer an exceptional employment training opportunity to at-risk youth, while providing home energy efficiency retrofits that enable low-income families to save on heating costs.

In the past year, the group completed the retrofit of 40 Newfoundland and Labrador Housing units. A third round of the program was recently started, which will see an additional 10 youth trained, and another 60 units retrofitted. As part of this round, the youth will receive abatement, ramset, and fire extinguisher training, which will greatly increase their skill base for future employment opportunities after **Train for Trades**. This group will also be involved in the renovation work of Choices for Youth-Duckworth Street location.



Quick Fact - Train for Trades:

10 youth received hands-on employment in the trades by energy efficiency retrofitting 40 units of NL Housing – this will potentially save hundreds of dollars in home heating costs for low income families.

Training and Employment

"When I complete the program I will be able to go to college and complete the trade I want to pursue. Thanks to this program I am a new person." - Former Train for Trades participant

Without training, skills development and tools to secure employment, all other elements in the day-to-day lives of youth begin to deteriorate—housing, health, and relationships can all begin to suffer if these components of their lives are not addressed.

Programs such as **Train for Trades** and **Jumpstart** provide a range of options for youth to begin piecing together these essential building blocks.



2010-11 Train for Trades crew presenting the Salter Place community with new picnic tables!

Leading Energy Company Helps Fuel Train for Trades Program

This year Choices for Youth was thrilled to have Statoil jump on board, for the second year, with funding of \$10,000 for the **Train for Trades** program. Choices is grateful for Statoil's proven commitment to helping youth build brighter futures.

A Heaping Spoonful of Success at the 4th Annual Hot Soup, Cool Jazz

Once again, this year's **Hot Soup, Cool Jazz** fundraising event served up lots of excitement! This community-based initiative, hosted by Choices for Youth, the Jimmy Pratt Memorial Soup Kitchen, the Canadian Mental Health Association NL- Division, and Wreckhouse Jazz and Blues, raises funds to help meet the needs of at-risk youth and individuals that experience poverty in the metro area. The evening consisted of a soup-tasting competition, entertainment, along with live and silent auctions. Restaurants around the city were invited to enter a soup of their choice in the competition for a chance to win one of two awards: the TD Taster's Choice award and the Chef's Choice award. Participants from Choices for Youth's **Jumpstart** program won the coveted TD Taster's Choice award for the third year in a row. While the newly opened Raymond's restaurant won the Chef's Choice award (chosen by the panel of judges assembled by the local chef's association). With the help of the community and our generous corporate sponsors, Hot Soup, Cool Jazz raised over \$115, 000.



Jumpstart participants making the winning soup

Of the 10 recent participants...

- 2 youth are now enrolled in our Train for Trades program;
- 4 youth are planning to pursue post-secondary education or alternative educational options in September;
- 2 youth are employed through SWASP grants; and
- 2 youth will choose their employment or educational route in the near future.

Jumpstart - Quick Facts

- 21 Jumpstart participants gained much needed skills that helped them access education and employment opportunities and make good connections with community services.
- 5000 meals were prepared by the Jumpstart program and were enjoyed by youth who accessed our Outreach drop-in centre.

Getting a Head-start with JumpStart

The **Jumpstart** pre-employment program gave 21 participants, including four peer mentors, the opportunity to enhance their skills this past year through cooking, maintenance and personal development programming.

Participants prepared and served over 5000 meals to youth who came to the Outreach Drop-in program at our Carter's Hill site. In the maintenance component, the participants did a tremendous job of painting and redecorating the drop-in area and continue to show much pride in their work when people come to visit.

Christmas Spirit Sparks Community Involvement

Community spirit and generosity abounded this past holiday season in St. John's and young people at Choices were the beneficiaries. It started long before Christmas when an unprecedented number of phone calls and requests to help poured in to our agency. For our Christmas campaign we asked the community to give donations of used items, gifts, and stocking stuffers, as well as monetary donations. The response was overwhelming!

Businesses and individuals across the city donated hundreds of items. The community also pitched in for our Christmas dinners. The staff of Belanger Clarke Follett & McGettigan (a local accounting firm and neighbour of the Lilly Building) cooked turkeys and hams with all the trimmings. They also provided homemade baked goods and dinners (individually frozen so youth could enjoy them later). The generosity did not end there. The company came with two gift bags filled with individualized gifts and a stocking for each of the young people in the building. Other businesses held silent auctions at their Christmas socials. For example, the employees of Chevron raised over \$2000 in cash, an amount that was then matched by the company. Staff of other companies, including associates from McInnes Cooper, volunteered at the annual Community Outreach supper and rolled up their sleeves to serve turkey dinners. All in all, it was a tremendous display of community generosity which will not soon be forgotten.



United Way of NL Gives Generously to Develop New Space

The United Way of Newfoundland and Labrador gave Choices a substantial boost this year – \$35,000 for the re-development of our Duckworth Street location. This space currently houses the Moving Forward and Train for Trades programs as well as our administrative offices. The much-needed renovation will provide an enhanced programming environment for youth which is more comfortable, respects their right to privacy, and provides further opportunities for training and personal development.



Duckworth Street Location

Financials

Statement of Operations
Year Ended March 31, 2011

Revenues

Government (Provincial & Federal)	\$4,348,020
Donations	\$235,964
Amortization of Deferred Government Assistance	\$188,667
Rental Income	\$160,229
Miscellaneous	\$71,345
Total	\$5,004,225

Expenses

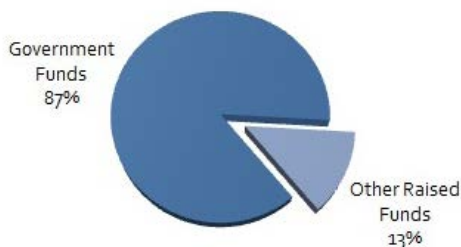
Programs	\$3,991,668
Administration	\$596,366
Amortization	\$218,917
Projects	\$91,118
Total	\$4,898,069

Restricted Funds

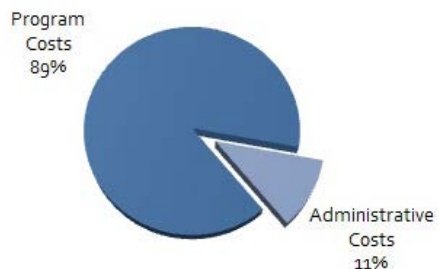
As at March 31, 2011 **\$1,204,025**

**Full Financial Statements available upon request*

Revenue Breakdown



Expenditure Breakdown



Donors:



Newfoundland & Labrador Credit Union
Sunlife Financial (Kirk Newhook)
RNC Association
JSM Electrical Ltd.
Jenkins Anthony Insurance
ReMax (Sherry Sullivan)
Eastern College
Fred & Mary Constantine
Public Service Alliance of Canada
Bell Aliant Pioneers Newfoundland & Labrador
Browning Harvey (Employees)
Paint Shop Atlantic (Employees)
McInnis Cooper
Tim Horton's (Goose Bay)
Family Medicine Interest Group (FMIG)
Hanlon Realty
IBEW Local 1620
Katheryn Winsor
Newfoundland & Labrador Teacher's Association
Eastern Health (Obstetrics & Gynecology)
KMI Innovative EHS Software
Friends & Family of Andrew O'Reilly
Friends & Family of Randy Pittman

Government Funders:



Service Canada
Canada Mortgage & Housing Corporation



Eastern Health
Department of Human Resources, Labour & Employment
Department of Health & Community Services
Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation
Department of Child, Youth & Family Services
Department of Environment & Conservation
Department of Innovation, Trade & Rural Development

ST. JOHN'S



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261 Duckworth Street
St. John's, NL A1C 1G9
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Fax: 709-726-3125

Carter's Hill Place

12 - 16 Carter's Hill Place
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Phone: 709-754-3047
Fax: 709-754-6102

Lilly Building

52 - 58 Bond Street
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