

**CANADIAN OBSERVATORY
ON HOMELESSNESS**

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Joe Roberts
Push for Change
604.941.7708
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Re: "The Upstream Project: Preventing youth homelessness by working in schools"

Dear Mr. Roberts:

The Canadian Observatory on Homelessness strongly supports your Push for Change project as a means of not only drawing attention to youth homelessness in Canada, but highlighting how communities can proactively address this issue through focusing on prevention. We support your efforts and offer our assistance in helping communities identify evidence-based practices to prevent, reduce and end youth homelessness. We are delighted that you will be helping to raise funds to support The Upstream Project: Preventing youth homelessness by working in schools. Everyone understands that it is better to prevent a problem before it starts, rather than have to deal with the consequences after. However, in most Canadian communities our response seems to be the provision of emergency supports, such as shelter beds and soup kitchens. Some communities lack even that. And prevention is not discussed at all.

The goal of the Upstream Project to support communities in the implementation of effective school-based prevention strategies, which will ultimately reduce the number of young people who become homeless, is an evidence-based and internationally tested approach that is fully supported by the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness.

The Canadian Observatory on Homelessness (COH), centered at York University, is a non-profit, non-partisan research institute that is committed to conducting and mobilizing research so as to contribute to effective solutions to homelessness. The work of the COH engages an ambitious program of research that includes local, provincial and national monitoring activities, as well as original research that not only contributes to the scholarship on homelessness, but enhances the impact of research on solutions to homelessness by establishing an evidence base and knowledge mobilization strategy.

The benefit of our participation comes from our expertise in knowledge generation, community engagement, technical support and evaluation. Additionally, we will support the development of a marketing and communications strategy that is modeled on the successful Homeless Hub, of which the COH is steward. The Homeless Hub is a web-based research library and information centre representing an innovative step forward in the use of technology to enhance knowledge mobilization and networking. The Homeless Hub and



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its large, international reach will help bring an audience to this work. Furthermore, our large team (30 academics and 28 organizations from across the country) will advise and support the team throughout the life of the initiative. Opportunities for deeper collaboration will be sought as the project evolves.

I am excited about the prospects for success this initiative aims to deliver. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Dr. Stephen Gaetz
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Director of the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness and Homeless Hub
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