



PROFILE

Who do we Help?

Youth and families who are

Living in priority in at risk neighbourhoods

Homeless or in danger of becoming homeless

In danger of dropping out of school

Engaging in unhealthy life style choices

Living independently but require ongoing support

Having difficulty accessing community services

Without stable family, peer or community supports

Who Are We?

The RAFT is a regional youth centre that offers a Resource Drop In Centre, Youth Hostel, Steps to Independent Living Program, Youth Reconnect, Youth In Transition, Eternal Routes, After-School Matters, Summer Camp and Social Enterprises initiatives aimed at strengthening and awaking neighbourhoods in Niagara to their full potential.

Our main office is located in the downtown core of St. Catharines. It houses the Resource Drop In Centre, Hostel and office space for Community Based Services. In addition, community services are delivered at a variety of sites, including schools, neighbourhood houses, recreation and social centers.

With the help of our community partners, services focus on providing support when and where it is needed. Services target at-risk youth and families, and focus on creating independence by activating as a social safety nets in home

communities and neighbourhoods. Community based initiatives seek to awaken and empower youth and families living in stressed neighbourhoods, helping them to build stronger caring communities and realize their full potential.

Many young people who come to us live on their own without adequate financial resources, others live on the street and many come from unstable homes. Unemployment, broken families and early life trauma are the realities of many of our clients.

Our services help them break this cycle. Services nurture and connect young people to the community before they engage in serious "at-risk" behaviours including crime, drug abuse and social service dependency. Youth are provided with the base of a supportive network to successfully complete the transition to adulthood.

Our Vision for the Future

The RAFT contributes to the welfare of our community by helping at-risk youth become independent and self-sufficient, strengthening their emotional and social well being and acting as a referral source that reconnects them to their family and community.

The RAFT provides a safe place that is free from violence, intimidation, exploitation, discrimination, drugs and alcohol. Niagara Resource Service for Youth focuses on helping youth make positive life style changes. With the help of trained staff, these young people can access services and supports in the community.

We believe

That working together, one step at a time, we can make a difference.

SERVICES AT 17 CENTRE ST

**Empowering Youth to Make
Positive Changes**



Youth Hostel

**Open 7 days a week
24 hours a day**

A safe place where homeless youth can get their life back on track.

Services include:

Overnight Housing
Independent Living Support
Case Management

Hot & Nutritious Meals
Laundry Facilities

Community Reintegration Plan
Social Support

Steps to Independent Living Program

One on one and group activities are provided to encourage independence, self-sufficiency and improve self-esteem.

Activities include:

Job Readiness
Referrals
Social Programs

Housing Help Search
Life Skills Support
Recreation Activities

Crisis Counselling
Community Outings
Advocacy

Resource Drop In Centre

**Open 7 days a week
6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.**

A safe place to get together and access support.

Nutritious Meals
Phone & Internet Access
Laundry Facilities

Social & Recreation Programs
Clothing Closet Shower
Social Support

Services are based on the principles of empowerment, dignity and respect and provided in a caring environment that encourages independence

When clients feel in control of their lives, they build self-esteem and confidence and are empowered to become more active community members



AWAKENING NEIGHBOURHOODS

**Committed to Building Stronger,
Caring Communities**

After School Matters

These programs are part of a network of after school programs provided across Niagara. These programs are part of a United Way and Prosperity Initiative to revitalize and support stressed neighbourhoods. They offer free and accessible recreation, leisure and educational opportunities that foster independence and positive community relationships amongst clients. For program information and times please check out our website

Youth Reconnect

Youth Reconnect is a nationally recognized program designed to help youth without secure housing access services and supports in their own community. When young people are reconnect to their community, they can give back.

Social Enterprise

Community based initiatives seek to empower individuals and groups to make positive changes in their neighbourhoods. They target stressed neighbourhoods and are designed to strengthen communities, engage young people and foster empowerment, independence and self-esteem. Social enterprise initiatives include Prosperity Initiatives, Project Reclaim, Neighbourhood Projects, Conversations and Community Events.

Eternal Routes

Eternal Routes is a family unification program based on the Family Finding model developed by the California Permanency for Youth Project (CYPY). Eternal Routes connects homeless youth unable to live with their parents and Crown wards ageing out of foster care with distant relatives who would be willing to provide the youth with the support they need to transition into adulthood and avoid homelessness.

Youth in Transition

Based on the Youth Reconnect program model. Youth in Transition is a provincially funded program to support Crown wards ageing out of the foster care program. Youth in Transition connects youth to the services and helps them navigate independent living.

Services can be accessed by calling the Centre at 905-984-4365

Open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. After hours and weekend emergency support is available by calling 905-984-4365

About The RAFT



Since its inception, The RAFT has provided support to thousands of high risk young people in Niagara by helping them to become independent and self-sufficient and strengthening their emotional and social well being.

Our operation began in 1992. In response to growing concerns associated with a lack of services for at-risk and homeless youth, an inter-faith task force examined how the community could best meet their needs. Following community consultations with education, social services, justice, the faith community and local community agencies, the task force proposed the development of a resource service for youth with funding from service clubs, community groups, the faith community and concerned citizens and with the help of community volunteers, the RAFT took shape and officially opened in May of 1994.

Our Agency began as a drop in centre operating five nights a week and expanded its programs to include a 16 bed 24/7 hostel, a steps to independent living program, a regional transportation program, a community based youth reconnection program and social enterprise aimed at strengthening stressed neighborhoods and empowering at-risk youth.



The social enterprise initiatives are aimed at reducing and preventing the number of at-risk and homeless youth in Niagara. Through our Neighbourhood Awakening Initiative we have helped to build stronger, caring communities in Niagara. This program engages potential at-risk young people and fosters empowerment, independence and self-esteem.

As our Agency grew, it developed key community partners who shared its vision and beliefs. Today, in conjunction with its partners, continue to respond to the needs of at-risk youth. Working together, one step at a time, we are making a difference!

Program Partners

Niagara  Region



RAFT
SUPPORTING NIAGARA'S YOUTH

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