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**THE SHELTER EXPERIENCE:
A CASE STUDY OF STREET KID RESIDENTS AT TORONTO'S COVENANT HOUSE**

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JULY, 1994

A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and
Research in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the
degree of Master of Arts.

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Abstract

This case study of Covenant House, an emergency shelter for street kids in downtown Toronto, focuses on the experiences that draw kids into youth shelters and that drive them out. The analysis stresses the importance to street kids of feeling "cared for". Street kids were drawn to Covenant House because they felt cared for there by its open intake policy, appealing facilities (clean surroundings and good food), and staff who listened to and were interested in their problems. But residents were rather swiftly turned off by its rigidly enforced, elaborate and "uncaring" rule structure, and either walked out or got kicked out. Given the limited alternatives in Toronto's "shelter world", however, Covenant House has become the preferred choice for street kids who find themselves in a cycle of entering, leaving and returning.

Résumé

Cette étude de cas portant sur Covenant House, un abris d'urgence pour les jeunes sans-abris du centre-ville de Toronto, se concentre sur les raisons qui conduisent les jeunes à entrer dans ces refuges et à en sortir. L'analyse met l'emphasis sur l'importance pour ces jeunes de sentir que l'on s'occupe d'eux. Les jeunes se dirigent vers Covenant House car ils sentent qu'on s'occupe d'eux, que l'environnement y est sain (propre et une bonne nourriture) et qu'il y a une équipe qui les écoute et qui est intéressée à leurs problèmes, et qu'il est ouvert en tout temps. Pourtant l'ensemble des nombreuses, "insensibles" et rigides règles ainsi que leur application constante font en sorte que la plupart des résidents quittent le centre ou se font mettre à la porte. Cependant, étant donné le peu d'alternatives dans le "monde des centres d'hébergement" à Toronto, Covenant House est devenu le choix privilégié des jeunes de la rue qui se retrouvent dans un cycle d'arrivée, de départ et de retour.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

Street kids have been the object of much practical and theoretical attention: they have been the focus of efforts to establish shelters to rescue them from the problems of living on the street, and they have been the object of social work and sociological studies focused on why they left home and on the conditions of their street lives. Remarkably little attention has been paid, however, to the experiences street kids have in the shelters set up to rescue them. This thesis is a case study of the experiences of street kids at one such shelter - Covenant House, the largest and most fully equipped shelter in Toronto.

The literature dealing with street kids has conceptualized them variously, often using terms that emphasize the reasons why they left home and/or ended up on the street. Thus, some authors call them "runaways" or "runners", others call them "throwaways" or "homeless", and still others feel that "system kids" or "in and outers" are more fitting descriptions (see Kufeldt and Nimmo 1987, van der Ploeg 1989, Morrisette and McIntyre 1989, and Shane 1989). Rather than adopting one of these essentially explanatory conceptualizations, I prefer McCarthy's (1990:5) term and definition of "street kids" as "all adolescents [who] share the experience of having no permanent address other than that of a friend or shelter..". The term "street kid" thus makes no reference to why kids left home, but simply to their resulting

living situation and is appropriate for this study which focuses on the shelter experiences of adolescents after leaving home.

RESEARCH ON THE ETIOLOGY OF "RUNNING"

The existing research on street kids has focused primarily on the etiology of "running", and secondarily on the conditions involved in living on the streets. Most of the research has dealt with the etiology of running and has concentrated on the pathologies thought to produce street kids. As McCarthy (1990:12) notes in his comprehensive review of this literature, these studies assume that "adolescents who leave home are substantially different from those who stay". Thus, much of the research has attempted to locate the causes of running in the individual, family and/or social structural characteristics that differentiate runaways from non-runaways.

Individual pathology has been identified as a key difference between runaways and non-runaways in several studies; it has been contended that runaways suffer from "substantially more personality pathology" and a "runaway reaction disorder" (Jenkins 1971:169), poor self esteem, immature and withdrawn personalities and depressive, anti-social character structure (Stierlin 1972) and the "depressed-withdrawn, uncommunicative and delinquent" profiles associated with "psychopathy and patterns of maladjustment" (Edelbrock 1980:218-222). Conclusions like these have been compromised, however, by the size and source of the sample groups - for example, when a sample of "disturbed"

runaways referred for mental health assessments is compared with a sample of "non-disturbed" non-runaways (as in Edelbrock 1980).

Family pathologies have been identified as another key difference between runaways and non-runaways by some studies; it has thus been contended that "running away .. is the surface manifestation of deep psychosocial conditions" located in "family relations" (Stierlin 1973:61), that runaways perceive their parents as "significantly less supportive and more punishing" than non-runaways (Brandon 1974), are more likely to come from broken homes and have poor relations with their parents (D'Angelo 1974, Adams et al. 1985). And a number of studies note that runaways report parental physical and or sexual abuse as a major reason for running (D'Angelo 1974; Farber and Kinast 1984, Janus et al 1987, Kufeldt and Nimmo 1987, Price 1989, and Weber 1991). Troubles at school, as well as a variety of less consistent factors, have also been identified as distinguishing runaways from non-runaways; thus, it has been contended that runaways are more likely to report poor grades, trouble with teachers, disinterest in school and a general inability to relate to adults (Goldmier and Dean 1972), limited educational goals and weak religious affiliations (D'Angelo 1974), and more behavioural as well as academic problems in school (Olson et al. 1980:185).

In contrast with this pathologized portrait of street kids and their backgrounds, there have been several efforts to present "running" as a normal extension of adolescent desires for freedom, independence, adventure and fun away from the "adult

world" (see Kaufman et al. 1969 and Yablonsky 1968). But this perspective, framed prior to the "discovery" of child abuse, has since been largely rejected as "naive and inaccurate" (see McCarthy 1990:24). As one girl in Jack Rothman's (1991:1) study of runaway and homeless youth notes, "Why would any kid leave a happy environment?"

CONDITIONS OF "LIVING ON THE STREETS"

The existing research on street kids has also focused to a lesser extent on kids' experiences of "street life", their methods of survival, and particularly on the issue of their involvement in deviant and criminal activities such as drug use and sale, prostitution, panhandling and theft. In an early investigation and follow-up of "transient youth" surveyed from a Canadian hostel (Canadian Council on Social Development 1970, 1971), the most common sources of income while "living on the street" were identified as employment, contributions from friends and panhandling. More recent studies have emphasized the process of progressive involvement in more serious forms of criminal activity as street survival strategies.

Thus, Palenski's (1984) analysis of the "process" of becoming a runaway and the steps involved in the "careers" of runaways highlights a typical sequence of activities that begins when the adolescent leaves school and fails to secure a job, leads to "hanging out" with friends who share survival information, and ends with "hustling" - "a systematic procedure

used to take something of value from others" that includes prostitution, drug sales, purse snatching, and cheating individuals and agencies of money (for example welfare cheques) (Palenski 1984:90). Illegal behaviour is presented as a response to the conditions of being "on the street." In their study of 489 adolescents interviewed in the downtown core of Calgary, Kufeldt and Nimmo (1987) divided their sample into "runners" who have lived on the streets for an extended period of time, and "in and outers" using the street as a temporary coping strategy. The authors report that a much greater percentage of "runners" than "in and outers" were involved in deviant activities (such as prostitution, drug sales and theft) and had experienced physical and sexual abuse. In another study of runaways in a Toronto shelter, Janus et al. (1987) conclude along similar lines that "street experiences" quite commonly include sexual abuse (predominantly for females), violence and interactions with the police.

McCarthy's (1990) recent study of 390 street youth residing at several downtown Toronto shelters and common "street hang-outs" comes to similar conclusions. Using multivariate techniques to analyze the prevalence and incidence of illegal activities associated with "living on the streets", he concludes that "a greater proportion of adolescents violate the law [in terms of theft, drug-selling and prostitution] after they leave home (relative to the proportion of offenders at home) and offend on more than one occasion" (McCarthy 1990:1). McCarthy explains

this phenomenon using Sutherland's theory of differential association, whereby the "likelihood of street crime increases substantially with the number of deviant peers, peer offers of "criminal" assistance and the adoption of non-normative beliefs" (McCarthy 1990:2).

In summary, a number of studies have focused on the extent to which the experiences of street kids include their progressive involvement with criminal activities such as panhandling, drug use and sale, prostitution and theft. These studies also suggest that for a large majority of street kids, their street experiences include violent interactions and, in the case of females, high levels of sexual abuse.

CHILD WELFARE AGENCIES

An additional small body of literature has set the issue of street kids into the context of the web of child welfare policies and agencies by observing that many street kids are as likely to be "runaways" from child welfare institutions as from home. Thus, studies have noted the extent to which street kids report past experience with youth service agencies (Brandon et al 1980) including a history of institutional life (van der Ploeg 1989, Stone 1987, Raychaba 1989). In their study of 489 Calgary street kids, for example, Kufeldt and Nimmo note that 53% of the "runners" and 30% of the "in and outers" said they were on the streets primarily because of their experiences with child welfare agencies and secondarily because of their experiences with their

biological parents. The authors conclude that the street has become a 'final resort' once the agencies "let them [street kids] down", leading to more neglect and abuse and "finally a sad, desperate death" (Kufeldt and Nimmo 1987:540).

One study suggests that child welfare institutions produce street kids by inculcating learned helplessness - "an absence of any motivation to change a problematic situation" (van der Ploeg 1989:47), and notes that the majority of the 212 street youth studied had "positive feelings about earlier help". This interpretation of the findings is questionable, however, since only 37% of the sample said their experiences with social service agencies were "useful" or "very useful", 42% said "all right" (is this really positive?), and 21% said "pointless or not good at all" (van der Ploeg 1989:51). And studies more commonly suggest that street youth have run from child welfare institutions and agencies because their experiences there were negative. Thus, homeless teenagers:

.. described their negative experiences with social service agents as those where they were not heard or believed, where they were not considered capable of making decisions for themselves, and where they were dealt with punitively and in a controlling manner" (Michaud 1988:28).

SHELTERS

Most studies of street kids have found their samples in youth shelters yet very little attention has been paid to the shelters themselves and the experiences of their residents as such. This neglect would seem a serious oversight since a large majority of street kids will most likely encounter a number of

shelters in the course of their street experiences. As Snow and Anderson (1991:154) suggest in their study of the homeless more generally:

An understanding of the experience of homelessness and how it is managed thus requires a consideration of the local matrix of social service and control agencies and commercial establishments that deal directly with the homeless.

Youth shelters are different from child welfare agencies insofar as they have a "voluntary" clientele that can leave when desired, but this does not mean they can operate freely in accepting clients. Both the lives of street kids and the nature of the shelters set up to rescue them from the street are shaped in the context of the larger web of policies and agencies that impact the lives of kids: schools (via the legal school-leaving age), child welfare agencies (via legal rules about what kids are old enough to be free from supervision), and employment and welfare policies (at what age and under what conditions can kids work full time and/or receive welfare). Much of what can and cannot be done for street kids is defined by these parameters, and the establishment of youth shelters is heavily impacted by these rules that determine who they can and can't accept (age), and what has to be reported and to whom (troubles with the law, notification of agencies or parents, etc.).

The recent growth in shelters for street kids can be illustrated by looking at Toronto's "shelter scene". In 1984, Covenant House was the only privately run shelter specifically for street kids, in addition to several city-run hostels for the

homeless population more generally (such as the Salvation Army and Seaton House). By 1993, the number of youth shelters had approximately tripled¹ to include Turning Point, Touchstone, Robertson House, Street Haven, Youth Without Shelter, Second Base, Stop 86, Jessies, Eva's Place and Horizon For Youth (to open soon) - all serving the growing population of 16 to 21 year old youth "on the street."²

This study is a start at setting street kids into the context of the web of policies and agencies that impact their lives once they leave home, in this case, the voluntary youth shelter. It parallels Jacqueline Wiseman's (1970) study of skid row alcoholics in the sense that street kids, like skid rowers, have contact with a variety of agencies in the course of their "careers" on the street, repeat experiences with the same shelters, and preferences about the kinds of accommodations they have experienced. Thus, a study of clients from ten agencies for runaway youth found that younger girls (48% were under fifteen years of age) preferred shelters while older boys (88% older than sixteen years of age) preferred drop-in clinics, "squats", or staying at friends' places (Pennbridge 1990). But little is known about how street kids use shelters, what shelters are like, and what reasons kids have for entering and leaving them.

This study focuses on Toronto's Covenant House, a "model" shelter in the sense that it is the largest, most experienced and best equipped shelter in the city. As agencies that rely on "volunteer" clients, shelters must attract street kids and hold

them long enough to make a difference in their lives. The study thus focuses on Covenant House as a "best effort" to accomplish these goals, and examines life there from two perspectives: from the perspective of the shelter management and staff, on the one hand, and from the perspective of the kids who spend time there, on the other. From the agency perspective, how is the shelter run, what is its philosophy, its resources and practices, the point of view of staff towards clients? From the client perspective, why do street kids come, how do they experience "shelter life", and why do they leave?

METHODOLOGY.. A CASE STUDY

Access

My interest in the youth shelter experiences of street kids grew out of my own relatively brief experiences as a lower level front line worker at Covenant House, combined with my sociological interest in "deviants" and the agencies set up to deal with them (here, a case of agencies that rely on "voluntary" clients). My original research focus, roughly modeled on Jacqueline Wiseman's (1970) study of skid row alcoholics, had to do with the "careers" of street kids at Covenant House. More specifically, I was interested in discovering what issues draw street kids to Covenant House, and what keeps them there or fails to keep them there.

I approached Covenant House with a short proposal to investigate these issues in May 1992, and was allowed access only after several weeks and numerous meetings with upper level management during which I was asked to rewrite my proposal to identify more specifically what I intended to actually "study". My eventual access was facilitated by two factors. First, I was an ex-employee with a reputable standing and good relations with the majority of staff. Second, and more importantly, the agency was in the process of launching its own research concerning the decreasing number of residents. I was permitted access on condition that I employ their questionnaire (which had already been created) in formal interviews with residents, but was allowed to add questions I felt were missing. Fortunately, their research agenda was for the most part complementary to my own and I added only two questions (discussed below). These questionnaires remained anonymous and were given to Covenant House. I was allowed to audio tape interviews, providing the respondents agreed and signed a "release of information" form; the tapes and forms were not given to Covenant House, but stayed in my possession.

I was also permitted to do field work in the form of informal interviews and participant observation, and to interview agency workers. However, I was denied access to all meetings involving workers (for example, Upper Level and Case Management meetings). As a final condition, I was to give the agency a copy of my final report. Data collection took place from June 1992 to

September 1992;³ during these months, I was present at Covenant House approximately five days a week, each stay lasting from three to five hours.

Interviewing residents

I interviewed 44 street kids: 30 current residents of Covenant House, 9 former residents now at other shelters or "on the street", and 5 kids presently "living on the street" who had never been to Covenant House. I recruited interview subjects in several ways. First, I attended "night meetings" (meetings for all residents before "bed time"), explained my research and solicited volunteers for the next day. Approximately half of the subjects were recruited in this way. Second, after each interview, I asked any resident present whether he or she was interested in taking part in an interview. This netted another quarter of the subjects. Finally, agency workers also asked residents whether they would be willing to be interviewed, accounting for the rest of the sample. I solicited interviews at several different Covenant House locations (Intake, Residence and Bond Street) in order to obtain a broad sample of Covenant House residents. In general, residents were very receptive to my research and commonly approached me to ask if they could be interviewed. (I stopped interviewing residents when no new material was surfacing; I then looked for ex-residents and street kids who had not stayed at Covenant House).

The resulting interview sample (44) closely resembles the characteristics of the larger Covenant House resident population for the year 1992, but is somewhat older due to the inclusion of several ex-residents. The sample consisted of 65% male and 35% female respondents, 73% of whom were White, 11% Black, 6% Native, 6% Asian and 2% Hispanic. In age, 9% were sixteen years old, 18% were seventeen, 23% were eighteen, 16% were nineteen, 27% were twenty and 6% were twenty-one.

Most of the interviews were conducted in a closed office at Covenant House except for several which took place at a nearby park or restaurant (with some ex-residents and the street kids who had never stayed at Covenant House). Before beginning the interview, I explained the purpose of the research, promised anonymity and confidentiality, and asked if I could audio tape their responses. Every respondent in the sample gave their permission, signing a "Release of Information" form, for my use only. During the interview, I also wrote down responses on the anonymous Covenant House questionnaire form (later given to the agency). Following each interview, I also made rough notes of the content of discussion. During the interview itself, I used the 22 item questionnaire (see Appendix A) as an interview guide, allowing the order of questions to depend on "the flow" of responses. The interviews lasted approximately from half an hour to an hour. In order to distinguish myself from the Covenant House staff, thus facilitating interviews and participant observation with residents, the interviews with youth

were completed before interviewing staff.

Interviewing staff

I interviewed 18 out of approximately 90 staff members, chosen to reflect the range of programming areas and positions at Covenant House. Every worker I asked agreed to an interview. The resulting sample included: 9 lower level workers (5 youth workers, or front line staff, from the Intake, Residence and Bond Street buildings, and 4 shift supervisors from the Intake and Residence buildings); 7 middle management workers (3 in the fields of social work, pastoral counselling, and advocacy, 2 supervisors of the "case management team" at Intake and Residence, and 2 building managers); and 2 upper level managers who were directors of specific programs.

As with residents, I employed a semi-structured, open-ended format using a list of 11 general questions as an interview guide (see Appendix A); a few additional questions were tailored to specific workers - for example, questions concerning agency funding were asked of upper managers only. All of these interviews took place in closed offices, and every worker interviewed agreed to be taped. Subjects were promised confidentiality and anonymity, and no material from these interviews was given to the agency.

Participant Observation

In addition to interviews with residents and staff, I set aside several hours during each visit to Covenant House to "hang out" with residents in the kitchen and living room areas at the Intake and Residence buildings, and to "observe" interactions between residents and staff. I was sometimes an active participant (for example, playing cards or watching TV with residents) and sometimes a passive participant (for example, sitting alone in the kitchen area watching the interactions of residents and workers). I was aware of my "outsider" presence in these instances and tried to fit in through common dress and behaviour. Lastly, at the end of each session, I would find a closed office to make notes on what I had observed (never in view of residents or workers). These observations gave me another window on daily life in the shelter and helped me understand issues that came up during interviews.

In addition, I visited four of the most "popular" shelters (according to street youth) other than Covenant House, where I observed and carried out short interviews with staff and several youth.

As a final source of data, I utilized Covenant House records, pamphlets and brochures particularly in documenting the agency's self-presentation and the characteristics of its residents.

Coding and Data Analysis

At the completion of the interviewing stage, I transcribed each tape and reviewed the transcriptions, highlighting the recurring themes I found. Using the concept of organizational "careers" as a frame of reference, I coded respondents' experiences into several chronological steps: entering the agency; first impression; the intake procedure; the orientation and assessment procedures; the "plan" and daily routines; why residents stay; and finally, why residents leave. After reviewing these areas, I began organizing the material into more specific and compressed themes. These themes became the chapters here called "Getting Cared For", "Structure And Stress", and "Unplanned Discharges". Findings from my field notes supplemented these sections, as did material from the transcribed interviews with Covenant House workers. The chapter documenting the agency perspective draws on agency records and brochures, and on interviews with workers. The final chapter "Structure as Caring" reviews the findings in the light of the common contention that adolescents, especially troubled ones, experience rules and structure as "caring".

As a case study of one youth shelter, this study makes no claim that other shelters are like this one, nor that the street kids who are residents at Covenant House necessarily represent street kids more generally. If anything, Covenant House is a model rather than a typical shelter, but of all the greater interest for that reason - since this is what sufficient

resources might produce. The usefulness of case studies does not lie in how well they represent other cases, but in the social processes they allow one to identify. In this case, the social processes have to do with how youth shelters structure a relationship between adults and adolescents, staff and clients, service providers and service consumers.

IN WHAT FOLLOWS, ALL OF THE REAL NAMES HAVE BEEN CHANGED.

NOTES: CHAPTER ONE

1. This was the approximation cited by the Community Information Center for Toronto.

2. It is hard to know how many kids are presently on the streets of Toronto, however social service agencies working with this population estimate the number to be over 10,000.

3. Contrary to what one might expect, there are as many residents during the summer months as in the winter. Covenant House statistics indicate little variation in the numbers and characteristics of residents by time of the year, nor any notable increase during the winter months. During 1992, in fact, the average census at Covenant House for December was much lower than for the months of May, July and August months. One middle level worker observed, "there is no association between it being cold outside and more kids in house...it just doesn't work that way .. we have basically the same numbers in summer and winter."

CHAPTER TWO

COVENANT HOUSE

Covenant House, an emergency shelter (or "crisis intervention center") for street kids from the age of 16 to 21, has been in operation in downtown Toronto for almost twelve years. As a branch of Covenant House International¹, its main creed is to shelter and help kids² who have 'runaway' or have been 'thrown out' from home and find themselves on the street or with nowhere else to turn. As stated in the agency's annual report,

[Covenant House] provides a welcoming and nurturing home for kids thrown away and abandoned...providing a second chance at life (Covenant House Annual Report 1992:2).

Within Toronto's network of social work and health care services, shelters, drop in centers and clinics, Covenant House maintains a reputation of being at the forefront in delivering services to street kids. As one middle management worker claims, "We're [Covenant House] like the big fish in the pond". This status is mainly a result of Covenant House's experience in working with street kids ("the pioneers in this field" as one worker notes), coupled with an unusual wealth of resources and funding in an area which has always been underfunded by local and provincial government. Covenant House receives financial support from the following sources:

1. Community donations (mostly by means of direct mail) generated internally through Covenant House campaigns (approximately 60% of total revenue in 1992) (Covenant House Annual Report 1992)¹
2. Share Life (Catholic Organization) (18% of total revenue in 1992)
3. Operating funds from the Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto for purchased hostel services and for case-management services (which in 1992 represents approximately 12% of Covenant House's total revenue of \$6,921,530)
4. Contributions from Covenant House, New York (approximately 9.4% of total revenue in 1992)

As one upper level worker states,

...In relation to social services in Toronto, we [Covenant House] are probably the best funded program for the transitional age group, not from the point of view of being fat cats in the social services, but not tied to 100% government funding... it's allowed for us to develop our programs in accordance to what we have learnt about the kids' needs....

Compared to other shelters working with this population, Covenant House is not only better funded, but is also indeed the "fat cat in the social services" in terms of a greater number of residents taken in per day, larger facilities, more employees to provide care, and a greater range of services for residents and non-residents. In all, Covenant House is at the forefront in providing shelter and treatment to street kids in Toronto.

AGENCY ORGANIZATION

Covenant House is run by a president (the "spiritual and corporate head"), a board of directors (an elite group of bankers, lawyers, business persons and social service workers), and an executive director who sets policy and manages fiscal affairs. It employs over a hundred staff ranging from cooks to housekeepers to front line workers and supervisors, many more than any other shelter working with street youth in Toronto. In terms of day to day work with residents at the Residence and Intake buildings, the key staff include:

1. The manager of Intake/Residence - who oversees all facets of the building, including issues with residents, workers and maintenance.
 2. The case management supervisor - who leads the "case management team" and oversees all aspects of care to residents.
 3. The shift supervisor - who runs "on the floor" shifts and oversees all youth workers.
 4. The youth workers - who deal with day to day issues of residents. Each resident is assigned a "consistent worker".
- Daily work with residents "on the floor" is set up in three shifts, each consisting of one supervisor and three or four youth workers. (Upper level workers, such as the Manager and Case Management Supervisor work 9am to 5pm days).

Covenant House operates out of four main buildings, all in close proximity and situated in the downtown corridor of Toronto (however plans are in the making for a consolidation into a

single new and large building - "Willard Hall", funded primarily by a large grant from the Provincial Government). The current buildings include:

1. Intake

This building is set up to "intake" street kids and house surplus male residents. Female residents are directed to another building - Residence immediately after the intake procedure is completed, while male residents waiting for beds to open up at Residence sleep on mats in the living room area of Intake. In a given day, there are approximately 15 to 20 male residents at Intake. The Intake building includes a basement floor locker room with several showers and a health care unit, a first floor living room (with a couple of couches and T.V), small kitchen and dining room area (for breakfast only as all other meals are provided at the Residence building) and several small offices for workers including one large glassed-in office situated in the centre of the floor. The remaining two floors contain offices and meeting rooms for middle and upper level workers and are "off-limits" to residents.

2. Residence

Several blocks from Intake, the Residence building houses male and female residents. The first floor consists of a large living room area with two large colour T.V's and several couches and rest chairs, a large kitchen and dining area where all meals are prepared and served, a health-care office, and several other offices for workers, again including a central office surrounded

by large bay windows where front line workers gather. The second floor consists of fifteen rooms (all singles except two) for male residents (the surplus stay at Intake). A resident's room is plain looking with a single bed, desk, chair and closet. The male wing also contains a large washroom facility with several basins, toilets and showers, a laundry room, and a glassed-in staff office. The third floor is identical yet reserved for female residents (the surplus of girls sleep on mats in the living room) and also contains a locker facility for male and female residents. Male residents are not allowed on the female wing and vice versa. The basement contains a clothing room where residents can obtain donated clothing and "practical needs supplies" such as combs, underwear, tooth paste and tooth brushes. On a given day, there are approximately 30 to 40 residents at "Residence".

3. Bond Street

A few blocks away from both Intake and Residence lies the out-care building where street kids (up to the age of 24) not in residence can receive services, including counselling, food, showers, bus tokens, phones and a place to rest. Bond Street also employs a part time teacher (for help with educational matters), a legal advisor, and provides "recreational activities" such as a cooking program, movie night, music night and an art program open to residents and non-residents.⁴

4. Administration Building

This site, a few houses away from the Intake building is used solely by staff and houses the departments of finance, administration, support services, and development and communications.

COVENANT HOUSE RESIDENTS

Every night we [Covenant House] shelter up to 60 desperate kids who've been living on the street. And they come from everywhere--the next province, next town, even the next street from where you live (from a Covenant House letter to potential donors).

According to the Covenant House Annual Report, 1634 kids were admitted to shelter in 1992, with a total of 3,062 "intakes" (many come more than once). Males outnumbered females more than 3 to 1 (69% male and 31% female). In age, approximately 18% were sixteen years old; 23% were seventeen; 20% were eighteen; 19% were nineteen; 19% were twenty; and 1% were twenty-one. Over 85% of the residents came from Ontario (43% from Toronto), 12% from another Province and 1% from outside of Canada. The majority were white (over 70%), with smaller representations of Black (approximately 15%), Native Indian (approx. 5%) Hispanic (approx. 2%) and Asian (approx. 2%) populations.

THE COVENANT HOUSE PHILOSOPHY

Covenant House presents itself as a child rescue organization, emphasizing a view of its clients as "kids" and as abused whether at home or on the streets. Thus, Covenant House

materials note that kids leave home for a variety of reasons including neglect, family breakdown, conflict with parents and serious abuse⁵:

Most [kids] come from abusive homes. Homes where there was usually a lot of alcohol or a lot of drugs, but not a lot of something else...love (from letter to potential donors).

And once on the street, kids are susceptible to more hardship and abuse. As a Covenant House brochure explains,

With no family support, they [street kids] survive any way they can- theft, begging and prostitution. Drugs and alcohol offer the only escape from fear and loneliness. The freedom they felt when they first hit the street quickly evaporates and they're trapped: often no home to return to, and no skills to care for themselves.

The same view of street life is put forth in a letter to potential donors:

...And in a matter of hours they [street kids] are lost. Alone. Cold. Hungry. And terrified. With only two options left to survive. They can steal. Or they can sell themselves to the pimps and predators roaming the streets....

Covenant House thus presents itself as rescuing kids from the horrors of the street.

We are Covenant House. We help runaway and throw-away kids survive and escape the street... (Covenant House brochure).

And this rescue from the streets is conducted by sheltering kids in an atmosphere of "love", "care" and "structure" so they can move forward in their lives and try to forget past street experiences.

Whatever brings them to our door, they [street kids] don't deserve to be bought and sold, exploited and abused. They don't deserve to be left cold, hungry and homeless. Their mistakes- and those of others- shouldn't add up to a life sentence. Covenant House gets them back... (Covenant House brochure).

In the language used by many Covenant House workers, Covenant House is "a place for second chances". Although operating primarily with a social work, therapeutic orientation, Covenant House is also a Catholic organization with an underlying 'spiritual' focus⁶. This can be seen in the agency's mission statement:

We who recognize God's providence and fidelity to His people are dedicated to living out His covenant among ourselves and those children we serve, with absolute respect and unconditional love. That commitment calls us to serve suffering children of the street, and to protect and safeguard all children. Just as Christ in His humanity is the visible sign of God's presence among His people, so our efforts together in the Covenant community are a visible sign that effects the presence of God, working through the Holy Spirit among ourselves and our kids (Covenant House Annual Report 1992).

Through both 'spiritual' and 'therapeutic' managing, Covenant House's mission is "to serve suffering children of the street" with "absolute respect and unconditional love". This is the foundation of the "Covenant Environment", described by the agency as a set of relationships based "on love, trust, caring and acceptance". This environment has its beginning in five principles (from Covenant House Annual Report 1992):

- 1.Immediacy: Kids come to us in crisis, desperately requiring help. We provide for their basic human needs- food, clothing, a shower, medical attention, a safe bed- immediately.

2.Sanctuary: Kids who are trying to get off the street are often scared and mistrustful. We protect them from the street and its terrors, and from the failures of their past. Youngsters can only grow when they feel safe and protected.

3.Value Communication: Lying, cheating, stealing- these are part of the street code. It's the way kids are forced to survive on the street. We try to show our kids, by example, that lying, cheating and stealing are wrong- that street values are destructive. Even more important is teaching them that caring relationships are based on trust, respect and honesty.

4.Structure: Street life is very unstructured. Kids on the street never know where they will sleep or how they will get their next meal. We provide the structure and stability of legitimate and carefully articulated expectations without a lot of rules and regulations. This helps alleviate anxiety and allows them to focus on planning their next steps.

5.Choice: Young people often feel powerless to control their lives. They fall into a self-defeating cycle of failure. We encourage kids to make serious choices about their futures. They must choose to change, to believe they can make it, to believe that tomorrow can be better.

Each of these principles has implications for how the day to day activities of residents are organized. Covenant House sees itself as providing kids with a "caring", "structured" environment from the moment they enter to the time they leave. This environment includes a set of "expectations" (house rules) which are directly connected to the five principles. As noted by one upper level worker,

Part of where the rules come from is a part of our whole philosophy of care that is really tied to the five principles of the Covenant... and the rules are really part of what is the structure...

Each house rule is intended to provide the resident with structure and a sense of security. In addition, house rules are intended to get residents to put their energies into establishing

their futures, leaving behind their previously "disordered street lifestyle". As the worker above continues,

...Many of the kids come from great chaos and disorganization...and really to be able to accomplish things, there needs to be a time for work, a time for play, there needs to be some structure, there needs to be, like getting to bed on time and routines and predictability that can give some sense of being able to have the energy for other things, like school or getting a job, so we try to describe that to the kids in those ways...

The house rules at Covenant House, and the agency's justification for them are presented as follows:

Structural rules for day to day living

1. Curfew

Residents must be inside the shelter at 9:30 every night in order to receive enough sleep to function properly the next day, and to avoid being enticed by the downtown Toronto night scene (which can include alcohol, drugs and prostitution).

2. Scheduled Activities

Specific times are designated for meals, going to the clothing room, going upstairs to one's room, having a shower, working on plan, watching T.V, waking up, and going to bed (see Appendix B) in order to give residents a predictable schedule, and regulate an otherwise chaotic or disordered life.

3. Room Expectations

Residents are required to make their beds each morning, tidy up clothes, and leave no belongings on the floor in order to provide residents with a clean, structured environment.

4. No Visiting

For the safety of all residents and their belongings, residents are not permitted in another resident's room.

Behavioural rules

1. Swearing

In order to convey a safe and home-like environment and reject "street-like" behaviour, residents are not allowed to swear, use racial or sexist terms, or threaten any other resident.

2. Physical Contact

In order to provide a sense of security as well as protection from unwanted touching, residents are not allowed to hug, kiss, hold hands, or lie on top of one another on the couches.

3. Drugs and Alcohol Policy

In order to create a safe environment as well as reject "street activities", residents are not allowed to use drugs and alcohol inside or outside of the shelter.

4. Weapons Policy

In order to protect the "sanctuary" of all residents, no weapon can be brought into the shelter.

5. Smoking Policy

Due to the fact that Covenant House is a smoke free environment, residents are only allowed to smoke outside.

6. Dress code

In order to "look presentable" when job searching, as well as move away from "street lifestyles" (i.e. dressing as if resident is prostituting), residents are required to dress appropriately. This includes no attire that reveals sexual parts, contains racial or sexist slogans, or supports "street behaviour" (i.e. T-shirts with beer advertisement, sexual connotations or drug slogans).

Planning-for-a-Responsible-Future rules

1. Saving Policy

In order to be able to support themselves in the future (once they leave shelter), residents who are employed in any type of job are required to open a bank account and save 85% of income.

2. Daily Plan

Residents are required to follow through with their plan every day. This means job searching from 9am to 4pm each day or attending school each day, and attending appointments he or she has set up (or Covenant House has set up). Workers verify residents' daily activities (by phoning their work place, checking their job search sheet, or calling school to check their attendance). As noted in the Youth Worker Training Handbook,

...Part of our [Covenant House] support [to residents] is to verify appointments and other activities when necessary.....this is not a contradiction of the "trust" we talk about in the covenant relationship but a check and balance which supports that trust (p.23).

3. Daily Contact

Residents must meet with their assigned worker twice a day to discuss any issues or daily activities. This is seen as a form of caring and counselling for the resident.

4. Welfare Policy

Residents are not allowed to collect emergency welfare cheques (except student welfare). Since Covenant House provides the immediate needs for residents (food, shower, clothing, toothbrush, soap, etc.), it is believed that welfare is not needed. In addition, welfare is seen as breeding a cycle of dependence that Covenant House is trying to break.

RESIDENT "CAREERS" AT COVENANT HOUSE

More than just a bed for the night and an encouraging word, we [Covenant House] are also interested in their futures. We offer a platform from which they [street youth] can launch a new life.. (from a Covenant House Brochure).

In providing short term emergency care for street kids, Covenant House goes further than many other shelters by having a certain sequence of steps that residents will follow in leaving the street, getting "back on their feet", and achieving an individualized plan for an independent and responsible future. As one supervisor explains,

...Covenant House's expectation of kids is that they [residents] attempt to stabilize, get on their feet...we [Covenant House] have the open intake policy which allows kids to come in and before an assessment is done, we have a grace period of 24 hours... so fundamentally we're saying to kids, come stay for a day or two, relax, get away from the street and then begin to think about what it is you really need...what are your long term goals...we have an open mind about kids staying here as long as the plan is in place and they're working successfully towards its completion, no matter if that's three months or six months.

According to Covenant House, each step encompasses elements of the five principles and allows for the agency to work at providing residents with "a better future". More importantly, each step takes the resident farther away from his or her past "street lifestyle" and closer to a set of values espoused by Covenant House. As one middle management worker notes,

...we work with kids from the time they're intaken to the time they're working on a plan.. so they can get out of this street lifestyle and have a better life.. and this is done by promoting a value system that is not a destructive one for the young people.

The sequence of steps envisioned by Covenant House is as follows:

Intake and Orientation

....When a kid reaches out his or her hand for help, we take it...5,000 kids this year [1992] alone. We give them food. We give them clothes. We give them a clean bed to sleep in and medical care. We give them counselling and friendship and support. Above all, we give them love...24 hours a day...365 days a year... (from letter to potential donors).

Covenant House maintains a 24 hour a day, 365 days a year "open intake" policy, meaning that a street kid can enter shelter any time he or she desires. All residents are voluntary. There

are three criteria for admittance into residential care:

1. Residents must be 16 to 21 years of age. The age 16 is required due to the fact that Covenant House works as a shelter in Ontario with voluntary clients. As noted under the Child and Family Services Act, "a service provider may provide a service to a person who is sixteen years of age or older only with the person's consent..."⁷. Kids under 16 must be under parental supervision or the supervision of Children's Aid Societies⁸.

The age 21 appears to be an arbitrary cut off point defining the end of the 'adolescent' stage of life. (Residents are required to show some sort of identification within 24 hours in order to verify age). In addition, Covenant House provides services (not residential) to street kids up to the age of 24 at the "out-care building".

2. If a kid has an "active card" (restriction due to infraction of a Covenant House rule), he or she will be denied admission until "card" has expired (usually two week duration).

3. If a kid is "a danger to himself or to other residents"⁹ (i.e severe psychological problems) or high on drugs or alcohol, admission is denied¹⁰. This is seen by staff as a way to protect the "sanctuary" of residents inside shelter.

Once a street kid has passed the admittance requirements, he or she will go through the intake procedure involving several short questions about where the individual has been in the past few days or weeks, and biographical information (such as date of birth, age, parent's name and address, connection with other

agencies such as Children's Aid, whether currently on welfare, whether he or she has been abused, etc.. See Appendix C). This meeting takes approximately 15 to 25 minutes and serves as:

1. a brief interview to welcome the resident;
2. a way of addressing immediate needs (whether the resident needs food, shower, medical aid, or sleep immediately);
3. and as a way of establishing the "Covenant relationship", which is seen as

a whole series of human relationships on two equal levels: one of trust, caring and acceptance of you; and the other, the concrete expression of that love in feeding, sheltering, clothing, counselling and providing other support services to you (Youth Workers Training Handbook:17).

After the "intake" procedure, a youth worker will be assigned to the resident and an "orientation" will take place. The "orientation" (which usually immediately follows the intake procedure) involves a worker explaining and describing the shelter's daily routines and "expectations" (the term used for rules by management staff). A form is then signed by both parties¹¹, a process suggesting that an agreement has been reached between both parties as to the "expectations" of the agency, and the responsibilities involved in becoming a resident (See Appendix D).

Assessment and Plan

A day or two later, the "assessment" takes place. This process involves a youth worker (who has been assigned to the resident) asking questions of the resident in order to create a

"plan" to be worked on while staying in the shelter. According to Covenant House,

The assessment is the medium through which we establish a youth's discharge plan at Covenant House...the purpose of the assessment is to develop a profile of the youth with a brief background history; strengths; goals; needs and outstanding issues (Youth Workers Training Handbook:19).

The assessment takes place in a closed office and lasts approximately one hour. During this process, the resident is asked to provide information concerning his or her background (name, age, date of birth, family life, abuse), street history (involvement with drugs; prostitution), and specific needs (why are you here? what do you need? how is your home life?) (See Appendix E).

During the assessment, a rough plan is sketched out by the worker and resident. The plan is seen as a way in which a resident can work towards a "new and brighter" future, leaving behind past experiences. The final script of a resident's plan is decided at the case management meeting which takes place every week day for approximately two hours in the morning. This meeting involves workers from every department at Covenant House: a social worker, a nurse, a pastoral minister, a youth worker and a supervisor. The meeting is led by the case management supervisor. As noted in the Youth Worker Training Handbook,

The purpose of having an effective case management system is to ensure that the youth in our care receive coordinated, differential services which we [Covenant House] promise at the time of their admission to shelter (Youth Worker Training Handbook: 21).

During this meeting, members review assessments and finalize the day plan of each resident. This process of "finalizing a day plan" focuses on three main areas - day to day work, finances, and housing. The main purpose is to create a 'path' to be followed by a resident in order to be discharged "successfully". The chart below illustrates this point and describes two of the most common plans for residents.

day plan

finances

housing plan

full time job search	Resident required to complete "job verification form" with employer so that Covenant House has a record of work hours and salary. Resident is then required to open bank account and save 85% of income (in order to support him/herself in future)	does resident want "independent living", which requires searching for apartment in spare time. Or does resident want "group home" or "co-op" living, which is arranged through social work department.
full time school	student welfare (resident is entitled to a specific sum of money from provincial government if he or she is attending high school, yet not living at home)	does resident want "independent living", or referral to social work for "co-op housing" or "group home placement"

Other plans can also be implemented in specific cases if deemed appropriate by the case management team. Two examples are listed below:

1. family reconciliation: if a resident wants to return home, Covenant House (through Social Work department) will aid in the process.

2. drug or alcohol rehabilitation: Covenant House does not have a drug or alcohol treatment program, but the social work department will work to get a referral to a rehab clinic for a specific resident.

There are also a number of services offered by Covenant House to help residents in their individual plans, or day to day work¹²:

A. Health Care: This clinic is open 8am to 4pm Monday to Friday and employs three full time nurses and one part-time doctor. The clinic tries to accommodate general medical needs as well as specific symptoms of street life such as sexually transmitted diseases, poor hygiene and improper nutrition. In addition, the clinic is set up to include diagnostic laboratory facilities, medication and medical supplies, arranging Health Card coverage, health and positive lifestyle teaching, and co-ordination of dental and ophthalmological services. The main focus of the Health Care Clinic is to

..give youth the time they need to feel comfortable and to discuss their concerns...[and] try to help them feel better about themselves so they will start taking care of their health (Covenant House Annual Report,1992:10).

The clinic is open to non-residents (street kids in the community) as well. No other shelter working with this population has their own individualized health care clinic.

B. Social work: There are two social workers employed at Covenant House. This department deals with counselling on personal issues; referrals to other agencies or programs; housing issues; and works as a liaison for residents who have present involvement with other agencies (for example, a psychiatric hospital).

C. Pastoral counselling: There are two pastoral ministers employed at Covenant House. The purpose of this program is to "listen, encourage, share and understand as people [residents] ask questions about their lives" (from Statement of Chaplains' Vision of Pastoral Care at Covenant House). This program attends to the spiritual needs of residents through loving and caring counselling.

D. Planning for Independence: This program involves five full days (9am to 4pm) and focuses upon 'teaching' residents skills for living independently. Such topics as "home management skills", "budgeting", "community resources", "social skills development", "job information" and "dealing with stress" are covered. Residents and non-residents can take part in this program.

E. Educational Counselling: Covenant House employs one part-time teacher to aid residents in literacy assessment, tutoring, upgrading, and school reintegration. Both residents and non-residents can take part in this program.

Each program is designed to be a "continuum of care" for residents and express values of "love", "care", and "respect"

(Covenant House brochure). No other shelter working with this population has as many services.

Discharge and Follow-Up

Each of the above steps is designed so that a resident can be "discharged successfully" into the community, with the tools, confidence and self-esteem that Covenant House has provided. An excerpt from a Toronto newspaper story about street kids conveys this notion.

Donna says she'll always be grateful to Covenant House for saving her life. Staff counselling and new found friends made her realize that she's a good person, that she has so much to live for. She's finishing her high school credits by correspondence and next year plans to study child care at Ryerson [Toronto college] (Toronto Sun, Sept.12, 1988).

The last stage in a resident's "career" envisioned by the agency is the "planned discharge", whereby a resident successfully completes his or her plan and thus moves on: for example, a resident has found a job and saved enough money to live independently in his or her own apartment.

And even though this is the last stage in the resident's "career" at Covenant House, "it must be made clear to the youth that Covenant House maintains an ongoing commitment to the youth as an individual with special needs" (Youth Worker Training Handbook: 26). This is done by allowing the individual to visit if he or she desires, utilize the out-care program (Bond St.), or re-enter shelter if needed.

However, this is not the only form of "discharge" that exists at Covenant House. A resident can end his or her "career" in shelter in several other ways:

1. A resident can be "referred" (a term used by staff to connote "being kicked out") for an infraction of the rules or guidelines of the House. In this case, a youth worker will find the resident a "referral" to another shelter (if the resident desires).

2. A resident may simply decide to leave on his or her own. In both scenarios, the resident has left with a plan unfinished in the eyes of staff. The agency thus considers these two forms of exiting as "unplanned discharges". As with "planned discharges", a resident who leaves unplanned is still allowed to use out care services, or re-enter the shelter after his or her card¹¹ has expired.

The agency views both types of discharge as the resident's choice: he or she can choose to leave "planned" (thus, choosing to abide by the expectations of the agency) or leave "unplanned" (choosing instead to leave on his or her own or by violating the expectations of the agency).

END RESULT

In the last several years, Covenant House's client population has fallen steadily, from an average daily population of 77 residents in 1989 to 64 residents in 1990, 54 in 1991, and

dropping to 48 in 1992¹⁴. According to the agency, the steady decrease of residents is linked to demographic factors (the number of individuals in the 16 to 21 age category has fallen in the past decade), to the opening of several other shelters working with street kids (Touchstone and Turning Point have opened in the last couple of years), and to changes in welfare policy (allowing kids over 16 to receive emergency cheques with greater ease). Nonetheless, the decrease in population is a serious problem for the agency. As one upper level worker explains,

It was common when I started (five years ago) working here to see 70, 80 kids in house, I can't remember the last time we had that many... so sure we're concerned... we can't operate if we don't have any kids..

Coupled with the fact that fewer street kids are entering Covenant House, is the fact that residents are frequently leaving "unplanned". Official statistics for the 1992 year compiled by Covenant House show that approximately 70% of the residents in that year left "unplanned". As two high level workers note,

The largest numbers of discharges are those unplanned to self...most kids are taking off or being kicked out..

...very few [residents] leave when their plan is complete, that's very very few....

And at a time when Covenant House is set on moving to a larger facility ("Willard Hall") which holds over 80 beds, the issue of "unplanned discharges" is an even greater problem. It is significant, in this respect, that one condition for being allowed to do research at Covenant House was that I investigate

the reasons why so many residents are leaving after so short a stay. Even though the agency specifies no ideal length of stay, most front line workers feel that the present average of 7 to 10 days is too short. The "goal date"¹⁵ of a plan is usually set at two weeks by case management, and even then it is expected that a youth will need more time before he or she is ready to "leave successfully".

The agency views "unplanned discharges" as residents who have "made the wrong choice" for one reason or another. By not completing the intended sequence of steps, residents are described as "not ready to succeed", "not ready to commit" or "falling back into previous street ways". As several upper and middle level workers note,

...I think a lot of kids just aren't ready to make the change, to leave their street lifestyle behind...

...you can't force a kid to stay here [at Covenant House]..when they decide, really decide that they want to get straightened out, um, want to leave the street..that's when they'll decide to stay.

...many kids leave for another alternative, party a bit, smoke some dope, drink...they're not at a stage in their life to make the right choice...

I think kids leave cause of a lack of impulse, control, you see, what kids see is opportunity...they'll grab anything that looks better...and in most cases that means going back to street activities.

The end stage of the majority of residents' "careers" at Covenant House is the "unplanned discharge". Whether as the result of their own decision to leave, or the result of getting kicked out for a rule violation, most residents leave prematurely from the agency's point of view. In this context, it is relevant to look

at how Covenant House residents themselves experience their rescue from the street and why they leave so quickly.

NOTES: CHAPTER TWO

1. Covenant House International is situated in New York City (founded by Father Bruce Ritter) and has shelters spread out through the United States and South and Latin America.

2. The use of the term "kids" to describe street youth is seen in the majority of Covenant House letters, brochures and Annual Reports. Since this chapter presents the agency's perspective, its language will be employed as well. However, once a "kid" is intaken into the program, he or she becomes known as a "resident".

3. As can be seen, most financial support comes from private donations which are a direct result of Covenant House's powerful advertisement campaigns through the media (T.V, radio and print), most high schools in Toronto (via Covenant House's "Runaway Prevention Program") and the streets of downtown Toronto (Covenant House's "On The Street" van, and its posters on billboards and in bus shelters, and other street campaigns).

4. Bond St. also houses the "on the street" van that travels the streets of downtown Toronto four nights a week, providing counselling, food, referrals and first aid to youth who are "system shy". The "runaway prevention program" is also run out of Bond St. visiting Toronto schools (ages 11 to 20) with the message - "Before you run, ask someone for direction".

5. As one youth worker at Covenant House remarks,
Most of the kids we see here have encountered some form
of abuse in their past, usually from people close to them,
like parents or step-parents, an uncle, a teacher...

6. Covenant House Toronto was established by the Archdiocese of Toronto and obtains partial funding (approximately 18%) from Share Life. Share Life is a Catholic Organization that collects charitable donations from church and community and distributes these funds to Catholic agencies in need of support.

And day to day living at Covenant House undeniably conveys this religious orientation: the symbol of the cross on the walls of all Covenant House buildings, the availability of two pastoral ministers for counselling, the absence of condoms for residents (as at other shelters), the presence of several staff members who have volunteered a year of their lives to working at Covenant House (for a small stipend) and committed to a simple, spiritual lifestyle ("Faith Community"), and a pro-life policy which is part of the agency's official mandate (especially relevant to treatment of girl

residents). The Pro Life policy (explained to the youth at the "Orientation" period) condemns the act of abortion, and thus any girl who decides to obtain an abortion is discharged prior to the operation and subsequently re-intaken after the operation. This is to show that Covenant House condemns the "act", and not the girl's "choice". As Covenant House's Worker Manual states on this issue,

Covenant House Toronto is a pro-life organization and we will stand at arms length from the act of abortion to defend the principles of the preservation of life. However, compassion dictates that we support a youth by assisting her in whatever way we can; we are condemning the act, and not the person.

7. "Child and Family Services Act", Vol.1, C.11, p.811 in Revised Statutes of Ontario, 1990.

8. As noted in the same act, one of the functions of Children's Aid Societies is to "protect where necessary, children who are under the age of sixteen years..." ("Child and Family Services Act", Vol.1, C.11, p.804 in Revised Statutes of Ontario, 1990).

9. From "Open Intake Policy" in Youth Worker Training Handbook.

10. If desired by the youth, staff will find a referral to another shelter.

11. In addition, the youth is asked to sign four documents which are put into his or her file:

1. Personal Property Responsibility (relieving Covenant House of responsibility for any damage or loss of the adolescent's property)
2. Waiver (allowing Covenant House to search their room or locker in the name of safety)
3. Welfare form (permitting Covenant House to apply for hostel assistance to the Municiple Government on a per diem basis)
4. Release of Information (allowing Covenant House to obtain personal information if needed from various sources such as parents, doctor, etc.)

12. If not already part of the "plan", a resident can simply ask his or her worker for a "referral" to any of these programs.

13. Unless it is the first time that a youth has come to Covenant House, and has stayed in shelter less than five days, a "card" will be issued to the resident leaving. The card specifies a length of time the resident must stay away from the shelter (except for Bond Street). Card lengths vary depending on why the youth is leaving,

but most involve one to two week duration.

14. The "out-care" program at Bond Street however has had a steady increase in clients over the past few years. The average contact with street kids in 1992 is approximated at a thousand per month, which has risen since its founding.

15. The "goal-date" is seen as a rough deadline for the specific plan to be completed. It is in no way a concrete time limit and as long as the resident is believed to be following through with his or her plan, the goal date will be extended. If however there is no evidence of the resident working hard in his or her plan, an extension will not be granted and the individual will be discharged.

CHAPTER THREE

GETTING CARED FOR

Covenant House residents had both good and bad things to say about their experiences there. A key feature of their positive experiences had to do with the feeling of being cared for. This feeling came across most vividly in how they spoke about two aspects of Covenant House life: the quality of the environment, and relations with staff. This chapter focuses on how residents interpreted these experiences as being cared for.

THE QUALITY OF THE ENVIRONMENT

I was impressed, when I walked into Intake it was clean, you know, it was nice....It felt like home (Susan, 17').

..well I get food, I get clean clothes everyday if I want to, I can take showers in the morning and evening, and I got a bed, what else would I want..it feels like home... (Pedro, 20).

Most residents interviewed experienced Covenant House as a warm, home-like environment. To begin with, Covenant House's "open intake" policy was seen as a caring gesture by most residents. No matter what time it is, or whether all beds are full, Covenant House will never turn away an eligible client (who meets the minimal intake criteria). As one resident notes,

It's good because you have a place to go if you need it, Cov is open 24 hours a day, and that's good, kids can come in off the street at one in the morning and still have a place to stay, other places [shelters] they might not be able to do that (Bill, 18).

As Bill says, other shelters working with street kids "may not be able to do that": most shelters have a quota on how many clients they can handle; for example, Youth Without Shelter can only take in 25 kids, and Turning Point has a limit of 26 kids at one time. The fact that Covenant House's "doors are always open", while other shelters may "turn you down", is seen by most residents as an important issue in being cared for. As several residents describe,

At Cov, they won't turn you down, cause of the open intake thing, unlike other places (Paul, 18).

I needed a place late at night, and most other hostels I thought would be full, so I came herc [Covenant House]I knew they'd take me in.. (Chris, 19).

I called a couple of places, like T.P [Turning Point], um, Touchstone, they were all filled, but when I called Cov, they told me to come down...I was relieved.. (Janet, 17).

And once inside Covenant House, most residents felt cared for in the manner in which their immediate needs were met. One of the first questions asked of a new resident is whether he or she is hungry, tired, in need of a shower, sleep or medical attention. From the point of view of most residents interviewed, this immediacy in trying to satisfy specific needs is interpreted as being cared for. As several residents note,

I was surprised ...because they [workers] kept asking me if I needed anything, was I hungry, stuff like that...it was really nice (Tracy, 20).

...As soon as I came in [to Covenant House], somebody asked me if I was tired, or wanted some food....it showed that they [Covenant House] care here about you... (Tom, 17).

I actually thought it was great, I had no place to go, wow, these people [staff] are giving us our own rooms, and looking out for us...making sure I had a shower and something to eat... (Tera, 17).

I felt welcomed, um, they [Covenant House] don't make you feel like you live on the streets, you're no good, I mean they really want to help you and I felt that first when I walked in, they right away asked me if I want food, or if I was hungry, this or that, um, they made me feel comfortable... (Sophie, 17).

As residents settled in to day-to-day living, the feeling of being cared for was further enhanced by Covenant House's home-like environment - a safe, clean place providing "a bed, shower, clothes and good food".

Safety

I wanted some protection from the outside, the street, I've lived the street and it's no life (Andrew, 20).

As noted in the previous chapter, one of Covenant House's five principles is "sanctuary". This principle was expressed in the following practises: double doors locked from the outside so that anyone entering must buzz a worker at the front office; only current residents are allowed in; phone calls coming into Covenant House are answered only by workers, and information about a specific individual (i.e. whether he or she is residing there) is never divulged; and if a resident is scared to go outside alone, a staff member will accompany him or her. This safety aspect seems to be very important to those who have come in from dangerous situations (such as leaving one's pimp; a fight with another individual on the street; or leaving an abusive relationship).

I think Cov's safe, cause when you come in you have to ring the door and stuff like that...it shows they care (Justine, 17).

Ya, it's the safest place for kids, you know the doors, you got to be buzzed in, it's good (Tony, 20).

I think it's safe, cause they [Covenant House] have kept their promise, well they said to me that if anybody who comes here, they're not gonna invite them in unless they have my permission. If they call, they put it on a message, and it's like everything is totally safe (Ronny, 16).

Cleanliness

Nearly all the street kids interviewed regarded a clean, sanitary environment as an important aspect in a shelter, and the residents interviewed seem to interpret a clean environment as a caring environment. On the street, Covenant House is reputed to be a clean environment for street kids to live and this is a strong motivating factor for entering. As several residents remark,

Every time I came from jail or from the street I knew that at least Cov would be clean, I mean that's the reason I came here, it's always clean, um, cause they care about street kids here (Todd, 20).

You come off the street and it's all dirty and stuff, and most shelters are just like the street, but here it's different, they take care of the place, um, everyone cleans up.. (Saul, 20).

Cov's the cleanest place to stay....they care about the place and us [residents] (Tera, 17).

Food

Covenant House is also well known on the streets as a provider of large home-cooked meals, including salads, soups, and desserts as well as milk containers that residents can have non-

sparingly. Covenant House employs three full-time cooks and has a large kitchen to prepare hardy and staple menus. To many residents interviewed, having a good meal means being cared for.

...you get better meals here [at Covenant House] than at home.. (Bill, 18).

..the quality of food here at Cov, I have to say is superior to all others... (Mark, 21).

Well at Cov, they make the food for you, you don't have to cook or anything, and it's home-cooked, that's important, oh, so important when you haven't eaten much for days...and you can have as much as you want.. (Ian, 21).

Other services for practical needs, such as showers, clothing and laundry facilities are mentioned as well by the majority of the residents as important elements in a caring environment. As two residents describe,

Man, they [Covenant House] have hot showers here- they're hot and the pressure is good too, wow, I'm not leaving this place. They don't have it at other places (Ronny, 16).

...staff will also do your laundry for you every other night here [Covenant House]...and they got a clothing room to get donated stuff if you want (Karen, 19).

The feeling of being cared for has in part to do with how residents were living prior to entering Covenant House. Many had come directly from abusive homes, jail, their own apartments, a friend's place or directly from the street, and described these prior situations as lacking any sort of care. As several residents note,

...My parents kicked me out, and they said it was time to go for my own. I was tired and I was hungry... (Amy, 20).

Basically I had no place to stay, um, I had been evicted from my place and there was no other place to go... (Tony, 20).

...I was living on the street for awhile, um, I got in the habit of living in a Goodwill drop box, where they put clothes in, or on the floor of instant bank machines... (Mark, 21).

Partly from the perspective of having experienced past street lifestyles³, Covenant House is viewed by residents as a safe, clean and caring environment.

In addition, many residents see Covenant House's environment as caring by contrast with their experiences at other shelters (several residents have noted this point above). This point has been made regarding the restricted intake policies of other shelters, but can also be made about the environments provided. According to the majority of residents interviewed (and confirmed by my own observations), other shelters do not provide a caring environment. As several residents explain,

Man, Salvation Army is a dive, I was only there for four days, old men in the place, it stinks, the food's garbage, nothing like Cov where it's clean, you got your own room, and the food's better.. (Steve, 20).

Oh, there's a big difference [between Covenant House and other shelters], um, just the facilities itself, except for Touchstone, I mean you might as well line up cardboard boxes and put mattresses in them, in some of these places, because that's what they are like, cockroach infested slime holes that are used to house kids.. (David, 21).

Cov's a lot cleaner, actually so is Touchstone, but the others [shelters] are scum, they're really gross, especially the Y [YMCA], just dorms, here [Covenant House] they [staff] sort of make you keep yourself clean, I mean, you got good showers, they [staff] do your laundry, um, you got to clean your room...not like the other places...that don't really care (Gary, 17).

...You get better showers here [at Covenant House] and a lot more food than the other places (Sacha, 18).

..At Turning Point you only get one glass of milk a day... and you got to pay for laundry [free at Covenant House]... (Frank, 16).

Whether it is as much milk as you want, free laundry, a clean living room, a buzzer to let people inside, or an open-intake policy, most residents interviewed interpret the quality of the environment at Covenant House as being cared about.

STAFF

The second area central to residents' experiences of being cared for lies in their relations with staff³ at Covenant House. Most of the residents interviewed viewed staff as warm, helpful, caring and there to listen. As several residents point out,

..The staff here [at Covenant House] are really welcoming, they're really friendly (Ronny, 16).

I felt comfortable at Cov, like a lot of the people that work there are pretty cool (Mitch, 20).

It was like someone was actually willing to listen to me ...my parents never listened...and here's [at Covenant House] someone who wants to listen to me... (Amy, 20).

Initially, however, many residents were anxious, fearful and uncomfortable when encountering Covenant House for the first time, specifically during the intake procedure when asked to divulge personal information. As several residents remark,

I felt at first really uncomfortable, well they [staff] were asking more about my personal life, um, I really felt uncomfortable.. (Ronny, 16).

The first time I was pretty offended, they [staff] were asking me things about my personal life, my family life, which I wasn't prepared to share with them, I was really defensive, you know, like 'why are you asking me that?', 'what does that have to do with me being here?' (David, 21).

Yet it is during this procedure, that many residents begin to see staff as caring: many commented on the efforts made by staff to make them feel comfortable and relaxed during intake:

I was pretty nervous at first, but it was O.K, ...whoever did it [intake], I think it was Alice, made it feel like it wasn't high pressure or anything, she tried to make me relax, and feel open (Jay, 19).

It was hard at first, the intake thing, but staff tried to make it go by as quickly as possible, and they kept asking me if I needed anything....made me feel more comfortable (Miriam, 18).

...It was kind of stressful, cause I didn't know how to answer sometimes, but they [staff] made me feel relaxed... (Judy, 19).

Even though many residents felt uncomfortable throughout the intake procedure, youth workers were seen as caring and friendly. As one resident expresses,

Um, I felt cool after it [intake] was over and they [staff] made me feel like, they cared about what I was doing... (Jeremy, 18).

And this same feeling occurs during the orientation and assessment stages as well. Even though most residents felt uneasy or intruded on by these procedures, the majority believed that staff were caring and only wanted to help. As several residents remark,

It's hard to share all this information with staff you know, especially when you're in a small office for an hour, but you know that they're [staff] here to help you.. (Gary, 20).

It's hard at first, they're asking you all these questions, but they do it in a nice way, you know they want to listen and help you (Amy, 20).

And during day-to-day living at Covenant House, in which youth are following individual plans, staff are seen as tough yet

caring. As one resident makes clear,

They're [staff] tough at times, they [staff] care about us [residents]...make sure you get up on time, go to work, stuff like that, which I need... (Ronny, 16).

The feeling of being cared for by staff appears to be grounded in the view that staff are 1) friendly and caring,

Staff are very supportive, they talk to you, make you feel like you're close to them (Judy, 21).

They're [staff] really nice and you can tell they're warm hearted people kind of thing (Craig, 23).

What I like about this place [Covenant House] is just to have someone to talk to, like staff, someone to say 'hi' to you, or ask how your day's been.... (Bill, 18).

I stay here cause the staff are nice.... (Sammy, 18).

2) and always available to listen or help with personal problems,

Staff here at Cov give me the patience, and um, the ear that I need... (Amy, 20)

...they [staff] were always there to listen to me.... (Jeremy, 18).

Staff helped me out a lot, they were good to talk to when I had a problem..or needed to get stuff together... (Andrew, 20).

..Um, staff were very helpful, just sort of approaching someone and saying 'I got this problem how do I deal with it'... (Jay, 19).

They [staff] helped me because when I first got there [Covenant House] I had a lot of problems and I could talk to a worker... (Mark, 20).

Again, residents contrasted their experiences of caring Covenant House staff with their experiences at other shelters.

As one resident notes,

...At other places [shelters] you don't really get the feeling that staff care about you..they [staff at other shelters] don't really care what you do... (Miriam, 18).

Most of those interviewed viewed the staff at most other shelters as unfriendly, unhelpful and uncaring.

Cov helps you by being friendly, cause you go to some places and like, they [staff at other shelters] don't want to bother with you, they don't want to know you. Here [at Covenant House] it's totally different (Ronny, 16).

..At YWS [Youth Without Shelter], they seem not to care as much I think, that's the feeling I got, you're basically left alone.. (Justine, 17).

Turning Point was cold, um, the staff had to help you and you were made aware of it, and they had to listen and you knew, by attitude, by reactions and stuff like that, they had to be there, it was their job (Amy, 20).

..I found, of all the agencies that I have experienced, the staff at Cov are the most dedicated people...they're not there cause they need a job... (Becky, 18).

...Like at other places [shelters], the staff are just doing paper work and have no time to talk, you know, they don't really bother with you...if you want to talk...Cov House is the place (Andrew, 20).

I've been to all of them [shelters] and every one of them, they don't have the in depth, I mean, I got a real sense of pride in our kids when you come to Cov. Like every time I went out the door at Cov, there's four or five staff telling you good luck, pumping you up, you leave from other places, you grab your bags and walk out the door and that's it (Jay, 19).

..Like at Seaton House, the staff don't give a damn...you can't talk to them, they were there to get their pay cheques and go home.. (Peter, 18).

...Like when I was at Touchstone, I wanted to talk to someone [staff] and staff are like, 'well I don't have time to talk to you', the staff there [Touchstone] are not as serious as Cov you know....sure you got a VCR, a pool table, a big screen TV [at Touchstone], they [staff at Touchstone] pamper people the wrong way, materialistically, not emotionally...like at Cov... (David, 21).

...the biggest difference between a lot of shelters that I've been to and this one [Covenant House] is that Cov helps you more with your problems, staff listen a lot and give good advice... (Veronica, 18).

Thus, whether by contrast with their lives at home, on the street or at other shelters, the majority of Covenant House residents who were interviewed placed a great deal of importance on the shelter's home-like environment and warm staff, and clearly interpreted this as being cared for. This feeling of being cared for was the central positive experience for Covenant House residents. As several residents conclude,

I stay at Cov cause it's a good environment..you feel welcomed, it's not a dump or anything, the food is good, and also they [staff] take care of you (Sophie, 17).

Well this place [Covenant House] is the best, well because you can come talk with staff, they help me with my homework..it's clean and healthy, they feed you...compared to some other shelters this is a palace...it feels like home, better than home (Kevin, 17).

How is it, then, that residents come to leave this supportive environment so prematurely?

NOTES: CHAPTER THREE

1. The number denotes age of resident.

2. As noted, most residents come from abusive homes, other agencies, incarceration, or their own or friend's places. Only a small percentage of "clients" find themselves living in doorways, parks, squats, or any other place directly on the streets. An ex-resident explains this point,

...a lot of kids [who are at Covenant House] have criminal backgrounds, they come straight from prison, a lot of group homes, or straight from a dysfunctional family, some of them are just travelling and need a place to stay...I mean just because you run away from home, or just because you come from an abusive situation, does not mean you're a street kid right, I mean I slept on the streets a few nights, like in this park, doesn't mean I'm a street kid... (David, 21).

Several workers also note this point,

The kids that come into program now aren't as hard core [as they were ten years ago], they are still damaged, the issues are the same, sexual and physical abuse, the castaways and the throwaways, but they have not been as entrenched or inducted into the whole street scene..

Seven years ago when I started, the term street kids meant something else, and you really did see more kids who were actually living on the street, in the parks, stairwells, and no so other options available to them, they crashed wherever they can. In my opinion, there is no reason for a kid to be actually saying 'they're living on the street'...there's so many other options now...

The kids that come here don't fit traditional understanding of street kids..they come from homes, they come from homes that have been very destructive...

I call the kids we see here 'part timers'- part time street kids, not hard core at all...a lot of them have homes to go to, the street is not their only home..

However, as can be seen from the previous chapter and Appendix F (several clippings from a Covenant House brochure), Covenant House continues to represent their clients as hard core street kids. As David continues to remark,

...and I think they [Covenant House] got to start changing their attitude towards 'we deal with street kids'...I mean it appeals to the public, you know, when it comes around to donation time or fund raising....but it only represents some of the kids in there [Covenant House]... (David, 21).

One youth worker also notes the agency's misrepresentation of its clientele and hinges upon a possible reason ("appeals to the public") that David brings up for its existence.

When I look at the posters [of Covenant House] I'm not so sure they depict the kids we're serving..we see the drug addicts, the prostitutes, they're one element, they're really hardened, but they're not the prime candidates that actually come into Cov, I mean, we see middle class, upper class kids..I think these ads are misleading...they're there to reach the donors, show a romantic kind of work we do...

3. The term "staff" primarily connotes "on the floor" workers who are called "youth workers". However, several residents also speak of other workers such as social workers, pastoral ministers, supervisors, and managers as "caring and helpful". Therefore, the reason the term "staff" is used in this paper is to describe a wide spectrum of workers who interact with a resident.

CHAPTER FOUR

STRUCTURE AND STRESS

In spite of their positive experiences of being cared for at Covenant House, most residents interviewed also came to experience a number of serious drawbacks to shelter life. As one ex-resident notes,

...at first I was glad to be here at Cov, once I got comfortable with everything, I really liked it here, the food is great and you get your own room...but after awhile [approximately one week], a lot of things get to you, like the rules, how staff treat you, um, then you just get fed up....staff have to learn to listen to kids, um, respect kids who have lived on the street, you know, give some slack...stop pushing dumb rules like no swearing at us....let kids rest for a while before they start working [on plan]. If more hostels worked this way, there would be less kids on the street... (Jack, 20).

The majority of this study's sample experience much the same sequence of feelings as Jack describes¹. Most residents locate problems in three main areas, 1) shelter culture, 2) rules 3) and the plan, all of which made it difficult to stay at Covenant House².

SHELTER CULTURE

...I don't like the culture in here [Covenant House]
...lot of the kids have attitudes....they think they're real tough... (Miriam, 18).

One of the drawbacks of living at Covenant House, according to most residents interviewed, stems from their daily interactions with other residents. Many residents note that there were always a number of residents who acted "tough" or

"streetish" and made them feel uncomfortable. As several residents in this sample note,

...You see, it's basically a continuation of street life there [Covenant House]...and what I saw of it, there's a lot of in fighting going around, somebody would do something or say something and somebody would stand up to them and pull the macho attitude, then the next thing you know, wow, everybody's mad at everybody else (Jay, 19).

Well, it's mainly the kids here that are a problem, there are sometimes when I don't know, there will be a skinhead or some type in there, just decides he has to have a power trip or something like that and then he's got to drag someone into a fight, sometimes it's just not seen by staff (Pierre, 20).

...You get a lot of assholes in a place like this, you're always gonna get assholes in any kind of shelter, 'hey I run this place' kind of crap (Jack, 20).

A few residents see the cause of this problem in Covenant House's downtown location.

...But Cov's right downtown, terrible location to have a youth hostel, it's right in the middle of downtown Metropolitan Toronto, cause you get all the trouble makers there.. (Jack, 20).

There's a lot of attitude here with kids, given the location of it, right off the bat it's not the best part of town... other shelters that aren't close to downtown get better kids usually...they're not as tough, you know, they don't carry an attitude... (Amy, 20).

In addition to being in close proximity with other residents who "carry an attitude" or "act tough", residents have difficulty with the lack of space in the sense of privacy, living in a shelter'. And as many residents note, an absence of personal time can lead to frustration and anger.

You don't have a life here [Covenant House], it makes you so mad, I mean, you don't have a personality, cause you're always surrounded by 40 kids, there's no privacy at all... (Ed, 21).

...Most people [residents] come here [Covenant House] cause they have problems, and everybody has their own problems, sometimes you know, um, you have to deal with your problems, but you got no space to go and just think, you know, stuff gets to you, it makes you mad.. (Sophie, 17).

...I kind of wish I could be on my own for a bit, you know, sometimes all the other kids just get to you, like, well, I got this friend here, he's got something going on, sometimes he comes to talk to me about it, so I try to help him, but at the same time I have to help myself, like I have two people to help, and sometimes it like stresses me out so (Carol, 18).

Another frustration with shelter culture, by far the most commonly expressed, involves in-fighting and bickering amongst shelter residents. Most of this tension seems to derive from relationships between male and female residents⁴. One girl described this phenomena in terms of "girls getting their predatory sights on some guys" and "the guys getting their predatory sights on some girls" (Miriam, 18). As several residents explain,

It's a soap opera in here, you know, like the relationship thing, if someone gets a boyfriend in here [Covenant House], then all the other girls get jealous you know, they'll do whatever they can to break you up (Sara, 17).

The attitude of most people [residents] in here is about bragging how many people like me, or how many people I've slept with.. (Tera, 17).

Well there are some rough kids, if you do something or say something, um you might get into a hassle with them, like if you're talking to one of the girls in Cov right, and one of the girls is going out with one of the guys, then that guy will come over and say why are you talking to her or something, it's like that, and start something (Bill, 18).

There were a couple of times when someone wanted to pick a fight with me, um, usually cause I started to talk to his girlfriend or something (Jay, 19).

Ya I'd say that 99% of the fights in here are over guys or girls (Miriam, 18).

The social scene in Covenant House, described by many youth as a "soap opera" and by many staff as "the Cov relationship" is seen to be one of the major drawbacks to living there. For some residents, the shelter culture can lead them to leave. As one resident explains,

I was sort of going with this guy, we liked each other, we fooled around a bit, he was telling me he sort of wanted to go out with me and then he turned around the next day and said by the way I got this girlfriend now, sorry, forget it, and that made me so sick, and his girlfriend kept threatening me, like, stay away from my man or else...so I just left, I couldn't stay there [Covenant House] any more (Tera, 17).

However, the majority of this sample found strategies for coping with other residents that kept them from leaving. As several residents remark,

I just keep to myself much of the time...and I try to get out of Cov as much as I can, I hang out at 519 [gay community center]... I don't like hanging around the same people all the time (Miriam, 18).

...you got to basically walk around and keep your distance, kind of like piss on your own turf type thing (Bill, 18).

..Basically, if you keep your trap shut, and keep to yourself, don't spread any rumours, don't get involved in any of the horseshit, you're fine... (Jay, 19).

In this respect, then, residents are disturbed by some aspects of the Covenant House environment that are less noticeable to staff and make it a less warm, safe and calm atmosphere than it may otherwise seem.

RULES

Rules, rules, it's just more rules, more red tape, there's really a lot of rules here [Covenant House], rules about everything...and a lot of dumb rules...that make no logical sense whatever (Ed, 21).

A second area that virtually all residents find problematic has to do with Covenant House rules. The majority of the sample believe that Covenant House is "too strict", "too structured", and place a large part of the blame on the fact that there are "too many rules". As one resident notes,

I hate Cov cause of all the rules, it's alright as a shelter but they [Covenant House] get carried away on the rules (Carol, 18).

The rules are seen as problematic both in terms of their content which constrains or restricts various normal adolescent behaviours and activities and, in terms of how they are enforced by staff. In both ways, residents experience a great deal of frustration, confusion, anger and pressure in living at Covenant House.

Rules for Day to Day Living

They [Covenant House] got so many rules about everything, like you can't do this and you can't do that...it's too structured (Ronny, 16).

Nearly all residents interviewed experienced the rules governing daily life at Covenant House as a restriction on their freedom to live their own lives. The majority found the general environment at Covenant house "too structured" in ways that impinge on such common activities as answering the phone or

opening the door.

It gets to you when you can't even answer the damn phone in this place [Covenant House], you got to wait for staff to give you a message.. (Chris, 19).

It's a drag that you can't let friends [outside of Covenant House] inside to hang out in the living room, you got to go outside in the cold (Karen, 18).

Residents experience the most frustration and anger over the daily timetable at Covenant House which is seen as rigid and inflexible in relation to their own lifestyles. Many interviewees spoke of feeling trapped by Covenant House's daily schedule.

It's stupid, I mean you got to eat at this time, go to sleep at this time, blow your nose at this time, you can't be free... (Sam, 20).

Basically once you're in your room, you can't do anything, you can't walk around anywhere, except to the can and back, so you feel sort of trapped.... (Ed, 21).

It's hard to structure your day around Covenant House times, I mean, if I wanted to see my mom, I have to do it before 5, or else I miss dinner.. (Becky, 18).

One thing that I hate is that you can only go up to your room at certain times, I mean if you're not inside at exactly 1:15, you got to wait till after dinner (Sara, 20).

Even more specifically, residents objected to the early curfew as one of the most restricting rules. Residents felt that they had little time to be on their own or see friends due to the early curfew. Once again, most residents spoke of being restricted or feeling trapped by the curfew.

It's a drag coming in here [Covenant House] so early, I have no time to see any of my friends...I mean, you work all day, and then I got to be in at 9:30 (Kevin, 17).

Curfew is at 9:30, that's pathetic...I can understand it on week days, but on week ends...you're not given any room here to relax and have a little fun... (Carol, 18).

The early curfew was also viewed as an expression of the agency's lack of trust in residents.

They put this dumb curfew on us, like they're afraid we're gonna go out drinking, well a lot of us are smarter to realize we come back with alcohol on our breath, we're out. They [Covenant House] just don't trust us, they try to control our lives (John, 20).

Behavioural Rules

Residents also felt that Covenant Houses' behavioural rules controlled their lives unnecessarily, restricting the ways they liked to express themselves. Interestingly, these same rules did not effectively control the negative social scene (or shelter culture) that was more salient to residents. Rules concerning physical contact, dress, and swearing evoked the most reactions.

I think they [Covenant House] should change the no physical contact rule, what happens when you want a hug, it's stupid..(Carol, 20).

It makes absolutely no sense that there's no physical contact, it doesn't let you get close to anybody (Tera, 17).

I couldn't be my own person, I had to dress like they [Covenant House] want you to (Miriam, 18).

I can't even wear most of my favourite clothing, cause of 'inadequate symbols', that's what staff told me, I don't understand it...like I can't wear this jacket cause it has a playboy bunny on it (Ed, 21).

..they're too strict, like with the dress code, you can't be yourself there, you have to be a good little girl, a good little boy, it's pressured upon you, it crushes your identity (Sara, 20).

I mean at Cov, they try to push these rules too much on you, like they say...you can't swear, you know, you get all hyped up about something...and say 'fuck' or something, and they [staff] wrang on you (Jack, 20).

Most of the residents find the behaviour rules focus on trivial issues and ignore more important issues. As one resident sums up,

..I came here [Covenant House] cause I needed a place and some food, I wanted to get fixed up..I don't need someone telling me that I can't swear or how to dress.. I mean, it's like they're [staff] power tripping on stupid things.. (Steve, 18).

How Rules Are Enforced

In addition to their complaints about the content of the rules at Covenant House, residents have many complaints about how staff enforce the rules. The residents view staff as responsible for a climate in which there is perpetual enforcement of a strict and rule oriented structure.

Staff usually have a bad habit of pushing too much..they push and push and push about say, swearing, simple things like that, when you've been on the street for years, swearing becomes part of your language.. (Jack, 20)

You can't do anything inside [Covenant House], you can't really goof around or have fun, cause you have staff on your back, saying 'you can't do that', 'you can't touch like that', you got them [staff] always on your back...and they treat us like we're small children who don't know anything..staff should learn to respect us a bit more.. (Ian, 23).

Man, the staff here at Cov are so uptight about the rules, they're constantly barking at you to not do this or that... (Mark, 21).

Staff got to be more human, be more easy going..stop bugging over every little thing....they're [staff] the cause of half the stress in the place... (John, 20).

Staff got to learn to ease up a bit, like, if you want a smoke after 9:30, you should be allowed to go out for one... (Kevin, 17).

A lot of staff in Cov need to learn that a lot of the kids know all the rules, know more about the streets than staff..staff got to learn to give more slack, um, respect us more, our own beliefs, listen to us and not just throw rules on us... (Jay, 19).

Virtually all of those interviewed viewed the enforcement of Covenant House rules as an attack on their ability to be free, young and in control, and as an expression of the agency's lack of trust and respect. As a result, many residents devised various strategies for coping with the rules to regain some sort of control and "beat the system".

..that money rule, they [staff] take 85% of your money and save it for you right, because the original time I came here, I had a lot of money, so the first night I went out and spent it all (Ed, 21).

It's easy to get around most of the rules, like physical contact, they [staff] can't have their eyes on you all the time you know, so you sit there [in living room] and horse around and staff don't know about it (Jack, 20).

I never went to two contacts a day, God, I stayed outside till 9:30, then it was too late for contact, I get in trouble a lot for it (Carol, 18).

One of the most common tactics was simply to leave the premises for a few hours.

When things get to me about the rules and stuff, I just go out, take a walk (Sophie, 17).

I spent a lot of time over at my friend Jeff's house, nobody to bug me there (Jay, 19).

Still others simply learn to tolerate the rules:

You just bite the bullet about some of the rules here [Covenant House], once you get used to it, you're fine.. you realize all the kids are in the same boat (Steve, 20).

I don't care any more, like about the rules and stuff, I've been here [Covenant House] so much, I just do it, if they [staff] say 'don't swear', fine, I do it.. (Anne, 17).

All the residents interviewed agreed, however, that other shelters are more flexible, less strict and have far fewer rules⁵. As several residents note,

At Touchstone or Turning Point, you don't have a contact [with staff] everyday, you sit and talk to someone [staff] if you want...usually you can do anything you please..these places don't have the rules like Cov... (Jack, 20).

Stop 86 gives you overnights, you got a twelve o'clock curfew during the week, and one thirty on week ends, you get incoming calls, there's a smoking room inside..you just don't feel as restricted as you do here [Covenant House] (Anne, 17).

At YWS, you don't have to make contact [with staff] every day like here [Covenant House]..there's just not as many rules [at YWS], and they got better hours [later curfew].. (Justine, 17).

The Covenant House residents were not alone in their views about the lack of freedom, trust and respect expressed in the content and enforcement of the rules. There are also a number of staff workers at Covenant House who find the house rules too strict and too restricting:

I think there's great friction between the population we serve and the rules or expectations of the shelter...um, and I think that maybe, we need to loosen up a bit with a lot of the rules....relax on our strictness..

This is a very tough way to live [for residents] and you got to be aware of that when dealing with kids...we come down very hard on them and be strict with them...

It's too strict here [Covenant House], for example, kids can't touch each other, that's humanity, and I think that's wrong.

I think we [Covenant House] have to let go a bit, let go, I mean, things like the dress code or curfew...we have to let kids have more flexibility..

...And I think all the expectations around shelter managing, like curfews, wake ups, all the things that go along with residential care are harder for our young people to manage...and we may need to lower our expectations then...

THE PLAN

The third area that elicits negative feelings from the majority of those interviewed has to do with the plan. Most residents interviewed feel pressured by the strict plan structure at Covenant House and mention a lack of trust on the side of the agency in day-to-day workings around the plan.

Many residents in the sample wanted to find a job, search for housing, or register in school. And most spoke of "getting straightened out" or "getting my life back in order". As several residents note,

I wanted to get a job, a place to live, and basically a push on the right track, you know.. (Judy, 19).

Ah, I came to Cov to get myself back into gear, um, get things together so that I can support myself, you know, get my life together (Jeremy, 18).

Um, I wanted to straighten myself out, I wanted to get a job and get money in my bank, get my own place, stuff like that (Jay, 19).

And even though many residents note that Covenant House is one of the few shelters that helps in "getting their lives straightened out", the general consensus amongst those interviewed was that Covenant House "pushes too much", and "pressures too much" with respect to several areas of the plan". To begin with, most residents feel that there is very little time to rest between entering shelter and the time a plan is created

(approximately one to three days). As several residents explain,

You got no time to just relax at Cov, it's like you come in one day and the next day they [staff] push you out job searching...It just doesn't make sense (Janet, 18).

...They [Covenant house] got to be more flexible, give some kind of leeway, why not take a week or two and let people [residents] relax when they come in for shelter... (Jack, 20).

And due to the perceived shortness of time to rest and think over their individual plan, many residents feel they are pressured by staff into a plan that is not their true desire.

I mean, I don't think staff give you enough time to figure out what you really want to do...like they put me on job search when I really wanted to do job training....like they [staff] don't listen to me when they wrote out my plan.. (Gary, 20).

I just wanted some time to think what I wanted to do, like my Futures [job placement program] was something I wanted, but they [staff] sort of pushed me into job searching, and I didn't want to do that at all, or not right away...but they pushed me into looking for a job eight hours a day.. (Tera, 17).

I mean, they [staff] want to set you on a different track then you want it seems...I said I wanted to go to school... they [staff] say 'finding schools [that are open for registration] is impossible, so we'll put you on job search', it's like you set your plan, and they push you to do it in a day, and then they go and change everything... (Tony, 20).

Several residents in the sample place some blame in this regard on the case management team (CMT) that finalizes an individual's plan. As two residents explain,

I think CMT is a very evil group, I mean they meet behind closed doors, we [residents] can't be there to explain what we really want [in a plan]..it was like everything is censored, and then you're told what the plan is... (Jay, 19).

Well CMT, they make decisions for people's lives...they don't ask you how you feel about any of it...it's like they twist everything [plan] and send it back to you all fumbled up.. (Ed, 21).

A youth worker comes to the same conclusion:

..My contention lies with case management..I think a lot of time you have a group of management staff up there who don't really know the kid very well...

Many residents also express frustration and confusion at how strictly certain "expectations" for working on a plan are enforced:

They're [Covenant House] so uptight, they're so strict, like I was seriously looking for a job, and staff gave me tokens to do a job search, and when they give you tokens, you're not supposed to come back until dinner [bag lunch provided] right, I took the tokens and went out to this mall, I handed out 45 resumes, so I had four and a half job search forms filled out, all they [staff] expect for the entire day is one [job search form]..and I came back for lunch and staff started giving me shit for coming back..other places [shelters] would be so impressed..but here [Covenant House] they're so uptight.. (Mark, 21).

I just can't understand them [Covenant House], like if you find work as a bartender or bouncer, you can't do those jobs cause it's against Cov policy...they want you to find steady work that's not connected with bars and stuff...that should be cut out, cause work is work and money is money..it just makes you frustrated (Jack, 20).

But most of all, residents feel the greatest frustration and anger over how pressured they are in their day-to-day workings on plans.

...when you got a plan, you better work on it every day or else you're gone [discharged]..I mean, you can't rest or think about things..they [Covenant House] just keep pushing you... (Bill, 18).

I feel so much pressure on my back, like someone's watching me, you know, like in the morning if I just want to sit down after breakfast, staff come right up to you and tell you to go work on your plan...they're so strict (Jay, 19).

Part of this frustration seems to come from feeling that working on a plan can be tiresome and discouraging and staff should show some sympathy and flexibility towards them.

You come back from pounding the streets all day looking for a job, and everyone is telling you 'no', they're not hiring, you feel like shit, you're tired, and staff are like 'where's your job search sheet'...it makes you feel so mad (Ian, 23).

Staff got to learn to mellow a bit, I mean, we're out there all day, we're tired, just let us have some time to relax...the last thing I want to do is talk to staff, or show them what I did today, you know (Sally, 19).

Part of residents' frustration also stems from their feeling that the agency "doesn't trust them", arising from the fact that a resident's daily work is verified each night by staff.

I mean, you come back and you got to show your job search sheets for staff to verify. I mean you feel like you're immature, like you're pretty stupid..like they [staff] don't trust you (Ed, 21).

It's pretty stupid that staff call your school to see if you're there or skipping...makes me feel like a little kid, why don't they [staff] just believe you (Jeremy, 18).

Many residents experience other rules concerning the plan, such as daily contact with a worker and the saving policy, ostensibly designed to promote their independence, as treating them "like babies" and as further evidence of agency mistrust.

I just don't understand why you have to save 85% of your money, I mean, it's my money...they [Covenant House] treat you like a baby...I think I should be able to decide if I want to save it [money] or not... (Frank, 17).

...The saving policy has to go...it just shows they [Covenant House] don't trust you.... (Jeremy, 18).

There's so much pressure, you got to meet your worker in the morning and at night..like, if I wanted to talk to someone I will, I don't have to be told to (Gary, 20).

What's the point of two contacts a day, nothing changes, like, what changes from one night to the next morning, you know, it's just for their paper work...they like being really strict, and making us feel like babies (Teri, 19).

These claims by residents were supported by a number of lower and middle level workers at Covenant House:

We do an assessment in 48 hours of the kid being with us, I think we rush kids...I mean think about this, they're gonna sit for an hour and set up a plan with a stranger, you can't do it...

I think Cov is very rigid, we have to loosen up the structure..let kids breathe for awhile...

We kind of label kids by putting them on job search or look for schooling, and that may not be their needs..we look at formulating a plan one or two days after they get within Cov, they may need time to just look and decide...

..Some of the kids that come need a month to rest and chill out, they need this time, you know, and in three days they're job searching..it's really hard to do that..they get rejections all day, someone calls at night to see if they've gone to all these places..I mean give me a break...I wouldn't do it that way..

Again, in dealing with Covenant House rules around the plan, most residents interviewed devise various coping strategies in order to stay at Covenant House and maintain a sense of control⁷. To combat the common feeling of being pressured into a plan with little time to rest, many residents plan their arrival to shelter late in the week, allowing a few more days to rest (the case management team which finalize all plans does not meet on weekends).

I try to come here [Covenant House] like on Thursday or Friday, you see, that gives me about four days until CMT [Case management team] makes me go out and look for a job (Rachel, 20).

Other residents choose certain plans that they see as easy or in which they can relax.

Ya, I picked P for I [Planning for Independence] cause it's a good way to sleep during the day... (Jack, 21).

I say I want to see social work... and then I tell him [social worker] I want to do something, and he'll get it going, and then I'll have a couple of days to kill...like by setting up an appointment a couple of weeks later, so then I can just sit around and goof off... (Alex, 21).

And in trying to cope with the feeling that staff are "pushing" a different plan on them, several residents simply agreed with staff and then carried on with their own individual plan.

After awhile, I just say yes yes yes yes, I'll do what you [staff] want, but after the plan is all written up, I do something totally different...but it's still part of their [staff] plan...so I won't get in trouble (Tony, 20).

If they [staff] don't want to listen to me, and help me, I just do it my own way...I mean they [staff] put me on job search, and I'd actually go get a welfare check and put money down on a place (Ian, 23).

In order to deal with their frustrations in working non-stop on a plan each day, many residents found alternative ways to "satisfy" staff.

Man, you just can't do it [job searching] every day, it's much easier to use old ones [job search sheets], works much better, or use somebody else's [job search sheet] from another day, because doing a job search, even if you did do it, you have the same amount of chance if you copied it off of someone else, of getting a job, but you still got to do it everyday (Ed, 21).

If you ever end up on job search, take you about two minutes to do it, all you do is grab the closest phone book and jot down the name of the restaurant or store, grab the phone number and check off if you think they're gonna be hiring. Then you just go to the mall, hang out, shoot some pool, go down to the docks (Jack, 20).

A last resort for residents can be to simply leave the shelter.
As one resident explains,

I just couldn't take it any more, I mean everything I wanted to do, they [staff] would turn around, after awhile, I just decided to leave, I couldn't take it any more...a lot of other shelters are a lot easier (Tera, 17).

The majority of residents interviewed agree with Tera's statement that "other shelters are a lot easier". As two residents point out below, other shelters are more relaxed and less pressured with regards to individual plans⁸.

Like Touchstone, it's so relaxed, you go there [and staff ask] 'what's your plan?' [and resident states] 'I don't know' [and staff reply] 'ok, ok, you got three weeks to decide what it is.....they [Touchstone] give you time to rest (Kate, 20).

YWS, um, Turning Point, all of them [shelters] don't pressure you as much as Cov does...it's like, they're [other shelters] not on your back every day about what you're doing.. (Peter, 18).

In summary, the majority of residents in the sample found that the shelter culture, rules and the plan combined to produce a very difficult environment in which to live. It is significant that these problems arise for clients in residence (Intake and Residence) rather than those in the out-care program at Bond Street. As a drop-in center rather than a residential setting, Bond Street does not contain the same shelter culture, rules and plan as do Intake and Residence. As one middle level worker at Bond Street notes,

We [Bond Street] don't have to deal with a lot of the issues that Intake or Residence deals with, like curfew, um, dress code, wake ups, in house squabbling over some relationship..

This point may be a large factor as to why Bond Street is seen by many street kids as a much more relaxed and calm environment. In addition, this may also be why the number of street kids entering Bond Street continues to rise while the numbers are falling at both Intake and Residence.

NOTES: CHAPTER FOUR

1. Miller, Miller, Hoffman and Duggan (1980:139-140) find similar feelings in their study of runaways in San Francisco. When asked about their perceptions of an "ideal agency", the sample noted "sensitive counsellors" and a relaxed, non-pressured environment.
2. William McCarthy (1990:155-6) in his study of street kids in Toronto noted that adolescent "disliked staying in hostels" due to their "distrust and dislike of fellow hostellers" and "disagreement with the rules and regulations of the hostel".
3. This point can also be seen in the research of Davis (1977) and Dunham and Jones (1980) who focused on "residential care".
4. This phenomenon is seen at Residence, where both male and female residents live "under one roof" rather than at Intake where only male residents are housed.
5. My own observations at three of the more "popular" shelters aside from Covenant House validate these comments. Apart from having a later curfew (which is extremely important to many teenagers and young adults in general) and less staff intrusion, the general atmosphere at these shelters appears more relaxed and less rigid. Residents at other shelters were noted to be walking around freely (in and out of their rooms and staff offices), answering phones, opening the front door and in general "hanging out" with other residents. Most other shelters also allow youth more freedom in dress and physical contact.
6. Marlene Weber (1991:246) makes a similar point in her work on street kids. She questions as unrealistic that agencies expect a kid to come in on time, make all meetings and appointments, follow through with a plan and conform to all other rules, in order to get help. Abbot and Blake (1988:151) also voice the same concern,
One of the difficulties encountered in creating a program for homeless youth is that many times, the nature of their 'street lifestyle' does not conform to operational procedures of established agencies which serve youth.
7. As Davis (1977:26) notes about social service agency's "plans" for clients, "the responsibility for making broad and detailed arrangements for the whole life of a person is rarely found elsewhere".
8. My own observations at several shelters confirm these remarks. Touchstone, YWS, YMCA and Turning Point give residents one to three weeks after intake to relax and get settled. An assessment and plan are followed through only after this "time out". In addition, daily work on the plan was not enforced by staff as strictly as at

Covenant House: for example, residents were not required to show their daily work for staff verification.

CHAPTER FIVE

UNPLANNED DISCHARGES

According to Covenant House statistics, the majority of residents who enter shelter leave "unplanned". As one youth worker notes,

..I guess you could say, we [Covenant House] don't have a very good success rate....

Residents left "unplanned" either because they were "kicked out" by staff or because they "walked out" on their own.

Approximately 80% of the sample interviewed, many of whom who had come to Covenant House more than once, fell into one of these two categories at one time or another (roughly equally divided) during their stay(s) at Covenant House. As several residents point out,

Basically it happens to everybody their first few times, either they [residents] get kicked out or else they just can't take it [Covenant House] and leave... (Jack, 20).

I'll just stay here [Covenant House] until I can't stand it any more, or they kick me out.. (Chris, 19).

This chapter investigates both exiting processes as well as issues concerning residents' return to Covenant House.

Walking Out

Most residents interviewed said they frequently felt like walking out, and constantly considered doing so during their stay at Covenant House.

More than a few times I felt like discharging myself...
I just couldn't handle it [Covenant House] any more
(Jay, 19).

...When you're here [Covenant House], you think about
leaving all the time... (Alex, 20).

Well every day I come in I debate whether I want to come
in the door, every night it's just like, should I stay..
(Ed, 21).

And some residents do in fact stay at Covenant House in spite of
their desire to leave. For these residents, having a bed and
food, caring staff as well as a lack of alternatives, made it
difficult to leave and reinforces their sense of dependence on
the agency.

I mean, if you leave, you lose all this stuff, like
being able to talk with staff...and there's no where
else to get it... (Gary, 20).

Well the fact that you're sort of walking out of your
castle, sort of speak, is hard...it seems you've got these
protective walls here [Covenant House]...the security, the
food...being able to talk about problems, stuff like that...
(Jay, 19).

I mean, I wouldn't know where to go, there's no other
place like Cov, staff is nice, they care... (Kevin, 17).

[It's hard to leave] cause, well, basically I know there's
food here every day, every one I know who's left doesn't
eat.. (Carol, 18).

When I think about leaving, I just think about all the
other junk places like the Y [YMCA], Salvation Army...
(Craig, 20).

Basically, I need shelter...you put up with it [Covenant
House] for as long as you can manage...if you can only stick
it out for two days, that's two days off the street
(Tera, 17).

The "card system", which set a period of time that one had to
stay out, also made it difficult for residents to leave.

Residents walking out will generally receive a seven to fourteen day card.

I mean, having a card would make it difficult [to leave] ...I'd rather stay here [Covenant House] than get a card, I got nowhere else to go, and they're [staff] helping you out (Justine, 17).

Well if you leave you get a card, you're out for two weeks, you know, if I walked out the door now, I'd have to stay out for two weeks...I think that's what discourages people from leaving (Miriam, 18).

In spite of these disincentives for leaving, however, many, if not most residents have trouble "sticking it out" and inevitably do decide to leave on their own. As one resident explains,

I kept thinking about taking off, and then I thought, wow do I want to be in jail, cause it's like jail here [Covenant House]...so I left (Ed, 21).

For most residents in the sample, the main reason for leaving had to do with the rigid structure and excessive rules. As Ed put it, Covenant House feels like jail.

..After awhile I just couldn't take it [Covenant House] any more, it's too much pressure...I just didn't feel comfortable there any longer, they're too strict... (Alex, 19).

I'd eliminate half of the rules [at Covenant House], like the saving policy...curfew...physical contact, I'd eliminate the bullshit over not being allowed to swear in the house, or that you can't go up to your room when you want...all these rules stress people [residents] out...and make people leave (Frank, 17).

When you're at Cov, they [staff] make all the choices for you, like when to eat, go to bed, what your plan is...I mean you just can't take it any more, so you leave...cause the only way to be free is to leave (Tera, 17).

I left cause it was so uptight in the building, rules, rules, rules, everywhere are rules...in jail there are less rules than there are here [Covenant House], it's actually a more civil environment in jail (Ed, 21).

...it's just a matter of time before people [residents] just leave cause of all the rules..it's too much pressure (Carol, 18).

Um, you get sick and tired of all the routines...there's too much structure here [Covenant House], it's frustrating sometimes, that's why you want to leave... (Miriam, 18).

...Most times I leave cause the curfew is so short, and like other rules, it just gets to me, you got no control... (Chris, 19).

I got sick of it, all the rules and the pressures [like what?].well, job searching, curfew, all that stuff (Tony, 20).

A number of residents also say they left because of Covenant House's "shelter culture":

I just decided to leave cause of all the gossip from other people staying there, it got to me... (Judy, 21).

...Just being around thirty kids all the time, you know, I just wasn't used to it....it just started to get to me, um the people that were staying there [Covenant House] at the time... so finally I left (Jay, 19).

....I just couldn't deal with it [environment at Covenant House], it was so stressful, this place was like a big soap opera...you know everybody's business (Susan, 17).

It's just the politics, just the fact that everybody [residents] is always in your face, I mean you can't do anything without everyone knowing, nothing's a secret (Miriam, 18).

One time I just left cause I got tired of people [residents], so many people in and out, it just really got to me, it really bothered me, you just don't want to meet any more people cause you see how screwed up everyone is, you can get sick from it... (Jeremy, 18).

I left a while back cause I had a problem with one of the other residents, he was threatening me cause he liked my girlfriend (Kevin, 17).

A small minority of the residents interviewed reported walking out not so much because they were put off by Covenant House rules and environment but because they were drawn out by events and friends. For example, some residents become attached to other residents and decide to leave and share the rent on their own apartment (usually with an easily available emergency welfare check). Others just want a night out with friends outside of Covenant House, and decide to jeopardize their shelter in order to "party". And some residents are drawn to special events they decide justify breaking curfew, such as a hockey or baseball game, a concert, or a festival. Even when pulled by events outside Covenant House, residents are nonetheless motivated by their desire for a less strict structure and more freedom or control. As several residents put it:

..there's always a temptation, you're constantly tempted to leave, like if the Jays [baseball team] are playing and you score tickets, or like my friends tell me to come to this or that going on at night...I want to go...it's like you're free again, you can do what you want (Ed, 21).

Well I met this girl [at Covenant House], and we got talking about maybe getting a place, so we'd have you know, some privacy and not have to be under all these rules (Jay, 19).

And, whether pushed or drawn to "walk out", the general result is a feeling of relief, freedom and control. As two residents point out,

...When I left on my own it made me feel good, because it gave me the opportunity to experience life on my own. It doesn't make me feel like I'm boxed in and it's not like jail, I don't have to stay for the whole sentence, I had a choice and it made me feel like I was free sort of.. (Ronny, 16).

[When I left] it felt great, it really does, it's like you're getting all that pressure off you... (Tony, 20).

Several residents nonetheless had mixed feelings about their decision to leave, and for many individuals this led to a return to Covenant House (discussed below). These mixed feelings primarily had to do with leaving a shelter perceived as caring and with the lack of shelter alternatives. As Tony continues by saying,

...but in another sense you're losing a lot too, because you're running away from your problems, they keep building on you..and Cov is the best place to get them [problems] straightened out (Tony, 20).

Many workers at Covenant House, for their part, also found it upsetting when residents walked out. Several put their frustration and anger in terms of having "unfinished work" with the resident:

...Sometimes it makes me feel angry, if I've been working with some kid and then he or she takes off...feels as if it was all for nothing...

You've got to keep your expectations in check when working with this population..I mean sometimes it can be real frustrating when you've put a lot of time on one resident.. to find they're gone..

At the same time, however, a number of lower and middle level workers support residents' claims that Covenant House's structure is too rigid and too strict, pushing residents into leaving "unplanned". As several youth workers explain,

I think a lot of kids just leave cause of us...they just can't meet the expectations that are imposed on them by the Covenant House structure....

We very much enforce rules, structure, a plan, on them.. and I think that's too much pressure for these kids...they end up splitting..

I think a lot of these kids are leaving because our expectations are too high...

Getting Kicked Out

"Unplanned discharges" included not only residents who walked out but also residents who got discharged or kicked out by staff. Approximately half of this study's sample had had this experience. From the point of view of most of them, being discharged was the result of trivial matters, such as being a few minutes late for curfew, swearing, or missing an appointment. And for many, the experience of "getting kicked out" left them feeling bewildered and unjustly treated. As several residents explain,

I was discharged last time for curfew, it was so stupid, we were five minutes late, because, um, my friend, she passed out, we went to call her an ambulance, and give information to the ambulance, so we were a bit late, and they [staff] kicked me out.. (Justine, 17).

Cov House usually discharges for the pettiest reasons, very petty reasons, like I mean, a verbal argument, um, two guys [residents] just arguing you know, and they [staff] say 'no swearing, no shouting in here' and both of you are gone... (Ed, 21).

...they [staff] kicked me out cause I called Paul a nigger, we're sitting on the couch talking, just the two of us, and I called him a nigger, and he called me a honky, we're just joking you know, he's my buddy, and we just talk like that, and they [staff] kicked me out...you know, I can't understand it (Ian, 23).

I'm kind of pissed at them [staff] now, cause they [staff] always discharge you for the dumbest thing, I mean they [staff] are always doing that, such stupid things, like 'bad job search'...I didn't fill out my whole sheet (Alex, 21).

I got discharged because I missed an appointment with my probation officer, so they [staff] discharged me for that. I didn't think it was fair, it was a personal appointment, they [staff] didn't make it for me...I felt like shit cause it was a stupid reason (Mark, 20).

One of the main differences between being discharged and deciding to leave has to do, in fact, with how residents feel after the experience. As one resident notes,

When I discharge myself I feel fine, I'm doing it on my own, I'm in control of it, when I get discharged [by staff] I'm not very happy with it, cause most of the time it's for an unfair reason... (Tera, 17).

For most residents interviewed, being discharged produced sadness, fear and low self-esteem.

It's not a good feeling, to be kicked out, cause you feel like you're nothing, you got nowhere to go...it's a really bad feeling (Gary, 20).

Well I was tripping at first thinking 'oh what did I do' and all this stuff, I felt really down for awhile... (Kevin, 17).

When it [discharged] first happened, I did feel bad cause I felt I messed up in some sort of way.... (Craig, 20).

I felt really low, really small, they [staff] made me feel really stupid, cause I mean think about it, here I am in a shelter kind of thing and I've been kicked out of shelter... I felt very lost... (Ronny, 16).

Residents understood being kicked out as evidence of staff not caring about them, and in this sense, felt betrayed by staff who are "supposed to care".

I mean they [staff] want you off the street, right, they're a shelter for that, and then they go and kick you out...it doesn't make sense....they're supposed to care about you (Chris, 19).

Staff treat you like kids here [Covenant House], they say they care about you and all this stuff, but they don't..if you make one mistake, like come back five minutes after curfew, you're gone, you're discharged..that doesn't seem like they care about you really.... (Janet, 17).

...It's [discharge] like saying, you're not our problem any more...we don't care about you... (John, 20).

This feeling of betrayal was amplified by the agency's "discharge procedures". First, the resident is formally informed of the discharge in a closed room in the presence of several youth workers. One or two workers then escort the now ex-resident up to his or her room to gather any belongings; as the kid packs, the youth worker commonly starts stripping the bed sheets and tidying up the room for the next resident. The resident is then asked whether he or she wants a referral to another shelter. Finally, a bus token is offered and the resident is invited to come back if he or she desires after the duration of the card for staying out has expired. This 'discharge ceremony' clearly strikes residents as uncaring, if not indeed inhumane.

...They [staff] tell you that you're gone in a closed room, then you got to pack all your stuff while staff are like cleaning your room, man, they could at least wait till you leave...then it's like 'hey you're kicked out, but here's a fucking token and come again', I mean, you feel so angry, and they [staff] don't really care.. (Ed, 21).

Many residents in the sample describe how easily one can be discharged. As one resident puts it:

All you have to do is breathe out of your left nostril instead of your right to get discharged here [Covenant House] (Tera, 17).

Several described how specific workers (mostly supervisors) got into "discharging moods" whereby many residents get discharged at one time ("house cleaning" as one resident evokes).

....Joe's [supervisor] a joke, cause he's an idiot, he's so serious he gets in these discharging moods, where he will maybe discharge 4 or 5 people one day. If he hears someone swear, they're discharged, even if he sees someone touching someone, they're discharged, oh ya (Carol, 18).

....I noticed a few times there were some real house cleaning, I don't know what went on but I suspect someone said 'hey these guys [residents] are getting relaxed with their plans', so staff would get rid of all those people who didn't do a full job search, or had a bad attitude, something dumb like that... (Jay, 19).

The sense that one can be discharged at any moment adds to constant pressures of daily life at Covenant House.

Staff got to relax a lot, like things aren't perfect, I mean, if you're one minute late for curfew, don't discharge you for it..say someone had a bad day, they don't do their job search, don't discharge them...I mean you forget why you're here, all you end up thinking about is if you're gonna be discharged for something... (Jeremy, 18).

...Staff are always using the discharge word all the time, like if you don't follow your plan, or if you don't treat people with respect, like staff, you get discharged, everything that comes out of staff's mouth is discharge, discharge, discharge...you always feel pressured (Tony, 20).

...they [staff] use it [discharge] as a threat, if you don't do things their [staff] way, you get discharged...every time you do something wrong, staff say 'you can be discharged'... it's always on your back, you know, 'am I gonna be kicked out' (Ed, 21).

And for many residents, this constant pressure means that staff don't care. As one resident notes,

They're [staff] a bunch of hypocrites, like staff say how much they care and respect residents and then they go around threatening you with a discharge for every little thing you do... (Tera, 17).

Most residents interviewed found the experience of being discharged very disturbing and saw it as evidence of injustice, strictness and lack of care on the part of the agency. In support, several youth workers at Covenant House expressed similar views:

I think it's [discharge policy] much too strict here at Cov, for example, my supervisor told me yesterday that I have to discharge this kid for smoking out on his ledge.. and the thing is, this kid told me, he was honest, and now he has to go...I think it's wrong to treat kids like that..

..There should be more forgiveness in this agency, more respect for the kids...we treat them very legalistic...you break a rule, we kick you out...there seems to be little humanity in that...

It's like a pressure cooker in here [Covenant House], a kid does something wrong, doesn't job search properly, or comes late for curfew, they're out [discharged], no questions asked..the expectations are too high..

We're a very punitive agency...and I think we can give damaging messages to kids....telling someone you're gonna be referred for unsuccessful work on a plan...reaffirms the image of lacking self worth, damages their confidence, and they get used to losing..

..We don't give kids a break, if you have a bad week and don't job search well, instead of saying 'what are you feeling? what's wrong?' you know, we discharge them, how many of us could live in that sort of environment?...

It is noteworthy, then, that so many residents do indeed return to this "sort of environment".

Returning

...well I've been here [Covenant House] on and off. I was here for a couple of days [about a month ago] and I left cause some friends [outside of Covenant House] told me I could stay with them, that didn't turn out too good so I went to Turning Point [another shelter] for a couple of weeks, I got discharged from there [for drinking]... hung out on the street [mostly in an abandoned building] for a couple of days then came back here [Covenant House] (Kevin, 17).

There are numerous paths a resident can take once he or she has left Covenant House. A large number of residents in this sample end up "making the loop"¹ from shelter to shelter, interspersed with stays on the street, in their own apartments, at friend's houses or back at home. As one resident explains,

Um, first I was at Touchstone, that lasted about a week, then I stayed at YWS for a couple of days, couldn't stand it [too dirty], um, spent some time with some friends, at their places, one night I slept in a park, then I went back to Touchstone...and after, I think it was two days I came back to Cov [had been at Covenant House approximately a month earlier] (Peter, 18).

Over 70% of the sample had returned to Covenant House at least once during their careers in street life. The average number of intakes ranged from three to seven, with five subjects reporting from 12 to 20 stays at Covenant House. For most, Covenant House was comfortable and home-like, even though strict and structured. According to most residents interviewed, Covenant House is the favoured shelter "on the loop". In this sense, coming back appears the result in part of two characteristics of the other Toronto shelters. First, the other shelters provide a much less appealing physical environment:

..When you get discharged and you go to some of the other places, wow, it's a real shock, it makes you think, I don't want to stay in a shit hole.....so I came back [to Covenant House] (Jay, 19).

Man, you go to some of the other places [shelters] around, and it's like 'ahh what did I do'..so when my card ran out, I was like, 'yes back to Cov', I wanted to be there (Jack, 20).

After I got discharged I went to YMCA and it was scary, it was like living in a shit house....[so I] came right back here [Covenant House] (Sean, 17).

...plus the physical conditions, man some of them [shelters] are terrible, you got bunk beds at Turning point or dormitories at Seaton House, and you know you're in hell...YMCA, man, that place should be like a boot camp, I stayed two nights and literally threw myself at the mercy of Cov [he had been discharged by Covenant House for two weeks]... (Ian, 23).

I came back cause I won't stay at another hostel, cause they're not clean (Tera, 17).

Second, the other shelters have quotas while Covenant House maintains an "open door" policy:

You always know that Cov will take you in, like other places [shelters] may be full, or you have to wait till a bed opens... (Christy, 18).

..It's like you can call and wait around till some place like Touchstone or Turning Point gets a free bed, but you usually got to wait till after dinner, which is a drag...Cov's not like that (Jay, 19).

Kids thus come back because they know that Covenant House will "always take you back". As one middle level worker explains,

...The program here at Cov is brilliant, it's non-negotiable, yet you [residents] can come back as many times as you want...it's just like a family, you can flip out, yell, swear at staff, but you're always forgiven..

The experience of being able to return to Covenant House at any time (once the card has expired) makes it feel like "home".

I could say I came back cause I kind of feel safe in that hostel [Covenant House] ...I don't know, I guess it's like a homey feeling in there, I feel like home when I'm there (Paul, 20).

Other places [shelters] just don't do it for me...like you can come here [Covenant House] as many times as you want, and they care about you...they remember you...it's like my second home (Paula, 17).

It's just that I know this place [Covenant House] will be here when I come, you know what I mean, I can go to a friend's place, they might not be home, you know, I always know this place will take me back..and I know everybody there, so it feels like home, a bit (Ed, 21).

...Coming back is cool cause you know everything going on, and even if you treated staff like dirt last time, they [staff] put it all over in the corner and welcome you back.. that's good (Susan, 17).

Every time I left I was never coming back, no way, but they [Covenant House] always left the option there [of coming back] (Jay, 19).

In returning "home", however, some residents also feel a sense of personal failure at not succeeding on the outside and thus needing to return for shelter²

...It's hard to admit that you left [Covenant House] and you have to go back for help, that's the hardest thing.. (David, 21).

..When you leave and you think, 'hey I've got everything under control', and then all of a sudden it all falls apart and you have to go back [to Covenant House], that makes you pissed off (Anne, 17).

Two other resident express similar feelings, but also mention the frustration involved in starting over:

...and I was readmitted a couple days later...but I had to start all over again [like what?]. ..like doing my assessment, my plan, stuff like that....it was frustrating... (Jay, 19).

ya, it's a drag, cause when I came back, I had to take my assessment again, it's kind of like starting again, you know (Ronny, 16).

This feeling of "starting over" is much more of an issue for male residents, since they are required to stay initially at Intake, which involves sleeping on mats in the living room, until a bed opens up at Residence which most residents find more comfortable and home-like (since Residence beds are private rooms). Female residents, on the other hand are automatically sent to Residence once admitted into the program. As one male resident explains,

...when I got thrown out, it was like 'shit, here we go again', you got to start all over...sleeping on mats [at Intake], it was like being in the minor leagues for a ball player...Residence is like the majors and when you're thrown out, you got to start in the minors again... (Jack, 20).

Although starting over was difficult in some respects, several residents felt that the more times one stayed at Covenant House, the easier it became to cope with the structure and rules.

You got to come back here a couple times before the rules and stuff don't bother you as much.. (Steve, 19).

Nobody does it the first time, that's why so many people come back...cause you got to get used to how they run the place here, like with all the rules and discharges.. (Tony, 20).

At first when I came to Cov, I was like this place is way to strict, man the curfew and some of the other rules.. actually I still think it's really strict, but it doesn't seem to bother me as much.. (Gary, 20).

It may also be the case that as residents get older, their priorities change. An older resident may, for example, be more concerned with making a living or getting straightened out than a later curfew or being allowed to dress freely.

The cycle of entering, leaving and returning to Covenant House does nonetheless emphasize the common experience amongst

the sample that Covenant House is far too strict. Most of the residents interviewed prefer Covenant House over any other shelter; they are drawn to what they perceive as its caring and home-like atmosphere, yet in turn are "pushed out" by its strict and rigid structure. This cycle of entering and leaving characterizes the majority of the sample's shelter experiences.

You want to be here right, I mean, it's the best place [Covenant House], but the rules just get to you...that's why so many kids get discharged, come back in, get discharged, it just keeps going.. (Jack, 20).

You need a lot of tries here [Covenant House], because you get discharged all the time for stupid things..you end up coming back a lot.. (Tony, 20).

One middle level worker expresses the same view:

We're just gonna see a lot of kids four, five, six, seven, ten, twenty, thirty times....maybe our resources would be better spent if we tried to keep the kid for longer by regrouping on our structure and expectations..

For most of those interviewed, a less rigid and strict structure would indeed appear to encourage residents to stay longer.

NOTES: CHAPTER FIVE

1. "Making the loop" is a term coined by Jacqueline Wiseman's (1970) subjects in her study of skid row alcoholics. It refers to the travelling by skid row men from one institution to another (Wiseman 1970:58). I have adopted this term to represent the travels of street kids from one shelter to another.

2. Interestingly, one supervisor places the sense of "failure" on herself in seeing many residents returning for shelter. As she states,

..You know, they're [residents] in and out, they're back in and you feel that you don't have a good success rate cause you see them so many times, you feel it yourself, that you're not doing what you need to do cause this kid is back for the thirteenth time..

CONCLUSION

STRUCTURE AS CARING?

This case study addresses a gap in the previous research on street kids - namely, the absence of attention paid to youth shelters and to the experiences street kids have there. In a larger sense, this study also belongs with the growing number of investigations of the conditions of the homeless more generally, including their experiences with shelters for homeless adults and families (see Snow and Anderson, 1993; Liebow, 1993; Baum and Burns, 1993; Blau, 1992). Jacqueline Wiseman's study of skid row alcoholics and the agencies they frequented (Wiseman, 1970) provided an early model for such research in the sense that it looked at the part played by agencies in the social world of the homeless "deviant", and gave equal consideration to the contrasting perspectives held by agencies and clients. Along similar lines, this case study of Toronto's Covenant House provides insight into the contrasting perspectives of the agency and its transient clients towards two key issues: caring and structure.

Setting Limits as Caring

It is a truism among social work professionals, not to mention adults more generally, that children and adolescents not only need to have limits set on their behaviour but also experience such limits as evidence that they are cared for. And

it would seem that this view is even more self-evident with regard to young people who have lived troubled or disorderly lives; thus, rules and structure are often emphasized in residential settings for delinquents not merely on the grounds of convenience and order, but on the grounds that these adolescents in particular need structure and the care it is claimed to embody.

In many respects, the practices and orientations of staff at Toronto's Covenant House expressed this point of view. Certainly in its mission to rescue kids from the dangers of street life, and in its emphasis on the "principles" of "immediacy" and "sanctuary", Covenant House claimed to care for street kids. And in imposing more rigorous rules on its residents than other shelters did, Covenant House justified its "structure" not only as something that street kids needed as a necessary corrective to the disorder of street life, but also as something that street kids wanted as an expression that someone cares. Thus, one upper level worker at Covenant House observed:

I'd say that most kids come here because they want someone to be on their tail, they want some structure, a basic routine, kids want that, it allows them to see that this place is concerned about their well being, you know.

The same view is voiced by a Covenant House supervisor:

We really give the kids structure, cause we say it makes them feel safe. You know, when they live on the street, they have no structure .. by giving them structure, we're also saying we care for you, we care about you.

While staff thus imputed a "structure as caring" perspective to residents, they themselves seemed to place as much if not more

emphasis on structure (particularly the rules enforcing a resident's "plan") as a device for launching residents as swiftly as possible out of the agency and into adult independence; hence, the emphasis on making immediate and all-out efforts to find a job, attend school, find a stable place to live, and - once launched - making limited use of the supports for ex-residents at Bond Street.¹ From a staff perspective, then, "caring" for street kids involved imposing rules that would force them to "straighten out", "stay out of trouble", and "become independent" (somewhat paradoxically, since the rules led so many residents to complain about getting treated like "dependent" children). As one Covenant House supervisor put it,

I think we're teaching the kids to live in this world, you need a job, you need to have an income and a place to live..we try to teach them to live in a stable manner in the community, and that's where the structure comes in.

Getting Cared For

For the street kid residents at Covenant House, the experience of feeling cared for had a far greater salience than staff seem to recognize, but this feeling had very little to do with rules or structure as such. Instead, from the point of view of residents, feeling cared for had a great deal to do with the Covenant House environment ("clean", "safe" and "home-like") and their experiences with front line staff ("warm" and "understanding") who talked with them and listened to them. In this sense, Covenant House served as a stand-in home (caring properly for their physical needs) and a stand-in family

(providing adult interest and support for their emotional needs) to a much greater extent than staff even realize. It was this, and not the structure, that residents experienced as caring. Residents experienced the staff as caring - in spite of the structure - when staff members talked with them, inquired about their daily activities (even if only to enforce the plan) and listened to individual problems:

I know that Cov is very structured, they're very different from the other shelters, but staff at Cov care about you, they talk to you, they feed you, you got your own room and it's clean, you know (Craig, 20).

You see, it's basically all the other places [shelters] are where kids crash when it's raining, like Touchstone and T.P, and, um, YWS .. they're not as strict as Cov, but also none of these places talk to you or care about you (Paul, 19).

And, when staff members enforced the rules or plans too rigidly and especially when they kicked kids out, residents felt all the more betrayed, angry and frustrated by what they experienced as an "uncaring" response from adults they had come to trust.

Whether residents walked out or got kicked out, they were essentially driven out by what they experienced as a rigid and uncaring rule structure. And their perspective towards the "structure" at Covenant House was shared by some staff, notably front line workers. As one worker commented:

I was working with this kid, and he was really quiet one day and I said 'what's up', and he said 'today's my goal date and I'll find out if I can stay or not' .. and I'm thinking, like what the fuck, this poor kid is sitting down here sweating his ass off thinking 'am I gonna have a place to stay'..you know it's ludicrous...we're pushing these kids out, I mean, who of us [workers] could deal with this setup?

Indeed, very few residents can actually "deal with this setup". Drawn to Covenant House by its open intake policy, appealing facilities and caring staff, street kids are rather swiftly turned off by its rigid and uncaring structure. But the current alternatives in Toronto's "shelter world" are limited to a handful of shelters with limited intake and what are generally described as "ratty" environments. By default, Covenant House has thus become the preferred choice for street kids who find themselves in a cycle of entering, leaving and returning to Covenant House.

Structure Reconsidered

A large majority of residents at Toronto's Covenant House, as well as a number of workers, identified excessive "structure" as the primary reason why residents leave so quickly. How did the agency come to be so highly structured? There are two answers. First, Toronto's Covenant House is attached (through funding and program development) to the founding organization in New York City; it has thus been modeled on the strict regimes devised there for dealing with the perceived "violence" and "toughness" of their "hard core", "street" clientele. Second, up to 1989, Toronto's Covenant House had large numbers of clients. With over 80 residents a night, when every Covenant House building was "crammed wall to wall" with residents and many more were waiting for a "space to open up", a structured environment was perceived as essential to "control the large number of

residents", "clean out" individuals who "were not ready to commit" and provide shelter for those who were still waiting. According to several workers, it was common in the early 1980's to see groups of street kids hanging out beside the doors of the Intake building, awaiting the "discharge" of any resident so they could get into residence. This reason for a highly structured environment no longer exists; indeed, the agency is now suffering from the loss of clients at a time when its facilities are to expand.

Implications for Service

The findings from this study have several implications for how Toronto's Covenant House, and other shelters working with street kids, might attract, retain and help their voluntary street kid clients.

First, a more flexible and less rule-oriented environment is recommended: less strict adherence to rules such as curfew, dress code, physical contact, going up to one's room at a certain time, etc., so that residents are more comfortable and less pressured. This is not to suggest that there should not be any House rules, simply more leeway and flexibility in enforcing them; a resident returning to the shelter five minutes past curfew should not be automatically discharged. Instead, staff should understand why the individual was late and how this action can be remedied in the future. As one youth worker notes,

We should be handing out chocolate bars when these kids come back for curfew, you know, 'hey thanks a lot for coming back, you probably had a lot of opportunities to leave'...instead we discharge them for being five minutes late...I'm not sure that makes too much sense.

Secondly, there should be less pressure put on a resident's "plan". To begin with, a rest period of perhaps one week should be given to the new resident before any type of assessment commences. During this time, the individual can above all relax in a safe and clean environment, then decide upon a "plan" for the future. And once a plan has been made, residents should not be monitored as closely as they presently are. If one goal of the shelter is to foster independence, then over-monitoring job searches or school attendances is counterproductive. In general, more leeway and understanding should be provided to residents in their day-to-day workings around a plan. For example, staff need to be aware of the hard work, frustration and monotony that goes along with searching for a job, as well as living in a shelter.

Third, an important aspect of residents' positive shelter experiences was found to be the quality of Covenant House's physical environment. It is essential that other shelters realize the importance street kids put upon a clean, safe and home-like setting. As seen in this study, Covenant House's physical environment (in contrast to other shelters) was a large factor in the residents' feelings of "being cared for".

Fourth, many residents spoke of "not being trusted" or "not being respected" by staff at certain points during their stay at Covenant House. Anyone working in a shelter needs to convey a

sense of trust and respect to those they work with - and this means listening, understanding and believing what is told to them. During my own past work at Covenant House as a front line worker, I was frequently told by other staff, "Don't believe everything a kid tells you," or "Kids make up a lot of lies to get out of doing things". Beliefs like these only create more obstacles for a resident to overcome.

In general, staff need to realize that living in a shelter can be extremely restricting, frustrating, and impersonal at times. By providing residents with an environment that is flexible - with leeway around rules and structure - as well as caring, understanding staff can reduce many of the difficulties inherent in "shelter life". As one resident puts it,

Shelters got to learn to respect kids who have lived on the street .. listen to them, stop throwing rules at us all the time, pushing so much, give some slack .. if more shelters ran this way, there would be less kids on the street .. because all of a sudden people would be "Oh, 'respect', what a new concept". (Jack, 20).

Future Research

Further investigations of street kids and "shelter life" might usefully focus on the movements of street kids from one shelter to another so as to clarify their "patterns" and reasons for entering and exiting shelters. Comparisons of this case study with other Covenant House sites in the United States or South America might clarify variations in shelter programming and the kinds of street kid clients attracted. And the experiences of "successful" residents who left Covenant House with "planned

discharges", an area left unexplored in this study, might also be pursued in the context of finding out what becomes of street kids as they become young adults. Finally, within the specific "shelter world" provided in any large city - here Toronto - the issue of "competition" among youth shelters for clients raises a number of interesting questions about how shelters try to "attract" and keep clients. The findings of this case study suggest that street kids want to feel cared for and that they feel that way when their surroundings are clean and safe, when they are well fed, and when they have adults around who will listen to them and expect something from them without threatening to throw them back on the street for relatively insignificant rule violations.

NOTES: CONCLUSION

1. Street kids (up to 24 years of age) are allowed to visit Bond Street once a week to obtain food, a shower, or counselling. However, street kids who desire more "out care" can set up a "plan" with Bond Street workers, and are then allowed to visit each day (for follow up on plan).

APPENDIX A
THE QUESTIONNAIRES

Questionnaire used in interviewing residents.

Covenant House prepared the first twenty questions, the last two were added by the researcher.

1. Why did you come to Covenant House?
2. How did you hear about Covenant House?
3. What was your first impression of Covenant House?
4. Did you feel welcomed at Covenant House when you come for shelter?
5. Do you think Covenant House is a safe place to stay?
- 6a. What did you want to do when you came to Covenant House?
- 6b. Did you succeed in doing it?
- 6c. How did Covenant House help you?
- 7a. Does Covenant House services provide the assistance that you need? education/health care/planning for independence/vocational/pastoral ministry/social work
- 7b. If no, what kind of services do you need?
- 8a. You shared a lot of information with workers at Covenant House. Did you feel comfortable doing so?
- 8b. How do you feel workers used this information?
9. Were staff available to discuss your concerns?
10. Did you have to give up some activity you enjoyed in order to stay?
11. How do you feel about the sleeping arrangements?
- 12a. Did anything make it difficult for you to stay at Covenant House?
- 12b. What made it pleasant for you to stay at Covenant House?
13. What were your reasons for leaving Covenant House?
14. What would have made it easier for you to stay?

15.What made it hard to leave Covenant House?

16.If you were given the opportunity to teach Covenant House something, what would it be?

17.What do you tell your friends about Covenant House?

18.If you were to run Covenant House, how would you make it different?

19.Have you stayed at other shelters?

20.Have you noticed any differences between them and Covenant House?

21a.Covenant House allows you to come and go at will from shelter.How do you feel when it's your choice?

21b.How do you feel when you are discharged?

Interview Guide used with staff

1.What type of kids come here for shelter?

2.Why do you think they come?

3.Why do you think they leave?

4.What are the advantages/disadvantages of working with this age group?

5.What are the advantages/disadvantages of working with voluntary clients?

6.Where does Covenant House lie in the network of social services?

7.Where does the philosophy of Covenant House originate?

8.Where do the House rules originate?

9.Describe your day to day work here?

10.Can you explain to me the policies of intake and discharge?

11.How do you feel when a resident is discharged planned/unplanned?

APPENDIX B
THE DAILY SCHEDULE

7am- wake up (residents can take showers; rooms have to be clean- bed made, clothes in closet, desk tidy; room is checked by staff member; then locked by staff; residents not allowed back upstairs until after lunch; residents must be off floor by 8am.)

8am- breakfast is finished, usually consists of toast, cold cereals, juice, bacon and eggs on weekends

9am- resident needs to be following plan, have met with worker and most likely have left shelter to start daily activity (job searching, school, job training course, etc.)

12pm- lunch is served, usually consists of hot soup, salad, sandwiches and hot meal, as well as dessert. If resident is at school, or job searching a far distance away from shelter, then a bag lunch can be made in the morning. In this case, the resident is not supposed to come back for lunch (since he or she has received tokens for transportation), this sometimes results in a warning or discharge.

1pm- residents are allowed to go upstairs with a staff member to rooms to get anything they need (allowed upstairs for approx. 15 minutes).

1:15pm-4pm - resident once again is required to follow through with his or her plan (which most likely means they are outside of shelter- staff keep watch of residents and any resident 'hanging out' inside are quickly questioned as to why they are not following plan)

4pm- resident is allowed to come into shelter, relax, watch TV (TV is turned on at 4pm)

4pm-5pm- residents are allowed to go downstairs with a staff member and look for any clothing in the clothing room. As well, bathroom supplies (toothpaste, comb, underwear, etc.) are offered to anyone who desires.

5pm- 5:30pm -dinner is served, usually consisting of salad, soup, bread, home cooked meal (hot), and dessert . Residents who know they will be late for dinner, can sign a "late dinner list" and have supper saved.

6pm- residents are allowed to go upstairs to rooms again with a staff member (approx. 15 min)

6pm-9:30pm- residents are allowed to relax, watch TV, or go out. However, they need to make a "contact" with their worker to discuss daily activity.

9:15- snack is served, usually consisting of cookies or cake.

9:30- curfew, all residents need to be inside shelter, being late results in discharge. For specific circumstances, a resident may be allowed a "late pass" by worker (for ex. if he or she is working late)

9:45- night meeting, involves all residents in living room listening to a worker's short presentation (themes are oriented along spiritual or moral issues, such as, ways to deal with living in a shelter, being honest, working hard, getting off the street, etc.)

10pm- all residents must go upstairs and get ready for bed (11pm on weekends). They are permitted to take showers or simply clean up.

10:30pm- residents must be in his or her own room with the door closed (not allowed to be locked). He or she can read or do homework.

11pm- lights must be out (overnight staff remain upstairs on both the boys and girls floor until morning).

APPENDIX C

The following is the list of questions used by a worker in order to intake each new resident entering Covenant House:

DATE

NAME

STREET NAME

TIME

SEX

AGE

DATE OF BIRTH

LANGUAGE SPOKEN

NEW INTAKE

REPEAT INTAKE

APPROX. DATE OF LAST ADMISSION

DOES YOUTH HAVE CARD (HAD IT BEEN CANCELLED)

LAST PERMANENT ADDRESS

RESIDENT WITH CHILDREN

TYPE OF LIVING SIT. OF LAST ADDRESS

REASON YOUTH NEEDS SHELTER

RELATED PROBLEM AREAS (problems youth expresses such as health, education, legal, etc)

SOURCE OF REFERRAL

IS YOUTH ON MEDICATION

IS YOUTH ASSOCIATED WITH CHILD WELFARE AGENCY

FAMILY CONTACT MADE (IF YOUTH DESIRES)

SAFETY CALL MADE (if resident desires to call friend, teacher, etc to say that he or she is "safe")

RELIGION

ETHNICITY

PENDING APPOINTMENTS

SERVICES MOST URGENTLY NEEDED

ABUSE REPORT NEEDED

OUTSTANDING WARRANTS (if so, resident is required to "deal with" warrant and Covenant House will aid with any problems)

ALL CLOTHING AND BELONGINGS YOUTH HAS UPON ARRIVAL

ANY WEAPONS OR ILLEGAL DRUGS YOUTH HAS ON HIM OR HER

The intake worker fills out the following questions after the meeting:

- 1.distinguishing marks of youth (to identify him or her in the future)
- 2.color of hair
- 3.color of eyes
- 4.Physical assessment (estimate height and weight)
- 5.physical impairments
- 6.behavioural assessment (worker's judgement of youth's behaviour during Intake)
- 7.Any comments worker has about youth

APPENDIX D

COVENANT HOUSE TORONTO

70 GERRARD ST. EAST • TORONTO, ONTARIO, CANADA M5B 1G6 • (416) 593-4849

ORIENTATION OF NEW RESIDENT

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Establishment of the Covenant | <input type="checkbox"/> Meal Times |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Weapons Policy | <input type="checkbox"/> Shower Times |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Drug/Alcohol Policy | <input type="checkbox"/> Locker Access |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Curfew | <input type="checkbox"/> Laundry Routines |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Designated Smoking Area | <input type="checkbox"/> Inventory Routines |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fire Evacuation Procedures | <input type="checkbox"/> Room Expectations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Personal Supply/Orientation Kit | <input type="checkbox"/> Linen Procedure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Clothing (provided/needed) | |

FORMS

- ☐ Personal Property Responsibility
- ☐ Welfare
- ☐ Release of Information

PROGRAM

- ☐ Prior CSP Involvement (if yes, phone to explore details)
- ☐ Services Available
- ☐ Consistent Worker
- ☐ Initial Assessment
- ☐ Room Assigned #
- ☐ Meetings
- ☐ Schedule of Day Programmes and Events
- ☐ Orientation of Bond Street (physical)

 Signature of Resident

 Signature of Staff

COVENANT HOUSE

ASSESSMENT REPORT

LAST NAME		FIRST	MIDDLE
DATE OF BIRTH MM / DD / YY	AGE	SEX: <input type="checkbox"/> MALE <input type="checkbox"/> FEMALE	
BIRTH PLACE CITY	STATE/PROVINCE	ZIP/POSTAL CODE	

1. DATE MM / DD / YY			
RESIDENT ID NUMBER			
<input type="checkbox"/> INITIAL ASSESSMENT		<input type="checkbox"/> REPEAT ASSESSMENT	

2. YOUTH'S ID (COMPLETE AFTER ID OBTAINED AND VERIFIED)			
<input type="checkbox"/> UNAVAILABLE			
SOCIAL SECURITY CARD	///	MEDICAL INSURANCE CARD	///
BIRTH CERTIFICATE	///	WORKING PAPERS	///
IMMIGRATION CARD	///	SCHOOL I.D.	///
OTHER, SPECIFY			

2. SAFETY CALL			
SAFETY CALL MADE		<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	
DATE: MM / DD / YY	TIME: <input type="checkbox"/> AM <input type="checkbox"/> PM		
NAME OF PERSON CONTACTED		TELEPHONE ()	
RELATIONSHIP		NAME OF STAFF WITNESS	

2. ALLEGES ABUSE		<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	
RELATIONSHIP OF PERSON ALLEGEDLY ABUSING YOUTH			
CENTRAL REGISTRY NOTIFIED? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	DATE / /		
NOTIFIED BY:	C.R. #		

3. FAMILY CONTACT		<input type="checkbox"/> UNAVAILABLE	
PERMISSION GIVEN:	DATE: MM / DD / YY		
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO			
NAME OF STAFF MEMBER WHO OBTAINED CONSENT			
FAMILY CONTACT WAS BY			
<input type="checkbox"/> TELEPHONE <input type="checkbox"/> LETTER <input type="checkbox"/> MAILGRAM <input type="checkbox"/> POLICE <input type="checkbox"/> NEIGHBOR			
DATE: MM / DD / YY	TIME: <input type="checkbox"/> AM <input type="checkbox"/> PM		
NAME OF PERSON CONTACTED		TELEPHONE ()	
RELATIONSHIP		NAME OF STAFF WITNESS	
DOCUMENTATION OF PARENTAL PERMISSION ON FILE		DATE: MM / DD / YY	

3. RUNAWAY / HOMELESS	
<input type="checkbox"/> NO HISTORY OF RUNAWAY / HOMELESS	
<input type="checkbox"/> RUNAWAY	<input type="checkbox"/> HOMELESS
NUMBER OF DAYS AWAY FROM HOME	
NUMBER OF PREVIOUS TIMES AWAY OVERNIGHT	
AGE AT TIME OF FIRST RUN	

4. BIOLOGICAL MOTHER		<input type="checkbox"/> UNAVAILABLE	
MOTHER IS: <input type="checkbox"/> LIVING <input type="checkbox"/> DECEASED			
<input type="checkbox"/> WHEREABOUTS UNKNOWN <input type="checkbox"/> NEVER KNOWN			
MOTHER'S LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	MAIDEN NAME	
STREET ADDRESS			
CITY	STATE/PROVINCE	ZIP/POSTAL CODE	
TELEPHONE ()	<input type="checkbox"/> HOME <input type="checkbox"/> BUSINESS <input type="checkbox"/> NONE	OCCUPATION	
RELIGION: <input type="checkbox"/> CATHOLIC <input type="checkbox"/> PROTESTANT <input type="checkbox"/> ISLAMIC <input type="checkbox"/> JEWISH			
<input type="checkbox"/> UNKNOWN <input type="checkbox"/> NONE <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER, SPECIFY			
DATE LAST CONTACT		MM / DD / YY	

5. SURROGATE MOTHER		<input type="checkbox"/> UNAVAILABLE	
SURROGATE MOTHER <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO			
LAST NAME		FIRST	
STREET ADDRESS			
CITY	STATE/PROVINCE	ZIP/POSTAL CODE	
TELEPHONE ()	<input type="checkbox"/> HOME <input type="checkbox"/> BUSINESS <input type="checkbox"/> NONE	OCCUPATION	
TYPE <input type="checkbox"/> LEGAL GUARDIAN <input type="checkbox"/> ADOPTIVE MOTHER <input type="checkbox"/> STEPMOTHER			
<input type="checkbox"/> FOSTER MOTHER <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER, SPECIFY			
DATE LAST CONTACT WITH SURROGATE MOTHER		MM / DD / YY	

6. BIOLOGICAL FATHER		<input type="checkbox"/> UNAVAILABLE	
FATHER IS: <input type="checkbox"/> LIVING <input type="checkbox"/> DECEASED			
<input type="checkbox"/> WHEREABOUTS UNKNOWN <input type="checkbox"/> NEVER KNOWN			
FATHER'S LAST NAME	FIRST NAME		
STREET ADDRESS			
CITY	STATE/PROVINCE	ZIP/POSTAL CODE	
TELEPHONE ()	<input type="checkbox"/> HOME <input type="checkbox"/> BUSINESS <input type="checkbox"/> NONE	OCCUPATION	
RELIGION: <input type="checkbox"/> CATHOLIC <input type="checkbox"/> PROTESTANT <input type="checkbox"/> ISLAMIC <input type="checkbox"/> JEWISH			
<input type="checkbox"/> UNKNOWN <input type="checkbox"/> NONE <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER, SPECIFY			
DATE LAST CONTACT		MM / DD / YY	

7. SURROGATE FATHER		<input type="checkbox"/> UNAVAILABLE	
SURROGATE FATHER <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO			
LAST NAME		FIRST	
STREET ADDRESS			
CITY	STATE/PROVINCE	ZIP/POSTAL CODE	
TELEPHONE ()	<input type="checkbox"/> HOME <input type="checkbox"/> BUSINESS <input type="checkbox"/> NONE	OCCUPATION	
TYPE <input type="checkbox"/> LEGAL GUARDIAN <input type="checkbox"/> ADOPTIVE FATHER <input type="checkbox"/> STEPFATHER			
<input type="checkbox"/> FOSTER FATHER <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER, SPECIFY			
DATE LAST CONTACT WITH SURROGATE FATHER		MM / DD / YY	

NAME: _____

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8. BIOLOGICAL PARENTS'

MARITAL STATUS

- ☐ 1 AVAILABLE
- ☐ 2 MARRIED TO EACH OTHER
- ☐ 3 MARRIED AND SEPARATED
- ☐ 4 UNMARRIED, LIVING TOGETHER
- ☐ 5 DIVORCED
- ☐ 6 WIDOWED
- ☐ 7 UNMARRIED, LIVING APART
- IF LIVING APART:
- ☐ A FATHER SINGLE
- ☐ B MOTHER SINGLE
- ☐ C FATHER LIVING WITH COMPANION
- ☐ D MOTHER LIVING WITH COMPANION
- ☐ E OTHER, SPECIFY _____

9. SIBLINGS

☐ YES ☐ NO ☐ UNAVAILABLE TOTAL NUMBER _____

NAME	AGE	SEX	LIVING WITH WHOM
1	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 YRS <input type="checkbox"/> 2 MOS	<input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> F	
2	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 YRS <input type="checkbox"/> 2 MOS	<input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> F	
3	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 YRS <input type="checkbox"/> 2 MOS	<input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> F	
4	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 YRS <input type="checkbox"/> 2 MOS	<input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> F	
5	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 YRS <input type="checkbox"/> 2 MOS	<input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> F	
6	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 YRS <input type="checkbox"/> 2 MOS	<input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> F	
7	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 YRS <input type="checkbox"/> 2 MOS	<input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> F	
8	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 YRS <input type="checkbox"/> 2 MOS	<input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> F	

10. YOUTH'S MARITAL STATUS

- ☐ 1 NOT AVAILABLE
- ☐ 2 MARRIED
- ☐ 3 MARRIED AND SEPARATED
- ☐ 4 DIVORCED
- ☐ 5 SINGLE, NEVER MARRIED

11. YOUTH'S CHILDREN

TOTAL NUMBER: _____

YOUTH'S CHILDREN ☐ 1 YES ☐ 2 NO ☐ 3 UNAVAILABLE

NAME	AGE	SEX	LIVING WITH	IF NOT AT U/21 NAME AND TELEPHONE OF PERSON LIVING WITH	OTHER PARENT INVOLVED	PERMISSION TO CONTACT	NAME AND TELEPHONE NUMBER
	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 YRS <input type="checkbox"/> 2 MO	<input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> F	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 MOTHER <input type="checkbox"/> 2 FATHER <input type="checkbox"/> 3 MATERNAL <input type="checkbox"/> 4 PATERNAL <input type="checkbox"/> 5 SURROGATE <input type="checkbox"/> 6 OTHER		<input type="checkbox"/> 1 YES <input type="checkbox"/> 2 NO	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 YES <input type="checkbox"/> 2 NO	
	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 YRS <input type="checkbox"/> 2 MO	<input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> F	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 MOTHER <input type="checkbox"/> 2 FATHER <input type="checkbox"/> 3 MATERNAL <input type="checkbox"/> 4 PATERNAL <input type="checkbox"/> 5 SURROGATE <input type="checkbox"/> 6 OTHER		<input type="checkbox"/> 1 YES <input type="checkbox"/> 2 NO	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 YES <input type="checkbox"/> 2 NO	
	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 YRS <input type="checkbox"/> 2 MO	<input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> F	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 MOTHER <input type="checkbox"/> 2 FATHER <input type="checkbox"/> 3 MATERNAL <input type="checkbox"/> 4 PATERNAL <input type="checkbox"/> 5 SURROGATE <input type="checkbox"/> 6 OTHER		<input type="checkbox"/> 1 YES <input type="checkbox"/> 2 NO	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 YES <input type="checkbox"/> 2 NO	
	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 YRS <input type="checkbox"/> 2 MO	<input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> F	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 MOTHER <input type="checkbox"/> 2 FATHER <input type="checkbox"/> 3 MATERNAL <input type="checkbox"/> 4 PATERNAL <input type="checkbox"/> 5 SURROGATE <input type="checkbox"/> 6 OTHER		<input type="checkbox"/> 1 YES <input type="checkbox"/> 2 NO	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 YES <input type="checkbox"/> 2 NO	

12. CHILD WELFARE AGENCY

☐ UNAVAILABLE

CHILD WELFARE AGENCY CHECKED ☐ 1 YES ☐ 2 NO DATE / /

☐ 1 NEVER A CASE? CASE DATE OPENED / / CASE DATE CLOSED / /

CASE NAME _____ CASE ID NO _____

WORKER NAME _____ UNIT NO _____ TEL () _____

REASON FOR CHILD WELFARE INVOLVEMENT

☐ 1 VOLUNTARY ☐ 2 ABUSE PETITION ☐ 3 NEGLECT PETITION

☐ 4 STATUS OFFENSE ☐ 5 ADJUDICATED JUVENILE DELINQUENT

IF PLACED IN CHILD CARE AGENCY, TELEPHONE _____

NAME: () _____

PERMISSION TO CONTACT ☐ 1 YES ☐ 2 NO STAFF OBTAINING PERMISSION

13. HEALTH / MEDICAL

☐ UNAVAILABLE

IS YOUTH PREGNANT? ☐ 1 YES ☐ 2 NO ☐ 3 UNCONFIRMED

LAST VISIT TO HOSPITAL OR EMERGENCY ROOM: DATE / / REASON: _____

IS YOUTH OR FAMILY RECEIVING MEDICAID: ☐ 1 YES ☐ 2 NO

IF YES, CASE NAME _____ CASE NO _____

CENTER NAME _____

ADDRESS _____ TELEPHONE () _____

WORKER'S NAME _____

14. ADDITIONAL INDIVIDUALS/AGENCIES INVOLVED IN PLANNING

☐ YES ☐ NO

NAME OF AGENCY/INDIVIDUAL	NAME OF AGENCY/INDIVIDUAL
STREET ADDRESS _____	STREET ADDRESS _____
CITY _____	CITY _____
STATE/PROVINCE _____ ZIP/POSTAL CODE _____	STATE/PROVINCE _____ ZIP/POSTAL CODE _____
RELATIONSHIP TO YOUTH _____	RELATIONSHIP TO YOUTH _____
TELEPHONE () _____	TELEPHONE () _____

15. PUBLIC ASSISTANCE

☐ UNAVAILABLE

IS YOUTH OR FAMILY RECEIVING PUBLIC ASSISTANCE ☐ YES ☐ NO

IF YES, CASE NAME _____ CASE NUMBER _____

CENTER NAME _____

ADDRESS _____ TELEPHONE () _____

WORKER'S NAME _____

APPLIED AND DENIED ☐ 1 YES ☐ 2 NO DATE / /



COVENANT HOUSE

ASSESSMENT REPORT

ID#	NAME
-----	------

16. EDUCATION		<input type="checkbox"/> UNAVAILABLE
CIRCLE LAST GRADE COMPLETED IN SCHOOL:		OFFICIAL CLASS
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12		
CIRCLE LAST GRADE COMPLETED IN COLLEGE:		
1 2 3 4		
NAME OF LAST / CURRENT SCHOOL		
STREET ADDRESS		
CITY	STATE/PROVINCE	ZIP/POSTAL CODE
STATUS		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1 HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE	<input type="checkbox"/> 5 ATTENDING	
<input type="checkbox"/> 2 EQUIVALENCY DIPLOMA	<input type="checkbox"/> 6 ATTENDING BUT TRUANT	
<input type="checkbox"/> 3 DROPPED OUT	<input type="checkbox"/> 7 ATTENDING SPECIAL ED.	
<input type="checkbox"/> 4 EXPELLED	<input type="checkbox"/> 8 OTHERS, SPECIFY:	

17. EMPLOYMENT		<input type="checkbox"/> UNAVAILABLE
CURRENT WORK STATUS:	IF EMPLOYED, NAME OF EMPLOYER:	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1 UNEMPLOYED		
<input type="checkbox"/> 2 TEMPORARY JOB	STREET ADDRESS:	
<input type="checkbox"/> 3 PERMANENT JOB	CITY STATE/PROVINCE ZIP/POSTAL C	
<input type="checkbox"/> 4 PART-TIME JOB	TELEPHONE:	START DATE: VERIFIED
<input type="checkbox"/> 5 FULL-TIME JOB	()	/ / <input type="checkbox"/> 1 YES <input type="checkbox"/> 2 NO
<input type="checkbox"/> 6 NEVER EMPLOYED		
SALARY:	PER:	DATE PAYCHECK:
IF UNEMPLOYED, CURRENT MEANS OF SUPPORT: <input type="checkbox"/> 1 FAMILY		
<input type="checkbox"/> 2 PUBLIC ASSISTANCE <input type="checkbox"/> 3 NONE <input type="checkbox"/> 4 OTHER, SPECIFY:		
HAS YOUTH PARTICIPATED IN JOB TRAINING PROGRAM? <input type="checkbox"/> 1 YES <input type="checkbox"/> 2 NO		
NAME OF PROGRAM:		

19. CURRENT LEGAL SITUATION		<input type="checkbox"/> UNAVAILABLE
IS YOUTH CURRENTLY ON PROBATION?	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 YES	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 NO
IS YOUTH CURRENTLY ON BAIL?	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 YES	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 NO
DOES YOUTH HAVE AN OUTSTANDING WARRANT?	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 YES	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 NO
IS YOUTH CURRENTLY ON PAROLE?	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 YES	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 NO
COURT APPOINTMENTS PENDING?	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 YES	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 NO
LOCATION:	DATE / /	
DOES YOUTH HAVE OUTSTANDING COURT CASE IN:		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1 HOUSING	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 CRIMINAL	
<input type="checkbox"/> 3 CIVIL	<input type="checkbox"/> 4 FAMILY	
<input type="checkbox"/> 5 OTHER, SPECIFY:		

20. PRESENTING PROBLEMS			
PROBLEM TITLE NO.	PROBLEM TITLE	PROBLEM TITLE NO.	PROBLEM TITLE
1. <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>		5. <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	
2. <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>		6. <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	
3. <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>		7. <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	
4. <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>		8. <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	

21. STATED OVERALL GOALS		21. WORKER NAME
<input type="checkbox"/> 1 RETURN TO FACILITY	<input type="checkbox"/> 4 INDEPENDENT LIVING	
<input type="checkbox"/> 2 CHILD WELFARE PLACEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> 5 GROUP RESIDENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 7 OTHER, SPECIFY:		

NAME _____

ASSESSMENT REPORT

22.

COMMENTS

Appendix F

(from a brochure given out to High Schools
in Toronto as part of Covenant House's program -
RUNAWAY PREVENTION)

**DAVE HAS TROUBLE WRITTEN
ALL OVER HIM**



**JANE IS LOOKING FOR LOVE
IN ALL THE WRONG PLACES**



**SALLY USED TO BE
AFRAID OF NEEDLES**



**BOB USED TO THINK OF HOME
AS A PRISON**



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