



# Social Return on Investment (SROI)

## Louise Dean Centre—Housing Coordinator

### Supporting Pregnant and Parenting Adolescents

#### 2010-2011

### FAST FACTS

#### Catholic Family Service (CFS)

CFS provides a continuum of innovative and accessible services through a combination of counselling, community initiatives, school-based support programs, leadership development, and health promotion. Services are offered to the most vulnerable people in Calgary and are not based on ability to pay.

#### Louise Dean Centre (LDC)

LDC is a partnership program with CFS, the Calgary Board of Education and Alberta Health Services providing education, health and family/social services to pregnant and parenting youth.

#### LDC Housing Coordinator

In 2010 a Housing Coordinator was put in place at LDC in order to support young women to access and maintain appropriate affordable housing for themselves and their children.

#### By the numbers (2009/2010)

- 72% of LDC participants reported annual income below \$15,000
- AT Louise Dean Centre, CFS provided service to 649 young women and their children in 2009/2010
- The Housing Coordinator supported 50 mothers and 58 children to access and maintain housing

#### Social Return on Investment

The Social Return on Investment for every dollar invested in the Housing Coordinator project at LDC is: **\$8.15**

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### Background on the LDC

#### Background

When young women in high school become pregnant, it becomes difficult for them to manage their school obligations while also attending to their own health, the health of their baby and the multitude of social and personal stressors in their lives. At Louise Dean Centre pregnant and parenting adolescents access a range of supportive programming that includes high school completion, counselling, parenting education, on-site child care, medical care, and career development. Service is also provided on an outreach basis to young mothers up to age 25 who are living in the community. Louise Dean Centre enables young mothers to begin their lives with a higher degree of self-confidence, skills, stability and hopefulness in their own and their family's future.

#### Housing Coordinator

When young mothers arrive at the Centre, often there are a multitude of intersecting risk factors present in their lives, including risk factors related specifically to housing. Research shows that the provision of stable and secure housing is vital to all aspects of child health and development. The quality, cost, tenure and stability of housing, along with the neighborhoods and communities in which children live, all play a role in achievement of desired outcomes in areas of health, safety, education and so-

cial engagement. The Housing Coordinator helps the young women address their housing needs which in turn reduces overall risk while increasing resiliency and stability. The Coordinator does this by helping ensure a stable source of income for young mothers, teaching housing-related life-skills, assisting with locating appropriate housing, making lease arrangements,

#### Theory of Change

If pregnant teens and teen mothers served through Louise Dean Centre who are at high risk for experiencing housing instability have access to Housing Coordinator services to stabilize their home environment, then they are more likely to experience a decrease in mental/physical stress and an increase in their success as regards to school, employment, life, and parenting skills.

accessing furniture and moving it, and assisting with subsidized housing applications (e.g. Calgary Housing). The Housing Coordinator continues to work on an outreach basis to increase skills in budgeting, managing expenses, child proofing and managing basic housekeeping that creates a safe pleasant environment for mother and child, and meets landlord expectations. By helping young mothers maintain housing stability, the Coordinator helps ensure a strong foundation from which the young mother can address other areas such as parenting, health and education.

#### Social Value Created

The Housing Coordinator at the Louise Dean Centre effectively creates social value by decreasing risk factors associated with housing instability. Most obviously, housing support from the

### Funding provided by:



Health Canada Santé Canada



Human Resources and Social Development Canada

Ressources humaines et Développement social Canada



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## Louise Dean Centre (LDC) Housing Coordinator Position

Coordinator reduces the incidence of homelessness for the young mothers and their children, thereby reducing risk associated with homelessness (e.g. medical costs, police costs etc). In less-extreme circumstances when young women would not necessarily become homeless in the absolute sense, they nevertheless avoid inappropriate housing, for example with an abusive partner/family, with drug-involved people, or with dangerous conditions. By maintaining housing stability, young mothers are better able to finish high school, earn higher wages, provide for their children, avoid social assistance, meet basic needs, and continue on a learning path. The overall reduction in stress for young mothers and their children is significant, and results in fewer mental health problems and more productive activity. The secondary effects of stable housing on the children of young mothers leads to better overall early childhood development, improved health, fewer behaviour problems, better overall achievement in school and general reduction in risk factors.

### Case Examples from Working with the Housing Coordinator

#### Case 1: Avoiding Drugs and Violence

Jane was referred to the Housing Coordinator by her social worker when her living situation with her baby's father was beginning to break down. Jane came from a very turbulent family and spent most of her life without stability, moving in and out of foster care.

Jane eventually decided to leave the deteriorating living situation with her baby's father, and ended up moving back with her grandmother. This, however, was not a good long-term option for the young mother. While Jane's grandmother is a significant source of support for her, the increased connection to and involvement of Jane's mother while living with her grandmother posed significant risks for both Jane and her child. Jane's mother had a serious addiction to crack, and was not safe to be around when she was under the influence as she could become violent. Further, Jane had previously had some issues with drugs, and being around her addicted mother could trigger her own addiction. The whole situation was not suitable or stable for herself or her baby.

Jane was having difficulties extracting herself from this pressing situation as her sole income was Alberta Works income assistance, which did not provide enough money to afford both a damage deposit and first month's rent. After being connected with the Housing Coordinator, Stephanie was assisted with money for a damage deposit so that she was able to successfully move to an appropriate place to live with her son.

Jane is still housed today and is enjoying life with her son, drug and crisis free. Through the assistance Jane received to acquire and maintain appropriate and affordable housing she was able to avoid a deteriorating situation with her former partner, establish a safe, non-violent home for her child and resist the temptations of drugs. She has made incredible advances in her whole life situation.

#### Case 2: Transitioning from Louise Dean

Amanda and her daughter first contacted the Housing Coordinator in December 2010 when she was desperate to leave her group home living situation in pursuit of more independent living arrangements. The Housing Coordinator (and her social worker) convinced her to wait until she was 18 to make the move. Once she turned 18 in January, Amanda found a new place to live and was assisted by the Red Cross with her damage deposit.

Amanda quickly realized, however, that her new place was not what she had thought it would be. She began to notice some potential safety concerns and discovered that her landlord was a very unreasonable person. Amanda wanted to move, so the Housing Coordinator suggested that she might apply to Calgary Housing.

The Coordinator then went on to help Amanda with her application to Calgary Housing, bringing the application in and writing a letter of support describing Amanda's situation and needs. A week later, Amanda was called by Calgary Housing and offered a new apartment to live in. The Housing Coordinator accompanied her on a viewing, and helped her to determine that it was suitable, at which point she accepted Calgary Housing's offer.

On March 1, 2011 Amanda and her daughter were able to move into their new apartment. Amanda received help with the damage deposit from the Louise Dean Centre and will be supported by the Housing Coordinator as she works towards maintaining her own independent housing for herself and her daughter.

\*Note, participant names have been changed to protect identities.



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## Louise Dean Centre (LDC)

### Housing Coordinator Position

#### SROI Calculations

The Housing Coordinator position was established in 2010, so longer term outcome data is not yet available. In-depth discussions with the Housing Coordinator, as well as focus groups and interviews with program participants helped to determine the value of the work done by the Coordinator.

The overall investment in the Housing Coordinator position was \$105,690, while the value created reached \$861,583. The overall return on investment, then, in the first year of the position was \$8.15 for every dollar invested.

The calculation took into account the contribution of the Louise Dean Centre programming assuming young mothers are involved for the duration of their high school education. After graduation, a certain drop off in the effects of the formerly direct support provided by the Coordinator is assumed. Costs associated with not finishing high school due to housing issues are not included until after the three years of potential programming.

The overall involvement of the young mothers at Louise Dean Centre has also been accounted for in the calculations. It is assumed that some services provided by the Housing Coordinator (for example, help with applications for income support) would otherwise have been provided by other staff at the Louise Dean Centre. Included in the calculation, is the time saved by other staff in helping clients with certain tasks that the Housing Coordinator has been able to provide as a broader strategy to address housing instability.

Many of the financial proxies used to determine the value created by the Housing Coordinator are published standardized values from the SROI Canada Financial Proxy List. Those which were not coded indicators are either based on peer-reviewed literature regarding the social costs of different activities (ex. homelessness or drug addiction), or are estimated based on discussions with the Housing Coordinator and research on specific price/value levels (e.g. rent costs).

Social Value Calculation - Housing Coordinator - 50 clients (2010-2011)		
Homelessness prevented	\$36,191 x 5 (girls homeless without support)	\$90,478*
Children's Services involvement avoided	\$43,764 x 2 (girls with Children's Services potentially involved due to housing situation)	\$43,764*
Drug addiction prevented	\$55,400 x 1 (girl potentially addicted to crack due to housing situation)	\$55,400
Reduced stress (mental illness)	\$1,447 x 7 (girls with extreme stress due to housing instability)	\$10,129
Reduced stress (psychiatric treatment)	\$8,878 x 1 (potential girl with extreme stress due to housing situation leading to hospitalization)	\$8,878
Decreased rate of high school drop out	\$24,495 x 5 (girls at risk of not completing high school due to housing instability)	\$0**
Decreased costs associated with moving	\$2691 x 3 (girls moving frequently due to housing issues like expense or landlords)	\$8,072
Decreased domestic violence cases	\$7,413 x 7 (girls in violent situations due to lack of alternative housing options)	\$41,513*
Prevention of incarceration for violence	\$3,003 x 1 (girl involved in extreme violence in her home due to lack of alternatives)	\$3,003
Increased access to subsidized housing	\$7,272 x 11 (girls assisted with Calgary Housing applications)	(\$39,996)*
Increased access to direct rent subsidies	\$7,800 x 1 (girl receiving rent subsidy)	(\$3,900)*
Increased access to income support	\$10,776 x 15 (girls receiving support)	(\$48,492)*
Decreased use of social worker time	\$22,984	\$22,984
Reduced physical illness in child	\$146 x 10 (children visiting physician)	\$437*
Reduced number of child asthma cases	\$1,855 x 2 (cases of asthma)	\$2,226*
<b>Social Value Created (50 clients) =</b>		<b>\$861,583</b>
<b>Annual Program Investment =</b>		<b>(\$105,690)</b>
<b>Social Return on Investment Ratio</b>		<b>\$8.15</b>

\*Discounted for change created by other services or change that would have occurred with no investment. \*\*The cost of not finishing high school is not seen until after the Louise Dean Centre program has ended unsuccessfully (3 years)

#### Conclusions

Overall, the significant return on investment in stabilizing the housing situations of young mothers illustrates the importance of finding appropriate affordable housing solutions. While the investment in the Housing Coordinator position is relatively modest, the impact of the Coordinator's work is readily seen through the effects of increased housing stability in the lives of young mothers at the Louise Dean Centre. With the help of the Housing Coordinator, these women are able to complete high school with lower levels of stress, less violence and more stable incomes. By ensuring these young women have a safe place to live, the Housing Coordinator contributes to their overall success in academics, employment and life choices. The long-term effects of this stability for young mothers is seen not only in their own success, but also in the success of their children.



