

#14. Soup Ottawa Project Application

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Project Title: BeadWorks

Describe your project (max. 200 words):

BeadWorks is a social enterprise of Operation Come Home, a non-profit education, employment and social support centre for homeless and at-risk youth in Ottawa. BeadWorks offers street-involved youth a safe space in which to nurture their creativity through the design and creation of fashionable handmade jewellery. The products are then sold in-house at the youth-operated re:Purpose boutique, which showcases handmade and upcycled projects of local young artists. The proceeds from sales at the storefront support the artist who created the item, as well as the ongoing services offered to the youth at Operation Come Home. Through the design and production of handmade jewellery, BeadWorks operates on a drop-in basis, gathering every weekday afternoon to provide street-involved youth with a healthy meal, a peer support network, a creative outlet and fundamental entrepreneurial skills, in turn empowering them to begin accessing other educational, housing and employment services offered at Operation Come Home. The majority of BeadWorks supplies are donated, deconstructed and repurposed by the youth into unique and fashionable creations that promote environmental sustainability and social justice.

Tell us this project's story (max. 100 words):

The brainchild of a placement student at Operation Come Home, BeadWorks began when a bowl of assorted beads was placed in the middle of the table at the drop-in centre. As youth began to gravitate to the materials, investing hours in the creation of beautiful designs, it became evident that Operation Come Home lacked a program that harnessed the creative potential of the youth, while providing the therapeutic aspect of art and design. The introduction of the BeadWorks program has provided street-involved youth with the opportunity to channel their creativity into unique products and generate an income from their efforts.

Each project needs to be connected to this events' theme - "Giving Voice" (max. 100 words):

As a creative outlet, BeadWorks gives street-involved youth a voice as they weave their emotions, hopes and dreams into a unique piece. Each bead on a necklace is a symbol of resilience in the face of adversity. Each necklace is strung together with a cord that represents the strength of youth who have held their lives together despite trauma and hardship. Each piece contains a story -- of a young mother, a struggle with addiction, the triumph over abuse or the fight against homelessness – and the creation of every necklace gives the artist a voice to tell their story.

How will you use Soup Ottawa money for this particular project? (be specific - people will ask) (max. 100 words):

Although the majority of BeadWorks materials are provided through donations, BeadWorks requires

funding in order to purchase the select crafting materials (cords, crimps, clasps and tools) needed to deconstruct and upcycle the donated jewellery. In addition, BeadWorks relies on funding and food bank donations in order to provide a balanced meal to street-involved youth who are involved in the program. Lastly, BeadWorks provides employment to one youth through an annual contract to mentor fellow youth, oversee the program, offer creative insight to marketing approaches and provide direction to the artists.

What non-monetary needs does your project have (i.e. volunteers, tech support, etc.)? (max. 100 words):

The success of BeadWorks relies largely on the generosity of community members who provide the organization with donated materials. These donations tend to bring the project to life by the energy and passion invested by the artists in each piece that is created, the unwavering dedication of volunteers and staff who inspire the artists' creative journey, and the support of BeadWorks' customers whose purchase encourages the artists to continue investing their energy in making positive changes.