



I believe the heart of our communities is people and the responsibility we have to each other in helping, supporting, involving ourselves in each others lives as neighbours and friends.

Part of that responsibility is taking care of our young people as a community. I'm very fortunate to have a job as a Program Coordinator of a Transition House for Street Involved Youth which allows me to do that full time.

As a Program Coordinator I coordinate the day to day operations of a short term (3 week) residential service. Since every youth is unique and often in unique situations you never quite know what to expect when you come to work. I spend time with youth with a variety of issues (i.e. drug addictions, mental health issues, homelessness, unemployed, etc) and relationship build with the youth while also providing life skills and offering support to be successful in whatever goals/plans they've set. My role has both a direct involvement with youth as well as an administrative element that involves sitting on committees, writing reports, supervision, and is very interactive with other resources in the community.

One year I came into work on a Monday morning and received a message from a past client who called to wish me a Happy Father's Day. I have kept the sticky note, which the message was written on, on my cork board at work to this day.

It becomes less of a job and more of a role/ person in their lives, that perspective in working with youth is ultimately what I bring and the youth sense this when I'm spending time with them.

*John Manolakos is a BCGEU member who has been in this field for 8 years.*

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