

Focus on: Young Adult Support Program



What is the Young Adult Support Program?

In Quebec, individuals with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) have the right to be schooled and receive government support from the ages of four to 21. But what happens once they are considered “too old” to qualify for these services? Helping this growing population of young adults was one of the driving forces behind the specialized **Young Adult Support Program (YASP)**, an innovative pilot project at Ometz. First launched in 2015, Ometz has developed YASP for 18-30 year olds living with high functioning autism spectrum disorder or mild intellectual challenges often coupled with mental health issues. The **Young Adult Support Program** offers clients wraparound services, including case management, counselling and support, advocacy to assure all available public resources are accessed, and workshops to help improve independent living and social skills—as well as pursue personal and vocational life goals. There are currently 35 young adults enrolled in the program with a growing wait list.

Specialized support services include:

- Learning basic life skills such as creating healthy and affordable meal plans.
- Being accompanied by a worker to run simple errands, such as going to the grocery store and learning to use Montreal’s public transit system.
- Individual and in groups, clients can take courses in computer literacy and participate in a vocational assessment program.
- Participation in a cooking workshop and other group activities.

“Each of these young adults falls between the gaps with regards to public services.”

-Amber-Lee Shattler,
Case Manager, Mental Health Support Services



Amber-Lee Shattler speaks to a YASP client.

Goals of the Young Adult Support Program

- Learn to work well with others, multi-task and handle activities of day-to-day life.
- Gain skills, tools and strategies to participate more effectively in everyday life.
- Become more self-sufficient, independent and confident.
- Increase connection to the community by encouraging social interaction.

Why Ometz?

In the past several years, Ometz has developed an expertise working with a population of emerging young adults (ages 18-30) who are looking to function—and thrive—as independent, self-sufficient, autonomous members of society. We see hundreds of these young people annually who present with any number of challenges including intellectual and developmental disabilities, autism spectrum disorder, unstable education, unemployment, mental health issues, substance abuse and homelessness. Many of them have a complex background that includes poverty, undiagnosed learning disabilities, low literacy levels, a family history of mental illness, loss of a parent, and abuse.

These young adults come with a range of issues and a number of obstacles, and all of them fall between the cracks of our strained public system. Ometz currently offers this vulnerable population a variety of supports, including case management, training and work internships—however, we have identified a major gap in our service delivery. While many of these young adults identify as wanting to be independent and find work, they are lacking basic life skills. Without these skills, living independently and finding and maintaining employment present major challenges. Our mission at Ometz is to help young adults achieve self-sufficiency towards a more positive and independent future.

**For more information or to make a gift,
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