

HOW SWEET IT IS

Conexus Awarded 2019 Governor General's Award for Sweet Dreams Project

Conexus is honoured to announce it has been selected to receive the 2019 Governor General's Innovation Award for establishing Canada's first Social Impact Bond for its Sweet Dreams Project.

Located on 600 Queen Street in Saskatoon, the Sweet Dreams home is an independent living complex operated by the Saskatoon Downtown Youth Centre (EGADZ), providing single mothers with children under eight years of age with affordable housing and support while they complete education, secure employment or participate in other pre-employment activities (e.g. life skills or parenting classes) and eventually transitioning them into the community.

Projects like this would historically compete for traditional community investment funding and government funding, however, Conexus utilized a Social Impact Bond - an alternative and innovative investment model - to fund this project. The Social Impact Bond (also known as a Pay for Success Bond) is the first of its kind where an innovative investment was made through the provincial government to pay for improved social outcomes resulting in public sector savings. In 2014, Conexus entered into a Social Impact Bond agreement with EGADZ, providing a \$500,000 investment. An additional \$500,000 was also provided by Wally Mah for the delivery of programs and services. The complex included 11 suites, eight washrooms, and a shared kitchen that also provided EGADZ support staff, a social worker, parent-support workers, a live in mentor and childcare center.

For the Social Impact Bond to be successful and for the private sector to recoup their investment, the Sweet Dreams Project had to successfully help a minimum of 22 at risk children avoid the foster care system while supporting single mothers in securing a better quality of life for their families. We are pleased to announce that an independent assessor (Deloitte) has concluded that, during the five year period that this program existed, there were 53 children who resided with and were in custody of their mother while not receiving any foster care services for a continuous period of at least 6 months after having exited Sweet Dreams Home, therefore deeming this project an official success.

AT A GLANCE:

- Conexus' innovative use of Canada's first Social Impact Bond for the Sweet Dreams Project wins 2019 Governor General's Award.
- The Sweet Dreams Project successfully supported 53 mothers and children in securing a better quality of life for their families.
- Conexus partnered with Wally Mah for a \$1M investment that provided single mothers with programs and services that empower mothers to enhance their quality of life and improve their social situations.
- Conexus CEO Eric Dillon will accept the award in front of the Governor General in Ottawa on May 30th.

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“I believe Sweet Dreams encompasses bringing families together through the power of connecting the private sector with resources and purpose to make big impacts in the community,” says Eric Dillon, CEO of Conexus. “Families are more successful when they are together and this project ensured that happened.”

The success of the Sweet Dreams Project is now being recognized on a national level for the innovative, meaningful impact of the Social Impact Bond. On May 30th, Conexus CEO, Eric Dillon, and Board of Directors Chair, Joel Mowchenko, will be travelling to Ottawa to accept the award in front of the Governor General, Her Excellency the Right Honourable Julie Payette, at the official awards ceremony.

The Governor General’s Innovation Awards is an ongoing national awards program founded by the Office of the Governor General and the Rideau Hall Foundation that celebrates excellence in innovation across all sectors of Canadian society. The award recognizes those who inspire Canadians, particularly youth, to be entrepreneurial innovators that make a meaningful impact on the lives of Canadians.

“While this is such a great honour to receive the Governor General’s Innovation Award, we are more excited about having 53 families reunited and on a path of new hope and opportunity,” says Dillon. “We should also be celebrating the innovation in social finance and how new approaches to complex challenges can be found and how they can create outcomes much better than what we had previously achieved.”

For more information on the Sweet Dreams Project, please watch this [VIDEO](#)
For more information on the Governor General’s Innovation Awards, please visit [LINK](#).

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