

IMPACT REPORT

2023

Youth
Unlimited™
YFC TORONTO

Making Space Strategy 2019-2023

Our youth
'reach' metrics
hit a 3-year
high

Discover who
partnered
with us
this year

Read about
Charlene's
impact in
Scarborough

Celebrate
staff
service
milestones

Flip over for
reflections on
30+ years of
youth ministry

Reflections on a Strategic Journey

In the fall of 2018, our team leaders gathered together to begin the journey of shaping our first-ever, four-year organizational strategy. It's not that we hadn't been strategic, intentional, or well-planned before. Rather, what had historically been created team-by-team would now be a collective process. Out of this, our Making Space strategy was born, which launched in July 2019 and concluded in June 2023.

So, how did it go? Was this new approach worth it? Did it make a difference in the lives of young people, families, and neighbourhoods?



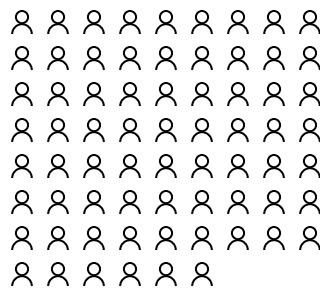
WRITTEN BY:
Scott Moore
Executive Director

We embarked on this collective strategy because we needed to be, so to speak, in the same boat pulling in one direction against the current of the many challenges facing our young people. Four years later, I can say with confidence that God has used this journey to sharpen our organizational focus and allow us to have an ongoing impact, as more and more young people experience the transformative power of encountering Jesus.



DOXA SUMMER CAMP

Youth We Served:



3,426

TOTAL YOUTH ENCOUNTERED



1,109

REGULARLY ATTENDING



856

ENGAGED IN MEANINGFUL RELATIONSHIP



I can say with confidence that God has used this journey to sharpen our organizational focus and allow us to have an ongoing impact, as more and more young people experience the transformative power of encountering Jesus.

—SCOTT MOORE

As we reflect on the past year, there are many encouraging signs in seeing the wholistic transformation of those we serve. Allow me to highlight just three:

1.

All of our overall 'reach' metrics (shown on page 2) hit *three-year highs* this past year. It is good news to see such a strong signal that we are emerging fully past the impacts of COVID on our work, and that our Making Space focus on youth experiencing vulnerability has deepened our relationships in this area.

2.

Two-thirds of our ministry teams had a *five-year high* in the number of youth who were engaged in a meaningful relationship with a YU staff or volunteer team member. For an organization that believes long-term relationships with youth are at the centre of transformational opportunities, reaching this level of engagement is deeply impactful and hopeful.

3.

Finally, we saw *three-year highs* in the number of youth who are connected to a local church through Youth Unlimited and whose faith is being nurtured and developed intentionally. Again, we believe this is a reflection of our Making Space focus on seeing young people integrated into neighbourhood churches.

Of course, the past year was not all highs. A number of our staff experienced the tragic loss of a beloved young person through violence. We had to pause some of our programming due to staff transitions or departures. Other programs struggled to have the engagement with young people for which they hoped.

Through it all, we celebrate the joy of partnering with you to see God use our time, talents, and treasure to serve the youth of the Greater Toronto Area. Our Making Space strategy has united us, grown our impact, and positioned us to continue to carry out the whole-person, life-changing work of Jesus among today's young people.



YOUNG PARENTS



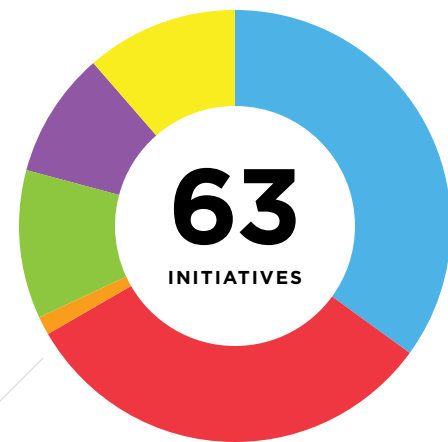
DOWNSVIEW SPORTS OUTREACH



HOOP 2 HOPE

Unique Programs for Unique Needs

Here are our six program categories and a sampling of the ministries that were active in 2022/2023.

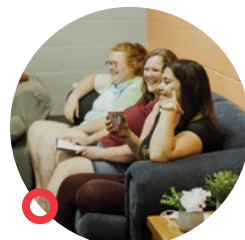


- Community Outreach**
Connecting in neighbourhoods through team and mentoring relationships
- Critical Care**
Supporting youth experiencing systemic vulnerability
- Innovative Centres**
Pursuing shared interests in inspiring environments
- Leadership Development**
Growing and discovering God's purpose for life
- Marketplace Initiatives**
Developing employment skills and entrepreneurship
- Trips, Camps & Events**
Sharing experiences, adventure and social impact



COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Our team in **Downsview & Rexdale** has been encouraged to see regular participation in their sports outreach programs continue to rise over the last three years. Youth of all ages come out weekly for soccer, ball hockey and the newly formed RJF Boxing Club, hosted at Rexdale Alliance Church. This same three-year growth has been seen in the Downsview Youth Group Program, hosted in partnership with Emmanuel Church of the Nazarene.



CRITICAL CARE

This year, our **Young Parents** ministry supported eight young moms and dads in their need for stable housing. This included bridging the connection between youth and housing workers; leading young people through the housing and maternity home application processes; presenting - and being a sounding board for - housing options; and moving young parents into new homes.



INNOVATIVE CENTRES

Iron Fruits is a strength and fitness conditioning program for young men, ages 14-23. This initiative provides mentorship, builds relationships, creates discipline and develops positive characteristics among participants. **URGENT:** Iron Fruits has recently lost access to their fitness facility. Please be in prayer that we would find a new, cost-free space for this ministry.

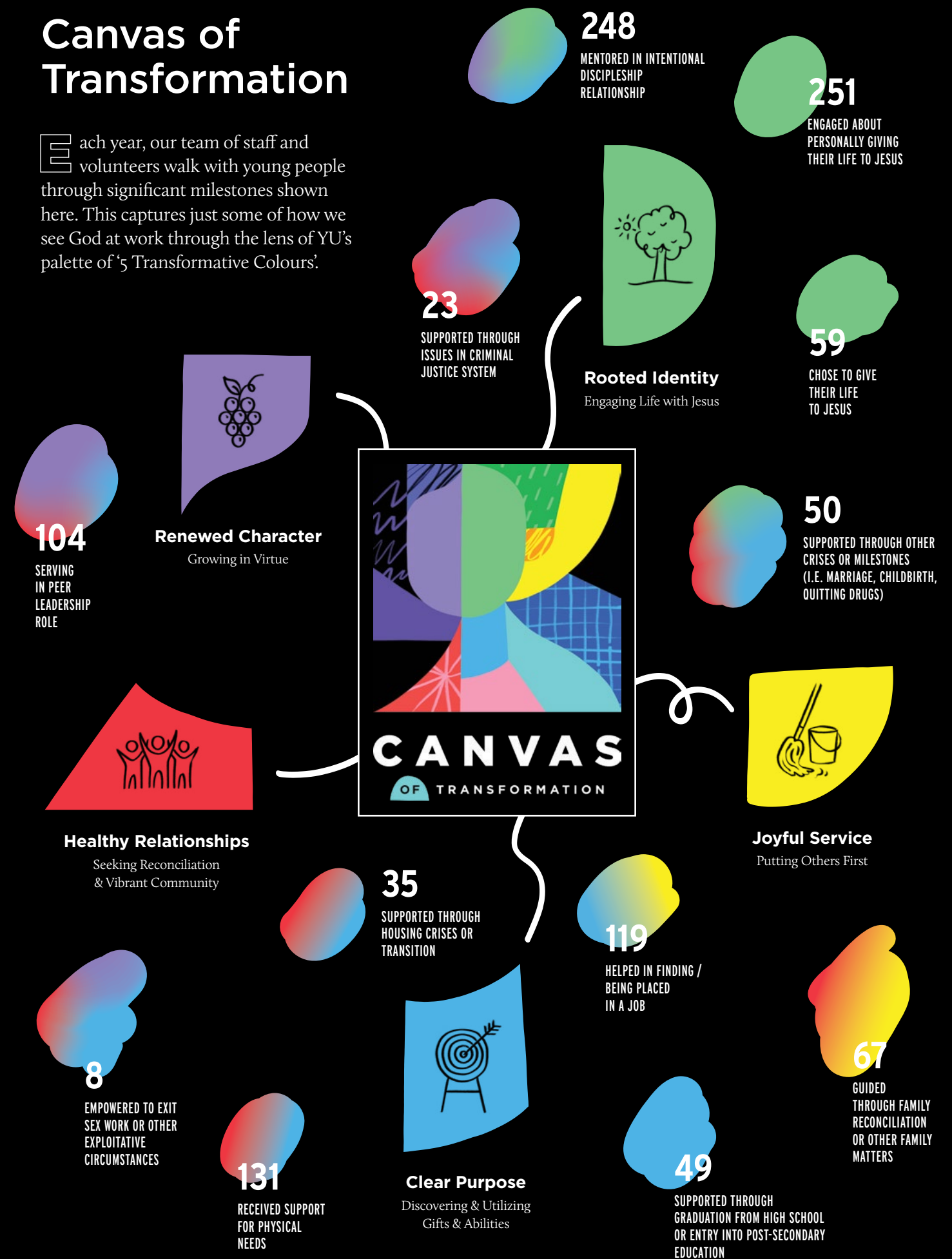


MARKETPLACE INITIATIVES

Heartbeat Bikes recently began a valuable partnership with Regeneration Outreach in Brampton. Prior to COVID, Stepping Stones & Heartbeat Bikes staff helped collect and organize food donations in the Regeneration warehouse and maintained the community garden. Following COVID, Heartbeat Bikes moved into extra space in Regeneration's thrift store to continue their bike refurbishment business. Many new immigrants and marginalized individuals frequent the thrift store, and appreciated the price point of the bikes for sale. Having indoor, permanent space has allowed the youth to quickly grow in confidence, as they take on new roles and greater responsibilities. Heartbeat Bikes now has the capacity to attract more youth to volunteer or be taught bike repair through the program.

Canvas of Transformation

Each year, our team of staff and volunteers walk with young people through significant milestones shown here. This captures just some of how we see God at work through the lens of YU's palette of '5 Transformative Colours'.



The Power of Partnerships

The work of Youth Unlimited is greatly enhanced through partnerships with organizations that are aligned with the vision and mission of our ministries. Here are just three beautiful examples of partnerships that impacted our programs this year.



Soles4Souls with Lakeshore Soccer League

Among their many areas of impact, Soles4Souls aims to provide brand new shoes to kids in underserved communities, eliminating a barrier to educational and extracurricular opportunities. This mission aligns well with Lakeshore Soccer League, which offers affordable soccer programming to families in South Etobicoke.

In August, Lakeshore Soccer League marked its 10th season in an extra special way, thanks to the support of Soles4Souls. We celebrated the close of the season the way we do each year: with trophies and medals for every participant, a free community BBQ, and a closing ceremony. This year, we gave each of the 225 children and youth (more participants than ever before!) a free pair of back-to-school shoes that were fitted for them on-site by the Soles4Souls volunteers!



One of the youth stopped me to show off her new shoes and her beautiful smile, from ear to ear, said it all. Meeting a need with dignity and leveling the playing field is what our organizations are all about!

—TIFFANY TURNER, SOLES4SOULS



Broad Reach Sailing with Light Patrol & Bridletowne

Broad Reach Sailing engages under-represented youth in the development of knowledge, skills and social belonging through sailing. Youth Unlimited was approached by BroadReach with a special opportunity, and our Light Patrol and Bridletowne teams jumped at the chance to give their young people an unforgettable summer experience on Lake Ontario.

Right away, the skipper got everyone involved hoisting masts, steering the sailboat and hauling lines. Highlights of their time on the lake included a youth sharing their joy over FaceTime with family in Ethiopia; a girl experiencing being out on the water for the first time; friendships formed that would be nurtured throughout the year; and seeing the young people having their minds opened with this new opportunity as they appreciated the beauty of the day.

Canadian Bible Society with Rahab

During the Toronto Prayer Breakfast, Rahab forged a valuable partnership with Canadian Bible Society who donated 220 Chinese New Testaments to the program. Our Rahab team was thankful to receive Bibles in the language of many of those with whom they interact on a regular



basis. These Bibles were distributed in just a one-month period of massage parlour outreach!

Starting in 2024, we're seeking to create partnerships in the areas of stable housing and church mobilization.

Learn more at gainingground.yugta.ca

Long-Term Service, Long-Term Relationships

We sat down with Charlene Boreland who has served with our DOXA team in a partnership with Wilmar Heights Baptist Church for 11 years. Charlene shared how her ministry is fostering wholistic transformation and neighbourhood church integration among the youth she serves.

YU: Tell us a bit about your ministry context - What initiatives do you lead? Who are these initiatives serving?

CHARLENE: *FourThirTeen Girls* fosters long-lasting friendships between girls ages 10-17. This program helps girls develop their talents and grow in confidence as young women. We emphasize guiding the girls as they find their identity in Christ through Bible studies and Godly conversations. *Destiny Kidz* invites children in our church and broader community to have fun through sports, entertainment, life skills training, Bible teaching and much more. *Wilmar Spot* is

a March Break camp that brings hope, love and truth to children by instilling good character, teamwork, respect, unity and a deep love for God. I also plan one *DOXA Gathering* each year at Wilmar Heights, which is an experience offered to youth in churches connected to our Scarborough network.

YU: Can you share with us how you've seen long-term relationships foster whole-life transformation in the lives of your young people?

C: As I've journeyed with my youth for many years and built relationships based on trust, honesty and love, I've watched them become more open to discussing situations they're facing, ask Bible questions, and build friendships with their peers in the program. I love that they know they can call me at any time - even the graduates from my programs still call me for advice.

A few years ago, I could see God working in the life of a young woman



in my program. She was beginning to ask questions and was very receptive to our mentoring relationship. During our time together, she began a deep relationship with Jesus and I saw her grow in leadership potential. I asked her to oversee my ministry while I was on sabbatical last year. She stepped up and did an amazing job! It was so cool to see God work through her, and use her talents and creativity in this way.

YU: How have you seen young people experience belonging and connection at Wilmar Heights? What impact does this have on these young lives?

C: Community youth who have come through Wilmar Heights' summer camp are now plugged into other areas of church, youth group and our DOXA programs. When we host DOXA Gatherings, I can see the connections that have formed between my youth and those from other churches in Scarborough. DOXA ministries have equipped my youth to serve at church on Sunday mornings and participate as leaders in my programs. Their faith has grown, and they're actively communicating with their peers about it on social media.



CHARLENE

YU: At YU, we celebrate when young people make a decision to follow Jesus, but we also want to walk with them to nurture their faith and see them flourish wholistically. How are you intentionally fostering both of these hopes as you serve young people?

C: When my youth make a decision to follow Jesus, I commit to walking alongside them through mentorship and discipleship. I teach them how to have a deeper relationship with God by making it a priority to begin with a verse each morning; meditate on the verse, quote it and live it out; worship God; and pray as it teaches in 1 Thessalonians 5:16. I now have a ministry team of young women who I have mentored who have gone on to mentor our younger participants and help me co-lead *FourThirTeen Girls*.

Thank you, Charlene, for your faithful service to Scarborough youth for over a decade!

Making Space 4-year Recap

As we move forward into our Gaining Ground strategy, it's important for us to pause and reflect on our four years of "Making Space" to celebrate and give thanks to God for all that He has done in and through Youth Unlimited from 2019-2023. This update goes through each of our four pathways and the impact we've made together over the past four years.



Increasing our engagement with vulnerable youth

- Launched **JOPI**, a new job opportunity and placement initiative piloted in the Jane-Finch community
- Launched **Navigate**, a new ministry in partnership with Prison Fellowship Canada to serve incarcerated youth reintegrating into community
- Funded and implemented **Good Samaritan** crisis housing support
- Established a 'Homestay' policy to assist our staff and supporters in providing safe, welcoming emergency housing for youth we serve
- Developed a circles of support model for wholistic care to youth experiencing vulnerability
- Young Parents ministry shifted its outreach strategy to go to vulnerable young people, instead of them coming to us
- The Shop increased its community outreach efforts beyond its automotive training centre



Accompanying youth in the midst of their mental health challenges

- Provided Mental Health First Aid training for all staff, with some staff also receiving training in trauma-informed care
- Implemented YU youth counselling subsidy fund
- Marianne Deeks launched **Re-Routed Counselling**, offering counselling for youth within our programs
- Transitioned Ann Stocker to Critical Care Consultant available to all staff



Supporting ministry

- Launched **Stepping Stones Property Services** and **HeartBeat Bikes**, and developed a new revenue model for The Shop
- Developed new internship funding and program
- Hired and onboarded the new Chapter Leadership Team
- Implemented the Open Hearts Staff Assistance fund
- Launched the transition of support services systems to new software, including finance, accounting and HR
- Hired a new HR assistant and Finance Manager to build Central Services capacity



Living out wholistic transformation

- Staff retreat focused on physical wellness
- 'Wellness' expense and time allocation approved for all staff
- Produced Canvas of Transformation devotional booklet
- Developed mobile app (canvas.yugta.ca) and conversation starters for all attributes of the Canvas of Transformation to assist staff in the spiritual mentoring of their youth



Integrating young people into neighbourhood churches

- Established Parkway Church partnership
- Utilized food grants to mobilize churches through partnerships with our teams in South Etobicoke and at The Shop
- Aligned our critical care ministries more closely with local churches

Youth Unlimited INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

Equipping and supporting emerging leaders and ministry workers to reach their full personal and vocational potential.

Each year, Youth Unlimited invites young adults with an interest in exploring ministry as a vocation into our internship program. It is our hope and intention that interns will be:

- **Equipped to minister out of a rootedness in Jesus**
- **Given practical group training, one-on-one coaching, supervision and shepherding, and relevant field ministry experience**
- **Trained to engage in community-based, trauma-informed, spiritually-grounded youth ministry**
- **Supported through the process of building ministry partner development teams**
- **Shepherded as they seek a clearer understanding of God's calling on their lives**

Through a thoughtfully designed year-long program, interns gain exposure to a variety of YU ministries, submit assignments that make their training relevant, and enter into a discernment process near the end of their internship to help better understand their calling and next steps. From there, interns may extend their internship, step into a role with Youth Unlimited, or pursue their career in another vocational context. 🗨️

INTERN SPOTLIGHT

Youth Unlimited is delighted to welcome five interns to our 2023/2024 cohort:



David Dolores

WITH [JANE-FINCH](#)

David has been part of the Jane-Finch program since he was in middle school. During this time, he learned about and experienced God in many ways, and has seen others also impacted by the ministry of YU. As an intern, David will help youth know and experience God, and find purpose in following Him.



Stephanie Ierullo

WITH [JANE-FINCH](#)

Stephanie has a strong commitment to helping families, communities, and young people. With a background in social work, she values cultivating authentic relationships through a very people-centered holistic view, to see positive change in our city. Her ultimate goal is to extend God's love and act as his hands and feet by using the talents God has given her.



Zaneta Angeles

WITH [THE SHOP](#)

Zaneta supports the administrative duties at The Shop, and has a passion to help youth and to reach the lost. Zaneta loves working with her team and listening to youth share their life stories. Her desire is for youth to find the same hope and peace that she has in Jesus.



Kirsten Fryer

WITH [DOXA](#)

Kirsten has a passion for building relationships with youth. She loves helping young people in this period of life and showing them Jesus' love through her actions and words. Having been part of DOXA herself, she knows the impact that YU can have on young people.



Sarah Maat

WITH [THE ENGAGEMENT TEAM](#)

Sarah is passionate about working with youth and storytelling. She serves as part of the Engagement Team to help tell the stories of what God is doing at Youth Unlimited. She is excited to help connect our partners with the work we are doing in the GTA and is looking forward to supporting the rest of the YU team.

If you would like more information about our internship program, contact our Internship Director, Melissa Williams at mwilliams@yugta.ca.

Moments & Milestones



CHURCH & FAMILY RESOURCES

900 Students & **500** Parents Equipped

Paul Robertson, our Youth Culture Specialist, developed a new seminar on how to develop healthy relationships with screens for junior high and high school students, and their parents. Paul travelled throughout Canada,

visiting Christian schools in Burlington, Belleville, Charlottetown, Moncton, Fredericton and St. John's. Paul spoke with over 900 youth and 500 adults, receiving much positive feedback from administrators, parents and students, alike.

7 Staff Celebrating Service Milestones

In June, our staff gathered for our annual Celebration BBQ. We enjoyed a delicious meal together, a competitive Survivor Challenge and celebrated our team members who have served Youth Unlimited so faithfully for many years. Our service milestone recipients were:



5 YEARS OF SERVICE
Mark Evans (*Frontiers*)

10 YEARS OF SERVICE
Clem Lee (*Jane-Finch*)
Charlene Boreland (*DOXA*)

15 YEARS OF SERVICE
Rob Gin (*Young Parents*)
Scott Moore (*Executive Director*)

25 YEARS OF SERVICE
Marianne Deeks (*Frontiers*)

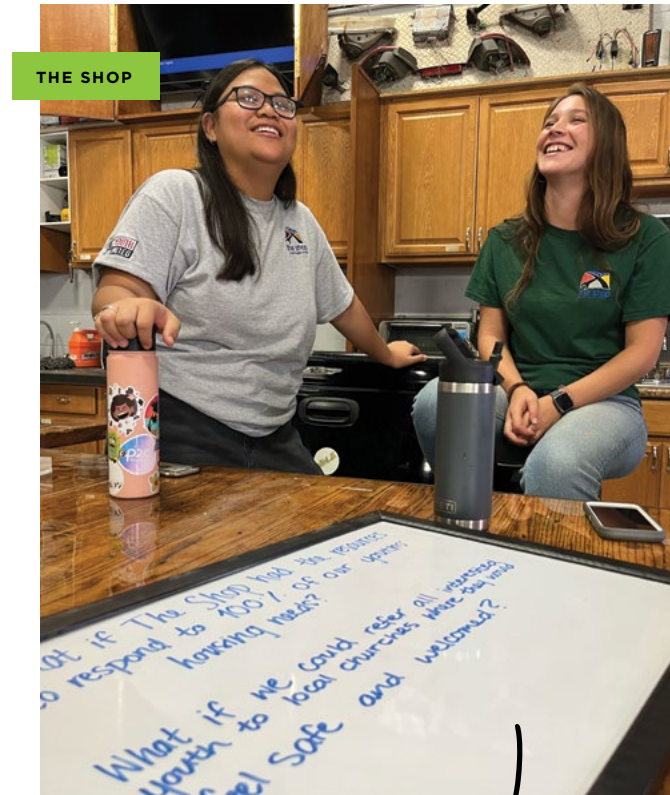
35 YEARS OF SERVICE
Ruth Heise (*Central Services*)



YU STAFF

Prison Ministry Resumes After 2 Years

Due to COVID restrictions, members of our chaplaincy care team were unable to visit young men in a local detention centre for two years. They have now been able to return to their weekly rhythm for a year, providing spiritual support, wholistic care and the simple act of being present with those on the margins of society in the GTA.



THE SHOP

3 Year High at The Shop

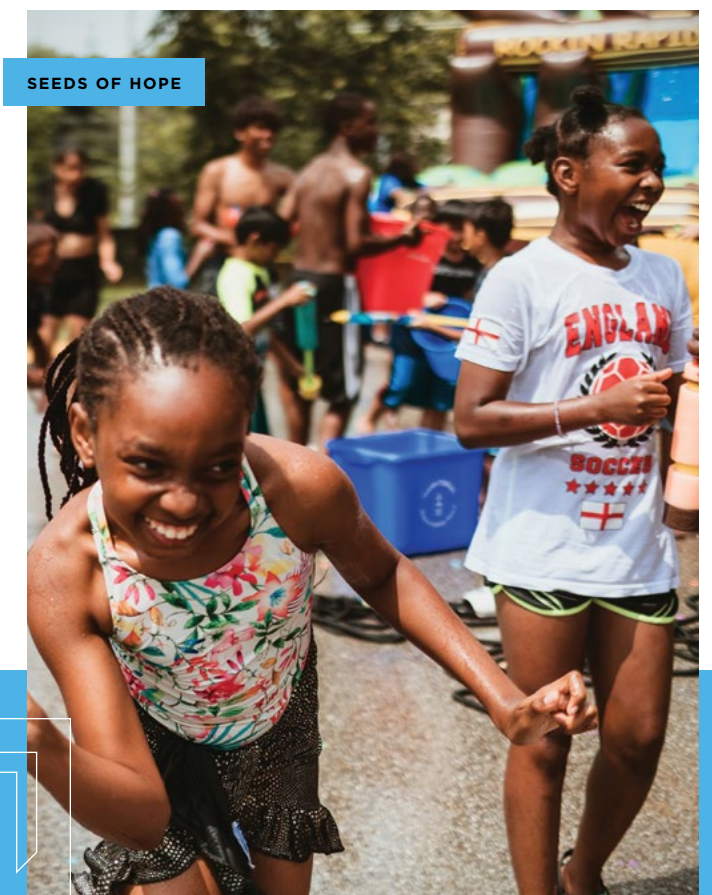
The ministry of The Shop continues to evolve as it extends its outreach efforts beyond the walls of the automotive training facility. The Shop hit a

three-year high in all of our Youth Reach metrics, as did their support of youth with mental health challenges.

201 Jane-Finch Youth

Youth Unlimited desires to have several "touchpoints" with the young people we serve to allow more opportunities for transformation. Encouragingly, we had 201 youth in Jane-Finch that participated in multiple YU programs this year!

Our Jane-Finch team also had five-year highs in youth discipleship, church engagement and peer leadership. All of these align beautifully with our intentional focus to integrate youth into neighbourhood churches.



SEEDS OF HOPE

Thank You!

We are grateful for the faithful team who partnered with us in 2023.

35
FULL-TIME STAFF

37
PART-TIME STAFF

39
SUMMER STAFF

4
INTERNS

316
VOLUNTEERS

168
ORGANIZATIONAL AND CHURCH PARTNERSHIPS

3,345
ACTIVE GIVERS

We're Still At It

WE'RE STILL AT IT



WRITTEN BY:
Tim Huff
*Compassion Series,
Team Lead*

I was less than four years out of high school when I started in my first YU role, developing a flourishing youth centre with no more technology than a rotary phone mounted to the wall. I went on to do solo street-work among the hidden homeless most nights after midnight, sans mobile phone or policy rubrics. Surely, an absolute impossibility and foolish notion today. Technology, sustainability, weapons, toxins, and polarization; myriad words representing ever-compounding complexities that 22-year-old me could have never imagined.

Next summer, I will turn 60 years old. This is so hard to say out loud and believe. I often wonder, how did time rob me and bless me simultaneously? The world has certainly changed. I have surely changed. And indeed, YU has changed, but only in faithful accordance to its original motto: "Geared to the times. Anchored to the Rock."

How inspiring it is to be part of a rapidly-growing community that is both humble and fearless in facing critical matters among youth that no one could have fathomed when that mantra was birthed. Marijuana

use was illegal and disconcerting mere years ago. Now, it is legal and recreational, barely mentionable in light of the fentanyl epidemic. YU is still at it. Truancy was the greatest worry for many schools when I started at YU. Now, unthinkable classroom violence and cyberbullying top student and teacher fears. YU is still at it. A good youth-worker used to get a one-time, two-hour training on depression among teenagers. Now, it is a must to be part of ceaseless learning around matters of mental health, self-abuse and suicide. YU is still at it. We worked at becoming specialists in "at-risk" youth, never imagining we'd soon become "at-risk" youth-workers. Yet again, YU is still at it.

What hasn't changed is the heart of God. Nor the heartbeat of Youth Unlimited, remaining ever "anchored to the Rock". My personal commission to "bind up the broken-hearted" feels like it rests in the YU mandate as warmly as ever. I am so thankful. And the deeply shared imperative to do justice, love mercy and walk humbly are perhaps more alive than ever within the YU ministry world that I still call "home".



LIGHT PATROL

Join Us in the Work

Youth Unlimited believes everyone has a part to play in seeing young people experience joy in Jesus, wholistic wellbeing, healthy community, and hope for a bright future. We invite you to consider how you might get involved in changing young lives in the year ahead:



Join our Prayer Team

Receive a short, daily invitation to pray for the work of Youth Unlimited.

Email:
prayer@yugta.ca to join



Partner with Us

We are committed to partnering with local churches and like-minded agencies to collaboratively impact and empower the young people we serve.

Learn more at:
yugta.ca/partner-with-us



Create Change by Volunteering

Most of our programs rely on a hardworking group of volunteers who invest their time and energy in youth transformation.

Learn more at:
yugta.ca/volunteer



Careers with a Calling

Make an impact as part of our growing team of resilient leaders.

Learn more at:
yugta.ca/careers



Donate

Impacting hundreds of young lives with the life-changing love of Jesus requires the faithful and generous financial partnership of people like you.

Give today at:
yugta.ca/donate

FINANCIALS

Alongside this Impact Report focusing on our field work, we also share our audited financial statements and analysis as part of stewarding every gift we receive with integrity and a desire to maximize the impact of you, our partners. **Read more at:** yugta.ca/financial-statements