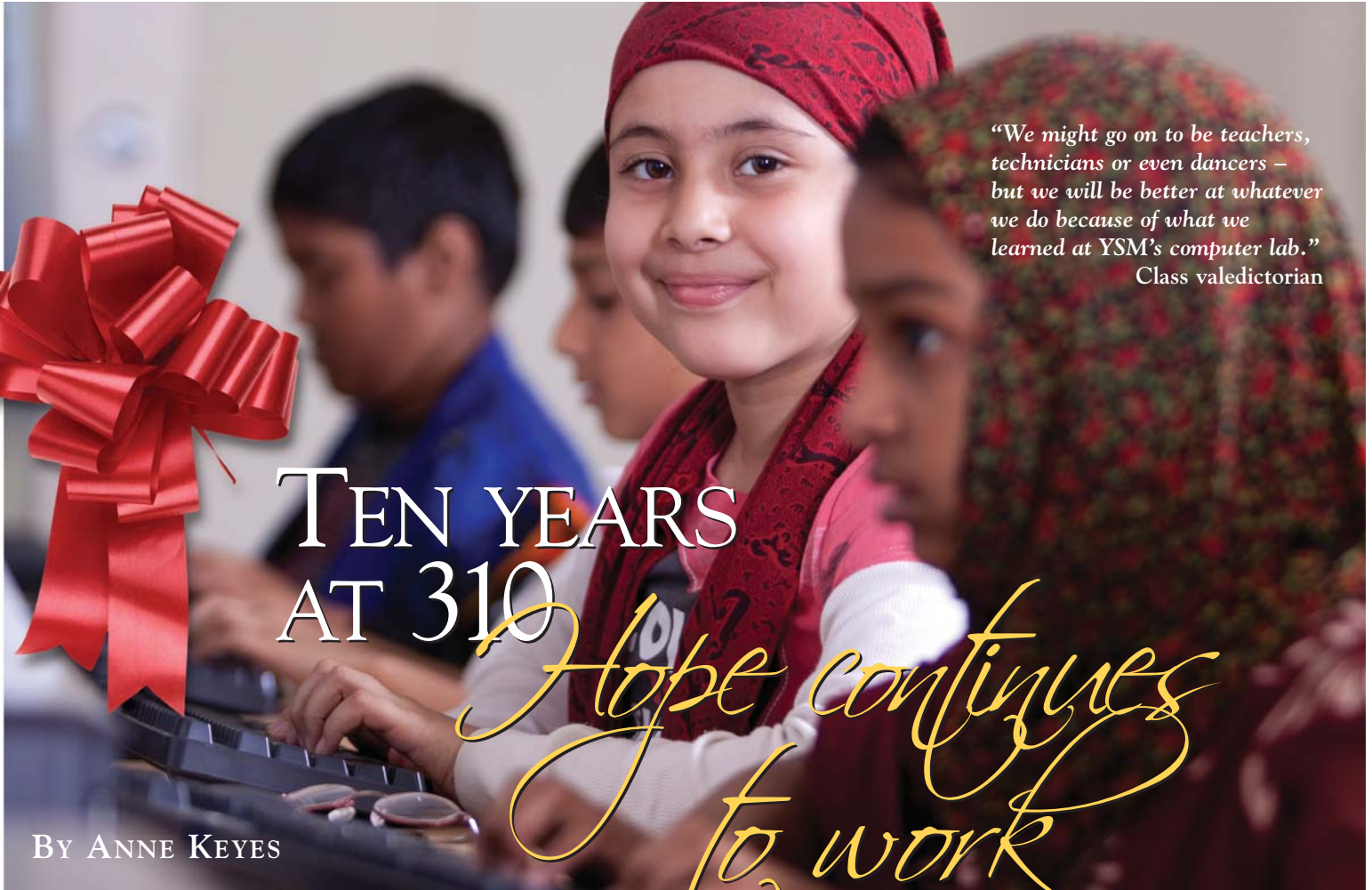




# Urban Lights

**YONGE  
STREET  
MISSION**

**HOPE IN THE CITY SINCE 1896**



*"We might go on to be teachers, technicians or even dancers – but we will be better at whatever we do because of what we learned at YSM's computer lab."  
Class valedictorian*

**TEN YEARS  
AT 310**

*Hope continues  
to work*

BY ANNE KEYES

Photo: J. Cowie

This fall the Mission celebrates the tenth anniversary of a bold initiative that brought the gift of hope to our Regent Park community. *Hopeworks* was the name of Yonge Street Mission's centennial campaign that resulted in the 310 Centre. Ten years ago, we redeveloped a derelict grocery store in a community gripped by poverty into a

gift of hope for the future with Double Take – our second-hand super store – and the TD Securities Computer Literacy Centre.

When the 310 Centre opened in 1999, CEO Rick Tobias paid tribute to the commitment of our donors who gave \$4 million to realize the dream: "Our supporters

have taken their stand because they see the benefits to the entire community. *Hopeworks* is the continuation of what was begun here 100 years ago."

Our board and senior staff recognized the need to promote economic activity and the confidence-building skills that paid employment could offer, as well as early access to computer literacy for our children.

"Through our work at the 310 Centre, we are able to play a strategic part in helping a person create a new trajectory just at the right time in their life," says

**In this issue...**

- *A Lost Voice Found...page 4*
- *Becoming a Canadian Parent...page 5*
- *Evenings at Evergreen...page 6*

*Continued on page 2*

...Continued from front page

David Adcock, YSM's former Chief Operating Officer, about the gifts of opportunity that continue to flow from 310. "I'm amazed at how far people will go once they are given an opportunity!"

Looking back to the mid-1990s, opening 310 was a remarkable and visionary accomplishment. At the time, the Canadian economy was barely stabilized from the 1990 recession that had a devastating impact on the poor. Today, jobs continue to be created at Double Take and an ever-increasing number of children make the leap into the digital age with training they receive at our computer centre.



Photo: J. Cowie

*Double Take is now a sustainable model in creating jobs for people in our Regent Park community.*

From the beginning, it was clear that the community was profoundly interested in work. We had 300 people apply for the first 15 jobs at the store.

"Double Take is a very good store and a good place to work. I really enjoyed my training contract in 2005-06," says Raneed.\* She attends our Women & Family program and now has a part-time job at a Wendy's restaurant. "YSM has given lots of help to my family! My son just did the computer program and he loved it. There are so many good things at YSM!"

Expanding Mission services into this 8,900 square-foot storefront allowed us to expand the Food Bank's used clothing room into Double Take. From the outset,

our store offered superb merchandise thanks to the annual Downtown Towers Clothing Drive and thousands of people who donated high quality apparel.

Our store gives trainees a first break into Canadian job experience to put on their resume, plus ESL training where needed and retail skills in merchandising, display and customer service.

A weekly computer club was transformed into a leading edge computer literacy program for neighbourhood children in 310's basement – YSM's answer to the growth of knowledge-based industry demands for skills.

**"It was great to have that computer in Grade 3, and learning to type gave me**

**an advantage that helped me get my schoolwork done better,"** says Raveed,\* who graduated from the Introductory computer class in 2000. Now he volunteers at the lab and is a YSM scholarship student in first year at the University of Toronto with plans to study medicine.

Raveed's class totaled a dozen students. We now average between 60 and 70 Introductory graduates each term who earn a computer of their own!

After ten years, YSM's work at 310 continues to offer hope to many. Ironically, today we are again recovering from a sharp economic downturn, and according to a 2008 report by the Organization for Economic Co-Operation

and Development (OECD), the gap between the rich and poor in Canada has widened significantly over the ten years.

**"As the city pulls out of the 2008-09 slowdown, one of its biggest challenges will be to keep the gap between its two solitudes from widening ... it is the city's social infrastructure – non-profit organizations and social programs – that will determine how long it takes the disadvantaged to get back on their feet,"** said Carol Goar in a recent Toronto Star column.

Yet again, Yonge Street Mission will be a part of this recovery. We will take the lessons learned from the 310 Centre forward into areas of poverty beyond the downtown Toronto core. With the commitment and the vision of our board and staff, the Mission will continue into our second century of service on the front lines of poverty across the wider Greater Toronto Area. With your support, YSM will bring the gift of hope to thousands more, closing the gap between the two solitudes of affluence and despair.

## **TD Securities Computer Literacy Centre – a continuing Gift Of Hope:**

- 3,425 enrollments over ten years in 11 different courses
- almost 1,500 computers awarded
- 388 students in the Internet course given free AOL

*"I'm amazed at the level of concentration once computer class begins. Remember, the children have been in school all day!"* says a lab visitor.

A 10th Anniversary celebration will be held at the Centre's Fall Graduation in late November. The Mission will honour TD Securities for the amazing impact their gift has made on our young people and their families.

*\*names changed for privacy*



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*President and CEO*

**KAREN BACH**  
*Mission Program Officer*

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*Mission Operations Officer*

**RAY MARSHALL**  
*Chief Development Officer*

**KERRY BOWSER**  
*Senior Program Director*

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*Director of Finance*

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*Lead Pastor/Director of Church  
 at the Mission*

**CLAIRE BARCIK**  
*Director of Community Services*

**RUTH PENTINGA**  
*Director of Volunteer Resources*

**BILL RYAN**  
*Director of Staff Care*

**KATHY WEBSTER**  
*Double Take, Store Manager*

Publication No. 1632817



# Lend a HELPING hand

## CHRISTMAS GIFTS OF JOY

One of our Christmas appeal donors last year was delighted to be able to reach out and help others. Twelve years earlier her family was welcomed and encouraged by the Mission, bringing joy for their first Canadian Christmas. "God bless you and thank you for bringing hope to many people in need like me!" she wrote.

We were deeply honoured to receive this lady's gift. By completing the circle from struggling newcomer through to established citizen, she underscored the value of our work – and the good that your gifts do.

Last Christmas, the Mission served over 5,000 people including families and children, seniors, disadvantaged adults and Evergreen youth. This year we will again provide festive meals, gifts and Christmas celebrations to bring joy to at least as many.

Recovery from the recession comes latest to people trapped in poverty. We depend on generous friends like you – individuals and school, church and corporate groups – to donate food, toys, gift certificates and other items on our 2009 Christmas Wish List. Your monetary donations will purchase perishable food and other needed items.

Thank you for sharing the joy of Christmas!



### INTERESTED IN A TAX REFUND?

Consider making your gift of securities to YSM before Dec. 31 in order to use your tax receipt in the 2009 year.

### THANK YOU

To all who supported our Bright Lights event and donated to our Scholarship Program.

### Yes, Rick, I'll share Christmas joy!

Please use my donation:  Wherever the needs are greatest  
 Other \_\_\_\_\_

Enclosed is my donation of: \$ \_\_\_\_\_  My cheque is enclosed.

Charge:  VISA  MasterCard  American Express

Card # \_\_\_\_\_ Expiry \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Apt. \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ Prov. \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Fax (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

- Please send me:  Information on planned giving, bequests, gifts of securities  
 Information on In Memory and In Honour gifts  
 A listing of Volunteer Opportunities  
 I would like to arrange a tour

Yonge Street Mission, 306 Gerrard Street East, Toronto ON M5A 2G7

Phone: 416-929-9614 Toll Free: 1-800-416-5111 Fax: 416-929-7204

E-mail: [donorservices@ysm.ca](mailto:donorservices@ysm.ca) Web site: [www.ysm.ca](http://www.ysm.ca)

Please make cheque payable to Yonge Street Mission. Charitable Number 11930 6181 RR0001

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# A LOST VOICE FOUND

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I am a 41-year-old woman with a voice that learned to be silent for a very long time. Now I have my voice back, and I speak from the heart.

My upbringing gave me a decent moral grounding but I lacked parental bonding and family connection. My stepfather, who raised me, was a mid-level executive. We lived in a good neighbourhood, had the best clothes and travelled to sunny places during March Break. I was a good girl! Excellent student, polite, athletic, full of potential.

What changed?

In eighth grade, I was assaulted and brutally violated in the schoolyard. I never told anyone. There wasn't anybody to tell who could understand my shame and humiliation. Holding silence became my new vow and eventually drugs and alcohol became my best friends.

At 17, I got involved with a 30-year-old man. Naively, I believed I had found my white picket fence, when in reality I was driving into a lifetime pattern of domestic violence, addiction and mental illness. I became pregnant with my first child at the age of 18 and by the age of 24 was the proud but disconnected mother of three precious boys.

My husband was a cruel man most of the time. The children and I suffered immensely from his abuse and neglect. At 26, I left and took my boys to a shelter.

At 28, I found another man to take care of me. He helped me stay clean, married me, and bought us a nice home with a real white picket fence in the backyard. I built a lovely garden to play in, got a really good job in a nursing home and went to church often.

But all was not as it seemed. Like before, violence soon consumed my marriage. Four years later as my boys were growing into



*“Jan and YSM continue always to be of help and for this I am truly grateful.”*

adolescence, I became very fearful for their physical safety. Youth have a tendency to speak the unspoken and I knew they were big enough to pay the price for breaking the code of silence. It was time for us to leave....back to the shelter we went.

The process of ending my marriage left me in financial ruin and homeless again. My addictions made sure of that. Three years further down the road, I was living the life of a street-level crack addict. I had abandoned my children. Hope was fading fast.

But still a flicker remained. My youngest boy never gave up on me during my desolation. He always told me I deserved to live and have a decent life. He was an inspiration.

My recovery journey began in the fall of 2006. Addiction treatment was a catalyst for

positive change in my life. I learned that it wasn't my fault that men kept hurting me. Importantly, I learned that I could be free from that oppression. As I worked through the layers of pain from my past, that little girl of excellence soon found her voice again. I was unfolding into the woman I was created to be.

Transitional housing was the next important step for me. I stayed there nine months, became more educated and developed strong community supports. During that time I met Pastor Jan Rothenburger from Yonge Street Mission who was a cornerstone in my recovery journey and always an empathetic and helpful listener.

I became involved in the Mission community and am an active participant and volunteer. I attend the camps Jan offers each summer and have gained so much love and acceptance by connecting to the women from all walks of life. It is a truly blessed time of rest, restoration and rejuvenation.

Now I am three years substance-free and living in affordable housing. What a blessing! I have the privilege of parenting my boys in an environment that promotes personal safety and love of self and others. Gradually, I am returning to the workforce.

My experience has taught me about life's pain and suffering but also about how precious life is. I believe I am giving so much to society right now and I have so much more to give. I can offer a deep understanding of poverty and suffering. I have a passion to teach others how to care for themselves and their communities. I have my voice back.

I have great hope and a growing and beautiful trust in God. To all who are struggling today I say, “Keep Hope Alive!”

# Get involved: VOLUNTEER

## GIFTS OF TIME

### OPPORTUNITY FOR GROUPS

**Downtown Towers Clothing Drive**  
Groups needed to receive clothing donations at the office towers, various shifts Jan. 25 – 29. Flyer distribution at Union Station, Jan. 21 & 22. Contact Stephanie Lear at 416-929-9614 ext. 4255 or slear@ysm.ca.

**Mentors - for Scholarship Recipients**  
Mature, professional, committed people to mentor youth entering post-secondary education. Qualifications: excellent listeners, good role models, some post-secondary education. Mentors must commit a minimum of four hours a month to this role and maintain weekly contact with their matched youth to develop a supportive and encouraging relationship. Minimum one year commitment.  
For these and other volunteer roles, visit [www.ysm.ca/volunteer](http://www.ysm.ca/volunteer).

## SPECIAL NEEDS

- Six eyewash stations to install in our various buildings for the health and safety of Property Services staff and volunteers: \$500
- Two cordless hand drills for ongoing building maintenance: \$600
- Transportation Fund – to purchase TTC tokens for community members needing assistance to go to appointments, job interviews, school: \$1,000
- Christmas Party – special outreach to street-involved women and their children: \$1,000

*Your generous response to our special needs is deeply appreciated. Thank you! For more information, contact Anne Keyes at 416-929-9614 ext. 4247 or [akeyes@ysm.ca](mailto:akeyes@ysm.ca).*



# FACES OF YSM

*"It was my husband who encouraged me to tell this story," says Fahmida Hossain. "He said, 'Why not tell everyone how much YSM has helped our family?'"*

*Fahmida and her husband moved to Regent Park in 2000. She was working towards an accounting diploma when she became pregnant. Her two children were born 17 months apart and Fahmida found herself a lonely young mother with no family support.*

*"My husband was studying all the time. I couldn't handle the two babies on my own. I was like a crazy person, not myself. Back home in Bangladesh, I would have had my mother and mother-in-law to teach me things. Here, I was so alone."*

*A friend told Fahmida about the Women & Family program at YSM's Community Centre and she enrolled in her first parenting course. Her children, then nine months and two years old, attended the Preschool.*

*"The first time I left my children in the Preschool was the first time I saw someone else cuddling my child," she says. "I couldn't believe someone else could love my child like that."*

*Fahmida has high praise for the Preschool staff and their impact on her kids. "The staff are so loving and kind and give lots of attention to each child.*

*When my daughter started kindergarten, I got a letter from the school saying how well prepared she was for school. I know many other parents did not get this letter."*

*Over the past four years, Fahmida has taken Yoga and Nutrition classes, participated in International Women's Day and the annual Fashion Show and completed several Parenting courses.*

*"Parenting class helped me understand Canadian ways," she says. "In my country we respect older people, not children. The class showed me how to understand the children's feelings. I told my husband about this and he tries to do it too. He says we have to become like Canadians."*

*Meeting with a group of parents to share ideas was a new concept to her. Now she speaks enthusiastically about the process.*

*"It works! Now I say to other new mothers, 'I know how you feel – I was like that too!'"*

*Fahmida looks forward to Christmas celebrations at the Mission.*

*"It's a little bit of happiness for the children. They want to be like other kids."*

*In a few years, Fahmida will go back to college or maybe get a job in a bank. Her priority now is to help her children succeed: "I'm not here to raise myself up, it's for my children."*

*She tells everyone about the programs that have helped her family so much.*

*"I say YSM is for everybody. The staff always smile at you. They really welcome people!"*



## FAHMIDA HOSSAIN

### BECOMING A CANADIAN PARENT

BY: KATHLEEN  
MAGLADRY

*"We enjoy serving the meals and the young people are so gracious and appreciative!" says a volunteer group.*



# Nourishing Evenings at Evergreen

By KATHLEEN MAGLADRY

Cool October weather signals the beginning of the Evergreen evening meal program which serves up to 100 street youth with a delicious hot meal five nights a week.

"Wow, I'm full!" grinned one young man as he finished his second helping.

"We meet the very real need of hunger through our meal program and we also develop a community of support," points out Brad Sider, Drop In Coordinator. "Evening meals provide a great way for staff to get to know youth better. The vibe is positive and the food is fantastic!"

The high quality of the meals is possible, according to Food Services Coordinator Vlad Nuk, thanks to the amazing volunteers who sponsor and serve evening meals for eight months of the year. Our volunteer groups typically cover the \$400 cost of hosting a meal. Everything is made from scratch

and groceries are purchased at a low price.

One faithful volunteer is Michelle Gebhart who comes twice a month with staff from Michelle's Brasserie. Another wonderful supporter, David Patriarche of Mainstay Insurance, volunteers his own group and has committed to finding over 20 other groups to help out this winter. Many volunteers come from the Los Silverados motorcycle group.

"Donors and volunteers are giving more than a meal," says Vlad. "Youth realize that there are adults who really care about them and who give up time and money to help them. What a positive impact that makes!"

In addition to increasing the evening meal program from three to five nights a week, the Drop In has recently expanded outreach services. These services include accompanying youth to court, helping youth move into housing, offering fitness activities and jail visits.

"Outreach programs are for the youth we already know. Their lives go on outside the walls of Evergreen and we try to be present with what they are going through," explains Brad Sider.

"One girl was trying to escape from an abusive relationship and I accompanied her to court when she testified against her abuser. That was a critical moment for her.

She now has a job and is getting on with her life."

"Without your support I wouldn't be where I am today," the young woman told us.

New outreach initiatives are helping youth turn their lives around. But the evening meal program plays a pivotal role for youth in need of hope and healing.

One young man found out that a volunteer was here temporarily from North Carolina.

"You came all that way to serve me dinner?" he asked.

"Yes," replied the volunteer.

Who knows what effect the power of this exchange will have on a young man who has lost faith and confidence in his own worth?

Our fantastic volunteers help work miracles in troubled young lives.

Thank you for your compassionate hearts and generous gifts!



## Volunteer Corner

### RUBY CONTRERAS

"I like to help people and learn more about their cultures," says Ruby about the volunteer work she has done every Friday for the past year at YSM's Food Bank. She also says it helps her to improve her English language skills.

Ruby was a physician in her native Columbia and, with her family, moved to Canada four years ago. She has started on the road towards gaining her Canadian qualifications by studying ESL and medical terminology at George Brown College.

Food Bank staff and clients value Ruby's great work, organizational abilities and her endless good cheer. Her contributions were recognized with a Volunteer Award this spring. Heartfelt thanks to Ruby and all others who give the precious gift of time!

## SERVICE UPDATE

### PROGRAM ATTENDANCE FOR 12-MONTH PERIOD ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2009

COMMUNITY SERVICES		EVERGREEN	
Daycare	11,211	Drop In	44,503
Children	5,534	Art	683
Youth	5,846	Health Centre	8,535
Women & Family	5,678	Employment Resource Centre	18,833
New Hope Fellowship	4,269	Evening Program	16,070
Seniors	6,099	Nursery	798
Resource Room	1,955	<b>Total</b>	<b>89,422</b>
Food Bank	33,943	Counselling	1050
Computer labs	11,240	Genesis Place	2,817
Special	1,096	Church at the Mission	8,358
Reception Drop In	826		
<b>Total</b>	<b>87,697</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>189,344</b>

# NEWS BYTES

## SUMMER CAMP 2009 – MORE CAMPERS, MORE FUN!

We saw a large increase in youth campers this summer: 32 teens signed up for the 'Building Healthy Relationships Camp' at Riverview to enjoy hiking, swimming, canoeing and, of course, the evening campfire.

The children's camp took their largest group ever to Riverview – 27 children and 31 Counselors in Training youth. At the end of a great week together one camper said, "I'm never bored here – there is always so much to do!"

The Cleanest Cabin Contest prompted a fevered pitch of competition. Elaine, our cook, was amazed when a little boy offered to take all the garbage from the kitchen. She thought he was an angel. He really wanted to collect the most trash to win a prize. The children did a wonderful clean up of the entire camp,



"I can't pick the best thing about camp. I just say Everything!"

so the contest was declared a tie and everyone got candy.

At the Community Centre, youth enjoyed a series of fitness, dance, drama, songwriting, cooking and martial arts workshops throughout July and August, capped with the ever-popular day at Canada's Wonderland.

The computer lab had six action-packed weeks of 'Keep It Real' day camp with 30 children signed up for each session. Thanks to a donation from the Toronto Star, they enjoyed field trips to the Metro Zoo and Ontario Science Centre. Computer camp wound up with a carnival and barbeque for over 60 children. We thank Canada's Wonderland for donating admissions for our summer day camps.

## SCHOLARSHIP STUDENTS CELEBRATE WITH MENTORS

"It's a big jump from high school to university, so it's really good to have his advice," said a YSM scholarship recipient as he introduced his mentor at a special dinner on September 3rd.

Scholarship Coordinator Beverley Trull paired the students with mentors in June, allowing time for solid relationships to build before the hard work of the school term.

All of the mentors were impressed with their students' accomplishments and self-direction. "She hasn't had the easiest life, but with such a positive attitude, she's a star!"

The students welcomed their mentors' support: "He's so smart, I've already learned about time management from him." "I felt overwhelmed about starting university – she's helped me by being encouraging and made me realize I will be okay, to take it step by step."



"In ten years I hope to be a doctor like my mentor!"

Our gifted 2009 scholarship students are preparing for careers in medicine (two young medical residents are mentors), teaching, social work and more.

A female engineer is mentoring a young woman studying engineering. Mentors range from mature adults with master's degrees to recent young grads who want to give back.

"I have a new friend!" said one student, summing up the strong bonds forged.

## STAFF ON THE MOVE

Karen Bach, Director of Evergreen since 2002, has been named to the senior role of Mission Program Officer.



Karen Bach, Mission Program Officer

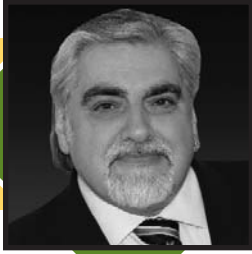
"Karen is uniquely positioned to help us through the changes ahead," said CEO Rick Tobias. "We are moving forward with our expansion both in St. James Town and in new locations in the GTA and her expertise will be a great asset."

"I expect YSM to be a force to be reckoned with in this city when it comes to justice issues," said Karen. "The next few years will be very exciting!"



Seniors enjoy a Thanksgiving banquet. "We can't wait for Christmas!"

Photo: J. Cowie



# THE BACK PAGE

By: *Dr. Rick Tobias, YSM President and CEO*

## The Gift of Compassion and Generosity

A great tradition of concern for and generosity towards the poor is deeply ingrained in our North American Christmas celebrations. Perhaps the very best of that tradition is experienced when, as a society, we mobilize to ensure that every child in every home receives at least one good toy on Christmas morning.

As a child, I would sit with my family in front of the TV to watch “The Empty Stocking Fund” broadcast in Saint John, NB. Between performances by local musicians and entertainers, we learned that many children in our city might wake up on Christmas morning and find nothing under their tree. At age eight or nine I could not begin to comprehend the realities of domestic poverty or its impact on children, but I sure understood that waking up on Christmas and finding no toys would be miserable.

Part of the appeal of the Christmas broadcast was that those who made a donation had their names flash across the TV screen. If your donation was big enough your name was read aloud and you were thanked on air. When I heard our family name read out, I knew we had done a good thing and even though as kids we had contributed nothing, our parents had. Through them, we felt proud that we had given to something important. In truth, my parents gave two gifts each Christmas: one to the Empty Stocking Fund’s children and the other to their sons – the example of compassion and generosity towards others

that was as important as what lay beneath our tree on Christmas morning.

My worldview is a little more complex now than it was as a child. Today, I understand that what happens at Christmas is a very small part of what, as a society, we must do to ensure that all our children grow well and live well; much of what we could and should do remains undone. Today I also understand the emotional turmoil of many parents as they swallow their pride and make their way to the Mission, knowing that they have not been able to provide for their children on their own. And I see the joy that enfolds parents when they become more self-sufficient.



Still, there remains something pure and innocent about a gift of an amazing toy to a child who might otherwise be left out. An exceptional meal or banquet or party over the Christmas Season induces wonder and delight among those who attend and

providing groceries for families to enjoy over the season is great, but what excites me is that we will place nearly 20,000 toys, books and puzzles in the hands of children this season.

I pray for the day when, as a nation, we discover better ways to care for our children; for a day when we have created more equitable structures for distributing wealth. Until that day arrives, I remain proud of the Mission’s Christmas efforts and touched by the involvement of the thousands of individuals and groups who will make this Christmas special for one of our children.

And as you respond to Christmas appeals, I invite you to find ways to involve your children and grandchildren. Take them shopping for toys and food. Bring them by the Mission when you drop off your gifts. And talk to them about why you support us. I expect that, as I did, they will experience the joy and pride that comes with sharing in your generosity.

To all who help us make Christmas a special time - my heartfelt thanks. And to all who have stood with us through this year’s economic downturn – a hundred million thank yous! Because of you and your generosity, YSM programs stayed open, our services were delivered at peak capacities and we remain a healthy and vibrant organization and community.

What a gift you’ve given us this year!