

URBAN



LIGHTS

Hope in the city

SINCE 1896

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V O L . 1 0 I S S U E 1



Photo: Peter Emmerson

Labours of Love:

our volunteers are amazing!



BY KATHLEEN MAGLADRY

Every week for the past ten years, Grace Dzavala has made the trek by streetcar to 381 Yonge St. to volunteer in the Evergreen kitchen making egg salad, peeling carrots and washing dishes. Rain, snow and sub-zero weather don't stop her. She even came in on

her birthday and said it was her "best day yet."

When Grace had a hip replacement, she was worried we'd put another volunteer in her Thursday time slot. We didn't. We don't call her Amazing Grace for nothing!

YSM depends on a roster of volunteers like Grace, without whom our programs would grind to a halt. Some are community

members, others come through corporate or church connections. According to some estimates in the voluntary sector, our volunteers give over \$600,000 worth of donated time.

But we're not putting a price on our volunteers' gifts of time, because they are priceless. Our volunteers bring expertise, enthusiasm and energy, and their work is a labour of love. Just take a look in our Food Bank any day of the week. You'll find a devoted group of men and women unpacking

In this issue...

- Giving at the office
- On the Edge: expansion targets at-risk youth
- Employee and Volunteer of the Century

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boxes, stocking shelves and assisting clients. Many have been coming to help for 10 or 20 years. Some laugh and confess they can't remember how long they've been volunteering.

Why do so many people want to volunteer here? "They feel welcome," says Ruth Pentinga, Director of Volunteer Resources. "They are genuinely embraced by staff and community members. We spend time touring new volunteers and talking to them about our work. We're flexible and work hard to place groups who may only be free on a certain day."

What makes volunteers come back year after year? "Quite simply, they are grateful," says Ruth. "Volunteers often say to us, 'Thank you for allowing me to help.' We provide a way for some people to connect with the poor and they appreciate being part of something that they had only read about in the newspaper."

For community members who attend programs here, volunteering is a way to 'give back' and be useful. Brenda Haist is a New Hope Fellowship member who sits on the New Hope committee, teaches crafts, calls the Bingo games and generally helps out every Tuesday and Thursday. Her husband Rob sets up tables and acts as security at the door. New Hope Fellowship depends on 28 volunteers, mostly community members, faithfully giving the gift of themselves every week. Our Property Department benefits from 160 hours of volunteer time every month. Property Manager Kin Sing Sum says, "The guys pick up donations in the truck, move furniture, set up for events and drive our seniors home. We can't manage without them."

Tenants at Genesis Place, our supportive housing building, enjoy a community lunch every Tuesday lovingly prepared by volunteer Maria Biggs. Maria suffered some toe amputation due to diabetes and so must come to us on WheelTrans. That doesn't stop her from cooking soup, stew, salad and pasta. At Thanksgiving, her husband helped her prepare a full festive banquet.

At our Computer Literacy Centre, at least 15 volunteers a week assist with classes, refurbish computers and prepare snacks. "I

think volunteers offer an important role model. Students see people who are using computer skills in the workplace," says Julian Williams, Computer Education Coordinator.

One such volunteer is Ben Goss, who works at the University of Toronto. He enjoys assisting in the computer lab because it combines two things he really likes – children and computers. "It's a joy to work on new machines at YSM," he says, "and the kids are so glad to see me. Everybody here is nice."

Top Ten Reasons for Volunteering at YSM

1. I believe in the work you are doing.
2. I heard Rick Tobias (or Bill Ryan) speak.
3. I attend programs here.
4. Our company wants to give back to the community.
5. A friend told me how great you guys are.
6. My school class/church group wants to do something good.
7. Your name popped up on my Internet search.
8. I used to work here.
9. I supplement my Ontario Works cheque by volunteering here.
10. I liked what I saw on your website.

In our Youth Group, several volunteers help out at our Friday Night Drop In, supervising the lounge and games room or preparing meals. For youth in our Scholarship Program, we provide volunteer mentors who provide advice and support throughout the student's academic career.

Our Seniors group depends on 20 regular volunteers per week, plus groups who come in to serve a meal. Shirley Vasilis is one regular who has just completed 20 years' service.

"I had come to visit the Mission as a teenager. Then when I took early retirement, I heard a speaker from YSM and knew I just had to come to volunteer. I started out playing the piano and doing crafts with the seniors. I was painfully shy – but the

most amazing thing has happened! Being here has totally changed my life. Now I can speak in front of the group with ease. We all come together in love here. I have no intention of retiring from YSM."

While many corporate or church groups come once a year, some groups at Evergreen are regulars who sign on to pay for, cook and serve an evening meal to homeless youth. The evening meal program was begun 10 years ago by Los Silverados and our thanks go out to them as well as to Apotex Inc., Fred Deeley Imports, Manulife Financial, First Filipino Baptist, Michelle's Bistro and many, many more who serve street youth with such practical compassion. We salute Bob and Jane Graham, founders of Los Silverados motorcycle group, who contribute so much of their time and challenge others to do the same.

Tributes to volunteers would not be complete without mention of the health professionals at Evergreen Health Centre. We count on 49 regulars who offer their expertise as nurses, doctors, chiropractors, optometrists and dentists, the latter always being in short supply.

Dr. Alan Tinmouth is a retired cardiologist who was recruited by Dr. Paul Caulford, another Evergreen volunteer. He walks to the Health Centre twice a month from his home in Cabbagetown to see 10 to 15 street youth each visit.

"At first I was a bit apprehensive but now I love it," he says. "I feel for kids on the street and I'm happy to do my part to help them."

Servants, saints, friends: our many volunteers are a precious asset. Thank you all for your gifts of time and your labours of love!

Cover photos clockwise from top left:

Ben Goss – Computer Lab

Brenda Haist – New Hope Fellowship

Dr. Alan Tinmouth – Evergreen Health

Shirley Vasilis – Seniors

Joyce Batson – Food Bank

Maria Biggs – Genesis Place

Grace Dzavala – Evergreen



Administration:
DR. RICK TOBIAS
President and CEO

DAVID ADCOCK
Vice President and COO

BARBARA WALKDEN
Director of Development

KERRY BOWSER
Senior Program Director
 Branches:

KAREN BACH
Director of Evergreen

MATTHEW PARKER
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

ROSEMARY GRAY-SNELGROVE
Director of Housing Genesis Place

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Charitable Registration #119306181 RR001

Publication No. 1632817



Lend a HELPING hand

CAN YOU GIVE AT THE OFFICE?

Your workplace can be a base from which to reach out and help the Mission overcome poverty in our community. Most businesses now want to become better corporate citizens and encourage their employees to reach out and make a difference from their workplace. Here's how you can help:

- Employee-led food and clothing drives make a crucial difference to our out reach programs.
- Employee-driven giving allows you to designate your donations through your company's giving plan payroll deductions. For example, Bell Canada's Employee Giving Program and OPG Employees' & Pensioners' Charity Trust both facilitate donations to YSM.
- You may have an opportunity to sit on your company's charitable giving committee. We are grateful for the ongoing support of the TD Securities Employee Charity Auction for employee-driven gifts.
- Corporate matching programs make a double impact through the employer matching employee gifts towards a chosen charity. Perhaps you could ask if your employer would participate in this kind of philanthropic program.
- Employees' significant volunteer commitments are recognized by some employers who make financial contributions to honour these volunteer hours. Mackenzie Financial Corporation supports YSM in this way.

The ongoing financial gifts of both our individual and corporate friends make the Mission's life-affirming work possible. More and more it is the social conscience of employees and employers alike that is making these gifts possible.

Find out if your employer offers these opportunities to build a healthier future for our community – it could be a winning situation for all of us! Yonge Street Mission is honoured to receive gifts from such a broadly based community of friends.



Yes, I want to help too!

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 _____

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Please send me:

- Information on annuities and planned giving Monthly donor brochure
 Information on In Memory and In Honour gifts Listing of Volunteer Opportunities

Yonge Street Mission, 270 Gerrard Street East, Toronto ON M5A 2G4
 Phone: 416-929-9614 ext. 273 Toll Free: 1-800-416-5111 Fax: 416-929-7204
 E-mail: donorservices@ysm.on.ca Web site: www.ysm.on.ca

Please make cheque payable to Yonge Street Mission. Charitable Number 11930 6181 RR001

ONLY 17%

of your donation to YSM goes to fund-raising and administration costs.

To view our Ethical Fund-Raising and Financial Accountability Code, visit www.ysm.on.ca/privacy.php.

Mark your calendars
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Thurs. Feb. 21, 7 p.m.
 Refreshments 6:30 p.m.
 270 Gerrard St. East

CORPORATE SPONSOR MAKES BRIGHT LIGHTS SPARKLE



BY BRAD OFFMAN
*President of Mackenzie Financial
Charitable Foundation*

of 125 worthy charities because we found the work they do with the poor and children in downtown Toronto to be nothing short of inspiring.

YSM immediately found ways for us to partner with them. We held a Christmas food and toy drive, donated 89 late-model computer monitors to the Mission's computer lab, supported their Los Silverados golf tournament and held a big food and clothing drive in response to summer shortages.

When we made a video last year on the work of Mackenzie Financial Charitable Foundation, YSM was a star – particularly its wonderful computer lab where children in the Regent Park community can enroll in free computer classes and get a re-conditioned computer to take home.

As we came to know more about YSM, we realized the amazing work they do in the area of education, from after-school homework clubs and pre-school classes to adult apprenticeships and more. In particular, we discovered their Scholarship Program.

This educational initiative offers money to students in financial need to pursue post-secondary studies. Students must be nominated by YSM staff and be involved in YSM programs either at Evergreen Centre for Street Youth or the Community Centre in Regent Park. In this academic year, the program will help up to 30 youth.

Mackenzie Financial Charitable

Foundation thought this was a fantastic way to be involved in a project to break cycles of poverty and allow young people to become fully contributing members of our society. We thought it would be a great idea to increase the fund so that even more young people could be helped and the size of the scholarships could grow.

Out of this came the exciting Bright Lights event held at the ROM on October 30. The evening was successful in raising tens of thousands of dollars for the Scholarship Program. Mackenzie Financial Charitable Foundation was proud to be the presenting sponsor and to have two of our staff volunteer on the planning committee.

Those who attended will know what I mean when I say that the highlight of the evening was the moment when two of the scholarship recipients told their stories. One came to Canada alone as a 20-year-old refugee; the other came as a 12-year-old immigrant. Both had to overcome problems of language, poverty and isolation. No one could listen to their stories without realizing that the Scholarship Program was really making a difference in their lives.

We at Mackenzie Financial are grateful to have the opportunity to positively affect the lives of these young people and to work with the staff at YSM as they try to make our city a better place.

We wish YSM, and those whose lives you strive to enhance, every success.

"It was a fantastic way to be involved in a project to break cycles of poverty and allow young people to become fully contributing members of our society."

Mackenzie Financial has a long history of giving back to our communities through volunteering, fundraising and donating. We look for opportunities to support organizations that focus on social welfare, poverty and educational needs. As well, we look for charities that offer volunteer opportunities and ways for Mackenzie Financial employees to get involved.

Back in 2006, we chose YSM as one of 11 charities that we would support through our Charitable Foundation. We picked YSM out

Get involved: VOLUNTEER

COMMUNITY SERVICES

Computer Lab Host Weekly commitment to prepare snacks, supervise the front door of the lab, talk with students and their parents and help in whatever other way is needed. Personable, responsible, experience working with children. Shifts: Mon. 5pm-8pm, Tues.-Fri. 3pm-7pm, Saturdays 10am-noon.

New Hope Fellowship Dinners Up to ten individuals in a group to prepare and serve a lovely dinner to our adult community members. Conversation, fellowship and clean-up once meals are finished. Tues. & Thur.

EVERGREEN

Lunch Groups Welcome Up to six volunteers in a group to help prepare and serve Mon.-Fri. 10am-2pm. Volunteers must be 19 years old or over.

Please call the Volunteer Resources office if these opportunities appeal. We'd love to hear from you. 416-929-9614 ext. 236. Check www.ysm.on.ca/volunteer and see the first issue of Volunteer Views, our quarterly newsletter for and about volunteers at YSM.

SPECIAL NEEDS

- Portable snow plow, to clear ramps, sidewalks and hard-to-reach spots at 270, 280 and 310 Gerrard St. East: \$2,000
- Guitars, good-quality used guitars for Children's Music Program: 8 @ \$80 = \$640
- Carts, to transport snacks and books at Children's Homework Club: \$400
- Basketball rims and boards for CCC gym: 2 @ \$250 = \$500

Thank you to all of you who respond so generously to our Special Needs. For more information, contact Barbara Walkden at 416-929-9614, ext. 245 or bwalkden@ysm.on.ca.



FACES OF YSM

Imagine soaking your poor old feet in warm, soapy water, then having your nails carefully trimmed and your corns and calluses treated, and finally having your feet gently massaged with lotion. All this is done lovingly by someone who also lifts your spirits by offering a listening ear and a ready smile, or even a joke. Who could this angel be?

Meet Bernard Janzen, retired nurse and devoted volunteer in our Seniors' Program. Bernard started as a driver with us five years ago, but soon went on to put his nursing experience to work by setting up the Foot Clinic. Every Tuesday all year long he drives in from Pickering to offer his services and usually treats 4 - 6 seniors a week.

"Maybe some days I'd rather be out golfing," admits Bernard. "But you know what? I always go home feeling blessed. I love the chance to laugh and joke with the seniors."

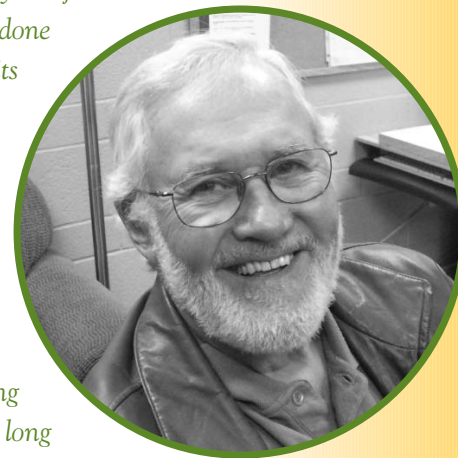
The seniors love him in turn. "He's a doll," says one lady, waiting for her turn at the foot clinic.

"I have edema," says another. "I don't know what my feet would be like without Bernard. I'd probably have to go to the hospital."

Seniors Coordinator Janice Rainey comments, "Bernard is a compassionate person who sees a need and responds. For example, he provided special shoes for one of the seniors who had swollen feet. He buys his own tools and supplies. He comes as 'health back-up' on trips and to summer camp. He even bakes goodies and brings them in for a treat!"

"I learned as a nurse that when you bathe a patient, the bath is incidental to the conversation you can have," explains Bernard. "I believe it's the same with foot care. I'm here to listen, laugh, educate and learn. I just happen to do that by running a foot clinic."

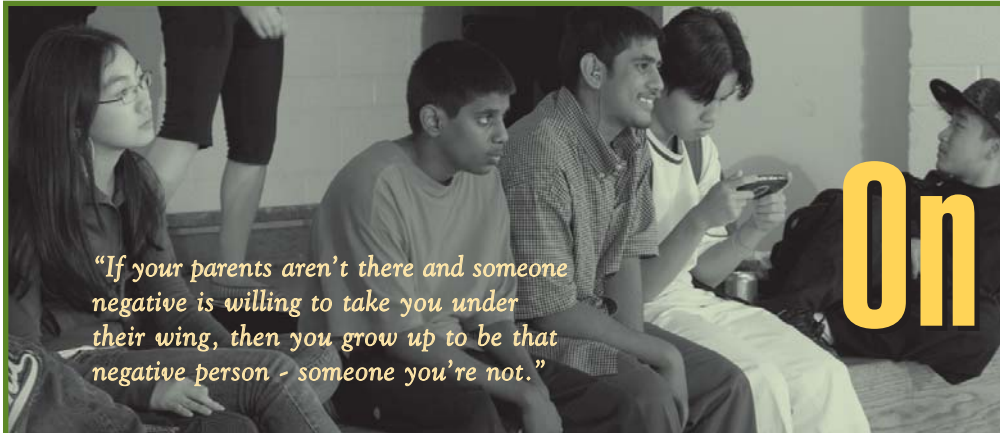
How long will Bernard continue his special service? "I'm happy to do it as long as I can still bend over and get up," he promises. "I just hope someone will do this for me when I'm elderly!"



BERNARD JANZEN

FOOT CARE SPECIALIST

BY:
KATHLEEN
MAGLADRY



"If your parents aren't there and someone negative is willing to take you under their wing, then you grow up to be that negative person - someone you're not."

On the Edge

YSM reaches out to more youth at risk with three-year expansion project.

BY KERRY BOWSER,
SENIOR PROGRAM DIRECTOR

This comment was made by one of our youth talking about the influence of gang leaders and drug dealers in the neighbourhood. One of the most difficult things that many of our young people face is the pressure to become involved in lifestyles that they would normally never choose. The lack of positive role models in their lives causes them to look for leadership and mentoring in any place they can, sometimes with devastating results.

It's not just that these youth have parents who don't care. While it is true that there are parents whose own pain and hurt make it very difficult to be the positive role models that their children need, often the real dilemma is the great poverty that families live in. Almost two-thirds of all children and youth in the immediate neighbourhood live below the poverty line. Many come from single parent homes where parents work two full time jobs just to make ends meet. That doesn't leave

much time to interact with their children.

In order to help address that need, Yonge Street Mission, in partnership with World Vision, James H. Cummings Foundation Inc., Dewdney Family Charitable Foundation, St. Andrew's United Church and other donors, has launched a three-year youth expansion project called The Edge. In addition to adding two staff members, this new venture will target at-risk and most-at-risk youth in the Cabbagetown/Regent Park community with a Leadership Development and Mentoring program. Not only do we hope to instill leadership skills in youth, we want to develop youth leaders who will give back to their communities by teaching transferable leadership skills, enabling youth to take those skills into the wider community and be a positive role model and influence for others.

The other significant lack for youth in our neighbourhood is the chance to learn

about the arts. While sports and recreation programming provides great outlets for many of our youth, the opportunity to understand, study and appreciate the arts is often absent. The Edge will provide specific arts programming not only to help youth explore and gain an appreciation for the arts, but even encourage them to consider the arts as a valid career option.

Until now, our resources have limited us to working with youth until the age of 18. However, many youth over 18 still need the kind of guidance and direction in their life that positive role modelling and mentoring provides. The Edge will broaden our mandate and enable us to work with youth until they reach 25 years of age.

Someone once said, *"If you're not living on the edge, you're taking up too much space."* We are about to start living on The Edge.



LEAVING A LEGACY THAT TRULY MAKES A DIFFERENCE!

Have you considered making a bequest to Yonge Street Mission in your will? Your will is one of your first priorities in managing your affairs and planning for the future. After remembering family and others who are important, gifts are often left to charities.

Here at the Mission, gifts from estates are very important. Your gift can be a lasting legacy of hope for the future.

If you have named the Mission in your will, please let us know so that we may note our files. To discuss any questions you have about bequests or other planned giving, contact Quentin Schesnuik at (416) 929-9614 ext. 260 or giftplanner@ysm.on.ca.

SERVICE UPDATE

VOLUNTEER RESOURCES FOR THE YEAR ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2007

Total Annual Volunteers	3,171
Number of Groups (corporate, church, school, etc.)	297
Average Regular Volunteers per month	227
Total Annual Volunteer Hours	33,965
Christmas Individual Volunteers	1,003
Christmas Number of Groups	56
Christmas Volunteer hours	3,260

NEWS BYTES

THREADS OF HOPE

As we go to press our 10th Annual Towers Clothing Drive is set to roll along the underground PATH system, kicking off with Threads of Hope, a breakfast fundraiser in Toronto's historic Design Exchange building.

The Threads of Hope special event marks this milestone 10th anniversary by celebrating transformations – the transformations in the lives of our community members wrought by these amazing gifts of clothing.

Featured speaker Diane Craig, President of Corporate Class Inc., has helped hundreds of men and women realize their professional and personal goals. Diane offered advice on the message we communicate with our style of dress.

Several street youth from Yonge Street Mission's Evergreen Centre were thrilled to receive an image makeover from Diane's team. A more polished look equals a big boost in self-esteem and this is a very important step towards turning their lives around.

This year 16 towers signed on to participate in the Clothing Drive, with almost 100 volunteers guaranteeing its success. All of us at the Mission are very grateful to our volunteers who make their way downtown well before sunrise on some of the coldest mornings of the year to receive hundreds of bags of donated clothing from commuters.

Thank you to all of our donors and volunteers for making the 10th Annual Clothing Drive such a success!

NEW SPACE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Construction is on track to finish our expanded children and youth program space for early spring. Our three fulltime children and youth workers have moved into their new office and, as we go to press, the new craft and youth rooms are taking shape.

Programming is continuing throughout the

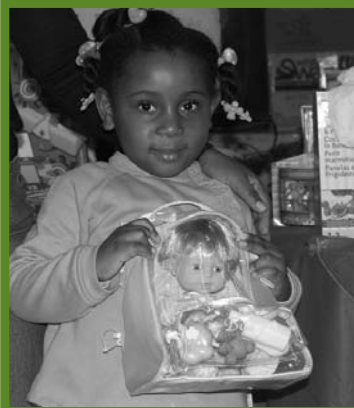
construction period as the completed areas are phased in. The old craft room will be replaced with a larger space that can be completely opened or divided into three smaller areas.

"This will be great for offering different programs at the same time – we have a wide range of interests among the children who come to our after-school clubs," says Children's Coordinator, Julie MacLean.

"The youth are really looking forward to finally having their own space at the Community Centre," says Jeff Kariuki, Youth Worker.

Kitchen renovations and expansion were also completed in January. They will allow us to offer food services job training to people in our community. The new kitchen renovation was dedicated to the loving memory of Jim Brakel.

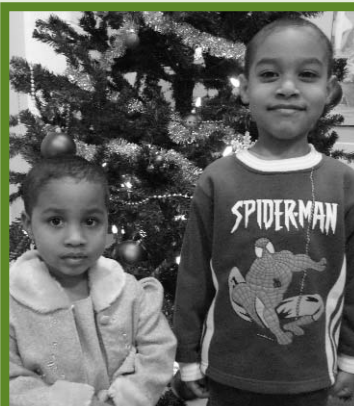
It is a testament to the dedication of all YSM staff that despite the disruptions of the construction period and through their creative thinking and good humour, they have kept up a high level of service to the people who depend on us.



"I got a new doll at the Christmas Market!"



"I'm going to be a shepherd in the Christmas pageant!"



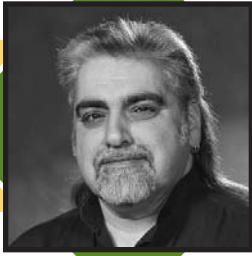
"We're going to the Christmas banquet!"

CHRISTMAS MARKET 2007

Our Christmas Market began on December 12th and ran until the 22nd. Thanks to our hundreds of volunteers and donors, it was once again a great success in serving our hard-pressed community. Over 5,500 children and adults received gifts of food, clothing and toys from the Market, as well as meals and other Christmas programs.

We are grateful to the many schools, churches and employee groups who held Christmas Wish List food, toy and gift drives for us, and to the CHUM Christmas Wish and Toronto Star Children's Charities. Your generosity made the Christmas Market possible.

Many wonderful corporate volunteer groups helped to operate the Christmas Market over a hectic nine-day period. Thanks to the employees of these firms and many others for their gifts of time and energy: The Sheraton Centre, BMO, Dell Canada, Affinity Markets, Nike, Ideaca, EBay Canada and Echo Marketing Solutions.



THE BACK PAGE

By: Dr. Rick Tobias, YSM President and CEO

Employee and Volunteer of the Century

"We urgently need at least three more City Missionaries. Our present staff is altogether too small and already overworked. Would you...like to have the privilege of providing a City Missionary? Twenty-five dollars a week will support a Full time Missionary."

So read the appeal in the September, 1943 issue of Yonge Street Mission's newsletter, then know as "Out of the Storm." Featured was Miss Wilma Watson, a \$25-a-week Mission worker who had begun her career with YSM only a year earlier.

No one could have predicted Wilma's significance in the life of Yonge Street Mission. Hired as the new Office Secretary and Treasurer, this City Missionary also cared for women in need of assistance, visited in homes and hospitals, and assisted in Sunday School and other children's programs. Three times a week she played the piano at evening services, frequently also singing, and played the organ at our open air services.

Directors came and went during Wilma's 41-year tenure, but she became a constant and ever-present strength. Former Director Glenn Taylor (1982-1989) said, "If it hadn't been for her counsel, affirmation and encouragement, I would hardly have known where to start."

Wilma trained most of YSM's directors, especially in matters of faith and true service. In an era when women were unlikely to ever attain senior positions, Wilma stepped in when the men departed; likewise she

was critical to keeping the Mission on an even keel when leadership was weak. I absolutely believe that there would be no Yonge Street Mission today without Wilma Watson – a true spiritual matriarch.

So who is Wilma? Her former colleagues describe her as gracious, humble, quiet, attentive, knowledgeable, hard working, and always open to change. But they quickly add that though unassuming, she was strong, had a mind of her own, set



high standards for the Mission and had high expectations of the rest of us. Long before the words had much currency, she networked donors, coached and mentored young women and invested heavily in staff development.

In every respect Wilma was a pioneer in Urban Mission. Were she active today, she would be the best known and respected urban worker in the nation, a celebrity of ministry. Today, we find it challenging even to grasp the commitment of someone

who would quietly, without fanfare, commit her entire lifetime to serving the poor of our city.

Part of the explanation is found in the 1942 announcement of her appointment, in which Wilma said: "My gracious Lord has now guided my steps to Yonge Street Mission...I am thrilled and happy to be associated with the work of God in this time-honoured mission." She quotes 2 Corinthians 9:8 as her guiding Scripture: "And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work."

Remarkably, her faith and her sense of calling sustained her for 60 years of ministry with us. When Wilma retired from YSM staff in 1983, she continued as a Mission volunteer for almost 20 years. Today she still is an active member of YSM's corporation and continues to promote YSM and its needs. Beyond "Employee of the Month" or "Volunteer of the Year", Wilma alone qualifies as "Employee and Volunteer of the Century."

Wilma recently celebrated her 90th birthday. Happy Birthday, Wilma. Thank you for setting the bar high and then living up to it. YSM is a far more effective ministry because of you. We are so very grateful for your life-long investment in YSM and its people.

Rick.