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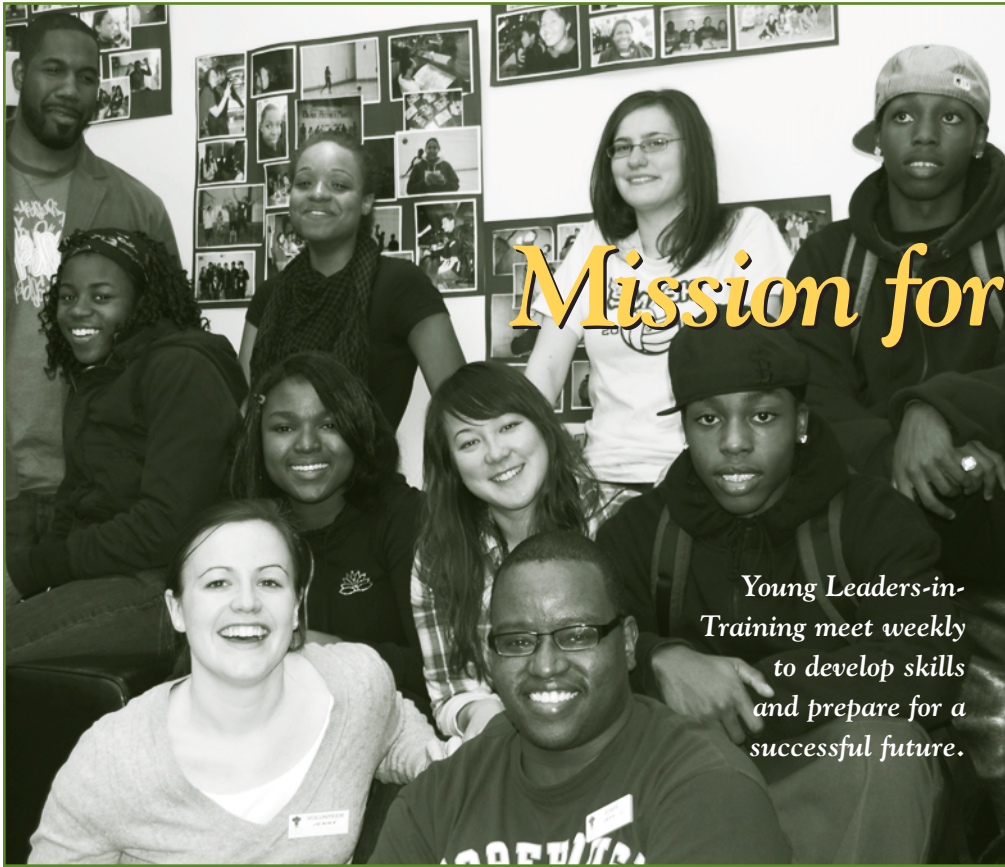
LIGHTS

Hope in the city

SINCE 1896

W I N T E R - 2 0 0 9

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



Mission for the Future

BY KATHLEEN MAGLADRY

We are on the move...

Young Leaders-in-Training meet weekly to develop skills and prepare for a successful future.

Imagine a city you would be proud to leave as a legacy to your grandchildren... Yonge Street Mission has a dream of a healthy city filled with opportunity for all citizens. Over the next ten years as we implement this vision, we will change the way YSM delivers programs and services.

“What do you say to a 50-year-old man who is humiliated to find himself in a Food

Bank line?” asks Rick Tobias, CEO of the Mission. “Once he had a secure job in the manufacturing sector and was proud of his self-sufficiency. Now he’s unemployed or under-employed and asking for handouts. He’s become his own caricature.”

A story like this explains part of the ‘why’ in the question: Why is the Mission embarking on such a significant change and

expansion at this time? The answer, Rick says, is that the face of poverty is changing in our city in two significant ways.

1. *Who are the poor?* Our city now includes many who are poor for the first time, either because their well-paying jobs have dried up or their education and qualifications from their country of origin are not recognized here and they can’t find work using their skill sets. Most never thought they would become one of the poor.

2. *Where are the poor?* Areas in downtown Toronto like Regent Park are the historical

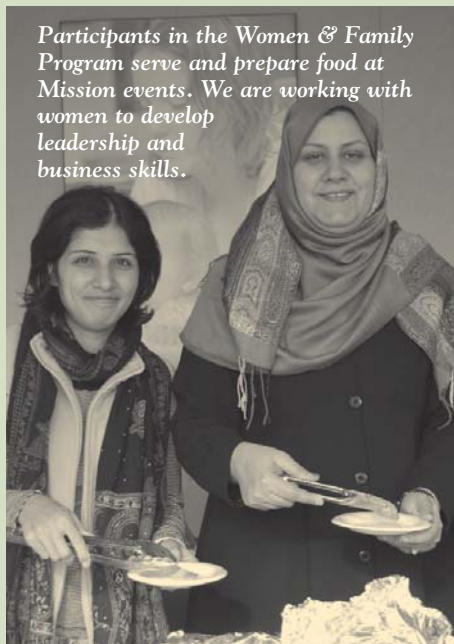
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- *Pimp Prevention Program*

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turf of the poor. But these areas are becoming middle-class condo villages. While some of our downtown neighbourhoods still have the highest concentration of poverty in the city, they no longer hold the greatest numbers of poor people. The poor have moved to areas in the northeast and northwest, along the 401 beltway. Like it or not, the presence of the poor downtown will diminish, says Rick, and that is why we must be on the move.



Participants in the Women & Family Program serve and prepare food at Mission events. We are working with women to develop leadership and business skills.

Keeping in mind that there is a geographical shift in the location of poverty and a change in background of people who find themselves poor, YSM has begun to respond with a changing model. For people who arrive at our doors hungry, the traditional model has been to provide meals and groceries. That model will not disappear because there will always be some very dependent people.

But for people who are not dependent, the starting point of a relationship with YSM has to be a partnership that keeps people from slipping into dependence. Community development begins with a conversation about aspirations: What are your dreams? What were you hoping for when you came to Canada or took that job in auto manufacturing? The answer is usually, "I wanted a better life for my children."

How can we help you fulfill your

dreams? In a service delivery model, a community might say, "Our teenagers need somewhere to go," and the Mission would open a Drop In. But the community development approach might be to ask, "How can we help you open a Drop In and turn it into a personal development program for your children? Can we help you negotiate with the City or find space in a church?"

One of the stated goals of YSM has been to help people move to full participation in society. We want everybody in this city to enjoy a reasonably good quality of life. A community development approach does less *for* people and more *alongside* of people, saying, "We will help you attain that goal *yourself*."

As the face and place of poverty shift in our city, our organization must remain flexible, adaptable and sensitive, developing the skills necessary to meet new realities.

In truth, the Mission has been on the forefront of change for years. Many of our current programs already fit the community development model of helping people to help themselves. For ten years we have offered employment and job training through our Double Take store for Regent Park residents who lack Canadian work experience. Our computer lab offers an array of free computer courses to make sure no child is left behind in our technological society. Evergreen provides supports to link street-involved youth to jobs and training.

One example of community development is the Community Kitchen Program, still in the visioning stage with some local women. One day we hope to see community members come together to cook, share cooking techniques and to purchase food in bulk for the group to divide and package, thereby reducing the family grocery bill. YSM might provide the use of the kitchen but the group would organize its own activities.

"We are moving towards a stronger community development model as we continue to engage the changing Regent Park community," says Kerry Bowser, Senior Program Director. "Most programs have a council in place that develops

community leaders from within."

In the Women & Family program, women took the chance for leadership and ran with it. The apprenticeship program allows women to develop skills and self-confidence as they teach fitness, computer, sewing, cooking or assist in the pre-school program. The council gives leadership opportunities in planning and delivering community events such as International Women's Day. It is a thrill to see so many women from the program go on to acquire further education and move into the work force.

Over the next few years, YSM will change from within and move out to become a citywide Mission. We have already established our first of several planned satellite locations, this one in St. James Town. There we are working as the lead organization in the Youth Network, advocating for change in the neighbourhood, initiating and facilitating the local Youth Council and facilitating Job Fairs and other means to providing youth with



Members of the Seniors' Council plan activities for the coming year.

employment and summer jobs.

We will continue to move into new areas where we are sure we are needed and wanted. We are proceeding thoughtfully, ensuring we have the resources to complete what we begin.

Our city has so much to offer: a rich culture, ethnic diversity, delightful neighbourhoods. Our citizens have much to offer, too. But some of them, especially young ones, can't wait.

Dreams of a better future must turn into real opportunities soon. Your support of the *Mission in Motion* campaign is invaluable as we go on the move with a vision of hope, possibility and empowerment for all in our city. Thank you for walking with us!



Administration:

DR. RICK TOBIAS
President and CEO

DAVID ADCOCK
Vice President and COO

BARBARA WALKDEN
Director of Development

KERRY BOWSER
Senior Program Director

MOREEN WHITE
Finance Manager

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

KATHY WEBSTER
Double Take, Store Manager

270 Gerrard Street East,
Toronto, Ontario M5A 2G4
Phone: (416) 929-9614
1-800-416-5111
Fax: (416) 929-7204
www.ysm.on.ca

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Lend a HELPING hand

Will you help?

Have you remembered your favourite charity in your will?

Do you even have a will?

Only 50% of Canadians have a will prepared when they die, meaning the other half have decided to let the government distribute their estate. To retain control of the distribution of your assets when you pass on, we urge you to have an up-to-date will.

When drawing up your will, you will want to take care of family responsibilities first. Many think of their place of worship second. After that, you may wish to make a bequest to a charity either as a specific dollar amount or a percentage of assets. We hope you will consider naming the Mission in your will.

Some of our donors who have left bequests to the Mission have realized they are making an investment in the future of our city. Your donation today meets urgent program needs, but your bequest leaves a legacy of hope for tomorrow. With our *Mission in Motion* expansion underway, we look forward to making our city a better place for all our children and grandchildren. And you can help!

For more information on bequests, wills or other planned giving, please contact Lena Balkaran at 416-929-9614 ext. 260 or giftplanner@ysm.on.ca. Lena is our new Gift Planning Officer and comes to us with a sales and marketing background in the financial sector. She will be delighted to help you – and thank you for helping us!



Mark your calendars

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Thurs. Feb. 19, 7 p.m.
Refreshments 6:30 p.m.
270 Gerrard St. East

Make a gift
In Memory or In Honour
and we will send
a card to the family.

Check the Donations section
on our website to use our
secure on-line form.

Yes, I will help!

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 bequests and other planned giving programs

A listing of Volunteer Opportunities DVD on our Scholarship Recipients

I am considering a pledge to the *Mission in Motion* expansion campaign.

Please send a prospectus.

Yonge Street Mission, 270 Gerrard Street East, Toronto ON M5A 2G4

Phone: 416-929-9614 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 RR0001

A PIECE OF OUR CITY



**BY MITCHELL COHEN,
PRESIDENT, THE DANIELS
CORPORATION**

The Daniels Corporation, founded in 1982, has received numerous awards including the prestigious Highrise Builder of the Year Award. The company has a long history of supporting charitable organizations that provide food, clothing and shelter. Daniels' condominium development at Parliament and Dundas, One Cole, is now accepting registrations to purchase at www.onecole.ca

Our goal as a company is to provide leadership in the housing industry by creating quality homes for people at all stages of the life cycle and at all income levels. We have a very simple approach to our work and that is to do everything we possibly can to ensure that our tenants and homeowners will 'love where they live'.

At the very outset of our work in Regent Park we recognized that our responsibility went well beyond the creation of new roads and buildings, beyond the bricks and mortar, to ensuring that the social infrastructure of the new community will be as strong as the pipes we put in the ground and the concrete we pour.

To that end, we've gotten to know a lot of people from the neighbourhood as well as the agencies providing services and programming to the community.

In that process we met David Adcock, Rick Tobias and Board Chair Michael Baetz of Yonge Street Mission, and we are looking forward to a long and fruitful relationship with YSM.

We also met a number of other local leaders including Michael Blair, former Executive Director of the Christian Resource Centre, who really brought home to us the love and commitment that folks from Regent Park have for their community, as well as the fear, the anxiety and the sense of loss over the demolition of their 'piece of the city'.

Local leaders also expressed tremendous faith in the re-generation vision, and that faith gives us strength and confidence as we continue along the path to a new Regent Park.

I was inspired to write a song that we recorded and gave to the Regent Park School of Music as a gift to assist them in their fundraising efforts. The song, 'My Piece of the City', features Jackie Richardson, Joe Sealy and the Regent Park

School of Music Choir, and can be downloaded for a small donation to the School at their web site:

www.regentparkschoolofmusic.org/music.html

As we continue building strong relationships in the neighbourhood, we are also making significant progress on the construction side. The first TCHC rental building is nearing completion, and construction of One Cole, our first condominium, is progressing well at the corner of Dundas and Parliament with a projected 'for sale' date in spring 2009.

As one of the first LEED Gold residential buildings in the country, One Cole, designed by Diamond and Schmitt Architects, is going to stand head and shoulders above the crowd. A 27,000 square foot Sobey's grocery store will act as the commercial anchor, joined by a full service branch of The Royal Bank of Canada, a Rogers Store, and a Tim Hortons.

The balance of the Phase One lands are also well into development with the second TCHC rental building now under construction at the corner of Parliament and Oak. In addition, construction of both ownership and rental townhomes and a second condominium building will commence in the summer of 2009.

It is extremely exciting to participate in the transformation of the neighbourhood. The extension of city streets, the integration of ownership and rental buildings, and the introduction of national brand commercial investors are all extremely positive steps that will engender hope and excitement as former residents move back 'home' to their 'piece of the city'.

We look forward to continuing to work with YSM and other community stakeholders as the re-generation continues to unfold over the months and years to come.

Get involved: VOLUNTEER

EVERGREEN

The Employment Resource Centre is in need of skilled, mature and experienced volunteers to help with various duties including: Employment Counsellors, Assistants, Administrative Helpers, Job Search Assistants, Researchers and Networking Specialists. Volunteers must be able to commit to one weekday afternoon between noon and 4pm for a minimum of six months. Great respect for youth, patience and enthusiasm are required.

COMMUNITY SERVICES

Summer Camp Counsellors:

Energetic, enthusiastic, responsible, trustworthy and committed volunteers to help make our summer camps the best they can be for our community children. Volunteers are asked to commit to at least one full week daily from 9a.m.-4p.m. during July or August. Minimum age 16.

For these and other exciting volunteer opportunities, please contact Volunteer Resources at 416-929-9614 or check www.ysm.on.ca/volunteer.

SPECIAL NEEDS

- Upright stainless steel Freezer for our Community Centre kitchen, will greatly assist planning and preparing for community meals: \$4,000
- Seniors & New Hope adults, TTC fare for job interviews: \$200; funds to attend learning events: \$500
- Mouse problem! Computer lab needs to place bulk order for mice for next year's graduates: \$600

Thanks to all 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

"I liked this place so much, I just wanted to volunteer," says 17-year-old Ratul Islam, reflecting on how he became a key volunteer at our Computer Literacy Centre. Now in Grade 12, he has logged over 1,100 hours since he began volunteering in the lab four years ago.

Ratul has lived in Regent Park since he emigrated from Bangladesh as a small child with his mom. His mother was working at our Double Take store when the Computer Literacy Centre opened nine years ago, and she registered her son in the first computer camp. He went on to complete the Introductory, Advanced and Internet courses and became a volunteer in Grade 8.

Although he loved attending YSM day camps, Ratul says, "Being a volunteer is even more fun than being a camper. You know you are doing something important."

"Ratul is incredible!" says Julian Williams, Computer Education Coordinator. "He helps out at summer camp, March Break camp, after-school classes, Fun Days, clean-up nights, graduation ceremonies and pretty much any time we need him. The kids love him and the staff team always appreciate his zany candor."

"He makes me laugh," said one ten-year-old, "and he helps me on the computer, too."

Not only is Ratul an amazing and dedicated volunteer in the computer lab, but he also helps out in the Community Centre with the children's Saturday Breakfast Club. He went once when he was in Grade 9 and thought it was so much fun that he has volunteered every Saturday since then.

"Ratul is phenomenal with the kids," says Julie MacLean, Children's Coordinator. "He can calm down the wild ones. Last year we were thrilled to offer him a paid Leader in Training position."

As a program participant, volunteer and then paid helper, Ratul has been a role model for other children and youth and an inspiration to staff. Here is his advice to other volunteers: "Try to remember your life as a kid. What did you like or not like? Use that to determine your behaviour around the kids. But know your boundaries, too."

Next year, Ratul plans to be at university studying Life Sciences. If he is in Toronto, he hopes to continue as a volunteer with YSM.

"I would like to be a pediatrician some day," he muses. "A doctor – that would make my mom very proud, wouldn't it? Or a teacher – I know I want to do something with kids."

Based on his history at YSM, we are confident Ratul has a great future ahead!



RATUL ISLAM

EMERGING
LEADER

BY:
KATHLEEN
MAGLADRY



"The Program"

"Who knew it could be so easy? Just someone to take a personal interest—that's what was needed," remarked an Evergreen staff leader.

BY KAREN BACH,
DIRECTOR OF EVERGREEN

Prevents Pimping

You would never know that some of the young men on our city streets were pimps. They don't fit the stereotype. Yet they are pimps and have been charged with 'living off the avails of prostitution.'

They refer to themselves as 'hustlers' rather than pimps, partly because they don't traffic exclusively in human flesh, but sometimes deal drugs or defraud people. Furthermore, in their perception, they are not exploiters of women but merely entrepreneurs who connect people who have a desire with people willing to meet that desire for a fee.

Evergreen staff, noticing an increase in this exploitive behaviour, formulated the Pimp Prevention Program. They knew that if they could reform the pimps, they would be helping to protect young women who continued to get drawn into prostitution by them. It seemed to staff that if they could

take young pimps and teach them life-skills, find them legal employment, and change their perceptions about others, the young men wouldn't always be on the lookout for another new girl to 'put out to work.'

Staff worked with representatives from a number of other services, including the police, to establish a 16-week intensive training regime designed to change young men's lives.

The program covers four categories:

Opportunity Building addresses potential barriers to success, such as the lack of employment, housing, ID, and basic needs.

Prevention and Awareness Training seeks to educate young men about their negative attitudes towards women.

Addictions, Mental Health and Counselling Supports involves linking

youth to any number of supports such as psychotherapy, addictions counselling, or anger management.

Community Building aims to connect youth to healthy community and social supports that may include community projects, mentorships, recreational groups, faith groups or even their own family.

Staff applied for and received a grant from the Junior League of Toronto to assist them with the production of promotional material designed to inform law enforcement agencies and the courts of this valuable service.

Since its inception in August, The Program as it has been renamed by the participants, has been amazingly successful. Recently, when staff accompanied a youth to court, the judge, raving about the great support Evergreen staff provide, gave the youth a gentler sentence. In addition to being legally mandated to The Program, youth have also been self-referring. They have even been recruiting their friends and asking staff if it might be possible to take The Program out to their neighbourhoods so that their buddies might be exposed to it.

In many ways, The Program has taken on a life of its own as young men participating have assumed personal responsibility for changes in their own communities. The challenge now is to obtain sufficient funding and resources to help them bridge the gap from an illegal means of survival to a legal means of real living.



Volunteer Corner — Bill Heise

"About seven years ago, after I had retired, I happened to pick up a copy of the YSM newsletter at my church. I saw that you needed volunteers for the Downtown Towers Clothing Drive and I thought, 'I could do that!'"

Bill has been a faithful volunteer ever since, helping us collect gently used clothes for our Double Take store. Last year he expanded his service to help with the School Supplies and Business Suit Drives as well.

"Somebody once came up to the booth and asked me how much I got paid for doing this," says Bill. "I just laughed. I know charities couldn't exist without volunteers. I feel blessed every time I come home from volunteering. I've met so many nice, generous people."

Thank you, Bill, and thanks to your fellow volunteers whose efforts make our annual Clothing Drive a wonderful success!

SERVICE UPDATE

VOLUNTEER RESOURCES FOR THE YEAR ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2008

Total Annual Volunteers	3,360
Number of Groups (corporate, church, school, etc.)	297
Average Regular Volunteers per month	239
Total Annual Volunteer Hours	44,099
Christmas Individual Volunteers	1,102
Christmas Number of Groups	91
Christmas Volunteer hours	4,427

NEWS BYTES

CHRISTMAS JOY 2008

During this busy Christmas season past, we served over 4,000 people who enjoyed festive meals and parties and visited our Christmas Market for food, toys and other gifts. Thanks to the support of our many kind donors and volunteers, Christmas hampers were delivered to isolated seniors, over 1,500 children received cherished toys, and all of our program clients enjoyed a Christmas banquet with us.



"This was just about the best meal I ever ate!"



"I never met an alpaca before!"

The children's Saturday Morning Breakfast Club had an amazing party, themed 'Treasures and Treats'. The children enjoyed a wafflefest at King Wenceslaus' castle and then embarked on a scavenger hunt and journey through the Community Centre, based on the Christmas story. They met angels and kings and live alpacas, sang carols, danced and had a wonderful time.

Over at Evergreen, staff at radio station Flow 93.5

volunteered to serve lunch at the beginning of the Christmas season. This was the start of their month-long on-air support of the Mission's Christmas Wish List, a partnership that helped bring the joy of the season to members of our community.

Once again, we thank Toronto Star and CHUM and our other amazing corporate supporters. We are grateful for the many friends who helped in so many ways to make this Christmas such a happy one for so many people!

BIGGEST GRAD EVER

The demand for our computer classes for children and youth continues to grow! We had our largest graduating class ever at the end of November – 69 students were awarded refurbished Pentium 4 computers for their hard work in the Introductory Course. Julian Williams, Computer Education Coordinator, is proud of his students' achievements over the 11-week program and grateful to our donors for making it possible to award such good computers to every graduate.



"Now I can take the Advanced course."

For the first time, we were able to award re-conditioned laptops – 14 in all – to the valedictorians and high school age graduates. One student emailed her appreciation to Julian, from her new laptop, within two hours.

"We have waiting lists for all of our classes – Internet and Movie Making are especially popular," Julian says, "and there is a huge interest in the graphic design course we are planning for the advanced students."

A SONG IN THEIR HEARTS

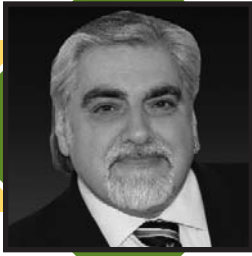
"Music is a big influence in the lives of our children, both music from their ethnic heritage and western culture," says Julie MacLean, Children's Coordinator. "The kids are so musical and enthusiastic!"

Working with the Music Box Charity and U of T Faculty of Music students again this year, ten children each are taking weekly piano and drum lessons in our after-school clubs. As well, the popular guitar group is into its second year.

"The children themselves are asking for these lessons," notes Julie. "The parents aren't pushing them. We have a waiting list!"



"I can play all the scales!"



THE BACK PAGE

By: Dr. Rick Tobias, YSM President and CEO

Setting aside our fear

Sometimes fear is useful. For example, a proper respect for gravity and acceleration keeps me from skydiving. Likely that's a good thing.

Some fears – an aversion to spiders for instance – are merely annoying. I don't understand them but they also don't greatly matter.

Others arise from circumstances, generating, for example, a sick fluttering in my stomach as I open my RRSP report, knowing that forces completely beyond my control can dismantle my plans. Those fears can be paralyzing, keeping us from doing what needs to be done, when it needs doing.

Such fears do not run Yonge Street Mission. In fact we are organizing to open three new mission branches over the next several years. We launched the first new work, in St. James Town, this past year.

Lately, and not surprisingly, people hearing our plans want to remind us of reality: "You do know this is the worst economic downturn since the Great Depression, don't you?" I appreciate their restraint: some actually mean "Are you out of your mind?" Others really just mean "Are you sure this is the right time?" – concerned that such a move could hurt the Mission.

And yes, expansion could wait – our current programs are productive, recessions are risky times for organizations that depend on donors, the future is uncertain, and no one is pressuring us to expand. So if we act out of fear, we would not act.

But fear does not command our hearts – people do.

It is a horrific time to be poor in Toronto. Our poverty rate is higher than the national average. The Children's Aid Society now rightly calls the GTA "the child poverty capital of Ontario". The high numbers of working poor and the wave of newly unemployed swelling the ranks of those in need is tragic.

Fear does not command our hearts – people do.

These are not just "risky" times for individuals and families downsized out of jobs or those never able to enter the workforce. These are devastatingly hard times. The recent economic downturn has massively compromised already-faltering efforts to reduce poverty in this province.

That's why a year ago the Board of YSM gave the green light to expand into under-supported low-income communities. The recent downturn only increases the urgency of such a move.

And we are not out of our minds; we are not blithely ignoring reality.

Day-to-day, we are a fiscally conservative organization. We are careful with pennies

and dollars (and the hundreds and the thousands as well). Further, as early as November we had already enacted the appropriate spending cuts and freezes. We are strengthening our capacity to manage, to implement and to plan and evaluate. And we have lived within our means year after year.

What's more, people are signing on to the vision for greater impact through an expanded YSM. These are terrible economic times – yet individuals have already committed more than half the required funding for expansion for the next three years! God bless them for moving beyond fear.

Do I get nervous? Certainly. I like guarantees. But those we serve have few guarantees. I may wince as my RRSP declines, but others weep because they cannot feed their children or see a better future.

At Yonge Street Mission we live by faith in God, who called us to this work, from whose compassion our vision is born, and who has carried us through difficult times before.

We also live by faith in our community of support: you have been with us for the long haul. And among you we see the signs of people choosing to set aside fear, to affirm compassion, and help us reach out to others. Thank you for that.