



Zobada, Double Take Thrift Store Supervisor.

## Growing community capacity, one article of clothing at a time

*YSM's Double Take Thrift Store opened its doors in 1999 and provides community members with hope, dignity and employment. All profits benefit YSM and its goal of ending chronic poverty.*

Double Take is much more than a store with affordable clothes and vintage finds. It is a resource through which YSM responds to the needs of the community and helps them take steps out of poverty, providing hope and employment opportunities, while maintaining the dignity of all who come through its doors.

To get our community from surviving to thriving, YSM uses the store as a resource for employment training, providing employment opportunities for community members who have obstacles to regular employment, including newcomers with little to no experience. For many of them, it is their first job and the stepping stone to gaining valuable work experience, introducing newcomers to the Canadian workforce and helping them build transferable skills, such as customer service.

The store is also a place where the people we serve can shop with dignity. Through YSM's various programs, staff distribute vouchers to low income individuals, families and street-involved youth. Additionally, the high-quality professional

clothing that we receive throughout the year and through our annual PATH Clothing Drive allows those seeking employment to shop for affordable business attire for jobs and job interviews.

*When Zobada came to Canada, she had little work experience, but determined to find her place in the community, she began volunteering at YSM and took advantage of the resources, taking a computer course and creating her first resume. She secured a volunteer position at Double Take and is now the supervisor, guiding others on their journey. Zobada values the experience YSM's Double Take Thrift Store has afforded her and feels like she is part of the community and continuously learns from her co-workers.*

**For store hours or donation policy,  
visit [ysm.ca/learn/programs/double-take/](http://ysm.ca/learn/programs/double-take/)**

# YSM's HELPING HANDS

## Gus Lamantia

Twenty-one years ago, Gus noticed large bins full of bread sitting outside of a local grocery store. Upset about the quantity of wasted food, he warmed his way into the good graces of the store manager and began collecting food for our neighbours in need. Gus has now delivered an estimated 700,000 pounds of food to YSM. In 2015, Gus was recognized for his efforts in the community with an Ontario Volunteer Service Award.

*"My sister Mary and I began making deliveries to various agencies, including YSM's Christian Community Centre and Evergreen Centre for Street Youth because we wanted to find a way to help our neighbours. We initially delivered once a week, which quickly grew to two, then five days and before we knew it, Mary and I were delivering food seven days a week! We knew that there were many people out there counting on places like YSM for food and could not stand by while our community members went hungry. I never think about how much time I have spent doing this, just how many people I am able to help if I keep going. A bonus is that I get to interact with so many great people, including YSM staff and the community members who benefit from the food deliveries. I've met a lot of kind people and made friends along the way."*

**To learn more about volunteering, visit [ysm.ca/act/volunteer](http://ysm.ca/act/volunteer)**



Gus Lamantia, YSM volunteer

## FIRST PERSON



Rodney MacLean, Maintenance Supervisor

## Rodney MacLean

Maintaining YSM's six buildings isn't an easy task, but Rodney and the property services team must keep the buildings in tip top shape for YSM's staff, volunteers and community members. The property services team also works with youth through our Connecting Youth to Work Program, offering them mentorship, training and valuable experience.

*"Maintaining the buildings operations to the highest standards creates a good physical environment for our front line programs to serve our community. Whether we work behind the scenes or interact directly with community members, we have a common goal and know that helping those we serve is a collaborative effort among all departments. It motivates me to come to work every day, knowing that I am working with a team that is dedicated to helping our neighbours in need. I love being part of this community, who care, support, strengthen and love each other; we work and celebrate together as a community and all take pride in the role we play in making YSM possible. I continue to learn and grow and am truly blessed to work at YSM and interact with the loving people that we call our community members. My prayer is that together, we can continue to provide hope and support to community members as they face challenges in their lives."*



# Celebrating 30 years of acceptance and community

*This year, Church at the Mission (CATM) is excited to be celebrating 30 years of service with the community, a great milestone that signifies a long standing commitment to unity and acceptance, something many of our community members are longing for.*

Finding a place to call community and people to call family doesn't come easy for everyone, especially if you have spent a lot of your life isolated, battling addiction or living on the streets. Thirty years ago, YSM realized that transitioning off the streets or out of a place of isolation and trauma can be very challenging. In an effort to help those looking for a place of community without judgement, YSM created CATM, under the direction of former CEO, Rick Tobias and founding Pastor Bill Ryan.



Original CATM staff performing during a service.

Like the other programs at YSM, CATM exists to meet the needs of poor and marginalized people, regardless of ethnicity, religion, economic status, gender, sexual orientation or social condition. In line with YSM's mission, the CATM team helps people find strength to start their journey toward healing and provide the resources to help them create a better life with dignity. Working closely with YSM's community support services, our pastoral staff aim to support community members, including those who are struggling to transition back into society and looking to begin their own spiritual journey. Here, street involved persons, chronically poor and isolated individuals find supportive care and an accepting and loving environment. CATM is one of the many ways our program staff can build trust with community members and identify their needs, connecting them to other resources for personal growth and supports, including counselling, soft-skills training programs, food bank and computer classes.

**To support YSM programs, go to [ysm.ca/donate](http://ysm.ca/donate) or [ysm.ca/act/volunteer](http://ysm.ca/act/volunteer) for latest volunteer opportunities.**

## YES, I want to lend a hand!

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Please use my donation: ☐ Wherever the needs are greatest ☐ Other

Amount Enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Cheque (payable to Yonge Street Mission)

Credit Card: ☐ VISA ☐ MasterCard ☐ American Express

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I would like:

☐ Information on planned giving, bequests, gifts of securities ☐ Arrange a tour ☐ Annual Report 2015/16





## The **BACK PAGE**

# The Hidden Epidemic

*Andre Picard from the Globe and Mail recently gave a Walrus Talk about the hidden epidemic of loneliness in Canada. In it Mr. Picard states, "this hidden epidemic of loneliness is particularly acute in certain groups like the elderly, people with disabilities, immigrants and refugees, and the economically disadvantaged — there is a reason they are often referred to as 'marginalized.' It is also particularly acute, or at least more starkly evident, in certain environments, like big cities."*

People living in poverty are six times more likely to be isolated than their peers. Sadly, this comes as no surprise. In fact, every day YSM sees the benefits that community and relationships bring to everyone involved as we draw people together. Building communities is one of our three key focus areas because we know that all people were designed for and desire to live in community. We have come so far technologically as a society that we don't need anyone to function, but more than ever it is clear that we definitely need one another to truly live.

This issue's stories are just a few of countless ways people develop community around the mission, deepening connection and relationships. Community is the antidote to loneliness. We want to thank you for being a part of this work through your support. If you have the time, consider joining us as a volunteer. You may find it opens a door to a community you never imagined.

Blessings,

Angie

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## Did you **know?**

- Double Take collected **5,991 bags of clothing** through January's 19th annual PATH Clothing Drive.
- Coldest Night of the Year walkathon raised **over \$175,000**.
- YSM held a total of 9 income tax clinics and **170 returns** were prepared for our community members.
- YSM's Evergreen staff and youth hosted their **first black history month event**, complete with performances, interactive stations and art displays.
- **Jubilee Designs**, Evergreen's social enterprise participated in Toronto's Bridal Show in April.

**THANK YOU! Your support makes these things happen!**



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