

HOPE BEGINS with a meal

"After I accessed the food bank at Christmas time I buried my hands in my head and cried. I was so overwhelmed by the love and compassion YSM had for me and my situation. They helped me put food on my table and gave me hope that I could get back on my feet and create a fuller life for myself. If it weren't for them I would still be on the street."

— Brad*, Community member



Christmas in Toronto can be a time of incredible beauty – and incredible pain. For the thousands of youth, families in need and adults experiencing chronic poverty in our city, Christmas can bring aching cold and hunger, loneliness and heartache. Your support will help YSM spread hope to these individuals and let them know they are not forgotten.

YSM's food bank will continue to distribute much needed food and also offer additional seasonal fare. Hungry neighbours will continue to have access to warm meals, getting the chance to sit with others and experience the joy of Christmas and street youth will have access to two meals – lunch and dinner five days a week during the cold, winter months.

The meals served through these initiatives do much more than just feed empty stomachs, they provide community members with a place to escape the frigid temperatures, a sense of belonging – something that community members deeply long for, and most importantly, a chance for change. Meals also provide an opportunity for staff to build relationships with people who are looking to make positive changes in their life, but who lack the resources to make it happen alone. We learn about their hopes and dreams over shared bread, equipping them with skills so that they can work their way up and out of poverty.

To support YSM programs, go to ysm.ca/donate.

*Name has been changed to protect privacy

YSM's HELPING HANDS

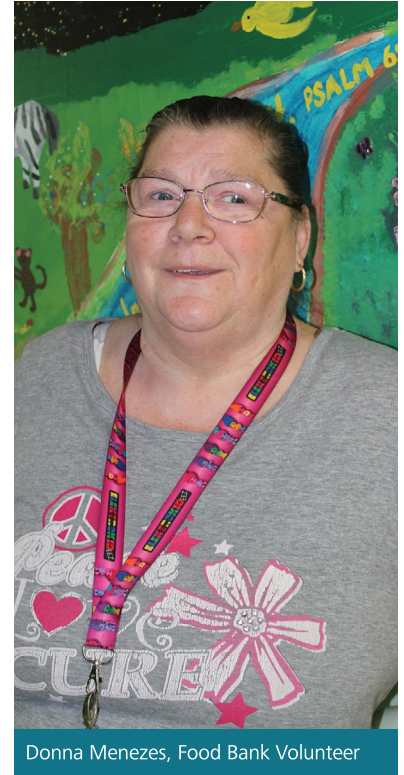
Donna Menezes

Donna has been part of the YSM family for 13 years and her time with us speaks volumes about her compassion and commitment to the community. She works alongside us to help neighbours meet their basic needs and over the years, has built relationships with community members, staff and other volunteers. Donna is also well known for her delicious homemade banana bread.

"I feel very whole here. There is a significant need within this community and I happily give my time to help YSM respond to it. Working alongside staff and volunteers is an absolute honour and Kate, the Food Bank Coordinator, has done a great job leading us. She trusts and believes in us and together, we make sure that everyone is treated with respect and dignity when they come in for their appointments.

Hope is always present in our work – even on the days when we may not have much food to offer, no one leaves empty handed. One of the most rewarding parts of volunteering is seeing hope and joy in their faces when they leave with a bag full of groceries. I am always so humbled by the gratitude that community members show when they pick up food. I've also learned that there is no donation (food or monetary) too small. One person's compassion can make a big impact and all of the resources are always put to good use.

To learn about more about becoming a volunteer, visit ysm.ca/volunteer



Donna Menezes, Food Bank Volunteer

FIRST PERSON



Nathan Scott, Food Services Coordinator

Nathan Scott

Nathan joined the YSM family five years ago as the Food Services Coordinator. In addition to overseeing training and developing youth, staff and volunteers, he also oversees food production for our meal programs and operation of the kitchens and food bank. This holiday season Nathan and his team are ramping up food services to respond to the increased need by offering additional meals through the cold, winter months and organizing festive banquets for community members.

"Aside from breathing, eating is the most basic thing our body needs. If we want to help our community transform and grow, it's important that we start by responding to their physical needs so they can work on rebuilding their lives – everyone knows it is hard to focus on an empty stomach.

At YSM, I have the ability to live out my passion for food and serve others with my gifts. It has been an extreme privilege to be a part of this community and to serve it."

To learn about more about career opportunities, visit ysm.ca/careers

Gifts for **GOOD**

Street youth face many barriers that make it difficult to come into work on a given day. **Jubilee Designs**, YSM's social enterprise initiative which employs street youth creates a familiar and safe work environment with a positive atmosphere where street youth like Alice* can gain valuable work experience.

You can provide hope for street youth while checking off loved ones from your Christmas list. By shopping at Jubilee Designs, you are helping create sustainable change in lives of youth. Items range from scarves and totes, to accessories and party décor.

"I was homeless and alone when I first came to Toronto and what made the difference was having people who believed in me and who didn't give up on me when I made mistakes. At Jubilee Designs you get to be part of something great, a community of people who have been through a lot of difficulties but who believe that life can get better for themselves and each other. Not a lot of people see a homeless youth and want to give them a chance, but I've seen the staff at YSM work really hard to give us that opportunity ... Thanks to the support of YSM, I now have a place to call home and gained the confidence to go back to school and get my college diploma."

– Alice*, Jubilee Designs Employee

Visit www.jubileedesigns.ca to view their creations, shop their online store and read more about their impact.

To support YSM programs, go to ysm.ca/donate or ysm.ca/volunteer for latest volunteer opportunities.

*Name has been changed to protect privacy



YES, I want to lend a hand!

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

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

Credit Card: ☐ VISA ☐ MasterCard ☐ American Express

Card #: _____ Expiry: _____ Signature: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____ Apt.: _____

City: _____ Prov: _____ Postal Code: _____

Tel: _____ Email: _____

I would like:

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



17ULWIN



The **BACK PAGE**

Have you been in a situation where you had more than enough and then all of a sudden due to circumstances outside of your control that security disappears, leaving you in despair? Imagine being in a situation where you really needed to go to a food bank, but didn't because of the overwhelming shame you would experience when you formally acknowledge that you simply did not have enough money to pay the bills AND buy groceries.

Friends, with the number of people in our city living with poverty, there will be far too many who will experience these feelings this Christmas with absolutely no idea how to turn the situation around.

At YSM we meet people every day for whom our first task is to restore their belief in themselves and their hope for their future. That conversation often begins with the most basic exchange - around food, the one thing that we ultimately can't live without, opening the doors to a suite of supportive services provided by YSM and our partners.

When we hold a person like Brad* as they express tears of joy knowing that someone like you chose to give so that their family might eat, we are reminded that **together we can make a difference**. Thank you for your generosity and financial support at this critical time of year when the pain of loneliness and lack can often be most acute. Thank you for knowing that each person is of value and that they can make that journey with your support.

May you and all whom you hold dear be richly blessed this Christmas,

Angie

Charitable Registration Account # BN119306181RR0001

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E-mail: donorservices@ysm.ca Web site: www.ysm.ca

Did you **know?**

- Hundred of kids in Regent Park will have gifts under the tree thanks to **YSM's Toy Market**.
- Seniors will receive **Christmas care baskets** and know that they are not forgotten.
- YSM will host **six festive banquets** for families and adults in our community and we expect to serve more than 17,000 nutritional meals in the weeks leading up to Christmas.

THANK YOU! Your compassion, generosity and support make these things possible!

There is still time to help us spread hope and Christmas cheer!
Donate to our Christmas gift drive, host a food drive and donate.
Visit ysm.ca/holidaycheer for a list of ways to get involved.

Save the **date!**

#GivingTuesday is
November 28



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