

URBAN LIGHTS



Anti-Violence Alliance with Children's Program Coordinator, Julie MacLean

EQUIPPING KIDS IN THE FACE OF ADVERSITY

As a new school year begins, YSM's Children's Program Coordinator, Julie MacLean is getting ready to welcome kids back to YSM's homework club. The after-school program is offered under YSM's Cornerstone division, which uses our holistic model to build stronger families. It is one of our preventative programs that helps children succeed in school and gives them an opportunity to explore and build their skills for a brighter future.

This year, they will continue to build upon their academic skills, talents, character – as well as empathy toward others, and social and critical skills through various activities. Because of you and generous donors like you, many of them will take their first music lessons and more.

"The homework club has built my son's confidence and taught him to express himself more effectively." –Parent

But more importantly, because of your support, we are helping keep kids in Regent Park safe, helping them cope with and process the increased gun violence in our city and get involved in their community. Julie notes

that the kids continue to be greatly impacted by the events in our city and has encouraged them to voice their concerns about city violence. This has led to some of the youth creating the *Anti-Violence Alliance* to address violence and educate their peers, helping them build their leadership skills and grow a stronger connection to the community they love along the way.

Your support means that these kids have access to tools that will help them cope with the obstacles that come with poverty. Julie has been working alongside YSM's mental health team to equip herself and her team with ways to support children's emotional health by knowing how to detect stressors in their lives and creating programs and activities that address those needs.

Your past kindness meant that the kids in Regent Park are getting the support they need now more than ever. *It's all thanks to you!* We are deeply grateful for your partnership in support of the work we do.



To learn more about YSM programs and see your support in action visit ysm.ca

YSM'S HELPING HANDS



Madison Gordon,
Volunteer Tutor & Food Bank Support



To learn more about volunteering, visit —
ysm.ca/volunteer

Madison volunteers at the YSM Bridges “Learning Hub,” helping adults improve their literacy skills and supporting them in continuing their education. Her ability to be quick on her feet means she finds unique ways to help people at various literacy levels get the assistance they need to reach their goals— from new readers to those working on their General Education Diploma (GED).

“I decided to volunteer with YSM as a way to enact positive change in my community. It can be frustrating to constantly hear negative stories in the news and know that so many members of our community struggle with essential needs. So, rather than sit by apathetically, volunteering has become a way for me to combat inequality and be part of the change.

It has also given me a chance to learn more about what’s needed to provide support. For example, by helping in YSM’s food bank, I’ve learned which types of foods are most useful/ sought after. And while language and cultural barriers can make the job a bit more challenging, I have found that having a friendly demeanor and listening attentively helps a lot. I look forward to continuing to volunteer at YSM, where all people are accepted and respected.”

FIRST PERSON



Michael Thielmann,
Youth Job Connection Program Coordinator



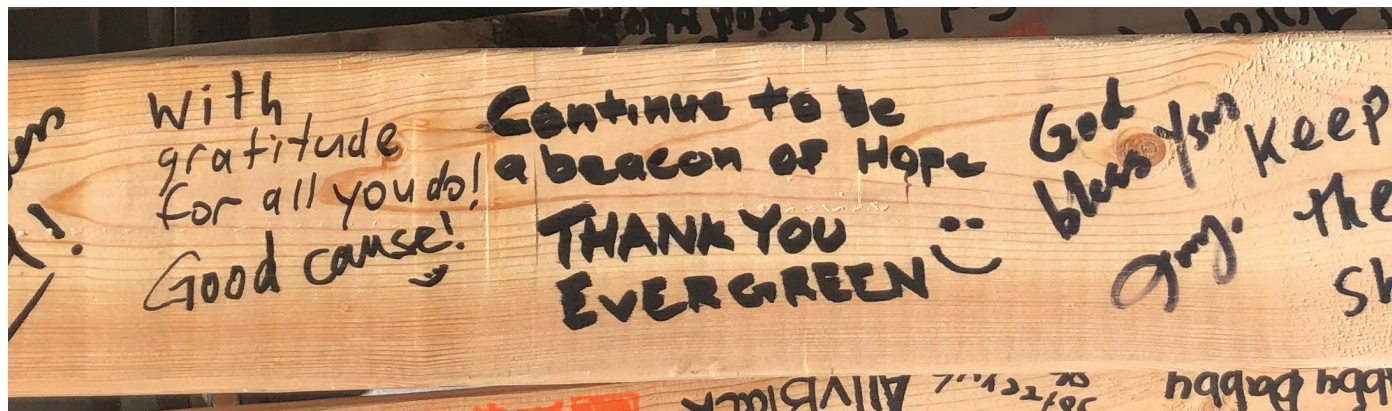
To learn more about working with YSM and latest opportunities visit ysm.ca/careers

Michael runs YSM’s *Youth Job Connection* (YJC) program, which serves youth aged 15-29 experiencing significant employment barriers. He leads a diverse team of YSM staff and volunteers to facilitate pre-employment training that prepares youth for job placements, with the ultimate goal of permanent employment. Recently, Michael advocated for placement hours to count towards workplace probation time so youth could access much needed employee benefits such as healthcare, sooner. He was successful in his efforts and continues to be a voice for all youth served through the program.

“The youth in our program come from a variety of challenging life circumstances – including poverty, homelessness, low levels of education or literacy and newcomers. As a result, we must constantly adapt to fit each group’s needs and keep them motivated. The group setting allows us to tackle other issues and give them a voice because they are used to getting shut down often by others.

We could not do the work that we do to without the commitment of our donors and volunteers. This support means we can connect YJC participants to other YSM resources more quickly, which contributes to their overall success. I am grateful for the volunteers who help prepare youth for employment and for donors who enable us to run our programs.”

SURROUNDING THEM WITH BLESSINGS



“Continue to be a beacon of hope...” This is just one of the messages handwritten onto the wooden planks that have made their way through YSM over the past year. Many of you who attended one of our events in the last year received a glimpse into our new YSM Evergreen Centre for Street Youth and also had a chance to share your blessings directly onto these pieces of wood. The planks, which are now installed in the walls of the new YSM Evergreen Centre, share messages of hope, gratitude and well wishes from past and current program users and supporters.

We are finally ready to move into phase one of 365 Spadina Avenue after significant and unforeseen delays. We are now raising the necessary funds to complete the full building, which will have multiple practice spaces to meet our community's diverse needs.

Thank you for your support and generosity, especially those who have made it possible for us to fund a much needed, larger location. YSM's Evergreen Centre has made a significant difference in the lives of the youth we serve for over 30 years. People like Marcus, a former YSM youth who attended our Evergreen heritage event last spring and expressed his gratitude for the help you made possible, onto one of the planks.

“You have been a big part of my life. You have opened doors for me to expand my horizons and for that, I thank you.” - Marcus, former Evergreen youth



18ULFALL

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

Credit Card #: _____ Expiry: _____ Signature: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____ Apt.: _____

City: _____ Prov: _____ Postal Code: _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

I would like: ☐ Information on planned giving, bequests, gifts of securities ☐ Arrange a tour ☐ Annual Report

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

Phone — 416 929 9614
Toll Free — 1 800 416 5111
Email — info@ysm.ca

You can also make a secure online
donation by credit card —
www.ysm.ca/donate

THE BACK PAGE

A FIRM FOUNDATION

Have you ever tried to build something, like a tree house? You could have a great design, materials and skills, but if you start to build the roof before the foundation you will soon find yourself trying to mount it on thin air.

The order in which we undertake a complex task makes all the difference in the world - including youth in difficult circumstances looking to complete their schooling or adults living with multi-generational poverty seeking employment.

How easy is it to perform well in school when there is trauma or if you are consistently hungry? How likely are you to make it to your job readiness program if you have been told all your life that you will never amount to anything?

We might be inclined to focus on the roof - the last step, but a holistic approach which helps individuals identify and work through other factors needs to be taken to build a firm foundation.

In the past year, YSM has been working with over 20 leaders across multiple sectors to build a pathway to sustainable employment for people living with poverty. Our pathway includes life skills development that helps people overcome the most difficult roadblock - brokenness, because only then are people able to successfully upgrade their education or skills to gain employment.

With the help of the Toronto Board of Trade, the City and many other partners, we have identified employment opportunities and developed a pathway that starts with people like Julie and our counsellors helping kids overcome traumatic experiences. It also begins with people like Madison helping adults get their GED. Building a solid foundation so that all people who are facing significant challenges can thrive.

But the truth is, it isn't our work or our partners that make the most difference. It is in believing that the people we walk alongside have immeasurable value and helping them believe it too. We could not do this without your support.

Thank you!



Angie



DID YOU KNOW?

- 120+ kids in Regent Park were able to experience summer camp this past summer.
- This year, 50 student awards recipients have received funds towards their post-secondary education and have also been matched with a mentor to help guide them.
- Over 300 community members received housing supports this past summer.

JOIN OUR EMAIL LIST



Receive more updates about the impact of your support and be the first to know about YSM happenings via our email list.

Visit ysm.ca to subscribe.

Thank you! Your support makes these things possible.