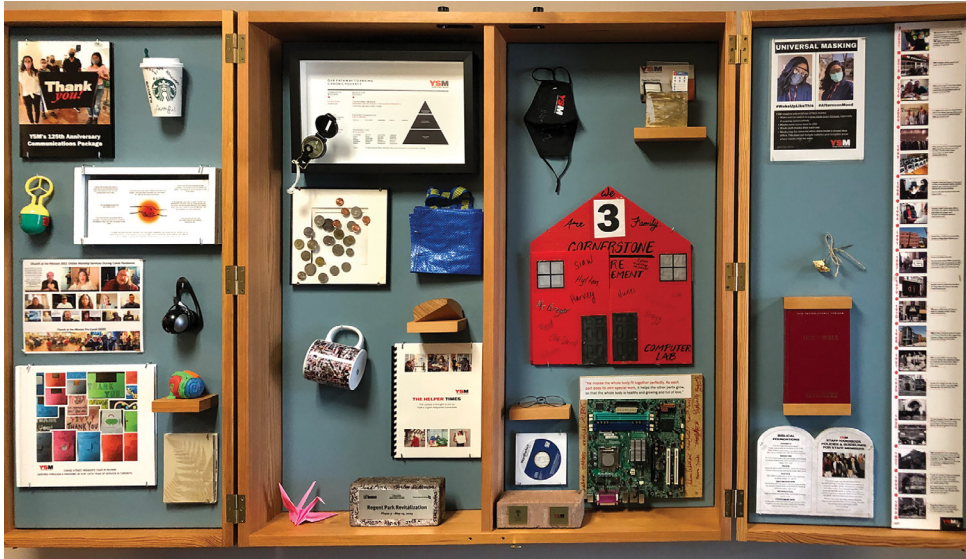


# URBAN LIGHTS

TRANSFORMING TORONTO SINCE 1896



Time capsule capturing life at YSM during our 125th year of service.

## COMMEMORATING 125 YEARS OF SERVICE, COMMUNITY AND COLLABORATION

2021 marks YSM's 125th anniversary of serving in our city. To commemorate this special and memorable occasion, we used wood salvaged from the beams of YSM's former site on Yonge Street to make a one of a kind time capsule to represent our work for future staff, volunteers, Board members and visitors.

To do so we partnered with Sheridan College's Furniture School students, who led a staff workshop and brainstorming session to describe YSM's work and culture. They then used the input to design and create a special time capsule.

Staff and Board Members carefully considered and produced items to go into the finished capsule, a special cabinet with cross sectional blocks of the salvaged wood prominently showcased on its doors.

At an outdoor and socially distanced celebration in September, Board members and staff shared what their department or group chose to include in the time capsule and why. Together we curated a one of a kind representation of what it's like to serve at YSM in 2021.

Sheridan students also surprised staff with individual mementos made from YSM's salvaged wood, for all to have a piece of YSM history and milestone anniversary souvenir!

**Thank you for all your support over the years and, if you're in the area, please drop by to see our time capsule on display in the Martin Centre!**

### Join our caring community of healthcare volunteers!

Are you a medical professional able to donate a half day a month to provide care at our Evergreen Centre for Street-Involved Youth's health centre? We're looking for:

- Dentists
- Physiotherapists
- General Practitioner MDs
- Nurse Practitioners
- Psychologists

As our Evergreen Health Centre Manager June shared "Volunteers are the backbone of our Health Centre. They enable us to provide much needed health services for youth and, importantly, by donating their time, healthcare professionals show the young people we treat that their health care matters. What volunteers provide is truly priceless!"

To learn more about volunteer opportunities or register as a YSM volunteer, visit [ysm.ca/get-involved/volunteer/](https://ysm.ca/get-involved/volunteer/).



# YOUNG LEADERS SUPPORTING YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH

## Our Evergreen Centre is launching a Youth Advisory Committee!

Participating youth aged 18-29 will help provide insight into how YSM can best support the mental health and wellbeing of young people. The committee will elevate young people's perspectives and facilitate their input on initiatives and programs, to ensure they reflect the evolving needs of our young community members.

The committee will focus on promoting diverse youth engagement and creating effective outreach strategies and opportunities for youth. It will focus on such strategic considerations as promoting mental health services, identifying service gaps, and developing innovative programs through surveys, actively seeking input



Committee members will ensure our programs properly address evolving needs of youth.

from youth on mental health issues and substance use, and collaborative work with YSM's mental health staff.

Participating committee members can expect to gain leadership skills, volunteer experience, and a means to advocate for their community.

## CHURCHES BUILDING COMMUNITY THROUGH GIVE 6IX

- **Plan A Ministries** held a virtual event sharing about 'Practical Compassion', YSM's impact in Toronto and how churches can make a difference in their communities.
- **St. Paul's Bloor Street** donated much needed baby diapers and supplies in response to YSM's request for support.
- During their LOVE WEEK, **Elevation Church** kindly volunteered to spruce up six YSM garden areas, including donating plants and mulch for the beautification project.
- **Hillsong** organized a back to school event at YSM, providing 215 backpacks filled with school supplies for Regent Park area children.

Learn more about our **GIVE 6IX** community building movement at [ysm.ca/give6ix](https://ysm.ca/give6ix).



Church groups make a demonstrable impact at YSM and within our community.



# A REAL LIFE SANTA CLAUS!

## Supplying gifts of food across the community



Gus cherishes remaining active and staying connected to the YSM community.

Retired for over two decades, YSM volunteer Gus goes above and beyond to source and share donated food with YSM, for staff to make into nourishing meals for community members.

Growing up, Gus was always providing food to his neighbours as his family had a grocery store on Centre Island. He remembers busy Sundays spent selling fruit – especially big slices of watermelon for \$0.10 each – to island visitors enjoying idyllic summer days.

Later Gus worked as a purchasing manager at a large company. At holiday time, his employer gave away turkeys and, when they had extra, Gus would deliver them to YSM. He credits his sister Mary for introducing him to YSM and our Evergreen Centre where she used to support street-involved youth.

From first donating holiday turkeys to YSM, it was years until Gus effectively became a full-time volunteer supplying hundreds of pounds of food – fruits, vegetables, baked goods and more – to YSM numerous days a week. His service started after Gus noticed an enormous container in the parking lot outside a Toronto Loblaws, inside were containers of countless baked goods. Gus asked the Manager where the food would be taken and learned it would go to feed animals.

He later went back and a new manager told him he could pick up unsold goods once a week to distribute as he saw fit. Not knowing where to bring them, Gus called the city food bank and learned about numerous agencies and shelters which would gratefully accept whatever he could provide. After Loblaws offered him more and more days' worth of food, Gus began delivering all he could fit into his vehicle daily, to YSM and other organizations.

Such deliveries effectively became Gus' full-time volunteer focus, and he met service users at many of the sites he visited, forging meaningful long-term friendships. For years he enjoyed weekly coffee dates with friends from Good Neighbours' Club, including a few who, when Gus' sister became ill, visited her weekly in hospital for many months.

Today Gus remains a regular visitor at Evergreen where he enjoys visiting the kitchen team headed by Marion, who warmly greet him and insist he enjoy a freshly cooked meal. He finds everyone to be kind and nice and, even after twenty years, feels blessed to continue making deliveries and to meet many of those benefitting from his efforts.

With his giving spirit and food donations, Gus truly fuels our YSM community.

## LETTER FROM ANGIE President & CEO



**Nihil de nobis, sine nobis –  
nothing about us without us!**

This Latin title and its meaning have become a rallying cry, as they are often applied to multiple marginalized groups. The essence is simple and clear: communicating that a person with a disability, or a

person of colour, or a person experiencing poverty know best their experience of our communities and are best able to speak into both policy and program design helpfully.

At YSM the phrase has been foundational to our ongoing posture in service for years. We intentionally engage the voice of the people we seek to advocate for and support in many ways.

In speaking with Nazreth, who leads the establishment of the Youth Advisory Council, the spirit of continuous learning is behind the council. She shared that, in listening to the youth, she and her colleagues realized some things had changed or were missing in the experience youth had with our programming and care services.

In digging deeper, we learned that what appear to be small things are what make the difference for someone experiencing poverty and mental health challenges. For the young person unable to stay in school for the last 6-7 years even though they are incredibly bright, counselling alone is not enough. They identified that breaking down goals into small steps and accompanying them is what helped them break through.

Things like shopping for clothes together, supporting the first trip to a family doctor in years, and staying alongside them when they dropped into depression and couldn't show up for long periods are key. Keeping our door open so when they come back, we simply say welcome and continue to journey with them.

The Youth Advisory Council is so critical because it means we will know what makes the greatest difference in the lives of young people, and then ensure our programs are designed with their insights at the centre.

Thank you for your support, because of you countless young people in our community break through, and we continue to understand community needs better and both are worthy of great celebration!

Blessings,

## HOW TO SUPPORT YSM'S TOY MARKET Sharing the joy of Christmas with our community

Kind donors have three options for donating new toys this year:

- **Geeness App** – Buy toys\* through the Geenees app or website at: <https://share.geenees.co/org-ysm>.
- **Buy & Send Directly to YSM** – Buy toys\* online via your preferred toy provider and send them directly to YSM at YSM Toy Market, 306 Gerrard St. E., Toronto, ON M5A 2G7.
- **Drop off at YSM** – Purchase toys\* online or at a store to drop off at YSM (306 Gerrard St. E.) yourself. Coordinate your drop off by emailing [volunteer@ysm.ca](mailto:volunteer@ysm.ca).

\* Donations of \$20+/- will be acknowledged with a tax receipt. Send your receipt to [csinfo@ysm.ca](mailto:csinfo@ysm.ca).



Share Christmas joy with 400 families this Christmas!