

Community
**IS THE SOLUTION
TO POVERTY**





OUR MISSION:
As a vibrant, local, Christian development agency, Yonge Street Mission (YSM) goes beyond meeting immediate needs by offering holistic programs and a pathway to transform the lives of people experiencing poverty in Toronto, taking them from merely surviving to thriving.

OUR VISION:
We believe if we combine our collective resources and wisdom, together we can reach our goal of ending the long-term experience of poverty in Toronto in one generation.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We acknowledge that the land on which YSM serves the people of Toronto is the traditional territory of many nations, including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee and the Wendat peoples and is now home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples. We also acknowledge that Toronto is covered by Treaty 13 with the Mississaugas of the Credit. By making this land acknowledgement we seek to be allies and to take part in the act of reconciliation, honouring the Creator, the land and the Indigenous heritage of Toronto.

FROM OUR PRESIDENT AND BOARD CHAIR

*“The solution to generational poverty is **community** – it is found in the collective impact of us all, working together and giving what we can.”*

We can all likely agree that the adage *time flies* has never felt as true as it does these days. We live in a society where everything moves quickly – Toronto traffic excluded! We run from meeting to meeting, responding to texts and emails on the fly while answering “Busy!” when people ask, “How are you?” Sadly, this is the reality of life in Toronto for many of us, present company included.

While life moves quickly for some of us, for many of those served by YSM, it can be a slow and challenging grind as they continuously struggle to make ends meet, often without a respite from hardship. This is where YSM, together with our loyal and dedicated community of partners, volunteers and donors, step in. By supporting YSM in big and small ways, you enable the rest stops along the difficult journey out of poverty, where vulnerable neighbours can begin to feel a sense of hope and belonging. Whether you made a monetary donation, gave your time, participated in a YSM event, added your expertise to our operations or governance, or said a prayer for a neighbour in need, that thoughtful act – or acts! – helped make a difference in the lives of the community members YSM serves.

Our 2022-2023 Annual Report is a celebration of partnerships, accomplishments and the power of communities which share a vision of a better life and future for vulnerable neighbours. Solving the long-term experience of poverty in this generation is possible because people like you, even amid the busyness of life, took a moment to consider what you can offer a neighbour in need and then acted on it. The solution to generational poverty is community – it is found in the collective impact of us all, working together and giving what we can. We all have a role to play. Nothing you choose to do could possibly be too small if it helps someone experiencing hardship.

Today, we invite you to pause and reflect upon the work and accomplishments your support has already made possible. We offer the stories in this report as gifts of celebration, hope and gratitude for all who have come together as one caring and strong community which extends a hand to lift those YSM serves out of poverty.

With sincere gratitude,



Angie Peters
Angie Peters
President & CEO



David McFadden
David McFadden
Chair, Board of Directors

Last year you
helped provide for
20,075
Food Bank visits.



As a single father and the owner of a struggling business, Steve had become lost in a maze of debt and overdue taxes.*

ALONE AND OVERWHELMED . . .

Steve's situation became even more overwhelming as he tried to navigate his financial challenges in the midst of ongoing personal difficulties – social anxiety, literacy issues, and the crippling pain of worsening arthritis and fibromyalgia. As Steve became more and more isolated, he turned to alcohol to cope. He wanted to change his life but didn't know where to start.

His 20-year-old daughter Alice began to shoulder the responsibility of caring for the family, which included a younger sister struggling with addiction. At first Alice reached out to Yonge Street Mission to seek support for herself, but soon she'd introduced Steve to YSM as well.

DISCOVERING A COMMUNITY OF SUPPORT

Steve was struggling alone to navigate public support systems while simultaneously coping with health issues and addiction.

As he reached out to YSM, Steve was accepted into YSM's care management program and assigned a care manager. YSM's care managers play a key role in offering holistic, wrap-around care. They listen, helping community members assess their situations and develop their own plans for moving forward from surviving to thriving.

YSM's RISE model of care – Respond, Invite, Support, Engage – is a pivotal part of how we serve community members experiencing poverty, providing immediate relief services like access to our Food Bank as an entry point to more comprehensive programs and services.

Using the RISE model, we first responded to Steve's immediate needs, making sure he had access to healthy food and support for his mental health needs. Addressing these core challenges made it possible for Steve to begin to take steps forward toward his long-term goals.

Next Steve's care manager invited him to engage more deeply in the programs and services available both within and outside of YSM, to address the specific needs he had identified. One of the most powerful services a care manager provides is practical help in both finding and navigating available support systems.

We connected Steve with health practitioners, social assistance programs, addiction services, lawyers and accountants to walk alongside him as he began to address his financial situation. As Steve successfully navigated various systems, his mental health and sense of self-worth markedly improved, though his journey continues.



RISE Model of Care

Respond to immediate community needs

YSM provides no-cost, low-barrier access to urgent support services, including food and healthcare.

Invite community members into programs

Individuals are gently invited to engage more deeply in YSM's services through relationship and trust-building.

Support for long-lasting solutions

When ready, wrap-around care management is available to help individuals and families overcome the barriers keeping them in crisis.

Engage with community

Once stabilized, we encourage community members to continue engaging with YSM and their community, by volunteering and becoming influencers, leaders, and mentors for others who are struggling.

**Name has been changed to protect the community member's privacy.*

ELIMINATING GENERATIONAL POVERTY WITH TIMES™

Six years ago, we took the important step of creating and implementing our unique measurement tool, TIMES™ – Transformation Integrated Measurement and Evaluation System – which we use to track 18 wellness indicators among the community members we serve.

As Steve began with his YSM care manager, he self-identified his standing on each wellness indicator. Over time his care manager could then track his progress across a 5-point scale. This helped Steve see and celebrate his progress. It also helps us gauge the impact of each program, learn more about how we can better address community members’ concerns, and assess whether we are meaningfully moving the dial toward ending long-term poverty in Toronto.

Throughout 2023, we took a deep dive into our community data regarding employment programming — focusing on the pathways community members take toward meaningful income. These pathways often begin with deep listening to understand the complex social barriers that affect people on a personal basis.

For example, we learned among those seeking employment, more than 85% required mental health

support, 25% needed housing assistance, 24% needed youth drop-in services, and 22% required Food Bank access. Through our TIMES™ measurements we also learned the vast majority of those looking for employment accessed more than one YSM program, benefiting from wrap-around care.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR STEVE?

Nearly one-third of the supports Steve needed from YSM included help in navigating systems, and we were alongside him every step of the way—accompanying him to meetings, helping with paperwork, and providing coaching.

Steve’s TIMES™ measurements showed that as his sense of power to navigate social support programs increased, he experienced a correlating improvement in his confidence, mental health, and efforts to overcome addiction. This brought about a critical shift in Steve’s life and in the lives of his family members as he decluttered his house, filed his taxes, folded his business, enrolled in financial support, and connected with physiotherapists.

These changes in Steve’s life gave his daughter Alice the opportunity to focus on her own financial goals and dreams—creating an opportunity to break the cycle of poverty for future generations of his family.

WHAT IS SYSTEM NAVIGATION?

We measure community members’ progress in navigating social service systems through these 5 steps:



You helped give community members **1,054** hours of support in navigating social service systems.



FINANCIALS

REVENUE	2023	2022
General Fund Contributions	7,324,092	7,509,231
Other Restricted Contributions	1,106,183	2,039,796
Bequests and Estate Income	2,190,199	558,876
Gifts in Kind	189,790	360,548
Government Grants and Subsidies	3,983,955	3,714,754
Sales and Program Income	1,476,418	1,325,655
Rental Income	147,560	108,468
Interest Income	507,800	273,027
Total Revenue	16,925,997	15,890,355
EXPENSES		
Community Support Services	2,477,597	2,323,897
Family Support Services	2,601,861	2,249,947
Services for Street-Involved Youth	4,880,576	4,168,395
Housing Services	717,143	670,119
Community Development	703,794	778,019
Centre for Urban Education	209,531	204,526
Scholarships	190,417	284,757
Mental Health Services	406,579	442,076
Advocacy	--	68,534
Program Development	419,764	437,604
Subtotal	12,607,262	11,627,874
Other expenses:		
Administration	1,010,637	1,008,280
Fundraising, Communications, Donor & Volunteer Relations	3,249,937	2,894,107
Total Expenses	16,867,837	15,530,261
Unrealized Gain / (Losses) on Investments	47,857	(152,344)

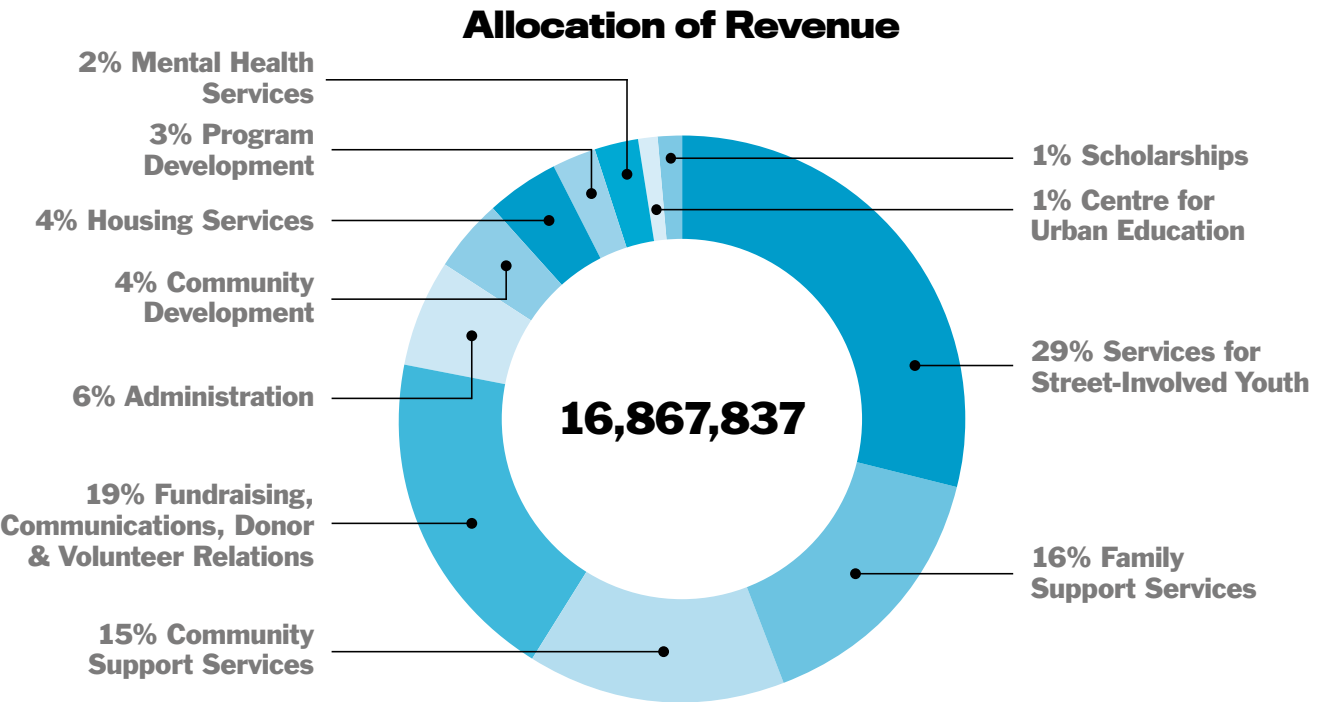
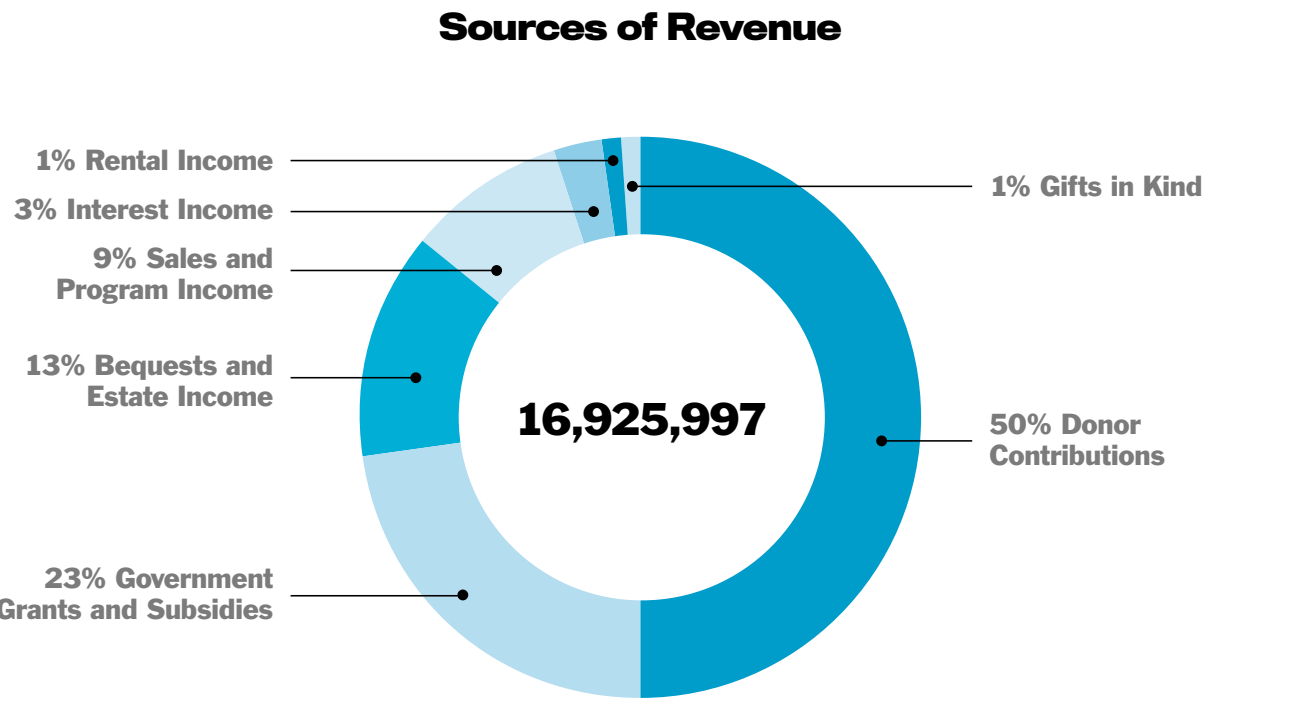
EXCESS		
of revenue over expenses	106,017	207,750

FUND BALANCES AT END OF YEAR		
General Fund	300,000	300,000
Capital Fund and Housing	16,266,876	14,168,392
Restricted Funds	4,124,867	6,232,687
Scholarship Fund	2,120,437	2,005,084
	22,812,180	22,706,163



Erik Parnoja
Chairman – Finance and Audit Committee

During the 2022-23 fiscal year, our donors provided 64% of YSM’s total revenue through contributions, bequests, and gifts in kind, enabling us to deliver programs and services to transform community members’ lives from merely surviving to thriving. **THANK YOU!**



**In all the ways you offer support,
you are an important member of
YSM's community.**

Thank you!

In this Annual Report, we are reporting on the impact of our community of support during the period from October 1, 2022, to September 30, 2023.

874

healthcare appointments
for vulnerable youth at our
Evergreen Centre

8,659

community members supported
by one or more of YSM's programs
and services

14,575

childcare sessions provided by
YSM's daycare

108

youth supported through our
HOPE – Helping Offenders
on Parole – program

1,840

hours of individual mental health
counseling sessions provided

10,800

neighbours in need
supported through YSM's
Food Bank

534

community members set long-term
goals for the first time while working
with a YSM care manager

222

community residents and other
partners worked alongside YSM in
Community Development initiatives

66,244

healthy meals provided for
food insecure neighbours

534

community members
benefited from our
Employment Services

22

community members connected
with safe, secure housing

508

youth participated in our
Computer Literacy Centre classes,
workshops and camps

*When someone knows they have a **community of support**, it makes a difference . . .*

LIA'S STORY

Even as Lia* experienced homelessness, she was quick to give whatever she could to help those around her. “When I see people struggling, I want to help them get through whatever they are going through,” she says.

While feeling isolated and seeking transitional shelter, Lia reached out to YSM to volunteer. “It was during the pandemic, and I volunteered packing groceries [at YSM’s Food Bank]. It was amazing. Everyone was really welcoming, and distressed about what I was going through. I decided - I think I love these people so much, they will be my adopted family!”

As time passed, Lia continued to volunteer for YSM’s Bridges program for adults, and when the opportunity arose through Ontario Works for her to take a job with YSM, she was happy to get even more involved. “I love when we have the Christmas and Easter meals,” she says. “Especially seeing the number of people who come out and support the program, seeing the community members excited to be here, and creating a nice space for them to really connect.”

Meanwhile, a YSM care manager connected Lia with legal and practical support to help her in her own journey. She began taking classes to become a community support worker.

“Before, I could see myself being alone,” Lia says. “But now, being here, you see a real community. Everyone treats you like family, never makes you feel like you don’t belong. Sometimes I look at myself, how it was two years ago, and how it is now – I’m so connected. I feel like I belong.”

EVAN'S STORY

Evan* became homeless when he was just 19. He came to YSM initially to visit our Evergreen Health and Dental Centre, but instead ended up eating a hot meal, having a shower, and getting clothes, including a t-shirt that became a favourite. “I never forgot that—the positivity of being there, getting free food,” Evan says. “I wore that t-shirt until it disintegrated.”

Years later, Evan was working a maintenance job when a friend encouraged him to apply for an opening at YSM. After he started work, he was surprised to discover himself back in the place where he’d appreciated that meal years before.

“I think God brought me here now to help others,” he says. “Every day, I am part of this. YSM is doing things that need to be done—I wish I could go to the rooftops and yell, ‘Come here, try this! Come for free, get the services, and get your life together!’ As I’m working, I see the care managers following up with people, I see people coming back. Once they get touched by YSM, it changes their lives for the better. People genuinely care.”

At YSM, Evan has also taken further strides in his own life. His job made it possible for him to move into his first apartment. He began from time to time to try some of the classes at Bridges. He mentions what it meant to him when his boss gave him new opportunities at work, and when he saw his co-workers at his grandmother’s funeral.

“I felt out of place before,” Evan explains, “but our team is like a giant family that just wants to help people.”



Youth find community and support at the drop-in program at our Evergreen Centre for Street-Involved Youth.

*Names have been changed to protect community members' privacy.



Melissa (left) and Giuliana (right) are co-chairs of the #HackPoverty Working Group for Community Supports. Photo by Carl Prosper Kallai.

A community in action: “Most of us would do something to help people journey out of poverty, if only we knew what we could do.”

This was YSM President & CEO Angie Peters’ premise when she invited 34 leaders from 5 different sectors across Toronto to participate in a half-day Poverty Hack-a-Thon in 2022. Together, the group could begin to identify how to address the problems faced by single-parent families, who are experiencing disproportionate levels of poverty in Toronto right now. What might residential developers, large-scale employers, social policy experts, and philanthropists be able to do if they worked together? As an essential component to ground the conversation in lived experience, Angie invited four courageous, gifted single parents to help design and lead the event as part of a Single Parent Advisory Review Panel.

MELISSA'S STORY

“It was a great feeling when Angie reached out to me to be on the Advisory Panel,” Melissa says. “She knows the way I can empathize with people and that I’m a very passionate person. If I put my mind to something, I will do it.”

As a single parent living in rental housing in Toronto, Melissa was working constantly, but found after she paid her rent there wasn’t enough money left for clothing, food, or her daughter’s needs. “You shouldn’t have to choose,” she says. As the strain of her finances negatively affected her mental and physical wellbeing, in 2017, among other losses, Melissa lost her job, and her daughter was placed into care. She reached out to YSM for support. Now Melissa is living in a rent-geared-to-income apartment, and she is able to make ends meet. This means she is able to focus more of her time on being a parent, with more money in her pocket at the end of the day.

“When Angie asked, I decided to put one foot in and see where it went,” Melissa explains. “We are going to see what we can do to take action.”

GIULIANA'S STORY

Giuliana had just retired from her job as Deputy City Manager for Community and Social Services for the City of

Toronto when Angie invited her to join the conversation at the Hack-a-Thon.

While her career spanned both the private and public sectors, she says, “I loved working in the public sector, helping communities become more resilient.” Born and raised in Toronto, Giuliana noticed that as prosperity rose in the city, it didn’t benefit every community. She saw, too, how even as the city tried to help, “You make a difference, but we weren’t eradicating poverty. I firmly believe no one sector is going to do that on their own. We needed a deeper understanding of what we were all doing, of the systems and barriers.”

WORKING TOGETHER

At the Hack-a-Thon, participants worked together to identify possible solutions to the key challenges single parents face. Afterward, many of the participants and lived experience leaders were eager to stay connected and continue to advance the work into actionable plans. The lived experience leaders reviewed the Hack-a-Thon content and prioritized the ideas developed, then the group established three #HackPoverty Working Groups in the areas of Housing, Community Supports and Income & Benefits. Each group is co-chaired by a person with lived experience of poverty and a leader in the relevant sector; in the Community Supports group, Melissa and Giuliana are now co-chairs. Their group is tackling how to help community residents navigate the services available to them. “There are so many people struggling in the city with no idea of where to go for help,” Giuliana says.

“This group is developing ideas that I wish I could have had at an earlier point in my life,” says Melissa. “I’m all about helping our group, because I know what it’s like to feel like the whole universe is sitting on your shoulders and there’s not a single thing you can do to help fix the situation. Maybe by helping the group, I can help someone else.”

“I really commend Angie for bringing everyone together,” Giuliana says. “As an individual I look at something based on my knowledge, and someone else will look at it totally differently. No one individual can look at everything. But when you look together, you can find a way forward.”

We all have a role to play in breaking the cycle of poverty - you are a valued member of YSM's community of support.

CELEBRATING A COMMITTED CHURCH PARTNER

St. Paul's Bloor Street has built a deepening partnership with YSM over the years, not only referring those in need of YSM's services, but generously giving time, money, and their space to help YSM as we work together to end long-term poverty in Toronto.

"YSM is working to respond to poverty at different levels – both the immediate response and the long-term response," says Associate Priest Ben Tshin. "Both are important. And YSM lets us be part of that."

Every summer, St. Paul's engages their congregation to donate new backpacks filled with essential school supplies. In the summer of 2023 the church generously donated 144 filled backpacks to YSM.

In the winter, St. Paul's participated in YSM's 2023 Coldest Night of the Year fundraising walk by walking, fundraising, and even hosting the event as our venue partner.

Partnerships such as this one are deeply meaningful to YSM as they allow us to create multiple layers of engagement and greater impact for struggling neighbours in our shared community.

Thank you to St. Paul's and all of the 57 churches who contributed \$163,866 to YSM during 2022-23!



One way St. Paul's Bloor Street is supporting neighbours in need is by donating backpacks filled with essential school supplies to YSM.

THE IMPACT OF A MATCHING GIFT

What can happen when one family's gift sparks the generosity of others? Giving Tuesday, a global initiative to unleash the power of generosity, is an annual opportunity for YSM to invite support for Toronto neighbours in need. Previously, our Giving Tuesday fundraising raised just over \$18,300 from 126 donors. In 2022, however, a forward-thinking family enabled their generous annual donation to be leveraged as matching funds, doubling the impact of every Giving Tuesday donation.

As a result, 572 kind and committed donors responded to the giving match, raising over \$110,000 to support those experiencing poverty.

We are deeply grateful to everyone who participated, and are especially moved by the foundational gift which served as such a catalyst. Matching donations are a proven way to inspire people to give, and to give more generously. Because of each one of you, we were able to support more community members who turned to YSM for care and services.

THANK YOU, MONTHLY DONORS!

We celebrated the increasing numbers of YSM donors who made the commitment to give a faithful, monthly gift in support of vulnerable Toronto community members.

In 2022-23, we gratefully welcomed 427 new Possibility Partners monthly donors! Those who give thoughtful recurring gifts save YSM significant administrative costs and allow us to plan more confidently and effectively with a steady source of funds each month. Thank you!



YSM volunteer Vinod estimates he's given more than 1,100 hours volunteering at YSM to help support vulnerable youth.

VOLUNTEERING: THE GIFT OF TIME AND HEART

As he chops vegetables for a drop-in meal at YSM's Evergreen Centre for Street-Involved Youth, Vinod estimates he has spent more than 1,100 hours over the last two years volunteering at YSM.

Now retired from restaurant and manufacturing work in India, Vinod says, "I believe in the mission—especially in terms of the youth, being in formative years. Doing something for youth, helping them out, is something that interested me. I feel very satisfied in the happiness one gets by serving others, by giving."

As Vinod works alongside Evergreen's Chef Marion and fellow volunteers to prepare and serve lunches and dinners, he explains, "The kitchen offers a lot of choices when the youth come for lunch—salad, fruit, smoothies, vegan and meat options. I find the youth are surprised to have choices."

As Vinod became involved at Evergreen and saw not only the quality of the meals but also the other services available, he felt even more committed to the work. "Youth come here in bad shape at times, with a lot of turmoil in their past, and here they make it more comfortable for them. They give them facilities free of cost. I don't think I've found anywhere else where we are creating such a safe haven for youth."

While serving meals, Vinod enjoys watching YSM's staff build relationships with those who come. He remembers one youth who visited daily with a love for chess. "On the street, no one would want to play chess with him, he couldn't express his ability, his giftedness. Every lunch time, I see someone sit with him and play chess. When he wins, he puts both his hands up in victory. I see them, and I tell myself, 'God bless the YSM community'—the happiness they are giving to the youth is unimaginable."

Thank you to Vinod, and to all of the 1,760 YSM volunteers who kindly gave 33,217 hours to help break the cycle of poverty in our city!

CORPORATIONS SERVING THEIR COMMUNITY

As Brokers Trust Insurance Group in Vaughan celebrated their 60th anniversary, the company’s leadership team decided to celebrate 60 years in business by donating 60 days of volunteered time to several nonprofits within the communities they serve.

“Our intention for our 60th year wasn’t to highlight ourselves but rather to prioritize giving back to our community,” says Brokers Trust Marketing Manager Stefania Zavaglia.

After finding YSM through an online search, Stefania and her leadership team colleagues visited YSM for a tour and learned how they could meaningfully join the work to break the cycle of poverty through YSM’s **Project: GENERAT1ON** corporate volunteering opportunities.

Brokers Trust sent 10 teams to YSM’s Evergreen Centre to prepare and serve lunch for street-involved youth—providing about 1,000 nutritious, home-cooked meals in total.

As an added benefit, their team of 140, who normally work across four locations, found themselves getting to know one another better as they had the opportunity to volunteer together.

“Everyone came back very excited, asking if we can continue to do this,” Stefania says. “I would tell another company thinking of trying it—if you can do it, you definitely should!”

Thank you to Brokers Trust and all of the 29 companies who partnered with us through Project: GENERAT1ON to stock our Food Bank, prepare meals for street-involved youth, and support our Double Take thrift store!

BECOMING A LEGACY BRIDGE BUILDER



“As someone who has worked with vulnerable communities, and as a Christian, it is important to me to show my love for others through action,” Theresa shares.

Theresa is a member of YSM’s growing **Legacy Bridge Builders**, a group of those who plan to leave a gift in their Will to Yonge Street Mission, to ensure we will continue to serve struggling Toronto neighbours as long as we’re needed.

For fourteen years, Theresa worked at YSM as a frontline worker who would be among the first to greet and support community members when they turned to us for help.

Recently, Theresa found herself thinking more about the kind of legacy she would like to leave when she passes on. She knew she wanted to provide for her family, but she realized she also wants to keep investing in her life’s work on behalf of neighbours struggling to meet basic needs by including a gift to YSM in her Will.

“I want Toronto to become a city where everyone has a secure home, healthy food to eat, and the chance to become positive change-makers in their own right,” Theresa said. “That’s the real legacy I hope to leave for my children.”

Thank you, Theresa, and all of our 65 Legacy Bridge Builder donors who have decided to invest in the transformational power of legacy giving.

LEADERSHIP AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Left to right: Leah Katerberg, Angela Solomos, Angie Peters, Phillip Fearon

SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM

- Angie Peters | PRESIDENT & CEO
- Phillip Fearon | VP, OPERATIONS
- Leah Katerberg | VP, PROGRAMS & PARTNERSHIPS
- Angela Solomos | VP, PHILANTHROPY

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- David McFadden | CHAIR
- Heather Janes | VICE-CHAIR
- Erik Parnoja | TREASURER
- Kristi Karens | SECRETARY
- James (Jim) Chestnutt
- Patrick Gill
- Kent Heise
- William Luke
- Dan Nohdomi
- Julia Robarts
- David Stevenson



Pictured: Members of a Project: GENERAT1ON team from Brokers Trust with Evergreen’s Chef Marion (left).



YSM SERVICES AND PROGRAMS

Martin Centre & Church at the Mission
306 Gerrard Street East

Evergreen Centre for Street-Involved Youth
365 Spadina Avenue

Davis Centre, YSM's Food Bank & Daycare
270 Gerrard Street East

Genesis Place
280 Gerrard Street East

Double Take Thrift Store & Computer Literacy Centre
310 Gerrard Street East

CONNECT WITH US

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info@ysm.ca



Facebook: @YongeStreetMission



Instagram: @YongeStreetMission



@YSM_TO



LinkedIn: /company/the-yonge-street-mission

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