







# 

Transformation within Limitations.

YUGTA.CA

## 9

#### **Anchored**

#### to the Rock

suppose there was never any question in these months what our 2020 Impact Report would focus on! I remember receiving an email on March 5 from Joanna Yee, our Rahab Ministries Team Leader, who was sadly cancelling their upcoming 10th anniversary celebration. "Was this too preemptive?" I remember asking myself. How naive! By March 13, we were gathering all our staff on a virtual call to navigate our ministry landscape through Toronto's initial lockdown in response to the coronavirus.

As Carl writes, the ensuing months have required constant adaptation, creative thinking, perseverance, and ongoing relinquishment. Youth Unlimited's long standing motto from its earliest days—"Anchored to the Rock, Geared to the Times"—is as apropos as ever. I am reminded of the words of Jesus:



WRITTEN BY:
Scott Moore
Executive Director

"These words I speak to you ... are foundational words, words to build a life on. If you work these words into your life, you are like a smart carpenter who built his house on solid rock. Rain poured down, the river flooded, a tornado hit—but nothing moved that house. It was fixed to the rock."

During these difficult months, we have anchored ourselves to Iesus' words of comfort: "I am with you always...Do not worry about tomorrow...Find rest in Me." We have also anchored ourselves to Jesus' words of action: "Give to the needy...Pray in secret...Proclaim freedom to those experiencing captivity...Share the great news of life and hope found in me...Be among the 'least of these'...Go." Join us as we reflect on this most unusual of years.



Great ReThink.

friend recently passed along a fascinating presentation based on the premise that 2020 has truly changed the global landscape in multiple sectors from Economic to Geopolitical, Technological to Industrial, Societal to Environmental. The conclusion was that it is time to reprioritize on a grand scale and 'rethink' how we live, work, and love.

That 'geared to the times' approach has long been a desire at Youth Unlimited. During the course of this pandemic we have devoted time and space to listen to, reflect upon and reimagine what God is inviting us to in our work towards youth transformation in our city, by:

- Reimagining how our staff can safely continue to provide support for youth and build meaningful relationships both in person and virtually;
- Rethinking how we as Christ-followers can promote justice and



WRITTEN BY:
Carl Nash
Ministry Director

equity for marginalized youth and their families;

- Reinventing how we can come alongside those who are seeking job skills training and meaningful employment; and
- Recommitting ourselves to sharing the Good News of Jesus in a fresh way to those who are lonely, isolated, hurting and anxious.

It is certainly true that, for most of us, 2020 has been a year full of challenges unlike any that we have faced in our lifetime. However, let's remember that we serve a God who is unchanging, who has carried humanity through multiple pandemics over the centuries. He invites us into His relevant, redemptive and transformational work here and now. May He guide us through this 'Great Rethink'!



# **BIG PICTURE STATS**

## The Big Picture.

hile the COVID-induced 'Great Rethink' has spurred us into reimagining and reinventing the 'how' of much of our outreach, Youth Unlimited remains firmly grounded in our commitment to partner with local churches and organizations in grassroots programming to foster the wholistic transformation of young people and their communities. Here is an overview of the young people we engaged in this past year, as well as the incredible team of people and partners who impacted each of these precious lives.

## **COVID's Impact on Youth Engagement.**

Each year, we base this Impact Report on our ministry year, which runs from July 1 to June 30. This year it means our numbers reflect only the first 3 months of COVID-related impact on our youth engagement. So what can we expect to see when it comes to our year ending June 30, 2021?

#### THE NUMBER OF YOUTH WE ARE ABLE TO ENGAGE WILL VARY SIGNIFICANTLY DEPENDING ON THE CONTEXT OR INITIATIVE.

Our gathered programming—such as Lakeshore Soccer League, Seeds of Hope Summer Day Camp, and REMIX urban missions experience—will see the most dramatic drop in engagement due to COVID restrictions.

Some outreaches have seen an increase in engagement as they adapt their programming, including our DOXA youth gatherings (which have gone virtual), and our Young Parents programming across the city (which is doing a hybrid of distanced in-person as restrictions allow, as well as online training and mentoring).

#### Youth We Served:

3,592

1,260

TOTAL YOUTH **ENCOUNTERED**  REGULARLY **ATTENDING** 

829

ENGAGED IN MEANINGFUL LONG-TERM RELATIONSHIP

THROUGH GROUP INTERACTIONS

#### **Supported By:**

64 STAFF

526 **VOLUNTEERS**  152

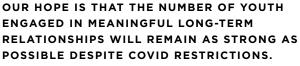
3,035

ORGANIZATIONAL AND CHURCH **PARTNERSHIPS** 

ACTIVE **GIVERS** 

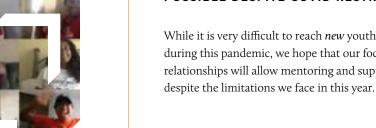
Finally, other YU programs will remain fairly stable in their level of engagement. This includes our LAUNCH leadership development program which has shifted its course and one-on-one coaching primarily online.

We shared our COVID-specific reporting with you in our Summer Snapshots in September. View it at www.yugta.ca/publications.



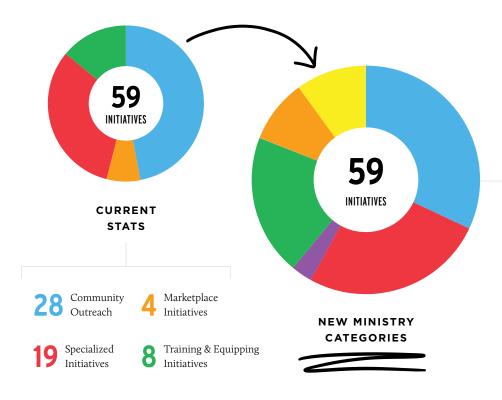
While it is very difficult to reach *new* youth personally during this pandemic, we hope that our focus on long-term relationships will allow mentoring and support to continue





# What is Youth Unlimited doing across the GTA?

As a grassroots and entrepreneurial organization, **our 59 active initiatives cover a variety of different youth contexts, demographics, and neighbourhoods.** To paint a clear picture of our work, we have typically divided it into four broad categories. This year, we have participated with YFC Canada to create a national picture of what the Youth Unlimited/ Youth For Christ movement is doing across the country. We're excited about this transition and once again being able to share clearly what it is we do among the youth of the Greater Toronto Area, and across Canada.



#### WHERE WE SERVE

Youth Unlimited's ministry strategy continues to be developing geographically-rooted programming bolstered by specialized initiatives uniquely meeting the specific needs of the youth we serve. Our long-term presence in communities empowers the wholistic transformation we seek in the lives of young people and their neighbourhoods.

We are excited to be developing a new website at <u>yugta.ca</u>, which will include an interactive map allowing you to see the variety of neighbourhoods in which we serve! Look for this mid-January 2021!



#### **Our Community Outreach**

initiatives journey alongside youth within GTA neighbourhoods. These multifaceted programs are shaped by the needs and desires of the local community, and brought to life through the passions, skills and expertise of our people.

#### 15

Our **Critical Care** programs provide wholistic care and tangible support to youth experiencing systemic vulnerability, as well as strategic advocacy and/or allyship.

#### 2

Our **Innovative Centres'** activities inspire youth as they gather together to grow and develop in areas of shared interests and passion.

#### 12

#### Our Leadership Development

programs provide mentorship, growth and discipling relationships for youth, as well as networking and equipping opportunities for parents, teachers and youth workers.

#### 5

#### **Our Marketplace Initiatives**

support the development of sustainable livelihoods for young people through mentoring relationships that focus on employment readiness, job-skills training, employment placement and entrepreneurship.



Our **Trips, Camps & Events** enable youth to join with friends as they share adventures and experiences, and participate in short-term service and mission projects.

Since we know wholistic transformation takes time, trust and modelling, Youth Unlimited seeks to develop meaningful, long-term relationships with youth.

These relationships often take us through both celebratory milestones and difficult crises in the lives of the young people we serve. Through the lens of our five areas of transformation, here's a picture of some of those milestones and crises from the past year: 196

YOUTH IN INTENTIONAL DISCIPLESHIP RELATIONSHIP **598** 

YOUTH ENGAGED WITH PERSONALLY GIVING THEIR LIFE TO JESUS

173

YOUTH IN PEER

LEADERSHIP ROLE



ROOTED IDENTITY

Engaging Life with Jesus

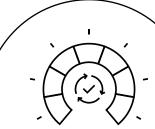
**57** 

YOUTH WHO CHOSE TO GIVE THEIR LIFE TO JESUS



RENEWED CHARACTER

Growing in Virtue



WHOLISTIC TRANSFORMATION



JOYFUL SERVICE

Putting Others First

**52** 

FACILITATED IN FAMILY RECONCILIATION OR OTHER FAMILY MATTERS

**53** 

SUPPORTED THROUGH ISSUES IN CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

7

HELPED IN EXITING SEX WORK OR OTHER EXPLOITATIVE CIRCUMSTANCES



HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

Seeking Reconciliation and Vibrant Community



CLEAR PURPOSE

Discovering & Utilizing Gifts & Abilities

81

HELPED IN FINDING/ BEING PLACED IN A JOB OR PLACED IN A JOB



161

HELPED ADDRESS PHYSICAL HEALTH CARE NEEDS 6

HELPED OFF The Streets 48

SUPPORTED THROUGH GRADUATION FROM HIGH SCHOOL OR ENTRY INTO POST SECONDARY EDUCATION 240

OTHER CRISES OR MILESTONES IE. MARRIAGE, CHILDBIRTH, MENTAL HEALTH, BAPTISM, OUITTING DRUGS

## YU's "Making Space" Strategic Focus.

n July 2019, we launched our 4-year "Making Space" strategic pathway. One way of effectively charting our progress in these pathways was to capture some new information in order to see how our strategic impact unfolds through to 2023.



# YOUTH EXPERIENCING VULNERABILITY WHO ARE ENGAGED IN LONG-TERM MEANINGFUL RELATIONSHIPS:

With a focus on intentionally increasing our engagement with youth facing vulnerability (whether internally, situationally, or systemically), it was important to understand how many of these friends we serve are experiencing meaningful relationships with a caring staff or volunteer.

## 162

## YOUTH ACCOMPANIED THROUGH MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES:

In almost all of our initiatives, staff and volunteers are coming alongside youth suffering from mental health struggles. As more and more young people report feeling isolated and having nowhere to turn, this Making Space focus of YU is more important than ever.

## 311

## YOUTH REGULARLY PARTICIPATE IN LOCAL CHURCH:

Since we desire young people to be on a life-long faith journey with Jesus, we seek to integrate youth into vibrant faith communities where they can find belonging and purpose. We also celebrate the ways young people can bring life and vibrancy to faith communities.



## YOUTH FOR WHOM WE HELPED ADDRESS PHYSICAL HEALTH CARE NEEDS:

While we started capturing this in our 2019 Impact Report, it is important for us in Making Space to acknowledge the essential care we often have to bring to young people on their journey to restoration and wholeness.

#### How are we doing at Making Space?

While COVID certainly restricted the pace of implementing the Making Space pathways, the pandemic also reinforced even more the relevance and importance of our four pathways. Here's a brief snapshot of some of the progress we are making:

- Training and equipping for staff and volunteers around mental health, including Mental Health First Aid for all staff as well as a theological exploration of ministry among those experiencing brokenness and vulnerability.
- Launched Re-Routed counselling services, provided by Marianne Deeks, a long-time YU staff member and now a registered psychotherapist.
- Focus groups with 12 staff to learn about effective integration in partnership with local churches.
- Launched a new "Canvas Conversation Lab" with 10 staff to learn together how YU can effectively understand, capture, and share about our impact in wholistic transformation.
- Launched Stepping Stones
   Property Services as a
   landscaping social enterprise
   serving young men with
   employment barriers.
- Preparing to pilot a job placement initiative that would provide work placements, job coaching, and one-on-one mentoring for youth, to help them build vocational skills and employment experience.

You can still visit <u>making-space.yugta.ca</u> to learn more about our Making Space strategy and the four pathways of: Youth experiencing vulnerability, mental health, church integration, and wholistic transformation.

LAUNCH

#### **Zooming Towards** Community.

☐ he LAUNCH Leadership Course is a Grade 11 class accredited through our partner school, Cornerstone Montessori Prep in Toronto. When government guidelines for school boards were revised, LAUNCH also had to adapt and rethink the format of our class structure.

At the LAUNCH Strategic Day in the summer, we discussed the key values we wanted each student to experience and walk away with at the end of the year. One of these core values was "Community". How were we to build community when we moved half the course online? We decided to make each class shorter but meet more frequently so students would interact more regularly. While meeting online, we utilize break-out rooms; the smaller group size allows for staff and students to get to know one another better and feel supported. A shy student showed appreciation in an email that this new arrangement has "led her to come out of her shell and made her share out of her comfort zone."

We also took a look at the course content and made adjustments to include more relevant topics and teachings for online learning.



WRITTEN BY: **Bonnie Wong** LAUNCH Lead Instructor

We felt it was important to equip students to become more resilient and build confidence as virtual learning becomes the 'new norm'. We added new elements of time-management skills, zoom etiquette and ways to use social media to promote their community impact projects into the curriculum. We want students to feel empowered instead of merely surviving in uncertain times like this and beyond.

Although the transition has been smooth, we are still grieving the loss of in-person hands-on experiences. Our annual Street Walk, where students walk through the streets of downtown Toronto to learn about poverty and homelessness, was cancelled when Toronto was declared a Red Zone. On short notice, we were able to recreate the experience through pictures, video clips and role playing. The students shared that they were very moved by the stories of the individuals we role played and had greater compassion after the class.

DOXA

## **Gathering on New Heights.**

s COVID hit and changed our world in a matter of weeks, the idea of running a youth ministry became a huge challenge for me and the DOXA team. We felt lost and scared, unsure of where to turn next. BUT we prayed and sought God's direction.

Not being allowed to meet in-person anymore, we needed to get creative and rethink how we run our youth gatherings. Even with no experience, we quickly decided that meeting online would be our best strategy moving forward.

Working to create a new normal for my youth group at Wilmar Heights Baptist Church was my goal. We meet biweekly on Zoom for worship, games, prayer and diving into Scripture. We have utilized social media as a means of connecting with youth. Instagram and Snapchat have been helpful in encouraging them and addressing fears during the pandemic. Even



WRITTEN BY: **Charlene Boreland** DOXA Outreach Worker

though we are not physically together, we are developing deeper relationships with youth through open conversations and increased connections throughout the week.

#### Here are some key insights I have learned during the pandemic:

- Don't give up when things get tough but press on with the help of God
- Don't do it alone I have a youth leader working alongside me to help create a fun learning atmosphere
- Use this time to learn or develop a new skill, like social media
- With Mental Health becoming more and more visible, we have been able to address it more directly and encourage youth wellbeing
- More youth are bringing their friends to zoom gatherings
- · We are still grieving the loss of physical social gatherings

#### Wilmar Heights **Pre & Post COVID**

AVERAGE YOUTH GATHERING ATTENDANCE

Pre-COVID and in-person

AVERAGE YOUTH GATHERING ATTENDANCE

During COVID and online



 LAUNCH Leadership Course Pre & Post COVID:

2019/2020 LEADERSHIP **STUDENTS** 

2020/2021 LEADERSHIP **STUDENTS** 



**PILLAR TWO** 

## **Relational Rethink**

U's programs are designed to facilitate relationship building. The shift to virtual platforms and limited in-person gatherings have provided some unique challenges to our staff. Our staff know that youth value and even crave face to face interactions. With some prayer and creativity, here are two examples of how our staff have responded.

SEEDS OF HOPE

#### **Surrendering the Seeds.**

ncertainty. Unprecedented. Restrictions. These words have worked their way into our everyday conversations and program planning. Back in May/ June we surrendered the Seeds of Hope (SOH) summer camp to God. Our team was encouraged when He laid it on our hearts that we should proceed with planning an in-person camp for the summer. We were determined to make it possible whatever it took, assured that God would make a way for it to be safe.

When the government confirmed indoor gatherings of 10 people were allowed, we moved ahead. We found ourselves having to rethink everything to accommodate these limitations. Not only that, our funding was limited and locations were hard to find as our usual camp locations had closed due to the lockdown restrictions. Although we were disappointed, God made it clear that camp wasn't supposed to have big numbers this year.

We dreaded the idea of having to turn away youth from camp. So instead of running one 6-week camp we broke it down into three 2-week camps. In the end,



WRITTEN BY:
Betty Bailey
Jane-Finch
Outreach Worker

we didn't turn anyone away! We believe God hand picked each child who registered. The smaller numbers of campers allowed for staff to go deeper with each individual. If we had larger numbers, some of them may have been overlooked. The staff had more time and energy to pour into each camper. They were able to plan and do special things for the campers such as a surprise birthday complete with decorations and a cake for a young camper who had never had a birthday celebration. Or teaching campers to ride a bicycle for the first time!

We have learned much from this past summer and are inspired to look at our programming through a new lens. We want to implement a new focus of mentorship and discipleship in each program. To do this effectively we need to allow for smaller groups and I:I interactions so staff can meaningfully connect with the young people that come through SOH.

**DOXA JOURNEYS** 

#### The River Still Flows.

big part of our DOXA
Journeys ministry is our
partnership with Serpent River
First Nation. Each summer we
facilitate two weeks of day camps
and community programs with
a team of youth and volunteers
from Toronto.

This year, due to COVID-19 restrictions, we were considering canceling our program for the summer. This was a difficult decision to make. This program plays a key role in the relationships our team has been building with the community in Serpent River. It is also an experience each year that has such a deep impact on all involved. However, we realized that our relationships reach beyond the ability to be together



WRITTEN BY:
Sarah Burton
DOXA Journeys Coordinator

in person. We decided to plan a virtual day camp experience for the children in the community. Our team of youth and volunteers worked hard and were creative in the content they put together for this virtual camp. A few of us were even able to travel together to Serpent River to deliver care packages to families.

It was different and we missed being together in person. However, many members of the community expressed how special it was for them to know we still cared and wanted to connect.

#### Seeds of Hope Pre & Post COVID:

**SUMMER 2019** 

54 NUMBER OF CAMP

**PARTICIPANTS** 

P NUMBER OF Staff Hired

SUMMER 2020

24

NUMBER OF CAMP Participants 3 NIIMRER

NUMBER OF STAFF HIRED



## DOXA Journeys Pre & Post COVID:

2019 TWO WEEK IN-PERSON CAMP

65

NUMBER OF CAMPERS

23

STAFF/ VOLUNTEERS

2020 TEN DAY VIRTUAL CAMP

N/A

NUMBER OF CAMPERS

STAFF/ Volunteers

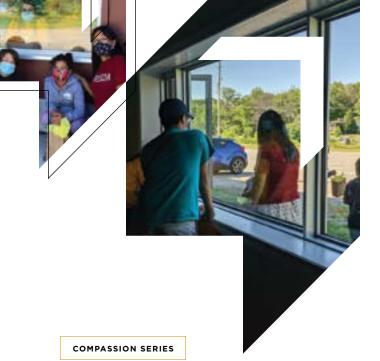
(Videos available through social media)

2020 CARE PACKAGES DELIVERY DAY

**15-20** 

) :

CHILDREN AND YOUTH CONNECTED WITH STAFF/ VOLUNTEERS



#### **Compassion is Essential.**

hen COVID-19 struck in Spring 2020, families were struggling with how to understand what was happening all of a sudden and how to talk to their kids about it. Simultaneously, news headlines featured the heroism of, and concerns for, "frontline" and "essential" workers.

Word spread like wildfire about Youth Unlimited's Compassion Series "Quarantine Colouring Pages", hand-drawn by Tim Huff and available via the CS website for free. Twenty unique colouring pages "recognizing and thanking" 60 different essential worker groups had been created in short order, ideal as both an all-ages activity and as important conversation-starters. These



WRITTEN BY:
Tim Huff
Compassion Series

were aligned with CS's already relevant and timely "Am I Safe?" (Exploring Fear and Anxiety with Children) online resources. Traffic to the CS website increased by 2500% over a six week span - with 95% first-time visitors (representing approximately 15,000-20,000 colouring page downloads). Countless downloads have subsequently occurred throughout 2020, as new colouring pages have been added along with a special "Who's Your Hero?" kids' activity, all aligning with ongoing "Am I Safe?" live sessions.

SOUTH CENTRAL ETOBICOKE

## The Contagious Heart of Service.

ver the past couple years, South Central Etobicoke programs have seen a steady increase in ministry growth. We have been so encouraged watching the over 350 youth pass through our doors each year. Not only this, but we have witnessed first hand the transforming power of God in the lives of the youth with whom we work. But in March of this year, all this came to a grinding halt when COVID forced us to shut down all in-person programming. Feeling uncertain and confused, we turned to God for guidance.

As we prayed, it didn't take long for God to respond. A friend reached out with a unique serving opportunity to partner with Scotiabank and MLSE to distribute food to Torontonians in need. This started an 8 week food relief event providing food and encouragement to those struggling during this difficult time. The excitement about this opportunity to help our community was contagious. Our partner church Capstone Community Bible Church and 5 other churches soon got involved. We distributed up to 175 meals to families every week for 2 months. God really led us in the process.



WRITTEN BY:

Becky Cripps

South Central

Etobicoke Director

"This is uncharted territory... but we do not lose hope for the youth we serve... we consider it a privilege and responsibility to journey alongside them especially right now."

- BECKY CRIPPS





Watch the full story here: https://youtu.be/13AH5BW96Mg

CHECK THESE OUT!

For colouring pages (with more coming) and "Am I Safe?" resources, visit: compassionseries.com/amisafe.

Here is a look at CTV's national morning show's earlyon feature (April 14, 2020) about the CS's Quarantine Colouring Pages: www.theloop.ca/this-author-has-created-freedownloadable-colouring-pages-thanking-essential-workers/



PILLAR THREE

## **Individual Rethink**

he individual pillar invites us to rethink how we see our own lives, and how we take care of our mental health. This pillar aims to find a renewed sense of balance in spite of everything around us. In doing so we also find new ways to support and walk alongside each other.



## Project Serve/ BlessUp Stats: >

10 CANCELLED PROJECT SERVE TRIPS

BLESSUP SIGN- UPS

**PILLAR FOUR** 

## **Economic Rethink**

Financial Snapshot

#### The Resilience and

#### Faithfulness of Our Partners.

ssessing the economics of charities is an important and ongoing conversation in many circles. At Youth Unlimited, this includes the importance of "missionary support" to the transformative work we do through long-term relationships. It also includes conversations like the role of social enterprise in ensuring the sustainable, and enduring impact of our work throughout the GTA.

All of our staff join Youth Unlimited because they feel a particular call from God to serve our young people and see them experience the fullness of life offered to them through Jesus. Raising missionary support to fund these roles to which our staff are called is part of this journey.

Over 50% of Youth Unlimited's revenues last year were raised through missionary support, with our team members collectively reaching approximately 85% of their overall funding target. These funds are raised by our staff through relationships and partnerships with faithful supporters who come alongside our team members financially, in prayer and in encouragement.

We are so grateful for the incredible resilience of our partners who faithfully gave in the midst of the pandemic to ensure not one of our staff had to be laid off this year. We were grateful to receive funds through the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy, which also supported us through these challenging months.

#### PROJECT SERVE / BLESSUP

#### Be Still, Be Encouraged.

remember having to cancel my first Project Serve day trip over March Break. We were heading into the two week lockdown and had every intention of rescheduling to a later date this year. Little did I know in a matter of weeks, I would have to cancel all ten service trips this year. I was devastated. Like many of you, I thought: "Now what?" It became evident that it was not going to be feasible to host teams of students to do service projects in downtown Toronto anytime soon. I turned to the Lord and asked Him what to do.

His response? "Use your gift of encouragement."

And with that, I started sending every YU staff an encouragement email at the start of their week. But that wasn't all. The next day I got a call from a colleague asking me if I would like to start an encouragement texting initiative that was on her heart.



## WRITTEN BY: Paula Castrucci Project Serve Toronto

Program Lead

Enter BlessUP.

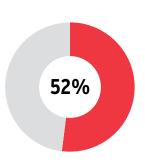
We wanted to respond to the increase of youth experiencing mental health challenges amidst the pandemic. We have been sending youth across the GTA three encouragement texts a week, to instil courage and hope in their day-to-day lives. Not only have we seen a growth in youth subscribers, but the response to our encouragement has been great, too.

One youth in particular wrote in to tell us that the text she received that day encouraged her to get a few friends together to pray for Lebanon. This in turn led her to donate money to an organization that was doing on the ground work in response to the tragic bombing. How encouraging! (Turns out the youth aren't the only ones being encouraged!)

#### STAY TUNED!

#### Our financials will be public on our new website

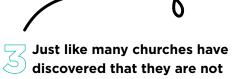
In an ongoing effort to build transparency, we will be publishing our audited financial statements on our new website, launching January 2021. This will also include insights and analyses to help you understand how we carefully steward every gift we receive, and where areas of need remain. Meanwhile, copies are available upon request.



52% of YU's revenues are raised through 'missionary support', where our staff partner with long-term donors who often give monthly towards their salary.

## 5 Learnings about YU Ministry in a pandemic.

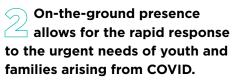
Small, but meaningful engagements make a difference in the lives of our young people. Even though we lamented the necessary restrictions placed on our outreach, every small opportunity for connection demonstrated that we can still continue a transformative journey with our youth in these times. For example, BlessUp, our encouragement texting initiative, now has 71 recipients receiving messages daily to uplift, bring hope, and nurture faith.



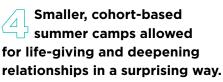
their building, Youth Unlimited is not our programs. Rather, our programs are a vehicle for meaningful relationships. This means our program structure may change, but relationships remain at the centre. Our focus is on being a trusted presence in communities beyond simply 'running programs'.

Our strength is in-person and we are working to grow our virtual ministry presence. Some youth are more likely to open up in virtual connections, but there can also be a limitation to the level of trust that can be developed. We also see that the capacity to connect virtually is also limited by the degree of vulnerability a young person may be experiencing.





While institutional and government responses to COVID took weeks to enact, YU's staff and volunteers—and generous financial supporters—were able to nimbly provide support to those we serve within hours of the pandemic abruptly disrupting young people's lives.



Yet, we know hundreds of kids missed summer camp opportunities as well—a critical piece of their wellbeing. Moving forward, how can Youth Unlimited both reach more children and youth while maintaining the level of richness in relationships that developed this summer?







## Listening Circles.

From October 22 to November 5, Youth Unlimited hosted a series of inspiring dialogues around critical issues facing young people, our city, and beyond. With expert panelists in conversation with YU staff and board members, it was a rich journey of discovery and learning about how Youth Unlimited as a faith-based organization—along with all of our supporters—can bring hope, renewal, and transformation to our young people and communities.

Here are just two learnings we are mulling over post-Listening Circles:

"Let's change the language to not at-risk youth but all youth are risk-takers...This is a positive. They are willing to experiment and go in different ways. It changes how I perceive how I interact with an individual — not an object, but a subject with potential... and a hope-filled future."



#### **Michael Mata**

Director of Network Engagement and Leadership Development at TogetherLA in our "How to Transform a Neighbourhood" Listening Circle



On-demand content is now available for \$25 at yugta.ca/circles.

We want as many people as possible to tune into these Listening Circles! If you weren't able to join us live throughout the 2-week event, you can still access **all** of the conversations online, on-demand. Register for \$25 at yugta.ca/circles. If cost is a barrier to you, please reach out to <a href="mailto:mkollar@yugta.ca">mkollar@yugta.ca</a> — we truly want everyone to be able to access our City-Wide Listening Circles.

"Reach out to someone
you know at YU. Find out what
the key barriers are that youth
are facing. Once you understand
what those are, pray about the one
that most breaks your heart...And then
do it. Just do it. You don't need to wait
for the system to be fixed or an invitation.
God already told us to do it."



#### **Angie Peters**

President & CEO of Yonge Street Mission in our "How Do You Respond to the Complex Needs of a Million Youth" Listening Circle

Our heart is always to provide ways
to serve alongside Youth Unlimited that are
transformative for everyone. This might include
financial partnership, volunteering, joining our team,
or praying faithfully. How can we continue to help
others find the place to serve where their hearts
are breaking for our young people?

As YU intentionally engages more youth experiencing vulnerability, how do we ensure we are interrupting stigma and marginalization, and fostering dignity and empowerment for our young people, their families, and communities?



FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT YUGTA.CA

