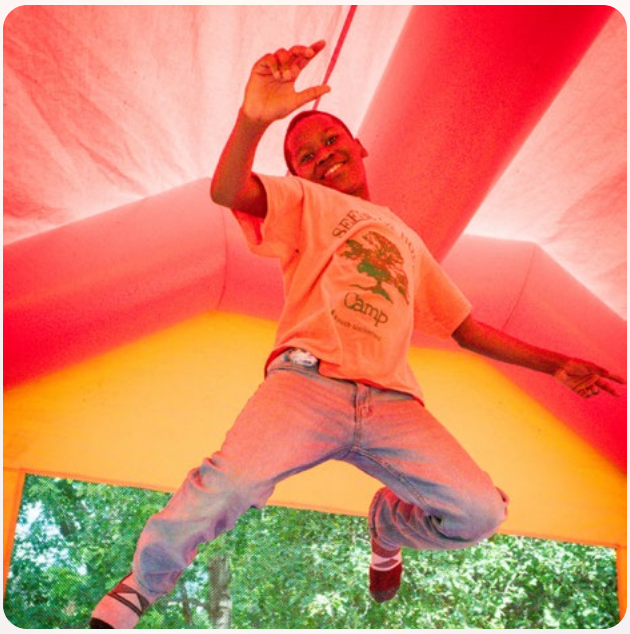
IMPACT REPORT

2025

Youth Unlimited™
YFC TORONTO



Do You Hear What I Hear?

Youth Unlimited Impact Report

TRACK 1
Best summer of his life

TRACK 2
Sound of laughter

TRACK 3
Healthy habits start with church baseball teams

TRACK 4
He puts the pieces together

TRACK 5
Speaking in their own language

TRACK 6
God led them to Canada

TRACK 7
Trust takes time

TRACK 8
Words that speak life

YUGTA.CA

The Soundtrack of a YU Year

WRITTEN BY
Scott Moore
Executive Director

The closing stanza of the famous Christmas song, *Do You Hear What I Hear?*, ends with:

> **Pray for peace, people, everywhere,**
>
> **Listen to what I say!**
>
> **The Child, the Child sleeping in the night**
>
> **He will bring us goodness and light,**
>
> **He will bring us goodness and light.**

The husband-and-wife duo of Noël Regney and Gloria Shayne Baker wrote the song as a plea for peace in the midst of the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962, with the world on the precipice of all-out nuclear war. Living in New York at the time, it was the sight of mothers pushing their babies in strollers through Central Park against the backdrop of a potentially catastrophic global crisis that birthed this song.

The babies inspiring Regney's lyrics were utterly vulnerable, and yet, ironically, it is a Child to whom we turn for peace in the most tumultuous of times. This is the surprising reversal of the Christmas story that never grows old – peace, wellbeing, and wholeness comes through the vulnerable fragility of the newborn baby, Jesus.

As I read through the Impact Report, the truth of the Christmas narrative rings throughout each story. It's a truth that is core to our vision. Young lives transformed by the love and life-changing power of Jesus. Yes, but not only that. Those same young people – in a surprising reversal –

3,090
TOTAL YOUTH ENCOUNTERED

1,145
REGULARLY ATTENDING

872
ENGAGED IN MEANINGFUL RELATIONSHIP

being a redemptive presence that brings transformation to families, schools, churches, neighbourhoods, and more. Peace can, and often does, come from the most unlikely of places.

May you be inspired by the stories of the young people at "Awaken" in Downsview, or "Z" finding community on a church softball team, or our LIT Toastmasters grads bringing change to their schools and friendship circles. These stories are but the tip of the iceberg for hundreds of stories happening throughout the GTA through our team members at Youth Unlimited.

Youth Unlimited counts it a joy and a privilege to have come alongside over 3,000 young people over the past year. This year, more than 28% of the youth we reached were engaged in a meaningful relationship with one of our team members. This is the highest it has been in the ten years we have been capturing this and more than double from 2016. It is these relationships that provide fertile ground for the healing, hope and joy of Emmanuel – "God with us" – to be experienced by our young people.

So, while our hearts always yearn for the wellbeing of every one of the GTA's one million youth, the song that I hear brings powerful glimpses of goodness and light, hints of revival, and hope for young people and their communities throughout our city. What do you hear?

WITH GRATITUDE,
Scott Moore

I hear this was the best summer of his life.

WRITTEN BY
Rachel Thiessen
Director of Engagement

WITH
Scott Veals
Jane-Finch, Outreach Worker

A few weeks ago, I received Scott's email update to his ministry supporters. From the subject line to his final sign off, Scott's overwhelming excitement for all that's going on in the lives of the youth he serves in Rexdale and Downsview shone through. He shared that he's in the midst of "the deepest connection with youth that he's ever had" in his 25 years with YU. Naturally, I had to jump on a call with him to hear more!

Scott runs sports programs in the summer months and afterschool programs throughout the year in partnership with Emmanuel Church of the Nazarene on Sheppard Avenue. "I've been in church partnerships for years," said Scott. "But right now with Kevin, we're working hand in glove and it's amazing. The vision, the mission, the logistics. Kevin, myself and the young leaders are phenomenally onboard. I get emotional just thinking about it."

On Friday evenings, Emmanuel's youth pastor, Kevin, hosts Awaken for youth of all ages. "Parents walk in and say, 'This is a family,'" shared Scott. "They know their kids are loved, welcomed and taken care of. Our hope is we can journey with some of these kids for the next 10 years."

Kevin is now seeing upwards of 60 youth attend each week. Here, they have a blast playing sports and board games, and participating in a worship service. Scott brings out his youth to this weekly event, as well. One of Scott's main goals from his summer programs is to get his youth involved in Emmanuel's Awaken youth group so they have a point of ministry connection throughout the school year. "I tell them, 'You can't come to [Camp Widjiitiwin] if you aren't coming to Awaken," explained Scott.

Last fall, Scott sensed God telling him to get ready for Summer 2025, saying: "You're going to have 20 new youth attending Awaken by the end of the summer." This past June, Scott was running his sports program on a Friday night before youth group. He sent the youth into the church to begin participating in the worship service while he cleaned up the soccer field. "As I came inside, I could hear and feel the volume of the worship," recalled Scott. "They were singing 'Let everything that has breath praise the Lord.' We had over 20 new youth and children in youth group before summer had even started. That might have been the best summer of my life. Seeing what God did in my leaders, and in our young people."

To learn more about transformative getaways like Camp Widjiitiwin, flip to **page 10**.

When you have such longevity in ministry, you experience the cyclical nature of youth engagement and journey through different seasons of youths' willingness to hear about Jesus. As you can imagine, that makes seasons like the one Scott is experiencing all the more meaningful. Consistent, long-term presence in the community is bearing fruit. It's important to take time and celebrate all that God is doing in Downsview. Scott would tell you, He is on the move!

398
YOUTH CONNECTED TO LOCAL CHURCH

251
YOUTH ENGAGED ABOUT PERSONALLY GIVING THEIR LIFE TO JESUS

231
YOUTH IN INTENTIONAL DISCIPLESHIP RELATIONSHIP

62
YOUTH WHO CHOSE TO GIVE THEIR LIFE TO JESUS

I hear the sound of laughter.

When Light Patrol first began envisioning Circles, we knew the mentors would be the most important part of the puzzle. We needed people who saw the opportunity to mentor with Circles as a calling to consistently reflect God's patient and steadfast love and care to youth currently within the foster care system.

WRITTEN BY
Matt Escott
Light Patrol, Circles Program Coordinator

That's why we were so excited when, after presenting at a missions' conference at a north Toronto church, we were approached by 3 women who believed that God had spoken to them about becoming involved in Circles. The vision of Circles is to surround youth in foster care with a stable and loving community who is "for" them during their time in foster care and beyond. This deeply resonated with their own experience of God's unfailing grace in their own lives, an experience they were eager to share through their consistent presence in the life of a foster youth. They were also drawn by the simplicity of the program's structure: to connect with a youth on a weekly basis around a fun and meaningful activity.

All of this was on full display when the mentors met the young woman they were matched with at the patio of a local coffee shop. Even though they were meeting for the first time, the mentors easily connected with her over delicious drinks and a fun card game. At one point I had to step away from the meeting, and while walking back to the coffee shop I could hear the sound of their laughter from a block away.

This initial meeting was like watching a dream turn into reality. We believe that presence matters and that it is meaningful for youth to connect with safe adults who enjoy being with them. God's character can be revealed through something as simple as a card game on a warm October evening. This is our hope, not just for this Circle that has just launched, but for every Circle that will come after it.

> **The perception of having social support decreased the likelihood of youth in foster care experiencing homelessness by 40%.**
>
> HOMELESSNESS AND THE TRANSITION FROM FOSTER CARE TO ADULTHOOD
> *2009*

374
YOUTH ENGAGED WHO ARE EXPERIENCING VULNERABILITY

I hear healthy habits start with church baseball teams.

Nicholas Chang
Jane-Finch, Outreach Worker

When I first met Z, I was working with the Light Patrol team and it was at our Thursday evening program for youth at a local shelter. He didn't have many friends and it was difficult for him to socialize with others. However, he loved the game of baseball and was excited when I offered to practice with him to help with his weight loss goals.

As the year progressed, we trained on different fundamentals of the game, and although it was very fun, it was mostly just him and me. Like with all life changes, there were some weeks of stagnation where it would be hard for him to change his eating habits or to practice outside of our time together, and being one of the only voices in his life speaking about his health only went so far.

Luckily, there was an opportunity to invite him to my church's softball team and, always wanting to be part of a team, he joined immediately, even without me. Since then, Z has gone regularly to their practices and to my church a few times. I hear from some of the church members that they are encouraging him to be healthy, work hard, and to know God. Other people are investing in him and he feels like he's part of a community. Since he joined the team, I've noticed he's spoken up more despite his social difficulties. How good it is to be part of the church body.

Moments & Milestones

14 Staff Celebrating Service Milestones

5 YEARS
Andrew Murrell
Ben Hartholt
Elita Fung
Emma Annesley
Mark Eggengoor

10 YEARS
Betty Bailey
Elim Burridge
Sam Mo
Sue Banik

15 YEARS
Jeff Smyth
Mark Eastwood

25 YEARS
Scott Veals

35 YEARS
Tim Huff

45 YEARS
Paul Robertson

20 years of Seeds of Hope

Our 200 guests enjoyed a glorious evening of praise and worship, great food and celebration at the Seeds of Hope 20th Anniversary Banquet on September 28th! It was a wonderful occasion for reunion, looking back over the years and acknowledging the contributions of some key supporters in making Seeds of Hope possible. Everyone left inspired to continue to help shine God's love and hope to families in Jane-Finch and beyond by planting seeds of hope for an even better future.

1 Year of Grand Central podcast

In October, we celebrated Grand-Central's first full year on JOY radio, 1250 AM. Tim Huff hosts an episode every Wednesday afternoon, all aimed at "honouring, inspiring and helping resource grandparents on their journey of goodness."

Tune in to Grand-Central Radio:
compassionseries.com/grand-central-radio-on-joy

4 Toastmasters Impact
58 Youth

The LIT Toastmasters program in Jane-Finch empowers leaders to lead confidently, walk in integrity as followers of Jesus Christ, speak confidently, and serve others. In March, four exceptional teenagers completed the two-year discipleship & development program, leaving a positive impact on the lives of over 58 young individuals across the GTA. They led a small group in their local church, organized lunchtime Bible study sessions at school, and prayerfully cultivated intentional relationships with classmates and friends.

4 Pizza Parties

Every week, DOXA PREP welcomes Scarborough youth for academic support. Participants receive 45 minutes of 1:1 or small group support from a team of volunteers. Then, they launch into goal setting, followed by a time of soft-skill and character development. Their time together is wrapped up with scripture and a personal testimony from a volunteer. DOXA PREP is gaining momentum and piloted another location in the fall. One of the things the youth love most about DOXA PREP is the chance to collectively earn "golden tickets" that they can redeem for pizza parties! Last year, the DOXA PREP group earned a record-breaking 4 pizza parties! Anyone want to be their pizza party sponsor?!

24,430 Donations Processed

Wow — that is a humbling number! Thank you to each donor represented in this grand total, and to our Support Services Team who processed every one of these donations behind the scenes.

156+ BlessUP Text Messages

"Is there a real person behind these text messages?" Yes! Lisa Green and Mark Evans are the dynamic duo who run our BlessUP text message ministry to young people across Canada and the US. Three times each week, subscribers receive a Bible verse, quote or word of encouragement. BlessUP has created a safe place for youth to reply, and ask for prayer and support in their day to day struggles. Many have opened up to share their insecurities and struggles with identity, anxiety, relationships, mental health, stress, loneliness, disappointments and heartaches. Others share their desires to live out their faith or affirm an openness to let God work in and through them. Connecting with and serving these individuals by allowing them to feel heard, cared for and encouraged is a tremendous privilege and joy.

512 Gaining Ground Walkers

In April, we hosted eight events across the GTA, inviting friends and family to walk 5 km for YU. Through the support of many, we raised $116,786 for our YU staff and their ministry programs — exceeding our goal of $100,000!

I hear He puts the pieces together.

Jenn Mikelait
Frontiers, New Ministry Strategist

Danyao Wang
JOPI, Volunteer Associate

Every Thursday, over 100 Farsi-speaking Christians gather at Willowdale Christian Reformed Church for "Farsi Fellowship." Leaders noticed many youth and young adults attending and invited Youth Unlimited to help launch a youth program. Soon, about 30 young people were meeting weekly with YU staff for Bible study, games, and community.

As Jenn Mikelait and her summer team built relationships, they learned about key challenges many newcomer youth face: barriers to employment, limited knowledge of worker rights, difficulty navigating systems, and a deep need for community and support. Jenn's team spent the spring and summer offering practical help while creating space for fun and connection.

At that same time, YU's Job Opportunity Placement Initiative (JOPI) began to see new fruit, as God began leading the team to new groups of youth and they found more effective ways of sharing workplace skills and resources with the youth they encountered.

God was bringing two pieces of a puzzle together — an effective employment readiness ministry equipped to share resources with young people, and a group of newcomers to Canada in need of exactly that. Through His perfect timing, the *Working in Canada 101* workshop for Farsi-speaking newcomer youth was born!

JOPI aims to leave each youth they encounter with a blessing for their job search journey. The JOPI team of Alison Chuck and Danyao Wang visited the Farsi Fellowship and led a workshop that explored the Biblical theology of work, the cultural differences of working in Canada, and strategies for job searching. New relationships were forged, stories were shared, and the young people in attendance collaborated on strategies to help take another step towards meaningful employment in Canada. That night was a beautiful example of God bringing two ministries together in partnership for the sake of young people in our city.

33
YOUTH SERVED WHO HAVE BEEN IN CANADA FOR LESS THAN 2 YEARS

111
YOUTH SUPPORTED THROUGH EMPLOYMENT READINESS, JOB PLACEMENT OR SECURING VOLUNTEER WORK

I hear them speaking in their own language.

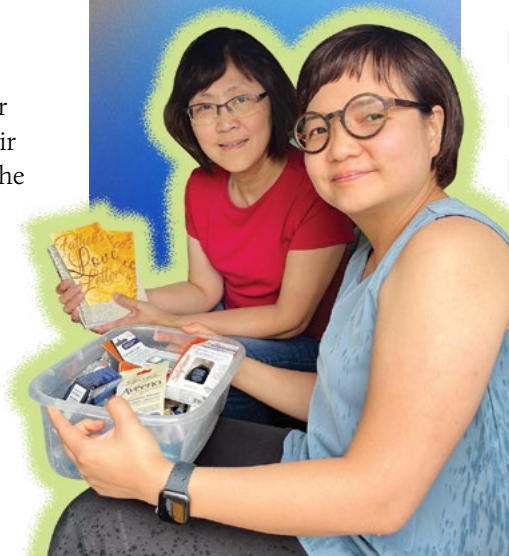
Manuela Stephens
Central Services, Executive Assistant

This past Christmas, I joined the Rahab team to carol for the women who work at massage parlours in locations across the GTA. I was quite nervous at first and wasn't sure what to expect as we knocked on the doors, singing Christmas carols and handing out gift bags. Reflecting on this experience, I felt a sense of heaviness and sadness mixed with hope that God *is* present and at work in the darkest places.

The women's first reaction when they opened the door to us was surprise and hesitation, as we were not who they expected to see at the door. They awkwardly eyed the gift bags we were holding while we sang We Wish you a Merry Christmas. But then, when Julie, one of our Rahab staff, started speaking to them in their own language, something changed in their demeanor and you could even see a faint smile. A connection was made, a small amount of trust was built, and they let their guard down a little. Something lit up within them when they heard their own language spoken to them. This deeply resonated with me. I left with a new appreciation and awe for our Rahab team and their tireless efforts to reach the unreached. I am deeply convicted that the Lord handpicked each staff member on the team to use their giftings, skills and backgrounds for His glory.

6
WOMEN HELPED IN EXITING SEX WORK OR OTHER EXPLOITATIVE CIRCUMSTANCES

185
MASSAGE PARLOURS VISITED BY RAHAB STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS



I hear God led them to Canada.

YU has welcomed a number of new staff and interns this year, including a few who are also new to Canada. Zeke, Mar, and Chelsea have a unique ability to empathize with the newcomer youth we've encountered in the past year. Here they share a bit of that story.

Zeke Newcombe

Youth Outreach Intern, Lakeshore Soccer League

Mar Van Iwaarden

Youth Ministry Intern, Light Patrol

Chelsea Laria

Youth Outreach Worker, Lakeshore Soccer League

What brought you to Canada?

ZEKE: I came to Canada from New Zealand. I was seeking a way into ministry and God placed an opportunity in front of me that led me to Canada, working at Camp Widjiitiwin. I'm now an intern for YU, serving at the Lakeshore Soccer Drop-In with Andrew Ironside.

MAR: While studying International Social Work in the Netherlands, I was required to do an internship abroad. I decided I wanted to go to Canada to gain ministry experience and gladly my program approved of my internship with Youth Unlimited. I am currently serving as an intern with Light Patrol.

CHELSEA: I came to Canada from Kenya to further my studies, and at the time ministry wasn't on my radar at all, but the Lord had other plans! He gently redirected my path and led me to Youth Unlimited as an outreach worker with Lakeshore Soccer League and Leaders In Training programs in South Etobicoke. Even though leaving everyone and everything I knew back home in Kenya was more than hard, God has been so faithful.

What has your experience been like building a new life as a newcomer to Canada?

C: It's been a journey of faith and growth. Starting over in a new country is very overwhelming; learning how things work, finding community, and trying to feel at home again. Through every challenge, God has surrounded me with people who have encouraged, supported, and loved me. I've learned that even when everything feels unfamiliar, God's presence doesn't change.

Z: I didn't know anybody and had to rebuild a new social life, find a new community of Christians, and familiarize myself with the culture of Canada. It's been a fun journey of learning new things, and feeling welcomed by the amazing people in my life here in Canada.

How do you empathize with the newcomer youth we've begun encountering?

M: When we worked with Iranian youth this summer, they were asking us questions about Canadian work culture, how to write a resume that will stand out to employers and other things I also had to work through when I first got here. Even the tendency to stick to socializing with people from the same cultural background, because the connection seems to flow easier, was something I could relate to.

C: I understand what it's like to step into a new culture and feel both excited and uncertain at the same time. When I meet newcomer youth, especially in the Kenyan communities I engage with on a more personal level, I see their courage and resilience but I also recognize the quiet struggles that can come with adjusting and trying to belong. I try to remind them that they are seen, loved, and not alone, and that God has a purpose in their journey too.

Z: The big one that comes to mind is fitting in. It's tough for regular people to fit in sometimes, even in your own country! Moving to a new country that you know nothing about, can make it even more difficult to fit in or find a group where you find your "people".

I hear trust takes time.

WRITTEN BY
Andrew Ironside
Lakeshore Soccer League, Outreach Worker

This summer, we had over 60 kids from our church and soccer community join us at Camp Widjiitiwin, just outside Huntsville. Camp is a uniquely amazing, meaningful, and outrageously fun place for kids to be—there really is nothing like it. It's a space where kids can explore nature, build friendships, and experience God's love in ways that are both simple and profound.

Before the pandemic, we had encouraging momentum for this week at camp—70, 80, even 100 kids coming with us some summers. But in recent years, we found it difficult to get community families to send their children. Almost every parent said, "That sounds like a great opportunity," but followed it with, "We're just not ready for that." And honestly, I understood. Sending your child to overnight camp is a big deal for any parent today.

That's why this summer felt so encouraging. Seeing 60 kids again was a sign of something deeper happening—trust being rebuilt. We noticed that nearly all of these kids and youth came from families we've come to know better in recent years; families who have seen us summer after summer on the soccer field, in after-school programs, and at church events.

Through that continued presence and care, parents, grandparents, and participants alike have come to realize that what we do is more than just running programs. They've experienced spaces that are fun, welcoming, and affordable—where leaders genuinely care, and where God's love is seen and felt in everyday ways.

As our camp week approached this summer, it was encouraging to hear from so many families who reached out personally—asking about safety, sorting through the camp forms, talking honestly about finances, or even looking for a spare sleeping bag. Those simple, practical moments of care often make the difference in whether a child gets to go to camp, and in helping parents feel peace about letting them go.

And it's worth every bit of effort—because once the kids arrive, they are swimming, canoeing, learning new skills, laughing around campfires, and seeing examples of God's love in ways that stay with them long after they come home.

Canadian research shows that most youth who hold onto their faith into adulthood can describe a time when they experienced God personally. Those experiences happened most frequently during youth retreats, overnight camps and/or short-term mission projects. That explains why we started measuring 'intense, short-term experiences' this year. Stay tuned for how it may continue to shape our ministry approaches in the future!

5,175
YOUTH TRAINED THROUGH GROUP INTERACTIONS

367
YOUTH ENGAGED IN SHORT-TERM TRANSFORMATIVE EXPERIENCES

160
YOUTH IN PEER LEADERSHIP ROLE

I hear words that speak life.

Charlene Boreland
DOXA, Outreach Worker

Kirushanthan Krishnapillai
DOXA, Community Youth Worker

Sue Banik
DOXA, Junior High Coordinator

For the last 18 years, our DOXA team has hosted the DOXA Elevation Retreat for Scarborough youth. We sat down with Charlene, Kirushanthan and Sue to learn more about the vision and impact of these retreats.

Tell us more about the DOXA Elevation Retreats:

KIRUSHANTHAN: Elevation was created to meet the needs of the diverse community of churches and youth in Scarborough. We host the retreat at Ontario Camp for the Deaf and this past year, over 120 youth in grades 6-12 and their leaders from nine churches attended. Youth participate in winter activities, team building games, campfires, dance parties, worship sessions and workshops, and even help serve the meals to one another.

SUE: We saw many Junior High and Senior High youth engaging with our theme "Speak Life"; what does it look like to speak life into the lives of others and have God's word impact our own life?

What are some memorable moments from the retreat?

CHARLENE: In the evenings, we get to have deep conversations with our youth. They might not want to have these conversations with their parents or other peers, but I'm able to speak truth, 'speak life' into their life.

K: When we go on retreats, I see a different side of my youth. I think to myself, "You guys aren't normally silly like this!" Youth these days have to grow up fast, but this allows them to just be kids.

Why do you think retreats like Elevation make a transformative impact on young people?

K: You are spending so much intentional time with these youth. We might see the youth for two hours a week, but this is 48 hours straight of creating a deeper investment with them. They also get to build friendships with kids who are not a part of their youth group. The DOXA Elevation retreat is a safe, loving, encouraging and open environment where kids can be themselves and experience what biblical community looks like.

We often see kids stay in a session following prayer time and want to go deeper with their youth leader. They get emotional saying they want to strengthen their relationship with Jesus. We're able to pray over them and talk through what's on their heart.

C: Elevation creates space away from everyday distractions where participants can reflect, connect with others, and deepen their faith or sense of purpose. Being surrounded by a supportive community helps the youth feel seen, heard, and valued — often in ways they don't experience in their daily lives. Those moments of openness and shared vulnerability can spark real growth, self-awareness, renewed motivation and changes lives.

Do you have future hopes for these retreats?

S: My hope is for our retreat experiences to continue these deepening opportunities for students to feel safe to have life-changing conversations and to be poured into by faithful members of their community.

"Thank you so much for the love and care that was poured into this time. My girls absolutely needed to hear the things they did this weekend. So grateful to have had these words spoken into them and that these conversations have been opened."

DOXA ELEVATION YOUTH GROUP LEADER

Transformative Getaways in 2025

- Camp Capstone, Lakeshore Soccer League, Downsview and DOXA youth to Camp Widjiitiwin
- Young Parents Retreat to Muskoka Bible Centre
- Seeds of Hope to Camp Koinonia
- DOXA Remix in Toronto
- DOXA Elevation Retreat to Ontario Camp for the Deaf

Walking Side x Side with YU

"We have many donors who have only ever given by writing a cheque and putting it in the mail. Several of them called in during the Canada Post strike to get help with sending an e-transfer or learning how to make an online donation. It was great that they were still able to send funds in, but even more meaningful, was the heart behind it. These donors made this extra effort and did something out of their comfort zone. It shows how much they care for our staff, for the work God is doing through YU, and that they know they are an integral part of our ministry. It's a beautiful picture of the partnerships that God has brought together."

KATHY WEBB
Donations & Payroll Administrator

38
PART-TIME STAFF

14
INTERNS

32
FULL-TIME STAFF

145
ORGANIZATIONAL & CHURCH PARTNERSHIPS

412
VOLUNTEERS

47
SUMMER STAFF

3,773
ACTIVE GIVERS

Join Us in the Work

Join our Prayer Team
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prayer@yugta.ca to join

Partner with Us
Learn more at:
yugta.ca/partner-with-us

Create Change by Volunteering
Learn more at:
yugta.ca/volunteer

Careers with a Calling
Learn more at:
yugta.ca/careers

Donate
Give today at:
yugta.ca/donate

Financials

Alongside the Impact Report focusing on our field work, you can also read our audited financial statements and analysis as part of stewarding every gift we receive with integrity and a desire to maximize the impact of you, our partners.

Visit yugta.ca/financial-statements