

2021

Youth Unlimited™
YFC TORONTO

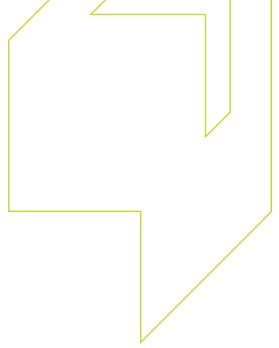
Impact Report



Enduring Hope

Labouring in Love.

Perseverance & Innovation



Do you remember how we thought in March 2020 that COVID restrictions would be a couple-week disruption to the normalcy of our lives? Oh, how wrong we were! Instead of a ‘blip on the radar’, this pandemic has been a marathon with the ups and downs of gratitude and grief, celebration and mourning, and hardship alongside overcoming. Paul, in his letter to the Romans, speaks of God as One who gives us endurance and encouragement. Throughout this marathon, Youth Unlimited has resolved to endure with hope and



WRITTEN BY:
Carl Nash
Ministry Director

to encourage our young people with meaningful supports in every facet of their lives.

Looking across the city

Admittedly, we cannot escape the reality that COVID hit our ministries hard, both in terms of the impact on our overall numbers of youth served, and the energy required to continually adapt to changing restrictions and guidelines to reach those youth.

Youth We Served:

2,119
TOTAL YOUTH ENCOUNTERED

759
REGULARLY ATTENDING

534
ENGAGED IN LONG-TERM MEANINGFUL RELATIONSHIP

2,660
YOUTH TRAINED THROUGH GROUP INTERACTIONS

While we are grateful to have connected with over 2,000 youth this year, we grieve the reality that this is a drop of 41% from last year. However, we are encouraged that our core focus – youth in long-term meaningful relationships – only dropped by 24%, which speaks to the strength of the multitude of ‘reinventions’ that happened in our initiatives throughout this year.

since COVID guidelines no longer allowed us access into correctional facilities, (2) Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu as martial arts were forbidden, and (3) after-school connections with youth in Oshawa since the Durham School Board Hubs were never permitted to open.

In other situations, our staff were able to pivot and create opportunities within mandated guidelines to allow some ministry gatherings to take place, but often the scale of those were greatly reduced, including limited cohorts for summer day camps and outdoor sports.

The impact of COVID on our initiatives included:



FORCED CLOSURES



REDUCED SCALE



INCREASED ENGAGEMENT WITH VULNERABLE YOUTH



CREATING VIRTUAL COMMUNITIES

Read more on pages 4 and 5 about how our YU initiatives innovated to reach and serve young people over the past year.



See some of the significant milestones our YU team journeyed through with our young people **on page 6.**



We also saw some of our initiatives experience increased engagement as they met tangible, practical needs facing our young people as a result of COVID. This included creative virtual experiences as well as innovating for safe in-person engagement wherever possible.

Looking at our young people

Finally, at an individual youth and family level, our staff reported many heart-breaking stories of the impact of COVID, such as youth turning to unhealthy habits, youth unable to gather and grieve the death of their friends or relatives, and a significant rise in social anxiety and loneliness. The effects of the pandemic upon our young people truly are immeasurable.

Thanks be to God, these COVID-related restrictions and impacts do not tell the whole story, nor do they define our ministry year. Digging a little deeper, we see encouraging trends, many good news stories, and a living out of the “endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ”. We are grateful for the opportunity to share these with you in this year’s Impact Report. 🗨

While 16 months of COVID restrictions have hampered some of the momentum we hoped to establish towards our Making Space strategic pathways, the impact of the pandemic has also made these four pathways more relevant than ever. To learn more about how the pandemic has affected the unfolding of our 4-year strategy, “Making Space”, **check out page 8.**

Creativity Amidst COVID

COVID-induced restrictions created the need, space, and opportunity for sparks of creativity and innovation across our initiatives, so our teams could continue to connect with youth. Here is just a sampling from our six categories of programs.



- Community Outreach**
Connecting in neighbourhoods through team and mentoring relationships
- Critical Care**
Supporting youth experiencing systemic vulnerability
- Innovative Centres**
Pursuing shared interests in inspiring environments
- Leadership Development**
Growing and discovering God's purpose for life
- Marketplace Initiatives**
Developing employment skills and entrepreneurship
- Trips, Camps & Events**
Sharing experiences, adventure and social impact



TRIPS, CAMPS & EVENTS
Unable to do our usual Muskoka overnight camp, the **South-Central Etobicoke** team launched the local Capstone Day Camp in partnership with Capstone Community Bible Church.



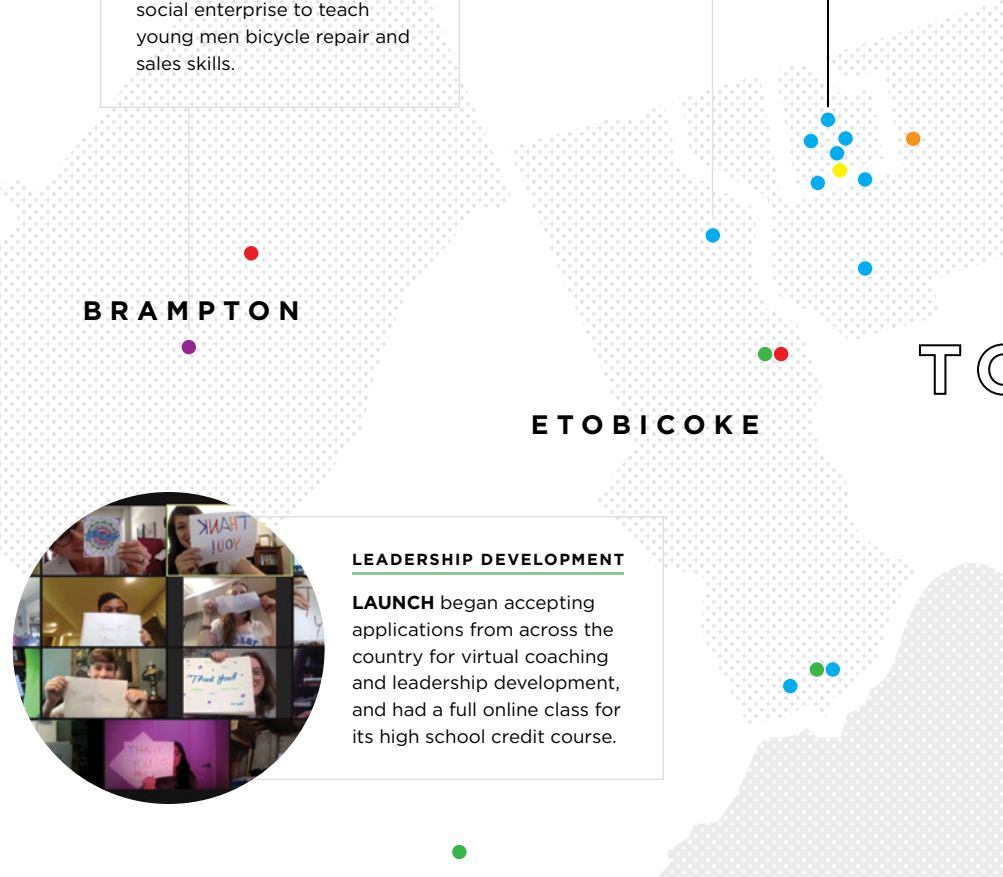
COMMUNITY OUTREACH
With no access to our usual programming spaces, the **Jane-Finch Outreach** team utilized campfires, skating trips and outdoor boxing to continue meaningful engagement with their youth.



MARKETPLACE INITIATIVES
Heartbeat Bikes was launched as part of the Stepping Stones social enterprise to teach young men bicycle repair and sales skills.



LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT
LAUNCH began accepting applications from across the country for virtual coaching and leadership development, and had a full online class for its high school credit course.



NEWMA

TC

MARKET



CRITICAL CARE

Re-Routed Counselling was able to offer virtual sessions to young people from across the city, which provided a much-needed resource to youth from other YU initiatives struggling with mental health challenges.

UXBRIDGE



COMMUNITY OUTREACH

To address youth's loneliness, our **Victoria Village Outreach** gave our youth a voice by starting a podcast called Victoria Village Vignettes, interviewing youth one-on-one so they could hear one another's stories and foster ongoing connection.



LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Today's Teens Conference, in partnership with Crossroads Christian Communications, equipped over 1,000 youth workers through a virtual livestream format. Our Youth Culture seminars were also able to shift to online learning experiences.

STOUFFVILLE

OSHAWA



TRIPS, CAMPS & EVENTS

DOXA began a pen-pal program between youth in Scarborough and Serpent River First Nation to deepen friendships from afar.

SCARBOROUGH

NORTH YORK



CRITICAL CARE

Light Patrol switched to downtown outreach on foot and partnered with a temporary hotel shelter to provide meaningful activity programs for youth experiencing homelessness.

TORONTO

DOWNTOWN

LAKE ONTARIO

Canvas of Transformation

Each year, our team of staff and volunteers walk with young people through the significant milestones shown here, which capture just some of how we see God at work through the lens of YU's palette of '5 Transformative Colours'.

CANVAS OF TRANSFORMATION



135
MENTORED IN INTENTIONAL DISCIPLESHIP RELATIONSHIP

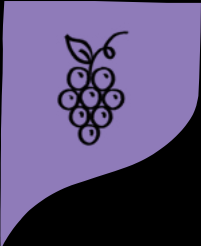
301
ENGAGED ABOUT PERSONALLY GIVING THEIR LIFE TO JESUS



Rooted Identity
Engaging Life with Jesus

17
SUPPORTED THROUGH ISSUES IN CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

35
CHOSE TO GIVE THEIR LIFE TO JESUS



Renewed Character
Growing in Virtue

89
SERVING IN PEER LEADERSHIP ROLE

70
SUPPORTED THROUGH OTHER CRISES OR MILESTONES (I.E. MARRIAGE, CHILDBIRTH, BAPTISM, QUITTING DRUGS)



Healthy Relationships
Seeking Reconciliation & Vibrant Community



Joyful Service
Putting Others First

33
SUPPORTED THROUGH HOUSING CRISES OR TRANSITION

84
HELPED IN FINDING / BEING PLACED IN A JOB

98
GUIDED THROUGH FAMILY RECONCILIATION OR OTHER FAMILY MATTERS

10
EMPOWERED TO EXIT SEX WORK OR OTHER EXPLOITATIVE CIRCUMSTANCES



Clear Purpose
Discovering & Utilizing Gifts & Abilities

322
RECEIVED SUPPORT FOR PHYSICAL NEEDS

71
SUPPORTED THROUGH GRADUATION FROM HIGH SCHOOL OR ENTRY INTO POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION



Finding Her Voice in LAUNCH

Natalie began our LAUNCH leadership course feeling timid and insecure. During my time as her coach, she set admirable personal goals: broadening her friendship circle and being more authentic. To Natalie, being authentic meant being her real self in front of other people and being confident in who she is. Through times of one-to-one coaching, Natalie learned how to make intentional steps towards connecting with peers and communicating with her genuine, humble and authentic spirit.

As the year progressed, Natalie began speaking up in class and was often first to contribute to



WRITTEN BY:
Bonnie Wong
LAUNCH,
Lead Instructor

group discussions. Her friends affirmed that she had really come out of her shell and her parents were moved by her growth.

When she presented her Homes for Hope community impact project at the end of the year, she shared with us that she had found her voice and now understands that what she has to say matters.

LAUNCH was thrilled to walk with Natalie this year, encouraging her to grow spiritually, in character and in leadership. 🗨️



During COVID, we needed to teach students like Natalie how to build relationships and make friends outside of the traditional classroom setting. Learning where to find support and community is so important.

—BONNIE WONG

Finding Refuge in the Rahab Residence

Since she was just 13, Samantha was trafficked by a pimp in her small town, and moved around to different cities, using drugs to numb her pain, anxiety, and depression.

Then, a few years ago, she met a man who took care of her, and helped ensure she would not need to go back to the sex trade. During their time together, Samantha became pregnant. Sadly, not long after, Luke was arrested for attempted murder and never got to see the birth of his daughter, Madelina. Now on her own at 21, Samantha continued to struggle with drug addiction and soon lost custody of her daughter.

After forming a relationship with our team last summer, Samantha decided to move into our Rahab Residence. She arrived under the influence of drugs and struggled with insomnia, as she was not allowed to visit her daughter. Through tears she expressed

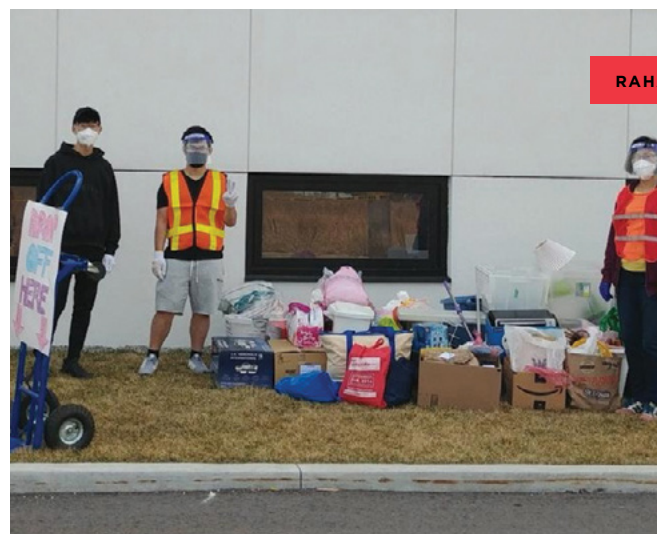


WRITTEN BY:
Joanna Yee
Director of Rahab

frustration over her desire to be a good mother.

With the constant companionship of Rahab team members, we witnessed her transformation as we shared with her the hope Jesus offers. Samantha's spirit calmed, her mind and speech became clearer, she was willing to quit drugs, and completed a course recommended by her case worker.

Today, Samantha is a different person from the young woman we met not one year ago. She has re-gained custody of her daughter and is settled in permanent housing. We connected her with a church in her neighbourhood where she can continue to grow in her faith with the support of church friends. We are so grateful for how Samantha is experiencing the transforming love of Jesus. 🗨️



The **Rahab Team** hosted a drive-through furniture donation event to furnish Samantha's apartment. When Joanna and Carol delivered the furniture, they were thrilled to see that Samantha truly is healthy and happy.



Making Space Strategy Update

While 16 months of COVID restrictions have hampered some of the momentum we hoped to establish towards our Making Space strategic pathways, the impact of the pandemic has also made these four pathways more

relevant than ever. Our effectiveness at increasing our ministry impact with vulnerable youth, supporting youth in areas of mental health challenge and investing in wholistic transformation have seen us continue to make tangible progress in these three pathways as we enter

the final two years of our four-year strategic plan.

The fourth pathway – integrating youth into the life of a neighbourhood church – has certainly been the most challenging, since the majority of our partner churches have faced

severe limitations to their community engagement. As restrictions ease, we hope to pursue partnership conversations to serve and equip more local churches to work alongside us and see more of our YU youth experience belonging in these faith communities.

Vulnerable Youth

215

youth experiencing vulnerability in long-term meaningful relationships

Mental Health Challenges

302

youth supported through mental health challenges

Youth Integration

209

youth regularly participating in a local church

Wholistic Transformation

301

youth engaged about personally giving their life to Jesus

Above are our key metrics for each pathway. Check out further strategic impacts relating to Making Space during COVID on the following page.

STEPPING STONES

Through a Mother's Eyes



Stepping Stones Property Services offers life skills development, on-the-job trades training, and paid employment in a professional property services setting. Thankfully, this social enterprise was able to continue operating safely during the pandemic. Here's an unprompted note from a mom of one of the youth (both names changed) who was hired by Stepping Stones.

Hi Mark

It's Nigel's mom, Cheryl. I hope you don't mind me texting you. I just want to thank the staff at Youth Unlimited for all you've done for Nigel.

Nigel has never had a lot of confidence due to his learning disability & he's always been a little immature for his age. School only made this worse & he rebelled & was always in lots of trouble. His father & I tried our best to encourage him but I think sometimes kids just need to hear it from someone besides their parents.

I'm so glad he found Stepping Stones! He's grown up so much and I know he's feeling more confidence knowing that there are things he can do in this life. He's always been my sweet, sensitive little boy and I see him now starting to mature on his way to becoming a man.

Anyways, I truly want to thank you and your team from the bottom of my heart for what you do for these kids. I don't know you or your staff, but I do know you are truly special people. I don't know where Nigel would be without you guys.

—Cheryl

Strategic Impacts Amidst the Pandemic



Throughout 2021, the staff and volunteers of Youth Unlimited showed intentionality and dedication, in spite of the many challenges and roadblocks of the pandemic, to do whatever it took to support and serve some of the most vulnerable youth in our city. As you read of their impact, we hope you are encouraged...

100%
increase in youth receiving intentional physical care, especially food relief

Impacting these 322 youth and their families in this way was made possible by a generous food security grant, and an intentional decision by many of our ministries to reach out to families and provide tangible physical support. For some teams that faced many program restrictions, like South-Central Etobicoke, this represented a wonderful new way to keep some supportive relationships alive.

6%
increase in number of youth engaged with our Critical Care programs

While our other ministry program categories remained engaged in meaningful relationships with 50% of our youth from last year, our Critical Care programs (including Rahab, Light Patrol, and Young Parents) actually saw an increase in engagement. The essential nature of this work and the adaptability of our teams allowed us to remain in close contact with those experiencing great need during COVID.

5x
more youth were supported through housing challenges

We intentionally increased our investment in helping youth transition through short-term housing crisis situations. Through the collaborative work of several of our teams, and the start-up of our Good Samaritan short-term hotel stay ministry, 33 youth were supported through housing crises or transitions.

↑
Increased engagement through online programming

While many of our youth certainly exhibited 'Zoom fatigue', both our Seeds of Hope after-school programming in Jane-Finch (including a new entrepreneurship program) and our Young Moms groups actually had significant increases in the number of youth that participated once they shifted to online programming. Virtual was simpler for many of the young moms and they opened up more readily online in response to spiritual conversations. We were also able to adapt many other initiatives virtually such as our Youth Culture seminars and Project Serve workshops.

86%
more youth supported through mental health challenges

The pandemic exacerbated so many existing challenges, heightening the need for our teams across the GTA to come alongside youth struggling with their mental health.

132
youth have enrolled in our BlessUP initiative

This encouraging Scripture-based morning text program saw some technology tweaks to allow those youth to reach out and begin to engage with our ministry staff and volunteers more conversationally.

40%
increase in academic support to students

Many youth struggled with the transition to virtual classrooms and online learning during the pandemic, which required many of our staff and volunteers to step up and help their youth successfully graduate or pursue entry into post-secondary education.



Gratitude & Grieving

When we consider our initiatives and our connections with young people, the past year has brought both beautiful signs of hope and transformation, which we celebrate, as well as real grief, trauma, and struggles. Here are some snippets of gratitude and grieving from across our teams this year.



JANE-FINCH

Jane-Finch

The hardest part of the year has been witnessing a number of youth turn to unhealthy habits. We remain hopeful that as social distancing restrictions ease and these young people have access to community programming and points of meaningful connection, our leaders and mentors will help them steer away from drug use, hustling and gang involvement.

We were encouraged to see volunteer engagement increase through virtual programming, like Enterprising Youth, as we shifted to an online format. Creating an entrepreneurial mentorship program brought out many new, and highly engaged, volunteers.

Compassion Series

The work of the Compassion Series around ‘exploring fear and anxiety with children’ was altered significantly in COVID to truly be ‘with families’, where we were able to provide sessions with parents and children to help navigate this season of upheaval.

I (Tim Huff) was able to speak at the Tearfund International Justice Conference, with thousands of online attendees from 11 countries on the subject of ‘Living out a Theology of Justice.’



DOXA

A focus this year, even during the pandemic, has been our ‘discipling cohorts’. It has been incredibly positive and encouraging to see the DOXA team fully embrace faithfully investing into a small group of young people and young adults. A positive outcome of our cohorts has been seeing many of our youth and young adults more engaged with their faith, desiring to disciple others and choosing to serve others. This was evident by their desire to be a part of our REMIX mission experience and Serpent River First Nations ministry.



Project Serve

While COVID restrictions required cancelling our usual in-city overnight experiences with young people, our team created a new workshop on poverty that was delivered online to youth groups and classrooms, which was a highlight of the year.



THE SHOP

The Shop



While we were limited in the number of youth we could connect with, we were able to hire some young people intentionally, allowing for a deeper and longer mentoring experience. We saw youth transformed with a renewed peace due to their knowledge of Christ and His love. We saw youth able to leave their home after suffering months, even years, of agoraphobia.



The Shop was able to focus on youth experiencing mental health challenges. We provided significant funding for youth who needed counseling, and also provided a referral to a Christian counselor. The fruits of God's work in the lives of those we helped is evident: Three youth were able to return to "normal" work routines and to their families after counseling. As well, one youth experienced such a transformation that one of their parents exclaimed to Mark, "I hardly even recognize her anymore!"

Bridletowne Outreach



I (Dave Burridge) am grateful for faithful volunteer mentors who were able to remain in meaningful connection with some of our community youth over this past year. Their presence was so encouraging in the midst of the loneliness induced by COVID.

Oshawa Outreach



Throughout the past year, I (Mark Eastwood) walked with youth encountering significant loss in their lives. This included a young person dealing with the passing of their father, and an individual from the Oshawa youth shelter who passed away from an overdose. Grief during COVID was a unique challenge. Many from the shelter did not feel like they had any closure, as there was no funeral or celebration of life. The young person who lost their father could not visit the hospital. But, mercifully, it was also a time where God strengthened the bonds of community and family.



YOUNG PARENTS

Young Parents



Over this past year, young parents had their day-to-day supports removed and we saw vulnerabilities increase (including incidents of abuse, food insecurity, unstable living situations, involvement with police, and mental health issues). And yet... This year we made significant inroads with young parents. They sought out our help and valued spiritual conversations, they opened up about their lives and were eager to participate in our online programs.



BRIDLETOWNE OUTREACH





OUR TEAM

Thank You!

We are grateful for the faithful team who has helped us endure in 2021.



32
FULL-TIME
STAFF

30
PART-TIME
STAFF

10
INTERNS

65
SUMMER
STAFF

465
VOLUNTEERS

OUR PARTNERSHIPS

148
ORGANIZATIONAL
AND CHURCH
PARTNERSHIPS

3,413
ACTIVE GIVERS

How you can bring hope

At Youth Unlimited, we believe everyone has a part to play in seeing young people experience joy in Jesus, wholistic wellbeing, healthy community, and hope for a bright future. We invite you to consider how you might get involved in changing young lives in the year ahead:



Join our Prayer Team

- Receive a short, daily invitation to pray for the work of Youth Unlimited.
- **Email Kathy at:** kwebb@yugta.ca to join



Partner with Us

- We are committed to partnering with local churches and like-minded agencies to collaboratively impact and empower the young people we serve.
- **Learn more at:** yugta.ca/partner-with-us



Create Change by Volunteering

- Each of our programs relies on a hardworking group of volunteers who invest their time and energy in youth transformation.
- **Learn more at:** yugta.ca/volunteer



Careers with a Calling

- Make an impact as part of our growing team of resilient leaders.
- **Learn more at:** yugta.ca/careers



Donate

- Impacting hundreds of young lives with the life-changing love of Jesus requires the faithful and generous financial partnership of people like you.
- **Give today at:** yugta.ca/donate

FINANCIALS

Alongside this Impact Report focusing on our field work, we also share 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. **Read more at:** yugta.ca/financial-statements

