

Summer 2023

UPDATE

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Follow Me

I started working at UPT in the summer of 2001. I was hired on the spot to start a summer camp for Jr. High youth (11-14 yrs) in the Rexdale community at our Camp Victory site. I wanted to make a difference in the lives of youth, I had no experience, but I was given the opportunity to develop as a leader.

Only two youth showed up on the first day, but by the end of the summer camp, we had 25 participants. Within a few years, our Jr. High program expanded into a weekly AfterSchool program and we hired our first StreetLeaders, who were once children in our summer camp.

Looking back on my first summer camp experience, I am amazed that I was entrusted with such significant leadership responsibilities. Reflecting on scripture, we see Jesus calling Matthew, a tax collector with limited experience and knowledge, simply saying, "Follow me."

In our 25 years of serving Toronto Community Housing, we have had the privilege of raising 480 young leaders and encouraging them to follow Jesus. This summer, we plan to provide over 30 StreetLeaders with the opportunity to learn, serve and grow. While they do not have extensive experience or knowledge in children's ministry, with

intentional discipleship and coaching, they can still make a positive difference in their community.

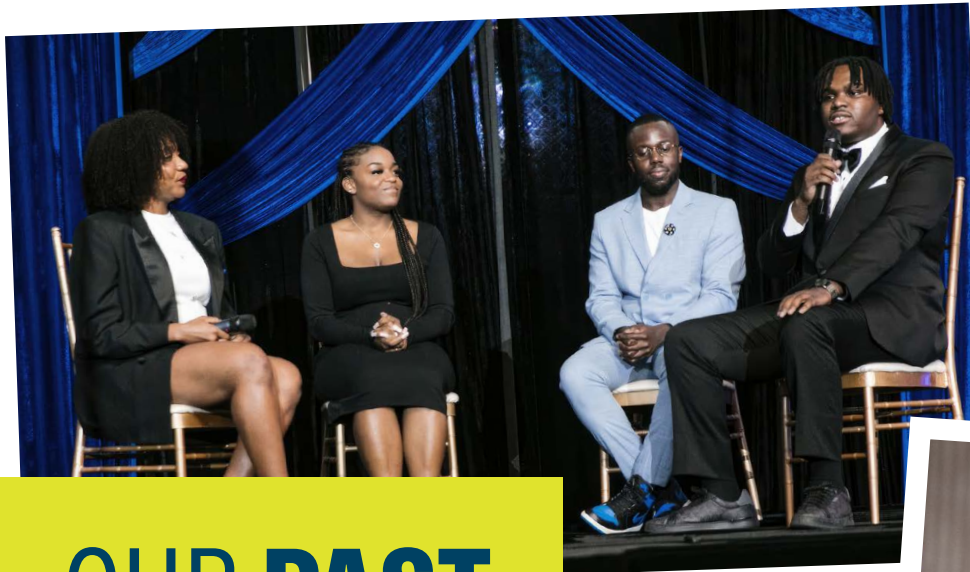
We are grateful for your prayers and financial investment in these young leaders as they grow to love Jesus and serve the next generation of children in their community.

Grace & peace



Shawn James
Executive Director

25 YEARS: A CELEBRATION



On May 4, we held a Night of Promise to celebrate 25 years of serving in Toronto Community Housing neighbourhoods. It was an event where we honoured the past and invited our guests to help secure our future.

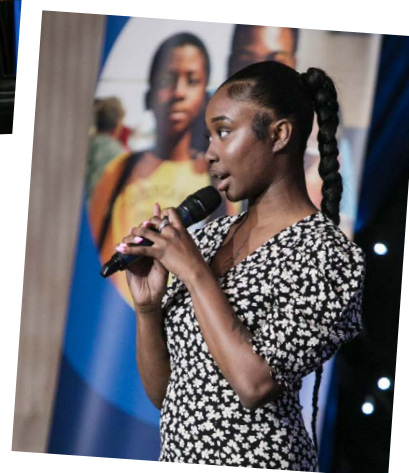
OUR PAST

“A few UPT alumni shared with our guests the impact that this ministry had and continues to have on them. They shared why they believe our ministry in TCH is important, here's what they said:

“UPT had a big impact on my life. It was the first time where I felt like my walk with Christ was being formed. I remember we would do devotions before summer camp each morning. Those devotions were so impactful on my life that they stopped me from doing dumb stuff and led me to make better decisions.”

—Nana, 25 years (Program Facilitator at Inner City Outreach and Editor Intern at Tidal League)

“I think the work UPT does is so important because it shows that people are always there for you. Many times children are ignored or not loved at home; camp was a safe space for them to authentically and vulnerably be themselves. UPT gave the youth the opportunity to learn and be financially equipped by providing them with jobs in their AfterSchool programs and summer camps.” —Janae, 23 years (Currently Senior Coach at UPWard Leadership)



“I think it's extremely important because it offers kids a very different experience of community than what isn't often found in their communities. UrbanPromise Toronto Camps teach the gospel, the leaders truly care and are intentional about fostering authentic relationships with kids. There is just something special about UrbanPromise, they really care, and the communities need that.”

—Justice, 24 years (Software Engineer at Amazon)

“I shared a lot of experiences with the people I formed relationships with at camp, and they are still the people I can talk about the deepest things in my life. My spiritual journey has not been picture-perfect or linear, but doing Bible studies helped me be able to explore the meaning on my own. Camp gave me space to navigate it myself versus being told, and I also was able to provide that same thing for others. My experience at camp always comes up in every area of my life. I have a piece of my life where I feel like I can find hope.” —Delove, 22 years (Assistant Director, PLASP Child Care Services)

We're thankful for the churches that have been integral to our longevity

- > **Parkway Bible Church:** In the summer of 1998, they opened their doors to us to run Camp Spirit AfterSchool program and summer camps until 2004.
- > **The Peoples Church:** As one of our first and longest-standing church partners, we have truly felt their commitment, in seasons of leanness, they were a pillar of stability.
- > **Toronto Alliance Church:** From 1998-2010, they hosted Camp Peace for children and youth living in Alexandra Park.

- > **Thistletown Baptist Church:** For 22 years, they have hosted Camp Victory, their youth have worked in our programs, and some Camp Victory youth even got baptized at this church.
- > **Christian Centre Church:** As our partner in the Jane and Finch community, they hosted Camp Freedom from 2007- 2017.
- > **Scarborough Baptist Church:** From 2009 - 2016, they hosted Camp Hope and served in the trenches with our staff and kids.



OUR FUTURE

We invited our guests to invest in the next generation of young leaders as we:

- > Provide employment and volunteer opportunities to youth.
- > Launch a leadership development program that focuses on developing them as leaders outside of programs. This includes intentional discipleship, teaching financial literacy, connecting them with professionals to learn about their careers and faith journey, and support their career & college/ university planning.
- > Partner with Muskoka Woods Leadership Studio to provide 3 retreats annually for StreetLeaders to develop leadership skills through their CEO program.

Together, our guests demonstrated the power of community in supporting our mission in Toronto Community Housing neighbourhoods. We surpassed our fundraising goal of \$50,000. **Our guests gave over \$62,000** towards the employment, training and leadership development of 25 StreetLeaders!

EVENT SPONSORS

We want to express gratitude to our event sponsors, who have generously supported us in the production of A Night of Promise. Their contributions and partnership have been invaluable.

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AND "FRIENDS OF UPT"
 (generous individuals who donated seats for staff and community members)



PROMISE PARTNERS

For 25 years, we have been dedicated to reaching children with the love of Jesus and raising them into leaders who restore their communities. We look forward to continuing to serve children and youth living in Toronto Community Housing neighbourhoods for years to come.

To celebrate, we're looking for 100 individuals who would say 'yes' to being a Promise Partner.

Together, we can make a lasting impact on the lives of children and youth living in Toronto Community Housing communities.

Will you join us in this important mission?

PROMISE PARTNER LEVELS

REACH: Support a Child (5-14 years)
> \$36/mo: Provides 1 month of AfterSchool Program for a child

RAISE: Support a StreetLeader (15-19 years)
> \$80/mo: Provides employment for 1 week of the school year for a StreetLeader
> \$320/mo: Provides employment for 1 month of the school year for a StreetLeader

urbanpromise.com/25years

OUR MISSION > To reach children in Toronto Community Housing with the love of Jesus, and raise them into leaders, who restore their community.



REACH
A CHILD.

RAISE
A LEADER.

RESTORE
COMMUNITY.

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