

UPDATE

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Ray of Hope

WHAT ARE THE GOD STORIES HAPPENING IN YOUR MINISTRY?

We ask our team this during our Staff Gathering on Tuesdays, where we share how we see God working in the lives of the children and youth we serve. One staff member recently shared about a change in the principal at a partnering school. They said the new vice-principal was a former participant in our programs, prompting me to arrange a meeting with her.

Upon visiting the school, I was warmly greeted by children from our after-school program. As I delved into her story, she shared that she started attending UrbanPromise

Toronto (UPT) camps around 1999, just after its launch. She fondly remembers the weekend trips and the hilarious skits the leaders did to share the gospel. She emphasized how the intentional relationships formed by our staff impacted her life profoundly. *“The staff would visit my home and spend time with my mother; their care for us was a ray of hope. Despite the challenges children face, they can be resilient when someone invests in them.”*

Now, as a vice principal, she mirrors that care by visiting her students' homes and recently she received

the TDSB Excellence Award. God's work in her life has come full circle, allowing her to be a source of hope for children in the community we serve.

As we celebrate Christmas, we remember Jesus as our light, inspiring us to be rays of hope in our communities. Thank you for investing in our ministry and being part of these incredible stories. Merry Christmas from the UPT family!

Grace & peace



Shawn James
Executive Director

OUR COMMUNITIES

CAMP VICTORY

—Sarah Babulal, Ministry Supervisor

One of our biggest hopes at camps is to create opportunities for both the leaders and campers to grow in their relationship with Christ.

This year, I felt God prompting me to find ways to disciple and help our leaders grow in their faith. God put it on my heart to lead bible study on knowing our identity in Christ and how God sees us. To make it special, we took a few of the leaders to Café Princess for some fellowship and time in the Word. The café was a hit, and the girls absolutely loved it!

After chatting, playing card games, and enjoying some delicious waffles, we read Psalm 139:1-18. We talked about

how God knows us, cares for us, and thinks about us so much that His thoughts outnumber the grains of sand on the shore. We wrapped up by asking: "How do you think God sees you?" The girls shared thoughtful answers, saying they felt God saw them as beautiful, cherished, and loved. Not only do I help run safe and fun programs, I also get to walk alongside these youth and watch them grow deeper in their faith and relationship with Jesus.



CAMP HOPE

—Jessica Jean-Denis
Ministry Supervisor

As a new Ministry Supervisor with UrbanPromise Toronto, I've spent the past few months getting to know the Camp Hope community. Most of my time is spent building relationships with children through fun activities and Bible studies. However, I also have the opportunity to connect with the mothers in the community.

Once a week, some mothers help me unload a large food shipment from a local food bank. They take the lead in sorting the food and ensuring there's enough for our children's program. Later, more mothers arrive to pick up groceries for their families. This time is special to me because it allows us to laugh together, share stories about their children, and build stronger bonds.

God is showing me the resourcefulness of these mothers and their amazing camaraderie and desire to help one another. While I enjoy leading devotionals to help children grow spiritually, I feel truly blessed to work alongside these mothers as they serve their community in such practical ways.

CAMP TRUTH —Shawn Reola, Ministry Supervisor

I have been working in Glamorgan for 6 months, and it has been a journey full of purpose, growth, and love for this amazing community. The people here are so warm and resilient that it feels more like being with family than just work. I've seen children grow, parents place more trust in our programs, and neighbours support each other in ways that inspire me and make me grateful to be part of this community.

As a Ministry Supervisor, I'm starting to be known as a camp leader, and every interaction reminds me why this work matters. Thursdays are especially meaningful because of our "Family Days." On these days, our junior high and kids' camp come together to share a meal, creating a sense of unity and belonging. It feels like God is right there with us, creating a space where everyone feels welcomed.

This work is a calling that fills me with gratitude. Glamorgan feels like family, reflecting God's love and the power of community.



In October, we welcomed new participants into the *Upward Leadership* portion of our Leadership Pathway, a key part of our 20-year journey.

SPOTLIGHT

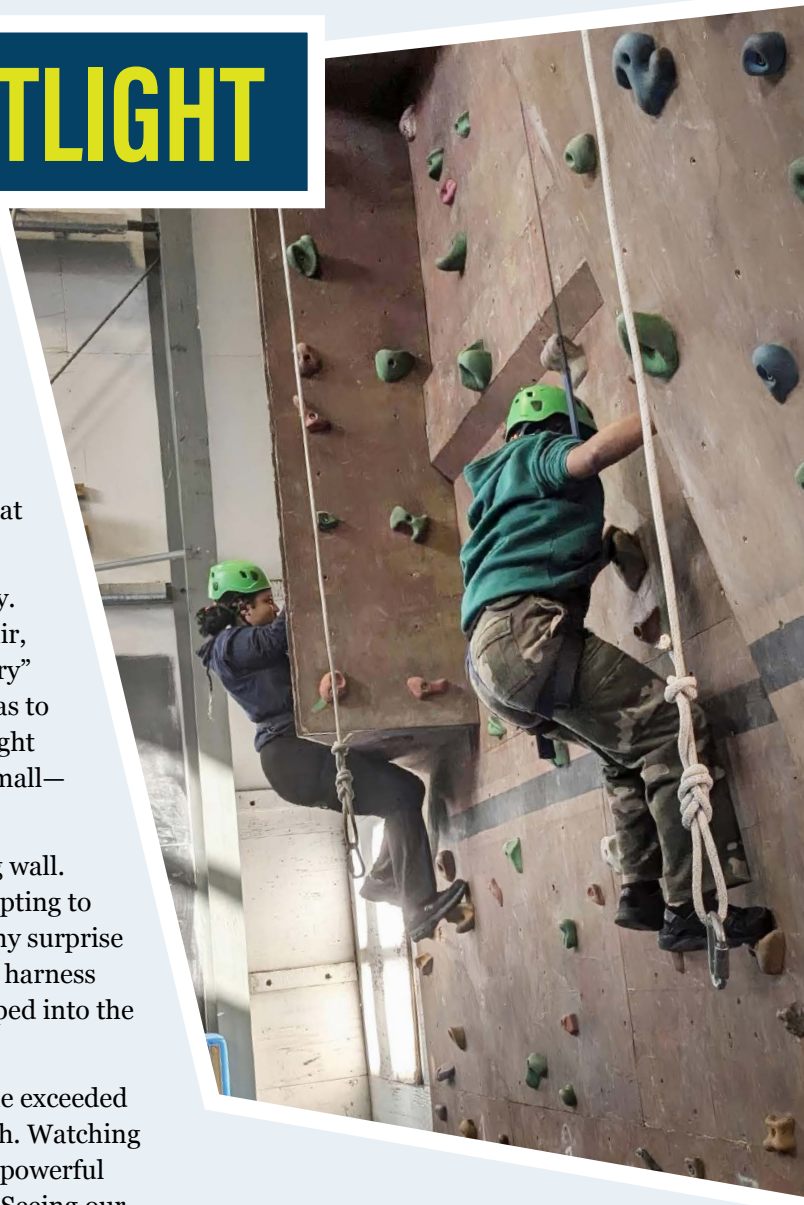
In partnership with Muskoka Woods, we took our grade 11 and 12 students, along with a few older graduating StreetLeaders, on a weekend retreat designed to build community and strengthen their understanding of what it means to be a bridge builder.

A central theme of every retreat is the concept of the “choice to try.” We encourage each participant to define what “trying” means for her and to step outside her comfort zone in a way that feels meaningful.

During an afternoon activity, I witnessed this in a very real way. At the rock climbing wall, I saw one participant sitting in a chair, focused on her phone. I approached her and asked what her “try” would be for this activity. She candidly replied that her plan was to remain seated. I gently encouraged her to reflect on what it might look like to adopt a “trying” mindset and suggested she start small—perhaps by putting on a harness just to see how it felt.

A little while later, I noticed her moving toward the bouldering wall. Quietly and on her own, she began testing the holds and attempting to climb. I smiled and continued to observe from a distance. To my surprise and delight, just a few minutes later, she had not only put on a harness and helmet but was also approaching the instructor to get clipped into the belay. She climbed a third of the wall!

This participant didn’t just define her “try” for this activity—she exceeded her own expectations of what she thought she could accomplish. Watching her step out of her comfort zone and grow in confidence was a powerful reminder of the transformative potential of these experiences. Seeing our youth discover their capabilities and embrace new challenges is an incredible privilege as they develop their leadership skills.



RUN FOR PROMISE

2024 HIGHLIGHTS

**THANK YOU FOR ALL
YOUR SUPPORT!**

35

LIVE RUN
PARTICIPANTS

9

CHURCHES-
VIRTUAL RUN

TOTAL FUNDS COLLECTED

\$85,539

This Christmas, celebrate the joy of giving by choosing a gift that makes a meaningful impact.

Every gift on this list supports our mission to reach children, raise leaders, and restore communities.

By giving, you're helping young people discover their potential, grow in faith, and develop a passion for serving others.

We hope your gift brings you joy, knowing it spreads hope and transforms lives this Christmas season.



HERE'S THE IMPACT YOUR GIFT CAN HAVE:

\$36 — Sponsor a child: Provides one month of AfterSchool Program for a child.

\$94 — Day trips & experiential learning: Provides children and youth participation in trips and retreats.

\$320—Sponsor a StreetLeader: Provides a month of employment and leadership development.

\$875—Sponsor a missionary: Supports our staff missionary fund.

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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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