

## **YUFA Community Projects Subcommittee**

Report to the YUFA Trust/Foundation

April 30, 2018

By Natalie Coulter and Ray Rogers, Co-Chairs of YUFA CPC

### **WHO WE ARE**

The mandate of the YUFA Community Projects Committee (YUFA-CP), a standing committee of the executive since 2004, is to facilitate YUFA's commitment to social justice through access and equity programs, outreach and education, and advocacy and research. In carrying out our mandate, we collaborate with community networks on strengthening neighbourhoods as well as on broader efforts for systemic social change.

### **WHAT WE DO**

Our process involves regular meetings where ongoing projects are reviewed and new initiatives considered. It is important for the work we do that committee members broadly represent the different constituencies that make up YUFA CP (see Appendix A for a list of current members). Members who have an interest in community-based equity initiatives are encouraged to join us.

The work the Committee falls into three broad categories:

#### **1. Increasing Educational Access and Outcomes**

YUFA-CP's initiatives for enhancing educational outcomes among low-income and racialized students share a place-based, holistic approach to reform--one that is committed both to expanding students' active knowledge of their communities and to reducing structural barriers to their participation. By the same token, the promotion of leadership development and civic engagement is also a key element of these programs.

Campus-based projects are designed to expand learning opportunities and increase exposure and access to post-secondary educational possibilities.

Over the years, these have included:

- \* Success Beyond Limits a six-week, summer program to support successful transitions from middle school to high school

- \* Readers to Leaders a literacy enrichment and leadership program for grades 9 and 10 students

- \* The Transition Year Program a full-year university access initiative for young adults who, due to various barriers, lack the formal educational credentials to qualify for admission to York

The Committee is always ready to explore ways that access to York's facilities can be expanded for Jane/Finch residents.

Community-based programs and events include basketball tournaments, skills-based workshops (e.g., first aid, life guarding), youth leadership training, homework clubs, and after school and March Break tutoring and mentoring. YUFA-CP also contributes to bursaries and scholarships based on criteria that encompass academic achievement, financial need, and community involvement and leadership.

## 2. Outreach and Education

The Committee organizes, participates in, and often provides support for initiatives that bring York faculty and students together as part of a broader support network (community meetings, Community Speakers Series, resident-led strategies for strengthening neighbourhoods, educational events). We likewise ally with local residents on specific social-justice campaigns.

These have included:

- \* Black Social Economy

- \* Black Daddies Club

- \* Power To Be International focus on youth and social media

- \* Urban Alliance on Race relations

- \* Aboriginal Powwow

- \* Jane/Finch Unity BBQ

- \* Refugee Youth

Our relationships with both community and campus groups are important. Among the former, are Jane Finch Action Against Poverty (JFAPP), Success Beyond Limits (SBL), Promoting Education and Community Health (PEACH), and the TD Community Engagement Centre (CEC).

Among the groups and initiatives on campus that we support are: the Aboriginal Student Association at York (ASAY), Regenesis York, Community & Legal Aid Services Program (CLASP), OPIRG York, the Graduate Student Association (GSA), Centre for Refugee Studies, Centre for Research on Latin America and the Caribbean, the York Federation of Students (YFS), and the campaign to get York University to invest in local hiring practices.

### 3. Advocacy & Research

The Committee facilitates and supports the projects of YUFA members doing research that benefits the community and enhances the effectiveness of YUFA-community partnerships. Projects have included:

- \* Collaborating with PEACH on youth education initiatives in the GTA

- \* Researching the role of mentoring for visible minority students in higher education

- \* Supporting research by CERLAC on Latin American and Caribbean issues such as the role of the Black diaspora in the GTA

\* Lobbying SSHRC to create a registration category--Community Partner--that waives the fee for single-day or single panel participation. Such an initiative, we are arguing, would be consistent with SSHRC's commitment to a "community engagement" approach that brings together "academics and practitioners."

\* Promoting educational initiatives with racialized and refugee youth.

\* The Jane Finch Community Research Partnership Committee is a community-led committee that addresses challenges in assessing ethical issues with regard to doing research in the Jane-Finch community.

### Community Projects Outlook for 2018-19

For 2018-19, we anticipate similar funding initiatives. Rather than only providing start-up funds for particular initiatives, which is a norm in social funding, we are endeavouring to build ongoing relationships with specific organizations so as to create closer links between York and the wider community. Therefore, we expect to continue to work with groups such as Success Beyond Limits (SBL), PEACH, Jane Finch Action Against Poverty (JFAAP), Readers to Leaders (R2L), the York visible minority student Mentoring Initiative, and the Transition Year Program (TYP). In a world of increasing austerity, this kind of ongoing stability provides a solid basis for pursuing social justice issues for our partners in the GTA. What has also become clear is that the promotion of social justice is not only a requirement in the broader community, it is also becoming increasingly necessary to carry on social justice advocacy within York University as well. In the current climate of austerity, multi-sector collaboration and coalition-building provides the best basis we know for pursuing social justice issues. YUFA's ongoing participation in developing, supporting, and participating in local education and community-building initiatives is unique among faculty associations in Canada. The experience of YUFA CP over the past twelve years has showed us the incredible potential of meaningful, long-term community partnerships to positively transform what happens both off and on campus.

## **Community Projects Budget Specifics (2017-18)**

### Revenue

Allocation from YUFA Trust/Foundation	100,000.00
Teaching Release for Co-Chairs	21,785.66
Total Annual Projects Budget	78,214.34

### Itemized Expenses

1) Success Beyond Limits	25,000.00
2) CERLAC (Latin America and Caribbean Studies)	1,500.00
3) York Centre for Education and Community	10,652.42
4) Black Daddies Club	1,500.00
5) Urban Alliance on Race Relations	1,500.00
6) Regenesys York University	1,500.00
7) Jane-Finch Community and Family Centre	1,500.00
8) Centre for Latin and Caribbean Studies	600.00
9) Jane-Finch Community Ministry BBQ	1,500.00
10) PEACH Educational Initiatives	10,000.00
11) Jane Finch Action Against Poverty	5,000.00
12) Power To Be International	3,075.00
13) Walk with Excellence	1,500.00
14) TSNS Education Action Group	1,500.00
15) Canadian Council of Refugees Youth	1,800.00
16) Transition Year Program Awards	10,086.92
Total Expenses	78,214.34

## **Funding Commitments (2017-18)**

The Community Projects Committee does not provide funding to professionals or educational institutions. YUFA funds are directed to support for students, as well as social justice-oriented community organizations. Profiles of this past year's grants are provided below. The number accords with the one listed in the budget line:

### **Profile of Partners**

1) Success Beyond Limits (SBL)- Success Beyond Limits is an innovative, community-based, non-profit youth program that aims to “improve educational outcomes, expand possibilities, and support youth in Jane and Finch along their individual paths to success.” SBL runs a summer program on the York campus and an on-site youth space and mentoring program at Westview Centennial, the local high school, during the academic year. YUFA CP has worked closely with SBL over the past couple of years. We have supported a number of its in-school activities, including: peer tutoring, an afterschool culinary program, and a bursary and scholarship preparation program. (\$25,000)

2) Centre for Research on Latin America and the Caribbean- The funds support a summer youth program entitled “Amautas of the Americas” that will focus on indigenous cultures of the Americas. The racialized youth who participate in the program will be exposed to a range of educational experiences whose goal is to promote inclusion and expand participation in university. (\$1500)

3) York University-based Student Mentorship Initiative (York Centre for Education and Community) - During the past year, the Faculty of Education has engaged in turning the York Centre for Education and Community (YCEC) into a community hub. This goal aligns with YUFA-CP's ongoing commitment to building links between York and GTA communities with an eye to expanding and supporting educational opportunities for youth in these communities. This has led to our support for Readers to Leaders (R2L), the Advanced Credit Experience (ACE), and the Transition Year Program (TYP). Because of our involvement in these programs, we have become aware of the need for upper-year mentoring for not only the students who have participated in these programs, but for a

wider range of York undergraduates. Based on the YUFA-CP's experience with creating and supporting educational opportunities for non-traditional students, it has become clear that peer mentorship, as well as extra tutorial support, play a central role in student success.

The Community Projects Committee is working with the YCEC to create a program of activity that will provide educational support to York undergraduate students. Three forms of that support are being explored:

a) one-on-one peer mentoring where students from upper-level years will provide support and advice for incoming and second year undergraduates.

b) specific drop-in times where undergraduates can participate in a tutorial where interns from the Faculty of Education will provide advice and respond to their concerns. Food will be provided.

c) volunteer faculty members who will be available at specific times for students to "drop-in" and seek advice. (\$10,652.42)

4) Black Daddies Club- These funds supported the participation of community members in an ongoing dialogue about issues that affect the Black community in Toronto, especially those related to male masculinity, fatherhood, and the family. (\$1,500)

5) Urban Alliance on Race Relations (Black Love Matters)- The funds supported the inclusion of community members in a graduate workshop course at York as guest speakers. Discussion focused on anti-oppressive, anti-racism coalition building in the GTA, along with an alternative mapping project of Toronto neighbourhoods. (\$1,500)

6) Regenesys York – This student group participates in an indoor farmer's market at York and focuses on environmental/social justice issues as well as health-related concerns. They request funds to purchase tables and chairs as well as other supports to aid them in the promotion of these issues at the market. (\$1500)

7) Jane Finch Community and family Centre- Jane-Finch community members meet regularly to discuss “social determinants of education” so as to promote a responsive educational system that better meets the needs of youth in the community. The funds support the participation of youth and community members in this initiative. (\$1500)

8) Centre for Research on Latin America and the Caribbean- These funds support graduate students who are participation in a conference on “Navigating Hot Water: Defiant Pathways Through the Next Millenium” that is sponsored by CERLAC. (\$600)

9) Jane-Finch Community BBQ- The unity BBQ is sponsored by area churches and focuses conversations on gun violence and tries to promote unity among the youth gangs in the community. There is a recognition that those youth who have died in the past through gun violence and there is encouragement by the wider community to begin to build bridges between the various groups. (\$1,500)

10) PEACH is a community organization that promotes a “wraparound” model of proactive/ongoing intervention to education, positive youth engagement and community resilience. The funds support three different initiatives: Learning Beyond Diversity, Audio Beyond Limits, and PEACH Bail Fund. All three programs are focused on community youth programming as well as keeping these youth out of the justice system. (\$10,000)

11) Jane Finch Action Against Poverty (JFAAP)- JFAAP was formed during a community demonstration in commemoration of the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty on October 17, 2008 with more than 150 community residents participating. It is a resident-led grassroots coalition of community residents, activists, workers and organizations working to eliminate poverty in the Jane-Finch community and beyond. JFAAP has been working continuously with community residents and partner organizations in Jane-Finch and city-wide on social and economic justice issues, including: the Raise the Rate campaign, CSUMB, minimum wage increase, workers’ rights, income security, racialization of poverty, food security and access to healthy and affordable food as well as police brutality and racism. JFAAP has led actions and



demonstrations addressing different levels of government and was instrumental in stopping the closure of a public school in the area. (\$5,000)

12) Power to be International is a student group organized by 'girls of colour' who wish to develop critical skills and talk back to disempowering images of them on social media. The funds will aid these young women in the Pickering area in creating safe spaces for them to interact and share positive visions of blackness. The funds will aid them in purchasing equipment as well as receiving media training in their use. This group is partnered with Durham Black Educators and the TAIBU Community Health centre. (\$3,075)

13) Walk with Excellence- This year marks the 6th annual Walk With Excellence, which is part of the Jane Finch Strong Neighbourhood Strategy. Over the last three years we've gained the support of YUFA for this initiative. YUFA support offers graduating students the opportunity to explore post secondary options and encourage first generation students the motivation to achieve post-secondary education. YUFA support also creates awareness of the role the labour movement plays in education. It also provides the opportunity for a cluster collaboration of community stakeholders to deliver on a community-based initiative. (\$1,500)

14) Jane Finch Task Force Education Action group will use the funds to hold a workshop on educational issues in the community. The funds will support food, child care and transportation costs for community participants, as well as for printing posters to publicize the event. (\$1500)

15) Canadian Council of Refugees Youth is holding an event that is co-sponsored by the Centre for Refugee Studies, refugee youth will collectively engage with the common personal and systemic barriers faced by newcomer youth. 150 youth from across Canada will participate in the event. The funds will help pay for transportation and food as well as help sponsor a workshop. (\$1800)

16)) Transition Year Program- TYP is a full-time full-year program that combines pre-university and university courses, while providing extra academic support for students

who do not meet the traditional requirements for attending York. The Transition Year Program was initiated by the Community Projects Committee and YUFA funding has played a central role in both to get the program up and running, as well as to provide much-needed student financial support. (\$10,086.92)

**APPENDIX A – MEMBERS OF YUFA-CP**

Natalie Coulter, Co-Chair, LA&PS, Communications Studies

Ray Rogers, Co-Chair, Faculty of Environmental Studies

Erin Black, YUFA Staff

Lorna Erwin, LA&PS, Sociology

Joan Allen, LA&PS, Sociology

Chris Ardern, Health, Kinesiology

Don Dippo, Education

Danielle Elliott, LA&PS, Social Science

Jenny Foster, Faculty of Environmental Studies

Luin Goldring, LA&PS, Sociology

Jan Hadlaw, Fine Arts, Design

Eve Haque, LA&PS, DLLL/Equity Studies

Carl James, York Centre for Education and Community

Jodi Letkiewicz, LA&PS, Admin. Studies

Mary-Elizabeth Manley, Fine Arts, Dance

Maura Matesic, Libraries

Wendy McGuire, LA&PS, Social Work

Gillian Parekh, Faculty of Education

Ellie Perkins, Faculty of Environmental Studies

Beryl Pilkington, Health, Nursing

Penni Stewart, LA&PS, Sociology