

Jane Finch Community Ministry



Annual Report
2019



History & Mission



The Jane Finch Ministry is a community ministry of the United Church of Canada within Shining Waters Region. Since 1982 it was situated in the middle of Toronto Community Housing's Firgrove Community. In the spring of 2017 one third of the 380 units were deemed inhabitable, due to disrepair and slated for demolition. Being that the unit the ministry was housed in, was one of them, the ministry office had to move to the adjacent Firgrove Public School in the fall of 2017. Although Firgrove is the immediate catchment area, the ministry provides support and is also involved in initiatives taking place in the larger area of Jane and Finch.

Although the community suffers from issues related to poverty and social exclusion, it is rich in culture with over 70 different languages and dialects spoken and representation from 110 nations. With the United Church's historic involvement in the Social Gospel movement and its commitment to social justice the Presbytery, through this ministry has tried to stand in solidarity with the Jane and Finch community in their struggles and issues since 1982. It is a ministry of presence that journeys with the community in their pain as well as hope and celebration of a more just society.



The role or mission of the ministry is to provide community development and community organizing support, offer pastoral care and do advocacy through coalitions and networks. The Ministry works quite closely with the Firgrove Tenant's Association. Many of the programs and initiatives of the ministry are done in partnership with others and we are grateful for this collaborative approach in building upon the strengths of the community to meet the deficit needs.



Minister's Reflections for 2019

by Barry Rieder

As I approach my 25th year of working in the Jane and Finch community I consider myself truly blessed to work in such a vibrant culturally diverse community such as Jane and Finch. However, I am discouraged though that over time many of the systemic issues of a racialized low income community have stayed the same. This has and continues to motivate me to be engaged in boarder networks and coalitions for improving the economic wellbeing of the community as the Ministry continues to stand in solidarity with the community's struggles but also the hope of a brighter future.

Under the excellent leadership of Faduma Mohamed and the support of the Neighbourhood Action Youth Employment Committee, the Passport to Employment program provided 501 youth with pre-employment trainings. These were done with out of work out of school youth as well as in 5 local high schools. Trainings were in first aid, high five, food handling, customer service, resume building, fork lift handling and smart serve.

The 10th annual Jane Finch Unity BBQ took place this year at Oakdale Park near the Oakdale Community Centre. The event and the hard work of the organizer Andrea Tabnor promotes Unity and ending of gun violence. The event was a huge success with over 1,000 free meals provided throughout the day and people from various communities from Jane and Finch and beyond attending.

There was a spike in gun violence this year in the city of Toronto and Jane Finch was no exception having the highest amount of gun discharges of any community. In Yorkwoods this fall there was a double homicide and in the month of December there were 4 separate shootings in the vicinity of Firgrove.

Earlier in the year a gentlemen who used to call me "Mr. Barry" was tragically gun downed. This person used to send out prayers every day through social media. Friends knew that something must have happened to him when they did not get their morning prayer. When his mom came up from Jamaica for her son's funeral she also called me "Mr. Barry" and asked me to read a prayer at his night-night. It was a prayer he sent to her just a few days before he was shot. Hopefully it was some solace in the time of loss for friends and family who gathered to celebrate his life.

In November another tragedy happened in the community when a raging fire took place at 235 Gosford. One person died and over 700 residents were displaced because of it, with many of them having to live in temporary shelters. True to the caring spirit of the Jane Finch community a group of residents, agencies and networks emerged to surround them with support. Thanks to all the individuals, agencies, churches and businesses that came forward to support these residents in their time of loss and financial ruin.



Initiatives of the Ministry



The Ministry provides information and referral to people who drop by the office or phone in. A variety of issues are dealt with such as legal matters, immigration, housing concerns, employment, schooling, skills training, parental support, conflict mediation, access to food, translation, etc..

Pastoral care includes supportive listening, crisis counseling, grief counseling, hospital visitation, conducting funerals, vigils or memorials, house blessings and naming ceremonies.

With support from the Painters Union, Toronto Community Housing and Firgrove Tenants

- ♦ 200 backpacks were given out to children and youth
- ♦ Three \$1,000 youth scholarships provided

With the support of Ontario Trillium Foundation we provided, through the Neighbourhood Action Youth Employment Committee,

- ♦ 501 pre-employment trainings for youth: first aid, customer service, high five, food handling, smart serve, fork lift and resume building

The Black Creek Micro Credit program worked with several clients in assisting them develop business plans and with workshops provided business info to many people

With the support from North York Harvest Foodbank and dedicated volunteers

- ♦ 30-40 families a month were helped with food needs

Through the support of the Charter Accountants Association

- ♦ 82 Individuals had assistance in filling out tax forms

With support from the Chum CP24 Christmas Wish Foundation, Humber Valley United and the Firgrove Tenants

- ♦ 141 parents and children attended the Festive Season Celebration which included a meal of curried goat, chicken (Jerked, BBQ'd, Stewed and baked), several rice dishes and salads as well as baked goods. At the event 74 small gifts were given out to children
- ♦ 46 families given 115 gifts for children for Christmas day

In June the ministry provided 53 Eid gifts for Islamic children in Firgrove.

Also during the summer the ministry made it possible for

- ♦ 40 children and adults from Firgrove to attend a retreat at Five Oaks Retreat Centre



Initiatives of the Ministry

Community development initiatives that the ministry provided financial and in some cases organizing support to include: Black History Events, Sewing program, JFAAP Temp Agency report, Mothers' day Event, JFAAP Temp Agency report, Firgrove Learning & Innovation Community Centre's afterschool and summer program, Jane Finch Unity BBQ, Firgrove Retreat, Black Creek Farm, Election Town hall, Anti-Black Racism training, 235 Gosford fire support

Coalitions, Collaboratives and Networks that the Ministry was involved in:

- ◆ Black Creek Community Collaborative
- ◆ Black Creek Micro Credit program
- ◆ Black Creek Financial Action Network
- ◆ Jane Finch Crisis Response Network
- ◆ Neighbourhood Action Youth Employment Committee
- ◆ Jane Finch Toronto Strong Neighbourhood Strategy
- ◆ FOCUS Toronto



Church Involvement:

- ◆ Co-Chairing National Community and Social Justice Ministries Reference Group
- ◆ Sparrow Lake Camp Board

Thanks to all who have contributed either time or financial support for the work of the Jane Finch Community Ministry.

A special thanks to Halima Abdela (Office Coordinator), Lorraine Anderson (Firgrove Learning & Innovation Community Centre's E.D.), Marilyn Quashie, Hazel Reis, Donna May (Food Day Coordinators), Donna May (Income Tax Coordinator), Natalia Sablina (Small Business Resource Development Worker), Faduma Mohamed (Passport to Employment Coordinator) Tamara Jeremie (placement student and Black Creek Collaborative Coordinator) Andrea Tabnor (Jane Finch Unity) and Mahad Awale (Coordinator of the Back to School Drive).

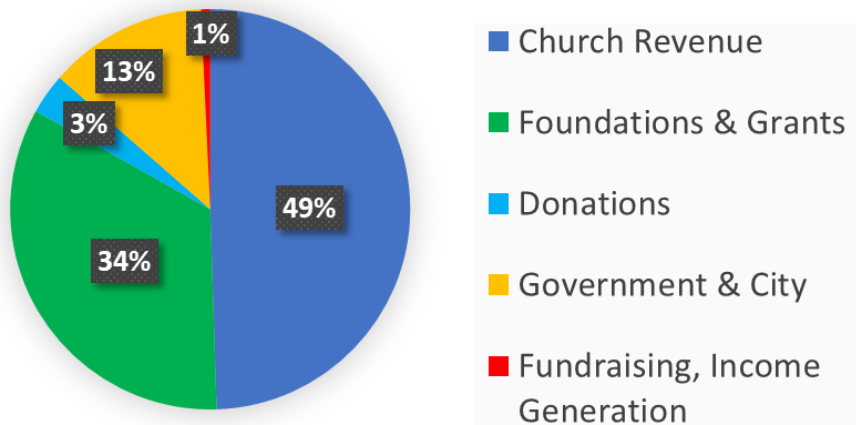
Thanks to the Jane Finch Steering Committee and the Commission/Board of the Community Ministries for its support, guidance and governance.

Also special thanks to the former Toronto West and South West Presbytery for creating and supporting ministries like this and for the core financial support from the Presbyteries of Toronto Conference Corporation as well as the United Church Mission and Service Fund which allows this ministry to happen.

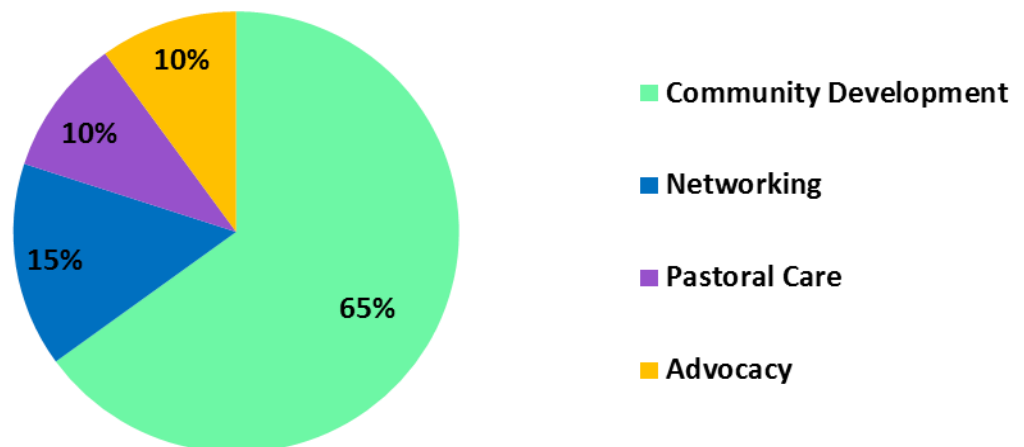


Funding

How Jane Finch Community Ministry is Funded: \$329,961



How Jane Finch Community Ministry uses funding



Funders & Partners



United Churches

Bloordale
Humbercrest
Humber Valley
Lansing
Kingsway Lambton
Norval
St. Bartholomew's
St. James
Stoney Creek
Windermere



Human Resources and Skills Development Canada



Toronto District School Board



Chartered Accountants of Ontario



Canadian Construction Workers Union



BLACK CREEK COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRE



Fondation Trillium de l'Ontario

An agency of the Government of Ontario
Un organisme du gouvernement de l'Ontario



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