

Jane Finch Community Ministry



Community

Annual Report
2018



History & Mission



The Jane Finch Ministry is a community ministry of Toronto Conference's South West Presbytery with the United Church of Canada. 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 2018

by Barry Rieder

I am always amazed of the resiliency of the Jane Finch Community and the dedicated work of community volunteers. This year I was away from the community for about 5 months in total while I recovered from two hip replacements, one in March and the other in October. The community was so gracious in giving me the time needed to heal after surgery saying, "You give so much to the community, time to take care of yourself." During my absence Halima Abdela the office coordinator kept the boat afloat and community volunteers ensured that other initiatives were taken care of.

Some of the work that continued in my absence was around the redevelopment of Firgrove. Toronto Community Housing was able to find money to rebuild the social housing units that were slated for demolition as well as replace the remaining stacked townhouses. Through consultation with the residents and stakeholders, a Master Plan has been developed which includes an integrated street scape, two social housing buildings, a community centre, as well as a mix of private condos and rental units. It was encouraging to hear that Housing will try to avoid pitfalls of the last relocation.

Under the excellent leadership of Faduma Mohamed and the support of the Neighbourhood Action Youth Employment Committee, the Passport to Employment program provided 513 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 9th annual Jane Finch Unity BBQ took place this year at Yorkwoods Park and the Salvation Army Community Centre. Although we faced rain during the early afternoon people still came out and eventually the clouds disappeared and the event was a huge success. The event and the hard work of the organizer Andrea Tabnor promotes Unity and ending of gun violence. There was a spike in gun violence this summer in the city of Toronto and Jane Finch was no exception having the highest amount of gun discharges of any community. Just before Xmas a drive by shooting took place just outside my office window. This resulted in the Firgrove school being locked down for hours traumatizing the elementary students and the community. Fortunately there were no victims.

With the support of Andrea Tabnor and the Jane Finch Crisis Response team I found myself called upon to do two community vigils for grieving families and the community. One took place outside in freezing temperatures of February. The second took place in July after back to back shootings the same week. One of the victims was the beloved brother of a Parks a Recreation Coordinator in Jane Finch. He was a peaceful Rasta man and the innocent victim of a drive by shooting. With two Rasta Drummers, we paraded through the community singing Bob Marley's Rasta Man Chant and ended in the middle of the community where prayers were said and candles were lit symbolizing each year he lived. May the long journey of healing come to all effected.



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 and Firgrove Tenant's Association

- ◆ 250 backpacks were given out to children and youth
- ◆ Two \$1,000 youth scholarships provided

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

- ◆ 513 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

- ◆ 95 Individuals had assistance in filling out tax forms

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

- ◆ 146 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 71 small gifts were given out to children
- ◆ 71 families given 214 gifts for children for Christmas day

In July the ministry provided 21 Eid gifts for Islamic children in Firgrove.

Also during the summer the ministry made it possible for

- ◆ 40 children and parents to go on a beach trip to Innisfil, Ont.
- ◆ 45 children and adults from the Tenant Association 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: Firgrove Tenants' Association Retreat, the Firgrove Learning & Innovation Community Centre's afterschool and summer program, Black Creek Farm, Driftwood Eid, Firgrove Community Garden, P.E.A.C.H., Kiddy Caribana, Jane Finch Church Coalition, Jane Finch Unity BBQ.

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



Church Involvement:

- ◆ Co-Chairing National Community and Social Justice Ministries Reference Group
- ◆ Sparrow Lake Camp Board
- ◆ Elected Presbytery Rep for General Council

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), Abdul Mohamed and Zahir Alizai(Small Business Resource Development Worker), Faduma Mohamed (Passport to Employment Coordinator) Andrea Tabnor (Founder of Jane Finch Unity) and Mahad Awale (Coordinator of the Back to School Drive).

Thanks to the Jane Finch Steering Committee and the South West Presbytery Community Ministries Commission for its support, guidance and governance.

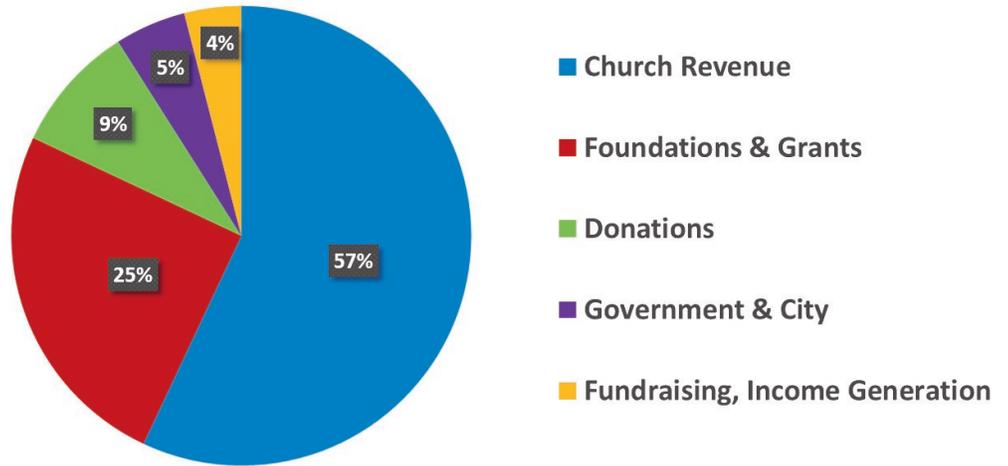


Also special thanks to the South West Presbytery for creating and supporting ministries like this and for the core financial support from the Presbyteries of Toronto Conference Corporation as well as the United Church Mission and Service Fund which allows this ministry to happen.

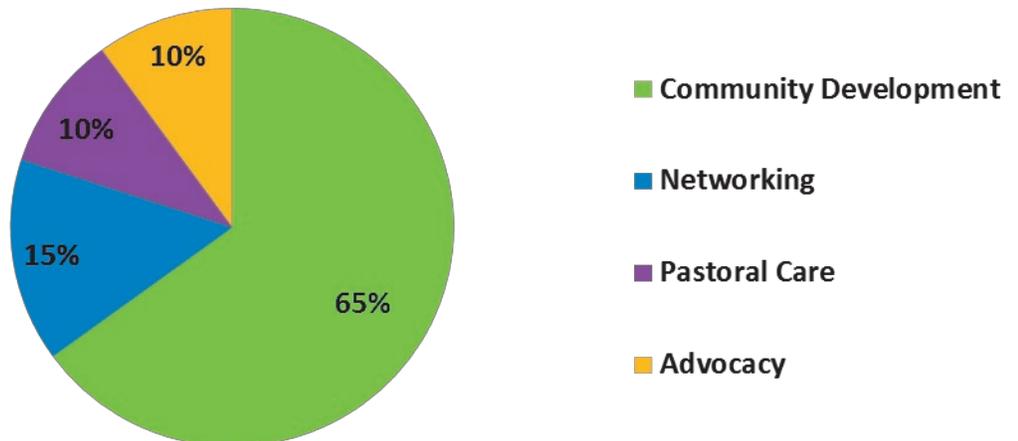


Funding

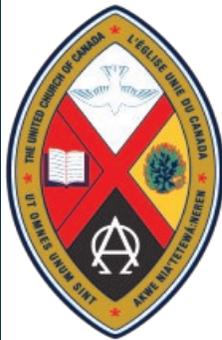
How Jane Finch Community Ministry is Funded: \$291,198



How Jane Finch Community Ministry uses funding



Funders & Partners



United Churches

- Bloordale
- Humbercrest
- Humber Valley
- Lansing
- Kingsway Lambton
- North York Korean
- Norval
- St. Bartholomew's



Jane Finch
Community
Legal Clinic



Human Resources and
Skills Development Canada



BLACK CREEK
COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRE



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



Toronto Community Housing



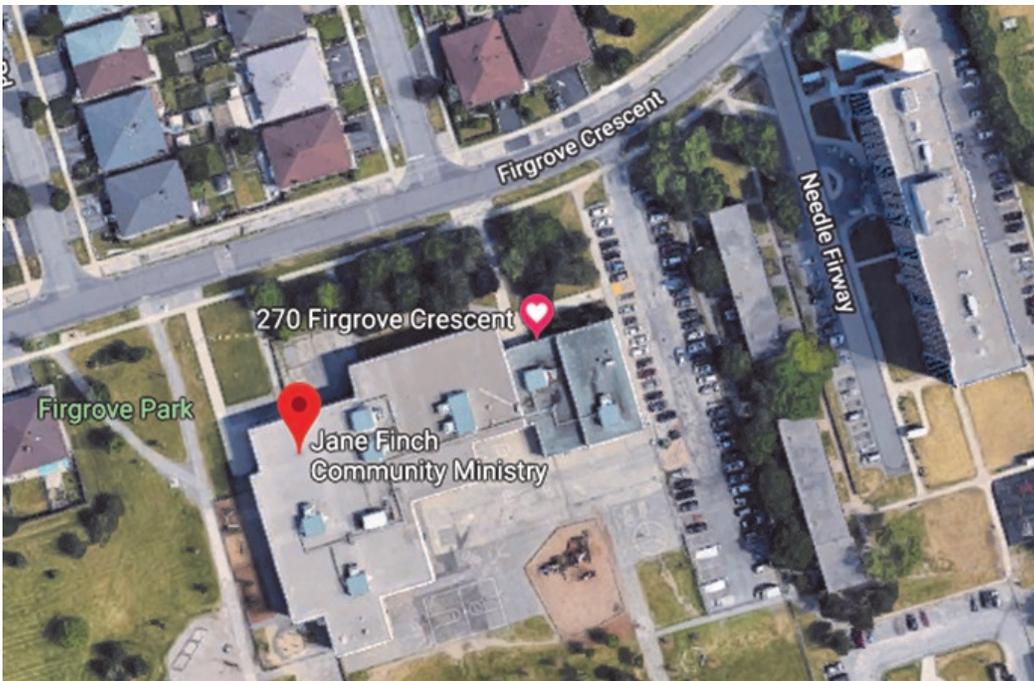
Tennants Association



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