

Jane Finch Community Ministry



Annual Report
2016



History & Mission



The Jane Finch Ministry is a community ministry of Toronto Conference's South West Presbytery with the United Church of Canada. It is situated in the middle of Toronto Community Housing's Firgrove Community and works quite closely with the Firgrove Tenant's Association. Although this public housing community of 380 households 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. Many of the programs and initiatives 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 2016

by Barry Rieder

As I reflect on 2016, it was a year to celebrate positive things as well as to mourn other things.

The Firgrove community assembled 1,100 back packs with school supplies which were given out to youth and children in the community. This initiative is done in conjunction with the Firgrove Tenants' Association, Firgrove Learning & Innovation Community Centre and the Painters Union. With this group we also provided five \$1,000 scholarships to community engaged Firgrove youth who are going to college or University.

The Black Creek Micro Credit program has continued to provide information and support to emerging entrepreneurs in the Jane Finch Community.

Last spring the Neighbourhood Action Youth Employment Committee (NAYEC) provided pre-employment training for youth from 3 area schools. NAYEC, with the Community Ministry as the lead organization applied for funding to expand this program and was successful in obtaining an Ontario Trillium Foundation grant and a Canada Post grant to run a 15 month pilot project, "Passport to Employment". This program started in Sept 2016 and we will be providing first aid, high five, customer service and food handling training in 4 High Schools. In addition to this we will be also providing fork lift, food handling and smart serve training to "out of work out of school" youth. In addition to the trainings we will be providing resume writing support and job fairs related to the trainings.

This year Andrea Tabnor held the 7th Unity BBQ, which promotes ending of Gun Violence. With a new location at the Toronto Azzurri Soccer Centre, numbers were down but it was still a good event.

The Firgrove Tenant Association retreat took place this summer at Sparrow Lake Camp in which 46 children and adults attended. The weather was not that great but it did not dampen any one's spirit. What did dampen the community spirit was coming home to find out that at a community BBQ in Firgrove that weekend, guns were discharged. Luckily no one was hurt.

As we continue to try and make a difference in the community by providing better opportunities and hope we are faced with the stark reality that the impact of poverty and violence related to it continues to plague the community. In 2016 there were 65 discharges of weapons in Jane and Finch with several unfortunate fatalities.

The picture to the right is from a candle vigil that the Community Ministry was asked to conduct for a youth who grew up in Firgrove. May it be a reminder to us that we must be vigilant in trying to make changes.



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 or memorials, house blessings and naming ceremonies.

With support from the Painters Union and Firgrove Tenant's Association

- ◆ 1,100 backpacks were given out to children and youth
- ◆ Five \$1,000 youth scholarships provided

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

- ◆ 89 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

- ◆ 176 parents and children attended the Festive Season Celebration which included a meal of curried goat, chicken (Jerked, BBQ'd and baked), several rice dishes and salads as well as baked goods. At the event 102 small gifts were given out to children
- ◆ 108 families given 237 gifts for children for Christmas day

In July the ministry provided 44 Eid gifts for Islamic children in Firgrove.

Also during the summer the ministry made it possible for

- ◆ 48 children and parents to go on a beach trip to Innisfil, Ont.
- ◆ 46 children and adults from the Tenant Association to attend a retreat at Sparrow Lake camp



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 program, Shoreham Animators, Kiddy Caribana, Somali Summer Camp, Jane Finch Church Coalition, 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
- ◆ Beyond Carding Coalition
- ◆ Jane Finch Crisis Response Network
- ◆ Neighbourhood Action Youth Employment Committee
- ◆ Jane Finch Toronto Strong Neighbourhood Strategy



Church Involvement:

- ◆ Chairing the Presbytery Nominations Committee and on coordinating circle
- ◆ Co-Chairing National Community and Social Justice Ministries Reference Group

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.), Martha and Johnnie Geday, Beverly Dwyer, Marilyn Quashie, Hazel Reis (Food Day Coordinators), Donna May (Income Tax Coordinator), Kandis Cornwall (Small Business Resource Development Worker), Faduma Mohamed (Passport to Employment Coordinator) Andrea Tabnor (Founder of Jane Finch Unity) and Safia Osman & Mahad Mohamad (Coordinators 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.



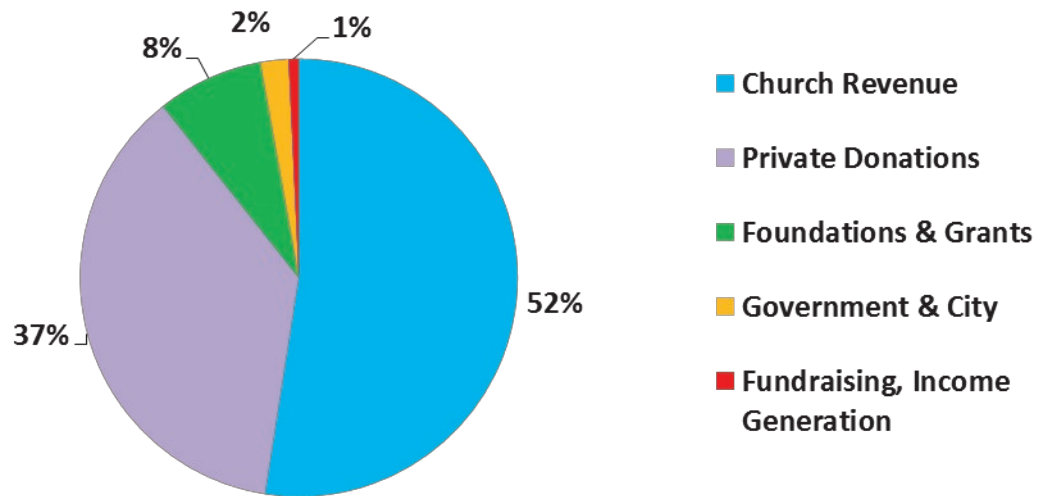
Also special thanks to the South West Presbytery for creating and supporting ministries like this and for the core financial support from the Presbyteries of Toronto Conference Corporation and the United Church Mission and Service Fund which allows this ministry to happen.

Thanks to all for making a difference

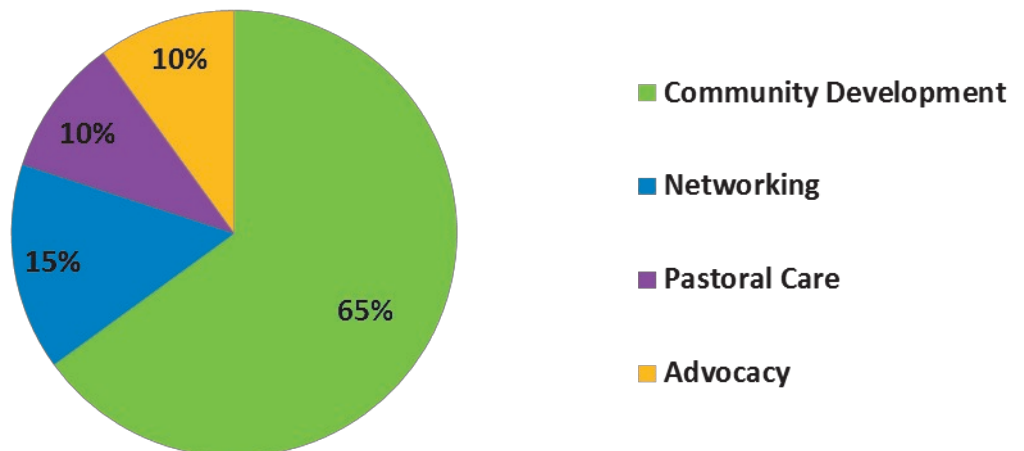


Funding

How Jane Finch Community Ministry is funded - \$271,912



How Jane Finch Community Ministry uses funding



Funders & Partners



With support from
41 friends of the



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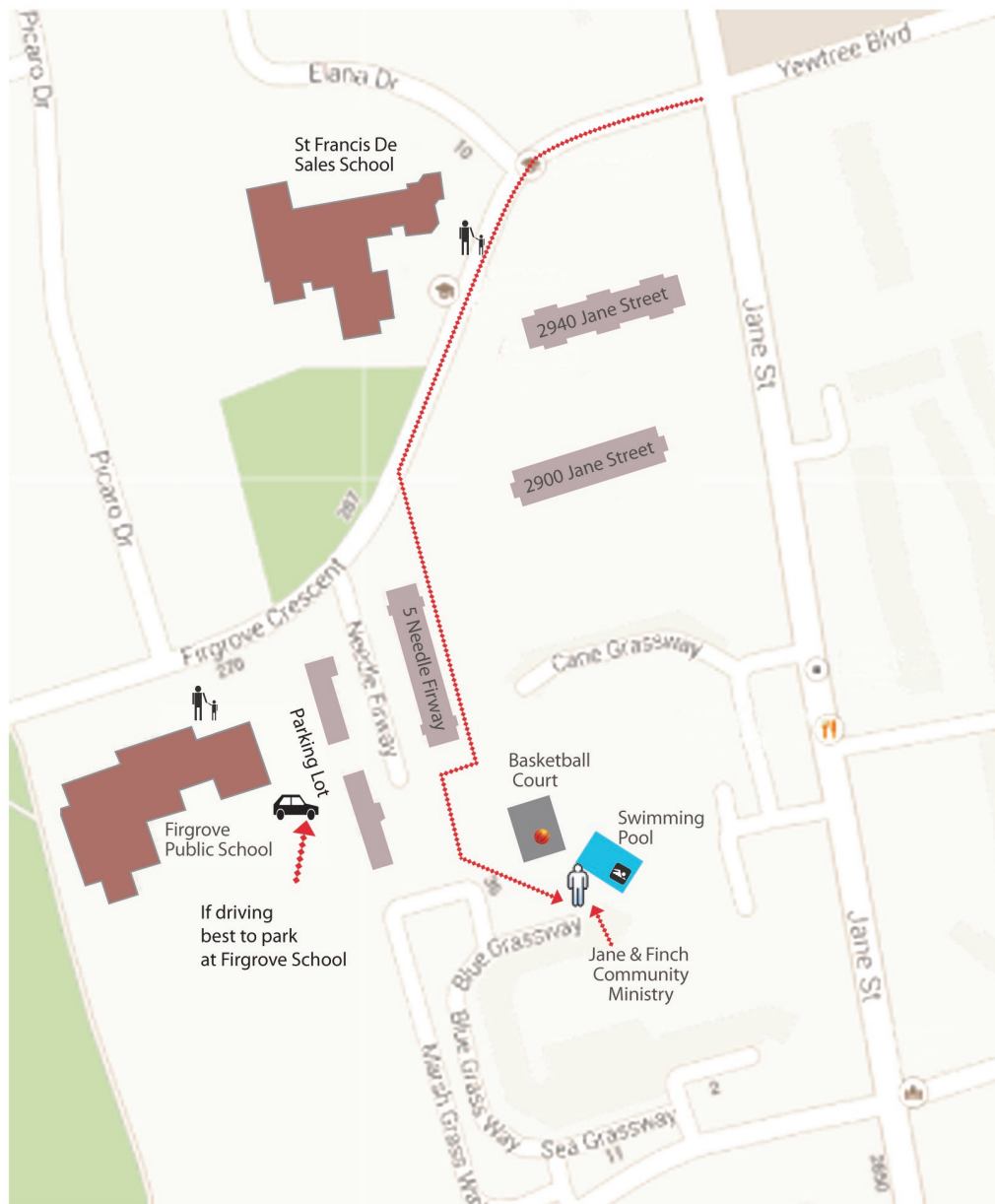
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