



# City Insight

*'Giving so others can give'*

February 2011

## Let me introduce you to "Role Model Moms"...

By Emily Slotegraaf (Jane-Finch Community Worker)

**Gail\*** is a 45 year old single mom raising five children. Her oldest child is 18 and the youngest is 18 months. Gail immigrated from Peru and English is not her first language. She described trying to champion education as a value for her children; yet at the same time feeling hypocritical as she herself had not completed high school. She also felt very embarrassed when unable to assist her 12 year old with what she described as "simple" math homework.

Gail faithfully attended Role Model Moms. She thrived in the program and excelled in math. Gail began to enjoy the math classes and her confidence in math grew with each passing day. Halfway through the cycle Gail came to class early to tell me she had helped her daughter with her homework the previous night. She was so thrilled that what we had been working on in class the day before was the same material (although more advanced) that her 12 year old was now learning for the first time. This became a regular occurrence for Gail. She helped her daughter with math homework almost daily.

Gail graduated from the program in May and four of her

five children attended the ceremony (her oldest son had to work that evening). They were extremely proud of their mother, and Gail was even more proud to have them all witness this milestone in her life. She described how she truly felt like a "Role Model Mom". After completing the program, Gail has taken steps to pursue a course in business administration. She would like to own her own business one day, a retail store, and feels that she needs additional training as indicated on her SMART Goals activity. Gail wrote the equivalency exam on July 19<sup>th</sup> and successfully passed 2 of the 5 sections. She attended cycle two of the Role Model Moms program and achieved her high school diploma!



**Aisha\*** is a 28 year old mom raising a son on her own. Her fiancé is in Spain trying to get permission to immigrate and Aisha is residing in Ontario with refugee status. English is not her first language; however, she can speak many languages including Spanish and an African dialect. As a result of being a refugee to Canada, she has extra hurdles to overcome in pursuing postsecondary education. She has applied for a study permit without which

## Upcoming Events

You are invited to attend **Ignite** to see how TCM is Sparking Hope in Our City!

**WHEN?** Tuesday, April 12, 2011

**WHERE?** On The Park (1095 Leslie St.)

**TICKETS?** Call Maureen Pryce for more info.

TORONTO CITY MISSION PRESENTS

**Ignite**

Sparking Hope In Our City

## Volunteer Appreciation Dinner 2011

We could not run programs without our volunteers! You deserve to be celebrated!

**WHEN?** Friday, May 27, 2011 at 6:30-9:30pm

**WHERE?** 2610 Birchmount Rd., Scarborough (Chinese Gospel Church Scarborough)

**RSVP:** Contact Eric Song at 416-922-6223 or [esong@torontocitymission.com](mailto:esong@torontocitymission.com)

## Jane-Finch Facts\*

- Total population: 80,150
- Population density: 3,817 persons/Km2
- Total families: 20,790
- Lone parent families: 5,855
- % Lone parent families: 28.2% (compared to city avg. 20.3%)
- Visible Minorities: 70.6%
  - Black 20.2%
  - South Asian 18.2%
  - Latin American 9%
  - Southeast Asian 8.5%
  - Chinese 4.7%
  - Other 39.4%
- Low income after-tax 24% (compared to city avg. 19.4%)

\* Source: Census 2006, City of Toronto

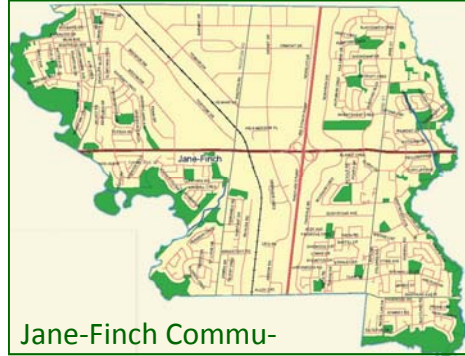


## Praise and Prayer

- Pray for the Jane-Finch Community which has had an unsettled feeling after the verdict for the Ephraim Brown case
- Pray for consistent attendance at Role Model Moms and for peace as the moms write their equivalency exams
- Pray for funding and support for Role Model Moms
- Praise God for partnerships!
  - World Vision
  - Emmanuel Church of the Nazarene
  - Jane-Finch Church Coalition
  - Ephraim Place
  - Move in Toronto
  - Youth Unlimited
- Pray for those analyzing the social services overhaul at Jane-Finch

# Community Profile: Jane-Finch

The Jane-Finch community is a living, breathing example of a community functioning with the characteristics noted in the Poverty by Postal Code report<sup>1</sup>. The 2006 census report indicated that almost 30% of families were headed by single parents, 24% of families are below the low income cut-off, and 70% of individuals were visible minorities<sup>2</sup>. Each of these stats are significantly higher than the city average.



gling to support the development of their children due to the time limitations caused by working multiple jobs, or the financial limitations caused by under-employment.

In 2006, Toronto City Mission (lead by Jill Koller) took on the major task of assessing the needs of Jane-Finch neighbourhood. The results led to the creation of the Role

Model Mom's GED program. This program has been clearly meeting a felt need because each class has been filled to capacity since its inception.

The disproportionately high incidence of single parent families in this community appears to have a compounding effect. Lone parents, the majority of which are single mothers, are strugg-

<sup>1</sup> United Way Report—April 2006

<sup>2</sup> Census 2006, City of Toronto

## Role Model Moms (cont.)

she will not be able to pursue post-secondary education.

Aisha faithfully attended class. She excelled in the program; dramatically improving in all areas but especially in reading and writing. Aisha expressed her excitement in finally being able to understand the math concepts. Part-way through the course, Aisha articulated her desire to study Social Work or Early Childhood Education. We pursued this idea together. After many phone calls, it became clear that she would not be able to attend the normal post-secondary schools due to her refugee status. However, we discovered that if she applied for permission as a refugee to study, then she would be able to pursue her education. We are waiting for the permit to be processed so that she can attend Yorkgate College which of-

fers free courses to someone in Aisha's position. Towards the end of the term, Aisha expressed her appreciation for the course. Over and over she repeated that she could not have done it without the Role Model Mom Program or the facilitator. The program allowed her to relax enough to study, knowing that her son was in good hands with the program's child care workers.

Aisha wrote the equivalency exam in December and successfully passed the Writing component. She is currently attending a third cycle of the Role Model Moms program to ensure that she receives her high school equivalency.

\*Names have been changed  
(Role Model Moms is run in partnership with World Vision Canada through "Partners to End Child Poverty")



World Vision  
Canadian Programs



# Ephraim's Place Partnership

Last summer we had the honour of partnering with Ephraim's Place Community Centre to run Sunshine Day Camp for the Jane-Finch Community. We served an average of 18 kids a week with a total of 125 camper weeks. We also run Role Model Mom's in Ephraim's Place.

Ephraim's place was founded in 2009 in honour of Ephraim Brown. Ephraim Brown was an 11 year old boy who was caught in the cross-fire of a gang shooting and died on July 21, 2007. Many



people from the community gathered for prayer in the streets the day after the shooting. They were all determined that such a tragedy would never happen again in their community. "Waiting for someone else to fix our city or address the needs of its people was not good enough. Change had to begin from the grass roots, the place where people live," said Bill Sunberg, Executive Direc-

tor of Ephraim's Place Community Centre<sup>1</sup>. This marked the beginning of the journey for Ephraim's Place Community Centre, a place that provides programs for children, youth and families in the Jane-Finch and Jane-Sheppard Communities.

Ephraim Brown's name hit the media again in December 2010 when trial verdict was announced. The "two 24-year-old Toronto men were acquitted of second-degree murder charges following a two-month trial."<sup>2</sup>

The meaning of the name Ephraim, "to find blessing from adversity," is an encouragement, particularly in the wake of this trial verdict. If Ephraim's Place journey began the day after the shooting, it will only end when "the Jane-Finch and Jane-Sheppard communities [are] the safest, happiest, and most peaceful place to live."<sup>3</sup>

Toronto City Mission is pleased to be partnering with Ephraim's Place to help them reach this goal!

<sup>1</sup>Ephraim's Place Media Release – 11-26-09.

<sup>2</sup>The Toronto Star, Madhavi Acharya-Tom Yew, 12-18-10

<sup>3</sup>www.ephraimsplace.com



A Mom who attended Role Model Moms

## Role Model Moms Highlights

- ◆ Moms from ages 18 to 43 have attended RMM.
- ◆ 22 students have received their high school equivalency (General Education Diploma)
- ◆ Previous students currently attend:
  - George Brown College
  - Humber College
  - Seneca College Upgrading

## Jane-Finch Staff Profile

Emily Slotegraaf has a Kinesiology Degree and a Teaching Degree from Redeemer University College. She started as a volunteer with TCM in Willowtree while teaching Gr. 6 at a local school. She thoroughly enjoyed volunteering with the single moms. While volunteering, she discovered that a position administering and teaching the "Role Model Moms' GED Program" in Jane-Finch was open. She applied and soon became an employee of TCM. Emily is-

helping single moms in the area to get their high school equivalency. She has moved to the Jane-Finch area where she has become part of the Move-in Movement. Emily thoroughly enjoys her job! She loves the conversations she has with her students and is honoured to witness the love that these students have for their children. Over her time at Role Model Moms she has seen 21 students get their high school equivalency and some even go to College.



Emily Slotegraaf—Jane-Finch Community Worker



# Perspectives

by Andrew Schell (Executive Director)

Dear Friends,

As many of you know, this fall we undertook the enormous task of reviewing our long term strategy. I'm excited to be able to share "fresh off the press" the results of extensive meetings with all our stakeholders including community members, volunteers, church partners, donors, staff and board.

First, let me articulate our reliance on God's wisdom and recognition of His sovereignty throughout this entire process. We will continue to include the message of Christ's love in all our programs and services. This is reflected in our revised statements of Purpose, Vision and Core Values. Our new purpose statement is:

*"Toronto City Mission exists to demonstrate God's love. To transform at-risk communities, we will:*

- partner with our neighbours,*
- form strong relationships,*
- cultivate community leadership and*
- provide proactive social and educational programs."*

We will know that our job is done when we see

*"vibrant, hope-filled communities where, by God's grace, neighbours experience and share God's love in our city."*

We continue to ensure that our core values shape all that we do.

1. *We are Christ-Centred*
2. *We Serve Others*
3. *We are Relationship Focused*

With our new Purpose, Vision and Core Values at the forefront of our thoughts we start the next step of focusing on three major initiatives: People, Services, and Brand.

**People** seeks to answer the following questions:

- How should we be organized to meet the needs of the communities?
- How do we recruit and support our staff so that they are most effective?
- How do we ensure open and timely communication both within TCM and to the communities we serve?

**Services:** We will focus on community programs that match TCM's core strengths. These include programs that are;

- Preventative – provide guidance before problems occur
- Educational – encourage and promote educational performance
- Developing community & personal leadership

**Brand:** We will develop ways to improve awareness of TCM and the benefits we bring to our communities along with a stronger public image.

We are excited to see what God has in store for Toronto City Mission and the communities we serve.

Andrew Schell  
Executive Director

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## TCM Staff:

Executive Director: Andrew Schell  
Ministry Resource Dir.: Steve Chu  
Program Director: Elliott Shin  
Development Dir.: Maureen Pryce  
Volunteer Resources: Ellie Duiker  
Volunteer Engagement: Eric Song  
Communications: Naomi Van De Visch  
Bookkeeper: Carol Bain

## Community Workers:

Jennifer Perry (St. James Town)  
Gilman Ho (Malvern)  
Nicki Freeman (Steeles L'Amoreaux)  
Elita Fung (St. James Town)  
Shelby Hall (Willowtree)  
Mimi Quong (Malvern)  
Adele Simmons (Malvern)  
Emily Slotegraaf (Jane -Finch)  
Tim Yuen (Steeles L'Amoreaux)



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