



NOV 2022 www.yfclondon.com | info@yfclondon.com | 519-686-0093

As I walked up the stairs, I could hear sobbing. I saw a youth in the corner with their head tucked beneath their arms. They shared their story of being bullied at school and how they felt unsafe, afraid, alone, and unworthy. Nearly two years had passed without having to navigate negative social interactions, and now they were hopeless and in a moment of despair.

However, there was a glimmer of hope... They had started coming out to YFC programs and were finding a renewed sense of belonging. The staff and volunteers had created a safe space for them to be vulnerable, a space where they felt they belonged, a space that allowed them to find hope.

The stories in this newsletter represent hundreds of young people who have been part of spaces where they are seen and belong. While we are still discovering what youth engagement looks like post-pandemic, our team is daily engaging with youth to bring love and a sense of belonging while providing a reason for them to dare to hope again.

This is only possible because of your financial partnership with YFC London. You are part of this team. You are the reason we can bring hope to the youth in our city.

As 2022 comes to a close, please remember YFC London in your year-end donations so that YFC can provide even more hope for youth in 2023!

James Coolidge
Executive Director, YFC London



COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Connecting through team & mentoring relationships



There are so many ways YFC reaches out within our community. It could be loading up the BBQ and heading to a neighbourhood on a sunny day, running programs in housing complexes, or simply hanging out with youth in the park or at the mall. Our team loves to connect with young people and establish trust that grows into mentoring relationships.



CHARACTER-BUILDING CAFE

Hello my name is Tatiana and I'm in my last year of highschool at CCH. The first time I volunteered at YFC was a Thanksgiving event where I dished turkey into containers and helped with cleaning up. I volunteered again at Easter and towards the end of the event, Dorothy approached me to ask if I was planning on getting a summer job. I brought in my resume to apply, got the job and never left!

During the summer of 2021, I worked in the café through a Y.O.U. grant. I was only 15 and it was my first job. I was very nervous but ended up having a great time.

Over the course of the summer, I learned about customer service and improved my communication skills. When I first started, I was very shy, and I still am. The difference is that I've opened up more and can speak with confidence. Working in the café with skilled and talented leaders, I felt supported. I am thankful that I got the opportunity to work at YFC London.

While working at YFC I developed my culinary skills. I learned how to serve people, how to use the grill top, how to present a plate, and how to use the cash register.

I appreciate how the staff at YFC were so welcoming throughout my time. Thank you Kat and Dorothy for supporting me and always being there when I needed help. Again, I am glad I got the opportunity to work at an amazing place! Thank you!

I'm Siobhon and I'm in my second year at Banting. I started going to YFC's programs in April and worked in the cafe this summer. I still volunteer with catered events.

I found out about YFC because my mom wanted me to get involved in some activities instead of being on my phone all day. I started out in the cooking program and made lots of friends. Later, I found out they were hiring for a summer job. I sent my resume and got an interview with Dorothy. It went well and I got the job.

When I first started working at YFC's Café, I was really nervous. It was my first job and I didn't know how to run a café. However, Dorothy and Kat were really patient and encouraging. They helped me to build my confidence and try new things. As a result, I feel very confident to work in the café and to help with catering.

While at YFC, I learned how to have good customer service. I was often complimented on how polite I was with the customers and how sweet I was. Dorothy and Kat have been very supportive. They always helped me and answered any questions. They were both amazing bosses and I will miss them very much.

I also appreciate how welcoming the staff of YFC are. We all worked well together and helped each other out. Everyone was super sweet and I am grateful for the experiences and all the wonderful memories I have made at YFC.



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A MOM'S REFLECTION

Hello, my name is Becky. I have two kids (ages 11 and 13) that attend YFC. I want to share with you how being accepted by your peers impacts a person's self esteem and self worth.

Last spring my daughter was coming home from school pretty down. She had been isolated and ostracized by her friends and peers. By April she was in tears, not understanding why her friends were verbally mean to her.

While talking with a friend of mine, she told me about YFC and some of the programs. I went online to check it out and I must say, seeing that the weekly programs were free was a definite bonus.

I signed them up for Feel Good Fridays. After that first Friday evening I picked up my kids and they didn't stop talking about how much they loved it there. The basketball court, the pool table, ping pong, and the SLUSHIES! They want to go every day!

We continue with the drop-ins on Mondays and sign up for the events on Fridays when they come up. My daughter is having a better year at school, standing up straighter and is talking more freely now. The acceptance that the staff and peers have provided at YFC to just be yourself is priceless.

It's no secret the last 2.5 years have taken their toll on all of us in some way. Our kids need our acceptance, to listen, and to play! To all of the people involved from the founders, the organizers, staff, volunteers, and donors, thank you for making this amazing space available. You have truly made a positive impact on our kids and whole family.



I thank God for guiding us to a safe place for our kids to develop social skills they will have for a lifetime. ~ BECKY

MARKETPLACE INITIATIVES

Developing employment skills & entrepreneurship



Investing in the future means training the youth of today. We understand the value of practical, employable skills and offer opportunities for youth to learn, refine and put these skills into practice. Through our marketplace initiatives like the café and e-recycling programs, young people gain transferable skills and the confidence they need to enter the workforce.



INNOVATIVE CENTRES

Pursuing shared interests in inspiring environments



YFC London's building is a safe space for kids to gather, connect and grow. Youth can burn off some energy while having fun with friends at our indoor skatepark and gym. They can finish up some homework or chat with a trusted mentor in our Hub. Activities and options transition as the demand for them changes. But, in the end, youth know they can count on YFC when they need a place to land.



LESSONS FROM THE COURT

My name is Gabriel Romero Serna, I'm 17 and have been a believer most of my life. This year I was invited to the YFC Compass Basketball program. My first thought was that I had to impress the coaches and display my talent so they would keep inviting me out and eventually I'd make the team.

However, I realized that the coaches took time before and after practice to get to know each player individually. I was surprised because other coaches I've played for wouldn't take the time to create these meaningful relationships with the players one on one. We would just be working on Xs and Os, on a playboard.

At that moment I knew that Compass was different. It wasn't like every other team I've played for, but a team that was truly invested in the development of the players on and off the court.

At the end of each practice Coach Jay gathers us together and shares a bit of his faith and a Bible verse that could be applicable to basketball, but also in our everyday life. This Fall our team talks have been focused on the Fruit of the Spirit. During one session Coach told us about exercising patience in life, and also how it's used in the game. We shouldn't

shoot everytime we get the ball but we should be *patient* and wait for the right opportunity; we shouldn't force the pass but *wait* and let the game create the opportunities.

When Coach Jay talked about patience, it really hit home because some days when I practice or train, I can't get anything right: I can't hit shots or make the right reads or just play basketball in general. In these moments, it feels like everything I'm doing is for nothing. Sometimes I feel that I'm wasting my time in pursuing basketball and that I should just QUIT, but I remember the team talk we had about "patience".

That's why I continue to train because whether it's hard to wake up in the morning or a session doesn't go my way, I know that God has plans for me. Jeremiah 29:11 states : "*For I know the plans I have for you*" declares the Lord "*plans to prosper you and not harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.*"

I don't know if basketball is in my future or not, but what I do know is that patience is not only for basketball, but in everything we do. In every situation you face God is seeing how long you will go, trying to deal with it on your own strength. When will you trust God and be patient that he will work everything out in his perfect time for

His plan?

At the end of the day we have to realize that God's plan is the only plan we should strive to follow even if we don't understand. All we have to do is trust Him and be patient that everything will turn out for the best.

I admire the Compass coaches because they not only share at the end of practice, but they try to live out what they say. Having a positive environment where coaches try to be the best version of themselves rubs off on the players slowly, but surely.

Studies have shown that a coach can be more influential than a parent in a kid's high school years, but many coaches don't realize their impact on the lives of their athletes. YFC coaches take this responsibility to another level, developing the character and moral compass of every young athlete that walks into their programs.

During my time at YFC coach Jay, Miguel, Javonte and JC have made a huge impact on my faith and in changing me into a better athlete and individual. I'm grateful for these people to have entered my life when they did and I know that God has a great plan for these coaches. My life has changed for the better at YFC Compass and I look forward to continuing my enrollment in this program but also finding ways to give back. I also can't wait to see YFC growing and reaching more youth, helping them in their transformation to adulthood and to a genuine faith. And lastly, I want to see the community increasing their support so the youth in the city have the opportunity to engage in a nurturing community and getting to know who God is.

God bless.



CRITICAL CARE

Supporting youth experiencing systemic vulnerability



More youth and families than ever are experiencing systemic vulnerability. At YFC London, we are able to provide meals and food programs to help youth and families reestablish food and basic needs security. More than simply serving a need, we work to build youth resilience and teach them how to develop skills and resource these basic needs.



WELCOME ABOARD JOEL!

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I am excited to announce the appointment of Joel Timmerman as the new Executive Director of YFC London, beginning on December 5, 2022.

Joel comes to YFC with a wide breadth of experience. Joel is a trained lawyer and has spent the last 7 years managing a team of as many as 26 legal professionals in the for-profit sector. At the same time, Joel has been studying at Tyndale Seminary and is on the verge of completing a master's degree in theological studies with a growing sense of the call to follow the Lord into vocational ministry. Joel is a devoted husband and father to two pre-teens and has been serving in numerous capacities within his home church. In these major facets of his life, Joel has been honing his skills in day-to-day operations, management, recruitment, and personnel decisions, and in faith-integrating, relational, practical, and Christ-centered ministry. Joel's depth of experience positions him well for leading YFC London, and the board is excited about the road ahead.

I want to thank James Coolidge for his faithful and dedicated leadership for our organization, especially over the last several months as we've worked together during this time of transition. He has proved himself to be a committed and inspirational leader with deep compassion for youth and a deep sense of justice for the vulnerable, and we wish him well in the next chapter of his life.

I want to congratulate Joel on his new role as Executive Director, and we are excited to see what God has in store for YFC in the years to come. Thank you for your continued prayer and support of YFC London.

Sincerely,

Randy Bird
Board Chair, YFC London



LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Growing & discovering
God's purpose for life



Each person has unique talents, skills and abilities. We all have untapped leadership potential and in the right environment, with appropriate guidance, that potential can be developed into a powerful skill. Our programs help youth to hone their potential and develop their leadership abilities.



LEADERSHIP SHOES

I'd like to take the opportunity to thank you for all your prayers, financial support, and encouragement for myself and the YFC London staff over the past 11+ years. It has been an honour to steward your resources to bring the love and hope of Jesus to the youth in our city. In January 2023, I will begin my next career with Ahria Consulting as their Director, Business Development and Talent Management. I look forward to seeing how God will use me to empower leaders and businesses within our city. As I transition to this new role, I also look forward to continuing my support for YFC London's new Executive Director, Joel Timmerman.

As Joel begins at YFC London, I would like to encourage you with a thought. When I began my role at YFC in 2011, many shared with me that I had "VERY BIG SHOES to fill." While I know this was meant to honour the previous leader, it was very unhelpful for me to hear because I had my own shoes, and they were different. Therefore, I would like to make it clear that I will be taking my shoes with me.

Joel will bring his own shoes and they will look different than mine and probably smell a lot better! In leadership successions, different is good as it provides fresh perspectives and opens new opportunities. More than ever, we need new creative ideas to reach youth. Please encourage Joel, pray for him and his family, support him, and celebrate him as he takes the reigns of this ministry. And remember, Joel is not filling anyone's shoes, because his shoes fit his own feet perfectly. That's why God led Joel to this ministry journey for such a time as this.

Thank you once again for your partnership over the years.

God bless,

James



TRIPS, CAMPS & EVENTS



Sharing experiences, adventure & social impact at home and abroad

Everyone can appreciate a chance to step outside their usual environment and routines. Trips, camps and events allow young people the opportunity to have an experience that is above and beyond their day-to-day reality. Typically, these events act as an exclamation mark and a catalyst for change in young lives.



THANK YOU TO THIS YEAR'S BANQUET TITLE SPONSORS



YOUR OPPORTUNITY TO TRANSFORM LIVES

The need for connection and hope is great for today's youth. **Tatiana** and **Siobhon** have shared about the confidence they've built through working in Cafe Connect. **Becky's** story illustrates how important it is for kids to have a safe place where they belong. And, **Gabe** has proven just how impactful the Compass coaches are to their players.

Your donation will help us continue to offer these programs and inspire similar stories in the future. Partner with us today to offer hope to the youth of London.

Complete the response card or scan this QR code to donate online. Becoming a monthly supporter will ensure continued access to these vital programs.

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