

YORK U-TD COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT CENTRE



ANNUAL REPORT
FOR 2018



DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

The York-TD Community Engagement Centre (CEC) continues to be a proud partner and colleague in Jane Finch community life. The following pages highlight just a few of these activities.

As you will see, we continue to put an emphasis on experiential education and ways for mutually beneficial partnerships between students, professors and community groups. We also have done lots of thinking this year on how research can contribute to the community in the best ways possible, and be valued as a benefit, not a drain, on community resources. We also are spending increasing time helping youth and organizations think more boldly about the possibilities in post secondary education. Institutionally, we are working for more jobs for local residents at York University and using our purchasing power in ways that can support local social enterprises. We've been busy.

None of this would be possible without the dedication and creativity of the York-TD Staff. In July we hired a new manager for the CEC. Byron Gray, founder and former manager of the SPOT, a youth program of the Jane Finch Centre, joined us. Byron brings immense local knowledge as well as strong skills in working with youth as a facilitator, mentor, and program planner and manager. He is joined by Talisha Ramsaroop, a proud York alum and community resident as our community projects coordinator. Talisha has upped our social media profile and the range of supports we now offer for youth and adults looking to pursue post secondary studies. She keeps the many moving pieces of various projects running smoothly. Tessa Jean our administrative assistant continues to bring her warmth and compassion to those who walk through our doors and helps identify how we can best support their inquiry. Tessa also manages to make sure we have space for the many meetings and community events that happen at the Centre along with keeping our administrative tasks on track. We are so fortunate to have this team representing York in the community. The community has also expressed that they are fortunate to have this team represent them at York. We are truly deepening the idea of mutual benefit through the work of the CEC.

The York-TD Community Engagement Centre continues to report into the Office of the Vice Provost Academic. I now work more closely with this office in supporting community engagement more broadly across the university. The support of Dr. Alice Pitt, Vice Provost Academic at York has ensured that the CEC continues to thrive and excel and take what we are learning across the University.

We've had a good year at the CEC and hope that through this brief glimpse, you will feel energized and committed to the importance of community-university partnerships. Thank you for joining us in this journey.

**LORNA
SCHWARTZENTRUBER**

Associate Director, Access Programs
and Community Engagement- York
University

CATALYST GRANTS

The catalyst grant is an award to a community-university partnership that is working to enhance one of the goals of the CEC. These grants are awarded by the Advisory Committee based on applications and demonstrated success. This year, the York University TD CEC funded three catalyst grant awards:

1) **Generation Chosen:**

The group worked with 20 participants culminating in an African Diaspora conference housed and facilitated by the University of Windsor. This conference focused on illuminating the potentialities of the peoples of the African Diaspora and provided an opportunity to share experiences beyond the local neighbourhood.

2) **Empowering the youth of Jane Finch through Community Creative Coding Workshops:**

With the collaboration of the Firgrove Learning & Innovation Community Centre (FLICC), this project aims to expose community youth to creative coding practices that would enhance an experiential, extra-curricular STEAM (STEM with 'Art') pedagogy and empower these participants with a safe space to express their thoughts and feelings through computational art.

3) **Debt Dialogues:**

This project created a student led podcast that provides information on OSAP Debt Repayment and Rehabilitation. Together with the Black Creek Financial Action Network, the podcasts will assist those who are looking to deal with OSAP debt.



THE JANE FINCH COMMUNITY RESEARCH PARTNERSHIP

Some of you may remember the work of the Jane Finch Community Research Project. The group came together in 2016 with the support of a Catalyst Grant and created a report which identified the need for a community ethics protocol. Since then the CEC has been working with the Jane Finch Research Partnership to develop an ethics protocol for researchers from York University looking to do work in the Jane Finch community. The protocol includes a comprehensive principles document intended to be used as a guide to support and strengthen research relationships between academic institutions, researchers and community members/organizations in the Jane Finch community. The principles document and protocol model are now in final draft forms and over the next year the CEC will support the group in conducting community consultations regarding the model and principles document.



SCHULICH COLLABORATES BCCC: On Corporate Social Responsibility in the context of Jane Finch

This year we endeavoured to explore a new campus community partnership with Schulich school of Business along with the Black Creek Community Collaborative. During the past two years more and more non-profits in the Jane Finch Community expressed the desire to connect to private partners and learn about Corporate partnerships for non-profits. In response we partnered with Lindsay Colley from Schulich School of Business who agreed to deliver a workshop on Corporate social responsibility and how to connect to corporate partners. In addition, 14 Non-profit/Grassroots organizations were also able to have a pitch developed for their organization by students in Ms. Colley's class. The event took place on Wednesday, February 27th, 2019 and engaged both students and NGO's in an informative discussion about Corporate Social Responsibility.

FIRST YEAR NETWORK

While the First Year Network (FYN) has been around for a few years now, it was reinvigorated by us in 2018. This group supports and mentors students from the local high schools (Emery Collegiate Institute, Westview Secondary School, Downsview Secondary, James Cardinal McGuigan and C.W. Jefferys) during their transition and first year at York University. This year we supported over 30 students going into their first year at York university and took on a variety of new communications strategies. From Drop-ins in their schools, customized tours, semester based check-ins, workshops that navigated the resources at York, resume help and connecting to the CEC, we were able to learn more about what students from Jane-Finch need in their first year. In 2019 we will be hosting a new group and hope to see many of our 2018 group come back as mentors.



BACK-TO-SCHOOL EVENTS

School starts are an important time for all students. In August of 2018, The York University-TD Community Engagement Centre supported in two separate Back to School events. The first event had 160 residents engaged at the Black Creek Farm and was coordinated by the Jane-Finch Education Action Group. The second event saw over 250 residents, and was organized in partnership with Freedom Fridayz, an art based collective that creates transformative spaces; while giving emerging and established artist a platform to share their art with community. Celebrating these important milestones with the community gives a strong message that education is important.



POST-SECONDARY ACCESS

Creating access to Post-Secondary, has and continues to be one of our main priorities. Over the years we have tracked numbers, studied student experiences and hosted many events. In 2018 we had a big push on in-school workshops that would eliminate barriers to post-secondary. We hosted multiple sessions on navigating OSAP, debunking myths of Post-Secondary and applying to scholarships. We combined a variety of in-school workshops with on-campus experiences to help create spaces where students explore their potential. We worked with over 100 high school students and 40 middle school students in this year alone.

TAKE OUR KIDS TO WORK DAY (TOKTWD)

Sixty Grade 9 students from four of the local high schools attended York University for Take Our Kids to Work Day (TOKTWD). TOKTWD was planned in partnership with Human Resources at York who organize on-campus programs for TOKTWD and the Neighbourhood Action Youth Employment Committee. The goal was to have youth from the community gain first-hand experience of the types of careers available to them right here within their own community, and be exposed to employment, careers and education opportunities that will propel them into success as they define it. The York University-TD Community Engagement Centre has spent several years developing and establishing relationships with the York community that would say "yes!" to ways of better engaging with community under the Anchor Institution framework.



ONTARIO POST-SECONDARY ACCESS AND INCLUSION PROGRAM (OPAIP)

The Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities granted York University funding to support access programming. The CEC focused on outreach and enhancing services we provided over the years. With a solid network of community organizations and local schools, including participation in the Jane-Finch Toronto Strong Neighbourhood Strategy Education Action Group. We established an Education Steering Committee of community groups (in partnership with school boards, York and Seneca). We did outreach to elementary and middle school guidance counsellors and teachers. We enhanced outreach with adult day schools in the catchment area (Toronto and York Region). OPAIP allowed us to support students who are treading a fine line of post-secondary access and need someone that believes they can be successful and will also provide extra supports once they are accepted into university.

EXPERIENTIAL EDUCATION:

Community Engaged Scholars

The CEC welcomed several students from the BSW, Communication, Nursing and Education programs as our Community Engaged Scholars. The CEC is moving toward an interdisciplinary approach to this particular EE in order to engage with community and access, research and create an action plan to address community needs. This will allow our students to work together creatively, finding potential solutions to challenges the community faces.



LEARNING TOGETHER:

Sharing emergent and unconventional approaches to community-university collaboration

In October 2018, our community projects coordinator Talisha Ramsaroop and Abena Offeh-Gyimah, Chair of the Jane-Finch Community Research Partnership, spoke at the University of Guelph, on creative approaches to community engaged work which seek to solve puzzles and clear hurdles. Other workshops and presentations from the CEC included: speaking to numerous classes at the University, facilitated a panel on Social Procurement at the TCBN Conference, and presented at the Coalition on Urban and Metropolitan Universities.

