

UPDATE

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IN WEEK 2 OF OUR SUMMER CAMP, we partnered with Athletes in Action to lead a dynamic sports camp and Bible lessons through skits and small group sessions. That Friday, I sat on the gym floor with all the children, who were sitting in rows, some on their knees, filled with excitement, waiting to hear their names called.

Athletes in Action concluded the week with a celebration called the “Line of Champions,” recognizing each child’s unique qualities. Leaders lined up, called each child by name and presented them with creative awards, like “Endless Effort,” “Iron Man,” “Most Electric Player,” “Gentle

Giant,” “World Cup Wonder,” “Best Listener,” and “Kindness.” Each child walked the line of champions, high-fived, and cheered on by their leaders. The gym’s atmosphere was electric and the joy on each face was priceless.

A StatsCan report notes that 7 in 10 youth experience some form of bullying, impacting both their mental and physical health. **At UPT, we are committed to creating a safe and supportive environment for every child.** I overheard one of our leaders telling a youth “For every put-down you say, you have to say ten put-ups.” Positive reinforcement combats bullying and fosters a culture of kindness.

Scripture reminds us, *“Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing” (1 Thessalonians 5:11).*

As we encourage and build up our children, and StreetLeaders, we see the impact. It builds resilience, confidence and points them to faith in Christ during challenges.

Thank you for encouraging our team as it spurs us on. We couldn’t do this work without your support. I pray that the stories in this newsletter will be inspiring to you.

Grace & peace



Shawn James
Executive Director

SUMMER CAMP 2024 AT A GLANCE

Our three camps—Camp Victory, Camp Hope, and Camp Truth—are dedicated to offering enriching experiences for the communities we serve. This summer, we provided unique opportunities for kids to explore, learn, and grow.



COMMUNITY NIGHT

—Sara-Jane (a.k.a “Spotlight”),
Community Intern, led the planning
of Camp Victory’s community night.
Here’s what she had to say:

This summer, my passion project was to revive our Community Nights, a tradition that once played a vital role in bringing our community together. Inspired by the legacy of Camp Victory’s former leader, who made these nights special, I felt it was time to rebuild this tradition and strengthen the bonds between our past, present, and future leaders.

The process was challenging but rewarding. I found myself tapping into different skills than I typically use when leading our StreetLeaders and kids. Reaching out to donors and sponsors and coordinating all the logistics was a lot of work, but I knew that an event like this was essential for fostering a sense of belonging and continuity within our community.

Local police officers joined us in hosting the event, helping to create a welcoming and safe environment. And as the evening unfolded, I was filled with a deep sense of joy, especially seeing our StreetLeaders and kids experience a Community Night BBQ for the first time. The enthusiasm and engagement of everyone involved proved that when we come together as a community, we can create lasting, meaningful experiences that will inspire future generations.

HERE ARE SOME OF THE COOL EXPERIENCES WE OFFERED THAT MADE THIS SUMMER EPIC:

- Local attractions such as: Royal Ontario Museum, High Park, Toronto Zoo, Bee Farm
- Feed Scarborough Food Bank
- Athletes in Action (Multi-Sports Camps)
- National Yacht Club (Broad Reach Canada: Summer Sailing Program)
- Nature Scavenger Hunt (Trekker Style)
- Visions of Science (STEM Roadshow)

And who can forget the times we got together with our ‘All Camp Day’, Community Night BBQs and the always memorable, End of Summer BBQ!

Each week wasn’t just fun, but offered opportunities to grow, learn, and build lasting memories.





SUMMER SAILING PROGRAM

—*Jermaine (a.k.a “Juice”), Ministry Supervisor at Camp Victory, and a small team took part in a summer sailing program. Here’s what he had to say:*

This year, nine Youth Making A Difference (YMADs), five StreetLeaders, and I sailed on Lake Ontario, a new experience for all 15 of us. As we approached the lake, the reality of what lay ahead began to unsettle many of us; some had never been on a boat, and some couldn’t swim. We shared our fears with the experienced sailors guiding us and we prayed together, asking God to help us overcome our fears. We sailed for about two hours and by the time we returned, everyone had enjoyed the experience and was no longer afraid.

This reminded me of Matthew 8:23-27, where Jesus calmed a storm after being awoken from a peaceful sleep by panicking disciples. Jesus’ response was a simple question: “Why are you afraid, O you of little faith?” Just like the disciples, we let fear overwhelm us, but by sharing our concerns and relying on God’s strength, we found the courage to face those fears and gained an incredible new experience as a result. We learned

that while fear is a natural response, God can always be trusted. Thanks to Broad Reach Canada for this experience.



MEET JAYDEN

*Camp Name - Adobe
StreetLeader at Camp Truth*

Q: How long have you been a part of UrbanPromise Toronto, and what drew you to the StreetLeader role?

A: I’ve been with UrbanPromise Toronto for two years now. I was drawn to the StreetLeader role because it offered the chance to build meaningful relationships—not just with other leaders, but with the kids in my community. Living in the same neighbourhood, it’s heartwarming to see how the kids recognize me outside of camp, whether at the park or around the neighborhood. It truly feels like we’re all part of a family.

Q: Can you share a challenging moment you faced during camp this year, and how you overcame it?

A: One challenging moment occurred when the kids were restless after being indoors for an extended period. Understanding how difficult it can be to stay inside for too long, I decided to take them outside for some free time. This change in environment helped them release energy and return to our activities more focused and calm. It reminded me of the importance of being adaptable and responsive to the needs of the children.

Q: Was there a moment this summer that inspired you?

A: I was particularly inspired by our WordUP sessions. As the weeks went on, I watched the kids engage more deeply with what they were learning. Seeing their understanding grow and witnessing the joy they found in these lessons was incredibly rewarding. It reminded me of Proverbs 22:6: "Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old, he will not depart from it." Being part of their spiritual and personal growth is what makes this role so fulfilling.

Q: What is your hope for the children and youth you lead?

A: My hope for the kids is that they continue to build relationships that extend beyond their immediate circles. I want them to see the value in forming new friendships and experiencing different aspects of life which will help them grow into well-rounded, compassionate individuals who can positively impact their communities.

RUN FOR PROMISE

WALK. RUN. FUNDRAISE

Whether you're a marathon pro or just lacing up for the first time, we invite you to join us in making a real difference for children living in Toronto Community Housing!

By registering now, you'll help us reach our goal of raising **\$120,000** to support the kids in TCH neighborhoods. All funds raised will support kids aged 5-14 with tutoring, literacy and numeracy development, experiential learning, sports, recreation, and most importantly, Biblical teaching and retreats.

Choose how you want to participate: in person or virtually from wherever you are!

Every step you take and every dollar you raise will provide life-changing opportunities for these children. Let's do this together and make a lasting impact!

Spread the word! Invite friends, family, or colleagues to join the race and be a part of this incredible cause. The more people involved, the greater the impact.



Head to urbanpromise.com/run to register or donate towards our goal. Your support will make all the difference!

LET'S HIT THE GROUND RUNNING—LITERALLY!

OUR MISSION >

To reach children in Toronto Community Housing with the love of Jesus, and raise them into leaders, who restore their community.



REACH
A CHILD.

RAISE
A LEADER.

RESTORE
COMMUNITY.

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