

Fall 2025

# UPDATE

URBANPROMISE.COM



## Possibilities

***“I live in a one-bedroom basement apartment with my four children, and I have to share with two tenants in other rooms.”***

These were the words of a single mother, a refugee, as she tearfully shared with me her struggles with childcare and finding work in Toronto while trying to register her children for our summer camp.

That moment offered me a glimpse into the challenges that many immigrants and refugees face in our communities, which are often not seen.

In the recent Child and Family Poverty Report 2024, Immigrant children had a poverty rate of 21% compared to 12.6% for non-immigrant children. Newcomer children had even higher poverty

rates: 38.1% of children who immigrated with their families between 2020 and 2021 lived in low-income households.

This past summer, we aimed to be a part of the solution to help families overcome the barriers that poverty creates. Led by our missionaries and empowering our StreetLeaders, we set out to enroll as many children as possible and provide them with the best experience. For six weeks, we created opportunities for children to build literacy skills, explore places like Warsaw Caves, Treetop Trekking, Downey's Farm, Toronto Island, and the list goes on. At the heart of our summer camp was our Bible theme,

“Who’s your King?”, learning about the kind of King Jesus is.

We are excited about the start of our AfterSchool program to continue to create possibilities for children to learn and youth to grow in their leadership skills.

Thank you for your continued partnership and prayers.

Grace & peace



**Shawn James**  
Executive Director



## OUR COMMUNITIES

### CAMP VICTORY

—Janelle, Leadership Development Coordinator

The best part about my role as Leadership Development Coordinator is connecting with our StreetLeaders (high schoolers) through new opportunities, which first means creating them. Through UrbanTrekks, I've developed experiential learning experiences that get them outdoors and trying new things. My favourite was taking seven StreetLeaders paddling down the Humber River after summer camp. There were tears and fears, but each overcame them and successfully paddled. We explored marshes, spotted gray herons, small birds, and even a deer. Being outside their



comfort zones, figuring it out together, and sharing laughter and tears built community like nothing else.

After two hours on the water, we grabbed McDonald's, and I asked them to write reflections. One StreetLeader, Jahsya Shaw, shared: "It gave me a sense of peace and helped me escape everything else that was happening that week. It was a lot of fun and gave me the opportunity to reconnect with others."

### CAMP HOPE

—Jessica, Ministry Supervisor

I am so grateful for everything the Lord made possible this summer at Camp Hope! For example, one blessing was partnering with a local school that is a 4-minute walk away from our Camp Hope site. This made it efficient for us to run the program in several rooms that were safe and appropriate for the children's needs. By God's



grace, we also had a dedicated team of summer Streetleaders. It was both beautiful and heartwarming to see these leaders build positive relationships with children, many of whom were new to our program. We also welcomed a few children with disabilities to our program this summer and the leaders consistently made them feel loved and included in our daily activities. Regardless of the children's abilities, God helped us work effectively to help kids create possibilities for fun, friendship, academic growth, and spiritual care.

### CAMP TRUTH

—Marlene Ministry Supervisor

For parents like Teneisha, Camp Truth has become a place where her son Kahmar is met with patience and kindness. Kahmar was recently diagnosed on the autism spectrum and had to leave his school because they could not meet his needs. This is the first program he has ever been to and Teneisha was a bit nervous about leaving him with us. We are not experts, just ministry workers and high school students saying "yes"

and trusting God's grace but we have done our best to support their family. The first week was rough. Kahmar is semi verbal and we struggled to help him through his meltdowns. But little by little he started to open up. Now Kahmar sneaks over to the alphabet magnets to spell out words. He even reads at a Grade 2 level. He has joined in our camp chant too. When we shout "Hey Camp Truth" he happily echoes it back with a big smile. He has become a favourite among the leaders and we are so grateful to God for the joy Kahmar brings.





**6**  
PROGRAM  
LEADERS

**38**  
STREET  
LEADERS

**208**  
KIDS

**SUMMER 2025  
BY THE  
NUMBERS**

## SPOTLIGHT

### MEET YEEZY – FROM CAMPER TO PROGRAM LEADER

Emmanuela Odia, or “Yeezy”, has been part of UrbanPromise Toronto since she was six years old. She grew up at camp, became a StreetLeader as a teen, and now this is her first summer as Program Leader at Camp Victory.



Yeezy runs the daily schedule, supports the StreetLeaders, and works closely with kids aged 5 to 10. She loves teaching them about God and leading worship. Her energy and sense of humour light up camp, and she's great at planning activities that make the experience fun...just like the one she had growing up.

Now in her second year of university, *Yeezy is giving back to the community that shaped her to help build the next generation of leaders.*

Sarah, the Ministry Supervisor at Camp Victory, says: “Yeezy has a very energetic and joyful personality. She's also funny and excels in planning activities for the kids and does her best to make camp an amazing experience, similar to the experience she had at camp as a child.”

#### Q. What inspired you to become a Program Leader?

I grew up with UrbanPromise from camper to StreetLeader, and now Program Leader. Both of my siblings have followed the same path. Watching them lead and pour into younger kids inspired me to do the same. This role feels right to me; it's my chance to give back to the community that has been such a big part of my life and help keep that cycle going.

**Q. How has leading camp helped you grow?** This summer pushed me to grow in responsibility and work with people. Creating the schedule and sticking to it taught me to stay organized, think ahead, and adapt when things go off plan. For example, I planned a relay race but the kids were tired so I switched to making paper airplanes. That kind of flexibility helps me beyond camp.

#### Q. What keeps you going when things get tough?

I pray or ask my Ministry Supervisors for advice, their support and Sarah's mentorship inspire me. My hope for the kids is that they have fun, feel cared for, and remember me as someone who believed in them.

**Q. Any Bible verses that guide you?** Philippians 4:13 – “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.” James 4:7 – “Submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee.”

They remind me that I'm not doing this alone. I lean on God's strength and I trust that He guides every step.



# RUN FOR PROMISE

WALK. RUN. FUNDRAISE

## 2025

### CREATE POSSIBILITIES

## ONE STEP AT A TIME

At UrbanPromise Toronto, we believe every child holds God-given potential, and we want them to see the world of possibilities ahead of them.

**Run for Promise 2025** is your chance to help make that happen.

We're excited once again to be part of the **TCS Toronto Waterfront Marathon!** Whether you're walking or running, your support will help raise funds for children and youth living in Toronto Community Housing.

This year, we're aiming for **100 participants** to help us raise **\$120,000**. Your support will help provide:

- AfterSchool tutoring
- Literacy and numeracy development
- Leadership development and youth employment
- Bible lessons and spiritual mentoring

#### Please note:

- > Full and Half Marathon registration is now closed
- > **5K spots are still available — but filling fast!**
- > Would you prefer to go at your own pace? Join our **Virtual 5K** and run anytime between **October 1-30** from wherever you are!

Not ready to run? You can still make a difference by **donating** or inviting friends and family to get involved. Every step. **Every share.** **Every gift — it all counts.**

**LET'S CREATE POSSIBILITIES TOGETHER.**

**DONATE/ SIGN UP**  
[www.urbanpromise.com/run](http://www.urbanpromise.com/run)

## 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.



[www.urbanpromise.com](http://www.urbanpromise.com)

MAILING ADDRESS:  
UrbanPromise Toronto  
502-685 Sheppard Ave E  
North York ON  
M2K 1B6

Tel: 416.516.6121  
Email: [info@urbanpromise.com](mailto:info@urbanpromise.com)  
Facebook: @UrbanPromiseTO  
Instagram: @urbanpromiseto

