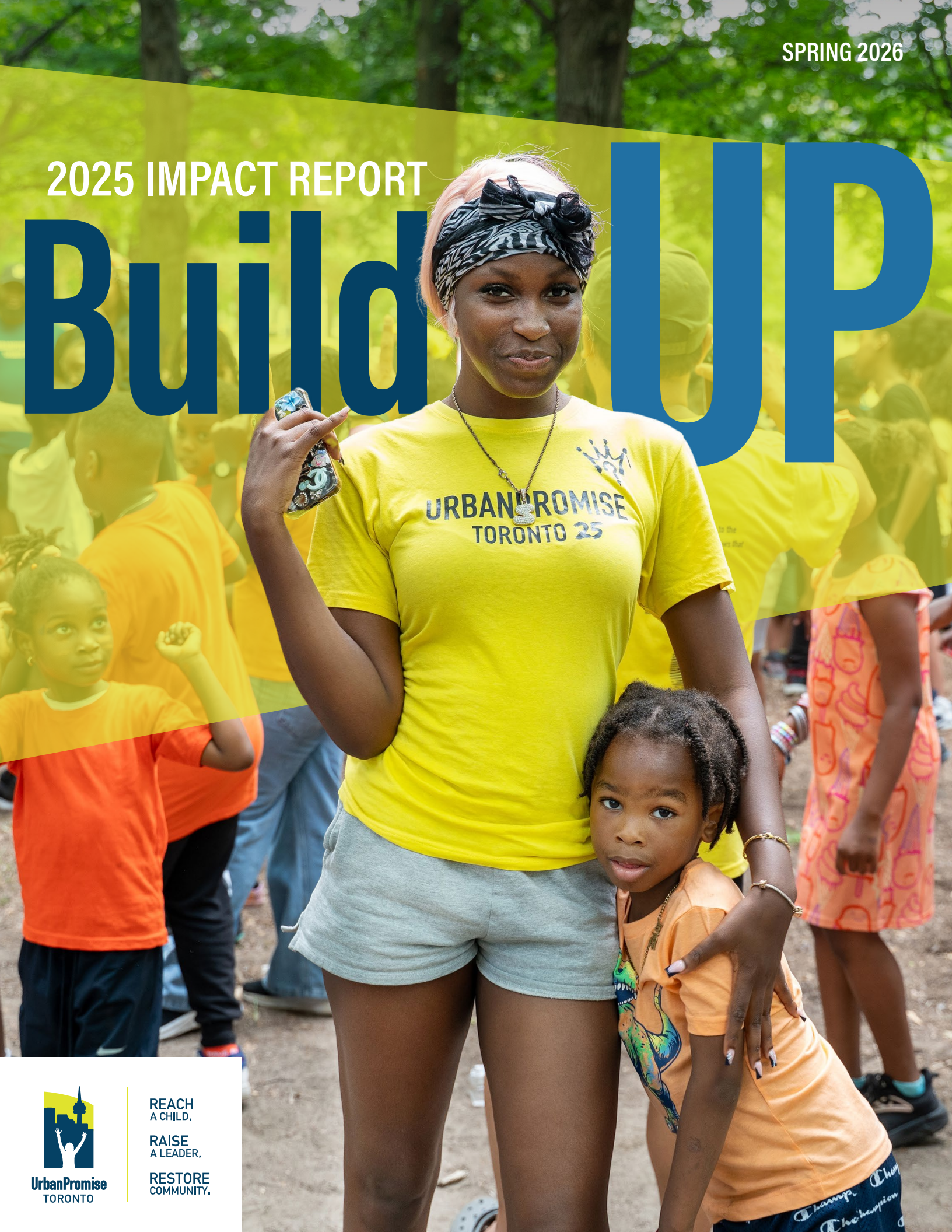


2025 IMPACT REPORT

# Build UP



REACH  
A CHILD,

RAISE  
A LEADER,

RESTORE  
COMMUNITY.



For the past few years, I watched outside my office window the construction and completion of a condo building next door. I was fascinated by the process of digging up and levelling the ground, pouring the concrete slabs, and the reinforcement with rebar to create a solid foundation.

Building up a solid foundation is important for things to stay in place. Children and youth need foundational things in their lives to be stable and thrive. Such as academic support outside the school, mentorships, work experience, a place to belong, and to express their creativity and talents.

In 2025, our strategic theme was Build Up, to innovatively reach our communities as missionaries, strengthen our team, and increase our Promise Partner commitments to create a sustainable future.

We saw these areas as foundational to support our vision of a generation of young leaders from Toronto Community Housing who love Jesus and serve their community. Similar to the wise builder in Luke 6:48, we want our children and youth to build their lives on a solid foundation, which is Jesus, so when the storms come, they will be anchored.

**SHAWN JAMES**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As for everyone who comes to me and hears my words and puts them into practice, I will show you what they are like. They are like a man building a house, who dug down deep and laid the foundation on rock. When a flood came, the torrent struck that house but could not shake it, because it was well built. —LUKE 6:47-48

With your support, we...

- Hired 5 missionary staff to serve our communities and provide HR support
- Launched the UrbanTrekks Program, providing outdoor experiential learning
- Implemented IXL Learning software to help boost children’s literacy
- Had our first StreetLeader graduation celebration, recognizing the accomplishments of our young leaders.
- Established key partnerships to support trauma healing and counselling needs.

As a way to recognize this impactful work, UrbanPromise Toronto was the recipient of the Toronto Community Champion Award from the City of Toronto, and United Way Greater Toronto (UWGT) nominated by our community members.

By standing with us, you make our commitment to a 20-year journey with a child and their family to help them overcome the obstacles of poverty possible. On behalf of our Board and team, it is with great joy and thankfulness that I share stories of transformation and impact found in this report.

Grace & Peace

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**LOIS TULLO**, Chair, Lecturer, Schulich School of Business

**BEN HOLMES**, Treasurer, CA, Norton McMullen & Co.

**JESSEY NJAU**, Secretary, Farm Manager, Zawadi Farm

**KATHERINE ISAAC**, Vice-Chair, Head of Customer Success, Flare Systems

**WALTER JONG**, Financial Management Executive (retired)

**WILL JIN**, Executive Venture Capital

**PETER DOBROWOLSKI**, VP, Bee-Clean Building Maintenance

**NATALIE MEZZINA**, Professor, Humber College



# 2025 AT A GLANCE



REACH

**342**

CHILDREN  
REACHED

RAISE

**48**

STREETLEADERS  
TRAINED

RESTORE

**7**

YOUNG ADULTS  
RESTORING  
COMMUNITY

## LEADERSHIP INVESTMENT

**10,744+**

Hours Worked by StreetLeaders

**\$190,598**

Paid in Youth Wages

**2,175+**

Hours Reaching Children

**215+**

Days Mentoring Leaders

**12+**

Leadership Retreat Days

## LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

**10**

UrbanTrekks Activities

**3**

UPWARD Workshops

**10 Weeks**

Trauma Healing Circle

**1 Day**

StreetLeader Graduation

**6 Full Days**

Streetleader Professional Development

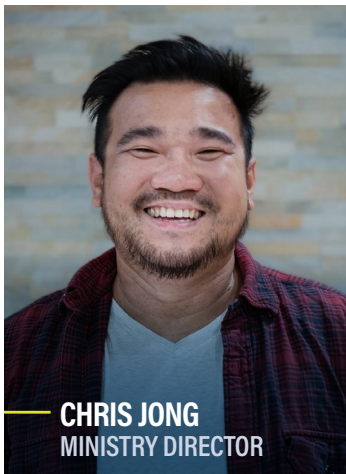
## LEADERSHIP SKILLS COACHED:

- Literacy Training, Tutoring
- Financial literacy
- Teamwork
- Conflict management
- Time management
- Communications

**EVERY NUMBER  
REPRESENTS A LIFE  
BEING SHAPED.**



## MESSAGE FROM MINISTRY DIRECTOR



**CHRIS JONG**  
MINISTRY DIRECTOR

The challenges facing youth in Toronto Community Housing are widespread and constantly changing. From a lack of positive male role models to the instability of broken systems, gaining traction can feel impossible. Added

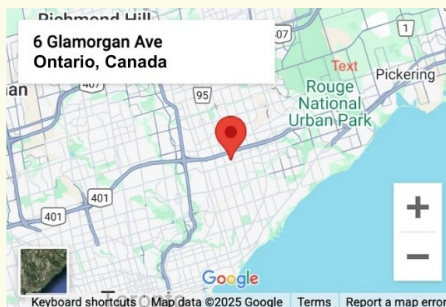
to this is a global struggle with isolation and loneliness, leaving our youth to navigate limited resources in an unpredictable world.

At UrbanPromise Toronto, our approach is to first love and care for people in a way that shows them we are here to stay. Through consistent

programming like our Afterschool Programs and StreetLeader/UPward ministry, long-term friendships with kids and their families, and a commitment to journey with people for 20 years, we believe that we are modelling the unchanging and reliable nature of Christ. We believe that in order to be dedicated believers and missionaries, we have to meet people where they are at, embrace people first with love and value, and to see the beauty of God's creation in everyone. We believe that this is best accomplished within the community and rarely in isolation.

On top of our regular programming, we are already seeing new initiatives to build this sense of community in 2026. We believe that through various outdoor excursions, snowboarding, fishing, video games, mission trip opportunities, and growing local school partnerships are avenues to show Christ's love in our neighbourhoods.

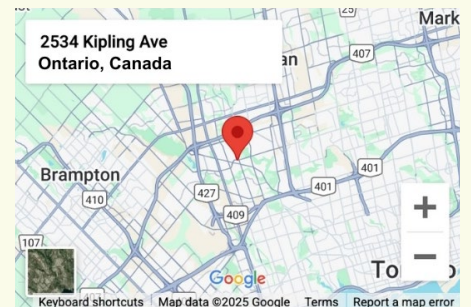
## OUR CURRENT TORONTO COMMUNITY HOUSING NEIGHBOURHOODS



**CAMP TRUTH**  
(Glamorgan, Scarborough)

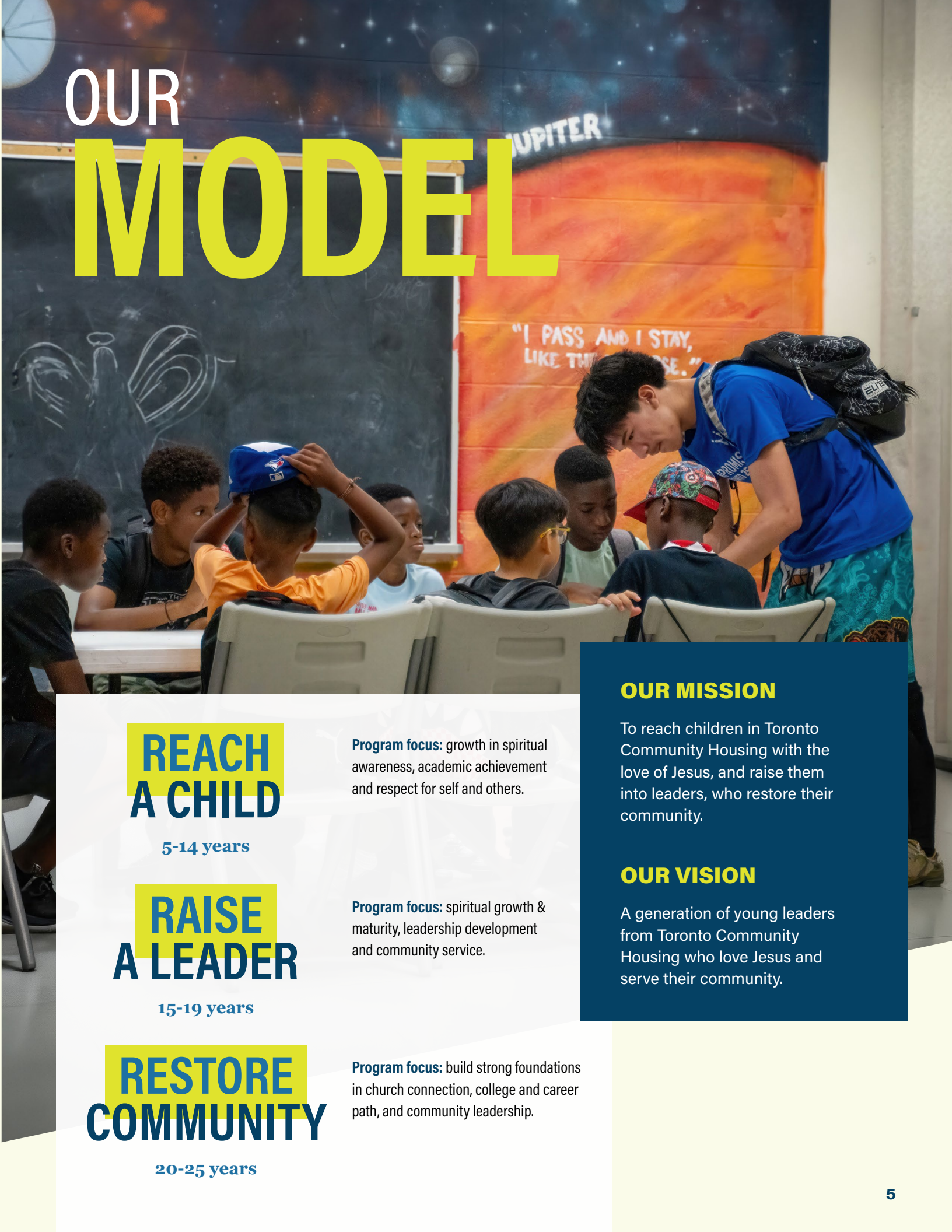


**CAMP HOPE**  
(Warden Woods, Scarborough)



**CAMP VICTORY**  
(Mount Olive, Etobicoke)

# OUR MODEL



## REACH A CHILD

5-14 years

**Program focus:** growth in spiritual awareness, academic achievement and respect for self and others.

## RAISE A LEADER

15-19 years

**Program focus:** spiritual growth & maturity, leadership development and community service.

## RESTORE COMMUNITY

20-25 years

**Program focus:** build strong foundations in church connection, college and career path, and community leadership.

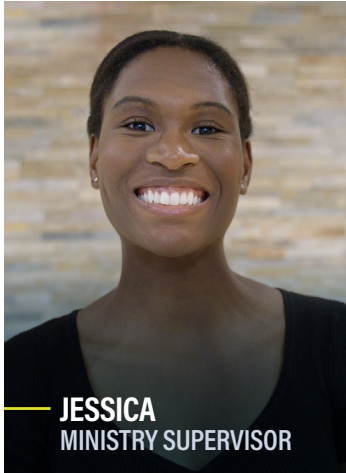
## OUR MISSION

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

## OUR VISION

A generation of young leaders from Toronto Community Housing who love Jesus and serve their community.

# REACH A CHILD



One child that I had the privilege of encountering this past year was "Joey" (name changed to respect the child). Joey was a bright and curious boy whom I first met during summer camp. I also got to know his mother during this time and in the fall, she decided to register Joey for our year-long AfterSchool program. One thing I quickly noticed about Joey during this program is

his thirst for the Word of God.

He participated actively in "WordUP" (our devotional time with the children) and would often ask questions about God and Jesus. I also asked him questions and soon learned that his family used to attend church but they haven't in a long time. The reality is that our AfterSchool programs can never replace the local church. However, it has been a blessing to give Joey access to the Word of God and to answer his questions about faith on a regular basis.

## List of activities done in 2025

- Second Harvest food security program with families
- Extra academic help within the school
- Academic help during AfterSchool program (IXL - Literacy Software)
- Small trips to the library
- Cooking activities
- Outdoors activities (sledding, camp-wide games in the summer, etc)
- Vision of Sciences
- Fun Trips - Downey's Farm, Warsaw Caves Exploring
- Outdoor reading program
- Arts & crafts
- Pet-assisted activities



In fact, he is so excited about this that one day, he confidently came up to me and said, *"I did something brave today: I shared the Gospel with a friend!"*

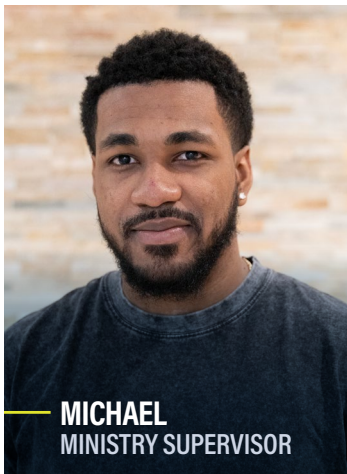
He gave me and his peers at camp more details about this experience and was so happy to share this wonderful news of Christ's love. We are continuing to pray that his family returns to church but we are also encouraged to know that in the meantime, God is using us to strengthen him spiritually.

CHILD  
QUOTE:

*"I did something brave today, I shared the gospel with a friend!"*



# RAISE A LEADER



**MICHAEL**  
MINISTRY SUPERVISOR

Our StreetLeader ministry, the Raise a Leader stage, is a beautiful transition. We get to watch kids who once attended our programs grow up and come back as leaders for the next generation.

One leader I've had the privilege

of working with is Rio (camp name). I didn't know her as a child in the program. I met her as a leader. At first, she came across as rough and closed off. She seemed uninterested in faith and just wanted to do her job and go home.

Over time, she opened up and shared that she is Muslim. She asked to be excluded from Bible studies and prayer time, and I agreed. That continued for a couple of months.

Then one night after work, she asked me a question about Christianity based on the Bible studies I was doing with the kids. That question turned into an hour-long conversation about the differences between Christianity and Islam.

That conversation sparked something in her. From that night on, she began participating in Bible studies. Sometimes she would even take notes and bring questions to me afterward so we could talk more.

From that one conversation, our relationship grew. Now we talk about life, and she shares openly with me. At times, I hardly recognize her. The rough, closed-off youth who showed no interest in faith has softened.

One of the main things we've been discussing is Christ's sacrifice. During one of those conversations, she told me she desires truth, even if that means leaving the faith she grew up with.

## RAISE A LEADER 2024 - 2025 IMPACT

### Leadership Growth

**71%**  
AVERAGE SCORE IN  
COLLABORATION

**70%**  
AVERAGE SCORE IN  
PROFESSIONALISM

**71%**  
AVERAGE SCORE  
IN RESILIENCY

### Skills Development

**90%**  
OF YOUTH  
REPORTED  
GROWTH IN:

Job readiness

Leadership skills

Confidence in  
leading children



#### STREETLEADER QUOTE:

*"I desire truth even if that means leaving the faith she knew growing up."*

# RESTORE COMMUNITY

**Emma Ader**

CAMP NAME: SIMBA

## INTRODUCTION

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Emma is a dedicated and compassionate leader who has grown significantly during her time with UrbanPromise Toronto. As a key leader at Camp Victory, she consistently demonstrated patience, commitment, and deep care for the children she served. Her ability to connect with students, lead with faith, and remain steady through challenges reflects her strong character and growth as a leader.

One of Emma's notable accomplishments was helping launch our first StreetLeader Graduation Celebration, recognizing the growth and achievements of our StreetLeaders. Her journey as a StreetLeader and Program Leader reflects how God shapes leaders through service, perseverance, and love, while living out UrbanPromise's mission of restoring community by building relationships and investing in young people.



## QUESTIONS

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### **1. How did you first hear about UrbanPromise and become a StreetLeader? (Your Journey into UPT)**

I first heard about UrbanPromise through a friend I had in high school. She worked there and introduced me to Chris and Janelle Jong, who were hosting a Bible study at their house at the time. After getting to know me a little bit, they offered me an interview, and later I got a job as a StreetLeader.

### **2. What made you want to join the StreetLeaders program/program leader?**

I was interested in the type of work my newfound friends were doing. Especially after hearing them talk about it, I became very curious.

Being around kids had always been a joy for me, so being able to do it as a job was very exciting.

### **3. When you first started, what was it like for you?**

Hard. I didn't anticipate all the challenges that leading kids would bring. I struggled a lot, even working with other StreetLeaders and learning how to work with their leadership styles and skills. But I learned so much about myself during that time.

### **4. What's one moment or experience as a StreetLeader that really stands out to you?**

I think it was more so after summer camp ended, still getting the chance to see the kids on the streets, heading to school or walking back home, and having them remember me and recall the moments we shared.

### **5. What has been the hardest part of being a StreetLeader/Program Leader so far?**

Honestly, one of the hardest parts of being a leader so far has been carrying the weight of responsibility. Wanting to show up consistently, lead well, and be someone the kids can rely on isn't always easy, especially on days when I felt tired or stressed. It can also be challenging knowing that you can't fix everything for them.

At the same time, it's been testing me in the best way and teaching me to lean on God, be patient, and lead with love even when it's hard.

## 6. How did you deal with those challenges, and what did they teach you?

I dealt with those challenges by reminding myself why I said yes to this role in the first place. On the harder days, I had to be honest about my limits, ask for support when I needed it, and choose to show up even when I didn't feel fully equipped. It also helped to reflect on small wins and remember that impact doesn't always look big or immediate.

Those challenges taught me patience, consistency, and humility. They reminded me that leadership isn't about having all the answers, but about being present and having a willingness to grow. Most of all, as I grew in my faith, they taught me to trust God more and to lead from a place of love rather than perfection.

## 7. How have you grown as a person and leader since joining StreetLeaders/Program Leader?

Since being a StreetLeader, and more recently a Program Leader, I've grown in confidence and maturity, both as a person and as a leader. I've learned how to take initiative, communicate more clearly, and be more intentional with my words and actions.

Being in this role has taken me beyond my comfort zone and helped me become more patient and understanding.

Most importantly, I've learned how to lead with compassion and faith, trusting that even the small moments can have a lasting impact.

## 8. How are you using what you've learned now, in school, at home, church, or in your community?

I'm using what I've learned by being more intentional and present wherever I am. At school, I try to lead by example and support others. At home and church, I'm more patient and willing to serve.

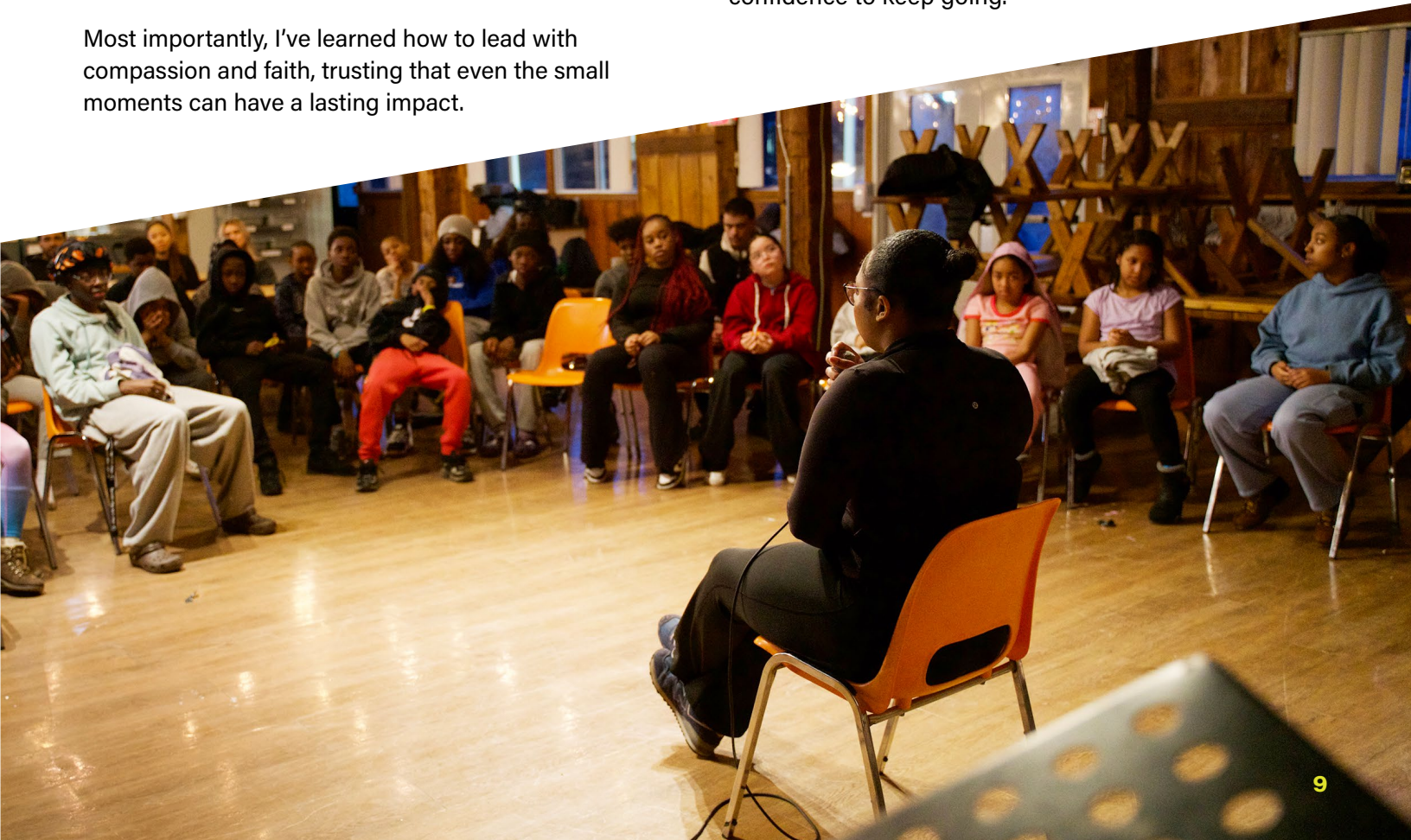
I understand the impact of my "yes" so much more. I'm learning to step up, take initiative, and care for people in practical ways, not just with words alone.

## 9. What Bible verse is encouraging you in this season, and why does it matter to you?

A verse that's encouraging me in this season is Isaiah 41:10:

*"So do not fear, for I am with you;  
do not be dismayed, for I am your God.  
I will strengthen you and help you;  
I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."*

It reminds me that I'm not leading or walking through challenges alone. Even when I feel pressure or unsure, God promises to give me the strength and support I need. That reassurance brings me peace and confidence to keep going.



# LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM



## MORE THAN A JOB - A CALLING

Being a StreetLeader at an UrbanPromise Toronto camp site is more than just being employed. Our Leadership Development Program (LDP) is designed to develop our youth and young adults into well-rounded leaders. The LDP is a dynamic, fun and engaging avenue to get our youth excited about who God calls them to be outside of their workplace identity.

## 2024-2025 Program Highlights

The LDP program included:

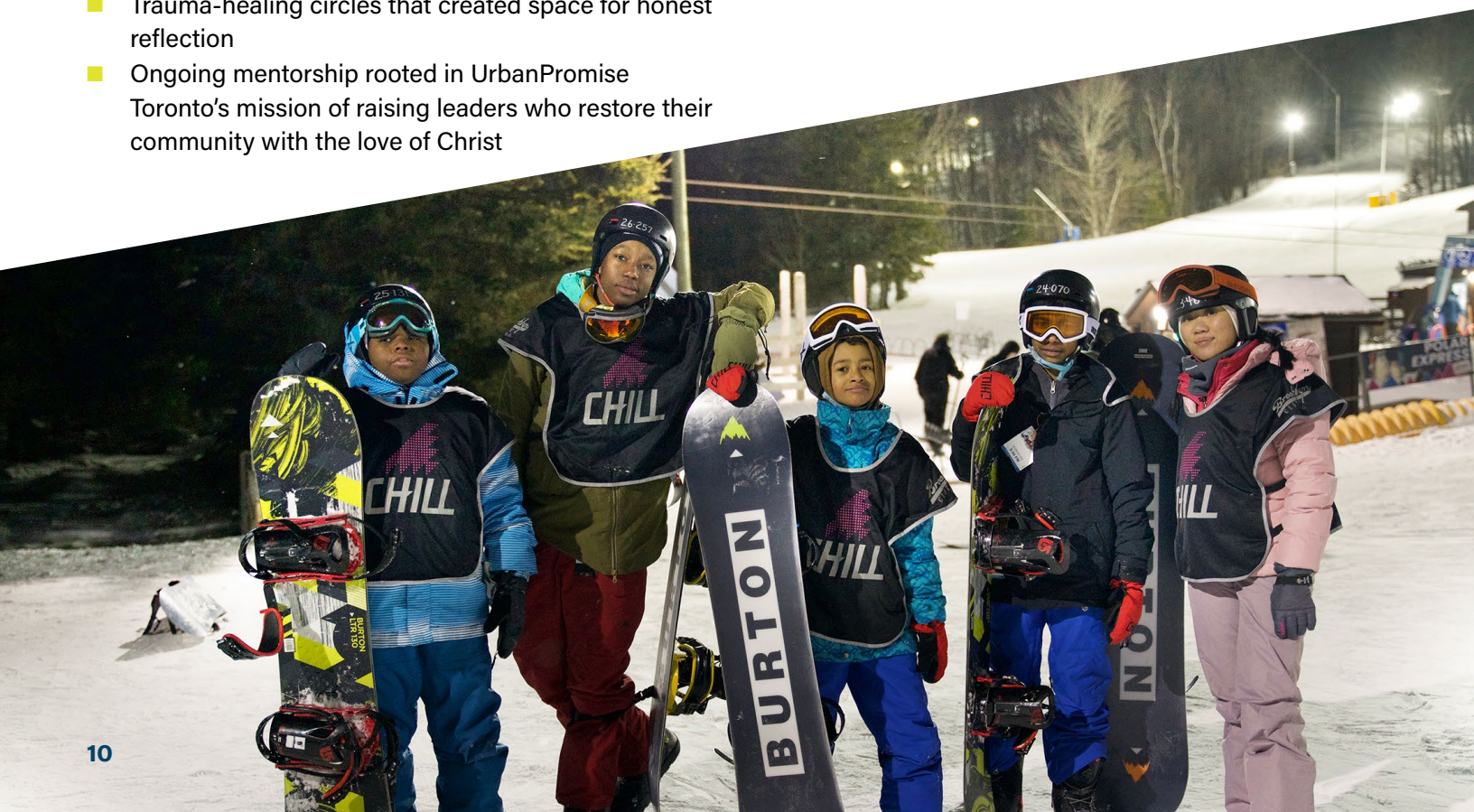
- Retreats to Muskoka Woods' Leadership Studio for team-building exercises and growth challenges
- Snowboarding trips to get the youth out of their comfort zone, develop resilience and explore a new sport
- Leadership workshops focused on education and career goals, self-management, spiritual formation and mental health
- Trauma-healing circles that created space for honest reflection
- Ongoing mentorship rooted in UrbanPromise Toronto's mission of raising leaders who restore their community with the love of Christ

## Growth We Witnessed

Through LDP, we have seen young leaders grow in confidence, learn to lead with integrity, and see themselves as role models in their neighbourhoods.

We have watched shy teens find their voice, hesitant leaders take initiative, and young adults step boldly into prayer and discipleship.

As they grow, our mission grows, because transformed leaders create transformed spaces for the children we serve.





## Celebrating One Year of UrbanTrekkers at UrbanPromise Toronto

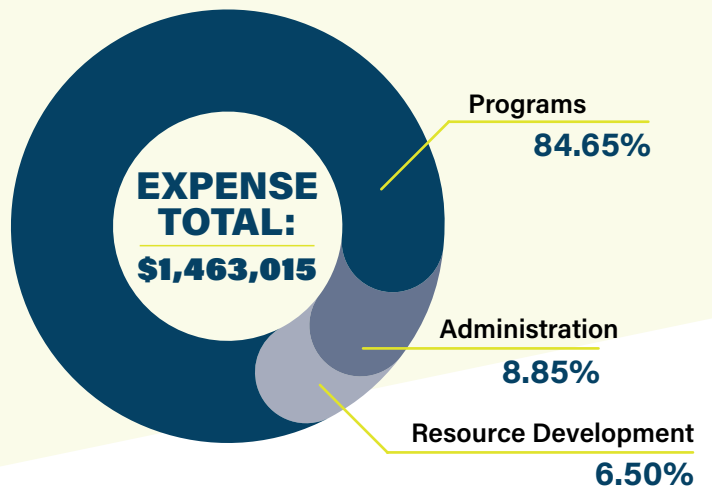
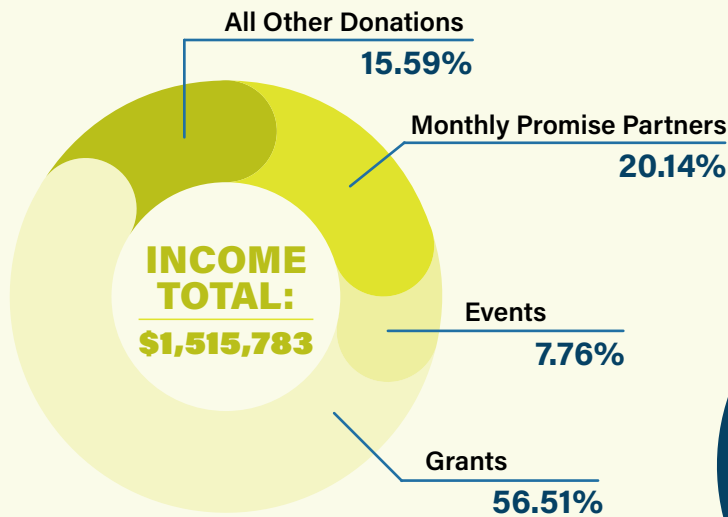
It has been one full year since we launched UrbanTrekkers at UrbanPromise Toronto, and the impact has been both visible and meaningful.

Over the past twelve months, young people have stepped beyond their usual routines and into new experiences that stretched their confidence and strengthened their sense of community. From visiting Niagara Falls, including the Underground Railroad journey, Journey Behind the Falls, and the Heritage Centre, to Chill and horseback riding at Team Ranch, along with a range of outdoor adventures, each activity was designed to expose them to opportunities they might not otherwise have had.



What started as an idea to expand horizons has grown into a consistent space for growth, connection, and discovery, helping our youth build resilience, deepen friendships, and see a bigger world for themselves.

# FINANCIAL STORY



Completed audited financial statements available on our website. UrbanPromise Toronto proudly accepts the seal of organizational integrity and accountability.

# GET INVOLVED

UrbanPromise Toronto is powered by a community of people who believe in the potential of our youth. Whether you give, serve, or show up in support, there are many ways to be part of the story.

## DONATE

Support our youth, staff, and programs at any level.

## ATTEND

Join us at events (Rise, Run for Promise) and celebrate our youth with us.

## CONNECT

Follow us on social media to stay connected and see the impact of your support.

## VOLUNTEER

Bring your skills and time to strengthen our programs

## VISIT

Tour our campus and see our programs in action.

SCAN  
HERE!



GET INVOLVED



# THANK YOU & VISION!

As we look ahead to 2026, our theme, **Building Community**, reflects our commitment to intentionally surround our children and youth with strong staffing presence, partnerships and opportunities. We are preparing to **explore a new community**, to expand our reach to Toronto Community Housing. **Launching a scholarship program** and enlisting our Alumni to be mentors to our young leaders, opening doors for continued education. Enhancing our ability to track progress for each participant through a new **program management software**, and report on our impact.

We also anticipate **increasing our program numbers** to support more parents. **Establishing clear rhythms for our StreetLeaders** to support their growth and development. Lastly, **engage with key community partners** to reinforce our support systems, so that our children and youth can overcome challenges, thrive, and discover their potential.

Thank you for your support and prayers. We couldn't do this work without your partnership as we seek to make a meaningful impact in the lives of children and youth in Toronto Community Housing.



REACH  
A CHILD.

RAISE  
A LEADER.

RESTORE  
COMMUNITY.



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