

SIGNS OF THE

Times.

2021 EDITION • yugta.ca

What does holistic transformation look like for the youth we serve?

I provide a safe and loving home for my children.

Since I know I am loved, I can share God's love with others.

I now have self-control, integrity, and respect.

I'm making education a priority for my future.

I'm influencing my peers for good.

I believe I can accomplish the dreams God has given me.

Jesus has given me purpose and a reason to stay alive.

I'm learning to love myself.

I am the bridge for restoring my family relationships.

This year's Signs of the Times explores the fourth major direction of "Making Space", our four-year strategic plan: We will intentionally **live out holistic transformation** as team members together with our youth, with the hope that more and more young people will experience God's transformative work in their lives.

Real Transformation: From the Inside Out



BY ANDREW WILLIAMS
YU Board Member

In the past year there have been moments I would like to redo. With so many new issues erupting into everyday life I found myself bumping into situations and conversations that I had no template for. *To 'mask' or not to 'mask'? How to deal with long hidden biases and discriminations?* Many good people with many passionate perspectives. How do you have respectful, truthful conversations and then actively move forward together? Our social contract – all those spoken and unspoken rules we all abide by to get along and be good neighbours – suddenly seems so 2019: stale, limited and out-of-date.

The first century prophet, John the Baptist, faced a similar situation

when he first came on the scene. For centuries the Jewish people had lived by the Laws of Moses, one of the most powerful and enduring social contracts in history. All those laws and rules had successfully preserved their community and their faith, but the Jewish people were not where they hoped to be as a nation, and for many, as individuals. The Law could not transform them into the great people and nation God had promised they would become.

Within that environment John introduced God's transformation plan.

[Jesus] will ignite the kingdom life within you, a fire within you, the Holy Spirit within you, changing you from the inside out.

— MATTHEW 3:11-12 (THE MESSAGE)

Real transformation is not externally imposed. It does not come from conforming to an external code of behavior. Real transformation starts from the inside of a person, manifests itself in love and moves out into everyday life and community. It's work only God can do, when we follow Jesus and let God's Spirit reconnect with our spirit.

Good programming can keep people safe, better housed, better fed and employed. It takes Spirit change, though, to truly transform. We help people and communities become the best versions of themselves by introducing them to Jesus, and letting His Spirit do its work from the inside out. 🌟



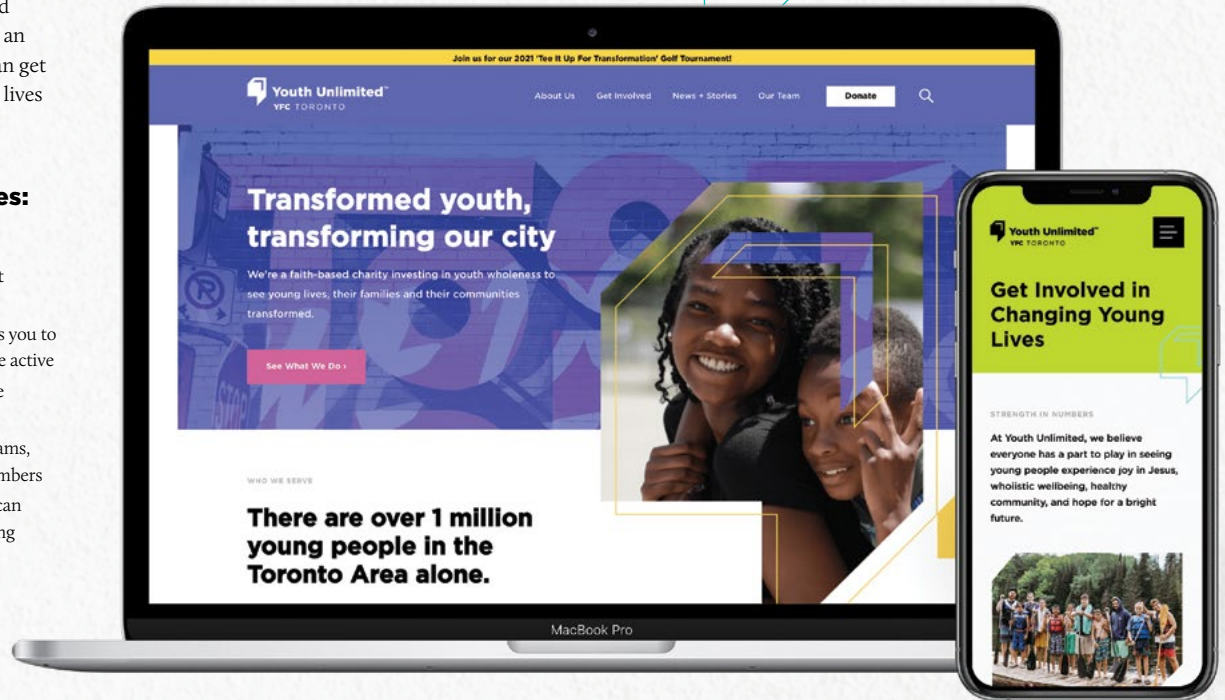
Website relaunch!

YUGTA.CA

We have re-launched yugta.ca with a brand new design and brand new content, all with an eye to show you how you can get involved in changing young lives throughout the GTA.

Our new site includes:

- Introducing our new national branding which was rolled out across Canada in 2020
- An interactive map that allows you to see where our 59 initiatives are active
- A new overview of who we are and what we do
- An overview of each of our teams, their initiatives, and team members
- A great search feature so you can find who or what you're looking for quickly



RESPONSIVE DESIGN • For Desktop & Mobile

INTRODUCING

The Canvas of Transformation

The Canvas of Transformation imagery speaks to YU's heart to see both individual lives and communities transformed by God. The canvas depicts the shape of an individual portrait, but is done so through the concept of a city map, made up of many small neighbourhoods. As we continue to invest in youth wholeness with our 5 YU "Primary Colours", we believe we will see this 'Canvas of Transformation' come to life in young people, their families, and their neighbourhoods.

For the full story on our Canvas of Transformation, check out page 5.



RENEWED
CHARACTER



HEALTHY
RELATIONSHIPS



ROOTED
IDENTITY



JOYFUL
SERVICE



CLEAR
PURPOSE

The Impact of Long-term Presence: A Mutual Blessing



SCOTT

Downsview Outreach Worker



HENRY

Young Adult



One of YU's guiding principles is this: Since we know that transformation takes time, trust and modelling, we seek to develop meaningful, long term relationships with youth. Scott Veals has been an outreach worker in the Rexdale and Downsview area since 1999. He has walked with countless youth over the years, living out wholistic transformation with them.



How did you meet Henry and how long have you been in a mentoring relationship?

Scott: I met Henry about 7 years ago through high school sports and he has since been a regular part of my programs. I have been informally mentoring him for over 3 years but about 1 year ago, Henry asked if I would formally become his mentor. I happily agreed!

How has your life changed as a result of this mentoring relationship?

S: Henry is a joy to be around. He is easy going, with a ready smile and infectious laugh. I am very proud of him, especially for the many obstacles he has overcome. He remains focused on positive goals and is a huge encouragement to me!

Henry: My life has changed tremendously because of Scott! He has helped me grow closer to God and deepened my understanding of who God is. In tough situations, I often find myself asking, "What would Jesus do?" This is a skill Scott has helped me develop to make good decisions to aid in my life, goals and relationships.

How have you seen God at work in Henry's life?

S: Henry has developed a strong relationship with Jesus and continues to allow Him to speak into his life. He increasingly submits to God when dealing with areas of struggle in his life, which I see him improving upon with each passing month.

When you look at the Canvas of Transformation, how has Scott helped you grow in any of these different areas?

H: In the past, I would get mad or defensive easily and often speak too quickly, hurting others with my

words. So I asked Scott to help me grow my Emotional Intelligence so that my relationships and interactions with others could improve. A big part of this was improving my communication skills; knowing how to set boundaries, delivering emotions with respect and letting go of holding grudges. I've learned that it's important for people to feel heard, so I let others share their piece uninterrupted before speaking.

S: I've seen so much growth in Henry, too! In a few months, Henry will graduate from university with a business degree and already has dreams of what he wants to do. While in school he was able to save a decent amount of money through a good work ethic exhibited in a wide variety of jobs over the last few years. This includes starting his own small business last Fall!

How has your relationship with Scott impacted your hope and vision for your future?

H: Through Scott's wisdom and life experiences, I feel as though I have been given blueprints on how to go through life and deal with struggles. He has provided resources that have helped guide and direct my decisions and develop skills to use the rest of my life.

A couple years ago, I felt very lost. I had no idea what I wanted to do with my life. But now I have dreams to become a policy maker or mediator to help resolve conflicts. I'm also interested in entering the trades, to develop a skill I can always fall back on. Scott has been a constant encouragement when I wanted to give up, always telling me to shoot for the stars and lean on God. 🗨️

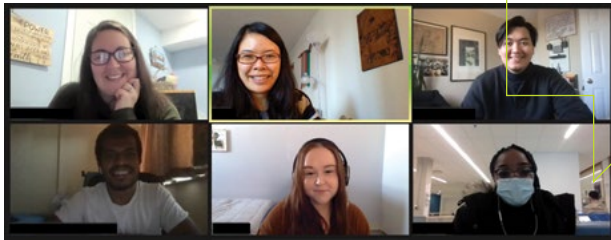
This interview has been condensed for this format. Read the full interview at interview.yugta.ca.



Casting the Vision of Transformation to the next Generation of YU Staff



BY MELISSA WILLIAMS
Internship Lead



I was a young volunteer youth worker sitting in front of a cluster of candles at an event contemplating my next steps in ministry...what could I, one person—a single candle if you will—do for the kingdom of God? I shut my eyes for a minute only to see the remnant light of those candles glow in the darkness, and I heard the Spirit of the Lord lead me to the work of raising up generations of young people to shine for Him, through an organization with a vision to reach the youth of Toronto with the transformative love and power of the gospel.

That organization was, of course, Youth Unlimited. And now, many

years later, I have the privilege of working alongside young leaders in our Internship Program as they explore their gifts and calling and consider the ways in which God is sending them out. By investing in our Interns we are not only seeing transformation in their lives, but in their communities, churches, and future ministries. This year's interns will become the next Youth Unlimited staff members, pastors and worship leaders, marketplace investors, community leaders, teachers, and mentors. Their reach will multiply and transform their communities and our city as they invest in one more youth, and then another, and then another. 🌱

The Importance of Comprehensive Care for those Living on the Margins



BY FIONA LEE
Rahab Associate Director

Rahab Ministry adopts a holistic approach when we provide comprehensive care for young women who have experienced brokenness in prostitution. This includes income support, job hunting, counseling, and one-on-one relational care. We believe this is the full expression of the gospel, that Jesus can save and restore the whole person – body, mind, spirit, and social relationships. Hence, through it, we can minister to every dimension of the young women's needs and seek their wholeness at every level.

Apple* was a victim of human trafficking. After she came to faith in Jesus, she left the sex trade and wanted to start a new life. However, she struggled to make a living due to a lack of job skills and many other life challenges, such as immigration issues, language barriers, and health problems. When she was lonely and frustrated, she wanted to return to her old lifestyle. In response to her needs, we paid for her groceries, connected her to the church, and sought the immigration lawyer and health professionals to help her. Our actions made her feel loved and encouraged her to grow in her faith. In her testimony, she said, "I wish to be like Rahab, the prostitute in the Bible who lives among the chosen people for the rest of my life. I want to be your witness and servant, and to testify that the Lord Jesus is the true God who can transform people's hearts because this true and living God has turned my life around." 🌱

*Name has been changed for confidentiality.

Having Eyes to See Transformation

THE YU MINISTRY NOTEBOOK

An important part of living out holistic transformation is taking time to pause and reflect on how we see God at work in us, among us, and through us. To that end, we have created a "YU Ministry Notebook" for our team, which includes a 6-week repeatable guide to shape the start and close of your week.

Here's a sample you can try for yourself!

As the week begins...

- Spend time in prayer holding with open hands all that's on my calendar to God (including meetings, relationships, work time, to-do's), entrusting my life to Him.
- In order to be fully present in the moments of this week, how do I need to prepare myself?
- What are some specific opportunities for me to be a transforming presence this week? Give those opportunities to Jesus, and ask for the grace of His Spirit to guide me.

As the week draws to a close...

- Take some time and ask God to show me this past week through His eyes... What moments did I particularly find myself being fully present this week?
- Did I notice the Spirit's guidance in any specific opportunities for me to be a transforming presence this week?

If you're interested in receiving our full 6-week guide, just email us at info@yugta.ca!



CANVAS

OF TRANSFORMATION

Canvas of Transformation Roll Out



BY CARL NASH
Ministry Director

Youth Unlimited's vision of transformed youth, transforming our city is all about helping young people experience wholistic transformation in every sphere of their lives. We are on an ongoing journey of discovering how to best describe what this transformation looks like!

In 2013 Youth Unlimited began a collaborative process of significant research and reflection which resulted in the unfolding of 5 high level 'transformation descriptors' which eventually became our 5 Gauges of Transformation: Renewed Character, Healthy Relationships, Rooted Identity, Joyful Service, and Clear Purpose.



BY MARK EVANS
Frontiers Team Lead

Over time, these descriptors have been strongly affirmed by both our ministry workers and partners. However, many of our staff experienced tension with the measurement imagery of the Gauges, feeling it was often impersonal, too 'clinical' and at times inadequate to capture the complexity of the journey of the young friends we serve.

While remaining committed to the 5 'descriptors', we sensed the need for a new metaphor to help guide how we understand and dialogue about transformation. A group of several staff explored a number of Biblical images around transformation and eventually felt led to the metaphor of God as artist. This metaphor has provided

us with a way of envisioning what transformation looks like that is both motivating and compelling: The Canvas of Transformation. Ephesians 2:10 reminds us that, "we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago." This passage roots us in the awareness that God is the artist and source of all transformation. Each of our lives is a canvas on which God desires to paint a transforming work of art. Of course, the canvas of our lives, and the lives of the youth whom we serve, are not empty. Many pictures have been painted onto our lives; some are joyous, others are painful. What we know is that God is able to redeem all things; to take what has been marred on our canvas and transform it into something new. This can be a messy process! We continue to hold the conviction that the palette God is working with includes YU's 5 'Primary Colours' (Rooted Identity, Renewed Character, Healthy

Relationships, Joyful Service, Clear Purpose). We can even imagine our staff and volunteers as the brush He works with to help transform the canvas of a young life!

As we consider this reframed vision of transformation we are captured by the potential it has to also help us understand how God's transformation is being unveiled within a neighbourhood, or even across our city. We have recently gathered together a small cluster of our staff (representing several different ministries) to become a 'Canvas Conversations Lab'. Our desire throughout this upcoming season is that we can dialogue together and discover some thoughtful and effective ways in which this new 'Canvas of Transformation' metaphor can help us better recognize, participate in, celebrate and share stories of God's transforming love and power at work amongst our staff, volunteers and youth. Stay tuned! 🎨



Leaving a Transformational Legacy

Clark and Donna Kostik have been friends and supporters of Youth Unlimited for over 45 years. Just recently they decided to include us in their will. We interviewed Clark to find out what prompted the two of them to make this generous gift.

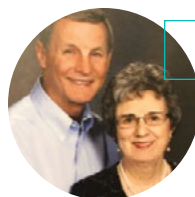
Clark, tell us about yourself: Where did you grow up? What was your main job/career? Family? Church?

I was born in Leross, a very small town in Saskatchewan, on the 29th of February 1940 in a little back room of the town's railroad station weighing a premature 2½ lbs. I like to kid that I don't have a birthday – at least most years! My family and I soon moved to Mount Dennis in Toronto. There I grew up and, by age 16, I

gladly left school and landed my first job at Weldrest Hosiery. Later, I joined SMS Machine and remained there until my retirement 15 years ago where I worked my way up to sales manager and partner. Most importantly, it was in 1955 at a Billy Graham Crusade in Maple Leaf Gardens that I became a follower of Christ and never looked back. I have been married to my wife, Donna, for 57 years and have two daughters, two sons-in-law and 4 grandchildren. I currently attend Rexdale Alliance Church.

How did you originally connect with Youth Unlimited?

My first connection to YU was through Gino Reda (currently host of TSN's That's Hockey) who was working in West Humber Collegiate where my daughter was attending. I just thought it was great to see young men and women like Gino wanting to reach out to youth. My girls loved to be at their events. Especially for the way staff took special interest in showing them that Jesus loved them just where they were at.



CLARK & DONNA

Friends & Supporters of YU

YU has always been committed to helping young people experience the fullness of life, that is, to see “wholistic transformation” individually, and in communities. How have you seen this played out?

I believe the leadership has adjusted well to the times as they move forward – still committed to wholistically reaching young people for Christ. Tim Huff with the Compassion Series, for example, is doing a good job here. Also, Light Patrol, in providing sleeping bags and nurses for essential health care, is doing a good job. It shows that YU is thinking outside of the box.

Considering this theme of wholistic transformation, how has partnering with Youth Unlimited changed or impacted you and Donna?

It's good to see and hear the stories of how youth are impacted by the ministry – how by hearing about Jesus, Jesus can

complete their person. We are also very encouraged seeing these new believers reaching out to others.

What led you and Donna to put Youth Unlimited in your will?

We are trusting it will help keep the work moving forward in these challenging times so that many more lost youth will find the Saviour.

What impact do you hope your gift will have on future generations of youth in the GTA?

We are praying and hoping that new leadership will be developed by hearing about the work of Youth Unlimited and seeing their dedicated men and women caring and reaching out. Finally, we hope that the Father, with Youth Unlimited, will have a strong voice and impact on our young people to find Jesus as Saviour and Lord. 📌

To learn how you can also give a legacy gift please contact us today at: legacy.yugta.ca or Mel at 416-383-1229 ext. 7245

Staff Updates

We'd like to welcome to the team:

- **CAROLINE CO CHIEN**
Rahab Chinese Ministry Worker
- **TOPE FAMUTIMI**
Jane Finch Associate Director
- **MICHAEL MORRISON**
DOXA Outreach Worker
- **CYNTHIA RIVERA**
DOXA Journeys Assistant Coordinator
- **BRAYDEN SALMON**
DOXA Parkway Youth Pastor and DOXA Outreach Worker
- **MICHELLE LAU**
Director of People Development

New interns:

- **ABI VANDERHEYDEN**
The Shop Intern
- **ANDREW MURRELL**
Frontiers Intern
- **KIRUSHANTHAN KRISHNAPILLAI**
Frontiers Intern
- **NAOMI WALTON**
South Central Etobicoke Intern
- **CHLOE SAVICH**
Rahab Intern
- **EMMA RODNEY**
DOXA Intern

Staff on the move:

- **BONNIE WONG** is now Lead Teacher for LAUNCH.
- **LEE SOMMERFELDT** is starting up a Young Parents outreach in Durham.
- **PAULA CASTRUCCI** is piloting a new role as a Ministry Support Worker.

Today's Teens

This year's Today's Teens Conference was a full day virtual event for youth workers and volunteers. We had just over 1300 participants join us from across the country to learn and grow from an amazing lineup of vibrant speakers. Two of our Toronto YU Staff led informative breakout sessions, thank you **PAUL BARTLEY** and **MARIANNE DEEKS!**

YU Annual Charity Golf Tournament

Interested in joining us for our annual charity golf tournament on May 11? Learn more at golf.yugta.ca.

ABOUT US

Youth Unlimited

95 Jonesville Crescent, 2nd Floor
Toronto, ON M4A 1H2
T. 416.383.1477

Editorial Team

Scott Moore
Dani Hoover
Kathy Webb

Design Team

Renga

CHECK US OUT ONLINE!
yugta.ca

 **Youth Unlimited™**
YFC TORONTO

