

INNER CITY OUTREACH

*working on the inside,
changing the outside.*

Summer
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Jane-Finch

REVOLUTION COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

REVOLUTION AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS

MISSION:

Inner City Outreach (ICO) exists to empower at-risk inner city residents to have more meaningful and fulfilling lives. ICO's main objectives include providing relief from poverty; the advancement of education; the advancement of lifestyle; and the advancement of inner city communities. ICO currently offers programming for children, youth and adults primarily in the Jane and Finch community.

№: 1

HOPE FOR HAITI

update:

A SPECIAL REPORT FROM
CHRISTIAN CENTRE CHURCH



AFTER LAST YEAR'S REMARKABLE ONE-WEEK trip to Haiti, there was a strong sense that Christian Centre Church (CCC) would send another team the following year. In early February 2011, CCC Assistant Pastor and ICO Executive Director Olu Jegede selected a group of eight young adults who would come and serve for three weeks, and an additional five members who would be joining during the last week (accompanied by Senior Pastor Dino Andreadis). The main focus of the trip was to

continued on page 2

№: 2

YOUTH WHO WENT BEYOND & THE LEADERS WHO TOOK THEM THERE



"IF ONLY THEY HAD A CHANCE," is a frequent thought that many community leaders harbour when envisioning what their youth could do if only they had the proper resources and loving support. This summer, Inner City Outreach (ICO) and Christian Centre Church (CCC) directed a five-week youth summer camp with the theme, "Go Beyond." CCC Youth Pastor and ICO Operations Manager Ian Yearwood conjured this idea with the rest of his core leaders as a way for young people to explore

continued on page 3

№: 3

LEARNING FROM PRINCIPAL CRONE



WHEN THE SCHOOL BELL RINGS AT 3:10PM, over three hundred students burst forth from their classrooms and start scrambling across the packed hallways—joking, laughing, and oftentimes shouting in the process. Amidst this vibrant, energetic scene stands a man in relaxed trousers and an open-collared shirt listening and looking around the crowd. Walkie-talkie in hand, he is ready to give a quick but personal greeting or command to any youngster who passes by—most of whom he knows by

continued on page 3

HOPE FOR HAITI

Returning to Carrefour's Grace Village after one year

continued from cover

re-build a rooftop for the *House of Help for the Children*, as well as hold an outdoor crusade during the last week of the trip. Funds were raised through personal and corporate donations, barbecue and bake sales, with the majority of fund generated through a giant community garage sale held at the front of the church parking lot.

The first team departed Toronto morning on June 10 and arrived safely to Haiti after an almost-missed connection in Miami. Passing from the aerial view of structured, suburban Florida to the scattered, slum dwellings of Port-au-Prince served as a wake-up call to passengers on the flight; a gentle reminder of where they were from and where they were heading. The flood wave of heat and humidity greeted the team as they stepped off the plane. After clearing customs, the team met up with Chris, one of Grace Village's translators and the team's main contact from last year. Traveling through the dusty streets of the capital city, one can experience the levels of devastation that still persists in the country. Piles of garbage and rubble, open sewers with scavenging dogs, major pot holes and makeshift tents constructed of corrugated tin and tarp still dominate the landscape. Despite the abject poverty, there is also a strong sense of vibrancy and life that can be witnessed through the hand-painted store signs, students in uniform and street vendors selling ice-cold soft drinks to drivers in brightly-coloured tap-taps (privately-owned taxis).

Grace Village is a gated compound in the Carrefour district of Port-au-Prince founded by Dr. Joel and his wife Reverend Doris Jeune. Before the 2010 earthquake, the village consisted of a girls' home, office, medical clinic, hospital and guest house for foreign missionaries. Overnight, their 20 acres of previously uninhabited land was opened to 25 000 displaced Haitians. After 18 months, this "Tent City" was reduced to 17 000 as people re-settled into homes.

Starting Monday, the team would wake up at 6am and clear rocks and debris from a nearby field. Working side by side with some of the local men, the group would use basic tools such as picks, shovels and wheelbarrels to carry the rubble around the hospital to the washing area. Children would often-times curiously peer through the barbed wire fence and watch while the team sweat and laboured. During their water breaks,

team mates would approach the kids and try to learn basic Creole. Mornings were also spent re-painting the medical clinic, building a new fence around the village as well as constructing the school rooftop. At around lunchtime, the Lord's Kitchen would open and the hundreds of children in Tent City would line up to receive food for themselves and their families. Some of the females on the team helped to prepare the rice, vegetables and spices while others helped to distribute the food. The late afternoons were occasionally spent visiting the girls' home, boys' home and widows' home. On most days, the team would prepare a Bible lesson and games for the children in Tent City. This became one of the main highlights of the trip. Shorniah (Kay) Williams and Behnam Eftakari played soccer and basketball with the boys who ran with their bare feet on the rocky ground. Dora Owusu and Toyosi Monilari led the skipping rope and hand-clapping competitions with the girls. Goya Chujor, Leyla Kafadar and Audrey Chia would assist the younger children who would colour pictures with crayons on paper near the abandoned guest house.

Throughout the duration of the trip, the team made several home/tent visits, prayed for families, witnessed physical healings and radical acts of kindness. Josette, a lady deaf and mute from birth, increased in hearing and speech over the course of three visits. Another lady, Elvina, whom last year's team had previously known, was about to be evicted from her tent. Although she was making some wages, she did not have enough money to put one-year's rent on a home (which is the typical Haitian standard). The team was able to move her family into a home the day she had to leave. (Her eldest daughter Guirlene also served as our interpreter for the remainder of our stay.) Mideline, a girl that team member Goya had befriended last year, needed money to pay for her school tuition fee. Once again, the group was able to pool together money to support her education. In return, members of the team were graciously blessed by families within Tent City. Some received pineapples, hugs and paper drawings as a token of their appreciation.

The trip culminated with a four-day outdoor crusade outside the Grace Village church. During the daytime, the team would be sent to invite and evangelize anyone and everyone from the area. The night was filled with sing-



TOP The new school rooftop built for the *House of Help for Children*.

MIDDLE (2) Playing with the children within Grace Village Tent City.

BOTTOM The crowd dancing at the outdoor crusade.

ing and dancing that attracted folks from the local vicinity. Pastor Dino and Olu preached a message with Pastor Faubert translating in Creole. At the end of each night, people would be able to come to the front of the stage for prayer.

Undoubtedly, the greatest memories were from the relationships established with individuals from Grace Village that worked most closely with the team: Claudy, "Big Baby" and Belizar the security guards; Alex, Ricardo, Chris, Jude and Frankie the translators. The trip served to solidify plans and visions for a number of the young adults who majored in political science, international development, non-profit business—or simply were interested in social justice. Upon returning home, many of the team members were able to make further commitments to build solidarity with the poor, whether it be locally or abroad. ■

YOUTH WHO WENT BEYOND

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their possibilities. “It’s about stepping past your comfort zone and breaking boundaries and stereotypes that are placed on you,” Yearwood teaches the mentors. Students participated in life teachings, sports, drama, photography and special outings where they were encouraged to push their limits. The summer camp culminated in a Talent Show that the students held for the 35 Shoreham seniors residence—another avenue to build a voice and rapport within the community.

Of course, a great program is measured by the strength of its leaders, not just the curriculum. Yearwood’s core team consisted of a group of youth from the neighbourhood that he has mentored and taught for years. In return, he has seen them grow into key players that journey alongside him as they reach out to young adolescents who are dealing with the same core issues that they struggled with:



peer pressure, self-confidence and discipline, media influence, conflict resolution skills, decision-making and lifestyle choices. Leaders like Kofi Adom and Myeashar Ellis are able to relate, rebuke and correct students. The program itself is not what inspires and transforms the students; it is the character and personality of leaders that cultivates change. ■



LEFT Asia and Tawah listen attentively during their photography session.

RIGHT Two out of the six award-winning photos taken by Godfred (top) and Fhyvian (bottom).

LEARNING FROM PRINCIPAL CRONE

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name. Although the age gap between himself and the students may span a handful of decades, the kids know that he can still compete with their enthusiasm—in both speech and physical agility.

After devoting 23 years as a principal (and an additional 13 years as a teacher) in four different schools, Craig Crone has definitely earned his stripes as an exceptional educational leader. His staff appreciate and respect him, and he exudes a perfect combination of approachability and toughness when it comes to the students under his care. This precarious balance is not easy; it comes through years of experience and difficult scenarios with parents, faculty and kids. Despite all of the challenges and demands of his job, he still loves what he does. He considers it an honour, a joy, and a never-ending learning process.

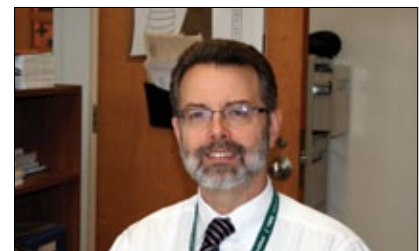
He first started his career with the Toronto District School Board in 1975 as a teacher. In 1988, he became a principal for five years at Second Street Junior Middle School in the New Toronto area. He then continued his career at Smithville Middle School in North Etobicoke. After six years, he moved on to Gracedale Public School where he stayed for the next decade. Each school brought a unique set of issues, given the different cultural ethnicities from the surrounding neighbourhood.

He came to Oakdale Park Middle School in September 2009, although it was not originally

his first choice. In fact, he was initially reluctant. Crone describes that first year as a period of much learning whereby the encounters and conversations with parents and students were held with utmost importance. However, after spending a year at Oakdale, he has felt a close attachment to the school and community. He has since realized that he has been able to confront situations that would have been addressed in a less-challenging area. And although the school is still very demanding, it is equally rewarding because he has enjoyed the most positive experiences in his career. He also notes that people can tell when they are being approached with genuinity. “Sincerity in your effort”, he believes, “has reciprocal benefits for both the [giver and receiver].”

Another reason for success is his strong conviction about demonstrating servant leadership. By nature, Crone is definitely not a passive observer; he is a self-proclaimed active person—which could actually make him a rather un-typical candidate for a school principal. “Educators are bureaucratic. We make great plans that don’t lead anywhere.” Whether the issue concerns extra garbage on the playing field or traffic jams in the school drop-off zone, Crone has always been a man of action. “Too much analysis is paralysis...By your example, compel and motivate people to do better things.” This mentality encourages people around him to do something about the situation rather than complaining.

As his year of retirement approaches, Crone comments, “you reach a stage in life where you think about the legacy you’re leaving behind.” He is undoubtedly an influential figure that has impacted the lives of those around him. It is evident in the way his vice-principal, office staff, teachers and students relate and joke with him. “Live each day, enjoy each day, make an impact. When you have a difficult day, you start over the next day.” ■



TOP Main entrance located on Grandravine Drive near Jane Street.

BOTTOM This year, Principal Crone enters his third year at Oakdale Park Middle School.



INNER CITY
OUTREACH

HISTORY: Inner City Outreach (ICO) was birthed from Christian Centre Church (CCC) as a community-based organization to reach peoples of all faiths and transform inner-city communities, beginning with Jane-Finch, Toronto. It has operated several community-based programs over the years including after-school programs, youth rallies, and outdoor carnivals to name a few. To increase its impact, ICO was created to meet the needs of its community through practical programming.

REFLECTION FROM MARTHA, A UNIVERSITY SUMMER INTERN



LEFT TO RIGHT Fran Brand, Anthony Fernandez and Martha Maris sporting their glasses after going to the movies (*Smurfs in 3D*).

During my time in Jane and Finch, I met people who had moved from Haiti, Vietnam, Jamaica, Sierra Leone, the Bahamas, Argentina, India, Ghana, among other countries. It was in this diverse community that I lived and learned for five weeks.

The physical environment of Jane and Finch is unique with its “corridor” of apartment buildings that were constructed in the seventies. These buildings along with many townhouse complexes are either government-funded or privately owned. In addition, there are many single-family homes. The numerous towering apartment buildings make for a high population in a small area. I lived in a townhouse right off Jane Street with five

other girls. Fran, who was born in Germany and moved with her family to Canada at ten, was the other intern. We shared a room and grew to be friends. Audrey, who was born in Singapore and is from British Columbia, served as our leader. She scheduled and led us in the various ministries and activities. Amy joined us in some of the activities and she cooked our meals which were always delicious. All three of them recently graduated from York University which was close by. Goya from Nigeria and Judy from Guyana also lived in the house.

On Tuesdays and Wednesdays we tutored a couple girls who are entering grade seven. I got to teach them French which was exciting. On Wednesday mornings we did an exercise class with some senior ladies at the senior centre beside the church. We helped with a youth camp at church on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons, doing sports and teaching a course on photography. Friday nights we went downtown and talked to people at a homeless shelter. We also took children swimming, visited senior citizens, and took a couple neighbour girls to a horse farm for a weekend.

The internship was a very formative and growing experience for me. It was a nice mix of working in the community and discipleship. There was a lot of room for personal Bible study and prayer. God used the time that I had set aside to speak to me and teach me.

PROGRAMS



HOMEWORK PROGRAM—This program provides academic support for students in grades 4-8 to get their homework done. Special emphasis is placed on improving Math and Literacy Skills. We currently operate from Brookview Middle School (Tuesday to Thursday), Oakdale Park Middle School (Tuesday and Thursday) and the Africentric Alternative School (Monday and Wednesday).



AFTER-SCHOOL DROP-IN—Held once per week, this program offers students in grades 6-8 with a safe place to congregate after school. Students are provided with the opportunity to socialize, participate in recreational activities, be mentored by caring adults and receive valuable life skills training.



MENTORING—This program involves an empathetic adults from the community meeting on a one-on-one basis with a youth. Mentors act as a friend and role model to these youth.

BASKETBALL LEAGUE—Opportunity for youth to learn and play the sport of basketball while being mentored. We currently operate from Brookview Middle School on Thursday evenings.

GET INVOLVED!



Inner City Outreach was born out of the desire to fuel Toronto's Jane and Finch youth with a positive identity for their neighbourhood.

WANT TO HELP OUT?

We are always looking for committed academic mentors and athletic volunteers. If you're a resident in the area or a York University student who would like to get involved, don't hesitate to contact us!

WANT TO DONATE?

Whether big or small, we gratefully steward any amount that has been given to us. We also appreciate creative gifts such as sports equipment, snacks and school supplies.

SPONSORS:

Women's Christian Temperance Union, Families for Christ Ministries of Canada, Bank of Montreal, private donors

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