

York University Faculty Association, Community Projects (YUFA-CP)
Annual Report, 2024-2025

YUFA-CP is a standing committee of the YUFA Executive. The YUFA-CP mandate is:

To facilitate YUFA's work with community groups to promote engaged citizenship through access and equity programs, and to undertake community-based research.

The focus of YUFA-CP work is organized into two broad categories:

1. Increases educational access and outcomes, connected to York University (e.g., greater inclusion, supporting traditionally marginalized York students)
2. Supports the conditions of community self-advocacy and empowerment

YUFA-CP is guided by a commitment to social unionism and the shared development of knowledge. The committee meets monthly through the fall and winter terms, and continues in an ad hoc manner through the summer term. Membership is drawn from across YUFA, and two Co-Chairs are elected annually for two-year terms. Over the past few years, YUFA-CP has adopted the practice of rotating Co-Chair positions each year, so a fresh Co-Chair works alongside an experienced Co-Chair. The 2024-2025 Co-Chairs were Luin Goldring and Joel Ong. Both chairs ended their terms at the end of this academic year, and sava saheli singh and Jennifer Foster are the new incoming co-chairs. Jennifer Foster will serve a 1-year term and the rotating overlap will be maintained. This year, like the last, YUFA-CP was supported by a \$100,000 annual allocation with a \$30,000 increase approved in Fall 2024 from YUFA Trust.

YUFA-CP fulfills its mandate in many ways. Activities undertaken by the committee evolve with the needs and interests of the Jane-Finch community, in response to issues and priorities that are identified by community members.

YUFA-CP has both integrative and facilitator functions, which include: (i) to support and help coordinate existing faculty-community projects, and (ii) to contribute to the design and implementation of new and evolving projects. An important committee function is the review and allocation of YUFA funds to support applications for funding. However, much of the work is also unassociated with budget lines drawn from the YUFA Trust allocation. YUFA-CP members contribute time, experience, and expertise in support of community groups across Jane Finch and beyond.

In making decisions on how to best support the community, YUFA-CP has adopted a set of guiding principles (found on [our website](#)). In addition, we have continued our

recent policy changes to increase openness, transparency, and accountability. A key aspect of these changes is our conflict-of-interest policy. Anyone on the committee who has a conflict is expected to declare this conflict and recuse themselves from any voting. This policy was successfully enacted several times during the 2023-2025 years.

Non-budget activities by YUFA-CP, 2024–2025

Community Conversation

On January 13th, 2025, we hosted a community conversation inviting all of our partners from the past several years, along with others, to join us in a discussion of YUFA-CP and its work. This represented a shift from holding the CC at the end of our academic calendar year to the middle of the cycle in order to have feedback that could inform the second half of the year's activities.

A total of 6 YUFA CP members and 14 community members attended. The latter were largely from organizations that received YUFA CP support in the fall of 2024 (some were new, some were organizations with prior CP relations). Some new contacts were added to our mailing list based on our registration form for this event. During this Community Conversation, we received positive feedback on the work of YUFA-CP and our new funding process. We also received guidance on the steps we have been taking to ensure that our processes are fair to new and returning applicants. Furthermore, community members requested CP support in events where members can meet each other to enable better collaboration across neighbourhoods and types of organizations.

Several issues stood out from the conversation:

- Community organizations and unaffiliated community members are concerned about developments in the Jane and Finch area that are taking place without meaningful community consultation. They noted the erosion of community hubs offering services, programming, and space; and the privatization of spaces where various groups, formal and less formal, could meet.
 - Some CP members discussed the possibility of making space available at York, but there are issues to consider around the Temporary Use of University Space (TUUS) policies.
- Housing is increasingly unaffordable. While this holds for much of the city, it has specific implications for the Jane & Finch area.
- Young people will be particularly impacted by both of these trends.
- In response to queries about CP supporting community groups rooted in Jane & Finch as well as others that lie outside the immediate area, CC participants agreed on the value of **balancing** support for both kinds of organizations, particularly when there are opportunities for networking across and between

groups in Jane & Finch and organizations working with communities that have shared interests working beyond Jane & Finch.

Website

In order to increase transparency, access, engagement, and visibility with community partners, we have been continuing to refine our new website (bit.ly/yufacp). This site is decidedly community-facing, in contrast to the page which is a part of the YUFA site and which is oriented toward communicating with other YUFA members (e.g., a place for these detailed annual reports). Our site provides information regarding YUFA-CP in a friendly, easy-to-access manner and includes our mission, the process to apply for funding, news and events, community partners, and means of contacting us directly. It also includes several different ways that partners can now apply: via PDF, form-fillable PDF, or a web form. The site includes a directory of York faculty who are willing to collaborate with Jane-Finch organizers, initiated in response to a suggestion from a previous Community Conversation. Invitations to be listed on the directory were distributed widely among the York community. We plan to continue this process. Another addition to the website that directly resulted from recommendations made during the 2023-24 Community Conversation is explicit wording that encourages creative and ambitious proposals and a tolerance for projects that have the potential not to succeed. Lastly, also in response to a Community Conversation recommendation, we now supply an example of a completed application form to assist those crafting a new proposal.

Mailing List

In addition to the website, we continued to grow our mailing list of past and potential community partners this year. We have used this mailing list to communicate directly with members of the community regarding policy changes, initiatives, and to provide reminders of our deadlines and updates on events. We currently have 71 individuals/groups on the list.

Advocacy

- Many of the challenges faced by international students have now gained widespread attention in the media. On Nov. 7, 2024, YUFA-CP co-sponsored a public forum with members from NSN (Naujawan Support Network), Migrant Canada, and the Graduate Student Association to share information and support advocacy around some of these issues. The event was very well attended and informative. Some members of YUFA CP and other YUFA members had visited the encampment that NSN set up in Brampton. Network members attended the CC.

- YUFA-CP advocated for ongoing support for CP in order to continue to support community unionism at the YUFA AGM and at YUFA Trust. CP members recognize that YUFA has other priorities in this time of budget cuts, and invite YUFA members to join the Community Projects committee in order to be part of the process.
- In addition, members of YUFA-CP participated in the annual Walk with Excellence, and plan to continue to discuss ways in which additional support from the university could be directed toward this necessary and impactful initiative.

Volunteer service in the Jane Finch Community

Members of YUFA-CP commit to advancing the mandate, programs and projects of a variety of community organizations across Jane Finch. Over the last few years this has included elected Board positions at organizations such as Black Creek Community Health Centre, Success Beyond Limits, and Promoting Education and Community Health (PEACH). It also includes responsibilities with organizations such as the Education Action Group and other community collaboratives.

Funding Updates

This year we received 32 separate requests for funding for a total amount of \$262,362. This was similar to the 34 requests received last year, as 3 organizations applied in the winter after not being funded in the fall. The amount requested far exceeds our available budget for ongoing programs and seed projects, which this year was about \$103,960 after course-releases. This represented a shortfall of \$158,402.00.

Membership

Increasing our membership has been a priority, both in terms of absolute numbers and breadth of representation. Breadth of representation has been achieved via various methods, including individual recruiting by current members, and several calls for new members placed in the YUFA-M listserv, which reaches all members. We currently have representation from across much of the university. However, a number of members were on leave during the 2024-25 year. Recruitment will continue.

Projects funded by YUFA-CP, 2024-25

Note: Proposal evaluation is led by co-chairs, with active participation by members over the course of 1-2 meetings for each cycle. This includes a review of proposed budgets. Co-chairs may also consult with colleagues at the YorkU TD-Community Engagement Centre. Their valuable input is appreciated.

Fall funding period

Indigenous Students at York

\$6,500

The Indigenous Students' Association at York (ISAY; previously known as ASAY), is a student community service group which functions under the York Federation of Students. Its mandate is to advocate for Indigenous students and to provide accessible community and cultural programming. Past funding has supported the annual Drum Round Dance, as part of Indigenous History month. This year, YUFA-CP funds supported a fashion show featuring Indigenous designers, models, hair makeup, and fashion board members as well as an external elder and speaker. Funding was awarded at 100% of the requested amount after committee assessment of the budget.

PEACH

\$10,350

PEACH has received funding from CP in the past. This application was for a new project, the Firgrove Connections Community Project. The project will support research and create a space to preserve the legacy of the Firgrove Grassways community. The space is currently vacant. They will set up an exhibit, collect photos, etc. The budget supports a survey, graphic design and marketing, lighting, photo enlargement, framing etc., and food for the launch as well as a plaque and signage. Funding was awarded at 100% of the requested amount.



Unity BBQ

\$5,000

YUFA-CP has contributed for several years to the Unity BBQ, along with several other funders. The annual event brings together many Jane & Finch community organizations with police in an effort to promote healing, reduce gun violence and support police engagement with the community. The 14th annual unity BBQ was designed to bring together residents from 10 J&F community organisations including groups focusing on housing, JF Ministry, PEACH, unions (TTC local, LIUNA), and various other NGOs. The event includes speakers, performers, etc. and youth employment for the event. In the past, funding has contributed to food and refreshments, honorariums, stage, performers, sound system and DJ, promotional materials, face painting, photographer, video, motivational speakers, bouncy castle, snow cone, animator/dancer, etc. Other organizations also provide sponsorship, funds, and in kind support (volunteers). YUFA-CP continued the funding at the same level, which is the amount they requested.

Naujawan Support Network (NSN)

\$12,000

NSN organizes projects designed to "combat the exploitation of international students and immigrant workers". Since they received CP funding in 2023-24, they expanded educational efforts and support for public actions such as the (then) current sit-in protest (encampment) in Brampton. Funding was requested for meetings/protest campaigning, sit-ins, rallies and public engagement campaigning. NSN maintained contact with CP co-chairs, invited CP members to the encampment and organizing meetings, and attended the Community Conversation. They were funded at 80% of the amount requested.

Finch-Keele Community Association

\$4,139.50

This group is composed of York Student and community advocates interested in hyperlocal grassroots organizing to fight for better living conditions. They focus on housing affordability, community safety etc. The immediate focus of this application is for a cricket field for residents and to improve road safety on Four Winds drive. Organizing will include use of a community newsletter (print + online), a community townhall and meeting with councillor Perruzza. All 21 people affiliated with the organization are volunteers who live in the area and are not seeking funding for themselves. They have collaborated with other community organizations in the past (JFAAP) and have great promise. Funding was awarded at 90% of the requested amount after committee assessment of the itemized budget.

Caribbean Canadian Artistic Star Inc.

\$5,000

This group has been active for 11 years, but was a new applicant to CP. They promote and support community development in the Caribbean community in Jane & Finch through Masquerade, making masks and dance performances. Their focus is on youth engagement. Funds would support materials and honoraria for workshops. They were funded at 100% of their request.

KBA (Khalid Basketball Association)

\$3,750.00

This is an example of a new organization applying and receiving support. The goals of this basket-ball league focus on bringing youth from marginalized communities together through mentorship, allowing youth to develop and strengthen skills. Funding would support site rentals, workshops, activities, and sessions on overall wellness. Also addiction, substance abuse, gang violence, etc. The two leads have 5 years experience. The organization received less than the amount requested as CP members saw this as an opportunity to provide seed funding to an organization that is/was not known to members. After reviewing their budget, they received 75% of the amount requested.

Real Al-Aqsa Soccer Academy

\$2,500

CP funded a second sports-related application aimed at youth skills development and training. This was also the first time they applied. The budget is for space (field, gym), food and drink for training sessions, and food for a final event for 100 attendees. There is a volunteer coach with ties to the TFC. Funding was awarded at 50% of the requested amount after committee assessment of the itemized budget.

Winter Funding Period

Wadoka Parents Community Network (WPCN)

\$4,249.25

This application is a proposed reorganization of prior successfully run multi-generational martial arts program into 3 main streamlined units to respond to changing needs in the Jane-Finch community under the WPCN. The budget is for a symposium to build/rebuild connections with organizations in the community. The applicant is a well respected leader in the community and is aiming to bring together stakeholders from 4 large community groups - BCCHC, JF Center, Yorktown Family and PEACH. Funding was awarded at 80% of the requested amount after committee assessment of the itemized budget.

Canadian Black Nurses Alliance

\$2,020

A young organization that held their inaugural workshop in Summer 24 with 50 students including 20 nursing students from York. They requested funding for capacity expansion to include outreach to schools in Jane-Finch through workshops to empower/inspire Black/Black identifying and racialized High School students, at the same time building leadership skills among current nursing students who will lead them. They have a strong partnership with York TD CEC and were funded in full.

Toronto Area Solidarity Summer Alliance (TASSA)

\$4,846.00

The TASSA is a youth-led organization that prioritizes South Asian and Indo-Caribbean youth and allies, building community through summer education and events that foster collective leadership, and learn practical skills for community organization and to build solidarities with each other for collective action. The budget would cover facilitator honorarium and subsistence for participants to their Summer workshop series in 2025 and consumable supplies. The organization has previously been funded in 2023 and 2024.

Policing-Free Schools

\$4,191.09

Policing-Free Schools (Canada) is a community-based organization that addresses the issue of policing in schooling and educational spaces by providing political education, capacity building and pushing for policy and legislative changes with community organizers, educators, school boards and post-secondary institutions. This is a first-time application and the budget will go towards supplies for a

community-based Teach-In in Jane-Finch. The organization also has collaborations with other local groups: Concrete Warriors 4 and JFAAP (Jane Finch Action Against Poverty).

Green Dupatta Charitable organization

\$2,800

Green Dupatta is an emerging grassroots organization that provides free learning packages (e.g., books, puzzles, activities, etc.) to students in need within the GTA. They follow a circular economy model where educators in the GTA provide them with slightly used resources that they then package by grade level and hand-deliver to families in need. This application aims to expand their impact in the Jane-Finch community through ongoing connections with community groups e.g. North York Women's Shelter, Black Creek Health Centre, Jane and Finch Centre, PEACH (Promoting Education and Community Health), and Native Child and Family Services of Toronto, in order to help connect them to families and youth in need. The budget covers honoraria for volunteers working on packaging, social media, digital forms, tracking and organizing delivery routes.

Concrete Warriors 4

\$2,400

Concrete Warriors 4 is grassroots and community-based in the north west side of Toronto and specifically in the Jane-Finch neighbourhood. Their mission is to improve the health, learning and life trajectory of young people through arts-based education and play-centered learning such as through Hip Hop and its elements of Rap, Breaking, Graffiti, DJing and Knowledge. The funds requested will cover honorariums and refreshments for a series of instructional workshops with youth in the community around breaking dance instruction, Capoeira instruction; the funds will also cover honoraria for volunteers to support the creation of social media graphics and outreach/facilitation.

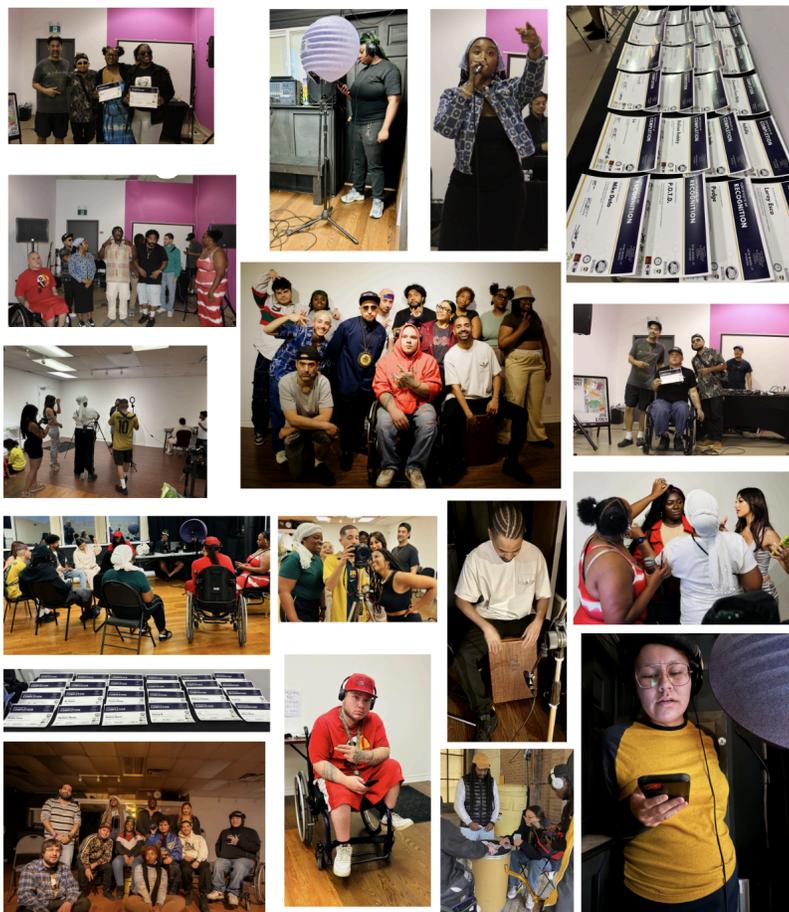
New Tradition Music

\$8,550

New Tradition Music is a collective of multidisciplinary artists who operate an annual 16-week hands-on mobile recording studio project – Wheel it Studios, engaging youth artists in two Jane-Finch community neighbourhoods from January to May. It is

currently the only active recording studio program in the community, and the only mobile studio in the area that enhances access to professional composition instruction and instrumentation while reducing the precariousness that many have of traveling from one neighbourhood to another due to gang related tensions that have divided the community for several generations. The application will support a full length album with two album/music video release events in Toronto planned for summer 2025 where invited speakers and Canadian Hiphop pioneers will provide support for the creative process. NTM is led by Beny Esguerra, an inspirational leader to the music community and two timed JUNO nominated multi-instrumentalist.

NTM Wheel it Studios VOL 6 (2024)



Success Beyond Limits
\$7,500

Success Beyond Limits Education Program (SBL) is a community-based pedagogical model that was first piloted in the summer of 2006 in response to high drop-out rates and suspension in Jane-Finch. YUFA-CP has been an instrumental partner since their inception as a non-profit organization in 2010. The application proposes to support the annual Summer Program held at York that engages over 150 youth in the community to assist with their transition into high school through mentorship programs, field trips and collaborative events with York's Faculty of Education and Osgoode Hall Law school. The application was funded at 30% after committee assessment of the itemized budget.

Back 2 Basicz

\$5,100

Back 2 Basicz is a non-profit organization dedicated to developing and supporting marginalized and underserved youth. This application will fund a series of sessions for young women in the program to support their goals and career pathways otherwise not known to them. The organization is partnering with York alumni, along with other Women of Influence through bi-weekly workshop sessions over a 3 month period in Summer 2025. The budget covers refreshments, speaker honoraria and modest fees for facilitators.

Blackhurst Cultural Centre

\$3,000

The Blackhurst Cultural Centre is a non-profit organization that has co-created and organized the Walk With Excellence (WWE), an annual celebration of graduating high-school students from the local high schools in Jane-Finch/Black creek neighbourhoods - C.W. Jeffreys, Emery, Westview, Downsview and James Cardinal McGuigan. WWE is in its 12th year and there are approximately 500 students, along with principals, senior administrators and teachers, community and York community members that attend each year. Funding is sought for refreshments and T-shirts for WWE participants.

Unity Youth

\$4,000

Unity Youth is a new initiative that seeks to bring youth from the North and South areas of Jane St together in unity through a basketball tournament they have named "Basket Over Barriers". The organization seeks funding for refreshments for the activities, honoraria for project coordinators and consumables. As they were

a new organization, they have also listed the Black Creek Community Health Centre as a trustee. YUFA CP reached out to Cheryl Prescod (Director, BCHC) and received confirmation of their support and Unity Youth's validity in March 2025. They received 80% of their funding after committee assessment of the itemized budget.

UNITY YOUTH ORG presents

BASKET OVER BARRIERS

3rd Annual

BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT
MEALS & REFRESHMENTS
BLOOD PRESSURE CHECKS
RAFFLES
FUN/SURPRISES

Saturday July 19, 2025.
TIME: 1:00pm - 6:00pm
LOCATION: Oakdale Community Center
350 Grandravine Drive

MUSIC - DJ HAPPY
PARTICIPATION WITH 31 DIVISION

SPONSORED BY: TORONTO BLACK CREEK

Logos on poster include: York University Faculty Association (YUFA), Domino's Pizza, and a crest with a crown and shield.

Prepared by Dr. Luin Goldring and Dr. Joel Ong (co-chairs)

July 1, 2025