



Jane/Finch Community and Family Centre

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York West Ontario Early Years Centre

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The Spot – Where YOU(th) Wanna Be

Yorkgate Mall

1 Yorkgate Boulevard

Downsview, ON M3N 3A1

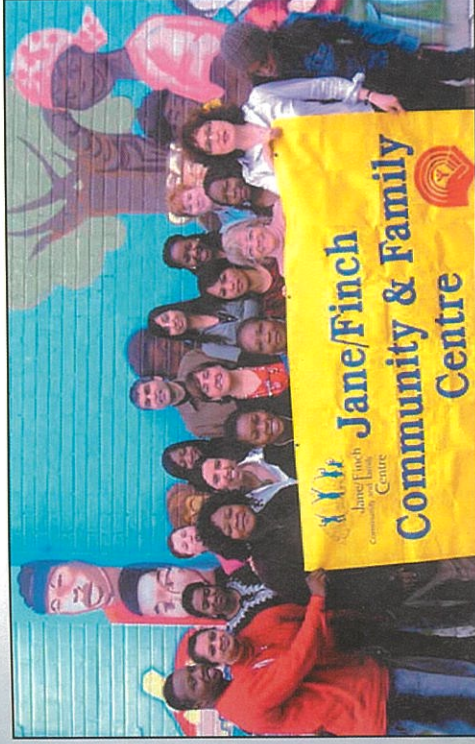
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JANE/FINCH COMMUNITY AND FAMILY CENTRE
30TH ANNIVERSARY STORY – 2006



Community and Families

A history of a unique organization

Thirty years of building on people's
strengths, valuing diversity, and
listening with respect

1976 - 2006

Jane/Finch Centre

It seems like yesterday when . . .

I found Jane/Finch Centre

I never knew that Jane/Finch Centre

Even existed . . .

Now it's like home to me

Like it's home to many . . .

As years flew by and as I grew everyday

I am proud to say Jane/Finch Centre is where

I want to stay . . .

There were days I would cook . . .

Days I had fun . . .

And days . . .

When the office got so busy I felt to run

There were days I felt to cry

But like family the staff guided me . . .

Days come days go . . .

Life changes daily . . .

Goals and many accomplishments have come by . . .

And many timeless memories have been gained . . .

I am proud to say to

Jane/Finch Centre congrats on your 30 years

From my heart and others we're glad you care!

. . . *Shaymar Gordon*

Youth participant and part-time staff

A Message from the Mayor . . .



Mayor

DAVID MILLER

A Message from the Mayor

It is my pleasure to extend greetings and congratulations to the Jane/Finch Community and Family Centre on the occasion of its 30th anniversary.

The Jane/Finch Community and Family Centre is an important part of our City's success and has contributed immeasurably to its growth and prosperity over the years. With the assistance and commitment of dedicated staff and volunteers, the centre offers programs and activities which meet the needs of a growing and diverse community.

As you celebrate this anniversary, you should feel extremely proud of the leadership and guidance you have provided over the past thirty years and the tremendous difference you have made in our community.

On behalf of Toronto City Council, I congratulate all those involved and extend my heartfelt appreciation for the job you continue to do. Please accept my best wishes for an enjoyable celebration.

Yours truly,

Mayor David Miller



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Jane/Finch Community and Family Centre

Introduction

In 1973, a group of residents who lived in the Jane and Finch community formed an organization called the Downsview Weston Action Community (DWAC) to address a variety of community issues. The local city Councillor and a number of agency staff (members of a group called Yorkwoods Resource Group) suggested to DWAC that a multi-service unit would be of benefit to the Jane Finch area.

A sub-committee of DWAC was formed with community residents and agency representatives. This committee then became involved in researching and reviewing models in different parts of the world (e.g. Hull House in Chicago), evaluating needs, gathering information about existing funding sources and identifying possible locations.

Recognizing the amount of work that needed to be done, they asked for assistance from Marvyn Novick who was the Executive Director of the Social Planning Council of Metro Toronto who then provided information and a conceptual framework for the committee to think about. The Social Planning Council also provided staff support once a month to do secretarial work.

The committee also consulted with Dr. Wilson Head at York University and he spoke of two areas; a community centre that would offer programs based on need, and the importance of community development. Then there were

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Written by Wanda MacNevin, Program Manager

Typeset by Richard De Gaetano, Volunteer

Special thanks to Mary Crabbe for assisting with the gathering of historical information and to the numerous people who reviewed the material and gave great feedback to the author.

visits to places such as St. Christopher House, Central Neighbourhood House, Don Vale Secretariat, and the Children's Storefront.

Based on the information gathered, consultations and discussions with residents, and visits to other sites, a proposal was developed to start a community resource centre in the Jane and Finch community. This resource centre would encourage and extend participation in the community, provide family support, secretarial support to

"Downtown they talk community, in Jane and Finch, they live community."

Marvyn Novick

Individuals and groups, act as a catalyst for residents to respond to community needs, and play an active role in resolving problems. The committee felt it was important for community members to realize their strengths and ability to make their lives better. They wanted members to understand that the community could be different, that needs could be met, that each resident had a contribution to make, and that each contribution was necessary in order for community and social change to occur.

Initially, the sub-committee considered starting a multi-service centre, but this idea was rejected for two reasons. It would mean that outside professionals would respond to the problems of the community and it would not bring the community together to deal with the underlying conditions that caused the problems.

So, after two years of study, the Jane/Finch Community and Family Centre was incorporated (1976) with four purposes: to study, review, and co-ordinate programs and services for residents of Planning District 10, North York

with emphasis on the Jane Finch area; to provide a central location for community groups and local service organizations; to offer services to individuals and community groups for the purpose of improving the social well-being of residents; and to sponsor and promote educational, cultural and recreational programs.

Those purposes were established through three components of service: the Child/Parent Component (now the York West Ontario Early Years Centre), Community Office, and Community Outreach (later changed to Community Development). We have since added Community Mental Health/FOCUS and Youth.

The original Mission Statement was: To improve the well-being of residents of District 10 by encouraging and promoting community participation and by acting as a catalyst so that residents can play an active role in identifying and responding to community needs.

The first Directors of the Corporation were Helen Ede, Laurel Rothman and Wanda MacNevin. The uniqueness of the Centre was reflected by the members of the Board of Directors who were community residents, and its shared management structure. For example, there were three coordinators who shared the functions of an Executive Director. Helen Ede, a resident who lived on Driftwood Avenue, was deeply involved in all the developmental process and became the first President of the Centre.

The Centre committed itself to planning according to a responsive process rather than to delivering specific programs. It was the Centre's philosophy that confidence is built within individuals and a community when those people come to value their own judgment. This wouldn't occur through designed programs done for them, but by

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having an organization respond to the community by identifying its needs.

Mary Lewis, staff from North York Children's Aid Society, worked diligently along with Helen to bring the Jane/Finch Centre to fruition. She was seconded to the Centre for one-day a week to support the Board of Directors and to seek funding to operate the Centre. Mona Robinson, Branch Director at that time, had the foresight to see the preventative value of establishing a Centre in Jane and Finch and was very supportive of Mary's time in our community.

Wanda MacNevin, a community resident, was hired as the first staff person in the role of Administrative Assistant in 1976 with a one-year grant from the United Way. Funding was given to the Centre every three months and another cheque was issued based on work completed. Sheena Sutraby, also a community resident, was hired shortly after with funding from the City to work in the Community Office.

One task of the Administrative Assistant was to find space for the Centre. The Board felt it was critical that a Centre offer not only a central service location but as well, encourage the co-ordination of efforts. Finding a space was problematic in the area (still is) due to the lack of public and commercial space and the zoning restrictions.

Initially, Greenwin, the developer on the north-east corner had agreed to provide a site for a trailer. We also explored the possibility of purchasing a Caboose to serve as a focal point for the Child/Parent Centre and after a walk through their train yard, Canadian Pacific Railways agreed to sell us a Caboose.

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Greenwin later decided that the City should be directly involved in the agreement. The City was prepared to do this but negotiations between the developer and the City's Legal and Real Estate Departments reached a stalemate. We never did get to purchase that Caboose! Meanwhile, the search continued with dialogue with the YMCA, the Jane Finch Mall and the North York School Board.

As it turned out, our first home was located in a little office at Driftwood Public School. Six months later, the Centre staff moved to the recreation rooms at 4400 Jane Street. Terry Skelton, a supportive Community Relations Worker believed us when we said we would only be there for six months! Needless to say, 4400 Jane Street became our home, thanks to Toronto Community Housing Corporation.

A lot of thought, planning, commitment and community participation made the Jane/Finch Community and Family Centre a reality. Those early pioneers knew enough to build a strong foundation that has enabled the Centre to become the strong and vibrant organization that it is today.

The following pages highlight some of the programs, services and community initiatives that were developed over the next thirty years.

Through The Years

1976 – 1980

Our first federal grant came from a program called Canada Works where we hired six staff for six months to work in five local organizations in the community, and to do outreach. Typically, projects were for a very short duration at that time. This team consisted of people from around the world: South Asia, Africa, Sri Lanka, and the Caribbean. To work with this team, we welcomed our first student placement, Peggy Edwards, who did her practicum for her Masters of Social Work degree focusing on community development.

Also, during this period of time, funding was received from the Ministry of Culture and Recreation, former City of North York, Metro Social Services, Ministry of Community
“The Centre was unique in having a philosophy of service. Key principles of that philosophy were to work with the residents where they were at and that everyone had strengths, and something to contribute. I have carried that philosophy throughout my professional life.”

Peggy Edwards

and Social Services, United Way of Greater Toronto and the Ministry of Health.

With those funds, we were able to hire our first Child/Parent Coordinator, Peggy Birnberg. Peggy Edwards, having completed her field placement, was hired as a Community Outreach Coordinator (later named Community Development Coordinator). This funding also allowed us to develop programs and services with the community and to

respond to issues identified by the community.

Our Child/Parent component was busy by responding to requests from such groups as the Tiny Toddlers Club (7 informal support groups for women and children located in various buildings) and developing new programs such as the Child/Parent Drop-in, Toy Lending Library, and a Craft Co-operative.

The Board felt it was important to contribute to the coordination and development of services and programs in the area so staff participated in groups such as DWAC, Jane Corridor Immigrant Services Committee, Yorkwoods Resource Group, North York Inter-Agency Sub-Committees and the Neighbourhood Services Committee.

The Community Development team focused on a School Community Liaison Project that supported the initiation of the first Parent Council in the area, located at Firgrove Public School. Community Development played a lead role and supported the establishment of the North York Women's Shelter. Isobel Meltz, the shelter's first staff person, worked at our Centre for two years until the Shelter was built. We also participated in, and supported the development of Northwood Neighbourhood Services, the Jane Finch Legal Clinic and a Seniors Project. Support was also given to organize a DWAC Convention and, from that, we initiated and mobilized action around four community projects which emerged out of the discussions at the convention.

We have a long history of welcoming student placements at the Centre. In 1980, Ryerson University gave us a team of eleven fourth-year Social Work students and we linked them with existing community programs and new projects being developed.

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We were also getting known in the planning and social services field. Helen Ede, our first president, presented a paper entitled *The Social Evolution of the Jane Finch Area* at the Urban Seminar on Social Objectives Urban Planning, co-sponsored by the Social Planning Councils of southern Ontario and the Canadian Institute of Planners. The Centre undertook an intensive evaluation of the Child/Parent Centre with Dr. Susan Hodgson, Child-in-the-City of the University of Toronto where parents were involved in designing and pre-testing the interview questions. The study was for a two and one-half year period with funding (\$250,000) from Ontario Mental Health Foundation. The report, released in 1983, gave evidence that the Child/Parent Centre had considerable success in implementing its model and achieving its objectives. This process also inspired an intensive internal review leading to an ongoing process of self-evaluation and culminating in a number of significant changes and efforts.

After the first year of study, we participated in a two-day Institute on Primary Prevention at the Ortho-Psychiatric Conference to present our Child/Parent Centre as a preventative model. Staff, community residents and our evaluator did the presentation for this group of psychiatric specialists from across North America. We were invited back a year later and presented an update. One highlight was learning about a psychiatrist who attended our session in the previous year who had begun to develop a similar centre in Texas.

In 1980, we started a mental health drop-in program, called Getting in Touch, as people in the community had been having negative experiences with existing psychiatric services and had a hard time coping or finding appropriate support. The program also attracted disabled persons and

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seniors. Getting in Touch had the support of North York Inter-Agency and Community Council and Toronto Public Health. In the earliest days, Toronto Public Health provided a dietician for the program once a week to cook with participants of the program.

“I love life skills from the Getting In Touch program because the program helps me gain self-confidence and is very stimulating.”

A Resident

Other initiatives that brought us pride in those early years included:

A new partnership with Seneca College and for several years where we offered courses through a program called “Seneca College without Walls.”

We became a member of the United Way in 1979.

We established a bursary for a Westview Secondary School student who contributed to community involvement. This bursary continues up to this day.

Our space was extended to include apartment 108, across the hall from the two recreation rooms.

We regretfully said “farewell” to Mary Lewis who had been on loan to us for one-day a week, from Children’s Aid since 1976.

1981-1985

While the first five years were a period of growth, this period focused on solidifying what we had along with developing some new initiatives.

Funding was received from the Secretary of State and

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we were able to hire additional office staff. Over a period of eighteen months, the Community Office had provided services to 29 community groups and many individuals. As such the Centre created a policy that would charge fees for services rendered. Also, systems were put into place for invoicing and collections, bookkeeping, and filing.

The Community Development team organized a "Meet Your Neighbour" Cultural Workshop where 63 people attended. This led to the Leaders-In-Training workshops where 70 residents participated in 9 training workshops in one year alone. The Leaders-In-Training workshops became

"The office team is very helpful. They always receive participants with a welcoming smile. The services they provide: photocopies, faxes, flyers, and referrals, are excellent."

A Resident

an integral program of the Centre for many years. This component also provided consultation around organizational development and governance, program planning, fundraising, assistance in preparing funding applications and reports for groups such as the Jane Finch Concerned Citizens Organization, Caribbean Youth Outreach Program, Tobermory Community Activities, Information Downsview, Downsview Weston Action Community and the North York Women's Shelter. Information Downsview was opened in the Jane-Finch Mall with support from the Community Development and Community Office Coordinators.

Partnering with educational institutions continued to be important to us at the Centre. As such, we forged a new relationship with the North York Board of Education by

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offering 10-week courses (cake decorating, typing, and bookkeeping) in the community through Continuing

"I wasn't sure that I could do this course; would I say something stupid, would I understand the books we had to read? Those were my first thoughts. But, as it turned out, the women were great and the professor was wonderful. And, I got a B+!"

A Resident

Education. The Centre launched a "Training through Experience" Project for first-year social work students at York University that enabled the students to understand our community and to experience an outreach activity in the community. We also worked with York University and others to establish the Bridging Course for Women, which continues today.

The Centre staff continued to be active and involved with groups such as the former North York Inter-Agency and Community Council committees, Neighbourhood Network, Supporting C.A.S.T. (Supporting Community and School Together), Yorkwoods Resource Group, and the Social Recreational Task Force. We also played a lead role in organizing a Community-School Conference at Geneva Park for parents, community workers, principals and teachers in thirteen North York special needs schools.

Lastly, T.V. Ontario came to our Centre to produce a documentary called *Heart of the Matter* which was later aired on television. This week-long production focused on the Child/Parent Component of the Centre and included parent interviews, spending time in the drop-in, attending meetings and interviewing staff. During that week of

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filming, the Centre often looked like a film studio with lights and wires going across the walls and the camera crew milling around trying to do their jobs in limited space.

1986 - 1990

This period of time started with strategic planning to identify short-term and long-term goals for the next five years. Priorities became space, sustainable funding, planning (with an emphasis on community development), evaluation and research.

In order to increase our finding base, we hired a consultant to provide us with expertise and assistance in developing and implementing a fundraising strategy. This included preparing a promotional package and training. Staff took some additional training through the Centre of Philanthropy and shared that training with organizations and residents in the community.

We were introduced to Pat MacKay, who became our patron, to organize luncheons so that we could talk about our Centre, share our vision and invite people with resources to become a Friend of the Centre. Our work continues with the support of a fundraising committee and with the magical support of Pat MacKay who has the gift of connecting those with resources to those who need them.

The Child/Parent Component completed a participant survey to look at who we were serving and to ensure that appropriate services were being offered, and a Needs Assessment Survey was done to look at the needs of parents who were at home with pre-school children. New programs were developed to respond to the needs. For example, parents talked about how difficult it was to survive on

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social services. So, after two years of planning by workers from social service agencies and community organizations, funding was received from the Children's Aid Foundation to develop Making Ends Meet, a money management counselling and support service.

The Community Development component underwent an evaluation process. The evaluation affirmed the work we were doing in being a resource, providing leadership development and in acknowledging its role as a catalyst for community development in the area. With affirmation, the Community Development component was doing good work, they decided to focus on racism as a theme for training in 1987 and to ensure staff reflected the people we served. With funding, we were able to hire people from the Vietnam, South America and South Asian communities to provide settlement services.

Also during this period of time, the Coordinator played an active role with Delta Family Resource Centre, North York Inter-agency and Community Council and others in the development of the Black Creek Community Health Centre and played a lead role in organizing the Project Rebirth Conference which was held in 1989. Project Rebirth, which was supported by the City of North York, was organized to identify needs and concerns and to make recommendations for action. Residents, workers, politicians and others came together for this conference and a report was completed with the recommendations. Unfortunately, resources were such that not many of the recommendations were acted upon.

Meanwhile, the Community Office took the leadership in moving from electric typewriters to computers. The Centre did a bulk purchase of computers, of which five

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were distributed to other community based organizations and five were placed in different offices internally. This encouraged other community-based organizations to move towards automation.

The Community Office also received funding from Employment and Immigration Canada to hire 10 residents to work as office assistants in nine local organizations. They learned about office administration, computer operations, and office skills. At the completion of the program, five graduates found full-time jobs and three went back to school. Only one dropped out.

While domestic violence was not new to our community, we started two initiatives to respond to this issue. We ran a group for 12 weeks for women who were or had been in abusive situations and we sponsored a four-week training opportunity for staff and volunteers to learn more about assault and its affect on women. This work later led to Wen-Do courses in the community, inter-agency participation on a Family Violence Committee and a partnership with the Centre for Spanish Speaking People by offering Cook' n Talk programs. The Centre also provided four-weeks of training for police officers at 31 Division on the issue of domestic violence.

Thanks to the Variety Club of Ontario (Tent 28), our Centre was the recipient of a brand new 15-seat Variety Club Sunshine Coach. Our van, co-sponsored by Dominion Stores and Beatrice Foods, continues to provide transportation services for participants in many of our programs to this day.

Another note-worthy action included becoming the trustee for funds for Tobermory Community Activities enabling 15 Tobermory to have a Coordinator for three days

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per week. This relationship of providing a Coordinator at 15 Tobermory continues to this day. Lastly, a handbook was produced to assist and orient new managers to the Centre. This handbook was made available to other local organizations interested in improving their procedures.

1991 - 1995

In response to increasing concern about drug use and misuse in the community, the Centre held a community forum where an Anti-Drug Advisory Committee was established. This work, guided by our community worker, led to a six-month project called Black Creek Community Groups United Against Drugs. Our initiative led to us being chosen as a "FOCUS Community" by the Provincial Anti-Drug Secretariat and funding was received for two years.

We also received funding for a two-year period from the Ministry of Community and Social Services for a Bridging Initiative Project in partnership with the Vietnamese Association of Toronto. The Ontario Trillium Foundation funded a new initiative called Caring Villages. Caring Villages aimed to establish a partnership of agencies and residents that would promote non-violent activities in the Edgeley area. Some of the early Caring Village initiatives included a local girls club, a support group for parents, community workshops and events, and a students' discussion group at Brookview Middle School.

We succeeded in receiving funds from the private sector, as well. During these years, we were able to secure much needed computers through support from the George Cedric Metcalfe Foundation and the Geoffrey H. Woods Foundation. A creative arts program was initiated with

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funding from the Mercalf, Kinnear, and Atkinson Foundations to give children the opportunity to experience the arts, with an hour each of drama, music and art.

Administratively, there were a number of activities that strengthened our infrastructure. For example, we were the first community-based organization in Jane-Finch to establish an extended benefits plan, including a Registered Retirement Savings Plan. This encouraged other community organizations to follow suit. The number of

“The Centre represents the power of women. Together we can move any obstacle and face any challenge and know that we will succeed!”

***Darlene Clark
Former resident and past staff***

staff we had working at the Centre increased to the point where we were able to secure two additional apartments from TCHC and, lastly, a management restructuring was completed where the position of an Executive Coordinator was adopted.

This was the period where Getting In Touch held its own strategic planning session with participants, staff and the Advisory Committee. It resulted in the adoption of a plan to follow a mutual support program model with a focus on social/recreational activities. Through our mental health initiatives, the Centre organized, with various partners, the first International Women’s Day celebration in the community. International Women’s Day has become an annual event with various community organizations taking the lead.

The Child/Parent component of the Centre was busy

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offering new programs such as a Life Skills group and a Craft group, and becoming involved in developing the Healthy Beginnings for Babies inter-agency initiative. Meanwhile, the Community Development component staff were busy launching the Diversity program. This anti-racism and community-building initiative meant to address systemic barriers faced by area residents. Internally, after a number of years of doing anti-racism training and workshops, the Centre finally developed a progressive anti-racism policy.

Leaders-In-Training workshops continued with cultural awareness workshops, a four-part series on preparation of funding submissions, three board development sessions, an “Ah-Hah” seminar, a social policy change workshop, Landlord and Tenant Act sessions, welfare reform and Metro Housing restructuring workshops and many more. Also, our first Citizenship classes were offered through the support of the North York Board of Education and the Ministry of Citizenship.

Lastly, the Centre played a leadership role in establishing the Yorkgate Alliance and supporting other initiatives, such as the Network of Community-Based Organizations, the Nor’wester Community Newspaper, and the formation of a local Boys and Girls Club which continues to exist in the Yorkwoods neighbourhood.

1996 – 2000

This period of time brought additional programs to the community for women. This included a series of health promotion groups: Walk ‘n Talk, Cook ‘n Talk, Yoga ‘n Talk, and Horticultural Therapy. A partnership with

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Chalkfarm Community and Family Centre, North York Community House, and the Jamaican Canadian Association was established to create a model of service for community kitchens for abused women.

A new partnership was formed with Hong Fook Mental Health Association and the Canadian Cambodian Association of Ontario to start a support group for Cambodian women. The Centre worked in partnership to develop the Jane-Finch Multi-Cultural Women's Health Action Project. This one-year project brought together women from the South Asian, Ghanaian, Vietnamese, and Hispanic communities to identify health barriers. In response to those health barriers, a booklet was produced called *Resources for Healthy Living* which was translated into twelve different languages.

Funding from the United Way of Greater Toronto allowed for the Success By 6 Program through the Child/Parent component. Success By 6 offers support to parents who are having difficulty with their children and helps to ensure success when the children go to school. Also from the United Way, we received funding to establish the position of Volunteer Coordinator. In the first year of that funding, we had 376 volunteers working 11,420 hours.

Another expansion was with funding from the Ministry of Health through a program called FOCUS. FOCUS was set up to do prevention work on drug related and health promotion issues. The FOCUS program in Jane and Finch was called the Black Creek Anti-Drug FOCUS Coalition. When their five-year funding came to an end, the province decided to integrate that funding into an existing incorporated organization that was currently receiving Ministry of Health funding; this included our Centre.

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The Centre's Board of Directors integrated the FOCUS program into the Mental Health component. With that funding, we put an emphasis on drug and alcohol use and misuse directed at youth and children. Our new work with youth added a new component of service to the Centre.

This was a period when residents began feeling the impact of the decisions of the new provincial Tory government: cuts to social assistance (21.6% reduction), changes to the Landlord and Tenant Act negatively affecting rent control, freezing the minimum wage, and eliminating any expansion of social housing. As a result, community development staff re-focused their work to supporting individual participants confronting these new challenges. They also provided information that helped residents to better respond to their concerns and issues.

Lastly, our Board of Directors adopted a new mission statement. It was: "Our goal is a healthy Jane-Finch community - strong cohesive, inclusive, socially and politically active."

2000 - 2005

The Centre put an emphasis on the development of youth programs with funding from various sources. This included developing Kids Clubs, Youth Councils, Young

"I joined Project Y.O.U. to make a difference in the community. I want to work in the Jane Finch project has helped me a lot in becoming a confident leader."

A Youth in Project Y.O.U.

Leaders, Cambodian Youth Group, Project Y.O.U., Graffiti Transformation Project, Zoo Project, Project Canoe and Project Chill. These programs received funding from various sources including the City of Toronto, Ministry of Health, National Crime Prevention Centre and The Geoffrey H. Wood Foundation.

An emphasis was also put towards securing funding for young children. We joined in a partnership with three other organizations and received funding from the Early Years Challenge Fund to enhance services for children 0 - 6 and their families. This led to our Centre applying for and becoming the lead agency for the York West Ontario Early

“My child has learned to handle separation anxiety.” “My child has learned how to share and play with other children.”

A Resident

Years Centre. The Early Years Centre is located in the Jane-Finch Mall and became our first satellite location away from the 4400 Jane Street location.

We continued to work towards supporting women who were victims of violence by working in partnership with the Centre for Spanish Speaking People and Black Creek Community Health Centre. This partnership offered the program called “Cook n Talk” where women cooked together and afterwards had facilitated discussions and special presentations. We then partnered with the Centre for Spanish-Speaking Peoples and the Barbra Schliker Commemorative Clinic in offering a two-year project called Counteracting Sexual Abuse and Assault with Hispanic Women.

During this period of growth, the Board undertook a management structure review as the Centre had doubled its funding, staff members increased by 58% and programs and services had sufficiently increased. This structure allowed for an Executive Director, Assistant Executive Director, and managers for each of the components. We were happy that despite the Centre’s growth, we were able to maintain the same number of members on the management team through establishing efficient administrative systems.

We also grew in technology with all staff having their own computers and access to email. A network was installed to support the increased computer requirements.

In 2002, the staff at the Centre decided to form a union. Interestingly, the founding Board of Directors (1976) had wanted the staff to unionize at the time. In February 2006, a collective agreement was ratified to the satisfaction of both the management team and the staff. As a result of this process, the Centre produced a new Manager’s Handbook on how to manage in a unionized environment and an Employee’s Handbook for all other staff.

Towards the end of this period of time, several significant and important initiatives happened. After 30 years, our Child/Parent Drop-in program moved from 4400 Jane Street to Gosford Public School. The program at Gosford focuses on getting children ready for school. While we were sad to see this program leave the main site, we were able to offer the staff, for the first time in its history, a welcoming and comfortable staff room. We were also able to create a much needed meeting room in the adjacent room.

Our 2005, the Graffiti Transformation Project, funded by the City of Toronto, produced a spectacular mural on the

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outside of 4400 Jane Street, stretching across the width of the building and up to the second floor. We have been able to use this piece of art on much of our promotional material.

We are partnering with York University's Faculty of Education, Con-Current Program by providing field placement experience for many students who will become teachers. We also have a partnership with the Faculty of Social Work by providing in-class presentations by community residents to students in the Community Work program.

We received \$47,000 from the United Way of Greater Toronto and \$250,000 from the Ontario Trillium Foundation to secure space, do renovations and develop youth programs in a storefront location in the Yorkgate Mall. We also developed a marketing partnership with the Rotman School of Business to assist us in launching this new space. The Spot – Where YOU[th] Wanna Be became the Centre's second satellite location.

The Centre received funding in the amount of \$934,000 from the Geoffrey H. Wood Foundation and \$300,000 from the Ontario Trillium Foundation to fund the Women Moving Forward Project. This five-year project, in partnership with 9 local organizations, is an integrated and comprehensive program for women 20 – 29 years old that will lead them to self-sufficiency.

2006

The Centre celebrated its 30th anniversary with an action-packed year. As such we were able to accomplish the following:

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The Board hired a consultant to work with Centre staff and board members to develop a three-year strategic plan, review and revise the vision and mission statements, and to review our values or principles of support.

We did a major clean-up at 4400 Jane Street by replacing all the floors, upgrading desks and purchasing new chairs and computers, and purchasing comfortable furniture for the staff room and meeting room.

Our anti-racism policy was revised in order to make it easier to read and more accessible, thereby allowing it to be more easily implemented.

Our Centre's brochure and program information booklet were revised, giving them a new look for the 30th anniversary.

The Board of Directors has done a full review of governance functions, board policies and procedures. This led to the Centre revising all its human resources and administrative systems.

We organized a 30th anniversary celebration that included a barbeque, entertainment, displays and children's activities. It was enjoyed by the hundreds who attended.

Lastly, in October 2006, after eighteen years of service, the Centre said good-bye to Margarita Mendez, the Executive Director. Margarita was first hired by the Centre as an Outreach Worker. She then became the Program Worker for Getting In Touch, and then the Child/Parent Coordinator. In her last, and longest role, she became the first Executive Director of the Jane/Finch Community and Family Centre.

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Vision, Mission, and Principles

New Vision Statement

Our Vision is a healthy Jane Finch community – strong, inclusive, socially and politically active through diversity, opportunity and participation.

New Mission Statement

Jane/Finch Community and Family Centre is a community-based organization driven by passion, innovation, and a strong commitment to social justice, community engagement, and collaboration.

Principles

- ◆ *Strengthening Capacity* We are committed to the development of our community, staff, volunteers and students through the use and creation of programs, services and supports that build on existing skills and strengths.
- ◆ *Participant Centred* We will continue to provide high quality programs and services that respond to the priorities and needs identified by the participants that we serve.
- ◆ *Collaboration* We recognize the strengths and knowledge of our community members and agencies and we encourage broad stakeholder involvement in identifying opportunities to enhance the way we respond to our community.
- ◆ *Diversity* We appreciate and value differences in all aspects of program and service delivery and organizational practices. By continually

demonstrating our commitment to diversity, we enrich ourselves and the lives of those we are committed to serving.

- ◆ *Respect* We are a caring organization that reflects and appreciates the dignity, abilities, beliefs, values, opinions and expressed needs of our community and each other, in all that we do.
- ◆ *Advocacy* We strive for the fair and equitable treatment of the people in our community, our staff and our volunteers.

Strategic Directions

Organizational Health

The Centre is a strong, passionate and healthy organization in which to work, volunteer and participate. It is understood that staff, participants, volunteers and the Board are the foundation of our organization and the quality of our programs directly relates to ensuring a safe, supportive and healthy organization environment.

Community Engagement, Participation and Response

The community is given opportunities to participate in the decisions that impact on their lives. Our staff and volunteers are able to respond appropriately to new and emerging issues as identified by the community. We recognize and value the fact that residents, volunteers and staff are committed to building a healthier Jane-Finch community and aim to expand on this potential. We are committed to building our capacity to adjust to the changing needs of our participants, and promote the healthy growth of our community.

Special Recognition

The Centre's origins and first few years set the stage for how the Centre operates in the Jane-Finch community today. Directions were set, systems were created, and our Principles of Support were developed, enabling our Centre to become a learning organization and a catalyst for change. There are too many people to list who played a significant role in helping our Centre be able to support and respond to the many issues in this culturally rich and diverse community. That being said, there are a few people who require special recognition:

Helen Ede – Founder and first President of the Board of Directors of the Centre

Mary Lewis – Provided staff support in establishing the Centre and staff support in its formative years

Wanda MacNevin – Volunteer and then first employee of the Centre. She remained at the Centre for 15 years

Peggy Edwards – First student placement and then first Community Development Coordinator. She remained at the Centre for 12 years

Peggy Birnberg – First Child/Parent Coordinator. She remained at the Centre for 10 years

Bruce Lewis – Provided free legal counsel for many years
Robert Velteer – Chartered Accountant since the year of our first audited statement

Pat MacKay – First chair of our Centre's fundraising committee. Enabled Centre to become successful at fundraising