

**York University Faculty Association, Community Projects (YUFA-CP)**  
**Annual Report, 2020-2021**

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

These two areas of focus were revisited this year as a result of ongoing dialogue around the purpose and focus of YUFA-CP.

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 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 2020-2021 Co-Chairs were Jenny Foster and Vidya Shah.

YUFA-CP fulfills its mandate in multifaceted 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 is supported by a \$100,000 annual allocation from YUFA Trust. 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.

**Non-budget activities by YUFA-CP, 2020-2021**

**Anti-oppression Framework for Community Project Support**

The COVID-19 pandemic created numerous changes to community and university initiatives and foci during 2020. This presented an opportunity for us to

rethink our purposes and processes at YUFA-CP. Guided by a workshop on anti-oppression and anti-racism led by KEDZ Consulting, the committee created new guidelines to increase openness, transparency, and accountability. The following questions serve as critical guidelines towards all decision-making:

1. Is this decision community-centred? How does YUFA-CP define community?
2. Does this decision disrupt the status quo?
3. Does this decision increase access and opportunity for study at York for members of the social, political, and geographic communities surrounding York?
4. Does this decision support the conditions of self-advocacy among members of the community?
5. In what ways might this decision create unintentional social injustices or exclusions?
6. How are we diving into challenges, tensions and contradictions of this decision and making space for dissenting opinions?
7. Are there conflicts of interest that we need to address in this decision?

### **Revamping the Funding Process**

In addition to new guidelines for decision-making, the committee completely revamped the YUFA-CP funding process. Please see Appendix 1 for a comprehensive summary of the revised funding process that centralizes the fundraising work of the committee at two key points each year (November and April), freeing up committee members to support advocacy efforts and community engagement. This new process increases transparency and accountability to the community and to YUFA. It also increases our commitment to funding emerging initiatives in the community that require seed money to launch, to innovate, and to build relations. We had conversations about what we are committed to funding, the geographic/political/social boundaries of our funding decisions, attending to extenuating circumstances, as well as attention to supporting groups and initiatives with a longstanding relationship with YUFA in a more consistent manner. Our new application form is included below as Appendix 2.

### **Conflict of Interest Policy**

In alignment with our revised processes, we had extensive discussion about conflicts of interest and have included the following clause in all funding decisions:

Any members with conflicts of interest must declare and describe this upfront and refrain from voting on that application. Conflicts of interest may include current or historic membership in an organization, formal or informal roles, partnerships and collaborations, as well as academic relationships.

While members are encouraged to support community organizations and partners in submitting and completing application forms, they are expected to declare a conflict of interest in voting on the application by recusing themselves from the vote.

### **Legacy project**

The legacy project is both a historical look at YUFA-CP and a collective imagining of how we might evolve. In partnership with Sensorium Centre for Digital Arts at York University, this project includes a podcast series profiling YUFA-CP and the important work being done by organizations and individuals in the Jane-Finch community. Each session will focus on a different aspect of community, justice, and sustainability, including food justice, labour justice, and troubling approaches to community engagement. This project is intended to launch in 2022.

### **Jane Finch Social Innovation Hub**

The Jane Finch Social Innovation Hub was identified as a priority at the February 2019 YUFA-CP Community Dinner, where an open conversation among approximately 40 community representatives and YUFA members sought to identify collaborations and important issues for future attention. YUFA-CP explored possibilities for mobilizing this initiative through 2019, in collaboration with community partners and various York units. The Hub was officially launched in January 2020. This is a dedicated space for Jane Finch undergraduate students at York to convene, rest and develop their own projects. The Hub is located at 141 Central Square, and in the spring shifted to an online platform in response to COVID-19. YUFA-CP members collaborated with Success Beyond Limits and the TD Community Engagement Centre to coordinate the project *Navigating York: The Jane Finch Experience*, which received a 2020 Academic Innovation Fund grant. The *Jane Finch Experience* produces a set of virtual workshop modules that orient incoming students to the university campus and its operations, academic routines and conventions.

### **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. This includes elected Board positions at organizations such as Black Creek Community Health Centre, Success Beyond Limits and Promoting Education and Community Health. It also includes responsibilities with organizations such as the Education Action Group and other community collaboratives.

## **Projects funded by YUFA-CP, 2020-21**

### **Jane-Finch Social Innovation Hub (Supported by Success Beyond Limits) 15,000.00**

YUFA-CP provided financial support for SBL Alumni to Coordinate the operations and functions of the Jane Finch Social Innovation Hub. This included wages for a Hub Coordinator to run the space, as well as refreshments, printer supplies and other office essentials. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, operations were modified significantly to accommodate distancing and virtual communication with community members and students.

### **Success Beyond Limits 15,000.00**

Success Beyond Limits offers youth programming out of Westview Centennial Collegiate Institute that addresses external challenges Jane Finch students encounter in achieving their academic potential. In addition to programming offered throughout the regular academic calendar, SBL delivers a 6-week summer program for students from across the Jane Finch community to gain academic credit, mentorship, employment, enrichment, nutrition, engagement, graduation and relationship building. Programming this year was transformed into remote platforms with daily check-ins, digital tablets with wifi connectivity, academic lessons, food, and mental health supports. Youth mentors also received additional training.

### **Jane Finch Education Action Group 1,500.00**

Jane Finch Education Action Group (JFEAG) applies a “social determinants of education” lens to youth support, through community events, deputations, town hall meetings and direct support to parents and guardians. The group reports to the Jane Finch Toronto Strong Neighborhoods Taskforce. YUFA-CP funds support refreshments at meetings, honoraria for meeting Co-Chairs, childcare, TTC expenses, and outreach materials.

### **The Power to Be International 1,500.00**

Akeelah's Room is a community-based program that is led by Black girls from various backgrounds. Akeelah's Room is an initiative of The Power to Be International, which is a community based and driven organization. The initiative was created to support the girl's empowerment programming by creating virtual spaces where Black girls could learn and share with each other. The organization and initiatives are all community-based and run. Currently, the Akeelah's Room team is made up of 5 Black girls who are responsible for operating the platform. It is important to the organization that

the programming and content be created by Black girls for Black girls. The organization's role is to raise the fund so the team can continue the platform. They recruited volunteers through calls in the Black community, Facebook, Instagram, etc. As the concerns around COVID-19 continue, their goal was to keep virtual programming going. Funding was needed to support the resources needed for the Akeelah's Room team to create content, develop appropriate online programming (following all the restrictions and considerations for safer online programming). Funding also supported the team to establish the "Black girl's guide to the GTA" with details on health services, products, etc., to support the wellbeing of Black girls in the GTA.

**Jane Finch Action Against Poverty**  
**5,000.00**

To support community initiatives and engagement.

**Regenesis York**  
**1,500.00**

Regenesis has been coordinating and administering the Cycle York initiative since 2017, providing services to cyclists at the Keel campus and in surrounding communities. Programming was adjusted in response to COVID-19, in support of cyclists working in deliveries and front-line work. YUFA-CP funds helped support bicycle mechanics and bike centre operations, as well as outreach and communications within the community.

**OPIRG Toronto**  
**2,000.00**

Sexual Violence Survivor's Support Network's overarching purpose is to provide emergency funding to GTA survivors and those currently re-experiencing trauma as a result of COVID-19's quarantine protocols. SVSSN focuses on assisting individuals who have difficulty accessing similar funds or government-supported funds due to accessibility issues or not meeting various bureaucratic requirements. These populations include: people ineligible for CERB, those without status, in between or without homes, who experience barriers to accessing funds at many other established institutions due to anti-Black racism, transphobia, anti-sex worker sentiments, Islamophobia, those who have no documentation or access to financial institutions, amongst other experiences. YUFA-CP support was dedicated to increasing capacity to support survivors, especially international students.

**Jane Street Speaks**  
**5,200.00**

Jane Street Speaks is an artist collective that focuses on community arts production and dissemination, as well as events and community gatherings. Aspire to Inspire is a project that couples live music performances with

discussions about mental health, emphasizing the specific experiences and challenges for members of the Jane Finch community. A series of weekly live broadcasts were conducted through the month of February, and then extended into March. The project exceeded proposed expectations, and materials were subsequently advanced into an exhibition at Downsview Park, as part of the ArtWorx. The full series is available on Instagram at @JaneStreetSpeaks\_.

**Wheel it Mobile Studios**  
**5,000**

This project by a collective of multidisciplinary artists opens access to professional studio programming across neighborhood boundaries. As the only active recording studio in Jane Finch, Wheel It Studios developed an innovative approach to meeting artists where they are: a mobile studio that travels across boundaries to create original Hip Hop, Afro Beat and Latin compositions compiled into a mixed tape released as a series of celebratory community events. This is a follow-up project, based on the success of the 2019-2020 YUFA-CP-funded recording project entitled “Parallel Intersections”. Coordinators were able to use YUFA-CP support as seed funds to acquire further funds, and the follow-up was very successful. Organizers developed a website and social media (<https://www.wheelitstudios.com/>), and released a studio album (available at <https://wheelitstudios.bandcamp.com/album/wheel-it-studios-vol-3-ride-it-out>)

The project was featured on CityNews:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5FqapXFqSLo>

**Affordable Housing Committee at York University**  
**1,500.00**

The Affordable Housing Committee at York University was established to develop strategies for construction of affordable and accessible buildings. The committee draws membership from across sectors of the university, including students, faculty, staff, volunteers and community members. The group is in the preliminary visioning stages, and YUFA-CP funds were dedicated to research and creation of a video project, as well as support to students who are engaged in the committee’s core work.

**Toronto Black Farmers Collective**  
**1,500.00**

The Toronto Black Farmers Collective mobilizes people of African descent to advance community food security and reduce hunger in Toronto. Based out of Downsview Park, the TBFC provides access to land and tools for year-round culturally appropriate food production and distribution. They host food planning strategic meetings with organizations across the GTA, and provide training for youth in land based traditions. YUFA-CP funds support plot

payment at Downsview Park, seeds, TTC fares, and refreshments for those working in the greenhouse and fields.

**Guyana Community House**  
**1,500.00**

Guyana Community House (Toronto) is an organized effort to create an affordable housing cooperative and community centre for the Guyanese Canadian community in the Greater Toronto Area. There are over 200,000 Guyanese-Canadians, with the vast majority of them living in the Greater Toronto Area. In particular, Jane Finch is home to a high concentration of Guyanese-Canadians. The project aims to bring the Guyanese-Canadian community together in a space that would provide affordable housing and social services to those who need it (seniors, single-parent households, new immigrants, etc.) and establish a community centre to serve our cultural and social needs. Guyana Community House (Toronto) is organized by a diverse group of volunteers from the Guyanese-Canadian diaspora. The founders of this initiative are both York University students and a number of our other committee members are either local residents of the Jane-Finch community and/or current and recently graduated York University students. Students were funded \$500 to participate in training with the Institute for Change Leadership Housing Training led by Olivia Chow. \$1000 was provided to support a student videographer to film/edit the housing precarity stories of Guyanese-Canadians in the local community. The media produced will be shared on our social media and via the local community newspaper, *The Downsview Advocate*, and on social media.

**Arts and Documentary Club & Downsview Advocate**  
**1,500.00**

This is a group of local youth activists who live in the Black Creek community and who are also students at York University. They have partnered with the Downsview Advocate and numerous community groups in the Black Creek/Jane-Finch area and student groups at York University and Seneca College to produce local media through film. Their aim is to amplify youth voices in the community through collaborations and access to media equipment. As youth activists in the community with access to videography equipment, they aim to document stories relating to the environment, equity, and justice in the Black Creek community. They produced their first documentary (on the topic of gentrification) with the assistance of a graduate student who owned their own film equipment. [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1eXmJeyEG2A9PJmYkA-6fAtFuHPZi\\_\\_Rq/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1eXmJeyEG2A9PJmYkA-6fAtFuHPZi__Rq/view?usp=sharing)

Topics they hope to document in the summer include Lost Rivers Walk in Black Creek, housing issues in Black Creek (in collaboration with ACORN York West) and transit

access in Black Creek (in collaboration with TTCRiders and Action 41 Keele). Funds were requested to purchase audio-visual to support their efforts.

#### **S4 Collective Scholarship Fund**

**12,000**

The Sanctuary Students Solidarity & Support Collective (S4) was formed in the fall of 2018 as a member-driven non-profit organization which supports precarious migrant and newcomer students, sanctuary students, at various levels of education in Ontario. The Collective is made up of many York students who have been able to access university as a result of the Sanctuary Scholars program. They also endeavour to identify and respond to ongoing and emerging barriers that prevent the full and equitable participation of sanctuary students and collectively advocate to increase equitable access for these populations at other post-secondary institutions. Moreover, the group strives to work intersectionally, acknowledging the ways other identity dynamics such as race, gender, ability, and class, intersect with immigration status and newcomer experiences to shape involvement in educational settings.

This project provides small scholarships to students with precarious immigration status (sanctuary students) who are studying at post-secondary institutions. By precarious immigration status, they are referring to multiple forms of temporary, less than full, residency status (refugee claimants, refused refugee claimants pursuing appeals, people caught in immigration limbo because of complex circumstances), as well as no status at all (people who overstayed their visitor or work visas, refused refugee claimants who were not deported) (Goldring et al., 2009). Over the course of the project, they will distribute 20 scholarships to sanctuary students based on financial need. These scholarships will support students to pay down tuition debt or help to pay tuition in the upcoming academic year (and possibly add a course as a result of the increased budget). Eligible students who are not active members of the S4 Collective will also be considered for the scholarships.



## Appendix 1

### YUFA COMMUNITY PROJECTS FUNDING PROCESS

YUFA Community Projects (YUFA-CP) accepts applications for funding from community partners throughout the year. The committee will meet twice per year (in November and April) to review applications and make funding decisions.

#### For Applications Considered in November:

1. Initial submissions can be submitted at any point up until October 15.
2. Chairs of the committee may respond to applicants with requests for additional details, if required.
3. Responses to requests for additional information will be accepted until November 1st.
4. Funding decisions will be communicated by the end of November.

If you have missed this October 15th deadline, not to worry, submissions are welcome for the next funding cycle, which ends in April.

#### For Applications Considered in April:

1. Initial submissions can be submitted at any point up until March 15.
2. Chairs of the committee may respond to applicants with requests for additional details, if required.
3. Responses to requests for additional information will be accepted until April 1st.
4. Funding decisions will be communicated by the end of April.

In summary, our calendar looks like this:

Jan.01 to Mar.15: Funding submissions welcome.  
Mar.15 to Apr.01: Period to respond to committee questions.  
Apr.01 to Apr.30: Submission evaluations and decisions.  
May.01 to Oct.15: Funding submissions welcome  
Oct.15 to Nov.01: Period to respond to committee questions  
Nov.01 to Nov.30: Submission evaluations and decisions.

\*\*If you have any questions regarding the submission process, including urgent time-sensitive requests that do not fit this timeline, please do not hesitate to email us at [cp.yufa@gmail.com](mailto:cp.yufa@gmail.com)

Application forms are available as a [form-fillable PDF](#), [PDF](#), and [online form](#).

## Appendix 2

### York University Faculty Association (YUFA) Community Projects Committee (CP) Funding Application

YUFA-CP funds are dedicated to support community-based work that:

- 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

There are two application periods each year, with applications accepted year-round but evaluated based on these two deadlines: October 31st and March 31st.

To apply, please complete this form and submit it via email to this address:  
cp.yufa@gmail.com

Project contact name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of  
Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Title / Role in  
Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Organization Mailing  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City / Province: \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Applicant's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Agree (where signature can't be supplied):

By selecting "agree" you agree to have your information passed on to YUFA-CP

Please respond to each of these questions, either with a short paragraph or in point form.

<p>What are your project goals? What do you hope to achieve? (e.g., Our goal is to help youth in the Jane Finch area gain access to...; This project will bring together expert mentors and...)</p>	
<p>Tell us a little bit about your organization or group. (e.g., size, history, names of individuals directly involved)</p>	
<p>Has this project been funded by YUFA-CP before? If yes, please provide some details of this past funding.</p>	
<p>Is this a new or emerging initiative, or is it part of ongoing work? If it is ongoing, please provide some details  (e.g., previous events/projects, number</p>	

<p>of participants/attendees helped).</p>	
<p>How will you complete the project? What is the timeline for key steps and activities? Please provide expected dates for key milestones.</p> <p>(e.g., Mid -May 2021: Secure additional funding; End - June 2021: Assemble team - members and complete training.)</p>	
<p>Is this project also connected to other community groups? If so, which groups and what is the history of your collaboration?</p>	
<p>Who else is involved in the completion of this work? What are their roles in the project? If you will be hiring people to complete work, how will these people be recruited and chosen?</p>	

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Please provide a project budget for the amount requested, with a description of how the funds will be used. If any individual(s) will receive honoraria (max. \$500 per person), please provide the full names of those individuals, if possible.

Item	Description	Amount

Total request: \_\_\_\_\_

A 1-2 page report describing how the funding was used, with accompanying receipts, must be submitted within three months of receiving the grant. Funded applications may also be invited to provide a description of the project for the YUFA-CP Website.