



Check it out!

A major accomplishment of the 2008-09 *Experience This!* participants was the production of a 27-minute audio podcast called *Tie Your Shoe With A White Ribbon: Walking the Line Between Love and Hate*. Our youth worked in partnership with the White Ribbon Campaign and GlobalAware Independent Media to educate the public on preventing violence against women. You can find it posted with the National Film Board Citizenshift site (http://citizen.nfb.ca/node/25009&term_tid=4)

You are invited to Self Serve!

An evening of fun and relaxation

DATE: An evening in late spring
TIME: Whenever you'd like!
ATTIRE: PJs, sweats, lounging clothes, a snuggly
WHO: The people you love most
WHERE: Your very own living room

Sound like an evening you'd like to indulge in? Look for more details coming your way in the new year!

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Hope through hoops: Ken Bryan learns to help himself by helping kids

By Christine Wong



At the renovation site of the new \$2 million supper club he's helping to launch in Toronto's club district, Ken Bryan manages to keep a calm confidence despite the chaos.

"It's Art Deco inspired," says Bryan during a visit to The Roosevelt Room Supper Club. "The main focus will be on service, food and people."

Bryan can smile amid the rubble and racket of this massive project because he's used to surviving chaos and coming out the other side. The makeover of this downtown building is nothing compared to the transformation Bryan has gone through himself with the help of *Serve!*.

"Serve! saves lives by changing lives," Bryan says. "Everything I am, I owe to that program."

Bryan was born in Toronto to Jamaican parents. Shortly following his birth, he returned to Jamaica with his mother, who was deported after being falsely implicated in a shoplifting incident.

HOPE THROUGH HOOPS... CONTINUED ON PAGE 5

Experience This! graduation



"I know each of us is capable of accomplishing our dreams."

different to the group. Some members of the group brought humour and some had amazing talents, for example dancing or writing. Whenever someone needed help there was always someone willing to help out. We encouraged each other to be on time and work through challenges.

"I have made some amazing friends here at Serve!. I learned something from each of you which I will apply to situations as they evolve daily. I know that each one of us is capable of accomplishing our dream. I wish you all great success in your future endeavours. To the staff a heartfelt thank you. We could not have gotten this far without you."

**Nadia, *Experience This!*
Valedictorian Speech 2009**

"When I first came to the program I was hoping it would help me get my life back into focus by giving me structure. I made a lot of bad choices in the past with school and I was unable to graduate. I was hoping this program would help me to stay on track and keep me busy while I figured out what I was going to do in the future with my schooling, such as applying for school and getting references. I was able to access relevant information about school, like how to apply for OSAP.

"We started the program not knowing each other well and we are leaving with fond memories of the time we spent together—challenging ourselves and having fun. Even when we felt like quitting because we accumulated a lot of points or because of other things that were happening in our personal lives we stayed focused and dedicated to finishing the program.

"We all have unique personalities that have helped us and the team to succeed. Each of us brought something

"I learned budgeting skills and many different life skills which I can apply to my daily life. This program has given me the opportunity to do the things I needed in order for me to plan for my future.

"Helping out in the community has been a really beneficial experience for all of us. We learned organizational skills, customer service skills and many other things from the staff and the members of the places that we got to work at. It has also given us work experiences and added to our network of contacts and references, while opening our eyes to some things that are happening in our communities.

What one parent had to say about Serve!

"I had the opportunity of sending my daughter to Serve! for 6 months. The structure of the program catering towards youth is amazing and the facilitators have a very friendly approach towards the youth...I noticed how comfortable she started feeling with herself as well as the people around her. Serve! helped her understand how she can bring positive changes in people surrounding her. She got a better understanding of being non-judgemental, harm reduction and anti-oppression. I wish Serve! would expand and reach out to youth in all priority neighbourhoods because they are our future. Empowering youth to make changes will help them build a strong community which in turn will lead to lower violence and dropout rates. I am proud of the work Serve! does and I hope they continue to work wonders with the youth. I thank all facilitators and staff for creating a difference!"

Sajada

Serve! Becomes Mackenzie Financial Charitable Foundation Partner

This year *Serve!* became a Mackenzie Financial Charitable Foundation Partner. This support helped to fund *Experience This!*, a comprehensive, tailored and holistic full-time program where youth aged 17-24 are grouped into teams, engage in experiential service learning programs, and are mentored by an experienced staff person. The program helps the youth to expand their skills in various ways including budgeting, time management, career development, goal setting, and anger management.

Rob Neish, Senior Vice President, Sales and Marketing, Mackenzie Financial, got involved with *Serve!* through friends about five years ago. He had attended several *Serve!* events and met the youth the programs help. When *Serve!* became one of Mackenzie Financial Charitable Foundation's Friend charities in 2006, he quickly signed on as relationship manager. Since then, *Serve!* has provided an increasing number

of volunteer opportunities for Mackenzie employees.

Since it was founded in 1967, Mackenzie Financial has been committed to the core values of philanthropy, community spirit and volunteerism. It is a three-time recipient of the Imagine Canada "New Spirit of Community" Corporate Citizenship Award and is a part of Imagine's group of Caring Companies.

Besides making donations, Mackenzie employees are given one paid day off a year to volunteer at a charitable organization of their choice and through its charitable foundation, the Mackenzie Charitable Giving Fund, Mackenzie raises money for its 14 charitable partners and talks to its clients about philanthropy.

"We are extremely grateful that Mackenzie Financial has supported *Serve!* for the past three years with significant financial contributions,"



"Once you see the results, you tend to fall in love with the program."

**Rob Neish, Sr. V.P. Sales and Marketing,
Mackenzie Financial**

said Alison Caird, Executive Director. "*Serve!* would like to partner in additional ways with Mackenzie, and believes that their employees could offer so much to our youth. We look forward to the potential and possibilities of a strengthened partnership!"



Big Night in Rosedale Raises \$100,000 for Serve!

Colin Mochrie and Seamus O'Regan MC'd this fabulous, backyard music-fest with sensational acts ranging from the electrifying Arkells, genteel Dala, harmonic Lunch At Allen's, and the powerful Carole Pope. The event raised \$100,000 for *Serve!*.

Thank you to Big Night in Rosedale's Corporate Chair Mark Gaskin, Event Co-Chairs Catherine Davey and David Kines, the events committee, and our hosts Mark and Maryann Gaskin, and Jane Ferguson and John Offutt.

Toronto Challenge Raises Over \$8,000 For Serve! Youth

On a beautiful day in June, twenty-three volunteers walked and ran for *Serve!* in the Toronto Challenge. This year, the event was hosted by Toronto Homes for the Aged, with over 53 community partners raising money for their organizations. *Serve!* hoofers included: Jacqui Allard, Arlene Bartolome, Alison Caird, Mary Cremer, Aramita De Melo, Richard Fedorowicz, Charleen Goodwin, Craig Gatten, Stephanie Ho, Kaif Khan, Elaine Munro, Richard Nestor, Yeny Paz, Cinthya Pazarro De Wilson, Jeff Reinhart, Josée Rheault, Wendy St. Clair, Stacey Taraniuk, and Mark Wilson.

Appreciation is also extended to David Mordecai for staffing the *Serve!* booth.



Donating Time and Talent

Volunteering and community service is a fundamental value of *Serve!* and a cornerstone of our program model for diverse and at-risk youth. We believe that engaging young people in meaningful leadership roles in their communities, creates opportunities for them to learn and grow. Youth participants discover their self-worth as they realize that others need and value them. As a result they become leaders and role models along the way to achieving their own personal goals.

When our community steps up and volunteers their time at *Serve!*, they are believing in our youth. They are not paid to participate, they want to participate. The power this dynamic has on our youth is unprecedented and cannot be overstated. *Serve!* would like to extend its heartfelt appreciation to our current volunteers—and invite new volunteers to join us.

THANK YOU TO OUR COMMITTEE VOLUNTEERS

Big Night in Rosedale (BNR)

Committee Volunteers:

Catherine Davey – Co-chair
David Kines – Co-chair
Tina Basic
Mark Gaskin
Bruce Gauthier
Sherri Haigh
Lars Hansen
Danielle Kotras
Rob Lavery
Craig Merritt
Wendy Vincent

Fundraising Committee:

Charleen Goodwin – Chair
Jacqui Allard
Mark Gaskin
Erin McGillis
Rob Neish
Mark Wilson

Governance Committee:

Jeff Reinhart – Chair
Lai-King Hum – Past Chair
Matthew Cameron
Vanessa Emery

Marketing Committee:

Erin McGillis – Chair
Anusha Srijejanathan – Past Chair
Jacqui Allard
David Kines
Sanober Motiwala
Josée Rheault

Program Measurement Project:

Sanober Motiwala

Self-Serve! Committee:

Erin McGillis - Chair
Jacqui Allard
Ashley Boyce
Lai-King Hum
Sanober Motiwala
Rob Neish
Yew-Wai Wightman

Serve! Uncorked Committee:

Charleen Goodwin - Chair
Jonathan Cummings
Erin McGillis

Youth Engagement Project Team:

Jeff Reinhart - Lead
Zachary Tucker-Abramson
Vanessa Emery

THANK YOU TO OUR PROGRAM VOLUNTEERS

Anam Abbas
Emily Antflick
Chris Green

A warm-hearted thank you to BNR supporters: co-hosts Colin Mochrie and Seamus O'Regan, and musical guests the Arkells, Dala, Lunch At Allen's and Carole Pope.

THANK YOU TO OUR VOLUNTEERS

Administrative Volunteers:

Jacqueline Chithyoka
Ragat Jubra
Andrea Stroh

Web Developer:

Mark Harris

Serve! Uncorked Volunteers:

Kevin Arnsdorf
Tina Basic
Jessica Brigantino
Stephanie Briggs
Brenda Currier
Stephanie Mustachi
Lisa Perruzza
Lauren Riley
Zachary Tucker-Abramson

Big Night in Rosedale (BNR) Volunteers:

Kevin Arnsdorf
Tina Basic
Jessica Berman
Louise Berman
Lisa Bolshin
Andrew Burton
Sylvia Chai
Annie Chiu
Jonathan Cummings
Will Doyle
Malinda Dunfield
Wendy Fraser
Bruce Gauthier
Rachel Groskopf
David Hopley
Paul Jessop
Alicia Johnston
Susan Kettlewell
Amanda Kirshenblat
Patrick Louche
Adam Michaud
Liz Radzick
Jeff Reinhart
Paul Rosen
Aziz Sidi
Sarah Smith
Wendy Vincent
Yew-wai Wightman
Armine Willis-O'Connor
Sara Winnett

Hope through hoops... CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

When Bryan was two, his father took him back to Canada, telling the boy's mother it would be a temporary stay. But it was a lie, and Bryan never saw his mom again until he was 14.

Back in Toronto again, Bryan's father (who he refers to as a career criminal) eventually exited his life, at which point he was raised by his paternal grandmother, whose boyfriend was extremely violent.

"When I was four or five I remember seeing him stabbing some people and my grandmother trying to get the blood out of the carpet. It was totally crazy," Bryan remembers.

Bryan's grandmother eventually left her violent partner, but then placed her grandson in foster care. Bryan boomeranged between two different foster homes until he was about 16.

When his last foster mother moved to Ottawa, the teenager agreed to maintain upkeep of the Toronto rooming house she owned in exchange for cheap rent.

With no real job, educational path or adult guidance, Bryan slipped into an aimless lifestyle that landed him on the cusp of homelessness.

"I just started bouncing around, staying on different people's couches. I was looking for a job for about six months and I didn't know what I wanted to do in terms of college," he recalls.

That's when a friend told him about *Serve!* and the *Hope Through Hoops* project within *Serve!'s Experience This!* program. In the program, participants earned a stipend and used basketball as a springboard for teaching life skills to younger youth from Parkdale and Regent Park.

Though he lacked an adult mentor in his own life, Bryan signed on with the *Hope Through Hoops* project to take on

a leadership role for the first time in his life. Besides job skills development, the program provided Bryan with valuable links in Toronto's professional community.

"For one thing, I needed the money. And two, I realized it was a good opportunity. I was able to get mentored by people like V.P.'s from Scotiabank," he says.

Through helping the kids he coached, Bryan ultimately learned to help himself. The confidence and public speaking skills he built in the program helped him land future jobs in the financial services and marketing sectors. He even launched Firebrand Consulting, a marketing and promotional firm he sold three years ago.

He's now the Marketing Director at Glam City Media, where he focuses on promotions, event organizing and, of course, the launch of 'The Roosevelt Room Supper Club'.

Following *Serve!'s* tradition of helping the wider community as well as individuals, he's now on *Serve!'s* advisory council. And he hasn't forgotten what he gained back in 1996 as an unsure teenager overcoming a violent background.



"(*Serve!*) gives you hope and teaches you the skills you need to fill in the gaps in your life," Bryan says.

He notes that one of the kids he coached at *Hope Through Hoops* went from getting kicked out of school for pulling a gun on the principal to later setting up his own music studio.

"Everyone has challenges and it doesn't matter where you come from, whether it's Parkdale or Rosedale. It teaches you that if you put together a plan, work hard on it and follow through, you'll succeed."

To check out The Roosevelt Room Supper Club visit, www.theroosevelroom.ca

our vision:

To see all youth have an opportunity to change their lives through engagement in their own communities.

our mission:

Serve! engages diverse youth in experience-based education, teamwork and community involvement so that they can establish personal direction, overcome obstacles, achieve goals and become involved citizens and leaders.

our mandate:

Engaging Youth for Change.

Transitions

We bid a fond farewell to Melanie Stewart after 11 years. Over the course of her time with *Serve!* Melanie filled a variety of roles, her last position as Executive Director for the last 5 years. Melanie has accepted a position as Executive Director for Big Brothers and Sisters of Ajax/Pickering. Closer to home and still working with youth!

Grateful appreciation is extended to David Mordecai who acted as Interim Executive Director and assisted in the search for a new ED for *Serve!*

Farewell to Heidi Eisenhauer, Linda Reid, and Miriam Zelada who have moved on to pursue other opportunities that will allow them to achieve their long term goals, both professionally and personally.

Alison Caird joined as Executive Director of *Serve!* in March. Having dedicated her career to the non-profit and public sectors where she has held progressively senior positions with the Toronto Rehabilitation Institute, the University Health Network (Toronto General and Western hospitals), the North York Public Library, and the Children's Aid Societies' - Pape Adolescent Resource Centre. Alison believes strongly that community engagement is about people working collaboratively through inspired action, learning and leadership.

Alison has been the recipient of several awards and best practice designations from external organizations in the areas of leadership, strategic planning, standards and service development. She has been a proud and involved volunteer with various organizations – from being a big sister, to president of a day care board, from coaching soccer, to volunteering at an improv comedy club – for 30 years.

Alison believes that by driving bold visions for our common future we directly influence the prosperity and health of our communities. It is this philosophy, along with *Serve!*'s core principles of investing in youth, making a difference and being community service oriented that drew her to the organization. She invites you to join her in doing whatever it takes to "get more *Serve!* to more youth".

Coming soon...
a new website for *Serve!*
We'll keep you posted.

**Stay on top of what we're doing
at *Serve!* by joining us on Facebook:**
<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=11237126098>
or simply look up the group "*Serve!*" in the search function.



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Sarah Smith, Fund Development

Experience This!

Stephanie Fernandes, Program Coordinator

Step Up

Shane Dunn, Program Assistant
Samantha Baksh, Program Assistant
Raza Bahadur, Program Assistant

Making it Work

Stephanie Fernandes, Program Coordinator

Serve Up the Summer

Motu Awogbade, Assistant Program Coordinator
Ian Fleming, Team Leader
Saschoy Morris, Team Leader
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