

January 20, 2020

Delivered by Email

Toronto City Hall
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10th Floor, West Tower
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2
buc@toronto.ca

Dear Budget Committee:

Re: Deputation re Funding for Transform Community Café Inc.

This deputation is in support of the Proposed City of Toronto Budget 2020, particularly with respect to the \$1.1 million dedicated to the Community Recreation Growth Plan & Waitlist Management (“**Community Growth Plan**”).

We write on behalf of Transform Community Café Inc. (“**Transform**”), a youth-operated not-for-profit community organization that provides arts, literacy and social programs while doubling as a creative space in the midtown community. Transform would benefit greatly from the proposed allocation of funds.

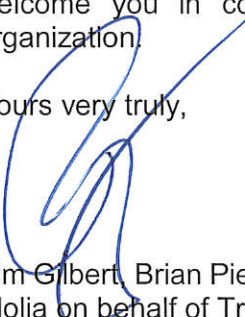
There is a rapidly growing problem within the City of Toronto concerning the lack of community activities for young people, especially underprivileged or marginalized youth. As Toronto continues to grow, the City will fall further behind in providing sufficient community programming for lower income families. In our experience, not-for-profit organizations face massive challenges in the form of rent increases and available space.

Underprivileged families looking to access community programming face an up-hill battle. The high prices of private organizations prevent underprivileged families from accessing for-profit community programming. While at the same time, prohibitively high operating costs prevent not-for-profit organizations from regularly and predictably offering similar services. Simply put, there is an ever-increasing gap between the need for community activities for low income families and the free services available to satisfy those needs.

Transform seeks to creatively fill this gap while providing young people with employment and skill-development opportunities. Located in the midtown community, Transform offers free arts and literacy programs as well as social programs for children from refugee families. This is all provided against the backdrop of a socially-conscious and youth-operated business venture, the Transform Community Café. Transform is an exemplary model for running community programming, wherein the beneficiaries are also the operators. The Café supports itself selling food and beverages like any other café, with the profits going towards Transform’s free workshops. Unfortunately, Transform is not immune to the financial hurdles mentioned above. Rent alone has doubled within the past five years and is a major barrier to Transform’s continued positive effect on the local community.

We request that you please implement the proposed \$1.1 million allocation to the Community Growth Plan. This funding is required to ensure the safe and effective operation of local community programming groups. Without funding, such groups may cease to exist. We also ask you to please consider an allocation of the Community Growth Plan funds to Transform Community Café Inc. Transform's model incorporates youth participants, volunteers, and government funding, which is critical to the development of community groups such as ours. We welcome you in contributing to the ongoing sustainability of our unique and wonderful organization.

Yours very truly,



Tim Gilbert, Brian Pierre, Elie Shermer, Tanya Mackie, Cynthia O'Connell, Farah Azad and Pippa Elolia on behalf of Transform Community Café Inc.