

Tropicana Welcomes New Executive Director – Raymund Guiste



Tropicana Community Services welcomes Raymund Guiste as the new Executive Director. Raymund was introduced to staff, members and the community by President Carol Comissiong at Tropicana's 39th Annual General Meeting.

Raymund joins the organization after a nearly 25 year career with the Financial Services Commission and the Ontario Human Rights Commission where his dispute resolution practice focused on addressing disputes in social justice and consumer protection contexts. He has also been lead consultant on a number of non-profit engagements where he worked to build capacity, shape organizational governance and achieve alignment of operating pillars for maximum effectiveness.

Raymund holds a Master of Laws (DR) from York University, Osgoode Hall Law School and is a highly experienced mediator and adjudicator. He brings to Tropicana, a passion for youth and a deep commitment to developing lasting relationships within the community and the organization.

Raymund remains active in the community, volunteering with a number of organizations. He sits on the Board of Directors of Shepherd Village Inc. Retirement and Long Term Care as well as on the Mediation Program Advisory Committee at Durham College. He has also volunteered his time with The Canadian Multicultural LEAD Organization for Mentoring and Training, The Stand Up Young Men's Conference and the Nelson Mandela Children's Fund Canada.

Welcome to Tropicana Raymund!

Tropicana Rising – An Evening of Food, Fun and Entertainment for All



On Friday June 7, 2019, Tropicana Community Services opened its doors for Tropicana Rising, an evening of food, fun, and entertainment in support of Tropicana Community Services' mental health programs.

The event was held at Tropicana Community Services' head office at 1385 Huntingwood Drive, where the community room was transformed into an elegant banquet setting for the evening. The event began at 6:00pm and guests were greeted by the sweet sound of the steel pan which was beautifully played by Nicolas Patrick, a student of Tropicana's steel pan program.

Guests were guided into two of Tropicana's classrooms where they enjoyed a selection of vegan hors d'oeuvres and tropical punches before being directed into the community room for the remainder of the programme.

The evening's emcee was Jay Martin who did not disappoint with clean, tasteful comedy.

Speakers included Akwatu Khenti, Assistant Deputy Minister, Anti-Racism Directorate, Judian Alexis, a counselling participant who shared her story about the impact of the SNAP program on her family, and MP Shaun Chen who extended warm greetings to attendees.

Chef Selwyn Richards offered up a buffet-style dinner with a selection of Caribbean favourites, including rice and peas, jerk chicken and escoveitch of red snapper filet.

Guests were also entertained by singer/songwriter Jay Harmony who channelled Tina Turner through her opening song, interacted with the audience and encouraged guests to shower her with donations which were then directed to Tropicana's mental health programs. DJ Glen C also kept the party going.

By all accounts, Tropicana Rising was a success and we look forward to another successful event in 2020.

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT OSAYI OKUNS



All through high school and his years at the University of Ottawa, Osayi Okuns helped his peers and juniors become comfortable with Math and Science. It's just something that he's always done. It's no surprise then that the Electrical Engineer employed as a Network Engineering Manager at Bell, also

tutors grade 9-12 students in Math and Science through Tropicana's Increase Your Success tutorial program.

Osayi was looking for ways to volunteer when Tropicana representatives visited his workplace. He recalls being drawn to what looked to be a fun place and liked that Tropicana is operated by people of colour. He felt that helping kids develop and better themselves through education would be a great way for him to give back. Osayi has been volunteering with Tropicana's tutoring program for almost two years now. Calm and friendly, he is seen as an older brother by the kids in the program. He believes that the kids "appreciate that [he's] able to have conversations with them and make them

feel heard." He also makes an effort to ensure that they not only hear but also apply what they are learning.

"It's fulfilling to help guide kids through hard work to reach that eureka moment, where they feel like they finally understand. I believe that has the power to change their trajectory in life. It gives them the confidence they need to overcome future challenges."

Osayi feels he has a stake in the kids' futures and wants to ensure that they are on the right path and focused on their personal growth and success.

NANDO'S SERVES UP ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL EVENT FOR TROPICANA



Staff at Tropicana Community Services extend a heartfelt THANK YOU to the team at Nando's Kennedy Commons for supporting our clients through the proceeds from the 2019 Nando's Dash event. As in 2018, Nando's held a dine and dash event where they offered free chicken and fries to the community, in exchange for non-perishable items which would then be donated to Tropicana.

The event held on Sunday, June 23, 2019 drew a larger crowd than the previous year and yielded \$125 in cash donations as well as an astounding 99.52% increase in non-perishable foods received (826 pounds)!

Hats off to the Nando's crew for a smoothly run event which was impactful to the community, including youth in Tropicana's life-skills programs, women support groups and many families experiencing food insecurity. Our organization truly cannot help those in need without initiatives such as the Nando's Dash and we look forward to the continued partnership.

*Thank you **Nando's** for your continued support!*

Congratulations **START** for Life Graduates

On July 11, 2019, 14 participants celebrated the end of Series #44 of the START for Life program. START for Life enables adults from all walks of life to come together for 10 weeks to examine and discuss positive social skills, anger and emotional control, as well as moral education. The program offers the opportunity to discover how these three facets interact to foster healthy relationships with others. The following are testimonials from two of the graduates:

"...we learned through role-plays, moral dilemma or just talking...what I feel [that I improved on] the most in this program is my communication skills, I learned to communicate in a way to have a better attitude, and that actually helped me find a job. I noticed my interviews started getting better and I landed a job that is hard to get into."

Carl - July 2019

"I just want to thank you all, for all your help and being patient with us. We are all different, and I think we all learn a little bit from each other. I think each one of us is what made these sessions entertaining, because it was long. The skits are not something I loved but once you do it, you are living it and learning from it. It is a slow process but you are going to continue to learn. Thank you."

Yvette - July 2019

TYJC Participants Volunteer with Habitat for Humanity



The Toronto Youth Job Corp (TYJC) has been trying for over a year to have its program participants experience a different kind of volunteer setting. The TYJC Pre-Placement Supervisor was able to connect with Jeff Abraham, Manager of Volunteering Resources, Habitat for Humanity, to discuss community partnership opportunities.

The TYJC participants were placed at 140 Pinery Trail with Habitat's Build Site Crew Leaders conducting undertakings such as: sanding, painting, siding, framing, flooring, drywall prep and application, measuring and cutting of plywood for ceilings, using drills and drill bits to bed in screws into walls, mixing cement to fill holes in walls and assisting in site clean-up. Crew Leaders were very helpful and patient with the participants who did not have first-hand experience prior to that day.

Participants gained practical experience in the skilled trades, met other like-minded volunteers, networked with individuals and gave back to their

community by helping with the building of affordable homes.

The participants indicated that they were happy to learn something new and be a part of building homes for low income families. They also felt that making a direct impact helped them to feel valuable to the community. Some thought that volunteering impacted their ability to explore their interests when it comes to their personal career goals and recognized that it can lead to employment.

Participants generally felt that they benefited from the opportunity and would do it again, as well as encourage others to volunteer in their communities.

Thank you Habitat for Humanity!

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You can donate monthly through pre-authorized gifts by credit card (Visa, MasterCard and Amex) or by submitting a void cheque for pre-authorized payments through your bank account.

Simply let us know the amount that you would like to give, and where you would like to designate your gift. Information about your monthly donation can be provided to us by fax, mail, phone, or online through canadahelps.org.

Be sure to include your name, address and telephone number so that we may properly acknowledge your gift and provide you with a charitable tax receipt.