



MEDIA RELEASE

Food is love: A picnic in Support of the Old East Village

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Youth Opportunities Unlimited (YOU) and ATN Access for Persons with Disabilities (ATN) with support from the City of London and local businesses are holding a free community event in support of families affected by Wednesday's explosion and fires on Woodman Avenue in London's Old East Village neighbourhood.

Through their respective social enterprises, YOU's You Made it Café and ATN's Old East Village Grocer, YOU and ATN are inviting the community to a picnic at Boyle Park from 12pm-2pm on Sunday, August 18. "We're putting food on the table," says ATN Executive Director Andrea Topham, "so that we can gather together and care for each other. The neighbourhood is overflowing with the desire to support these families, but some people don't know where to begin. We're starting by bringing food and sharing with everyone: all of us together."

"We're trying to create an intentional space," says YOU Executive Director Steve Cordes, "Where the community can acknowledge these families and the ways their lives have been disrupted and also show gratitude for the outpouring of support. It's a celebration of resilience and love."

The event is open and free to all: the families affected, the wider community, and those who still seek to donate to or support relief efforts. "We want to make this opportunity happen," says Topham. "We're feeling the same need to connect with our neighbours as everyone else, and we're going to do our best to reach other businesses and community members to say *if you have something to bring, please do. If you have love and compassion to share, come ahead.*"

"The neighbourhood has been carrying a big load. Not everyone will have the time and energy to come. But if you feel like you need to be there, then this is for you" adds Cordes.

WHERE: Boyle Park, outside the Boyle Memorial Community Centre, 530 Charlotte St (at Princess Ave)

WHEN: 12:00-2:00pm, Sunday, August 18

WHO: Hosted by YOU and ATN; open to all

COST: Free

ACCESSIBILITY: close to LTC route #s 2 & 20; Accessible washrooms on site.

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