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"Jane and Finch" to become "University Heights"

David Ros

Issue date: 10/16/07 Section: News

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Excalibur (York University)

TORONTO (CUP) - A Toronto city councillor is calling for one of the city's toughest neighbourhoods to re-brand itself as "University Heights." Anthony Perruzza, councillor for the notorious Jane and Finch neighbourhood claimed that the re-branding will bring the community and the university together, continuing to fight the neighbourhood's reputation for violence and hopelessness.

"University Heights, and York University, they re-enforce positive thoughts," Perruzza said. "I'm hoping that it will kick-start a renaissance of the area."

Richard Fisher, chief marketing and communications officer for York University, said that York supports the concept, pointing out that The Village, located beside York University, was deliberately built to accommodate the surrounding neighbourhood.

"York really wants to reach out to the neighbourhood, particularly during the 50th year [next year], so we are very much in step with the initiative," he said. The city is slated to change some of the neighbourhood street signs to feature the new University Heights label.

However, some local groups believe the name change will do nothing to address the real issues that affect their community.

"I thought maybe it was just a PR thing," said Paul Nguyen, webmaster of Jane-Finch.com, a community activist website. "All this re-branding and all this political-correctness actually makes things worse and it just distracts from the real problem."

A 2006 documentary about the neighbourhood, called Lost in the Struggle, found that it had a higher rate of immigrants and people new to Canada, a higher rate of youth and children, a higher rate of single parents, a higher rate of low-income families, a higher proportion of rental households, a higher rate of unemployment, a lower percentage of population with university education (despite being located next to York University), and a higher percentage of population with less than a high school education.

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POLL

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- Meh, I don't even care
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- I've got my ears open
- Let's protest right now!
- This is absurd, I want LONGER seminars!

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Andre Wisdom

posted 10/22/07 @ 2:27 PM EST

My name is Andre Wisdom I am a 17 year old student at James Cardinal McGuigan S.S., I am a resident of the Jane-Finch area. I grew up here I went to school in this community, I am here 24 hours a day 7 days a weeks & 365 days a year. (Continued...)

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