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Nicholas Davis

Mon, November 14, 2005



'At least they care'

PM, mayor unveil anti-gang fund during visit to Jane-Finch

By NICHOLAS DAVIS

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR



Mark Simms' neighbourhood took front and centre stage last week when Prime Minister Paul Martin and Mayor David Miller used Jane and Finch as a backdrop for the announcement of the new Gun Violence and Gang Prevention Fund.

The fund will be used to try to prevent young people from joining gangs and to encourage active gang members to get out.

"I guess it's good but they should have come a long time ago," says Simms. "It's sad they had to come now, when the problems are so serious in Jane and Finch. It would have been better if they had been proactive instead of reactive.

Not all of the \$50 million announced by Martin is for Jane and Finch. The fund is being used to help gang violence nationally. But with gangs being a major source of the problems in Jane and Finch, much of the additional \$1.9 million earmarked for Toronto will find its way to the troubled neighbourhood.

"I would have taken them to the bottom of Lane, where I grew up," Simms says.

Simms, who also helps run a website called jane-finch.com, says it would have been a real eye-opener for Martin and the mayor if they went into the homes of the people who live in what he calls the Jane and Finch "hotspots."

"All we're seeing now ... are the effects of a neglected community. The community can't be neglected much longer. The kids who are shooting now are having babies. Think about that."

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