

# City of Refuge

Fall 2002

A Voice from the Street

Vol. 1 - Issue 2

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## A Place to Call Home: A Place to Belong

Our people have often experienced painful, unhealthy living environments for much of their lives. They've slept on benches and concrete, hidden in ravines and back alleys, and paid too much for drug-riddled rooming houses.

Many of our community members need a housing opportunity to allow them to rebuild their lives, to begin again from the ground up. An opportunity that is long-term because change doesn't occur overnight. An opportunity that is supportive of all aspects of their lives, not simply a roof over their heads. Essentially, they need a surrogate family. And we have developed a pilot project to do just that.

We envision a modest house in which 5 people can live together, each with their own bedroom. Three individuals ("core members") would be in transition from the street to healthier lifestyles and two people ("anchor members") would be committed to developing community with the other members, as they pursue their studies or career. While no staff would live on-site, they will be very involved in providing ongoing support to the core members, and one will serve as the house facilitator to assist members in negotiating agreements about household living.

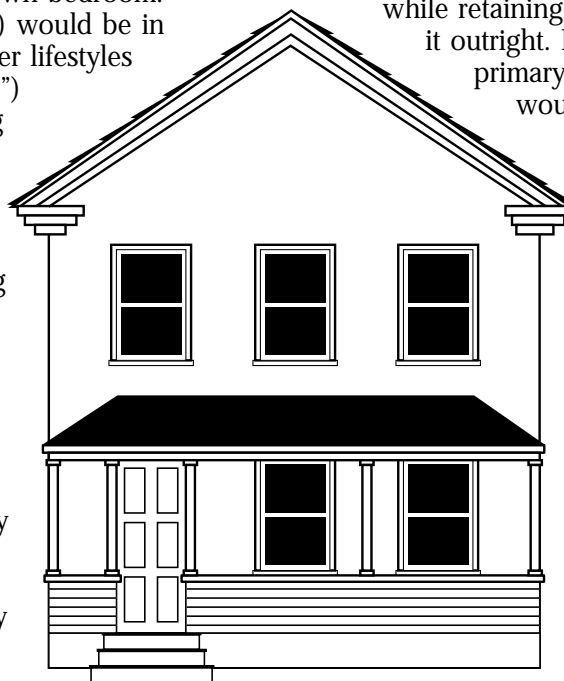
Ideally, the house will be within a 30 minute commute from Sanctuary and we are focusing our house search efforts on East Toronto, where a number of other Sanctuary staff and church leaders live.

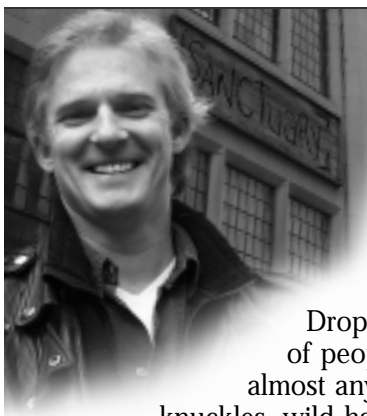
How will the house be funded? Our goal is for the ongoing operation of the house to be financially self-supporting, with each member paying rent geared to income. The rent would cover the mortgage payments, utilities and other household expenses.

In order for the mortgage payments to be manageable, we estimate needing to raise 60% of the purchase price up-front. We are pursuing two ways of raising the downpayment: straight tax-receiptable donations and a creative loan program. With a loan agreement, a supporter would provide a portion of the downpayment (e.g. \$25,000) for ten years and then participate in any increase in the house's value over that time. This is a way of supporting the housing project while retaining the capital, as opposed to donating it outright. Either way, we recognize that the primary motivation for participating would be philanthropic rather than financial gain.

Our hope is that we will be blessed with the necessary funds and then a suitable house early in 2003. ***We will keep you posted!***

If you would like further information about participating in this project, please contact Greg Paul at (416) 922-0628 ext.13 or [gregp@sanctuaryministries.on.ca](mailto:gregp@sanctuaryministries.on.ca); or Kathy Church at ext.11 or [kathyc@sanctuaryministries.on.ca](mailto:kathyc@sanctuaryministries.on.ca).





# A View From Here

by Greg Paul, Director

Drop-ins at Sanctuary are full of people who would stand out almost anywhere else. Tattooed knuckles, wild hair and beards, missing teeth and spectacular bruises are all pretty common. Faces often look like road maps of all the places you don't want to go – road maps that have been crumpled up and left in the glove compartment. But the first time Don came into a Wednesday lunch time drop-in, he stood out.

For starters, he was the biggest guy in the room by a significant margin. And despite his size (he towers over me), he didn't swagger. No tattoos or scars. He didn't look rough and tough, or swear a lot, and his face was relatively unlined. He wore gray track pants and a white golf shirt, both stretched tight – it's hard to find over-size clothing in the donation bins of hostels and church basements. He also wore a hopelessly lost expression in his deep brown eyes.

Most people come to a few drop-ins before I make any serious attempt to connect with them beyond a simple welcome. Most have been carefully edging their way into our community for months or even years before they're ready to talk about what is really happening in their lives. Don stood out there, too.

He sat down beside me, introduced himself, and within minutes was explaining the pain he wore as plainly as a coat. He'd had a good job. He had a wife, Francis, and a nice apartment. When Francis died of cancer, his world fell apart. With few other real supports in his life, Don lost the job, lost the apartment, lost the will to do anything much more than survive.

Don's first visit to Sanctuary was about 4 years ago. At first he came infrequently, then more regularly as he began to develop friendships with other people in the community. About two years ago, Karen Paul (our drop-in co-ordinator) enlisted Don's help in the kitchen. Noticing his quiet competence and light touch with other volunteers, she gradually handed over more and more responsibility and authority to him until he was essentially running the cooking crew for one drop-in every week.

He loved it! He had trouble getting to sleep on Friday nights, because he couldn't wait to get into the kitchen and start cooking breakfast on Saturday morning. The confidence Karen showed in him, and the delight in doing a job well, lit a new fire in him.

Last winter, he started job hunting for the first time since Francis' death. Finally, he found work through a temp agency. It was general labour, on a short term basis, for little more than minimum wage – and an hour and a half on the bus in each direction. The job was only supposed to last a month, but the company stretched it to two because they were so impressed with his work ethic. Finally, he was told, "We think you're great, and we've kept you on as long as we can. But there just isn't anything else that we can get you to do around here."

Despondent because he knew the temp agency had no other jobs on the horizon, he called Karen to ask her to pray for him before taking the longer-than-ever bus ride home. By the time he got there, there was a message waiting for him from the agency. The company had reconsidered, and wanted Don for another two weeks.

That job did finally come to an end. But Don's new-found sense of purpose, and his recovered delight in productive work didn't. This past summer, he managed our entire kitchen for all our summer drop-ins, working on contract. He did such a great job that we've extended that contract to the end of the year, and we're trying to figure out if he should be joining the staff on a permanent basis.

Make no mistake – Don's journey is about much more than just returning to work. It's a spiritual journey. A church-goer for most of his life, he has encountered and embraced the living Christ in a whole new way. He's discovered that dignified, meaningful work is, for the follower of Jesus, a spiritual enterprise. That conviction will live on in him regardless of where he ends up working. And, we hope, he'll continue to call Sanctuary home.

***"That everyone may eat and drink, and find satisfaction in all his work – this is the gift of God..."***

(Ecclesiastes 3:13)

If the concept of work as spiritual enterprise, and a means of bringing healing to damaged lives, is intriguing to you, check out Mustard Tree, Sanctuary's fledgling employment/training program.

Contact Wayne Rumsby, who has recently joined our staff to direct Mustard Tree, at 416-409-9072 or [wayne@sanctuaryministries.on.ca](mailto:wayne@sanctuaryministries.on.ca) ■

## What Does Sanctuary Mean to Me?

About two years ago I first walked through the doors of Sanctuary. The kitchen renovations were almost done. I was on the outs with my family, and I wasn't sure if I believed in God/Jesus. Thanks to the friends and family I found here, I'm putting my life in some sort of order. There is always someone to talk to here. Sanctuary has become a home for me.

by Jon Fletcher

# Faces of Our Community

## Eunice Kay

Eunice Kay volunteers regularly to produce and mail out acknowledgements to our financial supporters. A mom of 3 and proud grandmother of 6, she has admitted to feeling a little uncomfortable at times with our rowdy crowd. Still, she visits occasionally in the drop-in on Wednesday, and lightens the load on our Office Manager, Linda. Eunice's husband, Ted, is a member of the Sanctuary Board of Directors. They attend Forestbrook Bible Chapel.



## Alan Beattie

Alan Beattie has been a member of the Sanctuary community since before there was a Sanctuary! As newlyweds, he and his wife Colleen were part of the group that met for prayer and worship a couple of times each month as the ministry was being conceived ten years ago. They were the first of the suburban supporters of Sanctuary to move into the city in response to God's calling to ministry here. Now with three impossibly cute children (Aidan, 5, Zachary, 3, and Cassidy, 1), Alan is a member both of the Sanctuary church leadership and the Board of Directors.



## Forestview Church

As a relatively new but fast-growing church plant in north Burlington, the congregation of Forestview Church made an astounding donation of \$100,000 to our capital campaign three years ago to help us buy our building. It's not only the amount that's amazing – this church still meets in a public school gym itself! Their generosity continues in gifts of prayer, water, socks, money and host of other needs. Greg visits there regularly to preach, and is always impressed by the depth of worship, and the atmosphere of vulnerability. We're glad to hear that they're very close to finally purchasing a building of their own.

## Julie Hanna

Julie has been coming around Sanctuary for a number of years now. She has received food from us on the street and in drop-ins. She has celebrated and worshipped with us. There were times when Julie feared she would be just another street statistic, found dead either in a laneway or behind a heap of garbage. But her cries to God of repentance and help have not gone unanswered. Today, after 14 months free of drugs and abuse, she is hopeful. She has been able to spend time with her teenage daughter, she has stable housing, and she has plans for schooling and employment. A 4-day canoe trip this past summer, along with three other women from Sanctuary, provided her with healthy reflective time and taught her some valuable lessons on perseverance. Overwhelmed by the portages, she had to make some deliberate choices to keep going. And she did. Each day, amidst the ups-and-downs of piecing her life back together, Julie makes choices to "keep going". **Yeah Julie!!**



## In Memory of...

**Cecile**, an Ojibway woman in her forties, passed away during September. She was homeless, and died after striking her head in a fall. Cecile had been a member of our community for many years, and always had a joke and a hug at the ready. She is especially missed by her long-time partner, Houston.

**Carol Tackaberry** volunteered at our Thursday night drop-in for about a year and a half along with her special friend Dana Rutkay. She was struck by a car while walking to work in August. We miss her bubbly personality, her energy, and the homebaked cakes she brought with her.

**Wayne**, a proud Newfoundlander (he was born before it became a province of Canada), was nevertheless a long time resident of Toronto. He lived at Seaton House for the last couple of years of his life, and died of cancer in September. We're glad that, in his final illness, he reconnected with family members who had lost him for years. His brother and sister were at his side when he died.

# Staff Comings & Goings

We are delighted that **Keren Elumir**, our long-time staff nurse, has returned to Sanctuary following the birth of her daughter, Ekko, last October. Ekko is crawling and standing on her own, and her parents expect her to take off on them any day! Keren is providing nursing care at the Saturday drop-in, on the Health Bus, and with visits to our community members in hospital. **Welcome back!**

**Erinn Oxford** and her husband Dion are eagerly awaiting the birth of their first child, due mid-December. Erinn hopes to return to Sanctuary next summer on a part-time basis to continue her work teaching piano and directing the street choir, as well as staffing drop-ins and providing street outreach. We pray for every blessing on this family.

Sanctuary is excited to announce that **Lyf Stolte** will be joining our staff in January to develop a drama program with our community. Lyf is a graduate of Rosebud School of the Arts in Alberta and is currently involved in theatre productions in Saskatoon.

**Welcome!**

**Wayne Rumsby** has joined the staff as Director of Mustard Tree, a training and employment program for community members, scheduled to launch early in the new year. While Wayne and his wife, Linda (our Office Manager), have worshipped at Sanctuary for the past six years, they were formally commissioned for their ministries by Don Valley Bible Chapel in September.



That time of year most anticipated by some and most dreaded by others. A time to rejoice in the capacity to share with others or to mourn the emptiness of loss and impoverishment. Ever mindful of the tensions that this time of year presents to our community,

we seek creative ways to bless one another and to distribute responsibly the incredible amount of resources that come our way.

We'll host an evening celebration for our women prostitutes complete with food, gifts, silly games and carol singing. There'll be baking afternoons to meet the requests for favorite Christmas treats. Gift bags filled with good things will be delivered to shelters that provide care for our street women, and van loads of food will be donated from school drives.

Huge quantities of turkey, potatoes, vegetables and pies will be supplied for the Christmas Banquet on Dec. 23. Festive decorations will adorn the room and tables. Even Santa Claus will make an appearance distributing carefully prepared gift bags and presents.

A rooming house for 60 men in the downtown core will celebrate Christmas day together, starting with coffee and muffins and ending with a bountiful dinner, all of which will be hosted by men from our community who live there. Donated table decorations will contribute to the sense of celebration.

In addition, various community members will be invited to join extended family gatherings throughout the holiday season. Each and every event and detail will bear testimony to the living Christ: **God's Christmas gift to us.**

## Yes, I want to partner with you.

- ☐ My church/workplace should hear about Sanctuary.
- ☐ I would like to participate in a **street orientation**.
- ☐ I commit to **pray** for the Sanctuary community.
- ☐ I want to **financially support** your ministry:
  - ☐ where most needed
  - ☐ Staff Name \_\_\_\_\_
  - ☐ Street Outreach
  - ☐ Meal Programs
  - ☐ Health Care
- ☐ I would like to support Sanctuary on a **monthly basis**.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ Province \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_

Tel.: \_\_\_\_\_

Email.: \_\_\_\_\_

Please make donations payable to: **Sanctuary Ministries of Toronto**

11-02

## Sanctuary responds to a deep need with the Mustard Tree Workshop

Our goal is to open a woodworking shop early in the New Year and we need four kinds of partners:

- 1) Praying Partners - people committed to being part of a prayer network
- 2) Working Partners - volunteers, short or long term, to help set up the shop
- 3) Financial Partners - people committed to financially supporting this shop on a short or long term basis
- 4) Equipment Partners - people with woodworking equipment to donate

This is a new ministry initiative and we hope it calls new people to respond. If you are a vocational/hands-on type of person and you have long wondered how to get involved in God's mission, then you should consider Mustard Tree.

If your interested in this new iniative,  
contact Wayne Rumsby  
at 416-409-9072 or wayne@sanctuaryministries.on.ca.

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