

City of Refuge

WINTER 2006

A Voice from the Street

Vol. 5- Issue 1

Extending a Welcome by Alan Beattie

Sanctuary drop-in meals are perhaps our most visible and characteristic activity. It's also the one that is most likely 'expected' by folks who hear that we are an organization involved in caring for friends living on the streets of Toronto.

We host three meals per week: Wednesday lunch, Thursday dinner and Saturday breakfast. Anywhere from 80 to 180 people enjoying a meal together. About 20 to 30 different people typically get involved in setting up tables, food preparation, serving, washing pots and pans, clean-up. Quite an operation, really!

Some are young, some are older. A lot of men, some women. Some "clean and sober", many not. Some talking with friends, others talking to themselves. A veritable pot pourri of humanity, each at a slightly different stage of life and each with a story uniquely theirs which has brought them through our doors on this day.

So why do we do it?

Maybe the answer seems obvious: "They need food, don't they?" or "It's cold outside and they need somewhere to warm up" or "They need clean socks or a sleeping bag or toothpaste." While any or all of those may be true, they aren't the primary motivators for us in opening our doors to our friends. We're glad to offer those gifts to people in our neighbourhood, but more importantly, drop-ins afford us a wonderful opportunity to do what we believe lies at the heart of what we aim to do: To seek, develop & experience healthy Christ-centered community.

Community. Community is about relationships. Relationships of varying degrees. Some vague familiarity. Some cordiality. Some close friendship. Relationships that are inter-connected and overlapping.

We focus on this need for relationship above all others because, as Jesus said "Life is more than food, and the body is more than clothing." Physical needs aren't the most significant of all.

At times, they are the most visible. And often, they seem the most urgent. But rarely, I think, are they the most fundamental.

What makes your life good? What gets you out of bed in the morning? Good food? Having a roof over your head? Clean socks on your feet? Unlikely.

More likely, relationships of some description wake you up: the awareness that you are a welcome and contributing member of one or more communities. Maybe family...your spouse, your children, your parents, your siblings. Maybe work...the part you play, the friendships you enjoy in the lunch room, the banter at the water cooler. Maybe faith...the conviction that you exist in relationship with God and that you live out that conviction and that sense of purpose within a community of like-minded friends.

This is why we think of our drop-ins as foundational to our goal of building community: Because this is where we get to sit next to a friend on a couch and invest in friendship pure and simple. Not a

relationship driven by an agenda of giving or receiving practical assistance. Not a professional appointment with staff on one side of the desk and client on the other. Not a one-on-one relationship isolated from his friends, my friends or the rest of the community. A simple relationship of friend-to-friend journeying together through this chapter of life within the context of a big and diverse community.

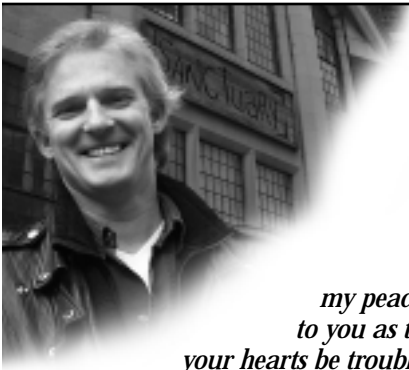
We believe these relationships are so foundational because, in relationship, we begin to realize and even become who God created us to be. For many of us, it is easy to take for granted the ways in which healthy relationships do this. But think about it...

When someone enjoys being with me just for who I am, I begin

...continued on page 4



Women's Drop-in on Tuesday mornings



A View From Here

by Greg Paul

"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid."

Jesus, speaking to his disciples just before his crucifixion (John 14:27)

Peace seems to be in such scant supply these days – globally, nationally, in our city, our neighbourhood, in my own life – that I'm not sure I'd recognize her if she cradled me in her arms.

A ten minute walk due south of where I sit writing this, fifteen year old Jane Creba took an errant bullet that ended her life while lined up for a Boxing Day sale outside a store where I did some of my own Christmas shopping.

A week ago, I had to tell a friend of mine that his third assault meant we would have to deny him entry to Sanctuary drop-ins until we could be reasonably sure it wouldn't happen again.

"The other guy hit me first," he said – the standard response, but it may well have been true. What he didn't say was that his attack had been prompted by the kind of nasty relationship compost that piles up when you mix homelessness and addiction over a long period of time.

Yesterday, I saw him with a woman in her early twenties, walking along the street together some distance away. She had delivered her fifth child a few days earlier, and was now back out on the street. Homeless. We waved at each other and kept going.

This afternoon, another friend stopped by for a quick visit, quick and unannounced, because the police are hunting him. He lasted four hours after his release from penitentiary before skipping parole. He had been doing so well when he was inside... He's been drunk and sleeping rough ever since, and has acquired a couple of broken ribs, but the thought of enduring the soul-deadening round of police cells, court appearances and detention centres, and the nightmare memory of the bars clanging shut behind him, mean he's not ready to turn himself in.

So I wonder, when I look around, where is that peace Jesus was supposed to leave behind?

Make no mistake, it's not just "my people" who are asking the question. This morning, a friend who is a successful business man described the hurdle he faces every morning: on the elevator to his office, he prepares himself for the moment when the doors will open, and he will step off with the eyes of the company on him. Regardless of what's going on inside him, his surface has to be calm, authoritative, impenetrable.

Is that peace? My friend would say, I think, that the necessity of projecting the appearance of peace actually robs him of it.

Another friend, a fit, attractive man with a lovely wife and family, a beautiful house, and a very successful investment practice, met me for lunch. He is also a serious and passionate follower of Jesus, and yet he practically wept as he told me about the deep ache in his heart for peace.

When the Sanctuary staff meets, we usually start by "checking in"

– going around the circle and simply asking each one, "How are you?" We, too, are intent on following this Jesus who offers peace; most have made significant sacrifices for the privilege of doing so in our peculiar context, and are convinced they are exactly where they should be. But our check-ins often sound like reports from an emotional MASH unit. Is this because our staff is more fragile than most, because we're whiners, or because we are working in extreme circumstances? I don't think so. I think the only unusual thing is that we have permission to tell it like it really is.

My friend "Albert" is, I think, in his mid-fifties. He has a luxurious mustache, quiet brown eyes, and a CBC classical music announcer's voice and vocabulary. He's homeless, too, and lives in a world taut with tension and danger, since he is often surrounded by people who are afflicted by addictions, mental illness, lengthy criminal records. In consequence, he has learned to make himself invisible. He never looks up, and stays so still and quiet that he remains, for the most part, unnoticed. I've seen him standing, on a cold winter day, in a nearby city park, with his bags at his feet, head down, utterly motionless for an hour at a time. As if somebody had switched him off. He has learned stillness, but I wonder – is that peace?

I've learned some of that stillness, too: moments when I can shut the door on the world and stare into space. I pray, and routinely pray myself to sleep; I read the Bible and meditate on it. I go sailing in warm weather: that moment when the land drops away and there is only water and sky ahead is bliss. I walk alone through Withrow Park and along the Danforth in the winter. I read books, listen to music. I try, with very limited success, to still myself enough to listen for the quiet voice of God.

As necessary as these times may be, I don't think stillness, the mere cessation of conflict, is what Jesus meant by peace. "I do not give to you as the world gives", he said. Maybe he meant, I'm not talking about the odd moment when you can escape the bullets and the bruising, the accusations, insults, tensions and the threats that whirl around you like a prairie wind. Maybe he meant, the peace I leave with you, the peace I give into your hands, is not the absence of conflict, but the presence of *shalom*.

The Greek word the writer uses to record Jesus' words is the one closest in meaning to that ancient Hebrew term. *Shalom* is most often translated peace, but is rich with shades of meaning: health, wholeness, prosperity, justice; a return from fractured isolation to vibrant oneness. And shalom is not just personal, but also societal and even cosmological.

Shalom is what God intended by sending Jesus. Not only do I have the confidence that forgiveness, healing and redemption are therefore possible for me personally, but justice – in the very broadest, most constructive sense possible – is both answered and fulfilled in that incredible gift. Even when my heart is troubled and my head is afraid of what's coming next, this kind of peace gives me hope, a ground on which to stand.

I'm leaving my *shalom* with you, Jesus says. It's yours to apply – justice for those who are oppressed; health and wholeness for those who are sick in body, mind or soul; prosperity for those who are poor. Take it; make it work. Announce this peace and grow it in others around you. Embrace it for your own soul. Step out from behind the facades you have created to disguise your anxieties, the facades that ensure your loneliness, and into joyous, fecund unity with me and my amazing, beautiful, broken, creative, resilient, beloved people.

What Can I Do to Help?

What a great and wonderful question!
Let's walk through some of the things you can do:

Helping Out

Do you like to fix things? Good at painting? Looking for some data-entry work? Are you an organizer? A computer geek? A web designer? Just happy to do whatever? Any or all of these are skills that we need at different times throughout the year and, if we knew about you, we would be only too glad to put your gifts to good use!

Donations

In this newsletter, right next to this column, we have talked about our need for socks. We also need soap, shampoo, vitamins, gloves, hats and much more all year-round. Maybe you could introduce us to someone who could get us great prices on items like those. Or maybe you can organize a group to pull together donations. Either of those is great.

The single biggest program expense we have is food for our drop-in meal programs. Last year, we spent an average of \$3,500 every month or about \$250 - \$300 per meal. This year, our drop-in numbers continue to grow and we are committed to serving above-average food but because of budget constraints, want to drop that number to \$2,500 per month. Maybe you and a group of friends can help by 'sponsoring' a meal or two each month - helping us out either with a targeted donation or else with donated food to prepare it.

And the winner is...Join Us!

More than anything, we would love for you to come and join our community. It might start with just coming once or twice but we are always keen to welcome new long-term friends into the Sanctuary community. You don't have to come with something to offer - don't slave away in the kitchen, don't teach art or woodworking or financial-management...above all, don't come to "make people better". Come *as you are* to offer *who you are* to our community. That is the single greatest gift that you can offer our community.

And you might choose to "join us" in any of a variety of contexts. Maybe you want to join us for lunch or dinner on a regular basis. Maybe you want to join Sharon and try your hand at painting or pottery in our arts studio. Maybe you love the smell of sawdust and would like to join Wayne at our wood-working shop. Maybe you've always dreamed of doing live theatre and want to join Lyf and the Screaming Monkeys. Maybe you want to join Paul and crew just to hang out and play games on Fridays. Maybe you're a nurse or doctor who wants to join Thea and Keren in the Health Clinic.

All of these are great ways to join the Sanctuary community. And there are lots more too. If you're willing to come and join us, our arms are wide open.

**Contact Alan at alanb@sanctuaryministries.on.ca
or 416-922-0628 x.11**

**to talk about what joining our
community might mean for you!**

Would You Give Us the Shirt Off Your Back?

How about the socks off your feet?

Clean and dry socks are perhaps one of the simplest and most taken-for-granted items that most people reading this newsletter enjoy. But they are also a hard-to-come-by commodity for most of our friends who live on or near the streets. Because of this, many of our friends often struggle with basic health issues relating to their feet and our nurses spend a striking amount of their time on simple foot care.

The good news? You can help! Here's how...

We give out approximately 400 pairs of socks each month at a cost to us of about \$250. We would love to find 12 groups willing to partner with us for one month of the year by providing us with socks for our friends on the street. So if your youth group or church or office or small group is looking for a Sanctuary project, this would be a great way to get involved.

**To sign up for your month's worth of socks,
contact Linda at lindar@sanctuaryministries.on.ca
or call 416-922-0628 x.10.**

JOIN US FOR OUR

Arts Extravaganza

Friday & Saturday
March 10th & 11th
7:30-11:00 p.m.

[SANCTUARY] 

25 Charles St. East
Parking lot across
the street

Glass,
Jewelry
& Gift Cards
FOR SALE

PERFORMING
 **SCREAMING MONKEYS**

All submissions must be
given to Sharon Tiessen
no later than Feb. 29th

For more information or to participate, contact Sharon Tiessen
at 416-922-0628 ext 21 OR sharont@sanctuaryministries.on.ca



Extending a Welcome

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to think of myself as something other than a 'societal nuisance'. When someone receives with gladness the gifts and skills I have to offer, I am reminded that I'm not a lazy good-for-nothing who (as that less-than-cordial passerby suggested the other night) should 'just get a job'. When we belong to and are participatory in a community that values us, we begin to think again that we just might, in fact, have value – not only to people, but maybe also to God!

This is what motivates us to extend a welcome to everyone who comes through our doors. When we open the doors to Sanctuary on a Wednesday at lunch, we think of ourselves as extending the very welcome of God Himself. A welcome to relationship. A welcome to community. A welcome to embrace. A welcome to connect with the value that God placed within each of us when He created us in His image. A welcome to experience His embrace. A welcome so important to Him that He came Himself, in the person of Jesus, to make sure we got the message!

We would love to have you join us for a drop-in, if you're able. No need to do anything at all...we would be only too happy to extend this very same welcome to you!

SANCTUARY

What's Going on Around Here

SUNDAY

Worship Service 5:00-7:30 pm
(worship, communion, teaching & prayer)

MONDAY

AA Group 12:00-1:00 pm
NA Group 7:30-9:00 pm

TUESDAY

Women's Drop-In 9:30am-1:00 pm
Open Art Studio 1:30-4:00 pm
Bake Club (1st) 1:00-4:00 pm

WEDNESDAY

Drop-In Lunch 10:30 am - 3:00 pm

THURSDAY

Drop-In Supper 4:30-9:00 pm

FRIDAY

AA Group 12:00-1:00 pm
Games Day (Feb, April, June, Aug., Oct., Dec.) . . . 12:30-3:00 pm
Movies Day (March, May, July, Sept., Nov.) 12:30-3:00 pm
Art Drop-In 3:00-6:00 pm

SATURDAY

Drop-In Breakfast 7:30-10:15 am

For more information contact the office:
416-922-0628 ext. 10

Staff Updates



It's a lot of fun for us when we get to introduce you, in this section, to staff who are joining us. It's harder to have to let you know of staff who are leaving us. But it happens...and this is one of those times.

Tania Tadros joined our staff at the start of last summer after a few years as a regular volunteer. She quickly

became known to many within our community and established a number of strong friendships. Sadly though, in light of Sanctuary's financial struggles through 2005, we have found it necessary to release Tania effective March of this year.

Naturally, this has been a difficult decision to make. Difficult because of the personal implications for Tania and her husband, Nabil. And difficult for our Sanctuary community because Tania has been embraced by many within the community. The great news is that, in spite of her official status change, Tania is planning on continuing to come around as she is able for the Women's Drop-In as well as occasional Wednesdays for a game of Scrabble or cards with some friends. And we hope sincerely that this is a temporary move and that, when we have our finances back on more solid footing, we will be able to welcome Tania back in a part or full-time capacity. Please pray with us to that end.

In the interim, we ask you to pray for Tania and Nabil. Tania is expecting their first child around June 17th and she has been experiencing health limitations almost since day one of her pregnancy. She is coping remarkably well with chronic shortness of breath and has been visiting many specialists, none of whom are able to identify the source of her troubles. While she and baby both appear to be otherwise healthy, this situation is obviously presenting some challenges.

We wish Tania, Nabil and baby God's richest blessings in the months ahead and thank Tania for the gifts that she has offered our community and will continue to offer as she is able.

As well, **Karen Paul** has been accepted, beginning in mid-March, for a 35-week contract position with the Toronto Drop-in Network working on a campaign directed towards educating communities on issues of homelessness to counteract NIMBY(Not In My Back Yard)-ism. While we will all miss Karen's



presence within our community, we are tremendously excited for her as this job is an outgrowth of some of the work she has been doing here and fits really well with her passions and skills. Also, it affords her the opportunity to widen her, and to some extent our, circle of influence within the city. Likely too, because of Karen's many connections to Sanctuary, we will still see her not infrequently. Our prayers are with Karen as she takes on this exciting challenge!

Faces of Our Community



Kelly Pringle

Kelly is in her final year as a student in the Management Program at the University of Toronto at Scarborough where she is specializing in Human Resource Management. Not only that, but she's also now a welcome and regular member of our Sanctuary community – joining us regularly for lunch on Wednesdays as well as at many of our Community Concerts and Arts Nights.

Kelly first found us when she heard Steve Martin talking about his work at Sanctuary at a church in Brockville, where she was visiting while she was home for a holiday with family. As she heard Steve share his heart particularly for women in the sex trade, bikers and other marginalized communities, she found herself responding and drawn to learn more about this place where Steve worked. And since that time, she has found her place here!

When her last semester of school is finally behind her, Kelly is hoping to spend the summer working and traveling before beginning the daily grind full-time in the fall. Ideally, she will be able to return to the Bank of Montreal (just two blocks from Sanctuary!) where she did her placement last summer. Spare time stuff? Playing in an Ultimate Frisbee league and being a Senators fan...oh well, nobody's perfect!

Blair Lewis

We have recently added three new directors to our Board including Blair Lewis, who joined us officially in December of last year. Blair is a chiropractor who has been practicing in the downtown core since 1988. He escapes the city every night though to head home to Lemonville (who names these places?) where he comes home to his wife, Kim, and their three young children, Jordan (5), Ben (2) and Brooke (1).

Blair got to know of Sanctuary through Greg Paul as he was a counselor and coach to one of Greg's sons at Hockey Camp for a number of summers. Blair himself played varsity hockey while at York, keeps in shape with mountain biking and skiing and continues to be involved with several summer camps and hockey schools as he has been for 20 years.

Blair's home church is the Olive Branch Community Church in Markham and we are glad that he has agreed to join our community as a Board Member for some years to come.

David Zeal

David's cheerful face has been a welcome sight around Sanctuary since he first started hanging around with us nearly 5 years ago. From his willingness to do whatever's needed – from drywalling to painting to washing dishes or prepping a meal – to his great smile and love of laughter, Dave is a treat to have around.



Life hasn't always been easy for Dave, though, as he first came to Toronto from Richmond Hill and lived on the streets after he lost his job and home in 2001 due to drug use (a habit which he now considers to be a thing of the past!). After several months on the street, Donald, our Kitchen Manager, helped Dave get a room at Markeen House (where Don lived) where he lived until recently.

As well, Dave is one of the original men in our Mustard Tree woodworking program, having worked with Wayne now for over 2 years. Over the last several months, he has been a tremendous help in re-establishing the shop in its new location. We're tremendously grateful for the gift that Dave is to our Sanctuary community!

Almost Home...

186 St. Helen's Avenue

After months of knocking down old walls, putting up new ones, drywalling, painting, replacing wiring and plumbing, installing proper heating and a whole lot more, we are poised to move in to our new home for Mustard Tree and our Arts Studio. Thanks go to Wayne and his team for all of their hard work and long hours to get it done.

There are, however, some jobs still to be done. See the pricelist to the right if you would like to 'adopt' one of these projects that we are anxious to have looked after as soon as possible – either by way of a donation (of money or the item itself), or by supplying the professional help needed to do the job.

And any time now, we invite you to come by for a visit and to let us show you around our new home – and to pray with us for God's blessing on the work that will be done there!

Projects to Adopt:

Approx. Price

Window for lunch room.....\$2675

Window for Art Studio\$2675

New front door\$1800

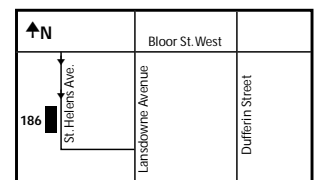
For more information contact: Wayne Rumsby
416-778-0694 OR wayne@sanctuaryministries.on.ca

Sanctuary Ministries West

Mustard Tree/Art Studio

186 St. Helens Avenue
Toronto, Ontario M6H 4A1

416-778-0694





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www.shoppersdrugmart.ca/donate

If you need more information contact Linda at 416-922-0628 ext.10
OR lindar@sanctuaryministries.on.ca.

PLEASE HELP US SAVE MONEY BY... ADDING YOUR NAME TO THE EMAIL LIST.

Send an email to info@sanctuaryministries.on.ca stating that you would like to receive our newsletter and any announcements by email. Thanks!

Yes, I want to partner with you.

- ☐ I would like to order ____ copies of "God in the Alley" (Retail price \$15.00).
Enclosed please find a cheque for \$_____.
- ☐ My church/workplace should hear about Sanctuary.
- ☐ I would like to learn more about **volunteering**.
- ☐ I commit to **pray** for the Sanctuary community.
- ☐ I would like to support Sanctuary on a **monthly basis**.
- ☐ I want to **financially support** your ministry:
 - ☐ Where most needed
 - ☐ Staff Name _____
 - ☐ Street Outreach
 - ☐ Meal Programs
 - ☐ Health Care ☐ Arts/Music/Drama
 - ☐ Mustard Tree Employment Program

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ Province _____ Postal Code _____

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Please make donations payable to: **Sanctuary Ministries of Toronto**
Tax receipts will be issued at year end. Designated funds will be applied as directed by the donor. Funds given in excess of an approved or discontinued program will be applied at the discretion of the Board. Charitable #89037 9340 RR 0001 03-06

Financial Update

Thanks to many of you who prayed with us and gave generously through the end of last year. December reached a new high-water mark for donations which is naturally exciting for us. Unfortunately, we had gone into December with such a significant deficit that we still wound up in a negative position for 2005. Donations themselves were essentially even with 2004; but our expenses continue to grow due to expansion in both staff and programs.

This negative result has naturally set us back somewhat, though we remain confident in God's ability to provide for our needs. We have had to respond though, in the short-term, by planning for reductions this year in some program areas and also in our biggest budget line (about 70% of our total expenditures): staff expenses. Unfortunately, this has meant cutting one of our staff back to half-time while letting another staff member go outright. These were not easy or comfortable decisions to make but ones which we felt were necessary.

Given this turn of events, it seems appropriate to remind you, our friends and supporters, that all of our staff are involved in seeking financial support for their work here at Sanctuary. While we remain committed to paying our staff a dignified wage regardless of their support-raising ability, our staff has grown to the point that funding this commitment has become increasingly difficult.

So we encourage you, if you are a friend or family member of one of our staff, to please prayerfully consider supporting their ministry financially or introducing them to someone who might. We, and they, rely on the financial support of folks like yourself to allow them to pursue their calling in a full-time capacity within the community of Sanctuary.

If you require more information about our financial situation or wish to find out more about becoming a financial partner with a staff member or with Sanctuary in general, please contact Alan at alanb@sanctuaryministries.on.ca or by phone at 416-922-0628 x.11.

A Night at Grace's



**NEXT SANCTUARY
COMMUNITY
CONCERT:**

**MAY 13, 2006
8:00-11:00p.m.**

Bring a Friend!!

[SANCTUARY]

25 Charles Street East, Toronto, Ontario M4Y 1R9

Tel.: 416-922-0628 Fax: 416-922-4961

www.sanctuaryministries.on.ca

email: info@sanctuaryministries.on.ca

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