



June Newsletter
Volume 2, Issue 6



I'm On Top of the World!

Do you remember the song by Karen Carpenter released in 1972,

"Top of the World?"

*Such a feelin's comin' over me
There is wonder in most every thing I see
Not a cloud in the sky, got the sun in my eyes
And I won't be surprised if it's a dream
Everything I want the world to be
Is now comin' true especially for me
And the reason is clear, it's because you are here
You're the nearest thing to heaven that I've seen*



The story you are about to read was told to me recently by a homeless lady living in a tent-city situation; essentially on the street, literally living from hand to mouth. Panhandling at a big box store is an everyday occurrence. Life has handed her a lemon of which she makes the best, with a cheerful attitude. I've changed her name and the location to protect her privacy, but the story is true.

Katherine worked for a finance firm on the 24th floor of a downtown office building in Toronto. With her husband, they enjoyed their million-dollar home in the suburbs, living a cozy lifestyle. Literally on top of the world, looking down on the streets of the city . . . excellent salary, a Porsche in the executive parking lot, and the entire world at her fingertips. The sun was gleaming in her eyes and her dream was coming true.

Then her world came crashing down. Her husband, caught up in an extramarital affair, was gone. The bottom floor, on the street, replaced the top floor corner office. The corporate accounting job disappeared; the car, repossessed. The street below her office building became her home. Twenty-four years to get to the top, and now, twenty-four years of living on the streets; suffering from many illnesses, stuck in a wheelchair.

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on the streets . . .

Direct Report From John and Pam

May 6th 2022: "Wow! Homeless people are everywhere this morning!" I exclaimed.

The unsheltered were spread-out all-over town, in hard places to find; even harder to find were places to pull over and park the SUV. (Thank you, small SUV, for still operating.) The large cube van we operate could never have managed the small tight places needing access that day.

Loaves of bread, jars of peanut butter, and bottles of water were the supplies on board. They were all so happy. These items provide emergency food supplies in their backpacks and bags, in case hunger knocked, morning, noon, or at night.

Many asked for booklets or reading material. One lady asked for an historical book based on Bible history; she even wanted to pass some on to others. Are we making an impact? The Holy Spirit leads; we follow. Since this is only early Spring, it looks like there's a very busy season ahead. We know God will provide the support necessary to meet the needs.

On another morning Pam and I went out to buy supplies for our Ministry's kitchen. On route, we saw a young lady digging through a filthy garbage can. Stopping, we asked her if she needed help with anything. She looked like she'd had a rough night, with her hair matted and smudged lipstick, along with dirty clothes. Fortunately, we had some supplies in the car. She received two bottles of water, two Bear Paws, a loaf of bread, and a jar of peanut butter. After placing everything in a bag, she asked me for a butter knife, which we did not have. She went back to her rifling in the garbage; said she'd lost something there the night before.

We were out at 7:15 this morning. Shortly, we met two ladies huddled together under blankets and coats. They looked very thin and malnourished. We gave them two bags each (a bag contains a sandwich, a piece of fruit, and a snack). They gobbled the contents down quickly and were so grateful. As I left, they were saying, "God bless you, John."

Later, we met six men huddled together downtown. As I drove by, I yelled out the SUV window, "Is anyone hungry?" All six ran toward the vehicle. We gave out seven bags and bottles of water. Here's a special blessing for me: they all knew my name and felt free to discuss personal matters and to share some of the troubles they're having. It takes time and patience to build trust. We have helped some of them for almost two years now.

Then another man, who lives across the railway tracks at the train station, received two bags (he was very hungry), and we chatted for awhile. He was very thin and extremely thankful for the help. After the chat, he took the book Hacksaw Ridge and a Tract called, "Where is God When I Am Hurting?" By now, the fifteen sandwiches we had left over were all gone.

After that, I saw a lady sitting on the ground beside a telephone booth, with the cord stretched to the limit from inside the booth. She was weeping; her mascara was running down her face. Her friend was there with her. She came to the car and received 4 bottles of water, Bear Paws, a loaf of bread, and a jar of peanut butter. Both ladies were very grateful as they are sleeping outside and on the ground. We told her about the Ministry's Cube Van making rounds on Sundays. "We will look for it," she said.

Then we went off to tent city and four people were there. Upon arriving, a young man ran out to meet us. We gave him two loaves of bread, two jars of peanut butter, Bear Paws and six bottles of water. We were also able to give out bandaids as their hands and fingers were all cut and bloody. An EMS vehicle and officer pulled in and we chatted a bit and exchanged info to assist each other in the future. Making contact with public service personnel in our city is important as one never knows when we will need each other's help.

Amazing! We just went out to get some supplies and the morning became busy, aiding and blessing those less fortunate than ourselves. What a Wonderful Day!

dilemma on the streets . . .

On Monday I received this email from John: "We have a situation that needs our help. What do you suggest we do?"

A motel resident has just lost his mom, and can no longer pay the rental rate asked for by the motel management. (It takes the pension of two persons to afford a motel room.) He's been there for seven years; they are willing to work with him. But to get a job at a local grocery store, he needs a size 11 pair of work shoes."

What? Are you kidding?

On Sunday, just the day before, I'd given away a pair of size 11 work shoes to a person on the street with torn, worn-out sneakers. Even though the work boots are hard to walk in, he said he would take them, because we had no other shoes available.

We had no other work shoes available for the gentleman in the motel. Walmart's cheapest pair are a \$109.00. What should we do?

First try Value Village, to see if they can help. Wonder of wonders! Value Village had a pair for \$35.00. With a senior's discount, John was able to purchase the needed shoes for \$27.00!

Here's another example of a need met: a tent city resident needed a pair of size 12 running shoe. There was nothing available in two different locations. In the third location, I found a pair for \$25.00. "Wow!" I thought. "The Ministry is going to go broke buying shoes at this price."

Fortunately, I found six backpacks for \$3-\$5 each, a suitcase on wheels for \$5, and yes, the \$25 sneakers were in the shopping cart also. This thrift store does not discount products, but when I checked out, the cashier recognized me from former business contacts and whispered, "I charged you only \$10 for the shoes. I know what you are doing with them."

God is even in the used shoe business!

~ Carl



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How JC's Place Ministries Helps on the Street . . .



It took a lot of coaxing to get this photograph! One of our volunteers (R) stepped in to steady the nervousness chap. After being outfitted with new boots, new hat, and a dry sweatshirt, creative thinking was needed to figure out how to carry all that stuff with only one arm! Ah, we had the solution! The rolling suitcase we'd obtained just the week before at a thrift store!



Accommodations are pictured in the background. Here's how to panhandle at the local Walmart.

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Yet, happy as a lark when given a small teddy bear, glad that the running shoes we found for her fit, and that, because we didn't have a pair of shorts, caprices would work fine.

How can a story like this happen? How is it possible to be at the "Top of the World," and in a short time to be at the "Bottom of the World?" Can you imagine the height and depth of this story? Such an impact that one act of infidelity made on Katherine. She walked away, leaving everything, and is content on the streets of Niagara Falls today.

The pious Martyr John Bradford once said, "**There, but for the Grace of God, go I.**" Can you relate to this statement? To put it another way, if things were different, you might be in as bad a situation as that other person, and you feel sympathy for them.

To weigh the situation of the unsheltered on the street, and to show the contrast of opinions, let me close with the following dialogue. Are you Luke, or Ella?

Dialogue between a brother and sister upon passing a homeless woman on the street:

Luke: I can't believe the police let these people overrun the city! It's disgraceful!
Ella: What do you mean? If she has no home, where is she supposed to go?
Luke: Somewhere where the sight of her won't disturb normal people like me.
Ella: That seems a little selfish.
Luke: Why? It's not like homeless people are like you and me.
Ella: On the contrary. When I saw that homeless woman a minute ago, I was thinking to myself, "There, but for the grace of God, go I."
Luke: How so?
Ella: I never told you this, but my husband used to hit me. I ran away to escape him. I had no money and no phone. I was fighting with our parents and you at the time, so I had no one to help me. I almost had to sleep on the streets overnight, but a kind woman took pity on me and paid for me to stay in a hotel and helped me find a job and a place to stay more permanently.

~ Carl

Backpack Project Needs a Project Co Ordinator Now ! ! !



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