

Working Together . . .

On Wednesday I received a phone call from the West Lincoln Community Care Manager. She informed me that they had gotten a request for a baby stroller, diapers, etc. from a lady living in a Niagara Falls motel. Normally they do not service requests from outside the Township of West Lincoln, but if JC's Place Ministries could deliver the goods, they would be glad to fill the request. In addition, they had a bin of goods—blankets, socks, sleeping bags, clothes, etc.—for JC's Place Ministries. Of course, I assured her, we would be only too glad to make the delivery. On Friday, the donations were loaded into the back of my SUV.



Fast forward to Sunday. JC'sPM had three vehicles on the road. While the Ministry's two vans were making our normal run, a private vehicle delivered the requested items to the needy lady. While there, it was discovered that she has four children, two boys and two girls ranging in ages from a toddler to 11 years. We added a Pack-and-Play that had been donated by a generous soul in Smithville, ON, and a colourful baby's blanket; the borrowed playpen they'd been using could now be returned. All the items, including five hand-made pillowcases, were excitedly and, with tears of appreciation, accepted. After many hugs and small talk, our team went on their way, with the promise to return. This team made two additional stops to people who had requested a visit.

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Where the Wind Blows . . .

One must be in a humble position when engaged in the work that God has asked us as Christians to perform. The Second Greatest Commandment says to “Love your Neighbour as Yourself.” So, one would begin to think that, in addition to small acts of kindness, there are some big tasks that will be completed on our part; that these are the ones that will end up bringing the most satisfaction to the heart.

So, let’s recount a few of the miracles that have been happening: Relocating a family from an unstable accommodation situation, to a more stable but not totally ideal location, brought smiles to the faces of three children and their mom. The children opened the door and welcomed me in with joy showing on their faces. They were so happy when I brought the simple gift of a big bag of popcorn as a house warming gift. Before leaving, I shook hands with each of the children and asked if I could give their mom a hug. They all yelled out “Yes!”, their faces radiant with happiness and laughter.

Then there was the gentleman who had no bread, so I took him to the store. When we got there, he had no money to pay--he had forgotten his wallet. Even though he was a bit embarrassed, he accepted the money I gave him, and proceeded to get what he needed. After I dropped him off, I went to visit a 16-year-old girl and an 18-year-old fellow; they’d been living in their car. I was invited in for a chat and a visit. Afterwards they came out to the van to get a bunch of things they needed. I told them to look for the big van on Sunday to get the other things they needed. When that was finished, the first gentleman came yelling and running towards me, and after placing the funds for the groceries in my hand, he asked “Can I volunteer with JC’s Place Ministries?” We gained another volunteer.

John 3:8 says “The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes.”

Well, the Ministry has been challenged, trying to find snacks and treats at a reasonable price. Inflation has escalated the pricing to double what our budgeting was planned for. One of our volunteers was able to contact three Tim Horton locations and two of the locations have begun to supply day-old donuts, muffin, bagels etc. This is an answer to prayer to solve an impediment to the feeding program. Well, lo and behold, I know the owners of these locations. We had worked together many years ago, and when confirming how and when the goods were to be picked up, I realized that the wind was blowing before I could hear or see its effects. Our volunteer commented, “I believe that God has shown your church much favour because of your heart for the homeless.”

As I work with the homeless on a personal level, it becomes difficult to tell our readers all of the details of what’s happening. Much of the news is very distressing, but somehow things work for us, as in the story in Carl’s article where we helped a homeless mom of four children. We are blessed to see a few of the homeless decide to change their lives and move on to better things. Another amazing aspect of this work is the homeless who don’t own much of this world’s goods wanting to help. I had a homeless man who is moving to an apartment bring a slow cooker to me, saying, “I don’t need this anymore, but you will find it a new home where it will be needed.” God is working for and through us.

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Working Together . . .

Back to our story on the two Ministry vehicles: Three folks arrived at the church to sort the donated goods; four others came to prepare one hundred lunches for the homeless we are serving. Yes, you read correctly. Our lunch count has now increased to 100. Please, keep the Ministry in your prayers and on your donations list as we work to meet the needs in this community. The growing demand on the street is visible, even with the loss of many of our regulars to drug overdoses, cancer, and other ailments.

Our first stop was at a motel accommodating refugees, those just off the street, a pregnant couple in need of accommodation, and many others. Our second stop was at the liquor store. Here, we missed our country troubadour; rather, we found a girl needing clothing and food, and we were able to help her. But she has a problem. Every second word out of her mouth was a blue one. She told us her children were being taken to church, and that she loved the Lord; she even showed me the tattoo on the back of her neck, which read, "God is Love." Apologizing for her inappropriate language, she said she would try to do better; that maybe she had a terrets syndrome problem. The blue words just flowed, but we told her to remember her tattoo and that God did indeed love her and to ask for His help.

At our next stop we were had lost one of our long tim-many trials and tribula-a hip replacement surgery, and even though he limped come to the truck to receive told that he was taken to suffered an internal blow taking crystal meth. Why drugs again after being to encounter a bad batch?

There is a very sad bit of media anymore. The home-precedented numbers and tion to the situation. The what is happening.

There is a dangerous ani-through the Canadian drug News March 23, 2023, street as TRANQ) is being spect for life. There are se-Xylazine is resistant to the fast-acting medication, Naloxone, to reverse opioid overdoses. The new drug known as "TRANQ Dope," "ZOMBIE Drug" is being cut into opioids like fentanyl to prolong their effect. The mixed combination can cause hours of black-outs, painful and horrific wounds and can lead to amputations. We have a pandemic occurring on our streets and no one is paying attention.



saddened to learn that we ers. He had been through tions—a broken leg (twice), to mention just a couple, badly as of late, he would food and socks. We were the hospital after he had out with his bowels after would a person start taking clean for so long, and then

news that is not making the less are overdosing in un-no one is paying any atten-general public is unaware of

mal tranquilizer spreading scene. In an article on CBC Xylazine (known on the used and sold without re-rious side effects and

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Working Together . . .

The Via Police have stopped our crossing of the rail lines, at the downtown station, to feed the homeless in the new tent city on the hills in the background. We think we can fix this by trying to use a back entrance at one location. For the homeless on the lower portion of this property, we tried accessing the property off the Niagara Parkway, only to find out that the property is actually part of the Canada Customs Clearance



Area. When we were parked here, and before we could locate and get the homeless to come to the truck, we were approached by a Canada Customs guard and told we could not park in their lot. After we explained what we were doing, he was endeared to our mission and said he could not promise how long this would be allowed but, for today, he would turn away without any pressure for us to move on. “Just keep it to 15-20 minutes,” he cautioned. Later, the same person came back to tell us of two other homeless folks who were tenting nearby. We are praying that this might be the solution to the second half of our problem. We need your prayers for understanding officials, or for another way to access this area.



Since it was a very pleasant sunny day, with only a light cool wind, I had suggested to our seven volunteers that they might spend more time chatting with the homeless, and spreading a bit of good cheer. Well, they took me at my word. One volunteer found three friends on the streets whom he had known in the past; others took time for chit-chat, giving words of encouragement,

hugs here and there, and lots of smiles and “God bless you” wishes. By day’s end, 80 meals (hot soup, a sandwich, & a Tim Horton’s snack) had been served; the balance would go to the warming shelter at 7:30 pm. Lots of pants, coats, work gloves (we had no winter gloves left), shoes, boots,—too many to itemize it all, had been handed out. Well, to my consternation, I found that we were now running 60 minutes behind schedule.

Working Together . . .

While driving to the church to drop off the volunteers at their cars, I passed a high chair at the side of the road. On my return trip, I picked up the chair. Before I could get it loaded, a neighbour came out and asked if we



could use an umbrella stroller to go with the chair. Of course, we could! It all would be delivered to the lady and four children who started this article. The gentleman also made a cash donation in support of the Ministry. He told me he was well acquainted with John Mergl, my associate; they had worked together in the brick and block laying industry. Well, this made it necessary for a return trip to deliver the added items. What a joy to visit them twice in one day!



We needed to make one more stop, to a couple living in a tent near a shopping centre. Though their needs are different, their situation is just as sad. They shared how their tent was broken into, how goods had been taken—propane heater and stove, etc., and that their tarps and tent had been slashed. After the recent horrific wind and rain storm, their meager belongings were now soaked—bedding, clothes, footwear, everything. What a world we live in . . .



This article started out as an example of working together--non-profit thrift stores, volunteers who prepare food and minister to the unfortunate, homeless persons, enforcement agents, and many others working together to make a better world. I hope I have brought a bit of reality to your lives of what is happening on the streets and how you can "Lend a Helping Hand". Thank you for listening.

~Carl

Where the Wind Blows . . .

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Thank you to all the volunteers, without whom this Ministry would not function; you are an integral part of serving. Thank you to the donors who make the funds and supplies available for our operations. Praise God for the gifts He bestows on the Ministry, on our volunteers and our donors.

The needs are great and growing at a pace with which we cannot, of ourselves, keep up. We continue to trust God to provide; after all, it's His work.

We've recently learned of another seventeen rooms in a motel that is housing those who have lost homes, or are just off the streets. The Lord's hand is on this Ministry. We move forward with confidence into another year of service.



Thank you. Thank you all.

~John

Ways to Give:

1. Electronically . . . www.jcsPlace.org

2. Mail . . . JC's Place 2408 Smithville Road Smithville L0R 2A0

3. Phone . . . 905-975-6394 or 365-880-7229



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