

Christmas Dinner 2023!

In December 2022, JC's Place Ministries was gifted all the items necessary to provide 100 turkey dinners for the homeless we serve in Niagara Falls. This was a first-time effort. We found we were short on the number of people we needed to prepare the turkeys, as well as the number to pack and deliver the food. This situation was compounded by the fact that Christmas Day 2022 landed on the very Sunday we had to do all of the preparation.

It was with trepidation that the Operations Committee decided months ago to repeat in 2023 the 2022 Christmas Dinner. This time we would carry the expense (our previous donor was unable to do so). What a difference 12 months makes! Christmas moving to Monday also helped. This time we had lots of offers



to prepare the 12 turkeys, and on Sunday, December 24, the kitchen was blessed with enough personnel to pack cranberry sauce cups, cook rice, prepare vegetables, and make the gravy. The dinners were packaged into nice lidded containers that could be used later for other things. Additional staff filled Christmas Gift Bags. Each bag contained a Christmas Letter of Cheer, a muffin, a pair of socks, a donated Christmas goodie bag, and a bun or bagel.

Christmas Eve we had 4 vehicles waiting to deliver the dinners and gift bags. Shortly after 1:30 pm EST **Vehicle #1, with 25 meals**, left for their stop. But, as there were only 13 homeless and refugees at this motel, they returned with 12 meals. These were split between Vehicle #3 and #4. **Vehicle #2, with 29 meals & gifts**, was dispatched to 3 different sites, where they distributed everything they had. **Vehicle #3, with 29 meals**, was able to feed 5 people along Lundy's Lane before they even got to their first stop! (see Pic) . . . *Continued on Page 4*



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Needed Right Now!

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- [Tents & Blankets](#)
- [Coats & Boots](#)
- [Men's Pants 28-32](#)
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- [Sweat Pants & Shirts](#)
- [Under Garments](#)
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- [Donate at www.JCsPlace.org](#)

To walk in another person's shoes . . .

What I struggle with at times is how to help a homeless person in their difficulties. I try to give practical advice or solutions to some of their problems, and hand out needed supplies, and offer prayer.

Many times, what I think is right and proper doesn't seem to be the right solution for them.

For one man, I found a room at \$500 a month after he received his monthly check, but he preferred to live outside in the cold winter. To me, this was not logical. He would often call, looking for blankets, clothes and other items as they got wet. There is also a lot of theft; but this is what he had chosen, and I had to accept it and just help where I could. I didn't really understand but again, I haven't WALKED IN THIS MAN'S SHOES*.



This reminds me of a mission trip back in 1996 when I went down to the Guatemalan



garbage dump where a thousand children and adults lived and ate from the garbage and drank the water found in puddles. There was a young girl there named Rosa.

While I was at the school we were building for the garbage dump children, a young girl came limping out from the dump to the school to get help for her feet. She had no shoes on and the director asked her to come into the school where there was a bed and medical supplies.

I carried her in and placed her on the medical bed and she laid on her tummy while we inspected her feet. They were filthy dirty, mingled with blood. The director washed her feet to see what happened.

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on the streets . . .

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In our investigation we found sharp metal and glass in her feet from walking through the garbage dump. As Rosa laid on her stomach the director asked me to put a small cloth in her mouth while she pulled out the sharp objects in her feet so she wouldn't bite her tongue or damage her teeth while the metal and glass were removed. The young girl was crying and moving around which made it hard to remove the objects. I had a thought to move around to the front by her face, and I stuck out my two index fingers for her little hands to squeeze on. At the same time, I would talk, sing and make funny faces while the director was pulling out the debris. She actually was laughing and crying at the same time. Once it was all done and her feet were cleaned up we wrapped gauze around her feet and put on new socks and new shoes.



She got off the bed and gave the director and myself a huge hug and went back to her mom in the dump. The next day I saw her coming out of the dump but to my surprise she had no shoes or socks on. I was so upset and asked her where her shoes were. She looked down to the ground and softly mumbled, "I sold them." Again, I was upset

and asked why? She told me that, by selling the shoes, she'd received enough money to buy fresh veggies and some bread so her mom and other siblings could have a fresh meal instead of the pickings in the dump. My heart broke, and I felt bad about my outburst.

Going back to my remarks at the beginning of this story. How can I understand unless I WALKED IN THIS GIRL'S SHOES? Her family received help from us, but most of all, she went to the Christian school

we built there and received Jesus along with a proper education to help her get out of the garbage dump in years to come. Many children since 1996 have gotten wonderful jobs and helped their families to get out of the dump. To this day the school is still operating and I thank God still today for using me to help build this school.

Blessings to all. ~John



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At their first 2 stops, their dinner count was right on target, and their last stop, a motel with homeless and refugees, took the balance of their meals. **Vehicle #4, with 17 meals** to cover 4 of our normal stops, was having trouble locating their folk. Perhaps they were out visiting, so a few surplus meals were still undelivered. With a bit of thinking and ingenuity, more people were located further out, almost out of city limits, and all the meals were dispensed. I think this vehicle was on a very special mission of Christmas Cheer. Vehicles #1, #2, and #3 were able to finish their routes in 1 hour or less, but Vehicle #4, while last out of the gate at ~2:00 pm, didn't return for almost 4 hours!

About 25 refugees who have been attending the Niagara Falls Seventh-Day Adventist Church, and who are also helping with the sorting of clothes and making of lunches, were then given a special Christmas dinner donated by some of the food prep people. So, all in all, 125 people shared some Christmas Cheer and a full dinner in 2023.

JC's Place Ministries was further blessed with a \$100 donation toward the food costs; the ladies in the kitchen donated the 25 refugee



meals; and the Christmas treats bags were donated by a special lady who would love to be hands-on, but is unable. There were also about 85 handmade fabric Christmas Bags donated by a group of dedicated sewers.

Many of the folks who received this Christmas Dinner were saying, "Thank you, God. Bless You. Thank You for making my Christmas special. Thank you, JC's Place, for doing the work that you do to help us. It is much appreciated."

We wish to convey these well wishes to you, our donors. It is you who make the giving of these meals and gifts possible. Your generosity returns with genuine thanks and special blessing.

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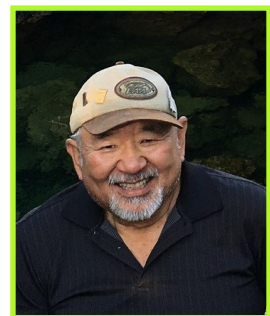
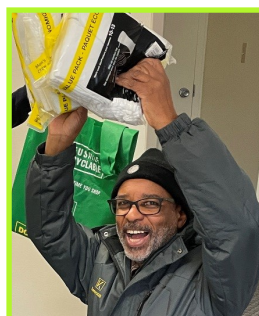
What does 2024 hold for JC's Place Ministries? I wish we were able to have such information--it would make our operations easier. So, we carry on in faith, and the generosity of our faithful supporters. What does the weather have in store for those who are truly living on the streets of Niagara Falls? The Region of Niagara has provided 65 beds off the streets, with the availability of 24/7 accommodation and food. Even though these rooms are full to capacity, we still meet 100+ persons on the street needing help each week. Our numbers have not decreased.

John Mergl, Trevor & Charmaine McMahan, and Carl Okimi are working as hard and as long as they can, and yet, with all the work, counselling, and emotional support that is needing to be done, this is not enough. The Ministry is seriously in need of a godly woman to lead out in ministering to the women who ask for help. We need another dedicated male person to take the load off Carl's shoulders; 20 hours a week is not cutting the mustard any more--there are more and more needs.

As you are aware, we have been looking for more space. Renting 3,000 sq ft of commercial space will cost around \$30,000.00 annually, plus taxes, insurance, heat and hydro. This option is not within our means right now; it would double our operating expenses. So, we are being led to change tactics. We can purchase a brand new 20-ft sea container and have it insulated and delivered for around \$4,000.00. And this 20-foot container doesn't need a building permit! Then we will need to outfit it with shelving and tote bins again.

A growing part of our ministry is helping individuals who have come to the realization that, with some good advice and encouragement and hard work, they can help themselves to get off the streets. Currently, we have 4 persons in this category who now in temporary accommodation and who have been able to access some type of work.

We are letting you, our donors, know the challenges we are facing. We thank you for you past support and look forward to how you will help in the future. We are also looking at ways to raise money by thinking outside of the box. Above all, God knows our needs and we are confident of His divine provision.



On behalf of John, Trevor, Charmaine, and Carl, and our Ministry's team of volunteers, we extend to you this greeting, "Blessings for the New Year. Happy New Year, and thank you for keeping the us all in your prayers and thoughts." Thank you !!!

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After v. Before



Fire standards on a Motorhome ???

This is the scene that greeted us recently. Living as a homeless person is not easy and definitely not safe.



It doesn't take long for an encampment of tarps, pallets etc. to burn up in a huge fire ball.

Ways to Give:

- 1. retransfer: carlDokimi@gmail.com (tag for JCsPM)**
- 2. Electronically: www.jcsPlace.org**
- 3. Mail: JC's Place 2408 Smithville Road Smithville L0R 2A0**
- 4. Phone: 905-975-6394 or 365-880-7229**



JC's Place Ministries

A mobile ministry of
the Niagara Falls Seventh-day Adventist Church
5355 Belmont Ave., Niagara Falls ON L2H 3H6
www.JCsPlace.org Carl: 905-975-6394
donate@JCsPlace.org John: 365-880-0818