



Sanctuary London

When the members of the community begin to care - for their own lives, for others within...and others outside the community.

Learning to offer and receive peace from one another is an essence of welcoming community.

The two individuals pictured above are not related. There is no past between their families. The extraordinary thing about these two people is they just needed each other one day at our drop-in.

Marla (we will call her that for this story) has a great love for children. If there is a news story about a child in trouble or a law about to change that will impact children in any way, Marla is the first to share that with me. She hurts openly for children without mothers. The lives of children fill Marla in an almost sacred way.

Grace is the second of three young sisters who visit Sanctuary with their parents. Her older sister can carry on a conversation and her baby sister was recently born. So Grace (as many middle children find) has a tougher time holding the attention of an adult right now. She works at it every week for a while. And finally finds her body fading towards sleep.

Marla and Grace found each other in that moment. One so full of love for children. The other in need of loving caring arms. And the gift that they gave each other was peace - shalom - that feeling that it might be alright in the world after all. GC

Learning what is important.

We are not exactly sure where he lives. We do know that this member of our community lives outdoors year round. When he drops in to our programs, he takes with him all of his possessions which are carried on his back. He has affectionally named his backpack 'my honey'. If you are someone he trusts, he will say: 'Go ahead, try and lift it!' Some of us have done this and found it weighs about 100 pounds.



Stooping down and doing his part to clean up a little, my friend taught me about what is important...and when it is important.

As we get to know him, we find there is a great deal of mystery about where our friend was born and how he got here. If you were to ask him regarding any of the aforementioned, with his head cocked to the side and eyes squinted, he would utter: 'I have a short memory' or 'I believe that you are being nosy.' He is a hard working, loving, humorous, servant hearted, hospitable man who loves to sing and play the guitar. We often hear his sincere rough voice bellow, 'I am so happy, I am so happy!...' He is very often concerned with the wellbeing of others and will make sure that he checks in regularly one to one.

A while back, a few of us walked with him to a friend's house for dinner. As he walked along with us (with his 100 pounds on his back), he would stop frequently to pick up bits of garbage or recycling that dotted our path. He continued his conversation with us, bent down, and kept walking. When he had accumulated a handful, he carried it until we found a recycling or refuse bin. It was a simple yet profound act that I have reflected on ever since. He was doing his part to make the world just a little bit better. Not just at drop in. Not just in special moments. In all moments, his eyes are open to living a life of love. For me, the message was profound. It took a homeless man to make me see that we all have a part in seeing the Kingdom come. None of our efforts are lost:

I Cor 15:58: 'Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm, let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labour is the Lord is not in vain.' JJ

"Take a look around!"

This is the text that Gil sent to me from the other side of the room at about noon at a Monday drop in. It was a little bit busier than normal, but uneventful so far. I looked up from the card game I was playing with some friends and expected to see something wrong. Perhaps there was a conflict escalating between two people in a corner that we needed to keep an eye on, or something like that. I looked around for...something...anything. But I didn't see anything out of the ordinary. So I wrote back, "I'm not seeing it."

He wrote back, "Every table is deeply engaged in conversation..."

It was true. As I looked around again, there were about seven tables that had anywhere from 3 to 8 people left per table. And at each one, people were leaning in and talking. I have no idea what any of the conversations were about. It was such an encouragement for us to know that our friends were being cared for. Not just cared for, but also caring for one another!



We try to create spaces where the power differential between people is diminished so that we can all connect on a deeper, more human level

Relationship – deep connections with other people – is something that we all need. You can give a person everything that they need for physical sustenance and enjoyment: food, clothing, shelter, entertainment, etc. But, if they don't have anyone to share those things with, what's the point? We continue to believe that disconnection – a lack of relationships with other people – is at the root of poverty. That's why Sanctuary exists. We try to create spaces where power differentials between people are diminished so that we can all connect on a deeper, more human level. The real purpose of our meal drop-ins is not about feeding people, although that is important. It's about sitting down, eating, and conversing with other people around a common table.


That's what was so amazing about the conversations that were happening that day. It wasn't a room full of impoverished people being served by volunteers. It was a room full of people caring for one another, relating to each other and being community. DR

One more ask. Last week, we got our latest bank statement for Sanctuary. It was not good. And I knew what that meant. We were going to have to ASK you for financial help one more time. This is not fun for me. I was raised to be independent. Get a job. Take care of yourself. I believed that asking for help is not good. Yet, now, we are in another situation where our funds are short and we need to ask again. So I went into Darryl's office to vent all that.

He listened then said, "yeah it hurts that we have to keep asking for help...but it hurts our friends on the street even MORE every day that they have to keep asking for help too..." Humbled, I returned to my office and prepared to ask again.

Can you help? An end of year donation? monthly commitment? One time assistance? Please check on <http://www.sanctuarylondon.ca/getting-involved/donations/>or mail a cheque to:

Sanctuary London, 531 Talbot St, London ON, N6A 1S5. Thank-you very much for your love and support!



Nov. 14/15 Bayfield, ON & Dec. 5/15 London, ON

the Ashgrove

In support of Sanctuary London

November 14, 2015 - **The Ashwood Inn**, Bayfield, ON - Doors @ 9pm, Show @ 10pm
 December 5, 2015 - **The London Music Club** - Doors @ 6:30pm, Show @ 7:30pm
 Tickets \$25, available @ www.tickets.com/events/351804.html or call 1-800-965-9324

theashgrove.com sanctuarylondon.ca theashwood.com londonmusicclub.com

What's going on?

Upcoming events at Sanctuary

Christmas Carolling:

Sunday December 13, 2015 at 6pm. Meet at 513 Talbot St dressed up for an evening of Carolling, then back to the church for hot chocolate and Christmas baking afterwards!

Christmas Party:

Wednesday December 23, 2015 at 513 Talbot St from 5:00pm to 9:00pm. Big Christmas meal, presents, games, songs, and sharing our talents. One of the highlights of every year!

5th Anniversary Party:

Friday January 29, 2016 at 513 Talbot St. from 7:00pm - 10:00pm. Lots of great music, games, food, and a wonderful celebration of Sanctuary London's 5th anniversary!