

Finding Home

Sanctuary London Update, December 2013

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As one of the older members of our community left our drop-in, I gave her a big hug. She stopped and looked me in the eye. "Since I was a young girl, I have been hurt by lots of men. I can feel that pain in my stomach. It hurts all the time. But when you hug me, that pain goes away for a while..."



Another year at Sanctuary comes to a close. This, our third in existence, has had its share of challenges and blessings. This past August, attendance at our drop-ins rose dramatically. Costs went up. But so did the number of friendships. We struggle, all of us, in the midst of it all, to find home together. Home – that elusive sense that can rarely be described – known when it is there...and aches when it is not. Home is belonging. Perhaps that resembles a celebration – like our 50's dance pictured above and below. Or more likely it means a cup of coffee and a listening ear. Someone to say they are there with you. Freedom to be a mess...and know you are still loved. A game of euchre. Sitting together under the bridge. We have discovered that one of the primary drives of humanity is the desire to find home. Its my drive. Its the drive of our friends who carry a knapsack filled with all their possessions.



"Finding home with people is not so much helping another person to fit in, but admitting how much you need to find home too!"

So, it hurts us to know that some of our friends will be sleeping outside again tonight. We know some of our friends do not eat every day. And I tear up inside knowing that some of the people we see still feel unwanted and unloved. We continue to invite. We continue to share meals. We continue to meet under bridges. And in moments we can only call sacred, some of the people we know trust us enough to invite us into their lives. Together, we find home.



*Getting into the 50's
Darryl and Sarah Reckman
and
Gil and Bonnie Clelland enjoy a night
with our community as we celebrated
a 50's dance and party!*



“Darryl... Darryl!... DAAARRRRRYL!!!!”

Dinner was just about ready, and I had just walked into the atrium to see how everything was going. I was already deeply involved in another conversation, but I couldn't get that piercing shrill (and slightly whiney) voice out of my head. I knew there was no way she was going to stop interrupting everybody else in that crowded room until I came over and found out what she wanted. So I apologized to the person I was speaking with and excused myself.

Eventually I worked my way through the crowd of people. “What would you like Elizabeth?”

It takes her a while to get the words out... I'm highly irritated by this point, knowing that every time she calls me over, she never needs anything very important. Usually she just wants me to know that we're getting low on sugar or she needs help picking up something she dropped on the ground. I'm not saying she's not important, I'm just saying that there are a hundred other people in the room who could easily help with her little 'problems' just the same as I could. And what drives me crazy the most is that she knows I'm busy with someone else.

Finally she begins to reply, “I need you to turn around”.

“Ok....?” And so I did, all the while thinking to myself, *I don't have time for this!*

“Now look out the window... I know you have been in the kitchen all afternoon, and I didn't want you to miss out on the majesty of the clouds today.”



Come join us for a Sunday evening service. Doors open at 5:30 to set up the space and hang out. Worship begins at 6:00 (or so). Worship for us is an open time to share God's love through song, word, and story. We have a teaching time followed by Communion and prayer. We end each Sunday hanging out and enjoying food! We meet at 513 Talbot St, Sundays at 5:30

While I appreciate the effort to keep the word "Christ" in Christmas as opposed to Happy Holidays, I am wondering if we can use that same energy to live out Christ this Christmas season? Live out His mercy, love, forgiveness, and grace - especially to those who have known rejection and poverty.

Get to know your neighbours,

Share your time at a shelter,

Go sledding with your children, and invite others to join.

Make a gift instead of buying one.

Write a homemade card to someone

Hot chocolate and egg nog!

Go sing Carols at the senior's homes!

Call a relative that needs love

Admit you might need that love too.

Live out the Spirit of this Jesus and we will put Christ back into Christmas...

“So, what do I have to offer?” blurted out our friend (who we affectionately nicknamed 'the Ox') as I was preaching on Sunday night.

The sermon I shared was based on 2Corinthians 9 – specifically verse 7, “Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.”(NIV) I discussed the joy in giving from our blessings – all the ways God has gifted us. And our friend could not handle it any more...what did he have to offer?

Three decades ago, Ox was born into a challenging home-life. Drugs surrounded his teen years and became his coping mechanism as he hit the streets of London in his early 20`s. Often degrading himself to get his latest fix, Ox knew little of love. His life, like so many of our friends on the streets, had become a life of survival. Just get by. Certainly not a life of success. Certainly not worth anything And certainly not a life where he had much to offer. Somewhere along the way, he began to hang out with Sanctuary.

At first, he came for the food - sandwiches at Monday lunch and a good warm meal on Wednesday evenings. Every now and then, he would stay longer. Ox played euchre with us. Not well. He's a great player...just a short temper. Occasionally, he would lose his control, yell at us, and leave. For some reason, he keeps coming back. For five years, he has kept coming back.

A few weeks ago, we were asked to help out an organization that rescues women out of the sex trade. This organization had already rescued a woman and her children. They were safe and moved out of their apartment in London. The person who had trafficked her was behind bars. We were asked to clean up the apartment she had been renting when she was rescued. I asked the members of our community at Sanctuary and 10 people showed up for the day. The apartment, having been abandoned for a few months now, was disgusting. Bugs of all varieties greeted us under every box, every piece of furniture, and in every closet. Overwhelming smells caused many of us to take a walk outside just to get fresh air. But Ox lived up to his nickname. He scrubbed floors on his hands and knees. He washed walls and moved furniture. When I got tired, the Ox kept going. Sweating in this hot apartment, he poured himself out. He was loving a woman and her children – people we will never meet. And those images struck me as he asked his question Sunday night...

“What do **you** have to offer?” I repeated back to him, “You have so much more than money. You have a wonderful life that is somehow still full of love.” I recounted how he interacts with my children, the one who stays on Wednesday to clean up, and the one who helps get Monday's lunch ready. No, he does not have money. And he does not know his worth all the time. He knows that God calls him his beloved, but its hard to believe that after the life he has lived. Its hard for the Ox to believe that he has anything to offer. But for some reason, he DOES offer. And God holds onto all of those offerings. And in people like Ox, God's love is offered to the rest of us.

Gil Clelland

Come Join us for our Annual CHRISTMAS BANQUET

December 18, 2013, at 5:00-8:00pm
Amazing meal, Talent show to follow!
513 Talbot Street, London, ON
Everyone is Invited!



Mark Your Calendars!
We are celebrating...
Sanctuary will be 3 years old!

3rd Anniversary Party!

Dancing, Music, Food, Fun!
January 31, 2014, 7-11pm
513 Talbot Street, London

SHARING LIFE AT SANCTUARY LONDON

Year-End Donations to Sanctuary London:

Sanctuary London is a church. However, because a large portion of the members of our community are living near or below the poverty line, Sanctuary is constantly in need of financial support from individuals like you from the Greater Church Community to help us continue reaching out to those who are the least among us. **Our financial needs have increased greatly this year as our attendance has grown.**

Presently, we are behind by approx \$25,000 in this year's budget as we head towards next year's work. Can you help? Can you donate a year end sum towards meeting this year's budget? Do you want to begin to be a monthly donor? Do you want to increase your monthly donation? Please contact us to set this up!

Contact us: Sanctuary London

By mail:

147 Walnut Street
London, ON N6H 1A5

By phone:

(519) 280-8895 (Darryl)
(519) 902-9774 (Gil)

By email:

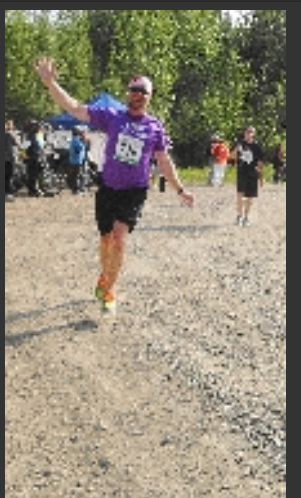
darryl@sanctuarylondon.ca
gil@sanctuarylondon.ca

50 Mile Run for Sanctuary!

To help raise enough funds towards the budget and future staff and programming, Gil Clelland (our pastor) has begun training for a 50-mile run! This run will take place on September 6, 2014 around London and ending (approximately 10 hours after he starts) at Sanctuary for a big celebration.

**We hope to raise \$50 000 for
50 miles of running.**

We will need help with promotion, fund-raising, and planning the event. Would you like to get involved? Call or email Gil with the info listed above.



Sharing this Newsletter

One of the best ways you can help us is sharing our story with others you know. If this was mailed to you, we have included two copies (if it was emailed, print off an extra copy!). Please share the extra copy with a friend. Chat with them over coffee about Sanctuary. Highlight this page – how to get involved. Share your love for our work with others...helps us...helps those who we serve each day!