

SANCTUARY LONDON

Stay updated at
www.sanctuarylondon.ca
New stories posted every other week!

Play Euchre with Sanctuary London!
Join us for a tournament (\$20 a person) on
Friday November 16th, details on page 4

UPDATE FALL 2012

Perseverance: Why keep going? Why not just move on? People don't change, they don't want to...maybe we should just find people who are willing to be different. This whole thing would be easier...OR...God didn't give up on us. So we can't give up on others...At Sanctuary, we have struggled with this. We want great things from people – even expect it of them. But God is teaching us to persevere...no matter what. And in that, we might realize God is still persevering with us!

But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. Philippians 3:13b-14NIV

Contact us: Sanctuary London

By mail: 736 Glasgow Street
London, ON N5Y 1V7

By phone: (519) 280-8895 (Darryl)
(519) 902-9774 (Gil)

By email:

darryl@sanctuarylondon.ca
gil@sanctuarylondon.ca

When the Zest for Life Disappears

Darryl Reckman

"A bagel?... Where'd you get that bagel?... This sucks man! Where's my bagel? I haven't had anything to eat all day! This is so stupid, I don't even know why I came. Life sucks... EVERYTHING SUCKS!"

Liam greeted me with these words when I picked him up to help me on a "walk-about"... (Except maybe add a few more profanities)...And immediately I thought to myself, *I knew it wasn't a good idea to invite Liam...*

At Sanctuary we regularly offer educational "walk-about" through the downtown core of London, to various small groups who are interested in learning about poverty in our city. Often, we'll invite some of our friends with more street experience than ourselves to come along and share some insight and their own personal stories. However, on this particular walk, none of our regular leaders were available. So, I called Liam.



Liam and I have been close friends for four or five years now. He struggles with a combination of mental illness, addiction and the deep pain of a broken and fragmented childhood. He has experienced homelessness for many years. Although fun-loving and with a rich zest for life, Liam has a temper that can flash up and rage in a matter of seconds, usually with very little warning.

That afternoon, his irritability demonstrated he was hungry. But I thought to myself, he knew that we were going for a walk. He should have eaten before hand. He knew better. And I was angry at him. He hinted at me to get him food but didn't really ask me for it. I wanted him to ask if he really wanted something. After all, it's my job to teach him that if he needs something, he needs to ask **properly** for it. I wasn't about to reward his bad behaviour!

Cont'd on page 2



Save the date – January 18th, 2013
Celebrate our Second Anniversary!
7pm at 513 Talbot St
Music, Art, Writing, and Dancing!
More Details at sanctuarylondon.ca



ZEST (cont'd from page 1) As Gil and I began our walk with the youth group, I could tell that the rest of the group could sense Liam's agitation, and were all a little nervous. I asked if anyone in the group knew anyone in their own lives who were truly homeless. A few said they have had brief encounters. Then one boy, probably 15 years old raised his hand. With a sigh of hesitation, he looked around and shared, "My half brother is homeless. I haven't heard from him for a few years now. Last I heard he was working as a male prostitute in Toronto..."

And that was it for Liam. I noticed him glancing around for a brief moment before he started running... straight for the river. I knew that running after him would make his anger worse, but I had no choice. I was responsible for him at this moment. And I didn't want to think about what could happen to him if I didn't follow. I left Gil with the group and I ran. We ran along the rivers edge, losing both my sandals along the way. I called after him, "If you don't tell me what the problem is, I don't know how to help you." He only screamed threats back at me. We came to the top of a dam, and without hesitation, he stomped right into the water. My heart was already racing. I knew Liam was not a strong swimmer, but he didn't look back. The water was rushing hard, and if he kept this pace he would be over his head and plunging through the rapids within seconds. *Father, give me Your strength, I'm completely desperate and don't know what else to do!* I trudged into the water after him, losing my footing several times on the slippery rocks. I looked up for a moment and noticed that Liam was slowing down, struggling to keep his own footing... I caught up, grabbed him by the arm and when he turned his head I stared deep into his eyes.

"Liam, if we don't turn around right now, one of us is going to die," I yelled above the sound of the rushing water.

"I don't care," he responded.

"Ya, but I do Liam," and then I added, "and I believe you care about me too."

Silence

"Can we please go together to find some lunch, and then we can talk about what's making you so upset? I really don't want to see you get hurt here."

"Fine."

A few minutes later we were sitting and enjoying a much-needed sandwich. I began to understand how the 15 year old boy talking about his adopted brother touched too close to some of the most painful parts of Liam's own story. It was easier for Liam to project disgust and anger, than it would have been to relate and share the tears in his soul.



What do these green spikes have to do with poverty in London? To find out, contact Darryl or Gil to set up a 'walk-about' with your small group today.



Gil with students on a 'walk-about'

And I am learning more and more every day, that Liam and I really aren't much different. Liam bursts out and gets angry when he hurts. My own anger is often driven by the hurt that I have for my friends. Was I really angry because Liam didn't have something to eat before coming on our walk and wasn't asking *properly*, or was I actually hurting because my friend doesn't know how to take care of himself? By the grace of God, I was able to persevere long enough to bring Liam back to reality, and to talk through some of his deepest pain. And by the grace of God, Liam has been persevering for many years and in spite of all his struggles, he continues to have that zest for life.

"Differences are not intended to separate, to alienate. We are different precisely in order to realize our need of one another." Desmond Tutu

The vision for Sanctuary London is: "At Sanctuary, we are becoming a healthy, welcoming community where people who are poor or excluded are particularly valued. This community is an expression of the good news embodied in Jesus Christ." But what does this vision look like "on the ground"? What do we do regularly to live out that vision and why do we do these things (not others)

What we do	When we do it	Why we do it
Weekly Drop-ins	<i>Mondays</i> 11am-2pm <i>Wednesdays</i> 3-6:30pm	We invite our friends into our space to share a meal, play cards, have a coffee, and get to know one another. We sense that the greatest need of all people is to be connected to others. Drop-in is a space for all people to connect, feel loved, and welcomed. We will not use the word "client" for the people who attend – we much prefer the word "friend."
Walk	Weekly	We leave "our space" and enter the area where our friends feel most comfortable. We walk, meet people in their own turf, go for coffee, greet people who are new to the city, and over time build up relationships of trust. Rarely do we hand out anything on these walks. We want to establish friendships based on mutuality – not provision of services.
Art and Writing Class for our community	<i>Wednesdays</i> 7pm-9pm	One of the greatest losses a person experiencing poverty feels is the loss of their voice. They feel like their voice does not matter, is not worth listening to, and should be silenced. We offer space and time (through guided teaching) to allow our friends to express themselves once again.
Community Bible study and Worship	Bible study: <i>Mondays</i> 2-3pm Worship: <i>Sundays</i> 5:30-7:30pm	We remain determined to centre our week on growing in understanding (including allowing questions) of God and His scriptures. And we sense that worship is the essence of any community. It is at the feet of Jesus' cross that we can be real, feel broken, renewed, called, forgiven, and loved. We meet there weekly.
Teaching about poverty and God's response to it	Regularly	Small groups, individuals, school groups, and youth often join us for educational "walk-about" - read Darryl's story for more details. We walk through the city viewing the streets through the eyes of our friends – where some people sleep, what is helpful, a hindrance, and how we can make a difference.
Speaking outside of our community	About 40 times in the last year	Church groups, youth groups, retreats, camps, and schools regularly ask Gil and Darryl to speak. We enjoy encouraging the church to "be the church" in their own communities among the impoverished in their own communities, and finding a God who loves us all – in spite of our messes.
Inviting partners into our community (financially, with prayer, with their time)	Regularly	We cannot survive without others. From our partner in ministry at Talbot St. Church – who host us for all our programs (at 513 Talbot St), to the many churches and individuals who support us regularly, we are truly blessed. But, we know that we need to continually expand this partnership with others, invite people to play a role, and enjoy seeing God among His people.
Celebrations within our community	Every few months	If we're reading God's scriptures correctly, we sense that God's reign is often seen in parties! Every few months we have a big party – music, lots of food, and a time to invite all people to join and meet our community. Watch for invitations for two different events in this newsletter!



THAT SON! - is me...

Gil Clelland

He just stood there. At the end of the dusty driveway...waiting. Nobody really knows how long he was there. We just know that it was a regular event for him to be there. Waiting for his son. The fields still had work every day. So he worked every day. His wife and other son still needed his attention, so he gave them his attention. But, something ached in the heart of the Father, and he waited. At times while he waited, it rained and papa would walk back to the house soaked. After a hot bath, he drank a warm cup of tea, said a little prayer for his family – always remembering his lost son, and went to bed. Sometimes, the sun baked down upon his body as he waited. And he staggered back slowly to the house after his time of waiting. His old legs felt weary on those days. But, love drove him to persevere, no matter what. Some people began to say things behind his back. That son was not worth waiting for. Honestly. That son yelled at dad, left the house with his inheritance – collecting his inheritance before dad DIED! That son was not worth it. That son ran away. That son knew what he was doing when he left. But, this was the father who persevered no matter what. Love did that to him. According to Jesus' story of the prodigal son in Luke 15, this was the image of God waiting for us to return. (Prodigal son etching by Rembrandt van Rijn)

Rick was the first man I met on the streets of London. I came to London in February of 2007 to work with Streetlight, a division of Youth for Christ. Long before we had a dream to plant a church downtown called Sanctuary London, I was a street missionary with no street experience. I was not an expert. I had no experience. I just had a passion for justice and a sense of God's call. That first week, I met Rick. Rick left his home while still a teen in December of 1999. Before getting his first apartment, he bounced around from shelters to friends helping him. I was indebted to his street experience. Within a few weeks of starting, a men's service group asked me to speak. I brought Rick along to hear my words. After the talk, I asked him how I did. He pointed out that I had wanted to illicit a response ONLY from all the pain our friends on the street feel – and in doing so, had missed so much of what makes our friends amazing. "You forgot we are human...not just pain." So I began to bring Rick along to speak with me. He was a natural communicator. His experience and warm friendly nature made him likeable and approachable. And as we have shared scripture in community over the years, Rick's intuitive sense of the character of God shone through. He would explain a passage in ways that would teach me (as well as so many in our community). I share all of that to share this: I am growing impatient with Rick. I want so much better for him. A little schooling, a little drive, and this guy could be so much more! We've spoken together about Bible college, a career as an associate pastor (perhaps with us one day). Where is his motivation? Why doesn't he just get at it?

Maybe I need to remember Rick's first critique of me. Maybe I need to remember he is human. Maybe I need better criteria for establishing if someone is worth waiting for – other than a job or motivation. Maybe I need to see that Rick finally belongs – most of the time. That Rick has friends who love him, respect him, and want him around. And maybe if I didn't have my dreams for him in the way of his dreams for him, I would have heard and perhaps even celebrated a bit more when he shared with me that he just had an amazing weekend with his father – for the first time in a really long time. Maybe its my pride getting in the way...and I need to love more. Maybe I still need to be taught how to love our friends on the street. And maybe God has Rick in my life to teach me. I know I need to be more patient with Rick. But perhaps the greatest thing I need to remember is that Rick has been waiting at the end of the driveway for me.

Financial Update:

We at Sanctuary are indebted to people like you joining our community in prayer and financial support. As you may know, we have moved all of the financial side of our ministry to London. Please send ALL funds to our London address –

Sanctuary London

736 Glasgow Street

London, ON N5Y 1V7.

Through a summer donor drive, we saw our monthly donors rise from approximately 45% of our budget to just over 65% of our budget. This is amazing! But it also means we are still 35% short of our budget each month. One time gifts are great but monthly donors allow us to budget for the coming year. Can you help with this? If you wish to support us, please contact Darryl or Gil via email. Thanks so much!

Come join our community for a great night!

What: Euchre Tournament (Cost \$20 per person – supporting the work of Sanctuary)

Where: 513 Talbot St. London ON

When: Friday November 16th, 2012, 7-11pm.

Limit 120 participants (including members of our local community)

Register: Email darryl@sanctuarylondon.ca

OR CALL Darryl at 519-280-8895

This is a progressive style tournament where you get a new partner every game. Keep your individual score throughout the night for the chance to win TICKETS to a London Knights Or London Lightning game! Lots of food, fun, and an opportunity to hang out with our community.



Euchre Tournament

If you cannot participate and wish to play a role, you can sponsor one or more of our friends to play for the evening (\$20 per person). Send a cheque to our London mailing address in that amount!