

SANCTUARY LONDON



HOPE IN CREATIVITY

COVID-19 has had significant impacts on all of us. Everything has changed. And many of us are left feeling disconnected, at least physically, from the places and people we love. But Sanctuary is a social place... a place where we try to foster healthy and positive relationships. So as you can imagine, it has been an interesting challenge for us to find new and fun ways to recreate social connection in spite of our physical distance. Allow us to share just a few of the things we have been doing!

SIDEWALK CHALK

While we can't have art drop-in inside for now, we've brought art to the streets! Read more on Page 5.

OUTDOOR PATIO

Not allowed to have people dine inside? No problem! During that time, we set up tables and chairs outside in our parking lot. With lots of physical distance of course!

GARDENING

What better way to visit outside than to spend some time in the garden?





coming closer

In many ways, COVID-19 has taught us to withdraw, to pull away and close our curtains, to cover our mouths and refrain from touch. To be wary of stepping out. While these guidelines during a global pandemic are designed to keep us and others safe, there is a quiet invitation to come close. To notice the person who lingers with extra need for connection. To listen to both the rage and the silence of those who feel the isolation the most. To feel the tension in our own bodies and become more aware of the aches we hold in our shoulders and to respond in care and rest- knowing that our own health directly impacts the health of others.

One of the first things I resumed after the initial lockdown were my downtown walks. I was able to get outdoors, maintain social distance, and yet still be present in my community. In this way of "staying close" while still keeping distance, I realized how much more I noticed and how my senses were so much more alive in the slow pace and awareness of my surroundings. I had no destination, no scheduled meeting, Just being; being closer. I noticed people I had never seen before, and yet I'm sure I walked by many times before. I noticed structures and graffiti and living trees and flowers growing in strange places I may have passed by on a normal day.

This 'coming closer' looks like an opportunity to check in on those I haven't thought to call on in weeks. It's the ability to greet each person at the door during drop in, just so glad to see them and know they are well. Brief and warm check-ins that bring us closer in camaraderie. The joy that wells up in the small ways we are able to bring community, friendship, and home to each other despite the challenges.

In coming closer, I have more awareness, more time, more empathy and joy. More gratitude. A sneaky hug from someone I haven't seen in ages, both of us so glad to see each other again. An acknowledgement of shared pain and frustration from six feet apart, masks on, but eyes speaking more than words. A unified understanding as we attempt to be in community together and support each other despite the ever-changing laws and guidelines. The silence and holiness that lies between those golden conversations between these folks, and at home with my children.

At a time when we are urged to keep our distance physically, there is endless opportunity to come close if we are ready to listen. -T.B.

Resilience and Creativity



At staff meetings for the last number of months, we've been talking about how COVID-19 has challenged us. We've been challenged to be creative in new ways as we continue to be Sanctuary. We are in good company. Our community is full of resilient and creative people.

I spoke with Paul, a young man in his twenties. He described to me how he has been waiting for more than three years on the city's housing list. He told me about what his days look like, over and over. Every day is a challenge to survive. He talks of all kinds of creative things he does to meet his daily needs. He is resilient and I am struck by this.

Paul showed me the place he called home. It was a beat up tent covered in tarps to keep out the rain and provide a bit of shade. The ground was very sloped. To level things out he found himself a wooden skid and created a few sturdy looking legs. I could tell as he explained it all to me that he was very proud of the engineering behind it all. His tarps were bigger than the tent required. Instead of letting the tarps hang or fold the excess under, he created a porch. Under his outstretched tarp was a lazy boy chair that someone had discarded at the road. He told me how he rigged up a makeshift rickshaw trailer, using bike tires. Paul pulled the chair across the city to his porch. Another creative engineering feat! I was amazed and impressed by this man's resilience and creativity.

I couldn't help but remember back to when I was a kid. I have very fond memories of playing in the forest and building forts. My heart ached as that fleeting memory faded and reality set in. This was Paul's home. Not some fun fort. This was where he lays his head down at night. My heart ached, and still does,

knowing that the wait list for housing is so long and appropriate housing is so hard to come by. My heart ached knowing that it won't be long until the authorities would come along and dismantle his creatively built home. And they did. Affordable, appropriate housing is a serious need in our city. People are dying. I saw Paul on a recent walk and he asked me to keep my ears open for housing for him. Paul is a resilient and creative person who is worthy of having a permanent home. There are so many great folks just like Paul. At Sanctuary we are constantly dreaming and trying to find ways to provide and support physical home for people.

-M.T.



THE MANE EVENT

OCT/31/20

[CLICK TO
GIVE HERE!](#)

**HIS CHALLENGE:
RAISE \$10,000
AND HE WILL CUT
HIS FAMOUS LOCKS**

ALL PROCEEDS GO TO SANCTUARY LONDON

The Needs are Great... Can YOU HELP?

As COVID-19 continues to create challenges in how we are able to run our drop-ins and the increase in costs of things like food, supplies and staffing needs, our monthly expenses have grown significantly. We rely on the donations of the greater community and people like you to continue the important work of creating home and Sanctuary for the people most affected by poverty, homelessness, and isolation that this pandemic has continued to magnify.

For our fall Fundraiser this year, our dear friend and community member, Eric Buckley is raising funds to cut his hair at the end of October! We have a goal to raise \$10,000 by October 31st, that's about \$500 for every inch of Eric's hair! We are asking for generous donations! Every bit helps us get closer to our goal.

Pull together a group of friends or your Church community to sponsor an inch, or make a one time donation today to see the hair go!

Click on the link provided in the poster or find us on Facebook. Search "The Mane Event-Fundraiser for Sanctuary".

<http://www.sanctuarylondon.ca/getting-involved/donations/>

Be sure to select "The Mane Event" when you donate!

Time to get Creative!

Human beings are inherently creative. But that creativity seems to be cranked up a few notches when humanity runs across limits of any kind. The tighter and more restrictive the limits, the more creative we seem to get. One way we see that most clearly is the arts.

In the Italian Renaissance, patrons imposed many restrictions on the artworks they would purchase - it had to be either biblical or mythological subject matter, the colour scheme was mostly primary colours, the designs felt stiff, and the body types were idealized.



Into that world, Michelangelo and Leonardo brought their genius. Upholding most of the “rules” of art, they stretched and pulled the regulations while creating art works known across the world and through time - Michelangelo’s David, Sistine Chapel ceiling (with God giving life to Adam), and Last Judgement, and Leonardo’s Last supper - in which he created a new painting media, the Mona Lisa, and many life drawings and inventions (including the first drawings of the helicopter). The rules were restrictive and humanity responded with greater creativity.

So, when we realized that we could not use our office building for art drop-in every week, we needed to get creative. If our folks could not come to art drop-in, art drop-in would go to our folks! Mechele and I took sidewalk chalk out to the streets of downtown London - to draw, to talk, to meet, and to hang-out. Public art declares that all people deserve to participate in the artistic world of wonder, joy, and creativity. Art breaks down barriers between people and allows for meaningful engagement. And it’s working. Weekly, we have all sorts of visitors stop by our space (we usually set up just east of the library on Dundas St). One week a juggler joined us, we have had some of our community members stop and draw for a while, and we’re meeting new folks as well. Local businesses are noticing - stopping by and seeing what we’re up to. Moms and children stop to ask art questions. And lots of folks just stop to talk for a bit. It might be a quick comment about the drawing or a longer conversation about chalk, rain, and the temporary nature of all good things. Friendships have emerged, strengthened, and new relationships formed. We have engaged more people with art outside than we ever could have, if we were still in our building.



Winter is coming soon. Chalk does not work very well on snow. A new limit. I guess it's time to get creative again!

-G.C.

Thanksgiving

Even with everything going on in the world today, we recognize we have so much to be thankful for. Can you believe Sanctuary turns 10 years old on January 1st 2021? It feels like just yesterday we were preparing for our first ever Sanctuary drop-in lunch over on Blackfriars Street. I think there were seven or eight of us there total. It's ten years later and so much has changed.

For the last eight years I have been slowly but steadily taking seminary classes. We decided at Sanctuary that the timing was right for me to take a decrease in hours in order to finally complete my studies. So since September, and for the next two semesters, I'll be around Sanctuary a little less, and studying a whole lot more.

In order to help make this transition possible, Sanctuary has hired an already dear friend of ours, Heather Fieten. Heather's role with Sanctuary will be primarily with administration, helping to make things run more smoothly for all of us. We are so

excited and thankful to have her on our team! If you have a moment, give Heather a quick shout out on Facebook or email her at heather@sanctuarylondon.ca to help make her feel welcome!

There are also so many other volunteers, supporters, and people who have helped in other ways that we owe a great huge thank you to. We could not have made it through these past six months without you.

Thank you to Gateway Church for providing lunches on Mondays, to North Park Church for providing us with baked goods and other grab and go snacks and drinks. Thanks to our board for supporting us through this confusing time, and thank you to Talbot Street Church for supporting our work by providing us space through it all.

Thank you Scott, Jen, Debra, Marje & Jake, Kyle, David & Lydia, Madison, Catherine, Deb, Jan, Janelle, Rita, Roger & Barb, Dustyn, and so many others... This is really just the tip of the iceberg in terms of all the people who have helped us out in significant ways. To all of you, we say, "Thank you".

-D.R.



Welcome Heather!

**Sanctuary
London**

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