

FINDING HOME NEWSLETTER • FALL 2022

SANCTUARY LONDON



COMMUNITY UPDATE!

Many of you will know that about a year ago, Sanctuary began the process of reevaluating our vision, and strategic planning for our future. With so many changes happening as a result of COVID, and some recent rapid growth in numbers, the timing for this sort of thing seemed right. We continue to work hard on this process, and we are hopeful that we will be ready to share and begin to implement that strategic plan within the next few months.

In this newsletter, you will find an article written by Mechele about a social arts program that Sanctuary participated in as part of our brainstorming for the strategic plan. It was one way that we wanted to include our community members and amplify their voices in the process. The visual results and findings were remarkable!



We have decided to continue with this intentional hearing from our community by engaging in monthly "Community Conversations". These will be large group meetings where everyone from all levels of community involvement are welcome to come together with the simple goal to hear from one another. We invite you to join us!

As the strategic plan continues to take shape, there are a few things that are abundantly clear. We want to be a healthy, welcoming and inclusive community where reconciliation, healing, and home-making are our main focuses. We want to be a community that listens to one another, cares for one another, cares for creation, and celebrates life together.

We believe this kind of community is based on the Kingdom of God as described in Isaiah 40, where "every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low" (v.4). In this vein we struggle to release the grip of power from those who have it, including releasing our own power, and seek to elevate the voices and positions of those who are oppressed, marginalized, and deprived of the goodness of life.

One of the ways we promote this great reversal of power is through our "Community Celebrations". We commit, at least four times a year, to throwing some sort of extravagant party. As in Luke 14:15-24, we gather as the unlikeliest of banquet guests, and treat one another with special honor, if for no other reason than to celebrate life together. The truth is, we are all beautiful and broken, and if you are willing to admit that, then we invite you to join the party! -D.R.



One of the things we learned from this art project is that our community really does have a lot to say, and that we have much to learn from each other. We wanted to find more ways to engage with community together. For this reason we started to have more intentional conversations with individuals and groups of varying size. And we keep on learning! You'll also find an article in this newsletter written by Dan about another important piece of learning.

UPCOMING EVENTS!



COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

***MONTHLY ON FIRST WEDNESDAY
OF THE MONTH, 7-8PM***

We are so excited to start these monthly conversations with the Sanctuary community. The goal is to listen to one another and learn from one another. As a valued member of the greater Sanctuary Community, please consider join us!

COMMUNITY CELEBRATION

OCTOBER 21, 2022 7-10PM

Please join us for a fun night of line dancing and country twang! Why? Because we need every excuse to celebrate the goodness of life together.
513 Talbot Street

FALL FUNDRAISER

***WEDNESDAY COMMUNITY MEAL
SPONSORSHIPS!***

We have calculated the costs, and all-in, we have discovered that it takes about \$1000 per week to create a healthy and hearty meal for 250+ people on a Wednesday night. Our goal is to find 52 individuals, groups, families, and businesses to sponsor our meal each week of the year! Please consider supporting us in this way!



WHAT IS SOCIAL ART?

A Social Arts Project provides the opportunity to gather as a group of people to have voice and feedback into common goals. To reflect, play and dream engaging all our senses to be able to tell a bigger story. Sanctuary was storytelling during the month of May. Social Arts was one of the platforms Sanctuary used to involve community members in our Strategic Planning.

With the skilled guidance and expertise of Melanie Schambach, the community was welcomed to not only use words but to speak in metaphor and visual images.

Through Social Arts, we engaged the community in three different ways. We first met as a small group of five stakeholders, comprised of staff and long-time community members. We met for a total of eight hours over zoom meetings to talk of Sanctuary's core values. From these meetings the concept, composition, and larger images were born. The community traced the images onto the canvas and painted the first layer. The second small group was a

team of four community members and one staff who spent two days training with Melanie to become Community Facilitators for the project. The third way community engagement happened was to be invited as a whole community led by the Facilitators to have voice and create the second layers to the masterpiece. Approximately over one hundred community members participated in the entire process.

We began a community conversation around three main themes. 1. How do you meaningfully belong to the community? 2. How do you experience love? 3. What does a flourishing Sanctuary community look like?

Collectively we created a work of art that speaks of our humanity, interconnectedness, resiliency, and experiences of joy and sorrow. It is a magnificently powerful and beautiful vision of who we are and who we want to be. We celebrate the artwork that we all created together. (continued on next page)

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The artwork may be complete, but we will keep the conversation going. It's a remarkable continuation into the future of who we are individually and together as Sanctuary. It has been a few months now since the project wrapped up. As conversations and reflections continue, we have learned and been affirmed of a few things. Sanctuary has always put importance on listening to and taking direction from the community, especially holding up the voices of the most vulnerable among us. We recognize that being vulnerable with each other and creating space for this to happen is important. We were reminded how sacred spaces are, when people can grieve, cry, hope, celebrate, play, and create with others who care about them.

Together we recognize the importance of setting time aside to hear from each other in a more organized way. As a start, Sanctuary is committing to having Community Meetings at our largest gatherings, Wednesday evenings, once a month. We will take time to talk about where Sanctuary is headed and the impact that will have on each of us. Our hope and dream is to go forward together so everyone can thrive. We were reminded that people want to share of themselves in meaningful ways. We are excited to have community members who share in Sanctuary's core values join in the leadership and facilitation of our drop-ins and programs.



During the project it seemed easier for people to share their joys over their sorrows. It seemed easier to speak of what we liked about Sanctuary and not mention what is difficult about Sanctuary. Why is that? Is it in our nature? Is it societal expectations? Is it how we were taught? Like the old sayings, "if you have nothing good to say, say nothing" or "don't rock the boat". Do people fear judgement or retribution if they share something that is hard to hear? Do people feel safe to share the hard things? Do people just want to put their heads down and push through the hard things and only speak of the good? There are no easy answers to these questions. We will continue to live into our core values, challenge each other, reevaluate, make changes when needed, and do it all again. At Sanctuary we strive to be a place where people can build community, feel safe, and meet each other with welcome as we journey to find home together. We can't do this important work alone. We are grateful to have you along on the journey with us. Thank you! -M.T.

FINDING HOME AS "COMMUNITY"

The Jewish philosopher and Rabbi Abraham Heschel is credited with saying “words create worlds.” What does this mean? It means that the language that we use, the labels we apply to people, and how we describe things, is never purely objective, factual, or free of choices that are influenced by the values and biases we possess. When we speak about things in a certain way, we are choosing not to speak about them in other possible ways. And choosing to speak about some things means that we are silent about many other things. Language, in other words, is like a pair of glasses that we wear and, as with any prescription eyewear, it fundamentally shapes and influences how we see, understand, and engage with the world.

Recently, we have been giving a lot of thought to the language that we use to describe Sanctuary and the people who are a part of Sanctuary. In the past, we have often used the language of “friend” and “family” to describe other people involved with Sanctuary. However, over time, the departure of staff, volunteers, and others has left many long-term members of Sanctuary asking, “what does this language of friendship and family really mean?” People began to question if this language was dishonest, self-serving, or even unintentionally harmful.

“Family” and “friend” are loaded terms. Both come with baggage and expectations. On the one hand, many people only know family in a violent and unsafe way (for example, 75% of youth deprived of housing identify violence in their family home as a primary cause of their housing deprivation, and 40% also identify familial rejection of their sex or gender as a primary cause). Thus, even if people try to develop a “chosen” or “found” family (emphasizing that family is based upon the connections we intentionally make with others, rather than simply being a product of biological relationships), we often see patterns of violence, harm, and abuse replicated despite everyone’s hopes and best intentions. On the other hand, people also have very high hopes and expectations of those whom they consider their (idealized) family. It is fair to wonder if it is misleading to say that people who are paid to spend time with other people, and who frequently do not spend time

with those same people outside of paid hours, are actually “family” (and, if they are, what kind of family is that?).

Similarly, the language of friendship comes with great expectations. In fact, for people who have been abused within their biological family, the language of friendship often comes with much higher hopes and expectations than the language of family. But when staff members leave Sanctuary, it leaves people wondering, “was this person ever really my friend?” If a person cannot come to my house late at night because they are sad or in crisis, if I expect that person to only contact me during working hours and then access other support services at night, can I call that person my friend? Just who is being made to feel good about themselves and who is being taken advantage of (regardless of intentions!) when this language is used?

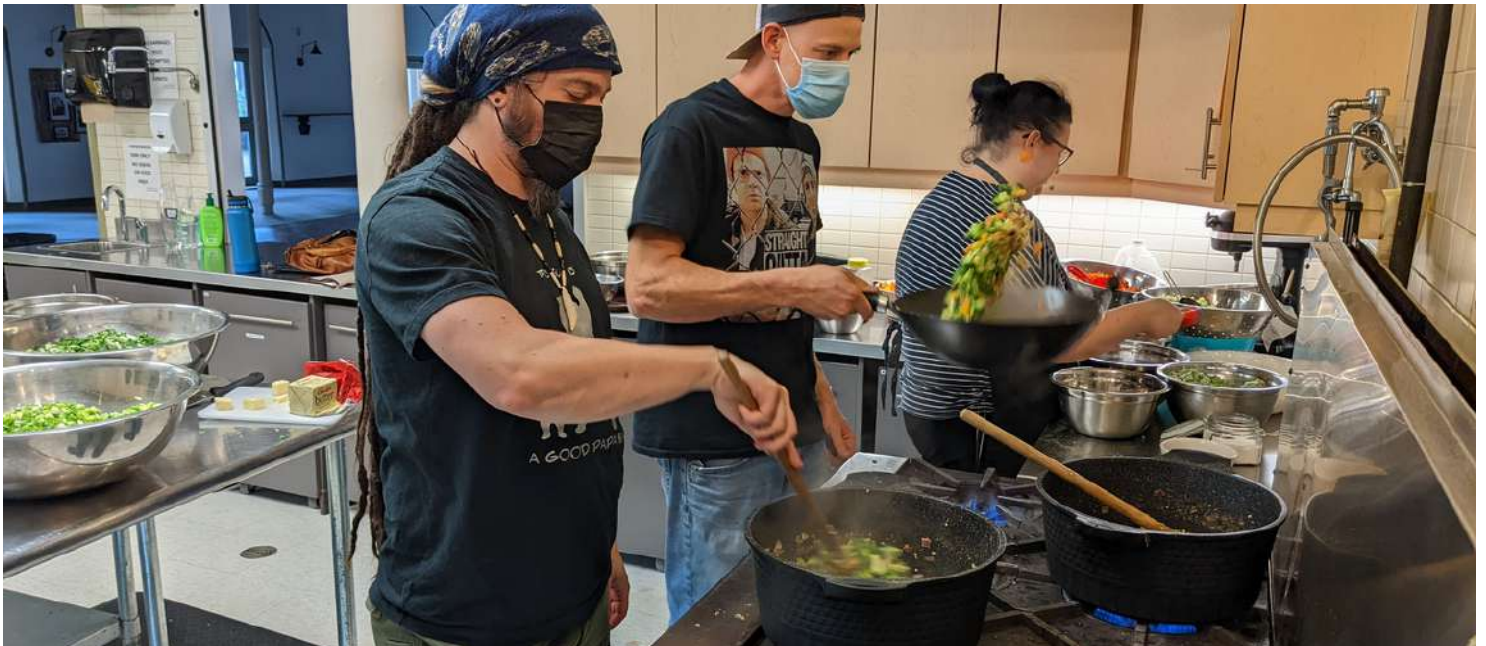


Moving forward we have decided that we will be intentional about using the language of “community members” in favor of “friends” when we speak of those who are a part of Sanctuary. This is the term explicitly preferred by community members at Sanctuary who have discussed this during semi-structured community conversations. To be a community member is to be someone who belongs in and with the community—they have a good and rightful place within the community and, in that place, they contribute to the thriving of the community as a whole—but how they end up connecting or not connecting with others in the community is more open-ended. There are less unreasonable expectations and less baggage associated with this label. (continued on next page)

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All of this is not to say that community members should not develop friendships with one another or with staff and volunteers. Quite the opposite! We are striving to create a safe and welcoming space where meaningful connections with other people are prioritized. That is what Sanctuary is all about! However, true friendships require time to cultivate and nurture and grow over time. Friendship is not something to be imposed upon everyone (or anyone) who enters our space. Furthermore, not all community members will grow friendships with each other, and not all community members need to be friends with each other, but all are still valued members of the community.

Secondly, we will also use the language of community membership to replace family-based language. However, this does not mean we will stop talking of home and of finding home together. The desire to feel at home is a universal human attribute, spanning history and cultures. Home is where we experience intimacy, belonging, safety, rest, healing, and play. Home is something that transcends our notions of both family and friendship. Therefore, making this change in our language—and the world we create with our language—is all part of this messy, joyful, difficult, playful, challenging, and delightful journey of being a community of people finding home together. It's a great responsibility and a wonderful privilege for us to be members of this home-seeking community with you. Thank you very much! -D.O.



We Are Hiring!

Are you passionate about caring for others? Do you love building community? Are you excited about being a team player?

Then perhaps Sanctuary London is the place for you!

We are currently hiring for the position of "**Community Kitchen Coordinator**". It will be a 6 month contract to start for 20 hours/week, with room to grow from there. We want our kitchen to be a welcoming community space, so this will be a very dynamic, challenging and rewarding position, combining top notch meal-planning, organizational, kitchen, and community skills.

If you think you have what it takes, please apply [HERE!](#)

As we continue to finalize and implement our strategic plan more positions will come available.

Please stay tuned!

THANKS SO MUCH FOR READING!



SANCTUARY LONDON

FINDING  HOME. TOGETHER.

Program Times and Locations

Sunday Worship	6-7:30pm	513 Talbot St.
Monday Drop-In Lunch	11am-3pm, Lunch @ noon	513 Talbot St.
Wednesday Community Dinner	1-9pm, Dinner served @ 5:30pm	513 Talbot St.
Thursday Art Drop-In	12:30-3pm	531 Talbot St.
Generous Space Group for LGBTQIA2S+	Every other Monday 3-4pm	531 Talbot St.
Community Gardening	Seasonally on Thursdays	West Lions Park
Street Outreach Walks	As often as possible!	Downtown

While Sanctuary is experiencing a time of growth in numbers and need, a significant increase in expenses, and a need to hire more staff, our finances have not kept up. We are currently experiencing a deficit each month. Please consider partnering with us through monthly donations. Download our Pre-Authorized Payment Form [HERE](#). You can also donate via e-transfer to giving@sanctuarylondon.ca. All donations are tax-deductible. Please also inquire about volunteering with us. We would love the opportunity to get to know you.

Thank you so much for supporting us in this way!

www.sanctuarylondon.ca

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