

St. Paul's Social Services Newsletter

Food Bank & Fellowship Centre

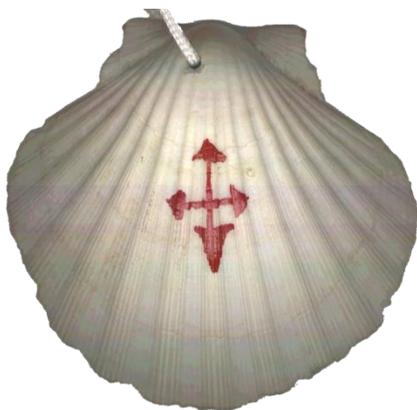
St. Paul's Cathedral, London, Ontario – Fall/ Winter 2017



This issue of the newsletter is lovingly dedicated to our volunteers at St. Paul's Social Services. Without the efforts of our generous volunteers, it would not be possible to do the work that we do in our community! There are some 75+ volunteers working regularly in **The Fellowship Centre** and for our **Food Bank**; individually and collectively, they give over 10,000 hours of service each year.

Volunteers greet and welcome all those who visit; register guests in our database, help families and individuals to select food for their hamper; sort donations and break down bulk food into smaller packages; carry boxes of donations up the stairs to the Food Bank and down the stairs to The Fellowship Centre; prepare, cook and serve really tasty lunches (and then clean up); provide an empathetic listening ear... this is just a sampling of their regular tasks, performed with willing hearts and warm smiles...All this they do, fueled primarily on strong coffee, cookies and willing spirits.

We have gone to a random selection of individual volunteers to talk about the work that they do and here are some profiles of the people who make St. Paul's Social Services their volunteer home... Our volunteers are also typically Canadian and did not much want to talk about themselves! We are grateful for the opportunity to share some of these stories with readers and reflect on Matthew 5:16 **"Let your light shine before others that they may see your good deeds..."**



Dale – Pilgrim and Hospitalero... Dale has been a volunteer for St. Paul's Social Services for over 3 years. He has involved himself with our Food Bank and is also a *Compassionate Presence* volunteer in the Fellowship Centre, ready to provide a non-judgmental listening ear to those who need it. Besides bringing a great deal of positive energy to SPSS, Dale is an active volunteer with several organizations; *London Affordable Housing Foundation* and *Westover Treatment Centre Foundation*, among them.

Perhaps the most exotic volunteer involvement for Dale has been his work on the great pilgrimage route, the Camino de Santiago to the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostello, in Spain. The ancient pilgrimage through unforgiving terrain to the Cathedral of St. James has been walked by pilgrims since the 10th century. As in the past, pilgrims may stay at hostels on the way, known as albergues. Because Dale has been a pilgrim 8 times, he is trained in providing assistance and aid to weary pilgrims. Dale is a “Hospitalero” and was recognized in a special service in the Cathedral of St. James for his work. In Dale’s words, “It was a little overwhelming to be Protestant and to be a symbol of pilgrimage before the altar of the huge Catholic Cathedral – being addressed at the altar by the Bishop; it seemed everyone crossed themselves except me...”

Virginia has been 24 years with St. Paul’s Social Services, which makes her one of our longest-serving volunteers. Upon her retirement from *Grace Villa*, where she worked as a nurse



administrator with the geriatric population (previously Virginia worked at *Victoria Hospital* nursing on the surgical wards), Virginia was looking for a new outlet for her helping nature and a church friend of hers told her about working at the Fellowship Centre as a volunteer. Virginia took to this new course with enthusiasm, and after 10 years working in the Fellowship Centre, felt that perhaps she ought to slow down a bit. Virginia decided to help in the Food Bank, where she graciously serves her guests with a warm smile and a ready laugh. Asked why she has stayed for so long, Virginia says, “I loved working with Jane Moffat and I really enjoy my fellow

volunteers! I look forward to coming here and seeing the people”

Barb is another retired nurse who has been a stalwart volunteer for over 20 years. Among our contingent of dedicated, caring retired nurses we number Jane, Carol and Connie who have all taken their compassion and abilities into a new arena and made a significant difference in our community.



Kevin is our Food Bank’s part time doorman and volunteer porter, always ready to help carry up the weekly Thursday food delivery. Kevin has been volunteering with SPSS for 4 years. Kevin has a passion for country music and has turned his passion into a small business. Kevin uses his resonant voice as a professional DJ, playing his country recordings at “Stag and Does,” weddings and other events...

Peggy is a volunteer with over 20 years of dedication to St. Paul's Social Services. Serving in the kitchenette, sanitizing recycled food containers and doing the important work of breaking bulk foods down into family or individual sized packages, this Nonagenarian is a regular every other Friday. Rosemary, (who has been a volunteer for 12 years) tells me that Peggy was her mentor when Rosemary began and that Peggy is "A lovely lady who made me want to come back – she made it *not* a chore!"



Olga: Born in Ituna Saskatchewan, Olga's early life on the prairie was one of pioneer-type hardship, in Olga's words, "Unimaginable to people nowadays..." Olga has been a dedicated Daily Bread volunteer for 22 years now, ever since she retired from her work in retail (Reitman's). At the same time that she was working part-time, Olga was raising her family. Previously a volunteer with Oxfam, when Olga retired at 60, she went looking for another outlet for her energies and found SPSS. Olga's work re-packing bulk foods in the kitchenette at our Food Bank is highly valued and her coffee-making skills are second-to-none.



Jean & Bill: Retirees from Canadian National, Jean and Bill, married 51 years, have given over 25 years to St. Paul's Social Services. Very active in their church, First St. Andrews United, Bill and Jean are a great team at our Food Bank, serving our guests by registering them at the computer and by providing groceries to single guests. Jean has a particular way of organizing her work station that would do a boutique grocery store owner proud! Giving her guests a choice is what Jean is all about and her efficiency is legendary.

Our Newest Volunteers: Rami will be helping out as a greeter, food distributor in the food bank and volunteer with the new "Around the Table" programme in The Fellowship Centre starting this fall. Rami and his wife Aya, who is also volunteering for "Around the Table", come to SPSS from Syria and their language skills will prove invaluable for our clients from the Arabic-speaking world. Sheree comes to us from a career in education in Sault St. Marie and has been helping in our kitchenette and with the planning of "Around the Table."

Our Youngest Volunteers: Chris and Michael are young volunteers always willing to help out on Thursdays when our big food order arrives; Chris is also a parishioner of St. Paul's. In addition, we are fortunate in having several great volunteers from **Western University**; Kaloni, Emily, Rachel and Drew. They have been enormously helpful in the Food Bank registering our guests and distributing food.

A Special Thank You to all of the loyal folks who come in on Thursdays to help with carrying the order from London Food Bank up those stairs! That includes Camilla (a volunteer for nearly 7 years and Food Bank Coordinator Shiella’s “right hand”), Sandra, Mike, Mike J., Michael, Kevin, Chris, Wilson and Sherman...without your help; we would be handing out food in the parking lot downstairs!

Providing warm hospitality in the tradition of the early Christian Movement is part of what happens downstairs in **The Fellowship Centre**. One of **The Fellowship Centre** volunteers, Monika, wanted to share some of her thoughts: “I have been volunteering at The Fellowship Centre for a little over a year, and have found it very rewarding and enjoyable. The volunteers are all caring, friendly and capable individuals from various walks of life. The people we provide the meals for a diverse group, very grateful for the meals and polite...I am impressed with the continual quality of the food prepared, its freshness, nutrition and the thought given to menu planning. Of course, the corporations / retailers that often supply us with food at no cost are invaluable. All in all, the network that makes the Fellowship Centre such a success is a great team of people.”

We want to thank everyone who contributes to The Fellowship Centre; our remarkable volunteers, our Clergy who come to bless the food and serve dessert to our guests and the Compassionate Presence volunteers who provide an empathetic listening ear. Not to forget the community gardeners at **St. Andrews Memorial**- your produce makes our soup and sandwich and sandwich and salad lunches even more flavorful and fresh!

News By the time you read this newsletter, we hope to be well on our way to re-establishing the Friday lunch at The Fellowship Centre, through the support of a group of volunteers from St. Peter’s Cathedral Basilica. Their outstanding offer of assistance means that we hope to once again provide **three lunches a week** downstairs!



Food accessibility and food insecurity not only affects charitable organizations like ours, but particularly the individuals living in poverty who rely on our services. Recently, St. Paul’s Social Services Fellowship Centre joined the London Food Coalition, a new organization dedicated to food rescue, recovery and redistribution. We hope that our continued involvement with the LFC will see a significant decrease in the cost of food for the Fellowship Centre, as we continue to see rising numbers of attendees. At our guests’ request, Fellowship Centre has returned to a Soup and Sandwich (or Soup and Salads) lunch menu, with the soups and fillings made from scratch using fresh ingredients. The response from our guests has been

Figure 1 A Child thanks SPSS with a sweet drawing!

positive indeed! New programs beginning in September will to provide support to newcomer families wishing to improve their English skills and learn about Canada as they cook and share a meal. This will broaden our reach in the community and foster new relationships between SPSS and re-settlement services in the London area. Your donation will help **The Fellowship Centre** to carry on our work and to expand our service in a much-needed way. I look forward to another successful and rewarding year and welcome anyone to drop in for lunch on us. -**Jaime Burns, Fellowship Centre Coordinator**

We especially want to thank our Donors, whose invaluable help keeps us moving forward...



Christmas Share 2017 is fast approaching and we do need your help! Donations to Christmas Share made out to **St. Paul's Social Services** will help **many people in need this Christmas Season**. **Cheques or cash donations enable us to make your donation go even further!** For more information on how to give to this very special program, **please contact St. Paul's Social Services** at **519-434-8987**. For this year's

Christmas Share, it would be great help for donations to arrive by Nov. 24, 2017.



**Figure 2 Donated Fresh Produce
SPSS Food Bank**

A Message from the Very Rev'd Paul Millward, Rector of St. Paul's Cathedral Church & Dean of Huron: As I write this on the eve of the Labour Day Weekend, I do so with a renewed understanding and thankfulness for the work that so many of you do as part of the St. Paul's Social Services. As I settle in to my new role as Dean and Rector, I have been tracing some of our history. In his historical account of the establishment of St. Paul's Cathedral, Orlo Miller, in his book **Gargoyles and Gentlemen** writes: " *Disease was not the only problem faced by the city fathers. Boom times, forcing a savage increase in the cost of living, created a new kind of poverty. Common labourers, previously able to maintain a precarious if sub-standard level of existence, now found themselves totally defeated by the price of food-stuffs on the London market and in grave and immediate danger of actually starving to death in the midst of plenty. In this plight the London city council established a formal relief department, the first in London's history... A few months later, St. Paul's Church established the "City of London Mission" under the direction of the new assistant curate, the reverend H.H. O'Neil, in an attempt to feed the city's poor.*"

It would seem that in many ways, not much has changed, and in spite of all of our advancements in society, there is still a need to reach out and offer care and assistance to those in need, as our Lord reminds us in the gospel message of Love. I pray that as the Labour Day weekend in many ways ushers in a new season of busyness, that you will know how important and how appreciated your Labours are, as we continue to serve as we are called to do.

Blessings, Paul+

Introducing Barb Symington:

Barb is our new manager at St. Paul's Social Services and she comes to us after 17 years with Leads Employment Services in London. She brings many years of helping people who use various social services and also has experience in helping people who have mental health issues. Both of these sets of experiences suit her well in her new role at St. Paul's Social Services (SPSS).

For some years Barb has been very interested in the programs we run at SPSS and wants to bring her experience, desire to help people, and listening skills to the Fellowship Centre and the Food Bank. She says, "My goal is to make this place a very good place to come so that the volunteers will feel it, the staff will feel it and everyone who comes in our doors will feel that this is a welcoming place and that they are safe here, and that we care."

Barb sees this new role as a ministry and states that she wants to meet people at their point of need and meet them on common ground.

Please welcome Barb when you get a chance to greet her.

Rev. Steve Johnston, Saint Paul's Social Services, Vice Chair

Soup & Sandwich Dinner – May 15, 2017



Figure 3- Rev'd Canon Ken Brooks - May 15, 2017 – Soup & Sandwich

Thank You to all who supported St. Paul's Social Services on May 15, 2017 at our 9th Annual Soup & Sandwich Dinner and Silent Auction. Since 2007, the Soup and Sandwich dinner has been our major annual fundraiser, benefiting our Food Bank and the Fellowship Centre. Over 100 people enjoyed this year's event, once again hosted by the gracious people at the London Club who prepared the simple, delicious food. The theme of the evening was "Hospitality" and the guest speaker Rev'd Canon Ken Brooks, gave a moving speech that brought back to his listeners the real reason for our existence as a social agency; to provide sincere, caring and open hospitality in the best traditions of the Early Church. Once again, a heartfelt thanks to staff and volunteers who worked hard to plan and carry out the work of the event; to our generous donors of items for the silent auction and especially to our Guest

Speaker Ken Brooks- Thank you!

Barbara Symington, Manager, St. Paul's Social Services – *(parts of this article previously appeared in **Huron Church News** – September 2017)*

How Can You Help St. Paul's Social Services Food Bank and Fellowship Centre?

There are so many ways to help...



-We always need donations of non-perishable food; especially cereal, baked beans, pasta sauce, tuna, powdered milk as well as toiletries and hygiene products

-You can volunteer your time at our Food Bank or at the Fellowship Centre; you can organize an event and contribute the proceeds to St. Paul's Social Services (**we are a registered charity**)

-Or, you can make a **Tax-deductible personal financial contribution, on a monthly or a one-time basis. We offer simple, convenient pre-authorized payments – Call for more information - 519 434-8979**

Please Note our Name Change- kindly make your Cheque payable to:

St. Paul's Social Services

Mail To:

St. Paul's Social Services
472 Richmond St. London, ON N6A 3E6

Cheques may also be left with Reception – Enter via the Parking lot door off Queen's Avenue

We are very grateful for your financial support!

Finally, your prayers are important to our guests and to our organization. However you choose to give, **our wholehearted thanks!**

Special Note - The 2017 -2018 “Dollars and Sense” Coupon Books are now available and they are still priced at \$25.00. A great way to save at local Businesses –Discount Coupons for Restaurants, Shops, Services, Recreation, Entertainment – Over \$4,500 in savings...

Support London while saving money *and* helping St. Paul’s Social Services-Treat yourself to a Coupon Book available at Cathedral Reception, or buy several as great gifts for friends and family!



Our next **Saint Paul’s Social Services Newsletter** will be out in time for Spring 2018– If you would like our Newsletter sent directly to your email, please give us a call or send a message to daily.bread@stpaulscathedral.on.ca (this address will continue to work until December 30, 2017).

Watch for our new Website and email address coming soon!