

GOOD WORK NEWS

The Working Centre, 58 Queen St. S. Kitchener, ON N2G 1V6

Issue 155

December 2023

Subscription: A Donation Towards our Work

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Remembering the Wise Words of Anna Kaljas

"I was taught that giving is better than receiving and that we're here to help our fellow sojourners, not ignore them when they are in difficulty"

In these times of multiple challenges and crises, we reflect upon the work, lived experience, and compassion of Anna Kaljas. Anna came to Canada as a WWII refugee from Estonia. When she settled in KW she soon realized that many Canadians slipped through the cracks and seemed expendable. In response, Anna purchased several houses on Frederick Street and turned them into rooming houses for those who had no other place to go.

Anna was a good friend of The Working Centre and a role model for community builders everywhere. Throughout her life she put the needs of others before her own, led by example, and shared a valuable perspective on what it means to help others.

"It would be nice if there was a Shangri-La, but there isn't. We can't make life perfect for the needy or anyone else, but we can make it easier. Caring for the needy is not a walk in the park. To commit one's self to helping those who are less fortunate takes an ability to care and share. It takes patience, compassion and a thick skin."

I know there will be those who will follow in my footsteps, as I followed in the footsteps of my Aunt Anna. Working with the needy and less fortunate must be your vocation - not just your job. When you want to help, when you're compelled to help and when you love to help, you will succeed.

For those courageous people who take up the challenge to become caregivers. I ask God to guard, guide and direct their footsteps. Give them strength and determination and keep them safe in the bosom of his love."

– Anna Kaljas (1912-2010)

Anna Kaljas, *A Lifetime of Memories*, Kitchener, 2006, published by Merv Mothersell p99

The Drug Epidemic and the Social Housing Challenge

By Joe Mancini

Dwight Storing has offered the KW community the wonderful gift of a movie that documents the Anna Kaljas story. The movie covers the full breadth of Anna's remarkable life from living in a war zone to being a refugee, establishing herself in Kitchener and how she dedicated her life's work to establishing rooming houses for those who were left out of society.

The movie about Anna comes at a time when the social housing system has literally collapsed at the bottom. How else to describe the high levels of homelessness where easily 1500 people can fairly be described as desperately surviving without consistent access to a secure home.

The fact that rents in the private market are sometimes twice the

amount of a social assistance cheque just adds to the despair. The Region of Waterloo oversees 5400 units of social housing including non-profit and coop housing, where rents are controlled, but tenants rarely move from these units for obvious reasons. Rent supplements are necessary and all that were available are taken up.

All shelter spaces are full. The 230 shelter beds that the Working Centre has established in the last three years have helped to double the Region's shelter capacity, but there are still 200 people camping and without access to shelter. There is little movement of people in our shelters as housing costs are beyond any social assistance cheque.

Underneath the despair of reduced housing options is a burgeoning drug problem. Every week, throughout

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Worth A Second Look Opens at New Location

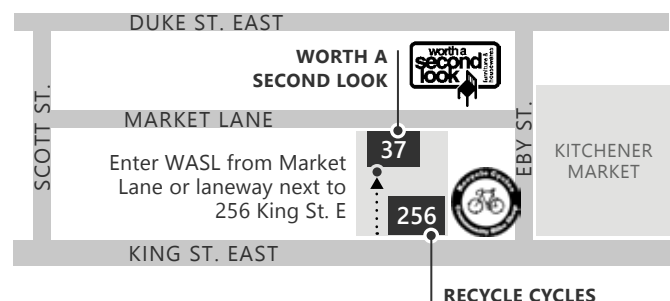
We are excited to announce that Worth A Second Look Furniture and Housewares Thriftshop has re-opened at 37 Market Lane (formerly Recycle Cycles and The Green Door). Thousands of affordable items are available for purchase.

Furniture & Small Appliances | Housewares | Jewelry
Electronics | Linens | Mattresses | Books | Toys | Tools

Come check out our new store!

Shop is open Tues - Fri: 9am - 5pm, Sat: 10am - 4pm

Volunteers and donations are welcome. We offer pick-up and delivery services.



DONATE TO SUPPORT OUR WORK



Donations help support our meaningful community work. If you would like to make a contribution, please visit:

donate.theworkingcentre.org

Thirty Eighth Year

Issue 155

December 2023

Good Work News

Good Work News was first produced in September 1984. It is published four times a year by The Working Centre and St. John's Kitchen as a forum of opinions and ideas on work and unemployment. Four issues of Good Work News constitutes our annual report. There is a circulation of 13,000 copies. Subscription: a donation towards our work.

Editors: Joe Mancini, Stephanie Mancini

Contributors: Isaiah Ritzmann, JP Smola, Douglas MacLellan, Christina Mancini

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The 35th Mayors' Dinner

The Working Centre is pleased to announce the 35th Mayors' Dinner

Saturday, April 6th, 2024

The Mayors' Dinner draws together an interesting and diverse group of friends and community members to celebrate outstanding community contributions

We invite you to become involved by purchasing tickets, sponsorships, a community table for your group, company or church

For more details, please contact Kara at:

519.743.1151 x119 | mayorsdinner@theworkingcentre.org

Alternative Gift Giving

Your donation to The Working Centre can be turned into a creative gift giving idea. Each donation card details the work supported through your donation. *As the donor, you will receive a tax receipt, plus the card to give as a recognition of your gift. Also available through our online catalogue.*

Lunch for 400 people visiting St. John's Kitchen each day
A \$50 donation will help to cover food costs for providing the daily meal

Laundry and Clean Clothes
Each day, 5 to 10 people do laundry, take a shower, and access clean clothing. A \$50 donation will go towards laundry costs per month

Winter Items

A \$10 donation will help purchase gloves, hats, scarfs, and socks

Cab Fare

A \$20 donation will help someone in crisis pay for their ride to the hospital or to an appointment.

An Alternative Christmas Gift Idea

For donations made in the name of family and friends, we will gladly send a Christmas card acknowledging your gift.

Please direct my gift to:

St. John's Kitchen The Working Centre

Please send a Christmas card to:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Postal Code: _____

Your name, email, and address:

(So we can send you an Income Tax receipt).

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Postal Code: _____

Email: _____

For credit card payment please visit online at: donate.theworkingcentre.org or call 519.743.1151 x111

Would you like to donate through e-transfer?
Please call us at 519.743.1151 x111 to set it up.

Thank You for Your Support



Bullafest 2023 raises \$6,250 for St. John's Kitchen

Paul and Colleen Bulla present Joe Mancini with a cheque for \$6,250 for St. John's Kitchen. The proceeds are from the 20th edition of Bullafest, an annual fundraiser they host in their backyard. Thank you for your continued support!



Hockey Helps the Homeless raises over \$300,000

The 2023 Hockey Helps the Homeless Charity Tournament of Waterloo Region raised over \$300,000 for local community organizations including The Working Centre that are responding to homelessness in our community. Thank You to the tournament organizers, the participants, the volunteers, and the many contributors!

Photo above: Mel Barrie, Mike Morrice MP, Bardish Chagger MP, WRPS rep, Dave Schneider, Catherine Fife MPP, Karl Keifer, Joe Mancini, Waterloo Mayor Dorothy McCabe, Craig Herner at the opening ceremonies for the tournament.



Standing in Solidarity with the Unsheltered and Unhoused

By Stephanie Mancini

Standing witness to the harshness of our world is painful and draws a deep lament – across the world, on the earth that sustains life, and in our own community. The lament is important, standing with eyes wide open as witness, and feeling the pain. If we don't lament, this despair can turn into anger, into fear, or indifference.

Recently a group of outreach workers stood on the steps of St. Mary's Catholic Church wearing t-shirts that said – "November comes at the same time every year". An expression of the despair that, in spite of all our efforts and all our wealth as a community, we still see 150-200 people living without shelter for the winter, facing the diminished life this creates, the mental health challenges, the harshness of needing to find the daily high when the need for fentanyl takes over a person's life.

In 2019, when the number of unhoused were lower, some of these outreach workers were part of the pop-up shelter created at St. Mary's Church where 200 people stayed for 3 weeks, inspired by a large snow storm on November 11. We laugh to ourselves – it's been a long day since November 11, 2019. The numbers continue to grow, the needs are many, we have participated together in creating new strategies, and we walk into every day feeling less than adequate but continuing to stand together in solidarity to carry a determined love for each person.

The lament allows us to continue in that determined love and hospitality witnessed every day; actions that include:

- St. John's Kitchen slid naturally back into St. John's Church as we create housing in our Victoria St. building. We are grateful for the welcome from the church, and some quick renovations helped us to share the space. There is a nostalgic feeling in the space as 400 people a day come for meals, hampers, washrooms, access to healthcare and housing supports, and warm drop-in spaces - along with hats, mitts, snacks and water
- The six people living at our Hospitality House on Victoria Street moved over to Water Street House so they were not living in a construction site. This helped us to expand the

number of health/safe beds at Water Street House, while the place on Victoria Street, located right across the street from the 100 Victoria St. N encampment, was transformed to provide washrooms, showers, laundry, and other supports.

- Daily visits to the 100 Victoria encampment, with 60-80 people, many of whom come and go; to connect, to bring supports, and help problem-solve with each person.
 - The slow thoughtful support it takes to help someone move to independent housing after spending years in communal settings, as they enjoy the security of place but lose the companionship.
 - Day after day helping people to sort belongings, keeping congregate spaces, or rooms, or cabins clean, fire safe, and dignified.
 - Standing in this work with non-judgement, creating spaces of deep harm reduction that welcome people who are not welcome in other places.
 - 230 people live with us in shelters/ interim housing – where we quip "shelter, hospitality, food, and cleaning toilets" – so much of the work is the continuous cleaning and tending of these spaces that become a temporary home during this housing crisis.
 - Visiting an encampment to make sure that people are well, they have the supplies they need, knowing that the outreach workers might be the only other people seen in a week.
 - Advocating a person-at-a-time, advocating for more housing, sharing with many interested groups, classes, churches the realities and needs.
 - Welcoming over 40 new people a day to our Job Search Resource Centre as we see refugees from Ukraine, Eritrea, Mexico, Syria and many Canadians and New Canadians who are seeking the work needed to afford their housing.
 - Holding the importance of each person, listening, caring, and walking alongside people determinedly exploring step-by-step responses to the challenges before them.
- Lament and determined action. When even our system responses are overwhelmed, we can't lose our capacity to act in the place we stand. Every day, in small and big ways, creating the kind of world we want to live in.

The Drug Epidemic and the Social Housing Challenge

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Ontario, the police are breaking up drug dealing networks, but new ones quickly reconstitute. This summer, Project Odeon disrupted two fentanyl production labs, one at Smithville farm outside of Hamilton and another in Stouffville. In 2022, WRPS laid 249 charges of drug and firearm offences and seized controlled substances worth over \$5,000,000.

The widespread and effective production and distribution of synthetic drugs like fentanyl and meth means that drug dealers have a ready supply in order to prey on the despair of those left out.

The despair is deep, it is structural for the individual whose internal mindset is battered without housing, without meaningful work, without the sustenance of helping relationships. Externally, feeling shunned by society, living in campsites, drugs can easily fill a void or mask over what has been lost and what has been hoped for. As connections to society weaken, behaviours no longer conform, yet as Gabor Mate states, the "ailing bodies and minds among us... (should be seen).. as living alarms directing our attention toward where our society has gone askew."

The saddest part of Dwight's film is the scene when Anna's granddaughter, Stephanie Kaljas is taking down Anna's portrait from above the fireplace as the family prepared to close down the rooming houses. After Anna died Maggie,

Anna's daughter-in-law and Peter, her son had continued Anna's work. However, by 2018, the reality of the drug crisis was effecting all social housing projects. Even Anna's houses were experiencing the random chaos that drugs feed. Drug seeking by those addicted can cause any number of problems at any time. The effort by the housing provider to hold control is immense. The kind of social housing that Anna had created was significantly harder to maintain not only because Maggie and Peter were ready to retire, but because the social conditions had changed substantially.

In the movie you can feel the heartbreak of the Kaljas' by the cultural shift they experienced and the effect that the widespread availability of meth and fentanyl had on the rooming houses. These drugs can insidiously take over people's judgement, as people succumb to the power of the drugs even though the user consciously knows the problems that they cause for themselves and loved ones. It is the inability to exert self-control that is the hallmark of addiction. It is well known that continued drug use effects brain regions that are critical to judgment, decision-making, learning and memory, and behavior control. It does not take long till the compulsive nature of addiction takes over.

Social housing, such as the rooming houses Anna created have their own challenges such as the need to provide 24/7 coverage for

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800,000 Pounds of Food Donated This Year From The Foodbank of Waterloo Region



This year The Foodbank of Waterloo Region donated an astounding 800,000 pounds of food. Weekly food deliveries from the foodbank make it possible for us to meet the daily need of those supported at Working Centre projects.

Our commissary kitchen on Queen Street South uses most of the vegetables, meats and grains for the 700 meals that are prepared and distributed each day.

A further group of items like cereals, crackers, canned goods, cookies, desserts, bread, condiments, juices etc. are distributed to all locations plus a weekly distribution for people staying in motels.

Thank You to the Foodbank of Waterloo Region for their ongoing support!

2023: A Year of Strong Community Action



Winter

Throughout the winter our focus was on safe and warm shelter spaces. We are now able to provide 100 beds at the King St. Emergency Shelter and 80 beds at University Ave (UA) residence. Both locations include a food servery, washrooms, showers, laundry, primary healthcare, and housing supports.

Our commissary kitchen on Queen Street continued to prepare 700 meals each day (200,000 this year) for distribution to St. John's Kitchen and the three emergency shelters – UA, King Street Shelter and Erbs Road Shelter. This huge daily effort is supported by many volunteers and the Waterloo Region Foodbank. We also continue to deliver hampers to motel rooms.

In February, our Community Dental Clinic re-opened with the help of many volunteer dentists and dental hygienists that are working to improve access to preventive dental services and dental health care for people who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness.

Spring

In the Spring our Income Tax Clinic helped over 3100 individuals file their tax documents and secure over \$8.4 million in critically needed income. Our Money Matters Hub works with thousands of people to help with budgeting, manage the increasing cost of living, connect to community resources, and to navigate government support programs.

On April 15th, the 34th Annual Mayors' Dinner welcomed over 800 guests to celebrate examples of people working to respond to the challenges of homelessness in our community.

In late April, the Erbs Road Shelter opened providing 50 individual cabins that include a bed, desk, chair and heating/cooling. A central community building at the site provides washrooms, showers, laundry and space for food distribution. The shelter quickly became a place of refuge for 50 people who found support and stability after finding themselves for long periods without housing.

On June 1st, tenants moved into 21 new units of affordable housing with the completion of the Queen Street Apartments renovation. The apartments are now home to 34 residents, including new Canadian women and their families. The Working Centre now provides housing to over 80 people at 11 locations.



Summer

The summer brought an increase in the number of individuals looking for employment support. Our Job Search Resource Centre continues to be a vital hub for job seekers, especially new Canadians, who are looking for job search supports like job postings, resume support, employment counselling, links to employers, and connections to community resources.

In August ground was broken at 97 Victoria St. N to begin work to add 44 units of supportive housing, a space for expanded outreach and healthcare supports, and construction of a new modern building for St. John's Kitchen. This project will recreate 97 Victoria into a hub offering comprehensive services to help those most marginalized move safely indoors, stabilize, access supports and be sustainably housed.

Fall

This fall St. John's Kitchen returned to its original home at St. John's Anglican Church, which has welcomed us back while 97 Victoria undergoes construction for the Making Home project. St. John's Kitchen has been providing a daily meal in the downtown since 1985, and today welcomes 400 people daily serving as a place of rest and belonging. Along with the daily meal, St. John's Kitchen provides public washrooms, showers, laundry, outreach supports, medical and dental care - all essential services for those without housing.

Also this fall, the changes necessitated by the Making Home project has served as a catalyst for regrowth. Worth A Second Look and Recycle Cycles are putting the finishing touches on new spaces at the 256 King East campus. These dynamic projects recycle and refurbish bikes, housewares and furniture with the help of many volunteers. Both are looking forward to operating in their new locations.



2024

The new year promises exciting new beginnings. The Making Home Project will be a focus throughout the year as we continue working with community partners to respond to homelessness and offer safe shelter and support.

Look for the reopening of the Queen Street Commons Cafe, Fresh Ground Cafe, and The Green Door Used Clothing Boutique in the new year. We are looking forward to welcoming everyone back into those open community spaces. We hope to see you in 2024!



Thank You to our volunteers, donors, community partners, patrons, and staff for helping to build so much community in 2023

One Year at Louisa Street Hospitality House

By Isaiah Ritzmann

This November we marked one year of community & hospitality at the Louisa Street Hospitality House. Over the past twelve months we've welcomed fifteen individuals from eight different countries seeking protection, asylum, and safety here in Canada. With diverse backgrounds and experiences, our guests and community members at the house have come to this country at a time when refugee claim processes are taking longer and longer & rents are climbing higher and higher. Many of our guests have had to wait many months to even get their work permits. After getting their work permits, and finally securing work, they are often up against not only unaffordable, competitive rental markets but unfair practices as well. Some guests, for example, were denied an apartment simply because of their country of origin.

The Louisa Street Hospitality House is set up to offer short-to-medium hospitality stays for newly arrived refugee claimants in Waterloo Region. Coming without status and with little money, claimants often end up in our shelter system. There the growing opioid and mental health crisis interact in toxic ways with trauma claimants carry with them from back home. Our hospitality house offers them a warm, safe, welcoming alternative. Here they can stay for anywhere from a few weeks to a few months (our average has been 5 month stays) as they settle in Canada, orient themselves to a new culture and community, and begin setting down roots.

The Louisa Street Hospitality House is set up to offer short-to-medium hospitality stays for newly arrived refugee claimants in Waterloo Region.

Our purpose is simple - to offer housing and friendship. Our hospitality house exists within a wider web of village-like supports, both at The Working Centre and beyond. At The Working Centre places like Recycle Cycles, the Job Search Resource Centre, and Worth A Second Look offer affordable bikes, employment and financial supports, and affordable second-hand goods respectively. Beyond that, agencies such as the Multicultural Centre and Compass Refugee Centre walk with our guests along the long and difficult road of making a refugee claim; supporting them with paperwork, connecting them to settlement services, and helping them prepare for their hearings. Beyond these more formalized support networks, an invisible but deep network of informal supports exists and continues to grow in our region. Community members and volunteers have stepped up to offer all kinds of practical and relational support to newcomers.

Community life in the house can be both a delight and a challenge. Together we've played card games, carved pumpkins, shared in community potlucks, and gone bowling to celebrate birthdays. Joyfully we have found ways to care for each other, and found ways to

communicate across cultural and linguistic differences. The house is most of the time a place of peace and refuge. But not always. We are human beings living together and like all humans living together in close proximity, sharing space can be challenging. We can get on each other's nerves. Some people's jokes don't land well with others. Sometimes (although rarely) tensions can bubble up and become fights - and in those cases it is really delicate conflict resolution and hospitality work to make sure everyone has their needs for housing and safety met.

The Hospitality House was launched this year amidst an emerging housing crisis for refugee claimants in Canada. The numbers of people coming to Canada seeking asylum grew considerably as the world began to return to a pre-pandemic normal. In July of this year the city of Toronto's shelters were full, and claimants began sleeping on the streets. By early August, 10% of the Region's emergency shelter beds were dedicated to refugee claimants. At a more personal level, I feel this greater volume of need every time I receive a referral for someone to stay at the house. As host of the Louisa Street Hospitality House I probably get between 5-6 referrals a month of claimants needing a place to stay. While I am grateful for our ability to welcome the fifteen individuals we have welcomed this past year, it's heart-wrenching to have to continually tell people that we have no more room. It's a spiritual discipline to live into the tragic gap between what we can offer and the much greater need.

And yet I celebrate that the Louisa Street house is not alone. Our hospitality house is not the only supplier of home-based hospitality for refugee claimants in Waterloo Region. In the seven years before moving into & starting the Louisa

Street house I was part of the Open Homes community in Kitchener-Waterloo. The Open Homes community is a grass-roots network of families and others in Waterloo Region who offer medium-term housing (from 4-6 months) for refugee claimants. Families and others ("the hosts") open up their homes and live in community with refugees, offering a place of safety, warmth, and relationship for people newly arrived in Canada ("the guests"). I have learned much from this community, and was able to host, on a much smaller scale, over the several years before moving into Louisa Street. Open Homes, in turn, is always looking for new host families. If practicing personal, home-based hospitality for refugee claimants - or volunteering with the Louisa Street house - is something that interests you, please get in touch with me for more information (isaiahr@theworkingcentre.org).

As I write this article I am recovering from a moderate back injury the first week of November. The day of my re-injury was painful, and my mobility was severely restricted. And then something amazing happened. Many of the guests who had moved in during the summer stepped up. At the very beginning of my injury they helped me walk, as I could not stand up on my own. They would check-in on me, concerned about my well-being. They helped accompany each other to appointments in ways I was temporarily unable to do. What began with me opening up my home and my life to strangers became real relationships, real care, real reciprocal support. The fact that all of this happened on the evening of our one year anniversary is a serendipity, if not more than that. I cannot claim that beautiful things always emerge when you take the risk of hospitality. But, then again, they sometimes do.

The Drug Epidemic and the Social Housing Challenge

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basic necessities to ensure there is someone available to cover plumbing, electrical, locks/keys and fire emergencies along with providing meals, medical care, laundry, cleaning and a healthy social environment. From the movie, you get the sense that the loving work of care was deeply disrupted by growing drug use that indirectly caused a mountain of new problems, making it increasingly hard to operate.

Yet it is exactly these kinds of places that are needed to help people move into recovery. The Working Centre receives many emails from family and caregivers that are similar to this note: "My niece successfully completed a 30 day recovery program and has remained sober since August. She takes a monthly sublocade and has moved past a desire for mind altering substances. But now we

are looking for a local Sober Living House. If she goes back to the city that was her starting point for her drug history, I am worried that she can fall into old habits as she has no supportive friends or family there."

There are few services/spaces for those caught in the deepest addictions. High levels of addictions bring increased health and mental health needs. These compounding issues need to be understood and addressed.

For The Working Centre we are working 24/7 providing wide reaching supports through meals, shelters, affordable housing and supportive housing. We have set up an infrastructure that is constantly reacting to the compounding issues that come up every day from plumbing to meal production and distribution to locks to fire safety. This ongoing and intensive work is being done in the midst of a drug crisis that continues to grow.

Donations and Volunteers Welcome

We are asking for donated items to help support the St. John's Kitchen community



**\$5 Tim Cards | Gloves | Hats | Scarfs
Full size bottles of shampoo and conditioner
Full size deodorant | Full size soaps
Brush or combs | Toothpaste and toothbrushes**

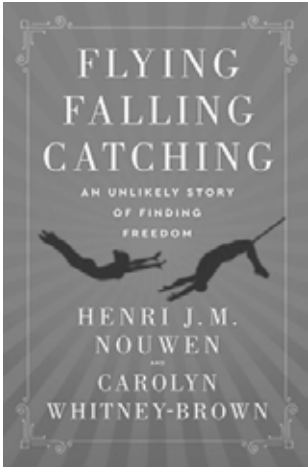
Are you interested in volunteering?

Volunteers needed weekdays at St. John's Kitchen between 8am and 3pm. We always welcome help with food prep, dishwashing, meal serving, and clean up.

St. John's Kitchen has been temporarily re-located to St. John's Anglican Church at 23 Water Street (at Duke) in Kitchener. Feel welcome to drop by or to contact us:

sjk@theworkingcentre.org

FEATURED LOCAL AUTHORS



Flying Falling Catching An Unlikely Story of Finding Freedom

Henri J. M. Nouwen & Carolyn Whitney-Brown

Co-authored with the late Henri Nouwen, *Flying, Falling, Catching* tells the story of Nouwen's five year friendship with the Flying Rodleighs trapeze troupe, and why his last manuscript was left unfinished at his death in 1996. Best-selling spiritual author Henri J. M. Nouwen became close to The Flying Rodleighs, a traveling circus troupe. Like Nouwen's own life, a trapeze

act is full of artistry, exhilarating successes, crushing failures and continual forgiveness. He wrote about his experience in a genre new to him: creative non-fiction.

272 pages | Learn more about the book and purchasing options at: www.writersunion.ca/member/Carolyn-Whitney-Brown



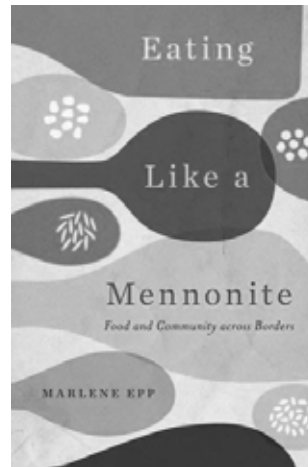
Breakthrough Community Change A Guide to Creating Common Agendas That Change Everything

Paul Born

In this deeply needed new book, Born shows how he was able to catalyze local communities and guide them to make significant progress on seemingly intractable community problems. Born has found that the secret to success is to organize and unite around a common agenda. A common agenda is a

statement of shared aspirations, a map of the assets in the community, and a roadmap for how to work together to make those aspirations a reality. Remarkably, enormous systemic problems like climate change, poverty, disease, racism, housing and many more issues can be best addressed at the local level. Communities can develop solutions tailored to their unique circumstances and can collaborate at a magnitude that can result in truly transformative impact. This book shows how it is done.

240 pages | \$28.95 softcover



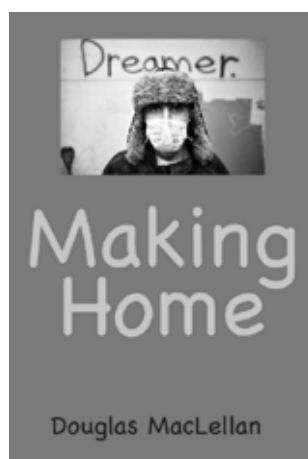
Eating Like A Mennonite Food and Community Across Borders

Marlene Epp

Originating in central Europe in the sixteenth century, Mennonites migrated around the world even as their religious teachings historically emphasized their separateness from others. The idea of Mennonite food became a way of maintaining community identity, even as unfamiliar environments obliged Mennonites to borrow and learn from their neighbours. Epp explores how diets have

evolved as a result of migration, settlement, and mission; how food and gender identities relate to both power and fear; how cookbooks and recipes are full of social meaning; how experiences and memories of food scarcity shape identity; and how food is an expression of religious beliefs – as a symbol, in ritual, and in acts of charity.

304 pages | \$39.95 softcover



Making Home

Douglas MacLellan

Making Home is a visual journey depicted through portraits, daily life, graffiti, writings on the walls, and inanimate objects to shed light on housing and opioid use over a two-year period in Kitchener and Waterloo, Ontario. The photography is inspired by street people and the people who help them.

Places and locations depicted in the text and photographs relate to programs and community tools created by The Working Centre, a community based, socially active

non-profit organization based in Kitchener. Joe Mancini, co-founder of The Working Centre, has written the introduction, adding context to MacLellan's words and photographs.

\$30.00 | Published by Black Moss Press

Available for purchase at: catalogue.theworkingcentre.org

See more of Doug's photography work at: www.douglasmaclellan.ca

ANNA KALJAS: THE UNTOLD STORY

A Documentary Film by Dwight Storrington



A documentary exploring the remarkable life of a passionate social justice advocate who came to Canada as a refugee from Estonia after World War II and ended up as a member of the Order of Canada.

Anna Kaljas believed that one person could make a difference - something she proved time and again. Anna's example endures as the measure of how we must care for each other.

The film is a sweeping view of Anna's life from childhood to contemporary times. It chronicles her early years in Estonia, her arduous escape from the Soviet occupation of her homeland and her new life in Canada. It is not only a retrospective of Anna Kaljas' life and its impact on "her people", family and friends, but it also re-frames her example as a beacon of hope in today's housing crisis.

For more information: <https://dwrightstorrington.com>

The Diploma in Local Democracy

Begins January 10th, 2024

"Democratic relationships in everyday life form the roots of a democratic society."



Together we reflect on our own experiences of democracy and think about what it means to include people in the decisions that affect their lives, what practicing reciprocity looks like, and why everyday equality is necessary for a democratic future.

Come participate in a dynamic and diverse discussion with the engaged community members.

We welcome you to join us!

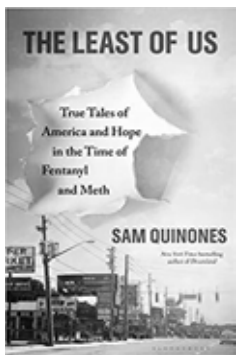
The class runs Wednesdays 7pm - 9pm
from January until the end of April.

519.743.1151 ext. 175

isaiahr@theworkingcentre.org

BOOKS FOR SUSTAINABLE LIVING

You can place orders by phone (519-743-1151 x111), or by visiting catalogue.theworkingcentre.org



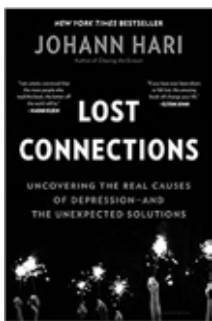
The Least of Us

True Tales of America and Hope in the Time of Fentanyl and Meth

Sam Quinones

From the New York Times bestselling author of *Dreamland*, a searing follow-up that explores the terrifying next stages of the opioid epidemic and the quiet yet ardent stories of community repair. Quinones hit the road to investigate these new threats, discovering how addiction is exacerbated by consumer-product corporations. "In a time when drug traffickers act like corporations and corporations like traffickers," he writes, "our best defense, perhaps our only defense, lies in bolstering community." Amid a landscape of despair, Quinones found hope in those embracing the forgotten and ignored, illuminating the striking truth that we are only as strong as our most vulnerable.

432 pages | \$24.00 softcover



Lost Connections

Why You're Depressed and How to Find Hope

Johann Hari

When Johann was a teenager, he had gone to his doctor and explained that he felt like pain was leaking out of him, and he couldn't control it or understand it. Some of the solutions his doctor offered had given him some relief - but he remained in deep pain. As an adult, he went on a forty-thousand-mile journey across the world to interview the leading experts about what causes depression and anxiety, and what solves them. He learned there is scientific evidence for nine different causes of depression and anxiety - and that this knowledge is about how we connect to one another. Read about ground breaking research on moving past depression.

336 pages | \$24.50 softcover



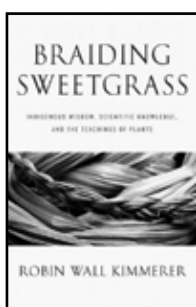
Finding the Mother Tree

Discovering the Wisdom of the Forest

Suzanne Simard

Simard describes up close—in revealing and accessible ways - how trees, living side by side for hundreds of years, have evolved; how they perceive one another, learn and adapt their behaviors, recognize neighbors, and remember the past; how they have agency about their future; how they elicit warnings and mount defenses, compete and cooperate with one another with sophistication: characteristics previously ascribed to human intelligence, traits that are the essence of civil societies. And, at the center of it all, the Mother Trees: the mysterious, powerful forces that connect and sustain the others that surround them. Her powerful story is one of love and loss, of observation and change, of risk and reward. And it is a testament to how deeply human scientific inquiry exists beyond data and technology: it's about understanding who we are and our place in the world.

368 pages | \$18.00 softcover



Braiding Sweetgrass

Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants

Robin Wall Kimmerer

As a botanist trained to ask questions of nature with the tools of science and as a member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation, Kimmerer embraces indigenous teachings that consider plants and animals to be our oldest teachers. She shows how other living beings - asters and goldenrod, strawberries and squash, salamanders, algae, and sweetgrass - offer us gifts and lessons, even if we've forgotten how to hear their voices. In a rich braid of reflections that range from the creation of Turtle Island to the forces that threaten its flourishing today, she circles toward describing the awakening of a wider ecological consciousness and the acknowledgement of our reciprocal relationship with the rest of the living world.

408 pages | \$26.95 softcover



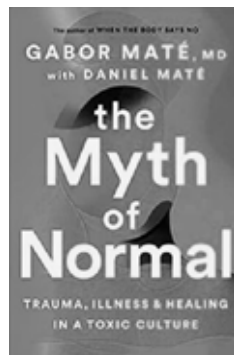
Transition to Common Work

Building Community at The Working Centre

Joe and Stephanie Mancini

The Working Centre in downtown Kitchener, Ontario, is a widely recognized and successful model for community development. Begun from scratch in 1982, it is now a vast network of practical supports for the unemployed, the underemployed, the temporarily employed, and the homeless, populations that collectively constitute up to 30 percent of the labour market both locally and across North America. This essential text is about The Working Centre—its beginnings thirty years ago, the lessons learned, and the myriad ways in which its strategies and innovations can be adapted by those who share its goals.

212 pages | \$20.00 softcover



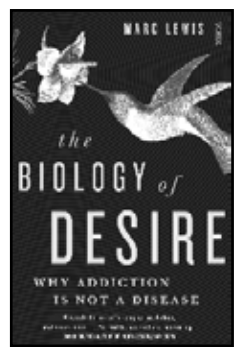
The Myth of Normal

Trauma, Illness and Healing in a Toxic Culture

Gabor Maté

Gabor Maté's internationally bestselling books have changed the way we look at addiction and have been integral in shifting the conversations around ADHD, stress, disease, embodied trauma, and parenting. Now, in this revolutionary book, he dissects how in Western countries that pride themselves on their health care systems, chronic illness and general ill health are on the rise. So what is really "normal" when it comes to health? In *The Myth of Normal*, co-written with his son Daniel, Maté brings his perspective to the great untangling of common myths about what makes us sick, connects the dots between the maladies of individuals and the declining soundness of society, and offers a compassionate guide for health and healing.

576 pages | \$39.95 hardcover



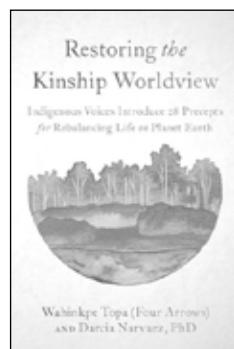
The Biology of Desire

Why Addiction is Not a Disease

Marc Lewis PhD

"Informed by unparalleled neuroscientific insight and written with his usual flare, Marc Lewis's *The Biology of Desire* effectively refutes the medical view of addiction as a brain disease. A bracing and informative corrective to the muddle that now characterizes public and professional discourse on this topic." —Gabor Maté, M.D., author of *In The Realm of Hungry Ghosts: Close Encounters With Addiction*.

237 pages | \$22.00 softcover



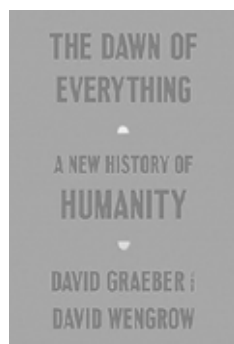
Restoring the Kinship Worldview

Indigenous Voices Introduce 28 Precepts for Rebalancing Life on Planet Earth

Wahinkpe Topa and Darcia Narvaez

Indigenous worldviews, and the knowledge they confer, are critical for human survival and the wellbeing of future generations. The editors emphasize our deep need to move away from the dominant Western paradigm—one that dictates we live without strong social purpose, fails to honor the earth as sacred, leads with the head while ignoring the heart, and places individual "rights" over collective responsibility. *Restoring the Kinship Worldview* is rooted in an Indigenous vision and strong social purpose that sees all life forms as sacred and sentient—that honors the wisdom of the heart, and grants equal standing to rights and responsibilities. All author proceeds from the book are donated to Indigenous non-profit organizations working on behalf of Indigenous Peoples.

336 pages | \$28.95 softcover



The Dawn of Everything

The New History of Humanity

David Graeber and David Wengrow

For generations, our remote ancestors have been cast as primitive and childlike, either free and equal innocents, or thuggish and warlike. Civilization, we are told, could only be achieved by sacrificing those original freedoms, or alternatively, by taming our baser instincts. The authors show how such theories first emerged in the eighteenth century as a conservative reaction to powerful critiques of European society posed by Indigenous observers and intellectuals. Revisiting this encounter has startling implications for how we make sense of human history today, including the origins of farming, property, cities, democracy, slavery, and civilization itself. *The Dawn of Everything* fundamentally transforms our understanding of the human past and offers a path toward imagining new forms of freedom, new ways of organizing society.

704 pages | \$29.95 softcover



The Working Centre

Experiment in Social Change

Ken Westhues

Published in 1995, this book offers an understanding of The Working Centre's founding concepts and how it produces knowledge and action in an effort to improve the community in which it belongs. Westhues draws a portrait of The Working Centre through a wide angle lens and demonstrates how it is doing authentic sociology. The second section consists of articles from Joe and Stephanie Mancini, Arleen Macpherson and Dave Conzani. Section three offers descriptions of earlier experiments in community-based work in the words of activist intellectuals Dorothy Day, Moses Coady and Jane Addams.

127 pages, \$20.00 softcover



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Building Community for Over 40 Years



3000+ job seekers supported annually



5000+ people assisted with financial supports



200,000 meals prepared and distributed in 2023



100+ people living in affordable housing



80,000 shelter bed stays annually



400+ people daily supported at St. John's Kitchen

Dear Friends,

The Working Centre is now offering **230 beds** as 24/7 emergency shelter. This came together through an effort of sheer will to support the daily operation, the culture of the space and the team working alongside the residents.

The 230 beds are located at three sites, providing 24/7 shelter, supporting people until their housing search yields a new place to call home. This important work has been done in cooperation with the Region of Waterloo in an effort to expand needed shelter beds.

The **University Avenue Dorms** ensures 80 people have housing and a place to build on new opportunities. The supports, meals and housing have made tremendous differences in the lives of many residents.

King Street Shelter provides 100 beds in a congregate shelter with three sleeping areas, a central community gathering area and a 24 hour servery.

Erbs Road Shelter opened at the end of April with 50 cabins, offering a single cabin along with a community centre with showers, washrooms, laundry and a gathering place for meals and a 24 hour servery. This is a safer place for a group of people who were all without housing and living in encampments.

This new shelter work is in addition to the interconnected web of services and projects that have grown out of the Working Centre community.

St. John's Kitchen is a primary place for the unsheltered and precariously housed providing access to meals, showers, laundry, public washrooms, outreach and medical supports. In a regular month St. John's Kitchen has over 1000 visits of different people.

The **commissary kitchen** on Queen Street produces over 700 meals each day that are served at St. John's Kitchen and the three shelters.

In the first three months of the newly opened **Community Dental Clinic** there were 110 appointments for services like New Patient Exams, Restorations, Extractions, Fillings, Emergencies, and Cleanings.

Outreach supports for those facing homelessness are crucial. Everyday our outreach workers are supporting people in encampments, motels and precarious living situations, helping with access to housing, medical, mental health, addiction supports, and legal issues. These same supports in our housing and shelter locations provide up to 400 different appointments per month.

This year, we completed construction at **54 Queen S** creating 21 loft units for new Canadian single parents. We were also able to start construction of our major building project at **97 Victoria N** to build 44 single units for those dealing with long-term homelessness.

On Queen Street, the **Job Search Resource Centre** continues to be a place where job searchers know that they will get ongoing assistance. Last year, over 3000 different individuals accessed the service as an integral part of their job searching.

Money Matters is an essential service and last year the project supported 2,627 financially struggling individuals in our community to connect to financial education, free financial coaching, or help solving urgent financial problems, and 3,142 individuals to access income tax filing securing over \$8,422,950 in critically needed new income.

Your donations help us support people with creative projects that respond to growing poverty and housing instability. Supporters of The Working Centre have proven, year after year, that community donations are vital to respond to local issues. We are grateful for your ongoing support in building our community of support.

Sincerely,

Joe Mancini,
Director

P.S. We share our quarterly newspaper Good Work News with our contributors. Learn more about our community-based initiatives by visiting our website at www.theworkingcentre.org

Donate to support The Working Centre

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