

GOOD WORK NEWS

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

Issue 153

June 2023

Subscription: A Donation Towards our Work

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After 18 months of renovations and construction, 21 units of new affordable housing are now available in downtown Kitchener for New Canadian women and their families

Queen Street Apartments Completed

By Joe Mancini

In late May 2023 we held an open house at the new Queen Street Apartments. Brent Davis of The Record summarized the project well, "the apartments are located in the Bricker Block, the same historic block of buildings where The Working Centre has grown its roots since 1985, the new apartments will provide convenient access to the centre's hub of income, employment and community supports."

Most of the apartments are approximately 400 square feet and each has a full kitchen, three-piece bathroom and high ceilings. Sixteen of the units have a second-level loft space. Two of the apartments are 3 and 4 bedrooms. For those familiar with 58 Queen, the former

accounting area and computer training space in the Wright Room have been turned into four bachelor apartments without lofts. There are beautiful original wood ceilings on the third floor, while many apartments have exposed brick and large windows. The apartments also use air source and in-unit heat pumps for heating and air conditioning.

This project came together quickly with the July 2021 announcement of Rapid Housing Initiative funding. Our application to build apartments was accepted and by November 2021 we were able to purchase 44-54 Queen Street South while architectural plans for a building permit were submitted in December 2021. Construction formally started

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175 Years of Canadian Democracy

By John Ralston Saul

When a group of Canadian citizens brought the national capital to a halt for three weeks in January and February, 2022, the atmosphere on all sides was one of confusion. Nothing like this had ever happened in Canada's capital – at least, not since anti-democratic forces besieged Parliament, which was then based in Montreal, and burned it to the ground. That was a little while ago: April 25, 1849.

Historical comparisons are rarely helpful. All the same, the Montreal

rioters were clear that they wanted an end to the new Canadian experiment in democracy, then called Responsible Government. That experiment had started just over a year before, on March 11, 1848, and it was aimed at making colonial governments such as theirs answerable to Canadian voters, rather than to the British Parliament.

Which means that today marks the 175th anniversary of Canada's continuous life as a democracy,

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34th Annual Mayors' Dinner



By Kara Peters Unrau

On April 15th, after a three year hiatus, we celebrated the 34th Mayors' Dinner in person in Marshall Hall at Bingemans. With over 800 guests, the room was full and decorated to feel like home with warm furniture, bookshelves and subtle lights.

It was heartening to see so many longtime supporters of The Mayors' Dinner come out to participate in this meaningful community event that highlighted the creative,

grassroots efforts to addressing homelessness.

We are grateful to RBJ Schlegel Family Foundation for generously contributing as our main event sponsor.

The Mayors' Dinner has a 34-year history of recognizing and celebrating people and organizations who have made a significant contribution to our community. Our hosts are the Kitchener, Waterloo and Cambridge Mayors. Mayors Berry Vrbancic, Dorothy McCabe, Jan Liggett

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The Working Centre is excited to be part of the Hockey Helps the Homeless charity hockey tournament

Read more on page 2

Thirty Ninth Year

Issue 153

June 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.

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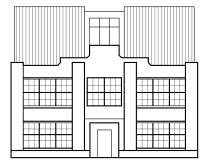
We've hit a Major Funding Milestone!



Making Home at 97 Victoria secures \$9.8 Million in Rapid Housing Initiative (RHI) Funding from the Government of Canada.

Stay tuned for more project updates in September's issue of Good Work News!

Read more about it or get involved in the project, visit: www.97victoria.theworkingcentre.org



HOCKEY HELPS THE HOMELESS

10TH ANNUAL WATERLOO REGION TOURNAMENT

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 27TH, 2023 | RIM PARK

Over the last nine years, Hockey Helps the Homeless Waterloo Region has granted \$1,903,000 to the local charities (oneRoof, House of Friendship, Lutherwood, Cambridge Shelter Corp, YW of K-W, and our newest edition, The Working Centre) who run the Region's emergency shelter network. These funds have resulted in over 24,714 safe shelter beds being provided.

Help us this year to provide the funds for over 3,000 Shelter Beds annually for the homeless in Waterloo Region.

GET INVOLVED. BE A GAME CHANGER.

You don't have to know how to skate or play hockey, but you can still play an important part in the tournament! Register and fundraise as an **honorary skater on the 17th team** and enjoy the perks with your own personalized jersey, participant gift, and complimentary food and beverage on game day and draft night. Interact with hockey greats including NHL Alumni and Olympians, and know that you are making a direct positive impact in Waterloo Region.

FUNDRAISE \$350 BY SEPTEMBER 21ST AND RECEIVE A PERSONALIZED CUSTOM JERSEY

Honorary Skaters must fundraise a minimum of \$350 by **Thursday, September 21** to guarantee their jersey by puck drop. Honorary skaters must hit their fundraising minimum by puck drop to participate on game day and draft night.

LEARN MORE AT WR.HHTH.COM

Hockey Helps the Homeless (HHTH) leverages Canada's affinity for hockey to raise awareness and financial support for the homeless through education, fundraising, and by partnering with solutions-based local homeless support agencies.

FOR MORE INFO, CONTACT ERIK LUCZAK | ERIK@HHTH.COM



Perimeter Development has made a one million dollar commitment to the 97 Victoria Making Home project. They have also committed to using their development staff to support the project through site plan, building permit and construction. Perimeter Development had two tables at the Mayors' Dinner and took time for a group photo that included many who are part of the Making Home project team. We are grateful for all the support.
From the back row: Stewart Barclay, Zak Hannah, Rena Liu, Laura Meikle, Craig Beattie, David Gibson, Micheline Murawsky, Hilary Abel.
Front row: Adrienne Bobechko, Nikita Thompson.

Reflections on Common Work

By Stephanie Mancini

At The Working Centre, we are forty some years into this work, feeling deeply rocked by the increasingly stark reality of people who are being left out of housing, people facing the deep dislocation of poverty, a lack of housing, a poison and highly addictive drug supply. Our hearts are broken apart and broken open over and over again as we stand witness to people facing increasing hardship.

We are strengthened and nourished by the witness of those who have come before us – the Catholic Worker movement that stood strongly in the face of the buffeting political issues of the time – holding the importance of personalist examples and radical hospitality.

We are settling out of the rush of opportunity created by Covid funding where we responded thoughtfully to those who were left out, where we created new housing and shelter opportunities – building opportunity out of the chaos. It was a bit of a playground of innovation, but we can hear the funding drying up, the call for reduced budgets, the lack of funds to do meaningful work. Such a jolting reality as we recognize that

the need is not going away. Every new effort takes resources, and finding those resources becomes harder once again.

The Mayors' Dinner was a testament to the importance of finding creative ways to make affordable housing happen, using witness, radical hospitality, and innovative partnerships to create more affordable and supportive housing.

It is also important to reflect on the forming of Canada, of shaping our continuous democracy over time. John Ralston Saul gives us a moral and political compass to think about how we organize our decisions about collective need. Saul acknowledges we missed the priority of indigenous peoples and the land we share. How do we hold on to the principles Saul is talking about, and not miss the reality of people who have been left out of our community priorities?

We continue to reflect, to act in to the realities of our time, to learn from those who have come before us, to ask ourselves hard questions about our current realities. All while acting-in continuously to the good work needed in our times.



Erbs Road Shelter Opens

By Joe Mancini

It was an exciting day on Thursday April 27th when the first group started moving in to the Erbs Road Shelter. One of the first to arrive was a couple who had been living at the Main Street encampment in Cambridge. A volunteer had made arrangements to drive them first thing in the morning. They quickly settled in, thankful for a safe and warm place where they could lock their door.

Over the first month, people living in tents throughout Waterloo Region were offered cabins. However, it was clear that there were not enough cabins for all those tenting or in precarious situations. For those who chose to move in, the site offered many advantages.

The Erbs Road Shelter was built by The Region of Waterloo on regionally owned land at 1003 Erbs Road. The

Photo above: A week before opening the Erbs Road Shelter was visited by multiple local and Ontario politicians including: Steve Clark, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Karen Redman, Regional Chair, Dorothy McCabe Mayor of Waterloo, Berry Vrbanovic Mayor of Kitchener, Frank Scarpitti Mayor of Markham, Catherine Fife, MPP Waterloo and Jess Dixon, MPP Kitchener South-Hespeler

idea of building an outdoor shelter started in the summer of 2022. The Region contracted with Now Housing in late December to start production of the cabins made out of shipping containers. The Working Centre only came on site when the occupancy permit was granted in the last week of April 2023. The 50 cabins offer private, safe, secure and inclusive accommodation. Each 107 square foot cabin is furnished and equipped with electricity, heating, cooling and wifi. A main community centre provides running water, washrooms, showers, laundry,

a food servery, a shared television, common space, small rooms for private meetings and health care access.

The shuttle service, using a van donated by Scherer Chevrolet Dealership, has been a helpful service for getting to medical, justice or other kinds of appointments. It is easy to understand these are impossible to coordinate when a person is unhoused or camping.

In the weeks before the opening there was constant interest in this new project with visits by Regional and provincial politicians along with neighbours and tours for the general public. While these tours were going on, Now Housing was working quickly to complete the Community Centre so that the shelter could start accepting residents.

After a month of operation, it has been refreshing to see how people have appreciated that the site, quite far away from the downtown, offers a degree of independence, wide open air and lots of open space. People have started to adjust, seeing the shelter as a way to settle, make new friendships and contribute to the space.

The Erbs Road Shelter is part of the formal shelter system, and the



site is not for permanent housing but to assist people towards finding long term housing in the wider community. In the first weeks we have had visits from the Humane Society, Woman and Crisis supports, Legal Outreach, Kitchener Downtown Community Health Centre, Ontario Works, and Lutherwood.

It is stunning that such a community can be built so quickly. As the community develops and trust is built, new pieces are being added like some grass, picnic tables, garden beds, and a gazebo. Those living on site want to make the place feel like a home and there is lots of work to help make that happen. A BBQ hosted by Creekside Church was a nice way of helping that along. The Erbs Road Shelter is a solid step forward for those struggling to regain their housing and community supports.



50 individual cabins and a central community building are located at the Erbs Road Shelter site at 1003 Erbs Road. Cabins include a bed, desk and chair, shelves, mini-fridge, and air conditioning unit



Queen Street Apartments

continued from page 1

in May 2022 and after a grueling year, the units were ready for occupancy at the end of May 2023. All the units will be deeply affordable.

During the evening of May 16th, members of the Waterloo Rotary Club helped unbox and set up 21 sets of fridges and stoves. It was a successful evening as we moved towards our June 1st move-in date.

At the same time, we quickly

organized an Open House for the afternoon of Friday May 26, realizing that by June 1st the apartments would soon be occupied.

At the end of April we started accepting applications from organizations that are supporting New Canadians. Most of the new tenants were living in shelters or precarious housing where they could move in immediately. The tenants have come from all over the world including Peru, Columbia, Mexico, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Sudan, Somalia, Albania, Kosovo, and Iran.

Katherine Bitzer, who is supporting The Working Centre's affordable housing efforts noted in The Record article that, "When women have come to see their units, there were tears of joy, tears of relief, tears of understanding this is a transition in



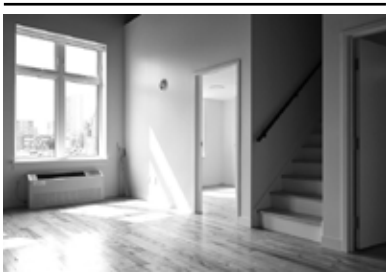
People attend an open house at Queen Street Apartments on May 26th to walk through the 21 new units of affordable housing

their lives. I think it means a new start, an opportunity to find stability in housing which they've not had, which then allows other pieces to stabilize in their lives."

One thing that was noticed right away was that the new tenants are making connections at the Resource Centre at 58 Queen which provides a common area where they can check in, get to know the counsellors and be part of a community of support. The projects on Queen Street will expand further when The Green Door opens at 54

Queen Street South on the main floor and soon after we look forward to the reopening of the Queen Street Commons Café.

Many thanks to the Region of Waterloo and Federal Government Rapid Housing Initiative, City of Kitchener and the Region for waiving Development Fees and to the main project team that assisted The Working Centre - architect Robert Dyck and Just Working Construction. As a community we are weaving supports to help make new housing possible.



The 34th Annual Mayors' Dinner



Mayors McCabe, Liggett, Vrbanovic stand with the groups delivering the main message for the evening including Nikki Britton SOS worker, Craig Beattie from Perimeter Development, Jeff Willmer, Laura Hamilton, Fr. Toby Collins, Marion Thomson Howell from A Better Tent City, and Joe and Stephanie Mancini

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offered greetings and insights into how their cities have responded to homelessness.

The auction was a different experience this year. For 33 years we have had elaborate silent auction displays and a live auction. This year we developed an on-line auction organized around the theme of Reclaim Social! We held on to the auction component of the evening, but in a way that is less intrusive. The auction raised about \$9,000 and we hope to build on this experience.

Video collages produced by Vidyard featured political and community leaders expressing their commitment and experiences in responding to the complexities of homelessness. Outreach workers provided video clips of individuals who were asked to share their experiences of homelessness, these were powerful stories that gave voice to the journey of 15 people.

A Better Tent City was highlighted with Jeff Willmer, Udanapher (Nadine) Green, Laura Hamilton & Fr. Toby Collins briefly speaking to the cooperative effort to establish ABTC and then to continue its operations. Craig Beattie from Perimeter Development spoke directly on how businesses can be involved, describing in detail Perimeter's contribution of money and their full partnership as the key development partner for the 97 Victoria Marking Home project. Nikki Britton eloquently spoke from the perspective of an SOS outreach worker providing on the ground support.

The messages were strong and many people expressed a sense of hopefulness in the face of the complex issues of homelessness, recognizing the importance of community collaboration. Thank you to all who helped make this community building evening so successful.

Responding to the Rise in Homelessness

Remarks by Joe Mancini

How did the numbers of homeless grow so rapidly in the last 5 years?

Here are some of the underlying social factors that are contributing:

- By 2013 the gathering forces of industrial synthetic drug production broke out from the margins making powerful drugs like fentanyl and crystal meth widely and cheaply available.
- Sky high rents are leaving many out of the housing market. The definition of despair is having a \$600 social assistance cheque when the cost to rent a room is \$800.
- Take a second to reflect on the obvious correlation between cheap drugs and expensive housing.
- Add to this, the fallout from high tech jobs. Factory work formerly paid good wages to thousands of workers. The main qualification was to endure the work. With this work no longer available, certain parts of the labour force have been left out, and the disconnection from meaningful work has been devastating.

On Nov 11, 2019, during a major snow storm, The Working Centre moved mountains to open a warming centre at St. Mary's Catholic Church. Over 2 weeks 225 different people used the shelter. We knew who each of these individuals were, they were all living without housing around the Kitchener downtown.

When we ended up at a vacant Tim Hortons we started integrating what was happening. How will people get housing? How did the numbers get so big? We had the example of people like Nikki, who will speak later this evening, demonstrating the commitment necessary to do 24/7 shelter work.

When the pandemic closed everything in March 2020, the ground at St. John's Kitchen had changed. The encampments all around the 97 Victoria property made the reality of homelessness visceral. When our doors re-opened the most important work was providing indoor space, meals, washrooms, showers, laundry and water. This began a remarkable journey of effort and perseverance by workers committed to standing in the gap.

Out of the pandemic came money for motel rooms and soon 60 rooms were filled with over 80 people. A group that has changed over many times, but who have stayed off the street and received important medical care through this valuable resource.

In mid-August of 2020, the Region presented the opportunity to use a dorm residence on University Avenue as an interim housing project. We said yes immediately and by mid-October the place was occupied, mostly with people who had been camping around 97 Victoria. UA, as we call it, is a shining example of creating housing out of nothing. It is a place of relationships where people adapt from the street, seeking stability while dealing with significant mental health and addiction challenges.

A year later, we hosted an emergency shelter at St. Andrew's Presbyterian. It was a time of grace, providing a refuge in the winter as the pandemic finally loosened. Now this low barrier shelter at the former Schwaben Club welcomes couples, pets, with 100 people making this a 24/7 temporary home.

No one involved will forget this past Christmas, when 150 people sought shelter during the Christmas Eve snow storm and the King Street Shelter opened its doors wide.

The Erbs Road Shelter will add 50 cabins to the existing shelter options, yet there are more than one hundred people who could move in.

All together The Working Centre's creative work has opened more than 300 24/7 beds helping hundreds of people from the streets into shelter.

The flashing sign of Homelessness throughout North America calls us to understand the interplay between:

- the widespread use of drugs and other addictions,
- the lack of on the ground support for mental health and trauma,
- the reality of unaffordable rents and,
- the abandonment of grassroots job support.

Drug use, mental health, high rents, and the lack of alternative work are a reflection on the society we come from. There is no way to deny the interrelatedness.

We have seen at St. John's Kitchen and our shelter work the desperate importance of walking with, of helping people make sense of their abandonment, of dealing with family breakdown, of pushing to find access to services.

The work of carving out places of healing, the building of integral connections, is about hope. It is a journey, fraught with setbacks when there are few housing alternatives.

We've seen the challenges and joys of this good work and we acknowledge and appreciate all the people who make this work possible.



Clockwise from top left: Jamie Schlegel of RBJ Schlegel Family Foundation brings greetings as The Mayors' Dinner main sponsor; Neil Aitchison and Mike Farwell shared MC duties continuing Neil's long service to The Mayors' Dinner and now including Mike to add new dimensions to the evening; Neil Aitchison welcomes Nadine Green from ABTC as she prepares to speak; New Vibes Jazz Quintet offered their jazz standards with polished and fluid improvisations throughout the night. New Vibes Jazz members: Andy Macpherson - vibes, Dan Brennan - bass, John Zadro - piano, Jay Boehmer - drums, Jerzy Kaplanek, violin, Sam Meakin - guest trombonist. A memorial photo of Larry Crawford, long time jazz musician and Working Centre volunteer is placed where the music was being made.

Housing is A Human Right

Remarks by Nikki Britton

Are you able to meet your basic needs like showering, clean clothes, using a restroom, accessing food and clean water? Have you been hospitalized or used a crisis service? Have you stayed in a holding cell, jail or prison? Have you been attacked or beaten up? Do you have planned activities, other than just surviving, that make you feel happy and fulfilled?

These are questions that might not cross your mind on a day-to-day basis but are front and center for many people in our community, folks our teams walk with each and every day. We are here tonight to celebrate the impactful and heartfelt work being done in our community and to acknowledge that we have a long way to go.

When we encounter someone on the street who is living differently, or acting a bit strangely, there is no reason that the natural instinct is to feel comfortable or that our understanding is deep enough to be compassionate, even if we want to be, so people walk around and look away.

As the cost of living increases, we see more tents and encampments pop up in our community and growing conversation in the media, making it more difficult to look away. It's a forced acknowledgement of the realities in our neighbourhoods.

Many of our neighbours are in a position of constrained choice, forced to commit quality of life crimes like trespassing for a place to sleep or stealing for food to eat.

People experience homelessness for many different reasons: family breakdown, missed payments, lost jobs, cycles of abuse, adverse childhood experiences and substance use, to name a few. People without housing in our community have been professional athletes, university professors and students, scuba divers, musicians and artists – poverty, mental illness, unforeseen circumstances and addiction do not discriminate.

I would like to take some time this evening to honor people we have been lucky to know, reflect on lives lost too soon to overdose, violence and system failure and to dream and hold hope for ways we can do



Nikki Britton is a lead member of the Specialized Outreach Services (SOS) Team responding to the homelessness, drug overdose and mental health crises in our community

better.

What we do is heart centered work, it is relationship and learning. It is authentic connection and more than a job – it's a purpose. Frontline workers take the time to get to know people and hear their stories, try to ease suffering and find solutions and most importantly hold a steady presence without looking away. Our teams offer outreach medicine, bring clinical services to the street, offer shelter, provide meals and cherish unique and special relationships. The most powerful message we can offer is mutual respect, not pity.

The work looks like:

- Knocking on the door to a garden shed to accompany someone to a psychiatry appointment.
- Treating head lice at a community centre.
- Responding to an overdose in a parking garage.
- Bandaging wounds out of the trunk of a car.

We meet people where they are at: on the streets, in encampments, motels, alleyways, hospitals, jail cells and libraries. We hope to make people feel seen, heard and valued for who they are and as they are. We offer unconditional positive regard and radical acceptance, showing up for people day-in and day-out, in moments of sorrow and beauty. We bring our hearts to work, and they

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A group of community outreach workers including Catherine Scida, Dr. Robyn Fallen, Alisha Baker, Ammol Warrach, Emma Horner, Chris Morton, Nikki Britton and her father Paul Britton

Thank You for Supporting the 34th Mayors' Dinner

RBJ Schlegel

A special thank you to RBJ Schlegel Family Foundation for being the main sponsor for the 34th Annual Mayors' Dinner

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In Memory of Andrew Telegdi

Menich Family

COMMUNITY TABLES

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CONTRIBUTIONS

Thank You to Collins Clothiers for providing tuxedos and formal wear for the evening, and to Royal City Nursery for providing plants and flowers for the evening.

Thank you to all Working Centre donors, contributors, and community partners who help us respond to homelessness in Waterloo Region and support all of our community building efforts.

On This Day 175 years ago, Canada became a democracy. Why aren't we celebrating?

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making us an old, experienced democratic state – the kind of state that has seen protest movements come and go over the centuries.

What made these much more recent events in Ottawa resemble the disorder of 1849 was the declared intent of protest leaders to bring down the government by non-democratic means. True, only a small group among the convoy protesters made the demand that the Governor-General and Canada's Senate form a new government. But that is classic revolutionary theory: Only the leaders should have a plan, and the masses can be convinced to follow. Some of us were distracted by images of protesters having fun, in hot tubs, for example, but that also is standard behaviour by figures on the margins. Sometimes they wear a noble's wig and dance around; sometimes they have the noble's head on a pike and dance all the same.

More troubling, governments at the federal, provincial and municipal levels appeared unwilling or unable to do anything about the disorder in Ottawa. For those of us on the outside, they appeared demobilized. Were they trying to avoid violence? Were they unable to motivate the local police force? We now know much more thanks to the inquiry into the federal government's use of the Emergencies Act. But again, this confusion among those of us on the outside was similar to the public's perception of the troubles of 1849.

Yet even though March 11, 1848, is so important for Canada, we rarely talk about it, or celebrate it. It is as if we don't want to talk about democracy. Instead, we gossip about politics.

But on that day, the governor-general, Lord Elgin, invited Louis-Hippolyte LaFontaine, from Montreal, to form the government of the Canadas. With his friend and political partner, Robert Baldwin, from Toronto, LaFontaine had been leading the democratic movement for a decade.

They had been exhausting years. First, they'd had to pick up the pieces after the failed armed revolts of 1837. Baldwin took on defending the losers in court, many of them friends, many of them hanged. LaFontaine had to flee into exile for a few years. Neither of them could work out a viable next step.

Then, in 1841, the two young men were brought together and began building a new democratic movement based on non-violence, and therefore restraint. In the process, they became each other's best friend. It's worth pointing out that all of this happened long before Tolstoy and then Gandhi tried to do

The first bill the new Reform majority got through Parliament was a law to encourage, protect and support immigrants. A torrent of reforms followed: public schools and universities; toll-free roads for the poor; a professional civil service; official bilingualism; municipal democracy; independent judges. Both legal codes were rewritten. It was a waterfall of legislation designed to create a fair and just society. What they put in place are the legal and social foundations of Canada today. And all of this was done in just three years.

the same.

None of it was easy. Politics in Canada was violent. More than once they had to run – simply run – to escape gangs of Orangemen armed with clubs. But when they finally won a large parliamentary majority in the election of January, 1848, and formed the “Great Ministry,” as it was called, they moved at remarkable speed to transform Canada. The journalist and politician Joseph Howe had come to great influence in Nova Scotia two months before them and done the same.

The first bill the new Reform majority got through Parliament was a law to encourage, protect and support immigrants. A torrent of reforms followed: public schools and universities; toll-free roads for the poor; a professional civil service; official bilingualism; municipal democracy; independent judges. Both legal codes were rewritten. It was a waterfall of legislation designed to create a fair and just society. What they put in place are the legal and social foundations of Canada today. And all of this was done in just three years.

With each reform, the elites became increasingly upset. They eventually occupied the centre of the national capital, in Montreal. Mobs attacked Parliament in scenes of brawling as the MPs fought back. A gas lamp was struck by a rock and suddenly the Assembly was on fire. In the morning, only a shell remained. Canada's largest library and archives were lost in the flames.

Over the next few days multiple attempts were made on the lives of Elgin, LaFontaine and Baldwin: the governor-general, the prime minister and the deputy prime minister, respectively. The disorder and attacks on property would go on for about three months.

As with last year's Ottawa occupation, these three leaders

did not do what most respectable citizens wanted them to do. What this meant in the 1840s was that they did not allow the soldiers or the police to open fire on the mob. Was this weakness? Confusion?

You can read in the cabinet minutes a memorandum its members had approved: In it, the soldiers and police were instructed not to open fire on the rioters. The government refused to reply to violence with violence. They would use restraint and careful politics instead. Here we see the beginning of what would become the better side of Canadian governance.

It is amazing, perhaps depressing, that our standard political discourse in Canada remains one based on an identity as a new country, and never as an experienced and stable democracy. We don't bother to celebrate March 11, the day on which we became a democracy – a continuous democracy, flawed in many ways, but a continuous democracy from that day 175 years ago to this one.

Of course, every state is flawed. In our case, the single most important unresolved question remains the situation for Indigenous peoples. If Canada is to function as a place of justice, every citizen needs to commit on this issue.

Still, here we are, the oldest continuous democratic federation in the world, and one of the two or three oldest continuous democracies of any sort.

“Continuous” is the key word. There have been lots of on-again, off-again democracies, with exciting narratives. Just look at France, an exciting democracy that emerged out of the French Revolution in 1789, but kept slipping between dictatorships, empires and spates of republicanism until the second half of the 20th century. Or consider the United States, with its political system and economy that were built for two centuries around slavery and semi-slavery. Or Britain, with its narrow democracy under the persistent control of two social classes until well into the 20th

century.

Canada failed on many fronts, along with most other countries. But in some areas, particularly in the time of LaFontaine and Baldwin's Responsible Government, we did well. Because of widespread land ownership – Canadians were predominantly farmers, after all – there was a broad male franchise here in 1848. And the solidification of francophone and Catholic democratic rights by LaFontaine and Baldwin was the beginning of the multicultural concept – the idea that a modern nation-state could comfortably be based on more than one language, religion or race.

Through the 19th century and the first half of the 20th, this idea was rejected in most other countries. The secular religion of the monolithic nation-state dominated. The flowering of francophone-anglophone relations in Canada in 1848 made the much broader complexity we have today possible. Perhaps the most important element was that this relationship was built on a new idea of democracy, which in the hands of Canadians and their Parliament has now found its way through the challenges of 175 years.

As LaFontaine put it in his most important declaration, “The Address to the Electors of Terrebonne”: “We will win our political liberty. No one will be able to take it from us so long as social equality is the central feature of our population.” So let us be honest with ourselves and conscious of our failures, but each year on March 11 celebrate the remarkable achievement of our continuing democratic experiment.

John Ralston Saul is co-chair of the Institute for Canadian Citizenship, president emeritus of PEN International and PEN Canada, and the author of 14 books, including A Fair Country and The Collapse of Globalism.

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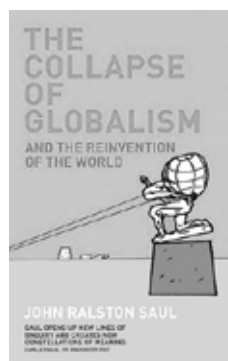


A Fair Country Telling Truths About Canada

John Ralston Saul

In this original vision of Canada, John Ralston Saul argues that Canada is a Métis nation, heavily influenced and shaped by Aboriginal ideas: Egalitarianism, a proper balance between individual and group, and a penchant for negotiation over violence are all Aboriginal values that Canada absorbed. An obstacle to our progress, Saul argues, too many fail to believe in Canada's deeper history and it is critical that we recognize where we come from to rethink our future.

340 pages | \$22.00 softcover



The Collapse of Globalism And the Reinvention of the World

John Ralston Saul

Originally published in 2005, Saul predicted the inevitable collapse of Globalism 15 years before countries started to pull back from globalization commitments. Saul's premise was that grand economic theories rarely last more than a few decades. Globalization, with its technocratic and technological determinism, its demand for increasing deregulation of industry and its market idolatry, immediately ran into political/economic headwinds.

224 pages | \$24.00 softcover

The Catholic Worker: 90 Years of Community Hospitality

By Isaiah Ritzmann

At the beginning of May the Catholic Worker movement turned 90 years old. The newspaper Dorothy Day and her collaborator Peter Maurin launched still sells for a penny a copy. The hospitality houses they began still exist on the lower east side of Manhattan, feeding over a hundred people a day and housing some thirty-odd people. Meanwhile across the United States and around the world roughly two hundred hospitality houses and farming communes persist in the daily practice of the works of mercy and with the slow work of building a “new society in the shell of the old, where it is easier for people to be good” (as Peter Maurin put it).

I had the great privilege to stay at the New York Catholic Worker this spring for their anniversary celebrations. This privilege was also a personal pilgrimage. Having never lived in a Catholic Worker community per se, the movement has nonetheless been a formative influence on my life since my early 20s. I first arrived, by serendipitous accident, on the steps of the New York Catholic Worker weeks before I turned twenty-one. Returning over a decade later, now in my early thirties, was an occasion for reflection - not just about the impact of the movement on my own life, but on the lives of many more people over multiple generations.

When a Catholic Worker house of hospitality begins it is often a precarious enterprise. A movement dedicated to personalist action, the founders are committed individuals who don't draw a salary for their work. A zeal for solidarity means any surplus they have is often given away to those who need it. Radical stances on justice and peace can sometimes alienate supporters. An allegiance to the principles of freedom and responsibility means there is no overarching “Catholic Worker central committee” that coordinates, organizes and resources each community. All of this, and more, is no recipe for stability or sustainability. In fact by some estimates about a hundred Catholic Worker communities have been founded each decade since the 1960s. If all of the communities that were ever founded existed today, there would be over a thousand communities in existence. But there are not. No wonder one Catholic Worker told me at the May Day celebration that “really, what we are celebrating is ninety years of failure.”

Still I wonder - how do you measure the life of a movement like the Catholic Worker? What is success? And how is it achieved? From the beginning the Catholic Worker has explicitly embraced a sort of spiritual anarchism, eschewing political and economic means of gaining and maintaining power and



Isaiah Ritzmann visits The Catholic Worker's House in New York City during their 90th anniversary celebrations

were born out of inspiration not commandment. And these were just communities under the name of Catholic Worker. What about all the other communities and groups that drew upon the philosophy, practice, and lived witness of The Catholic Worker - including The Working Centre? What about all the individuals, like myself, who have found their own ways to live out the values and philosophy? It's uncountable how many people have found food, shelter, clothing, and friendship because of the hidden influence of the Catholic Worker. Thought and example are indeed powerful.

There is a certain, unmeasurable and amazing success to all of it. Kierkegaard once wrote that “When the tyrant dies, his rule is over. When the martyr dies his rule begins.” Dorothy Day died at eighty-three. She was not killed for her beliefs. But she was nonetheless a martyr - in the sense of someone who suffered in that lived example she gave. It wasn't easy for her. The loneliness. The poverty. The internal conflicts. The misunderstandings. The sense of failure. But she kept practicing and she kept preaching. And now over forty years since her death and ninety years after its founding, the Catholic Worker movement still persists. It may be a failure in some senses - it is far from perfect - but there is more love in the world because of what Dorothy and Peter started. And this is no small thing.

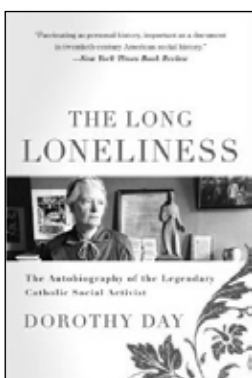
success. Dorothy and Peter and the movement they founded have often said “no” - “no” to weapons, “no” to wealth, “no” even to voting, “no” to different forms of organization. “No,” in other words, to forms of worldly power. At one point Peter said there would only be two powers the Catholic Worker would embrace - “the power of thought and the power of example.”

It's not insignificant that outside of New York City, Dorothy and Peter never started any other house of hospitality. Of the thousand or so Catholic Worker communities that have existed, all began as more-or-less local initiatives. They



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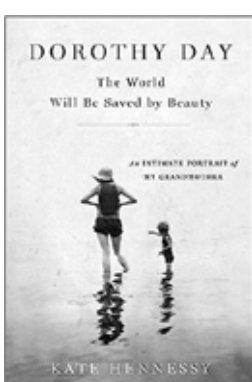
The Long Loneliness

Autobiography of the Legendary Catholic Social Activist

Dorothy Day

Here, in her own words, Dorothy Day tells of her early life as a young journalist in the crucible of Greenwich Village political and literary thought in the 1920s, and of her momentous conversion to Catholicism that meant the end of a Bohemian lifestyle and a common-law marriage. The Long Loneliness chronicles Dorothy Day's lifelong association with Peter Maurin and the genesis of the Catholic Worker Movement. In her commitment to peace, nonviolence, racial justice, and the cause of the poor, she became an inspiration to many other activists.

304 pages | \$21.00 softcover



Dorothy Day: The World Will Be Saved By Beauty

An Intimate Portrait of My Grandmother

Kate Hennessy

Dorothy Day (1897-1980) was a prominent Catholic, writer, social activist, and co-founder of a movement dedicated to serving the poorest of the poor. Her life has been revealed through her own writings as well as the work of historians, theologians, and academics. What has been missing until now is a more personal account from the point of view of someone who knew her well. Dorothy Day: The World Will Be Saved by Beauty is a frank and reflective, heartfelt and humorous portrayal as written by her granddaughter, Kate Hennessy.

384 pages | \$25.00 softcover

Diploma in Ecological Economics



Finding the roots of economy in community and nature

Class begins September 13th

This community-based class explores the critical question:

Can we have an economy that meets human needs while at the same time being in harmony with nature?

We will share our own experiences with nature & the economy and connect our stories to larger ideas explored by economists and ecologists.

The class is open to everyone, and will both give an introduction to the key concepts of ecological economics and be a practical forum for discussing personal action.

The class runs for 10 weeks on Wednesday evenings, 7-9pm from Sept. 13th until Nov. 29th.

To register or for more information, contact Isaiah: isaiahr@theworkingcentre.org

Housing is A Human Right

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often get broken. Our teams are in it for the long haul.

We look up, look people in the eye and smile when we see them, even if we aren't sure of how the interaction will go. Every interaction is powerful and we never know when it might be the last time we see someone. People live moment to moment and minute by minute. We experience moments in time, and they matter. Moments like:

- Seeing Jamie walking up the lane way towards St. John's Kitchen in a pair of shoes we have given him and seeing him leave with nothing on his feet due to lack of insight and untreated mental illness;
- Talking to Mary, a young mother, about safer alternatives to the toxic drug supply and opportunities to reconnect with her children on a Friday, and learning she has died of an overdose by Monday morning;
- Seeing Jim with black, frost bitten feet and no care due to systemic gaps, people losing lives and limbs to the elements in a developed country;
- Talking with Chris, who is larger than life and my own age, listening to him laugh, sing and play guitar only to pause and say "Nikki, will you please play this song at my funeral" and then playing it in his memory six months later.

It's also the small moments like:

- Knowing our nurses in the clinic keep 50 cents in their back pocket and a chocolate on hand for Mike, in case of emergency;
- Surprising Speedy with a double cheese burger and a coffee with seven sugar and two creams, because we know it's his favourite.

And moments of celebration:

- Hearing that Jamie has been stably housed for two years, he

is finishing high school, health is his favorite class and he plans to work at the waterpark again this summer.

These stories touch our hearts, we celebrate success when it comes, and believe that hope is possible.

I am continuously inspired by the courage, fierce resilience and tenacity of the people we walk with and the teams that stand beside them. The frontline workers in our community stand firmly at the intersection of the overdose crisis, housing crisis and healthcare crisis. We stand with people at the margins of society and bear witness to crushing poverty, addiction and illness – it is clear that people need care and that people need homes.

Our teams show up in blizzards and on the hottest summer days, we show up in snow suits, sunscreen and full on Covid PPE (masks, shields, gloves and gowns). We work hard to provide hot meals, offer a listening ear, bandage wounds and treat illness but without affordable and appropriate housing people are left behind and continue to fall through the growing cracks.

The experience of homelessness in and of itself, is an experience of trauma. Homelessness is a crisis across the country and in our community – people are dying in our front-yard. When we look away, we separate ourselves from our neighbors and from humanity.

It comes down to this:

- Housing is health care,
- Housing is dignity,
- Housing is a human right.

The last few years have been particularly difficult. This work is commitment and solidarity. Responding to homelessness is a collective effort and takes a community, it takes each of us and it takes all of us - we can't do this work alone. Frontline workers in this community hold a brave space to lean on and learn from each other, to love each other and to look out for one another while standing with people who are often forgotten.



The program for The Mayors' Dinner featured speakers from A Better Tent City describing how the project came to be and how it holds together. Here are some members of the ABTC community who contribute many hours to this housing work, from left to right: Patrick Doyle (representing his father Ron Doyle), Marion Thomson Howell, Jeff Wilmer, Udanapher (Nadine) Green, Laura Hamilton, Pat Murphy and Paul Rappolt



A snapshot of some of the many Working Centre workers who made The Mayors' Dinner possible ... all dressed up, away from their regular day to day roles of service

The Working Centre by the Numbers

330+ People in affordable, supportive, or interim housing	700+ Meals prepared, delivered, and served daily
400+ People a day at St. John's Kitchen	2000+ Job seekers supported annually
3100+ Individuals helped this year access financial benefits	17 Languages spoken by TWC support workers

The Working Centre by the Numbers: Motel Stays

The Working Centre has been placing people in motels since the end of 2019. The program expanded during the pandemic. The only funding from the Region of Waterloo is towards payment of room rentals. The Working Centre looks after all supportive and administrative work.

Typically, motel stays are used as a sheltering strategy to support individuals who are experiencing acute or chronic physical health, mental health or substance use concerns that make it difficult or unsafe for them to manage in a congregate or emergency shelter setting.

Some individuals accessing motel stays require medical interventions including: daily medication administration, mobility concerns, daily wound care or medical interventions (dialysis or chemotherapy), support related to pregnancy, as well as intensive mental health or psychiatric support. We recognize that physical and mental health concerns often stabilize after access to support and stability in motel and we are working to accommodate transition plans into housing or other sheltering options in partnership with Lutherwood Housing Services.

We also recognize that motel rooms are a limited resource and as a team work collaboratively to prioritize the most acute situations and anticipate an increase in need over the winter months due to an increase in adverse health outcomes related to the cold (pneumonia, frost bite, etc) and efforts to keep warm (burns requiring daily wound care).

250 different people have stayed at motels since 2019. 55 individuals currently stay at a motel. 20 are deceased. Collectively there have been 57,079 total nights stayed at motels.

