

GOOD WORK NEWS

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

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Dr. George Berrigan, Evelyn Gurney, Dr. Chris & Michelle Steingart, Dr. Michael Stephenson, Margaret Brockett



Person-Centred Grassroots Healthcare

By Tony D'Amato Stortz

The Guests of Honour at the 2019 Mayors' Dinner are all people who did not wait for permission to do the right thing.

As healthcare professionals, they saw a need in our community and took the initiative. They tackle Hepatitis C, refugee health, and primary care for those experiencing homelessness. They return day after day to do it again. Their efforts are chipping away at the major health issues in our community from the ground up, rather than the all-too-familiar route of top-down healthcare.

This compassionate initiative, this reduction of harm, this grassroots approach to healthcare is what we will be celebrating at the 32nd Annual Mayors' Dinner.

Dr. George Berrigan & Evelyn Gurney

Dr. George Berrigan and Evelyn Gurney, RN are the heart of St. John's Clinic, the primary care centre located within St. John's Kitchen. From that office, within an integrated community of supports, they care for those experiencing homelessness, addiction, mental health issues, and the complex health problems that arise. It is challenging work that responds to many interconnected problems. Every day they must go beyond just seeing the illness, or even just the patient, but must extend to see the patient within their world. Issues that normally require no more than rest, sleep, or good nutrition become much more complex when viewed through the lens of chronic homelessness. Dr. Berrigan and Evelyn look through that lens every

As healthcare professionals, they saw a need in our community and took the initiative. They tackle Hepatitis C, refugee health, and primary care for those experiencing homelessness. They return day after day to do it again. Their efforts are chipping away at the major health issues in our community from the ground up, rather than the all-too-familiar route of top-down healthcare.

day and form part of a community of supports for up to 2,000 patients, doing so with a smile and a kind, open approach.

Dr. Chris & Michelle Steingart

Dr. Chris and Michelle Steingart founded Sanguen, a charitable Hepatitis C clinic which has grown to become much more than just that. Sanguen has a mobile community health van which meets people where they are, and provides primary care, clean needles, and even fresh socks. They also run a program where teams go out and find used needles to dispose of them safely. Their initiatives come, not from a top-down approach of how to solve the opioid crisis, but from the grassroots. They see the problem and do what they can to reduce harm on the ground, where their work benefits those who need it most.

Dr. Michael Stephenson & Margaret Brockett

Dr. Michael Stephenson (Dr. Mike) and Margaret Brockett are the physician and associate director of Sanctuary Refugee Health Centre. This organization rose from

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Day by Day Work

By Stephanie Mancini

How to tell the story of this work? Following are some reflections of a lively week of conversations, system changes, and creative problem solving.

- We met to continue developing the Inner City Health Alliance (including Sanguen and Sanctuary who are highlighted at this year's Mayors' Dinner. Tickets are selling well, see details on page 2. We met with Kitchener Downtown Community Health Centre to

build more collaboration; we had a conversation with a doctor interested in supporting our work.

- We have talked with Hospitals and Police, trying to coordinate timely and coordinated supports for people who are homeless/at risk of homelessness. How can we do this better? We met with folks from St. Mary's Church as they expand their commitment to people dealing with homelessness.
- We had many conversations

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Remembering our friend Duff

read on page 6

Thirty Fifth Year

Issue 136

March 2019

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 12,000 copies. Subscription: a donation towards our work.

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Day by Day

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about the Ontario government announcements to change how employment and health services will be delivered.

- We did the background work for our Income Tax Clinics which start on Monday, helping some 3,000 people over 2 months to complete their income tax returns.
- On Thursday night the *Fermented Thoughts* conversation on the Ecological Works of Mercy emphasized ways we can build personal disciplines and practices that help reshape our relationships with the earth and with each other.

What stays at the end of the week are each of the people whose journey we supported together.

At the Job Search Resource Centre...

Helping the parents of two sisters who we are also helping to job search; they have very little English language skills, but we have found an employer who speaks the same language, willing to offer them a first work experience; A young woman with moderate language skills who has been volunteering to build her experience looking for a customer service job in the clothing sector; A single mom with strong language skills who has worked as an interpreter and is trying to find work in the social work sector... each navigating the complexities of life and work in a new country and in a new language.

In Outreach work...

Helping a man transition from hospital to a supported housing environment while we await a long-term care option; nurses visiting a woman in motel who has undergone a skin graft for cancer, carefully treating a terrible infection, bringing

food and friendship with each trip; supporting a man who lost his housing in the middle of the night without his belongings or shoes; a young man in motel is visited daily, offering support and food as he works to stay away from drugs. We call hospital to check on the wellbeing of a woman who is new to our community, while she talks to voices we can't hear. We held many conversations with a man who has overdosed for the fifth time at St. John's Kitchen, hearing his despair as he asks us to let him die, while we hold hope and commitment to life and love.

We ended the week with a memorial service at St. John's Kitchen, hosted by Margaret Nally – a litany of fifteen people from our community who have died since November. *Loretta, Sandy, Rocky, George, Kellie, Ovila, Dave, Bart, Jennifer, Mark, Greg, Ali, Daryl, Alf, Mike* – each person, each life is remembered. With each name, water is poured into a dish affirming with the declaration – Always Remembered, Never Forgotten. The service becomes the way we reinforce the commitment of love as a community, as we mark the joys of friendship and the loss that is so present with us in our work.

The Water Street house, a small gesture in the midst of these complexities, continues to develop. It will offer welcome, rest, and supported housing in response to the realities of injectable drug use. For an update on the house and its plans see The Working Centre website.

Day by day, weaving together, creatively responding, and strengthening the fabric of our community.



**Dave Berry Kathryn
Jaworsky Vrbanovic McGarry**

The Mayors of Waterloo, Kitchener and Cambridge invite you to celebrate the

32nd Annual Mayors' Dinner

Telling the Stories of Grassroots, Person-Centred Healthcare

Dr. George Berrigan, Evelyn Gurney,

Dr. Chris & Michelle Steingart,

Dr. Mike Stephenson & Margaret Brockett

Saturday April 13th, 2019

Marshall Hall, Bingemans, Kitchener

Cocktails and Auction Preview: 5:30 pm

Dinner: 6:45 pm

The Mayors' Dinner is an evening that celebrates outstanding contributions to our community, and serves as an important fundraising event for The Working Centre and St. John's Kitchen.

To purchase tickets and for more details

call (519) 743-1151x119

or mayorsdinner@theworkingcentre.org

You can purchase tickets online at

www.theworkingcentre.org/dinner

- Individual Ticket:** \$100 (includes tax receipt for \$55)

- Contributor Sponsorship Package:**

\$250 (includes 2 tickets, recognition in dinner program, and one tax receipt for \$160)

- Community Group Package:** \$750 (includes 8 tickets and one tax receipt for \$390)



Grassroots Healthcare

continued from page 1

humble beginnings in a church basement and grew from there. As more refugees came to Waterloo Region, Sanctuary grew alongside them. When it became clear more services were needed to reduce the barriers their patients face, they added them on, often paying out of pocket or finding creative ways to get funding. They have translators and social workers alongside their healthcare providers. This allows them to meet the patients where they are and walk with them through the healthcare system, bridging the gaps as they find them. Sanctuary serves the person in front of them, and in doing so, creates a healthier

community for all of us.

These six individuals and the organizations they represent are truly remarkable.

The simplicity and generosity implicit in this grassroots approach is a model for effective healthcare. These individuals saw a need and took the initiative. They help those most in need of care; serve individuals experiencing addiction; guide refugees through a complex system in a new and unfamiliar country. Their good work makes our community a better, kinder, healthier place. They will be honoured at the 32nd Annual Mayors' Dinner on April 13th, 2019.



St. John's Clinic Primary Healthcare Based in St. John's Kitchen

By Tony D'Amato Stortz

Dr. George Berrigan is the physician at St. John's Clinic, the primary care clinic located within St. John's Kitchen in Downtown Kitchener. Together with longtime Registered Nurse, Evelyn Gurney, and a dedicated team of healthcare and outreach workers, they care for the over 2,000 people in the clinic. Dr. Berrigan is the family doctor for many people experiencing homelessness in our community. Evelyn is often their link to specialists and advocates for people throughout the healthcare system. Together they offer care with kindness and a unique understanding of the health issues associated with homelessness and addiction.

Evelyn and Dr. Berrigan have been doing this work since they retired from their family practice ten years ago. Together, they are being honoured at the 32nd Annual Mayors' Dinner for their dedication to grassroots healthcare and outstanding contribution to the community.

Their patients have a unique set of needs. Addiction and mental health concerns are often present, but they are further compounded by dental issues, skin infections, and poor nutrition as a consequence of living on the street.

Many have also had negative experiences with healthcare before and come in ready for a fight. In these situations, Dr. Berrigan and Evelyn emphasize kindness in response to antagonism.

"What you need is a non-

Dr. George Berrigan is the physician at St. John's Clinic, the primary care centre located within St. John's Kitchen in Downtown Kitchener. Together with longtime Registered Nurse, Evelyn Gurney, and a dedicated team of healthcare and outreach workers, they care for the over 2,000 patients rostered at the clinic.

confrontational approach. Take the hostility and throw it out the window. Evelyn is the master of that."

She is. As the host nurse at the St. John's Clinic, Evelyn has walked this journey too. She is the practical, welcoming presence for those who find letting their guard down and showing vulnerability uncomfortable.

The relationships that form under these circumstances can be far deeper than in a regular healthcare setting. Evelyn recounts grateful patients coming in with small gifts to express their thanks for the care they received.

Through the strength of these relationships, Evelyn can facilitate access to healthcare, both inside the clinic and outside. She knows the patients well, but also knows the specialists, pharmacists, and other gatekeepers in the healthcare system. She uses these relationships to get her patients the care they need, often vouching for them and working behind the scenes to make things happen.

Emotion, perception, and judgement are also a huge part of

Evelyn and Dr. Berrigan's work. Their patients are often so quick to get labelled as an addict, mentally ill, or just another homeless person.

They try to throw these labels out the window too.

"We said no – what we have here is a person. He's human, and he may have schizophrenia, ADHD, or a drug addiction, but first and foremost he's a person" said Dr. Berrigan, with conviction. "Respect and kindness shouldn't be something you add on when you have time for it. You have to start from there."

Beyond creating a welcoming space and rejecting labels within their office, getting patients to follow through with treatment can be a challenge. This population has a high level of traumatic brain injuries which can make them forgetful and high incarceration rates which interferes with care. This, alongside so many other challenges, can lead to missed appointments and lost medications.



In many of these situations, Evelyn in conversation with the Outreach team, is the advocate who gets them another appointment, a new bottle of medication, and encourages them to continue with treatment. It is a vital and challenging role in light of the massive challenges faced by this group.

"Homeless healthcare is so much more complex... you have social problems contributing to the medical ones."

Berrigan spoke of a situation which demonstrated the barriers to healthcare this group faces.

"A patient with severe heart failure came in, and I said they needed to go to the hospital right away. It turns out the taxi wouldn't take them. They didn't have any

bus tickets. They had to walk from Victoria Street to Grand River Hospital, stopping to rest every five steps. It took them two and a half hours."

These are a long way from the issues Dr. Berrigan and Evelyn faced in their family practice. They have to go beyond treating just the disease; they must treat the entire situation.

"Housing, education, employability – these determine health."

But Dr. Berrigan also is candid about the barriers to effective treatment within this population.

"The mental health or medicine isn't the problem. The barrier is the addiction ... (and) the real payback is in prevention."

As for his existing patients, Dr. Berrigan emphasizes a harm-reduction approach to care.

"Harm reduction is about making a big problem less, so it doesn't become a disaster. I need to keep them alive, increase quality of life, and help them get better and safer."

"Addiction is a very big complex problem without a simple solution. It's a problem that will take a bunch of hard work from all levels."

But George and Evelyn do not appear to have lost hope or become cynical about the issues their patients face.

"[They're] funny, silly, sad, clever people who are, at the moment, homeless. No better, no worse than us. I want to talk about who they are."



St. John's Clinic supports access to primary care, mental health and addictions services for people who are homeless/at risk of homelessness with a commitment to helping people to be as well as they can be.

We follow an outreach philosophy that responds to complexity, meeting people in our clinic, on the street, in supported housing, in other organizations, in Mental Health and Drug Treatment courts, responding within a wider circle-of-care supports.

Partnerships with Sanguen, CFFM, and KDCHC help to enhance this work.

We collaborate in the interest of the person, with housing resources, police, courts, EMS, hospital and other agencies to creatively problem solve the best response for the person we serve.

St. John's Kitchen
97 Victoria N
Kitchener, ON

Dr. George Berrigan and Evelyn Gurney, RN are the heart of St. John's Clinic, the primary care centre located within St. John's Kitchen. From that office, within an integrated community of supports, they care for those experiencing homelessness, addiction, mental health issues, and the complex health problems that arise. It is challenging work that responds to many interconnected problems.





Sanctuary Refugee Health Centre

A Community Develops Medical Supports to New Canadians

By Tony D'Amato Stortz

Before she took her first breath, Margaret Brockett was fleeing war.

Her family was living in the British colony of Singapore during World War Two. When it was invaded early in 1942, Margaret's newly pregnant mother and her two young sons were on one of the last ships evacuating British women and children. "As I began to realize what she went through..." Margaret paused, then said quietly, "I gained a huge respect for my mother."

Her father would go on to escape in a fishing vessel, enlist in the British Indian army, and the entire family survived the war. Why her family survived when others did not, she does not know.

"What I do know is that [my mother] was received - in South Africa - with unconditional love, compassion and care."

Now, so many decades later, Margaret Brockett has come full circle. She is retired from her career, but volunteers as the Associate Director of the Sanctuary Refugee Health Centre. Margaret and Sanctuary founder Dr. Michael Stephenson are being honoured at the 32nd Annual Mayors' Dinner for their extraordinary work providing health care to refugee newcomers in our community.

The story of Sanctuary is just as incredible. Beginning in the basement of St. Mark's Lutheran Church, "Dr. Mike" started treating refugee patients in 2013. He carried medical supplies to the clinic in a plastic laundry tub.

"The early days were a challenge" said Dr. Mike, "but as we grew, more people became engaged."

Slowly the community began to support the clinic. Newcomers who had seen Dr. Mike when they first arrived stayed on as patients and Sanctuary grew.

Within a few months Sanctuary outgrew their location and moved to a three bedroom house on King Street that had been semi-converted to a medical office.

"You couldn't fit more than one family in the waiting room," Margaret recalls.

Within a few months Sanctuary outgrew their location and moved to 687 King Street, a three bedroom house that had been semi-converted to a medical office...

...They now have 3,600 patients and have recently expanded the clinic premises located adjacent to the Kitchener Market.

But the need just kept growing; the 2015 federal election came with a wave of support for Syrian refugees in Canada. The new Trudeau government opened the doors to 25,000 new refugees and the number of patients Sanctuary saw just kept rising. They now have 3,600 patients and have recently expanded the clinic premises located adjacent to the Kitchener Market.

Beyond the families who settle here immediately, there are many who move to the region after having settled elsewhere in Canada. One patient volunteered that she had moved here from Alberta because she wanted to raise her kids in Waterloo Region.

"I moved from Edmonton to make life better for my family - my friends here said it's a nice city."

Dr. Mike confirmed that stories about life in the area encourage newcomers to move from elsewhere in Canada.

"The work of many organizations and individuals in the KW community, in helping people feel valued and established has created this environment. It has snowballed. They're ambassadors for the

Waterloo Region."

And more patients mean a growing staff. Many at Sanctuary were healthcare providers before coming to Canada. Many others are young and want to get into the professions themselves. This young and diverse staff is a mirror of the young, diverse patients they see.

"We see a very young population - a lot of young mothers." Says Margaret.

Will, a regular worker and 3rd year student at Conrad Grebel University College has already applied to medical school. He did not have much experience with refugee settlement before university, but when he arrived in first year, he found out his new roommate was a refugee from Somalia.

"He came straight from the airport to my dorm room."

The experience of walking with his new roommate through the resettlement process opened Will's eyes to the experience new Canadians face. He later took a year off and spent seven weeks at a refugee camp in Greece, working with unaccompanied minors whose parents were either lost, deceased, or in prison.

"It really cemented the refugee medicine choice for me."

Returning to university, he scheduled all morning classes so that he could be done school by 11:30 am.

He works at Sanctuary every afternoon.

When asked about a moment that made them feel proud, Margaret and Dr. Mike both recount the day when a woman collapsed on Sanctuary's front doorstep. She was pregnant and had arrived in Canada just three days before. She was not yet a patient at Sanctuary and had no medical insurance.

"This was a woman who was very near to death. It could have gone very badly if we'd said "sorry, you're not a patient here" said Dr. Mike.

But that's not what happened.

Instead, the Sanctuary team rallied around this woman. They diagnosed her with sepsis and malaria, got her to emergency at the hospital, and worked with specialists to ensure she and her unborn baby got proper care. But there was another problem. While she was hospitalized, her young were children alone in an unfamiliar country. They knew none.

"The Sanctuary team helped take care of her kids while she was in hospital," Dr. Mike recalls, with

Refugees have health needs that are unique when compared with the general Canadian population. They suffer from medical problems that are not found in Canada, like strongyloides and schistosomiasis. They have higher rates of some medical issues, like viral illnesses and anemia. There are more physical disabilities and chronic injuries in this population because of war and other exposure to violence. And mental illness and distress are common in this population due to past traumas. The refugee health practitioner must be familiar with diagnosis and treatment of these issues.

pride. "They even found someone from the community to watch them at night."

She made a full recovery and, after four days, was discharged and could return to her family.

This story of a pregnant mother fleeing war, and being received with love, compassion, and care is reminiscent of Margaret Brockett's mother. It is a testament to the work done by Dr. Mike, Margaret and the entire Sanctuary team.

Sarah Flanagan, a Physician's Assistant at Sanctuary concludes the story.

"A year later, we have healthy mom and a healthy baby girl. They come to Sanctuary and they call it their second home."

sanctuary
refugee health centre

Sanctuary Refugee Health Centre provides patient-centred, evidence-based health care, recognizing issues arising from persecution, trauma, migratory stress, and social integration. We seek to bridge cultural and linguistic difference in offering orientation and access to the Canadian health care system. We also work tirelessly with partner organizations to create a 'hub' of services for the well-being of refugee newcomers seeking a new life in Waterloo region.

At Sanctuary, in addition to culturally sensitive primary health care, patients have access to a wide variety of services on site, including psychological and mental health assessment; trauma counselling; dietary advice; assistance with settlement issues; help in completing applications for income security and disability benefits; health education; and special programs designed to meet needs around childbirth, parenting, and respect for diversity.

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Sanguen Health Centre

A Mobile Approach to Serving Those Facing Addictions and Hep C

By Tony D’Amato Stortz

Dr. Chris and Michelle Steingart have matching T-shirts.

One says ‘Harm Reduction Works.’ The other, “I <3 people who <3 drugs”. It’s a long way from their past lives as a middle school science teacher and the Head of Infectious Disease at Grand River Hospital.

It may seem surprising, but it shouldn’t be. Chris and Michelle are people who embrace change.

The two met as students at the University of Waterloo, but when Chris got into University of Calgary Medical School, they moved west to take advantage of the opportunity. Michelle got a degree first in Science and then in Education and began working as a teacher while Chris finished his studies.

She has more degrees than Chris, and teases him for it. He didn’t finish his undergraduate degree before going to medical school.

Moving back to Waterloo Region, Chris became increasingly aware of lack of care for those suffering with Hepatitis C. He began seeing patients one day a week out of an office in Guelph, but it wasn’t enough. Eventually he told Michelle that he wanted to quit his job and open up a Hepatitis C clinic to meet that need. The couple had two young kids and Michelle was working as a substitute teacher.

It was not long after that, with trepidation, Michelle quit her job to administer the clinic, and Sanguen was born.

Sanguen is the province’s first charitable Hepatitis C service organization, but it has grown to do so much more than just treat Hep C. Sanguen has a dedicated team of nurses, social support workers, outreach workers, and peer support workers to meet the needs of the marginalized population they serve. They also run community health vans that go out, meeting people where they are, and providing primary care, clean needles, and even fresh socks. The WINS team also goes out to retrieve used needles they find in the community and dispose of them safely.

These incredible programs just

The first night, the van provided service to 11 people. A week later there were 25. The week after that, there were 40. Now, the van can reach up to 400 people on a night in Waterloo Region alone.

scratch the surface of Sanguen’s good work in our community, and they come, not from a top-down approach of how to solve the opioid crisis, but from the grassroots. They see the problem and do what they can to reduce harm on the ground, where it benefits those who need it most. Their vision is a combination of compassionate medical care for those with Hepatitis C as well as innovative programs to meet the many other important needs of their patients, who suffer from diseases similar to HIV without the same level of support.

Before starting Sanguen there weren’t the same options for support for Hepatitis C patients.

“If an HIV patient came in, I couldn’t set them up with housing, addiction counselling, mental health support, etc. If a Hepatitis C patient came in, they had nothing.”

The scale of the problem is also much bigger.

“There is an order of magnitude – more people are living with Hepatitis C than HIV.”

And Hepatitis C is a terrible disease to live with. Often undiagnosed, it causes the patient to feel tired, unwell, lose their appetite, experience muscle and joint pain, and even depression. Eventually it causes severe liver damage and even death.

“It’s a horrible way to die,” Michelle says, shaking her head.

It is, however, treatable and the medication has gotten much better in the past few years.

“Back in 2011, Hepatitis C treatment was like chemotherapy,” Chris recalls.

It involved weekly injections, a mountain of pills, and nasty mental and physical side effects.

“Now treatment is a single pill a day for 12 weeks. A 95%+ cure rate.”

But the improvement in the medicine does not remove the burden of this disease, especially for those who are already marginalized.

“It’s simple, but not easy. For people who are not housed, nothing is easy.”

And with this change in the treatment method, Sanguen changed as well. It is now less of a specialized Hepatitis C clinic that treats patients through the established medical system. It has changed to become more of a health-focused outreach organization that meets people where they are and walks their health journey alongside them.

“When you help people with Hepatitis C, you’re helping people with addictions, homelessness, poverty, and people who are new to Canada ... I don’t think we’re a Hepatitis C organization anymore – we’re just trying to meet the needs of people with complex needs.”

One way Sanguen does this effectively is through the use of their Community Health Van. This initiative, which has become central to the organization, was suggested by one of their Outreach staff, Violet. She saw the need for a van that could go out and meet people where they were. They had to be there physically as well as mentally.

The first night, the van provided service to 11 people. A week later there were 25. The week after that, there were 40. Now, the van can reach up to 400 people on a night in Waterloo Region alone. They also have services in Guelph, and are expanding into Palmerston.

“Now, people will be lined up, waiting for the van.”

And as the van’s reach grows, its services do too. It distributes clothing, toiletries, and even a hot drink on cold winter nights. It can be the bridge that re-connects someone to the healthcare system. Only then can you move to treat a chronic health condition like Hepatitis C.

“It’s just giving folks a sense of worth (...) Right now we’re trying to keep people alive, meet them where they’re at. We’re trying to help people to be safe and healthy. Because that’s what they deserve.”

Chris and Michelle are adamant that the credit for the incredible work done at Sanguen belongs with the staff working on the ground every day.

Tracy and Amanda are the Nurses administering care. Garilynn is a Nurse Practitioner. Kim is an Outreach Worker. Simone and Aislinn are van coordinators.



Violet is the Manager of Outreach, Education, and Prevention. Colin is the Program Director for Guelph/Wellington & Waterloo Region. Pete, Rene, and Alice are the Social Support Coordinators for Waterloo Region and Guelph. Johnny, Paul, Jen, Jason, Barb, Charlotte, Steph, Moira, Paul, Yanna, and Craig are Peer Workers. Dr. Chittle is the PrEP Clinic Physician.

Chris recalls looking over at members of the team while they were providing service and thinking “wow, they know how to do things I don’t have a clue about.”

“It’s the team” he says.

Michelle agrees. When asked about her favorite part of the job, she immediately jumps to the Monday morning meetings they have with everyone to get on track for the upcoming week.

“I love Monday mornings,” she said with a smile. “How many people can say that?”



Sanguen is the province’s first charitable Hepatitis C service organization, but it has grown to do so much more than just treat Hep C: it has changed to become more of a health-focused outreach organization that meets people where they are and walks their health journey alongside them.

With a dedicated team of nurses, social support workers, outreach workers, and peer support workers Sanguen works to meet the needs of the marginalized population they serve. Their community health vans go out, meeting people where they are, and providing primary care, harm reduction support, and even fresh socks.

These programs come, bring a grassroots approach to the opioid crisis. They see the problem and do what they can to reduce harm on the ground, where it benefits those who need it most. Their vision is a combination of compassionate medical care for those with Hepatitis C as well as innovative programs to meet the many other important needs of their patients including mental health, addiction, and housing support.

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Sketch by Joy Henry

Oh Duff

*you were a pillar. an always. a presence.
you were a friend. an advocate. a voice.
you were a writer, a talker, a linger-er.
you filled our lives with your life.*

*the albino squirrel, the strawberry patch,
the boys, the stories. oh the stories.*

*and your hands moved, your eyes would get that twinkle
and there aren't quite words to describe your
certain kind of style.*

*oh duff. you were an orphan who made these streets home.
made us feel at home.*

*you who welcomed, beckoned. shared.
children were treasures. new shops were opportunities.*

*there was always another story to tell.
to call you a fixture is to miss the vibrant broken beautiful
gift that you were complicated, vociferous, friendly.*

*I considered you a friend. someone on 'my list' to see
when i came to town. to say that you will not be forgotten,
doesn't do your life justice.*

*I don't think i can quite capture or even consider
the immensity of your presence.*

*I think the stories are going to flow. when marty passed,
there was a march. flowers posted in storefronts.
how do we honour your life? your story?*

*how do we say goodbye to someone who was always there?
this year has felt its share of loss.
and your passing marks one more.*

oh duff, but what a hole that is left...

by Ruthi Knight



After the memorial service at St. John's Kitchen, 200 people walked from the Kitchen down King Street to the Kitchener Market in tribute to our friend Duff. The Kitchener Market hosted a reception in recognition of Duff's supportive presence at the Market.

Photos courtesy of Peter Lee / The Waterloo Region Record

Remembering Our Friend Duff

By Rebecca Mancini

If you have walked into the Queen Street Commons, you have likely seen, heard or met Duff. He was often perched at the window seats, his wiry frame full of contained energy and ready to move as soon as he saw someone to connect with. Our dear friend Duff died on December 29, 2018 and it is hard to comprehend our world without him.

Duff found himself on the streets of Kitchener in May of 2007 and it wasn't long after that he found the Commons. Kayli joined us around this same time and they quickly formed a deep and lasting friendship. The Commons was just a year old and we were learning how to run a Café while also creating an environment where people could feel welcome and understand what it means to share space in diverse ways. As Kayli held the warmth of welcome and a steady framework of what was possible, Duff built on this, stretched it to its limits and steadily strengthened the ideas and practices. This was not done intentionally but it happened in the tension between Duff's normal ways of being, the place that Kayli was trying to build and the respect and love that they had for each other.

Duff would constantly invite people into spaces around downtown Kitchener. This could be a long-time friend or someone he had just met, often simply by walking up and introducing himself in his gregarious way. He would sweep people past the threshold explaining everything and everyone in the space and making people feel welcome in a real and radical way. The Commons

was one of his favourite places to do this and he brought in people from all walks of life. He would tell some it was a safe place to sleep or get warm, others about the food. Kayli would encourage people not to sleep but encouraged everyone to stay and meet new people.

Perhaps one of Duff's greatest gifts was the way that he could break down the bubble that people put around themselves in public spaces. He would talk to people at the next table; greet people as they walked in the door; suggest what people should order; if there was a child, he'd introduce them to all the toys. He had an open ear to hear your stories and he was ready with one of his own. He gave unconditional acceptance to people and was ready with acts of kindness. As Duff helped Kayli to form this pattern in the Commons, others started to pick it up and this has become part of the fabric and culture of the Commons.

This is perhaps the strength of Duff's approach. Each of us was invited, time and again, to take part in welcoming new people, doing intentional acts of kindness and sharing stories together. Duff's sudden absence is a great loss but the community that he helped to build lives on and it's up to the rest of us to carry it forward. In early February, over 200 people gathered to celebrate Duff's life through a memorial at St John's Kitchen and a classic Duff walk through the downtown that ended in a BBQ at the Kitchener Market. It was a fittingly large, diverse and meaningful memorial for a man who reminded us every day to step outside of ourselves and invite others into relationship.



Waterloo Region Crossing

Through Waterloo Region Crossing, we fundraised over \$40,000 for The Working Centre. Their proposed use for these funds is a first-of-its-kind integrated transitional housing and medical facility to serve as a healing residence for those most vulnerable citizens in our community. There is great community support for this project, and our donation will help to accelerate its completion.

Integrating medical care with housing helps to address issues surrounding homelessness, community inclusion, and healing all under one roof. The 115 Water Street project will be used as an innovative model for how to address some of the most challenging circumstances surrounding homelessness and addiction in our community, and may be implemented as a model in other communities facing similar challenges.

It is with great pride that Waterloo Region Crossing is able to make a significant contribution to a project that will have such a profound impact on the lives of so many of our neighbours.

Community Support for St. John's Kitchen



Thank you to 60 Vidyard workers who volunteered at St. John's Kitchen over two weeks to celebrate Vidyard's continuing success in our community.



Thank you to the Downtown Kitchener Business Improvement Area (DTKBIA) for selling Christmas Trees at the Christkindl Market. The proceeds from the sale totaling **over \$4,000** were donated to St. John's Kitchen.

Thank you to the Kitchener Junior Rangers Peeewe Select hockey team for collecting food and personal care items for St. John's Kitchen as part of the Chevrolet Good Deeds Cup.

Thank you also to Scherer Chevrolet Buick GMC Ltd. for helping to collect and deliver the items.

In the photo below, Jordan Scherer and Jason Shaw deliver the items with the Junior Rangers hockey team.



WEAVING ECOLOGY

A YEAR OF EXPLORING THE INTRICACIES OF LIVING WITHIN OUR LIMITS

A sequel to last year's *Finding Our Place* series, this year we go deeper in exploring our present ecological crisis, weaving the threads of sustainable living, and doing the work of reweaving a simpler way of life that is gentle on the earth.



BOOKSHARE

Books will be released through 2019 related to this year's theme. There will be opportunities to join a book club with other members.



ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSIONS

Queen Street Commons Cafe will host weekly, informal dialogues on a range of topics related to our "weaving ecology" theme. Discussions will be 5-7pm every Tuesday, beginning in January 2019 and run all year long.

Upcoming topics will include:

March 19th | *Rich in Skill*

March 26th | *Rich in Purpose*

April 2nd | *Inhabiting Place*

April 9th | *Know Your (Non-human) Neighbours*

SUMMER INSTITUTE

IN GRASSROOTS SUSTAINABILITY

The **Summer Institute** is a set of workshops designed by Working Centre staff that is geared to describing the philosophy and skills that enable the Working Centre to walk the fine line of rooting themselves in community while remaining responsive, reflective, and guided by virtues.

Join us for the 4th annual Summer Institute
July 31st - August 2nd 2019

Emergent Thinking • Personalist Practices • Local Democracy

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

519.743.1151 ext.175

waterlooschool@theworkingcentre.org



Check our website for details in the coming months:
theworkingcentre.org/waterloo-school-community-development/187

JOIN US FOR FERMENTED THOUGHTS

Earthen Vespers

THURSDAY MARCH 28th | 7:00PM - 9:00PM
FRESH GROUND CAFE | 256 KING STREET EAST
KITCHENER



Ecological conversion begins with a spiritual revolution that upsets our sense of separation from other creatures. **Earthen Vespers** restores an ancient practice of community and gives it a modern edge to cut through the isolation of consumer culture.

The evening will be experiential in nature, involving music, poetry and reflection to help us more gently inhabit the "Anthropocene", the name given by scientists to our current era defined by the massive forces of human change on the face of the Earth.

Led by philosopher, poet and priest, **Greg Kennedy SJ**.

Tickets are \$25, including food and drink.

FOR MORE INFORMATION: waterlooschool@theworkingcentre.org | 519.743.1151 ext.175

Who Are Our Teachers?

By Rachael Chong
& Adam Kramer

*"A teacher comes, they say,
when you are ready. And if you
ignore its presence, it will speak to
you more loudly. But you have to
be quiet to hear... All we need as
students is mindfulness."*

- Robin Wall-Kimmerer,
Braiding Sweetgrass

This past season, a remarkable community of gardeners brought to the garden the skills, knowledge and curiosity to make 2018 our most productive year to date. With a 25% increase in yields compared to the previous year, we were able to feed 115 families weekly through our CSA program, as well as many more purchasing our vegetables through local stores and restaurants. Over 17,000 pounds on less than one acre of land! How did this happen?

Many volunteers who come to work at the garden expect the staff to be the experts on gardening. While we do maintain many "ways of doing things," we also value the vast gardening and farming knowledge that our community holds. Volunteers are often surprised when we respond to their questions with, "Hmm. I'm not sure the best strategy here - what do you think?" Indecisive? Perhaps. Revelatory? Often.

Just as we listen to each other, we also need to recognize the importance of listening to nature and the eco-systems that support our work. In her book, *Braiding Sweetgrass*, Robin Wall-Kimmerer calls us to listen to the languages of the natural world and to open ourselves to the meaningful relationships that permeate what otherwise appears random.

Indeed, ecology is the study of how organisms relate to one another and how they relate to their physical surroundings. For ecological farmers, science is an indispensable tool in understanding these staggeringly complex relationships and how they impact not only their livelihood and food systems, but also those of future generations. With that in mind, most farmers and gardeners will also tell you that science is only part of the picture. Standing in a plot, dirt under your nails, listening

to the wind and the wildlife is also an indispensable step on a path towards understanding. As you plow your field, or bring in a harvest, there are lessons being taught if only you listen.

For the past few seasons it has been evident that the soil was teaching us things. After years of heavy tillage aimed at breaking up our hard clay earth and eliminating weeds, the soil definitely began speaking more loudly! Tillage contributes to hardpan formation, churns buried weed seeds to the surface where they can sprout, and destroys the habitat of the soil micro-organisms that ultimately provide nourishment to our crops and to the people that eat it. So we listened. Other growers share their learnings with us, helping to change our practices and focus on building healthy soil, rather than pulverizing it. Practicing care and mindfulness is helping us gain a deeper sense of the complexity of life in the soil that we are working alongside, just as we are working and learning alongside each other as growers. Now, life has begun returning to our soil and is naturally helping to break up what was once hard packed clay. Our water use has gone down and fewer weeds are sprouting. Certain crops that we once struggled to grow are now thriving.

So, how have we done it? We have listened, we have learned, and we can't wait to see what lessons are in store for us in the season ahead.

Join us in the gardens beginning
May 1st, Monday to Friday 8am to
4pm.



Hacienda Sarria Market Garden

The Working Centre's Hacienda Sarria Market Garden is a volunteer driven community enterprise that demonstrates, promotes, and shares knowledge about sustainable urban food production.

**Join us for FREE
gardening workshops**

Fridays 2:30-3:30pm
from May to October

Internships

We offer urban agriculture internship opportunities that actively engage in the work of building a more sustainable community based food system, while building community by working with volunteer gardeners.

Contact us:

519.575.1118

theworkingcentre.org/hacienda



CSA SHARES AVAILABLE NOW

Community Supported Agriculture is a model of food production that connects farmers directly with the people who eat the food they grow. Members purchase a share in the harvest and are treated to fresh, locally-grown vegetables in season each week.

Order your share now to receive your items weekly from mid-June until the end of October. Purchasing a share directly supports the work of our projects and community!

Vegetable Share

Enjoy delicious local produce direct from the Hacienda Sarria Market Garden. We harvest your vegetables fresh - usually within 24 hours of delivery!

Pea Shoot and Microgreen Share

The mighty microgreen is simply a just-sprouted baby vegetable. Grown at Grow Greenhouse, you'll love these flavor packed, nutrient rich greens. Varieties include Broccoli, Purple Kohlrabi, Radish, Arugula and of course, our fan favourite - Pea Shoots.



Baking and Cookie Share

Cookies, pies, coffee cakes, sweet breads, and cinnamon buns. Enjoy a sweet breakfast or snack freshly baked in Maurita's Kitchen.



Fair Trade Organic and Single Origin Coffee Share

Enjoy delicious fair trade organic and single origin coffee that is freshly roasted at Queen Street Commons Cafe! Choose your specific variety and roast, or receive a rotating selection.

Flower Share

Bring the freshness and beauty of our farm into your home with bouquets of locally grown, pesticide free flowers from the Hacienda Market Garden.

Dinner Share

Aromatic flavourful vegetarian stews, soups, and casseroles made at Maurita's Kitchen.

To purchase a CSA share online visit:

catalogue.theworkingcentre.org/csa

hacienda@theworkingcentre.org

519.575.1118

WEEKLY PICK UPS

Weekly pickups are available at Queen Street Commons Café, the Hacienda Sarria, and the Tannery.

Check our catalogue webpage for pick up times.

Eco Courier KW can deliver items right to your door.



Hacienda Sarria Market Garden is located at 1254 Union St in Kitchener