

GOOD WORK NEWS

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

Issue 138

September 2019

Subscription: A Donation Towards our Work

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Worth A Second Look Gets a New Look



Kitchener's busiest Furniture and Housewares thrift shop has a new look! Recent renovations have given Worth A Second Look a fresh bright atmosphere. Come see for yourself! For more information about WASL see page 3.

Composting Initiative

This summer, The Working Centre has been a partner with DTKBIA (Downtown Kitchener Business Improvement Area) in a pilot project to collect food waste from 14 downtown restaurants and stores.

Read more on page 6.



Students Support St. John's Kitchen



Adella Cowls, Leah Fitzpatrick and Kirsten Mendoza, three students from St. Davids Catholic Secondary School present a \$5,000 cheque to St. John's Kitchen. The students won the 2019 Youth Philanthropy Initiative grant as part of their high school civics project.

(Photo by Bill Jackson, TorStar)



Funding Announcement for Water Street House

Adam Vaughan, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, was joined by local community leaders to announce a \$464,605 commitment from the federal government for the construction of transitional housing for homeless men and women struggling with addictions.

Joining in the announcement: Shirley Hilton, WRPS; Joe Mancini; Elizabeth Clarke; Chief Bryan Larkin, WRPS; Marwan Tabbara, MP; MC Neil Aitchison; Raj Saini, MP; Greg Roberts, Adam Vaughan, MP; Andy Sobczuk; Stephanie Mancini, Kitchener Mayor Berry Urbanovic, Debbie Chapman

(Photo courtesy of CMHC)

More information about the Water Street House project is on our website. Search "Water Street House" or click on the homepage banner.

Homelessness: A Day in the Life of a Street Outreach Worker

By Candace Pitvor

Homelessness is an issue that continues to impact our community that affects so many people from diverse walks of life. And, it can happen to anyone at any given time. Not too many people choose to be homeless as it is scary, stressful, unsafe, unhealthy, unpleasant, nasty, and extremely exhausting. Homelessness can relate to people living life out on the streets, in abandoned buildings, parks or on park benches, couch surfing and in shelters. This paper brings into light my personal

involvement in working with people who experience homelessness, mental health and addiction.

Most individuals I work with live with concurrent disorders, meaning, they are dealing with mental health issues mixed with addiction. These are people who have not had it easy in life, that so often reach out for help. Although, it is almost impossible for them to get appropriate help due to their "concurrent disorders". Whenever they go to hospital, they are told to leave and deal with their

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Thirty Fifth Year

Issue 138

September 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.

Editors: Joe Mancini, Stephanie Mancini.

Contributors: Kyle Murphy, Isaiah Ritzmann, JP Smola, Bob Sharpe, Siana Crasto, Nancy Vernon Kelly, Tom Friesen, Candace Pitvor, Tony McLellan, Andy Macpherson, Douglas MacLellan, Laura Hamilton, Caterina Lindman.

Editorial comments, changes of address and new subscriptions should be directed to:

The Working Centre

58 Queen St. S., Kitchener, Ontario, N2G 1V6

Phone: (519) 743-1151 • Fax: (519) 743-3840

E-mail: kara@theworkingcentre.org

Web: www.theworkingcentre.org

Canada Post Bulk #05306256

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Man of Many Scarves

At least twelve scarves.
A kaleidoscope of colours
and patterns around his neck.
Loops and circles.
Necklaces, rings, tattoos.
A hospital bracelet.

He's older now
than when we first talked
about his love of music
and the reticulated python
in his bathtub.

Today, he takes off his scarves,
one by one,
and he's skin and bones
next to me in a pew half way back,
fidgeting and mumbling.
Making a gentle spectacle
on a two-hour pass.

He's anxious to get next door
by 11:10 for his meds.
Asking again and again
for a ride back
to the hospital next door.

Beyond doubt,
before the Easter Gospel,
we both rise up
and duck out the door
into the cold.

The usher with the kind eyes
runs after us
with the Palestinian scarf.

As we walk together,
(three hundred mere paces),
he has a little smoke
and tells me he's engaged
to a doctor.

Inside the hospital,
Time slows down.
We stop for a coffee,
and I recognize him
in the five sugars he rips open
with his leathery, trembling hands.

Peace, he says, when we part.
Me, to return to the church in the
middle.

He, to hurry downstairs to line up
for his meds.

Risen together.

If that's what you want to call it.
Risen indeed. Alleluia!

by **Nancy Vernon Kelly**



About James Coleman

James Coleman, the "Man of Many Scarves", was a familiar member of our community who died earlier this year.

Nancy Vernon Kelly is a retired Lutheran pastor, formerly of St. Mark's Lutheran (now Trillium).

She first met James while having lunch at St. John's Kitchen in 1993.

The incident described in this poem took place twenty-five years later on Easter Sunday, April 1, 2018, about a year before James died.

A memory from the 1980's was James venting his frustration when he could not get work.

One company where he often worked was a chicken processor in Waterloo.

However, just as often, despite lining up early in the morning, he and many others would be turned away. Due to a lack of work, which was always demoralizing.

From time to time for many years, James dropped in at St. Mark's Community Suppers on Wednesday nights.

Community suppers happen in many places in Waterloo Region including every Thursday at Trillium, 22 Willow.



Washroom Improvements at St. John's Kitchen

By **Stephanie Mancini**

We contemplated a complex situation at St. John's Kitchen. Every day, someone was overdosing in our space, most often in the bathrooms. We had old-school bathrooms, stalls in the men's and women's bathrooms, that were often being occupied by multiple people at a time who were using drugs in a place where they felt safe, where they knew that if they overdosed, someone would be there to help them. But, we also heard from the many people who were coming to St. John's Kitchen for a daily meal. Why can't we access the bathrooms?

We spent months reflecting on these issues. How not to exclude active drug users who do not yet have access to a safe injection site? How to make sure we were providing equitable access to food for both drug users and non-drug-users? And how did we get to the place where we were defining people based on whether they were drug-users or not?

How to be an inclusive space for all? After extensive conversations we decided to renovate our bathrooms – was there a way to be inclusive and safe? And once we renovated the bathrooms, could we "host" our bathroom access in a way that involved everyone in the conversation that ensured our bathrooms were clean, welcoming and safe for all?

Well, first the renovations, an intensive undertaking where we replaced separate womens/mens stalls with individual private rooms. We talked through the non-gender specific; we talked through small rooms that felt claustrophobic to those who had histories of confinement; we modelled the space on the Bauer Kitchen bathrooms – giving the space a sense of class and cleanliness, all the way to the brass fixtures above the shared trough sink.

Then we invited people back into the space, proud of the changes, "hosting" the bathrooms with a staff person wearing gloves, ensuring bathrooms were clean for each new user, cleaning, mopping, tidying, having conversations. We offered a curated bathroom environment, a place of welcome, a shared place that is welcoming for all.

And it is working. The space is beautiful, we have reduced the numbers of overdoses in the space, it has changed from a back corner with

Thank You for Supporting the Renovations

Arabesque; Bella Vista Catering; Bingemans; Café Pyrus; Church of St. John's the Evangelist; City of Kitchener; Coalition of Muslim Women; Community Christian Reformed Church; Conestoga Catering; Elevation Church; Erb and Good Family Funeral Home; Freshco; Giant Tiger; Gold Roast Coffee; Graffiti Market; Henry Walser Funeral Home; Indulge Natural and Organic Kitchen; Keybrand; Kitchener-Waterloo Gurudwara; Lancaster Smoke House; Little Mushroom Catering; Matter of Taste; Proof Restaurant; Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church; Tile Master; Waterloo Christian Reformed Church.

bathrooms, and is now a hosted, welcoming part of St. John's Kitchen. We moved the harm reduction office hosted by our partners from ACCK-WA and Sanguen to a more private office. We are now having more conversations about shared space, about welcome for all, about what it means to be together in complex times.

During the two-week shutdown required to rebuild this space, we invited community partners to provide a lunch time meal; one day at the Kitchener City Hall gathering space, and then 9 days at St. John's Anglican Church. For eleven days we experienced a daily miracle when a truck or van would show up with thoughtfully prepared food, drinks, extra treats or supplies so that when we opened for lunch there would be a hospitable welcome. Not only was the generosity free flowing, every day was a feast of fresh and delicious food from local chefs, caterers, restaurants, community groups and food suppliers. As a community we delighted in being hosted in a new way.

We are very grateful for the community response that helped to make this transformation possible. We were daunted by issues we couldn't resolve, we dreamed of a new reality, and we welcomed our community partners in helping make this possible. Our gratitude and appreciation of collective community effort reminds us that we are strongest when we work together in complex times.



The Green Door: So Much More than a Neighbourhood Thrift Store

By Tony McLellan

Too often, in this day and age, are the words “community focused” used to prop up the image of businesses not necessarily focused on the community good. Behind the downtown Kitchener Farmer’s Market however, there exists an unassuming storefront, decorated with flowers, sunlit windows and a bright green door. Welcome to The Green Door, a vital community space.

“It’s more than just a store,” comments Eunice, a long-time employee at The Green Door. “People come here not just to shop, but to connect and to feel part of a community. It’s a beautiful atmosphere inclusive to everyone and I love it.”

After opening in 2012, The Green Door has transformed into so much more by incorporating volunteers with broad skill sets. Over the last couple of years the Green Door Arts Space has invited volunteers to share their creative skills by hosting workshops utilizing crafting donations from Worth A Second Look.

Volunteers and employees at The Green Door focus on making the

store a bright inviting, well organized store that everyone enjoys coming to. It is important that volunteers enjoy their roles but also work towards goals and employment skills that they are hoping to develop.

Recycling Donated Textiles

TGD is also an exemplary recycler of donated textiles, from scraps of clothing to nearly new luxury brands. Michelle explains that “what we try to do when we get the clothing is separate out anything that we want to be sold from items that can be given away for free to St. John’s Kitchen.

As for clothing that is worn or damaged beyond resale/donation, The Green Door finds a way to productively use those items as well. “When we can’t repair an item, sometimes the sewing group is able to use it. Other times, we have to recycle it. We employ a company which comes and takes those to a facility in London to be repurposed”, states Michelle. Educating about textile waste and consumption is another area of concern. “When we have volunteers come in from

various companies for even a day, it exposes people to just how much clothing is being donated and recycled.” The Green Door has become a valuable source of waste reduction education.

Handcrafted Soap

Ask anyone who frequents The Green Door and you will likely be informed about their unique handcrafted soap, crafted by the talented staff and volunteers regularly in-house. “We have been making our soaps since the store opened but about 5 years ago we increased production of the soaps and added other products to our body product line”, says Eunice, of the organization’s successful, sweet scented organization’s successful, sweet scented product. According to Michelle, “when we develop new types of soap, it’s all in collaboration as a group. We come up with interesting ideas, we create tester bars, receive feedback and then we go from there. It’s almost always a big hit.” There are a plethora of lovely scents to choose from, depending on the season you visit them in. Seasonal soaps are among the most popular, with a “ce-



dar, cinnamon clove” holiday soap being in high demand. The store has 8 soaps available year round and offers a seasonal soap only available during the Christmas holiday season. The Green Door Arts Space also produces a variety of salves, lip balms, scrubs, body oils and a newly launched solid lotion bar.

While it started out as a used clothing store, The Green Door has functioned as a pillar of community goodness, including supports for recent immigrants looking to make



The Green Door is located at 37 Market Lane, steps away from the Kitchener Farmer’s Market.

Weekdays: 10am to 5pm
Saturday: 9am to 4pm

Contact us at:

519.804.2466 ext. 25
michelleb@theworkingcentre.org

Donations and volunteer are always welcome!

connections. “We’ve come to know a lot of people new to Canada, who after just a few months of volunteering here are able to get jobs”, says Eunice with pride. “Just getting to see people who start their volunteer work with Level 1 or 2 English volunteer here for a while and practice speaking English around the project ...they then go off with more conversational English and are able to find work”, says Michelle.

Present and upcoming projects at The Green Door include a partnership with The Button Factory Arts, collaborating on drawing workshops and other visual art related projects, and Saturday art classes are free of charge. Staff also help to connect local youth with the Art Shift program, focused on helping young people gain employment skills through arts activities.

Tony McLellan is a journalist student at Conestoga College and is doing a two-month internship at The Working Centre.



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Service is Never Simple The Work of Outreach at St. John's Kitchen

By Tom Friesen

Perhaps like many an angst young adult, I was once enamored with the idea of revolution — Rage Against the Machine was a staple of my music collection.

*Believin' all the lies that they're
tellin' ya
Buyin' all the products that
they're sellin' ya
They say jump and you say how
high?
You're brain dead
You got a bullet in your head*

There have been times in my life when I was drawn to the idea of tearing down systems. Shouting “cus the man!” and all that felt good. While I still get a kick out of this kind of music and am encouraged to see people standing up to challenge the system, I now think that if rage is not rooted in relationships it is empty. In other words, if our anger toward the systems that oppress people is not reflected in caring for the oppressed around us, it is an ineffective rage. As a matter of fact I would endeavour to say that such isolated rage against the machine is a kind of violence:

It is a violence to speak out on behalf of people for whom you avoid speaking to, much less have a relationship with.

Some 11 years ago I began working at St. John's Kitchen. St. John's is a community kitchen that has been serving those experiencing homelessness and those at risk of homelessness for over 30 years. During this time a rich philosophy of service has been cultivated. It is here that I have come to value the prophetic role of, as the Catholic Worker puts it, “creating a new society within the shell of the old, a society in which it will be easier to be good.”

Role of Outreach

It is this kind of nuanced revolutionary thinking that drives me in my maturing years much as RATM would in my youth.

At St. John's Kitchen I work as an outreach worker. My role is to host the space. I welcome people and build relationships with those in the

*We come not as experts or
problem-solvers but rather we
come as friends. More often
than not we will find that
we are the students in these
relationships, indeed students
who have a great deal to learn.*

community. It is here that I have been taught by those whom the system has failed. It is in relating to this community that I have seen my rage grow to include compassion and empathy. I have learned the simple yet often missed piece that each person is unique and did not emerge from an isolated vacuum of personal decisions. In relationship, we empathize with the person and we see our own selves in him or her. When we hear the pain that often lies behind what brought someone to where they are it becomes difficult to stand in judgment over them. It also becomes difficult to think that the solution to their problems is evident or clear. We discover that if this person's story were our own, we likely would be exactly where they are now. We find that at the end of the day we are all people and we are all fragile. This understanding transforms the way in which one serves. We come not as experts or problem-solvers but rather we come as friends. More often than not we will find that we are the students in these relationships, indeed students who have a great deal to learn.

Paradoxically, it is only in real relationships that this understanding arises, because only the power of friendship breaks down walls of pro-

tection; walls that divide us. While fabricated or even “professional” relationships with their clear boundaries isolate, real relationships bring forth understanding; understanding brings forth friendship and this moves us toward equality.

At St. John's everyone waits in line for our meal. There is no special priority for staff over patrons because we are all an equal part of the community. I eat at St. John's every day for lunch and believe that doing so is integral to building relationships with others who eat at the kitchen. In sharing a meal with others we take a small step to demonstrate our equality.

Walk With

If we view those we serve as equals we will see that to serve means simply to ‘walk with.’ Walking with an individual means that we recognize one's life as belonging to one's own self. We don't come with a set of goals or an agenda. This isn't to say that you can't question or challenge a person's choices. Rather, it is an admittance that at the end of the day a person's choices are his or hers to make, and if he or she does otherwise, you won't abandon the relationship. There is wisdom in



this because when we try to make transformation the goal, we will wear ourselves out and become angry and cynical when transformation doesn't happen. To walk with someone, however, realizes we have no goals per se. Friends mourn with those who mourn, they laugh with those who laugh and they bear one another's burdens.

Equality in relationships also means that our relationships are reciprocal. They are not one-sided



*Grade five students from
MAC Maple Grove School
collected items to donate to
St. John's Kitchen. Thank
you for your support!*

where you give and I receive. They are give and take. One day I was walking in Uptown Waterloo and ran into Robert. Robert was working panhandling and asked me if I had any money. I told Robert unfortunately I didn't have anything to give that day and as a matter of fact the coffee I was carrying was bought for me by a friend because I didn't have money on me. Robert looked at me incredulously, dug into his pockets and pulled out a gift card for a free coffee. It is in such an exchange that I can be overwhelmed by the depth of the others' generosity.

Reciprocal relationships are difficult. They are counter-intuitive. We like to be the generous ones, however in a relationship we must be willing to give as well as receive. If we will not receive gifts, we rob others of the joy of giving and indirectly establish an unequal relationship.

Respect the Place

It is important to acknowledge that real relationships are not boundaryless and at St. John's Kitchen there are expectations. Our base expectation is that violence is not welcome. Or as a number of our patrons who called themselves The Brotherhood taught me to put it, “respect the place”. It is simple to have a conversation around what it means to respect the place; a list of rules, however, is futile, as every rule needs five more to support it. When we let go of our need to enforce our authority over another with rules and rather open ourselves up to having conversation around what should be done in any given situation we promote equality. This is the hard work of real relationships for it makes us vulnerable. However, it is in such vulnerability that we develop a mutual trust for one another. Such trust is generated when the community sees that we are there to care for them and ultimately care about them.

A Gentleness of Spirit

This also requires a gentleness of spirit.

It is especially in times when members from our community react from places of anger or desperation toward the place that we can most demonstrate this. It is when we find regular graffiti on our walls or our



Homelessness: A Day in the Life of a Street Outreach Worker

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addiction, and when they go to treatment they are told to leave and deal with their mental health. This is a major system failure happening within our community with doors constantly closing on individuals trying to get help. It is no wonder they eventually give up!

Today sitting in my kitchen while sipping on tea, I read an article declaring “currently 264 people are experiencing homelessness within Waterloo Region as of April 2018, apparently, this includes singles and families” (Thomson, 2018). This is obvious to me starting from my work day each morning, walking downtown and all I see around me is condo after condo being built. Sadly, I notice places that use to be homes to lower income people are now being torn down. This infuriates me deeply to see buildings that once were low-income housing now in the process of being torn down to be replaced with new condos that will never be affordable to so many people in Waterloo Region. Personally, I have witnessed with my own eyes people being pushed and forced out of their own homes and put onto the streets with absolutely nothing. I have watched them walk away with only what they can carry on their backs.

As I work in the field of Street Outreach, I often hear many different stories from people experiencing homelessness. I hear stories and situations of why or what brought them to that point in their life. Daily, I listen to people telling me their stories mention reasons such as poverty, addiction, mental health, abusive relationships, system failures, lack of adequate housing, loss of a job, sudden health problems and the list goes on.

Whose Problem is This?

As I often do, before going to work I ask myself why we should care. Whose problem is this? Why are more and more people coming into homelessness? Are we as a region experiencing Gentrification? Perhaps people may start to care only when they are directly impacted by this crisis. Maybe they will one day when it's their friend, son, daughter, mother, grandmother, uncle, father or a loved one. I strongly want to ask everyone, “Is that when you will care?” I feel we go on living our very busy fast paced lives, sometimes not even realizing the sadness and pain happening all over the place.

Facing Judgement

Equally important, people who are experiencing homelessness are almost always facing judgements, unfair treatments; they are stigmatized, feared, hated, blamed, shamed, embarrassed, harassed, made to feel unworthy, and so often they feel no one cares about them, they feel defeated, and they give up

As I often do, before going to work I ask myself why we should care. Whose problem is this? Why are more and more people coming into homelessness? ...Perhaps people may start to care only when they are directly impacted by this crisis. Maybe they will one day when it's their friend, son, daughter, mother, grandmother, uncle, father or a loved one.

on everything.

For example, have you ever stopped to look a person who is panhandling in the eyes to ask about his/her day? Would you offer them a smile? I challenge people to think about what a person experiencing homelessness may go through daily trying to survive minute to minute! Imagine them wondering where their next meal will be, where their next shower will be, where their next drink of water will be, where they will sleep or when they will be able to safely sleep again. Just visualize it being every thought in your head, imagine it being the only thought in your head, every minute, every day, and all the time! We so easily can go grab something to eat from our fridge, go to our washroom and have a shower, grab a glass of water from our kitchen sink; if tired, we lay in our bed and sleep safely. These are things most do and take for granted without a thought daily.

The Experience of Motel Living

The other day, I was driving down the highway with a woman I had just picked up from the New Hamburg Inn, a red old looking motel, with only six rooms. This woman at the motel with beautiful red hair, deep blue eyes who had the look of sadness and pain almost intolerable to witness, shared with me how she has experienced homelessness for over 5 years within our community due to mental health issues.

She was staying at the motel with a friend of hers, whom I work with, who has been experiencing homelessness for over 10 years due to PTSD. Fortunately, this man was “lucky” to be placed in a motel as a temporary solution until we could come up with an adequate housing

solution for him. As one of the rules of the motel was no guests allowed, I was the one that had to ask her to leave. This woman with so much sadness and pain in her eyes understood. She even went to the motel owner and said, “Please do not kick my friend out, I was only here for a night helping him out”.

Showing that even though she too was suffering so much, she wanted to help protect her friend from losing his place of temporary safety. As the woman and I were driving I asked her, “where can I take you?” she said she was okay with me dropping her off anywhere downtown. As we were driving downtown she said to me, “Do you know what it is like to have to sleep outside and have to find a place that you can light a fire because it is so God damn freezing out you would do anything to get warm!”

She then went on with immense tears pouring down her cheeks to ask me “Do you know what it is like to have your children taken away from you because you can't raise them due to society's norm because you may be a little bit sick, too mentally unwell to care for your own children?” Not surprisingly, I had no words for her and I regrettably had no solutions. I felt helpless and distressed. I almost started to cry as I looked out to the road we were travelling on to bring her nowhere.

All I could do was be there for her in her moment of extreme suffering and pain. Supportively, I gave her all my attention and sincerely listened to all she had to say. Eventually she asked to borrow my phone, so she could call her uncle who did not answer the call. She then stated that she was hungry, so I dropped her off at St. John's Community Kitchen. A place she knows all too well, a place she could get something to eat and a place she could visit and chat with friends who also are living life on the streets.

St. John's Kitchen

St. Johns Kitchen is such a wonderful place where people from all different walks of life are welcome. We open our doors to everyone who wants to come, Monday to Friday from 8am to 3pm. In the morning a person could help themselves to bread, peanut butter and jam. Sometimes we get donations such as donuts and muffins or other yummy snacks that we leave out for people to enjoy. At lunch time, we always provide a hot healthy meal. Most of the people that come here are expe-

She then went on with immense tears pouring down her cheeks to ask me “Do you know what it is like to have your children taken away from you because you can't raise them due to society's norm because you may be a little bit sick, too mentally unwell to care for your own children?”

riencing homelessness, families with low income, new comers to Canada etc.

Within the kitchen, everyone shares a great big open space filled with tables and chairs. Amazingly, the walls are all painted a pleasant welcoming yellow and we have large pictures on the walls. Some of the pictures were painted by people accessing our services. We have big beautiful green plants and trees that help fill up some open space on shelves and in corners. Then there is the massive open kitchen where volunteers and staff work together on meal prep and cooking.

The Work of Outreach

After I park my car, as I walk in the building passing so many people that are outside in the lane way, everyone says hello to me, I say hello back and ask as many people as possible how their day has been. Shortly, after entering, I exit out the big red doors of the kitchen to look for a man I support. I need to remind him of the medical appointment he has for tomorrow. This short, tanned-skin man with scars all over his hands and face from fighting, is in a hidden laneway beside St. John's Kitchen. He meets with a group of his friends every morning at 10am, a time all the boys call “post time”, the time the liquor store opens. Some of these men have housing, some live outside on the streets, some live in abandoned buildings, parks and/or in shelters. In this moment, where they live does not really matter to them because they are all having fun, laughing, drinking and sharing stories.

The Reality of Homelessness

In my experience of working as a Street Outreach Worker I believe that the number of people experiencing homelessness in Waterloo Region is much higher than 264. I would go as far as to double that number. Having introduced the daily struggles and suffering as well as the causes for homelessness I say this: the next time you run into a person who is experiencing homelessness or a person who is panhandling take a minute to at least to say hello, smile and acknowledge their existence. Do not be scared or afraid of them and, most importantly, do not judge them. Show some compassion, treat the person with dignity and respect. We all deserve at least that much no matter our circumstances!

Candace worked as a Streets to Housing Outreach Worker at The Working Centre for 4 years and is now a Community Outreach worker at the Kitchener Public Library.



Service is Never Simple

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office is broken into yet again and reply with kind notes or a quiet coat of paint. It is how when something is stolen and we approach the person who took the item as a friend and helper rather than a thief. When instead of telling someone who just threw a phone across the room to leave but rather invite them to come into the office and tell us what is the matter, it is then that we embody gentleness of spirit.

Not only am I glad that we responded with gentleness because often it is effective, I am most glad, because this way of being allows for people to become our friends; friends who we deeply value the presence of, and who become our greatest supports.

Finally like those we serve, like all people, we too are frail and broken vessels. Gentleness of spirit

WHILE WE CAN'T
THINK OURSELVES
→ INTO NEW ←
WAYS OF LIVING
▶ WE CAN ▶
LIVE OURSELVES
← INTO NEW →
WAYS OF THINKING
~~~~~ Richard Rohr ~~~~~

means that we are also gentle with ourselves. We must be forgiving of ourselves as well as those we serve, as mistakes will most definitely happen. We won't always say the right things. Sometimes we will respond out of frustration, anger or fear rather than love. In this we must be forgiving of ourselves and move forward to restore the relationship as best as we can. At other times there will be no clear way to respond to a situation. In these times we respond in a manner that seems right and recognize that we have done our best.

### Love is...

Service is never simple. It calls us to a radical life of surrender and engagement with the other, a transformative relationship. At St. John's Kitchen I have experienced transformation. I am slowly learning how to relate with mutuality and equality to the other. This is the gritty work of peace and justice.

Ultimately the relationships that I have been describing are relationships that are undergirded with love. With this in mind I conclude with the words of St. Paul that embodies what love is. They appropriately begin with the caution, "If I give away all my possessions...but do not have love, I gain nothing."

Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Love never ends. Viva la revolution.

## Compost Initiative

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The compost is collected and taken to the Bio-En Power facility in Elmira, where the compost is processed through anaerobic digestion. Bio-En Power is able to convert a single tonne of food waste into enough electricity to power 20 homes for a day.

"This pilot is about supporting a circular economy by using local partnerships and expertise to provide local jobs and solutions to a global problem," said Linda Jutzi, the BIA's Executive Director in a press release.

The project is reducing commer-

cial food waste that goes to the landfills and it is lowering the amount of methane emissions.

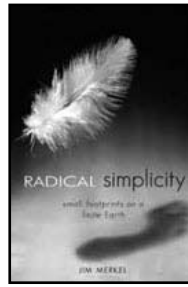
The Working Centre is organizing and staffing the food waste collection. Job Café workers collect the separated food waste from the 14 businesses three times per week. The project utilizes the same bin that is used to collect garbage after 5:00 pm in the downtown. The compost is transferred to a special bin that is then delivered to the Elmira Bio-En Power facility. This is another innovative project designed by the KDT-BIA in partnership with The Working Centre to make the Kitchener downtown a better place.

## Pancake breakfast raises money for St. John's Kitchen



Kitchener Mayor Berry Urbanovic and Downtown Kitchener BIA Executive Director Linda Jutzi present a cheque to Joe Mancini. The money was raised at the BIA's pancake breakfast during the 2019 Kitchener Blues Festival.

## BOOKS FOR SUSTAINABLE LIVING



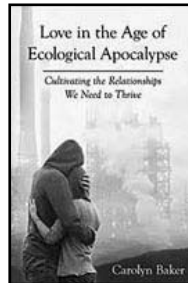
### Radical Simplicity

#### Small Footprints on a Finite Earth

Jim Merkel

In the face of ecological disaster, many people feel the need to change their own lifestyles as a tangible way of transforming our unsustainable culture. *Radical Simplicity* offers the reader three kinds of tools to begin their customized journey to develop personal sustainability goals and watch their progress to develop a way of living that is that is equitable amongst all people, species, and generations. Merkel combines lyrical narrative, compassionate advocacy and absorbing science in a way that appeals as much to Cultural Creatives and students as to spiritual seekers and policy makers.

288 pages \$19.95 softcover



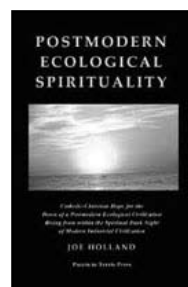
### Love in the Age of Ecological Apocalypse

#### Celebrating the Relationships We Need to Thrive

Carolyn Baker

Baker offers engaging, inspiring and candor psychological insights to counter the daunting and dire predicament in which we find ourselves on this planet in the midst of climate change, excessive resource extraction and environmental loss. She offers guidance on how to inhabit our relationships with vitality, empathy, intimate contact with our emotions, kindness in our relationships with all species, gratitude, open-hearted receptivity, exquisite creations of beauty, and utilizing every occasion as an opportunity to invoke and "inflict" joy in our world. In a time of obvious decay, how can we address our relationships with family, children, partners, friends and neighbours along with our work, our bodies, our natural resources, food, spirituality and more?

264 pages \$19.95 softcover



### Post Modern Ecological Spirituality

#### Catholic-Christian Hope for the Dawn of a Postmodern Ecological Civilization Rising from within the Spiritual Dark Night of Modern Industrial Civilization

Joe Holland

It is not just "secularization" that is to blame for the failure of religious institutions and the prevailing spiritual emptiness of late-modern industrial societies. People thirst for spiritual meaning while despairing over the refusal of Industrial society to turn away from devastating our planet Earth. Holland defines the meaning of "integral ecology" by analysing late-modern global devastation of ecological, societal, and

spiritual life while exploring the emergence of regenerative spiritual seeds of a future Postmodern Ecological Civilization.

340 pages \$30.99 softcover

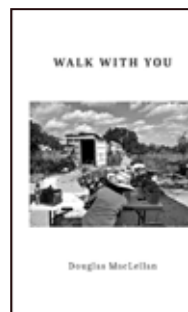


### In The Face of It

Douglas MacLellan

Documentary photographer, Douglas MacLellan's first book, *In the Face of It: Photographs from Leamington, Uganda, Windsor, and Zimbabwe* are a collection of stories and photographs from his experiences while travelling the world. The Hockey Hall of Fame photographer captures a variety of themes surrounding community organizations, international health, migrant workers, and poverty in diverse locations. Douglas gives a unique insight into everyday life in communities that seem far away but oddly reflect the ones outside our own front doors. The touching stories are brought to life through colourful photographs creating a sensory-filled narrative. From vineyard farmers to Queen's Park rioters, this book brings in readers from all walks of life who have an interest in communities and its residents. With over twenty-five years of independent professional photography experience, including the title of official photographer for the Toronto International Film Festival and the University of Windsor, Douglas captures authentic and dignified moments in time. This book is meant to be used, referenced, and shared throughout life, therefore, having small dimensions to create the perfect travel companion, fitting pleasantly in a purse or tote bag.

114 pages \$24.95 softcover



### Walk With You

Douglas MacLellan

In partnership with documentray photographer Douglas MacLellan, The Working Centre presents *Walk With You*, a "zine" style collection of photographs taken over ten years capturing the people, places, and community spirit at The Working Centre. It offers a comprehensive portrait of the daily work and the relationships that bind The Working Centre community. The zine includes a poem contributed by Wendell Berry.

40 pages \$19.95 softcover



### Reflections on St. John's Kitchen

Arleen Macpherson

For over 25 years, Arleen Macpherson volunteered and worked at St. John's Kitchen and The Working Centre. During that time, Arleen regularly contributed to Good Work News, The Working Centre's quarterly publication reporting on the ideas, initiatives, and people in our community. Arleen's articles provide valuable perspective into the work done at St. John's Kitchen, and the many people who help make it the special place it is in our community. We have collected articles written by Arleen for this book, and conclude with articles highlighting the 31st Annual Mayor's Dinner, held in 2018, which celebrated the Story of St. John's Kitchen. As part of that celebration, Arleen was guest of honour along with Gretchen Jones and Jennifer Mains, who were recognized for their years of dedicated service at St. John's Kitchen.

134 pages \$19.95 softcover



# Access To University (A2U)

By Bob Sharpe

By way of introduction let me first say that my role in the A2U program was that of Faculty Liaison. I provided a bridge between the academic and administrative operations of the Faculty of Arts and those of The Working Centre, our community partner. In this role I would regularly meet with colleagues at The Working Centre (Heather, Maru, Gabe, and Stephanie). Together we would troubleshoot the myriad of obstacles that students face when accessing university. Although I did not get to know each of you as well as your instructors, I did learn of the diversity of your life experiences, your challenges, and your achievements. It was always an interesting, and often moving role.

In terms of statistics, over the 4 years of the A2U program roughly 40 students took 130 courses. Some of you had the opportunity to take only a few courses, while others are now well on their way to completing their undergraduate degree requirements. Your achievements are impressive, and I offer you my heartiest congratulations on a job well done.

From this experience I have learned much. I learned about the importance of respect for the individual student; about the value of community in finding solutions; and, especially, about the importance of fostering empathy through university level education.



Recently, Sara Diamond, The President of OCAD, published an opinion piece in the *Globe and Mail*, entitled *The biggest threat to Canada's universities? The empathy gap*. June 28, 2019

Sara writes that "University education should foster empathy – an essential human capacity needed for effective management and societal well-being. Empathy can inspire communities of action and emphasize diversity of experience and choice, rather than underscore and fuel differences".

I believe that the A2U program has demonstrated a powerful way for the university, in partnership

with community, to foster empathy. Those involved in the program would often tell me that the A2U students bring a diversity to the classroom, to the university, and to the community that changes us.

I heard this at all levels: from you the A2U students; from undergraduate students across the Faculty of Arts; from support staff in the registrar's office, library, and student services; from faculty teaching A2U courses, from faculty teaching first-



year arts courses; and even from University administrators.

I believe that in many small ways the A2U program has helped to transform the practices and culture of the university. It is therefore most unfortunate that current provincial policies and funding neither understand the importance of empathy, nor the critical role of the universities and communities in fostering it.

In any case, I want you to know that your experiences in the A2U program have touched a lot of people. I hope that through the program you have discovered your place in university, or if not, that it has shown other pathways along which you might grow. In closing, I want to take this moment to acknowledge what you have accomplished, congratulate you on your achievements, and wish you all the best in your future endeavours.

*Professor Bob Sharpe has been a leading faculty advocate for A2U and the Community Engagement Option, two cooperative projects between Laurier and The Working Centre. As Bob retires we will truly miss his exceptional commitment to community-based learning.*



## Reflections from an A2U Graduate

By Siana Crasto

*Text from speech given at A2U graduation ceremony*

Thank you for the warm welcome. I'd like to begin by acknowledging and paying my respects to the indigenous peoples - past and present - whose land we are currently on.

I would also like to acknowledge all those who conceptualized, executed, and supported the success of the Access 2 University program, including members of...

- The Lyle S. Hallman Foundation
- The Working Centre
- Laurier Arts Department
- Fellow students, many of whom are graduating today
- And of course our families and friends

It is an honour and a delight to address you all today. My time at Laurier through A2U has been very personally transformative... however, it is a considerable challenge to speak on behalf of all the cohorts of our program since we are an extremely diverse group:

We include those of indigenous heritage, multi-generational Canadians, immigrants and more. We represent many languages, and a plethora of different life and work experiences.



But there is one thing we all have in common: We wish to be successful.

I joined A2U after being laid off, yet again. A friend told me about the program, so I made a late inquiry in to joining, had an interview, but soon learned that enrollment was full. A month in to the program I received a call for another meeting. There, I was invited to fill the spot of someone who could not continue. I distinctly remember my reaction:

**Apathy**

You see I had gone so long trying to seek suitable work, unsuccessfully, that the news that I was accepted for anything worthwhile seemed so far gone.

I picked myself up enough to start

classes the next week. I was overwhelmed with feelings, most stemming from self-doubt: Was I too old? Would my brain be able to retain all the information I would need? Could I apply myself to the degree that higher education demanded? In short, was I just an old dog who couldn't be taught new tricks?

It is no surprise to anyone in this room that universities are not inherently set-up to help non-traditional learners, and so my trepidation was understandable. Our A2U coordinators, who we had regular - or sometimes constant! - contact with as students, helped to cushion the transition.

The real fun began when the honeymoon preparatory phases came to a close. The next stage entailed every student picking their own courses. This is akin to a kid in a candy store. On a tight budget. And the store is closing imminently!

The stakes got higher, and much more quickly than I imagined. I pushed myself hard to keep ahead of the course work. I never skipped a class nor made excuses for myself. But there was a particular time when I needed help that was beyond the system, and that's when the skills I had gained through A2U really shone.

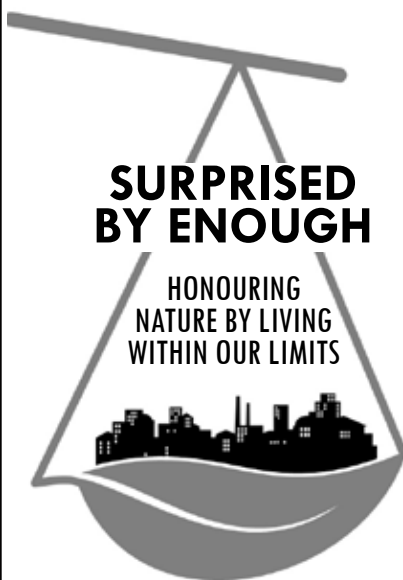
I had a defined problem. I brainstormed and researched by tapping in to my Laurier network. This led to a proposal for a collaborative partnership between The Working Centre, The Accessible Learning Centre, and Prism Resources. Due to the willing collaboration between these 3 agencies a solution was arrived at: With funding from TWC, courtesy of LHF, students could borrow a well outfitted laptop from Prism, a term at a time, which would then be flashed with approved accessibility software from ALC. It meant that I, and other students like me within A2U, could complete courses despite disabilities and without added financial burden.

When this project worked out and I could complete my courses on a level playing field with every other student in Laurier, I distinctly remember my reaction:

**Elation**

Through A2U I learned to be resilient, creative, confident, and like all my fellow graduates here, no matter what path we have chosen beyond A2U we are indeed SUCCESSFUL.

## JOIN US FOR FERMENTED THOUGHTS



In light of the environmental crisis many people are asking: *what does it mean to live equitably amongst all people, other species, and future generations?* One way people are answering this question is trying to change their own lifestyles to something more sustainable and less wasteful.

Join author and filmmaker **Jim Merkel** as he explores honouring nature by living within our limits, sharing with us the tools he has found helpful in his journey, and inviting us to find ways that work for us.

**FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 27TH 2019**

7:00PM - 9:00PM

**FRESH GROUND CAFE**

256 KING STREET EAST IN KITCHENER

**Fermented Thoughts** is a forum for imaginative thought on social, economic, and ecological issues. Join us for discussion over wine and food. **Tickets are \$25.**



## UPCOMING FERMENTED THOUGHTS

### Affordable Housing Alternatives

With rising rents and homeownership increasingly out of reach people are starting to invent new strategies to make housing affordable. In a time of proliferating constraints what is the role of government? What creative, imaginative possibilities exist to expand opportunities for housing? Join us for a panel discussion as we explore diverse & emerging strategies for affordable, accessible housing.

Joining us on the panel is **Brian Doucet**, Associate Professor, Canada Research Chair in Cities, University of Waterloo.

Date will be November 28th. Information will be available at [www.theworkingcentre.org](http://www.theworkingcentre.org)

**For more information, or for tickets, contact us at:**

[waterlooschool@theworkingcentre.org](mailto:waterlooschool@theworkingcentre.org) | 519.743.1151 ext. 175

## DIVEST WATERLOO EVENTS ON CLIMATE

### September 26th | What Does Climate Change Ask of You? The Leadership Role of Faith Communities in Response to Climate Change

As the impacts of climate change become more evident and more worrisome, faith communities are uniquely situated to show leadership and galvanize the strength of their members — and beyond. At this event, faith leaders and community members can learn and share on topics addressing how faith communities can engage the issues related to climate change.

3-5:30pm: Workshops by Sheila Murray, Resilience Project Manager, and Stephen Collette, Building Audit Manager for Faith & the Common Good

6 pm: Dinner; 7 pm: Panel discussion: What could climate justice look like with the leadership of Waterloo Region's faith communities?

*Offered by Faith and the Common Good, Divest Waterloo, Interfaith Grand River, and St. Mary's Catholic Church. You are welcome to attend any portion of the event. No entrance fees are required, but freewill offerings will be gratefully accepted. Registration on Eventbrite.*

### September 27th | Global Climate Strike Waterloo Region

This September, millions of us will walk out of our workplaces and homes to join young climate strikers on the streets and demand an end to the age of fossil fuels. Our house is on fire — let's act like it. Plan to join us as we demand climate justice for everyone. Waterloo Region's rally will begin at 11:30 at Waterloo Public Square - 75 King Street South.

### September 29th | Beyond Crisis Film Screening

Shantz Mennonite Church will be hosting a screening of climate action documentary *Beyond Crisis* the morning of Sept 29th, to be followed by a congregational discussion reflecting on the Global Climate Strike and discussing the next steps for action in our communities. All are welcome! The event will be attended by *Beyond Crisis* film director Kai Reimer-Watts, who will also be hosting the discussion following the screening.

For more information, contact Laura: [laura@divestwaterloo.ca](mailto:laura@divestwaterloo.ca)



## JOIN US FOR A SPECIAL FREE VIEWING OF THE FILM FORKS OVER KNIVES

*Forks Over Knives* empowers people to live healthier lives by changing the way the world understands nutrition.

**TUESDAY SEPT 24TH | FRESH GROUND CAFE**

256 KING STREET EAST IN KITCHENER

Fresh Ground Cafe will be open at 6:30pm serving our Plant Based Whole Food menu. The movie begins at 7:15pm.



For more information: [freshground@theworkingcentre.org](mailto:freshground@theworkingcentre.org)

## Fresh Ground for Plant Based Whole Foods

Join us at Fresh Ground as we explore the growing momentum around the ideas of plant based whole foods. In the last year, there has been a significant increase in public awareness and research around the possibilities of plant based eating:

- The EAT-Lancet commission released their report recommending a mainly plant based diet for planetary and human health
- The Canadian Food Guide was revised to increase focus on plants and decrease focus on animal proteins
- Project Drawdown has named eating a plant rich diet the #4 solution for impacting climate change
- Oxford University has released some intensive research
- Alongside of this climate change research, there is a deeper understanding growing about the human microbiome and how it changes our understanding of our place in the world

This year we will be exploring these ideas through various learning and practical workshop series.

For more information or to share ideas, please connect with us at: [freshground@theworkingcentre.org](mailto:freshground@theworkingcentre.org)