

# GOOD WORK NEWS

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

Issue 124

March 2016

Subscription: a donation towards our work

## Inside This Issue:

- Mayors' Dinner April 2<sup>nd</sup> 2016  
Guest of Honour: Ari Ariaratnam and Jassy Narayan
- Hacienda Sarria Market  
Garden CSA sign-up
- Community Tax Clinic
- Supportive Housing for Refugees
- Humanities101: Access to University Learning
- The Cultivation Project



**NEW VIBES JAZZ**

Queen Street Commons Café  
43 Queen Street South, Kitchener

March 4, April 1, May 6  
first Fridays of the months, 4:00 - 7:00

Come hear live jazz featuring Andy, John, Derick, Greg, Jerry, Ted and other talented guests. Enjoy delicious vegetarian cuisine and warm hospiality.



## Ari Ariaratnam and Jassy Narayan: Building Community

*Ari and Jassy are two exemplary women who have dedicated over 40 years working to support new Canadians settling into Canada.*

By Dave Thomas

By Dave Thomas

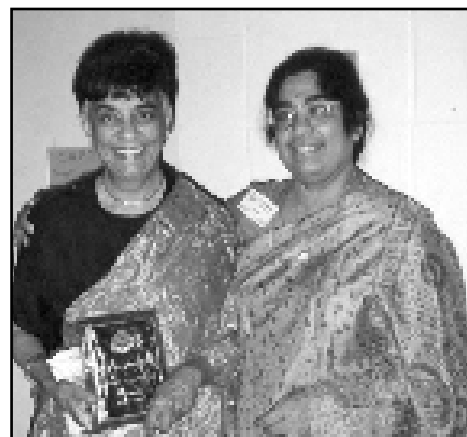
Jassy Narayan says she never expected a tribute such as being honoured as one of the Guests of Honour at this year's Mayors' Dinner. As she puts it, she's just an ordinary woman who grew up in rural Guyana who did not have much opportunity for formal education as a child, only being able to go to school until grade 8. But her journey has taken her on a long path of service to others in the community.

It's been a long and rewarding journey for Ari Ariaratnam, from South Asia, to being celebrated at the Mayors' Dinner for her work serving immigrant and visible minority women.

Though her family may have lacked material resources, there were strong social bonds, with a long tradition of women being involved in community life. Jassy had two strong role models: her mom, and an aunt who lived in the city. She calls her aunt a suffragette, who helped to start an organization to educate Indian children, raised money to buy textbooks for kids, and advocated for the education of girls. "Those values became a real foundation for me," she says.

Ari was born in a small town near Jaffna, Sri Lanka. The fifth of six children, Ari remembers a busy

and loving family life. She received a lot of guidance from her sister, four brothers and her mom, who was always calm and angelic. But it was her dad who was perhaps the most influential, instilling in her the values of service and hard work. Principal



of a local school, he enrolled her in his school at a time when most families didn't educate their daughters. He used Ari as an example and convinced many families to register their daughters at his school. Always a studious pupil, Ari was a pioneer and served as a role model for other girls in the village.

Later on, Ari went to a boarding school to finish her high school and then to India at age 15 to study at the University of Madras. She studied History, and she also took on leadership roles in the school's

## A Tribute to Fr. Bob Liddy at 256 King East

By Stephanie and Joe Mancini

Fr. Bob Liddy was a friend and an anchor for The Working Centre, believing in this work in the early 1980's, at a time when many others saw it as merely idealism. Each time Joe and Stephanie met Fr. Bob, he greeted us with warmth, encouragement and openness. This radical acceptance served to encourage the spiritual roots of The Working Centre (TWC). Fr. Bob didn't prescribe or interpret the work – he eagerly welcomed news about what was going on, looking past the concrete details to support and encourage us to live compassionately and genuinely. Fr. Bob found joy in the journey, in the story, in the commitment to create structures that support people where they are at.

This radical welcome and nourishment is the spirit of what Fr. Bob shared with so many people – and he had a charisma for supporting young people. With the passing of Bob this summer, we are dedicating the activities of the main floor of 256 King Street East, to his memory. Within our inter-generational spaces,

we see 256 King as being a place to engage young people in a web of community supports emphasizing relationship-based community development to help people to explore creative livelihood.

### Projects at 256 King East

At 256 King, the top floor will have eight single apartments, with the goal of providing long-term housing. The units are almost ready as we work on the finishing touches. In April these units will be ready – creating beautiful places that can be home for people who have persistently struggled to find a place to call home.

The main floor of 256 King, the space that we are dedicating to Fr. Bob, will encourage entrepreneurship and active creative work with activities that;

- Build creative livelihoods through self-employment, responding to local economy needs, and weaving together employment and self-employment to make these ideas viable.

continued on page 4

continued on page 3

continued on page 3

**Thirty-Second Year**

Issue 124

March 2016

**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. There is a circulation of 11,000 copies. Subscription: a donation towards our work.

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**Ontario Trillium Foundation Supports Job Café**

The Working Centre is one of seven local non-profit organizations that will receive Ontario Trillium Foundation Grants this Spring.

The Working Centre will receive \$750,000 over three years to integrate training and infrastructure into our Job Café project. The Job Café is a project that has been an essential part of The Working Centre since 2002. Operating with minimal infrastructure, it is a day labour project for people experiencing barriers to regular employment. Job Café workers are the labour behind many Working Centre projects - we dedicate a portion of our wages to offer creative work opportunities through Job Cafe. Examples of Job Café work include the truck driver and helper on the Worth A Second Look pick-up truck and on our Moving Service (which helps people living on a limited income), and constitutes most of the labour that helps us renovate buildings (such as the current work at 256 King Street East). Every six months about 80 workers are part of the Job Café workforce.

This three year Ontario Trillium Foundation grant will help us develop

infrastructure for Job Café. The first step will be to focus on supporting workplace skill development and training, the second step will create an identity for each of the three enterprise service projects: Moving, Landscaping and General labour, and the third step is to build the administrative structure to keep the projects integrated and focused on job training, strengthening of work skills and customer service. While Job Café is a significant part of The Working Centre it has operated with minimal infrastructure. This OTF grant will help us develop a sustainable strategy to build this new infrastructure into a long-term service. The most important benefit is that this project gives workers who are left out of the labour market a chance to develop job ready skills or to earn income that often complements a social income.

Over the past 18 years the Ontario Trillium Foundation has assisted The Working Centre with grants towards capital costs for renovations at 43 Queen, 66 Queen, and 97 Victoria. Two other grants have helped support the development of downtown Kitchener Outreach and a recent

grant has helped develop community education strategies in partnership with Laurier University.

Kitchener Centre MPP Daiene Vernile hosted a reception at the Queen Street Commons Café to announce local grants - including Community

continued on page 4



**Dave Berry Doug  
Jaworski Vrbanovic Craig**

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

**29<sup>th</sup> Annual Mayors' Dinner**

in honour of

**Ari Ariaratnam &  
Jassy Narayan**

**Saturday April 2, 2016**

**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) 743-1511x119

or [mayorsdinner@theworkingcentre.org](mailto:mayorsdinner@theworkingcentre.org)

You can purchase tickets online at

[www.theworkingcentre.org/dinner](http://www.theworkingcentre.org/dinner)

❑ **Individual Ticket:** \$100 (includes one 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)



**Community Access Bikeshare**



Community Access Bikeshare is a social enterprise project based out of The Working Centre that provides access to bicycles for people in Waterloo Region, while also helping to build a culture of cycling.

**Are you interested in joining CAB?**

**Would you like a CAB demonstration at your workplace?**

**Thinking about memberships for your employees?**

For details about this program and more, please email [bikeshare@theworkingcentre.org](mailto:bikeshare@theworkingcentre.org) or call us at 519 743 1151 x. 172



Or visit us online at [theworkingcentre.org/CAB](http://theworkingcentre.org/CAB) or in person at

58 Queen Street South in Downtown Kitchener

## Ari Ariaratnam

continued from page 1

Student Christian movement and the Senate.

After graduating with a Bachelor of Arts degree, Ari returned to Sri Lanka in 1957. At age 19, she took on a teaching job at a high school, where some of the students were older than she was. It was a busy and happy time for the next eight years, teaching, coaching sports and leading the debating society. In the summer of 1965, Ari married Ariam Ariaratnam, who was home for a visit. He had studied abroad in England and the USA, and was on the engineering faculty at the University of Waterloo. The marriage was arranged by their parents and they left Sri Lanka soon after to start a new life together in Canada.

It was a period of fast and huge change for Ari. Though she missed her family and friends back home, she warmly recalls how she was welcomed into the community. "The wives of the other professors were very kind, and so were members



of Parkminster United Church, especially the minister's wife who took me under her wings" she says. She soon became active in the community, managing an adult program at the KW YWCA.

Her first son was born in 1966, joined in due course by three more boys. Busy with family life over the next several years, Ari nonetheless stayed involved in serving the community. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, the profile of KW was becoming more diverse as people arrived in substantial numbers from Vietnam, Laos, Latin America and elsewhere. Very aware that most of the newcomers didn't have some of the advantages that had made her integration easier - such as joining a spouse who was already established here, fluency in English - Ari wanted to help.

A friend who was on the board at the KW Multicultural Centre asked her to volunteer. Soon she became a paid settlement worker and eventually the executive director. She hired some key staff such as Lorna van Mossel (later a citizenship judge and Mayors' Dinner Guest of Honour in 1994) and Maria Alvarez, who would later head up Immigrant Services at the KW YWCA.

The KWMC board decided to emphasize cultural programs over settlement work. So Ari left the organization at the end of 1985.

But she wasn't on the sidelines for long. The Waterloo Region Social Resources Council asked Ari to participate in a status of women group. There were a number of employment and training programs for women, but none specifically geared to the needs of immigrant and visible minority women.

Life wasn't easy for newcomer women. At that time, government funding for English as a second language was available only for the "head of the family" - usually the male. "Without the opportunity to learn to speak English, many immigrant women were often trapped at home or in survival jobs like worm picking," she says.

### Starting Focus For Ethnic Women

In 1986, Ari gathered a group of like-minded women, including her friend Jassy Narayan, and founded Focus For Ethnic Women (FEW), whose mission is to "Enhance the participation of immigrant and refugee women in Canadian society." They received funding for a feasibility study to set up a culturally relevant training program.

A six-month study followed. From that study grew Skills Unlimited, which would provide occupational training in sewing, English-language instruction and life-skills training for immigrant and refugee women. Ari served on the inaugural board of FEW. The board appreciated Ari's vision and dedication, and hired her to be the organization's first executive director.

In the years since, Focus has helped thousands of women. It expanded its range of services through programs such as Investing in Women's Futures, funded by the Ontario Women's Directorate, to help women with their job search. Ari also successfully applied in 2002 for funding from the United Way of KW and Area for a Healthy Lifestyles Program to reach out to women in the community by organizing Friendship Groups in various community centres. She asked Jassy to take charge of this program and it has since expanded to several sites.

Ari retired from Focus in 2003. In recognition of her years of commitment and service, the board established the Ari Ariaratnam Education and Training Fund to assist immigrant and visible minority women with training costs.

She later returned to the organization for a few months as interim executive director to guide

continued on page 4

## Jassy Narayan

continued from page 1

got his first Canadian job at Ontario Office Outfitters on Queen Street (where The Working Centre is now located). Busy raising the kids, Jassy got involved with the YWCA, volunteering with a community group for stay-at-home moms, and later served on the board. During these early years she met Lorna van Mossel, who became a friend and mentor. Through Lorna, Jassy assisted with the settlement of refugees from Vietnam, Laos and Latin America.

In the early 1970s, another of Jassy's mentors, Barbara Rahn, ran the first Regional day care centre. She asked Jassy to volunteer. Jassy was glad to help, but she felt that, other than raising her own daughters, she didn't know much about early childhood education. "I helped four-year-olds with their lunch," she recalls. "It was good to be lending a hand."

Barbara was impressed with Jassy, and encouraged her to enrol in the early childhood education program at Conestoga College. She didn't think she would be accepted, since she didn't have a high school diploma. But Barbara persisted, and helped set up an interview for Jassy at the college. She was accepted, and attended classes part-time over the next three years to earn her diploma.

Jassy was hired on by the Region, first as a daycare worker and then later on as a home visitor. She also volunteered at the YWCA. Through these activities, Jassy met a lot of other immigrant women and their children, seeing first-hand the challenges they faced. "No one was preparing workers for inclusiveness," she says. For example, "a nutritionist would teach parents how to feed their kids, but might have little understanding of a family's diet or cultural preferences."

With support from her mentors, Jassy began taking evening classes to earn a Bachelor degree in sociology. "I never went to school full-time," she says. "It was a challenge paying the tuition. I used grocery money, and I paid in instalments." That wasn't the end of her educational

journey. She then enrolled in the Master of Social Work program at WLU in 1984, focusing on community development. The theoretical education was very helpful, but it was the practical projects that really resonated.

After graduating with her MSW in 1987, Jassy worked for Lutherwood in Cambridge, connecting with community groups including the Greenway Chaplin, Christopher Champlain and Southwood neighbourhoods. She says she learned a lot from those community members, and this gave her the experience she

needed for her next role.

It was around that time that Jassy's marriage ended. She continued to keep busy volunteering, such as serving on the board of the KW YWCA along with her friend Ari Ariaratnam.

Ari invited her to a meeting to discuss a plan to develop a training program for newcomer women who did not have formal education or work experience. That was the genesis of Focus for Ethnic Women. "I was a founding member, and served on the volunteer committee, but was not on the inaugural board," she says. But her involvement wasn't limited to helping start the organization. Jassy later sat on the board, served as president and also acting executive director for a time after Ari retired.

### Building Community in the OnWard Willow Neighbourhood

In 1991, Jassy was hired as the first executive director of Better Beginnings, Better Futures-Guelph, serving the Willow neighbourhood in Guelph. The organization ran a wide range of programs and activities for children, their families and the community. Under her direction, the organization collaborated with service providers and community leaders, and recruited a culturally diverse staff. Jassy was impressed with the wisdom and generosity of neighbourhood leaders, whose acceptance of different cultural norms and values helped new families to integrate more readily.

"My approach was to develop principles of inclusion," says Jassy. "Everything we did at Better Beginnings, Better Futures was to benefit kids and their families." She describes her work there as "an opportunity of a lifetime."

Jassy retired from Better Beginnings in 2002, but it really just meant a new phase in her career of serving and advocating for marginalized members of the community. She went on to serve



as an active community member on the steering committee of the Waterloo Region Immigrant Employment Network and the Immigration Partnership. She's also an assistant practicum professor in the WLU Faculty of Social Work, supervising MSW students doing their practicum placements.

In addition to all that work in the community, Jassy enjoys spending time with her three daughters and her grandchildren. As she likes to remind them, it's important to help others, to strive to make the community a better place for everyone.

# Working at the Tax Clinic

By George Melnik

Last year, The Working Centre's Income Tax Clinic helped 2,400 people complete their income taxes. A group of 40 volunteers helped people with low-incomes to access the many tax credits that now come through the income tax system.

I was one of those 40 volunteers last year, and I completed 274 returns, mostly through personal interviews. I've been working at the tax clinic for the past 4 years and have already signed up to do it again in March and April this year.

I always meet interesting people who need help to do their tax returns and it is very rewarding work. Many of the people I met last year were immigrants, refugees or students from around the world. I met people initially from the USA, China, Somalia, Egypt, Vietnam, Afghanistan, Iraq, India, Spain, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Hungary, Iran, Syria, Kurdistan, Mexico, Eritrea, Romania, Columbia and of course, Canada. These included Canadian citizens, permanent residents, people on student visas and refugee claimants with temporary residence status.

We did taxes for a number of people who needed to have more than 2014 done. One young lady needed to do 4 years of returns and said that she had been in child protection and didn't realize that she should do tax returns and she got a large refund. One fellow said that he hadn't done any tax returns for 25 years and wondered if he could go back 10 years in order to obtain retroactive GST and Trillium rebates. We did 2014 and I suggested that he



## Ari Ariaratnam

continued from page 3

the organization through a transition period. There were many other activities as well, including serving on the boards of the Waterloo-Wellington Training and Adjustment Board and English at First. Ari was also appointed a member of the Refugee Status Advisory Committee and later as a member of the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada.

Though she has never sought recognition for her work, Ari has been recognized with such honours as Queen Elizabeth Golden and Diamond Jubilee medals, a Citizenship and Culture Volunteer Award and selection as one of the KW Oktoberfest Women of the Year.

Reflecting on all the work she has done, Ari says simply that "it is important to contribute, to help others and make the community a better place for all."

*The Working Centre will be assisting low income individuals to complete their Income Tax returns in March and April again this year.*

*If you want to volunteer, or would like to know more about the program, contact Jen Smerdon at (519) 743-1151 x 176 or jens@theworkingcentre.org.*

*See the front page of our website for more information: www.theworkingcentre.org*

come back after May 1 when it would be less busy and the permanent staff at the Working Centre would try to help him resolve his problems.

There were some people who didn't like the results I came up with because the tax refund or HST or Trillium amounts were much lower than in the previous year. They didn't have their prior information with them and weren't sure if their income had changed since the prior year. Most of them had me file their taxes right away, but some went home and came back with their 2013 information. When they did, we always found that there had been a very big change in their income and I was able to show them how the tax or rebate calculations changed. Some people apparently didn't realize that the refunds or benefits were partly based on income levels and would drop when their income increased.

### Community Volunteer Income Tax Program (CVITP)

Last year, over 2,000 organizations and their 16,000 volunteers supported the Community Volunteer Income Tax Program (CVITP). Together, they filed over 600,000 tax returns for people in their community. The organizations host tax preparation clinics and arrange for volunteers to prepare income tax and benefit returns.

Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) has been working for over 40 years with Community organizations and their volunteers to help eligible individuals with modest income (generally below \$30,000 per year for a single person, with small increments for couples and people with children) and a relatively simple tax situation prepare their income tax and benefit returns for free at tax preparation clinics. This free program helps many individuals such as social assistance recipients, seniors, students, newcomers to Canada, and persons with a disability. The CRA makes special copies of U-file software available to the Community Volunteers and most returns are filed electronically at once, and then deleted once CRA confirms that the return has been received. For more information on CVITP, go to [www.cra.gc.ca/volunteer](http://www.cra.gc.ca/volunteer)

*George Melnik is a volunteer at The Working Centre's Tax Clinic. He wrote this article for the Equitable Life retiree's newsletter. Before retiring, he worked at Equitable Life for almost 44 years.*

# Gifts of Time & Resources



St. John's Kitchen operates, largely, on gifts of time and resources. The Kitchen is a thriving community of hundreds of people who gather in a spirit of cooperation and mutual support to produce and share a daily meal, to connect with a range of community resources, and to explore together the complexities of daily life.

The Kitchen is also a place where people are able to connect with Outreach workers who provide support accessing health, income and housing resources.

If you are interested in supporting the Kitchen consider volunteering. In addition to financial contributions please see the list below of items we often need or contact us to learn more:

519-745-8928 or [tomf@theworkingcentre.org](mailto:tomf@theworkingcentre.org)

- Mugs
- Tea towels, bath towels, and dish cloths
- Toiletries - razors, toothbrushes, toothpaste, soap, lotion, pads, shampoo, tampons, combs
- Shoe laces
- Socks
- Plastic shopping bags
- Plastic containers with lids
- Food items - rice, sugar, jam, tea, coconut milk, coffee whitener, vegetable oil, salt, pepper, spices

# Youth Job Search Supports

By Ainsley Bauman

The youth unemployment rate in Ontario is 15.3%, well ahead of the provincial unemployment rate of 6.9%. Youth are unemployed for a shorter period of time than older workers, often taking jobs that are practical, but which don't always support their hopes or goals. Many of the young people we talk with are unsure about what their career goal is. They have ideas and possibilities, but feel the challenge of making these ideas a reality, and don't want to limit their possibilities too quickly. Many youth do not know about the resources available to help them in their job search.

Recently we posted an invitational job posting at The Working Centre, and met a lot of really talented and diverse young people with a strong interest in contributing to their community. As we talked together, we could see the ways that building a strategic job search could be helpful. In reality, most youth do not start with this approach, but as we talked about it, most could see the advantage of building allies in their job search.

The Working Centre hosts a wide range of youth projects that help to improve opportunities for young people – Youth Job Connection (for youth at risk), Youth Job Link (to help explore work possibilities and make connections with employers), Youth Entrepreneurship Project (to help those interested in starting their own business), Internships for work experience, and volunteer placements. We have just completed a Digital Media for Youth project, a Career Focus project providing Internships with local employers.

Our new King Street building will offer a range of opportunities for young people.

The funding pockets and eligibilities are complex – but we can help to figure out which funding makes sense to help individuals with their unique job search. We host a weekly drop-in time at 58 Queen Street South, Wednesdays from 1:00 to 4:00, where we welcome people under 30 to drop in, become familiar with our centre, and begin a conversation together. We can also book an appointment if that is the best starting point. Contact Ainsley at (519) 743-1151 x 118 or [ainsleyb@theworkingcentre.org](mailto:ainsleyb@theworkingcentre.org), or by text (226) 747-7970.

## Job Café

continued from page 2

Justice Initiatives of Waterloo Region (\$75,000 over 12 months), Parents for Community Living (\$66,100), Planned Parenthood Waterloo Region (\$186,500 over 36 months), Project READ Literacy Network (\$205,900 over 24 months), Sustainable CoLab (\$482,800 over 24 months) and the YWCA Kitchener-Waterloo (\$169,400 over 24 months). She took the opportunity to thank the local volunteers of the Ontario Trillium Foundation who make the recommendations for each grant, which help "local organizations provide vital services that contribute to the caring and inclusive society we are striving to create. These funds are a catalyst for improving sustainability, enabling employment and increasing education opportunities."

# Supportive Housing for Refugees

By Jacqui Terry

The Mennonite Coalition of Refugee Support (MCRS) assists refugee claimants in Waterloo Region. Since opening the doors in 1987, MCRS has welcomed and supported thousands of refugee claimants through the challenging refugee claim process. MCRS' key role is to offer legal and settlement

Kitchen and Integrated Supportive Housing .

## Supportive Housing at The Working Centre

Statistics indicate that there are over 3,000 households in the Region on the affordable housing waiting list and this was before the Syrian refugees arrived! Refugee claimants, some of the most vulnerable people, have benefitted from many different housing supports. The partnership between MCRS and The Working Centre has assisted many refugee claimants to find affordable housing. Here



support as people claim protection from Canada. They are not considered refugees until their claim is accepted, and are not eligible for many of the supports or attention that sponsored refugees receive.

One of MCRS' oldest and most significant partnerships has been with The Working Centre. MCRS partners directly with The Working Centre on projects such as the Sewing Group and the Speak English Café. MCRS also refers refugee claimants to Working Centre services like employment counselling, St. John's

are three examples:

### Maria's Story

Refugee claimants are particularly vulnerable; forced to flee war or persecution and make a claim for protection in Canada. They are not eligible for services during their refugee claim, and many arrive with only the clothes they are wearing, and no community contacts or knowledge. \*Maria is a single mother of 2 children under the age of five, who fled her native country of Guatemala. Upon arriving in Canada she took shelter with a

family friend as she tried to find her way. After 3 uncomfortable weeks, she knew she had to find a more permanent solution for her family. With no money or English, Maria's best option seemed to be the local shelter, an option that filled her with anxiety. She came to MCRS, who put her touch with The Working Centre. A rent amount was negotiated to allow Maria to meet the basic needs of her family. She is grateful to the Working Centre for providing a fully furnished home where her children were safe and happy! Maria is also near the MCRS office where she came for support which reduced her isolation.

### Hanna's Story

\*Hannah, is a vivacious 19 year old from Ethiopia. She was forced to leave her home due to gender-based violence - and her family sold everything they owned to get her away from the perpetrators. After arriving in Canada and making her refugee claim she enrolled in ESL classes where her spunk and charming personality quickly allowed her to make friends. A friend offered her a temporary home as she tried to find her feet in this new country. As a young woman away from her family for the first time, battling loneliness and coping with the post-traumatic stress of her experience and escape, she knew she needed a more permanent solution. MCRS helped her get a small Working Centre unit. Hannah smiles and says, "I don't have to worry anymore where I will lay my head at night. I can finally

rest."

### Mr. Abadi's Story

Earlier this year an independent home owner gave the Working Centre the keys to their home so that it could be used for "a family that needs it". It wasn't long before a family came forward. \*Mr. Abadi, a refugee claimant from Afghanistan lived in a cramped, one bedroom apartment with his wife and 2 young children, where he only had a one-month lease. Their uncertainty was at its height - they had a week left in that apartment when they asked MCRS for ideas. Friends within the MCRS community provided furnishings and the family moved in with one day to spare! Their sense of pride and joy radiated as they watched their children playing in the yard of their new home.

The families and individuals in these stories are now situated in stable affordable housing. There are still many in our region who still struggle with accommodation issues.

MCRS and The Working Centre have a long history of collaboration, working together to make a real difference in the lives of many, and ensuring that refugee claimants in Waterloo Region continue to experience welcome, compassion, inclusion, and justice. Learn more about MCRS or donate online at [mcrs.ca](http://mcrs.ca)

*\*names changed for privacy*

*Jacqui Terry is the Resource Coordinator for the Mennonite Coalition for Refugee Support. MCRS has shared offices at The Working Centre for 29 years.*

## A Tribute to Fr. Bob Liddy

continued from page 1

- Build knowledge of film-making and editing, digital media production, and other technical skills that complement self-employment and enterprising skill-building.
- Support local entrepreneurs through a regular weekly Local Marketplace supported by The Working Centre's Local Exchange website.

By sharing tools, knowledge and space, we hope to facilitate the exchange of ideas and skills in ways that support local enterprise – not for people who have it all figured out, but for people who work best in a community of support.

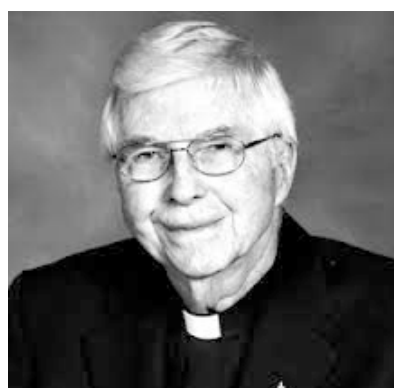
The Working Centre's model of entrepreneurship facilitation includes; one on one pathway/decision making supports, a coaching model to help build a plan and implement business ideas, pop-up weekly markets in collaboration with BarterWorks, Local Exchange online presence for shared marketing, links to mentors, Futurpreneur and enterprise facilitation supports, hot desks – place-based supports and networking – phones, computers, desks, meeting space, and specialized youth-based small business start-up resources.

The lower floor at 256 King will

include a Sound and Production Studio for video and music production, and a collaborative workspace that encourages shared ideas and supports. Through building on skill development of graphic design, 3D modelling programs, film making and sound productions – people will be able to nurture their talents in creative and imaginative ways. The co-working space in the basement will provide venture incubation space for youth developing their business plans.

### Bob Liddy's Commitment to Youth

Father Bob Liddy (1933 - 2015), affectionately known as Fr. Bob – or simply as Bob - by Catholics and non-Catholics alike, was ordained



a Roman Catholic priest as a member of the Congregation of the Resurrection in 1957 and was widely admired for his generosity of spirit, his dedication to his calling, and his personal warmth.

Joe and Stephanie remember Fr. Bob's early financial contribution to the fledgling Working Centre idea but more importantly his guidance and enthusiasm for supporting the unemployed. Fr. Bob intuitively understood that people only develop fully as human beings when they have opportunities to use their skills for the greater good.

Fr. Bob is remembered as a distinguished teacher at St. Jerome's High School. Indeed, it was Fr. Bob's interest in the development of young people that led to him being a fixture at St. Jerome's University where he served over 20 years in roles supporting students. Bob devoted his life to creating opportunities for others, but he always had a special interest in inspiring opportunities in the young.

We are pleased to dedicate this 256 King Street space to Fr. Bob Liddy to further his legacy and spirit. Our goal is to support the creative ideas of youth by following Fr. Bob's example of non-judgmental, compassionate and humble assistance.

Dr. Douglas Letson, former President & Vice Chancellor, St. Jerome's University, and longtime friend of Fr. Bob has undertaken



to help raise \$75,000 towards the development of the youth opportunity projects at 256 King East. We are grateful for the \$25,000 which has been pledged by the Congregation of the Resurrection, of which Fr. Bob Liddy was a long-time member.

We have crafted this space within The Working Centre tradition of a supportive and creative framework combined with invitation – we are excited to see these ideas develop over the next few years and count on the generosity of our donors and volunteers to help these ideas develop.

**If you would like to make a contribution in Fr. Bob Liddy's honour please contact Heather Montgomery at The Working Centre – (519) 743-1151 x 136 or [heatherm@theworkingcentre.org](mailto:heatherm@theworkingcentre.org).**

## Community Education

# Humanities101: Access to University Learning

By Trish Van Katwyk

*Editors Note: This article was delivered as a speech at the Annual Local Democracy Graduation on November 18<sup>th</sup> 2015.*

Education occurs always and everywhere. Each time we encounter something, we learn and are changed, even in the smallest way, changed by the impact of that encounter. When education becomes intentional, it is as if the change is being embraced, paths cleared to accommodate the change.

The exciting thing about The Working Centre's Local Democracy Diploma is that the change that is embraced is personal, and also about your neighborhood and your community. It is about this world we share.

I feel strongly that places of learning need to be accessible. I believe that places of learning can be powerful and political places, which is why so many public learning spaces are hard to access. These learning spaces have become exclusive elitist social spaces, even as they are referred to as public space.

To counter these types of exclusions, I have become involved in a program called Humanities101, a free university course offered through Renison University College at the University of Waterloo. This program directly addresses the ways in which the social space that we are all entitled to becomes exclusive.

### Expanding Our Understanding of Poverty

Social exclusion and poverty are increasingly understood as closely connected and it has become widely accepted that social inclusion is an effective anti-poverty strategy. Such work has opened up global conversations about poverty so that self-esteem is also being brought into consideration. By evolving our understanding of poverty in such a way, we can begin to see that the entirety of the poverty experience moves beyond the wallet, and different kinds of capital other than currency can be conceptualized – social capital with its principals of reciprocity; cultural capital with resources such as learnedness, language, talents and experience; and symbolic capital which finds resources in a person's expertise and knowledge base.

When I think about a conceptualization of poverty that acknowledges the impact of social exclusion, I think about the Local Democracy class' collective summary thought piece. The class is describing ways of doing community that support reciprocal, valued and multiply-resourced relations.

Humanities101 runs every Spring term for 12 weeks, with a 3 hour class on Thursday nights, and a 2 hour study session on Tuesday

*When privilege is withheld, these in-between spaces are encountered with hesitancy, self doubt, apology and uncertainty in our movements. This is how we carry exclusion, it pushes down on our shoulders, pours lead into our shoes, forces our eyes to the ground, squeezes our lungs so that we can barely breathe.*

evenings. There is a meal to begin each Thursday night class. Each week a different professor facilitates the class. While there is one theme for the course, "City", each professor teaches about City from his or her discipline. The course has room for up to 25 students. The students must have experienced an obstacle to university education, with financial difficulties as the leading obstacle.

Each week, there are university-level readings and a presentation. The students are asked to bring together what they've learned from the assigned readings, from the presentation, from the classroom dialogue and then from their real life experience. This becomes a short reflective paper, due a week after each class. The students demonstrate what they are learning each week.

### What I Learned from Humanities101 Students

I have seen up close how social exclusion shames, blames and diminishes. And I learned that this makes absolutely no sense.

The students I have met in Humanities101 have great capacity to make change. They have been vibrant, intelligent, completely engaged individuals who have brought significant knowledge to our classrooms, so that each lecture became a rich, thought-provoking critical analysis.

If the impact of social exclusion is to shame, blame and diminish, I see then that social exclusion explicitly silences people, takes away the voices that can bring such significant change to our neighbourhoods, our communities....our world.

The Humanities101 classroom was, without fail,

- an environment of possibilities,
- a place of active citizenship,
- a model of community development,
- and a site of deep connection.

The students tell me that Humanities101 is an important social space: a threshold or a portal, the entry point into a previously exclusive space.

Some of the students that I spoke to used metaphors like a key, an opening, a window, or a door, to describe the Humanities101 program they were about to enter.

*The model for Humanities101 emerged out of the work of a journalist named Shorris, who wrote about and recognized the strong connection between poverty and social exclusion. He was particularly struck by the exclusions to post secondary education. He created a program of free university education based in the humanities. Humanities101 is offered in a dozen universities across Canada.*

Here was a space that opened into a place of opportunity and possibility, opportunities that had previously been denied.

At first, after passing through the entry point into the university space, many of the students talked about feeling intimidated by one another, nervous about their own capacity to do things the way one is supposed to do things in this space, full of self doubt that they had the ability, convincing themselves that everyone else had what it takes and that they could never belong here.

And, then, very quickly, I saw how the students looked to each other and expressed the admiration they felt for one another. I saw how quickly a community could develop, how quickly a sense of belonging was nurtured and sustained, and how genuinely each student's contributions were valued.



I also learned that it takes a supportive environment that recognizes people's full humanity, seeing in each person their special interests and talents.

A student described to me a case worker who remembered being told how much she enjoyed elementary school as a child. Or the settlement worker who was impressed with the way in which the student was becoming proficient in English. Or the family member who could still see great intelligence even as mental illness seemed to obscure the person's ability to feel confident and capable. All these acts of kindness opened the entry point that had seemed closed and exclusive.

There are these entry points everywhere. They could be understood to be portals, or liminal spaces, in-between spaces (between out and in) or thresholds. When privilege is attributed, these in-between spaces are entered with ease, hardly even noticeable, as we stride through, confidence guiding our movements and ways of taking space.

When privilege is withheld, these in-between spaces are encountered with hesitancy, self doubt, apology

and uncertainty in our movements. This is how we carry exclusion, it pushes down on our shoulders, pours lead into our shoes, forces our eyes to the ground, squeezes our lungs so that we can barely breathe.

These are all the things I've learned from the students of Humanities101. I've learned about what it takes to approach an entry point, about the impact of belonging, the power of community, and what can happen when social inclusion occurs.

### Other Benefits

One student spoke about how now she feels there are many social spaces she can enter – that now she can go to the free classical concerts offered each month at the performance hall, to the adult education classes offered to the community by a local church, to openings at art gallery shows.

Another student described what it was like to make a presentation at the city council, and to receive, in her words, an "unheard of" standing ovation.

Another student described a new relationship with her daughters who did not even know she could write an essay.

Students have described jobs, further learning goals and new volunteer opportunities that became available because of what they gained in Humanities 101.

A final word from another student is how I would like to end my talk today. She was describing a conversation she had had with her teen aged daughter. This is a woman who left her parents and siblings far behind to create a new life for her children, only to find herself in Canada abandoned by her sponsor, fearful of deportation, desperately poor, and raising children on her own.

Now, many years later, having put so many things in place for herself and her children, she participated in the Humanities 101 course, bringing her intelligence, her engagement with the learning and her critical reflections about her own experience. As she was describing to her daughter why she was doing this, and what she wanted to be able to give as a result of this, she said to her daughter, "Education is intangible but viable. Everything else they can take from you, but education, once you have it, it can never be taken away."

I would suggest that this student was not only talking about what it is to have education, but also what it is to have access, what it is to move with some freedom and belonging in a social space, and what it is to appreciate, experience and understand inclusion.

*Trish Van Katwyk is an assistant professor in the School of Social Work at Renison College University at the University of Waterloo.*

# Books for Sustainable Living

## Books for Sustainable Living



Books for Sustainable Living at Queen Street Commons Café offers a wide selection of books on such topics as the environment, education, poverty, social alternatives, the philosophy of work, simple living, and more!

You can place orders by fax (519-743-3840), phone (519-743-1151 x111), or by [catalogue.theworkingcentre.org](http://catalogue.theworkingcentre.org)

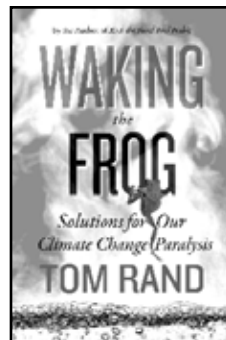


### Transition to Common Work Building Community at The Working Centre

Joe and Stephanie Mancini

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

212 pages \$20.00 softcover



### Waking the Frog Solutions for Our Climate Change Paralysis

Tom Rand

Venture capitalist, entrepreneur, engineer, and philosopher Tom Rand explains why climate disruption might just be our very own pot of hot water. Are we the frog paralyzed in our inaction? In a highly readable account, Rand looks to contemporary psychology, economics, business, and finance to explain our stasis in the face of one of the most fundamental problems of our time. Rand's account doesn't just point fingers at the bad guys, but goes deeper - to our motivations, institutional lethargy, and deeply buried assumptions about market economics.

235 pages \$22.45 softcover

### Reviewed by Joe Mancini

*Waking the Frog* is an honest look at the slow pace of reducing carbon pollution. Rand wants to change the pace and he puts forward an accessible discussion to help people see the path to a sustainable future. He optimistically notes that in 2014 Clean Tech initiatives installed 40 gigawatts of renewable energy globally. (A gigawatt is equivalent to the output of a large nuclear or coal plant.) As clean tech becomes increasingly viable, Rand estimates that only a tiny percentage of land will be needed to install the renewable technology necessary to eliminate fossil fuels.

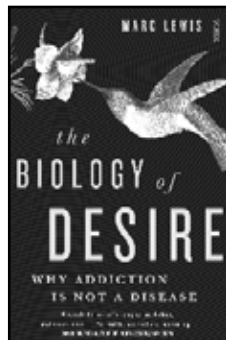
*Waking the Frog* is about turning our paralysis into action through ingenuity, technology, capital, and policy. It will take all of this to create a world where fossil fuel is no longer used. It will also take conservation and reduced energy consumption to change our present direction.

In the June 2015 *National Observer*, Tom Rand declared that “the fossil fuel party is over — so what’s the good news?” His answer, “Canada’s emerging leaders across the clean energy spectrum are ready to play big. Morgan Solar will produce solar energy for less than

5c/kwh in the oil-rich Mideast. Woodland Biofuels can produce renewable transport fuel from wood and agricultural waste for less than the gasoline it replaces. And Hydrostor’s grid-scale energy storage makes renewable energy robust and reliable. Diesel generation can’t compete with the combination of Hydrostor and wind or solar. There are many others, from LED lighting to power electronics, from sensors to geothermal drilling technology.”

These are examples of Clean Technology competing head to head with fossil fuels. Rand wants the market and government to work together to accelerate these solutions.

Jennifer Stoneburgh who works with Rand at MaRS Cleantech Venture Services takes the long view on understanding the movement to cleaner technology. “Change is obvious if you think about it: the market models and rules that have emerged over the last several decades are based on the assumption that markets drive toward equilibrium. However, equilibrium is a kind of death, with nothing changing or evolving. The economy, which is composed of trillions of transactions, is constantly evolving as new technologies are introduced, changing the very nature of our interactions.



### The Biology of Desire Why Addiction is Not a Disease

Marc Lewis PhD

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

237 pages \$22.45? hardcover

### Reviewed by Joe Mancini

*The Biology of Desire* presents vivid, true stories of five people who journeyed into and out of addiction. Neuroscientist Marc Lewis, a psychologist and former addict himself, has written a book dedicated to explaining why the “disease model” of addiction is inaccurate.

Lewis’s argument is fairly simple. He views the school of thought that names addiction as a disease as counterproductive. His point is that this perspective misses the point of how the brain works. Disease theory does not take into account the plasticity of the human brain. Of course, “the brain changes with addiction,” he writes. “But the way it changes has to do with learning and development — not disease.”

Lewis fears that the disease model can become an obstacle to healing. Lewis reveals “addiction as an unintended consequence of the brain doing what it’s supposed to do—seek pleasure and relief—in a world that’s not cooperating. Brains are designed to restructure themselves with normal learning and development, but this process is accelerated in addiction when highly attractive rewards are pursued repeatedly. Lewis shows why treatment based on the disease model so often fails,

and how treatment can be retooled to achieve lasting recovery, given the realities of brain plasticity.”

The book’s principal subjects – a methamphetamine addict, an alcoholic, a prescription drug abuser, and an anorexic – are portrayed with compassion and an eye for helping them move towards deeper development of their human nature. Lewis ultimately feels that people can find hope in recognizing that getting past one’s addiction is a developmental process. He states, “the biology of neural change – the way brains transform themselves and the way habits form and reform – helps explain how the developmental process works.”

Lewis uses the final chapter, *Developing Beyond Addiction*, to describe his developmental method. The subtitles guide the reader to understand his counselling approach: *Creating a Narrative from Past to Present to Future, Finding a Future: Self-Narrative and Self-Trust, Realigning Desire*, and *Helping People Quit*.

Lewis writes to help the lay reader understand the new brain science. He uses plain and accessible language that unpacks addiction counselling. *The Biology of Desire* is written so that the reader can make their own judgement on his breakthrough ideas.



### Reflecting on Shadow Photographic Poetry

Annette Dekker

*Reflecting on Shadow* chronicles a unique, personal exploration of bringing to awareness that part of ourselves which we usually conceal – our Shadow – until it exposes itself so powerfully that we can no longer disregard its presence.

Paul Benedetto a registered psychotherapist notes that Dekker’s “poetry and photography provides surprising opportunities to contemplate our own shadow through the interplay of light and dark. they give us an opportunity to see shadow close up; and also at arm’s length where they may reveal further dimensions of feeling, depth and complexity.

Her engaging poems give voice to an often hidden or unconscious human experience. We share her intimate encounter with shadow revealed through unwavering attention and discernment.”

45 pages, \$14.95 softcover

*During the month of February Annette’s Photo Canvases have been on display at the Queen Street Commons Café.*

Annette Dekker MSW, RFMT has a private practice in individual, couple and family therapy in Waterloo. She notes that the book brings to light a “greater awareness of how my own projections and judgments add their weight to our society’s Shadows which so profoundly and negatively affect those who are marginalized. *As a symbol of my trust that owning our Shadows can make a difference, 50 percent of the proceeds from the sale of this book and photo canvases will be donated to the Psychiatric Outreach Project of The Working Centre in Kitchener, where small acts of kindness lead to big changes.*”



ILLUSTRATION BY ASEL SCHIFFER

*Waking the Frog* argues that change is inherent to the system.”

Thomas Homer Dixon in the *Globe and Mail* noted that, “big shifts in key technologies sometimes happened quickly, as when city transportation flipped from horses to cars.” Similarly clean technology

is making fossil fuel obsolete. Rand wants Canada to think about clean energy technology as underpinning a significant economic revolution. Climate change can be faced head on by supporting and helping to unlock the creativity that is growing. *Waking the Frog* is Rand’s way of getting

## Hacienda Sarria Market Garden

# Urban Gardening Update

By Adam Kramer

There is one question us gardeners hear very regularly this time of year: "What do you do all winter?" Well, as the garden's volunteers can attest, the answer is, "Plenty!"

This winter has been perhaps our most productive on record. Aside from our typical winter tasks of crop planning and microgreen growing, we added some new projects which have kept us productive and helped satisfy our desire to get our hands dirty despite the snow!

### Rosemary Christmas Trees

This past growing season we planted over one hundred tiny rosemary plants in the garden, which we nursed along until they were nice and tall. In October we potted them, decorated them, and offered them for sale to anyone looking for an aromatic, festive, and edible Christmas tree. It was a huge success! We sold out well before Christmas and plan to grow even more of them in the year to come!

### Winter CSA

Our greenhouse allows us to grow hydroponic microgreens all year, so this winter we thought we'd offer up one more way for community members to eat local despite the weather. Each week, 13 households receive weekly shares from the greenhouse and from Maurita's Kitchen. Our microgreen shares boast a wide assortment of our healthy and flavourful greens, and our take-home meals from Maurita's Kitchen are a popular, delicious and nutritious add-on. If you missed out, we'll be offering both microgreen and meals shares as add-ons to our Summer CSA program as well!

### Mushrooms

That's right! We are very excited to soon offer locally grown oyster mushrooms to our customers. Initial trials are coming along, and although we have tasted our first batch, we are still in the process of perfecting our growing methods. A specialized mushroom grow-room has been built, which allows us to regulate temperature, light, and humidity. In any case, be on the lookout for Working Centre mushrooms on menus this spring!

### The Greenhouse

It is always a pleasure to walk into a toasty, lush, and productive greenhouse when the weather outside is frigid! This winter the greenhouse has been packed full of motivated and hard-working volunteers who have not only been growing microgreens, but taking excellent care of the grow systems

Join our Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) project this spring and enjoy fresh, local, organically grown vegetables from June to October.

Add to your vegetable share...

- ♦ freshly picked flower bouquets
- ♦ freshly baked cookies and pies
- ♦ Ready to Enjoy dinners from Maurita's Kitchen
- ♦ fresh and locally roasted coffee from the Queen St. Commons Café




The Working Centre's Hacienda Sarria Market Garden is a vibrant urban garden that grows healthy, fresh produce using organic methods, 3 km from downtown Kitchener. It is a community-based project that demonstrates sustainable urban food production.

To buy a CSA share on-line visit [catalogue.theworkingcentre.org](http://catalogue.theworkingcentre.org)  
 For more information you will find our CSA sign up sheet on our website at: [www.theworkingcentre.org/CSA](http://www.theworkingcentre.org/CSA)  
 Email: [hacienda@theworkingcentre.org](mailto:hacienda@theworkingcentre.org) • Phone: 519-743-1151, ext. 113

# The Cultivation Project

By David Shumaker

The Cultivation Project builds on the success of the Hacienda Sarria Market Garden and GROW Greenhouse to offer even more ways for volunteer gardeners to take part in the life of our project. Our gardens benefit every day from the diverse gifts of those gathered to work. Gardeners who have walked with the project for years pass on their wisdom, and teach the rest of us the value of dedication. Newer gardeners offer their fresh ideas, their well-timed questions, their hands-on skills, or their infectious laughter to create community around the tasks to be done.

Experience also shows that working in the garden benefits gardeners. Collaborating with others to nurture the soil or care for growing plants enhances wellness. Health studies confirm this. Gardening can reduce stress, lower heart rate, increase focus and attention, improve social confidence, and deepen connections with nature and with others. Some gain valuable new skills that they can use to grow their own food or as they seek paid employment in the area.

Convinced of gardening's benefits, The Cultivation Project is designed especially for those who receive Ontario Works or Ontario Disability Support Program assistance or who see themselves on a journey towards wellness. By connecting with the gardens through The Cultivation Project, volunteers hope to nurture their well-being and develop new skills while contributing to a lively enterprise.

Recent partnerships are encouraging. Volunteer gardeners with a developmental disability come to the greenhouse from WALES, Extend-A-Family, and Light House Programs, share unique gifts, and work towards realizing hopes each has personally chosen. Some want to get their hands dirty as they give to the community, while others are deepening their social and work skills.

In collaboration with the House of Friendship's Bridges to Health program, The Cultivation Project hosted a microgreens workshop at the GROW Greenhouse with those who are concerned with their substance use. Those who attended learned simple ways to grow some of their own nutritious food. Additional events are in the works.

With the Canadian Mental Health Association, The Working Centre is developing a work skills training project for people in CMHA's Mental Health and Justice Services. The Cultivation Project is



and adding a great deal to our knowledge of greenhouse growing! Our product line has expanded to include trays of living pea shoots and wheatgrass, which are making their way to homes around KW.

### The Garden

Just because the gardens are snow covered doesn't mean we aren't working on them. Planning is such an integral part of ensuring a successful grow season – as soon as we're out of the fields in the fall, we're already working on the season to come. Last year we increased our production and sold over 15,00 units of vegetables. Over the years we've been revising and strengthening our crop plan, which accounts for nearly every seed or seedling to be planted, not to mention each tomato, lettuce head, or zucchini to be harvested! In the coming weeks, we'll be out pruning our fruit trees and before we know it we'll be out hauling compost and planting those seeds!

## Summer CSA

Each week from mid-June through October, the CSA provides a variety of seasonal produce from the Hacienda Sarria Market Garden. Throughout the season new choices arise on the pick-up day as different crops become available.

**Small share: 4-6 items/week 20 weeks at \$12.50/week = \$250**  
**Large share: 6-8 items/week 20 weeks at \$18/week = \$360**

..... one option in this initiative, giving volunteer gardeners a chance to enhance wellness and employment skills while working towards a Market Gardening Certificate.

If The Cultivation Project is a good fit for you or for someone you know, please contact David for more information at 519-743-1151, extension 204, or [davids@theworkingcentre.org](mailto:davids@theworkingcentre.org).