

GOOD WORK NEWS

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

Issue 109

June 2012

Subscription: A Donation Towards our Work

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30 Years of Community Building

Editor's note: This year's 25th Mayors' Dinner celebrated the 30th year of The Working Centre and recognized the 25 Guests of Honour. Margaret and Bob Nally as Guest Hosts planned a Mayors' Dinner that reflected the art, spirituality, music and cooperative culture that is at The Working Centre's core. In this issue of Good Work News, with gratitude, we have printed Margaret and Bob's Mayors' Dinner speeches.



By Margaret Nally

In a fruitful garden under a tree stood two young people. The two young people had hopes and dreams and they planned them there under the tree of life.

Two young people who encouraged a movement, a network of responses to human need. The rich and plentiful garden is here in K-W.

A City founded by the farmers and industrialists who lived with the first nation's people who befriended them. A place of prosperity from the earliest days and enriched by immigrants and refugees who brought diversity and vigor.

Young students recently returned from Tanzania, deeply changed by their experience there and with a desire to share that experience with others Joe and Stephanie actively sought out others who shared their concerns and their hopes for a new vision of an engaged and inclusive community.

Arriving at Global Community Centre on Queen Street they found folks who shared their values and they became very involved in many of its activities. They took the road to Queen Street and, to paraphrase Robert Frost, that has made all the difference. What they found as a model for community engagement at the Global Community Centre was the ethos of respecting gifts of volunteers and their capacity to be active

agents for change.

Reflecting on our experiences of the needs of community together at the Global Community Centre brought us to a shared vision of how we wished to respond to social justice issues.

The responses that we engaged in together, whether it was paying attention to the war in Central America; the Mackenzie valley pipeline, the Ontario Food Commission or the debate around infant formula, had a process. We shared our experiences, we reflected together before we responded. For Joe, an ex-seminarian, and Stephanie and others whose frame of reference was religious or spiritual we went to that place where we engaged in theological reflection on the social justice teachings of faith and tradition – the social imperative of the Gospel. As the community of IONA reminds us "Spirituality is the place where prayer and politics meet."

We went to that core of possibility and hope. We recognized the richness of many faith stories and traditions. Together we began to formulate what it would look like if a community was open to explore what it would mean to move from abstract knowledge to concrete considerations of values, assumptions and commitments of how life ought to be lived.

The story started in the early 80's when factories were closing and the economy in K-W was moving from its industrial base and had yet to find its way into the new technological possibilities of today. Stories of layoffs of middle-aged workers and distress in families were the topic of many conversations.

Trades and skills were being lost and there was considerable grief. We

Fruits of the Spirit

By Joe Mancini

We all recognize when peach, pear and apple trees beautifully flower and produce fruit. That is when the fruits are the most important part of the tree. Our Tree of Life reflects on the fruits of the spirit, they are just as beautiful; the fruits of belonging, patience, goodness, caring, respect, joy, acceptance, gratitude, kindness, trust and compassion.

In our 30th year, the 25th Mayors' Dinner became an opportunity to celebrate the Fruits of the

Spirit. The Dinner was attended by over 950 people and as a celebration it integrated art, dance, poetry, laughter, music and conviviality. For The Working Centre, the core of the evening was the recognition of building relationships with the Mayors of Kitchener and Waterloo, with all 25 past and present Guests of Honour, and a growing list of patrons and friends who have generously supported our work over these

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Twenty-Seventh Year

Issue 109

June 2012

Good Work News

Good Work News was first produced in September 1984. It is published four times a year by The Working Centre and St. John's Kitchen as a forum of opinions and ideas on work and unemployment. Four issues of Good Work News constitutes our annual report. There is a circulation of 12,000 copies. Subscription: a donation towards our work.

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Fruits of the Spirit

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years. These relationships developed and nurtured over 30 years are the essence of community work and inclusion.

It is easy for community groups to get caught up in paper work, audited statements, and government bureaucracies that have become deaf to community. On the other hand, the works of the spirit are truly what we should aim to cultivate. We see that spirit alive and fruitful each day when people work together to produce the daily meal at St. John's Kitchen, offer showers and laundry and the services of a medical clinic. Kitchener's largest furniture and housewares recycling centre – Worth A Second Look is fueled by a dedicated community of workers. The bustling work on Queen Street South offers a resource centre, a growing community of workers that make possible an affordable cafe, catering and a learning kitchen, along with transitional housing, computer training and much more. Some of the exciting work of community building at 37 Market Lane is described on the back page.

For The Working Centre, the core of the evening was the recognition of building relationships with the Mayor's of Kitchener and Waterloo, with all 25 past and present Guests of Honour, and a growing list of patrons and friends who have generously supported our work over these years.

During the month of our 30th anniversary, the Hacienda Sarría Market Garden is offering us yet another example of integrated community. This was symbolized when Fr. Toby Collins C.R. offered his considerable landscaping and organizational skills to build an extensive and unifying 6000 square foot brick pathway. This community inspired project quickly defined the market gardening space even while Fr. Toby was leading the volunteers and Job Cafe workers. Together they completed the project in a week of dedicated labour that often went 14 hours a day. This is another example of the fruits of the spirit creating beauty and community all at once.

Andy Macpherson's Tree of Life graphic on the front page celebrates 30 years of The Working Centre using the Fibonacci Series as presented below.

Please join us for the
23rd Annual Golf Tournament



In support of The Working Centre and St. John's Kitchen

Wednesday, August 15th, 2012
at Rockway Golf Course

\$120 per Golfer plus a \$15 Golf Bonus Package

To reserve your spot,
call Kara at (519) 743-1151 x119

Visit our website for event flyer: www.theworkingcentre.org.
See the link in our "What's New" Section.

Sponsored by:



30 Years at the Working Centre

After 30 years at The Working Centre, core values, principles, ideas, shared work, learning, programs, community, kindness, compassion... so much fruit has been born of such hearty trunk and roots, all in cooperation with the whole: service, life, joy, community, shared tools and skills, hospitality, creativity, love.

The Fibonacci series: 1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13,... is interesting because each term is the sum of the previous 2 terms.

Leaves on plants find their place on their stem according to this ratio, the dimensions of our bodies adhere to these proportions, the artistic spirals of real fruits and vegetables (cauliflower, broccoli, pineapples, pedals on flowers, and many more) contain these fibonacci numbers, and the discovery and applications of this mathematical phenomenon are all at once aesthetic, useful and bountiful.



The ratio of consecutive terms 3/2, 5/3, 8/5, 13/8,... approaches the beautiful, naturally occurring number 1.61803399... known as the golden mean and usually represented by the greek letter ϕ .

Illustration by Andy Macpherson
Text by Joe Mancini and Bob Nally

Community Building

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talked about a moral framework for an economic system with firm foundations in values of inclusion and participation. We yearned for the community where the common good is a value and criterion as companies were established to live and work in K-W.

The conversations of those days continued as we sought to address what was possible when you articulate what a community might look like, how it might function if all were valued, where all could belong and participate. We needed a new paradigm – a new way of evaluating what a new, more just, economy might look like.

With the assurance of being listened to and encouraged, Stephanie and Joe, Patrice and Anna and others with the gift of time and good will sat around a table and with pots of tea began to dream the dream into reality.

Jim Wallis of Sojourners reminded us “You can’t start a movement, you can only prepare for one”. Our preparation for The Working Centre was a gracious space of relationship, of courage and of encouragement. We had the assurance of friendship, support of local organizations, and the leadership of churches (the \$6,000 grant from PLURA was a profound act of faith in founding the centre).

Someone recently asked when the moment was that the name came about and if these chairs could only talk!! But I remember the conversation and it was decided that it would be The Working Centre front and centre with the tag line of Self-help Centre for the Unemployed. We wanted it to be a forcefully positive place.

It was a time when the spirit of change was moving over the face of the earth and was seen in many parts of the world.

The climate for social change was ripe for new beginnings included the founding of the Centre for Community Based Research; Extend-A-Family, and Independent Living Centres. Trudeau repatriated the constitution and we celebrated a Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Base Christian communities in Latin America and the churches of South Africa spoke of God’s desire for the well-being of people. We held hope for that inclusive future.

We lived in hope and as if there was political space. It is a way of living that calls the future into being. To live imaginatively in the light of the hoped-for future is a prophetic choice. We chose community, we chose relationship, and we chose inclusion.

The stories were deeply steeped in values of hospitality, generosity of spirit, and the ability to reflect and to laugh. Yes, to laugh! To be able to hold hope for community and people’s capacity to live well is an

act of deep faith. To have the ability to hold hope in the midst of despair marked the beginnings of The Working Centre.

Dorothy Day, an Anti-Poverty Activist in New York from the 30s and an inspiration to The Working Centre stated “It is not easy always to be joyful, to keep in mind the duty of Delight” but we felt that faith called us to that place.

Daily walking with the realities of human need can steal the joy from the heart, but I encourage you, come to the Commons on Queen Street or St. John’s where you will encounter “delight” in warmth of conversation, good food, music and genuine relationship.

But tonight, this special night, it is easy to keep in mind the wisdom of Dorothy Day, who calls us to this duty of delight – it is a delightful occasion when our community gathers, - our mayors, our political leaders, those in business, education, social services and industry, healers and all who carry the well-being of our cities – to celebrate, to remember, to continue the journey.

Back to those young, long-haired, bearded and emboldened who often asked the WHY- why us- young, small in number, why now, why here, why, WHY NOT? Parker Palmer reminded us “The Energy behind caring is compassion for others, which in turn, is energized by the knowledge that we are all in this together, that the fate of other beings has implications for our fate.”

We heard the answer that the community’s well-being was also ours and we began to move along a path of compassion to the place where the How would be realized.

In the pastoral circle of the experience of the unemployed, reflecting on the social environment, bringing all this to prayer, we engaged in action.

The thinking, talking and deep reflection over pots and pots of tea has stood The Working Centre in good standing. We had at heart a deep reflective practice. The centre of the reflection circle had at its very core human dignity and respect.

Joe and Stephanie will tell you stories of going to New York on a bus with many other students from church colleges at the University of Waterloo to the Second Special Session on Disarmament. Walking the streets of New York with a million people of all faiths and traditions praying for peace and holding vespers at the Catholic Worker House on the impoverished Lower East Side or participating in the community festivals on the streets with great ethnic foods and sensing the great good that was possible - Missa Gaia at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine was food for the body, food for the soul.

Our Good Friday liturgies with Oz Arnal and others took place on

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On the side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the trees are for the healing of the nations (Revelation 21). The leaves and the fruit of The Working Centre are for the well-being of this community.

But what of the future of The Working Centre? Where are the young ones with vision and energy to sit and share dreams and visions? Those who hear the call of service that Dorothy Day reminds us is a joining together to try to make things better in this world.

Tonight we acknowledge that they are among us and around us and we announce that in future Mayors’ Dinners we will be honouring a young person who demonstrates a life lived with Working Centre values.

Tonight as we move into our fourth decade we are reminded of these words from Oscar Romero, an inspiration from our beginning days. He said:

“It helps, now and then, to step back and take the long view. This is what we are about; we plant seeds that one day will grow. We water seeds already planted, knowing that they hold future promise. We lay foundations that will need further development. We provide yeast that produces effects beyond our capabilities. We are prophets of a future not our own.”

We stand here representing the past and the present and believing in a rich future. We have been held together by cords of human kindness and bands of love (Hosea 11:8).

We stand here for our friends to thank YOU, this community, for gifts received in relationships and life and so on behalf of Joe and Stephanie, Jennifer, Leslie, Gretchen, Arleen, Andy, Don, Ashleigh, Mayor Cardillo, Martin Tarback and Bao Lu, for everyone who is at home in The Working Centre. We sang “All you need is love”. Dorothy reminded us that love comes with community. We are community for each other.

Thank you for your support of this vision, for your faithful friendship over the decades, for the dreaming of dreams and the community that springs from the Tree of Life that enriches us all.

- Margaret Nally

Thank You to the Ontario Trillium Foundation



We would like to thank the Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF) for their significant and ongoing support of many Working Centre projects.

In May 2011, OTF approved a grant that covered approximately half of the cost of two major projects. The first project involved making major repairs to the roof of The Working Centre’s 66 Queen St. S. building. OTF contributed \$19,100 to this project. The second project was the purchase and installation of a commercial-grade gas range and fire-rated hood vent in Maurita’s Kitchen. This new equipment allows for more efficient preparation

of food and provides kitchen volunteers experience with commercial-grade kitchen equipment. OTF contributed \$21,500 to this project.

The Ontario Trillium Foundation is also supporting a three-year developmental grant to the Multicultural Cinema Club that includes the purchase of a RED Digital Video Camera to rent to local filmmakers.



Thank you to Canadian General Tower

We would also like to thank Rick Chaplin and Canadian General Tower (CGT) for their donation of 5,000 sq. ft. of PVC roofing membrane.

A Beehive of Social Innovation or a Celtic Weave?

By Bob Nally

Tonight, we have all been part of the learning and telling of The Working Centre story in games, art and song.

However, the story is in fact made up of the hundreds of stories each day, these past 30 years, of the many thousands of our fellow citizens whose lives have been touched by The Working Centre.

When we started out on this journey 30 years ago, we had no idea how many thousands would walk together on this mystery tour of our shared humanity as a complex, living, growing and unfolding entity.

So how can we describe and celebrate what it is and is becoming?

What metaphor, parable or analogy can we use to narrate and celebrate the story?

Maybe The Working Centre is like a nurturing Grand River of life flowing throughout our land.

Or maybe the centre is like a beehive of social innovation; of highly motivated members, grounded in strong fiscal management and discipline that generates over 25% of its revenue from its various ventures such as; Recycle Cycles, Worth a Second Look and the Commons Café, with strict decision filters for all projects based on social utility with profit-and-loss and cash flow analysis. Of projects such as Computer Recycling, purchasing and renovating five buildings in the downtown core and leveraging \$300,000 in grants into the development of 35 supportive housing units for the homeless.

This is true social entrepreneurship in the service of others.

Or maybe The Working Centre is like a thoughtful sculpture of fine Italian bronze and marble like Rodin, sometimes quiet... and sometimes quite verbal.

Or maybe the Centre is like a beautiful painting like the Mona Lisa, with a quizzical look that seems to say: how can we make this next notion of Joe's work?

Or maybe it is like the Celtic weave of an Irish dance of life with people intertwined in motion?

Or maybe The Working Cen-

tre is like an abundant tree of life and lore which keeps on giving to the core?

This tree of life is an entrepreneurial, enterprising, empowering and sustainable social innovation incubator of programs and tools that strive to meet our community's needs.

It is intentional, integrated and inspirational based on enduring values and firmly rooted in the soil of the KW community; a living example that a sustainable, just and compassionate way of being is possible, for all it serves.

This tree has a strong trunk of dedicated, creative members with shared community virtues and values such as; serving others, creating tools, living simply and building community.

The branches of this tree of life include: hospitality, shared skills, imagination and good work.

It has an abundance of leaves representing the 50 or so programs or tools each with its own unique and creative and innovative response to meeting a specific community need of those it serves. Including training, nourishment, counselling, housing, outreach, resources and assistance.

This tree also strives to yield an abundance of fruit such as: inclusion, gratitude, compassion, trust and respect for the dignity of each person.

Numerous people come to avail themselves of this abundance and shade that The Working Centre has to offer in community with others. Just as new Canadians, who come from the great continent of Africa gather together for companionship under the shade trees of Victoria Park.

That The Working Centre has blossomed and prospered in our community, says a lot about who we are and the kind of community that we have and how we find ways to ensure that all of our fellow citizens, regardless of where they find themselves on their life's journey, have a meaningful place to be, a community to be part of and access to the tools and resources they

need, to help them on their journey.



The 25th Mayors' Dinner was a wonderful community celebration attended by over 950 people. In this collage of pictures from the event (starting at the top) are Murray and Merle Haase who have been long-time generous donors to The Working Centre and Mayors' Dinner.

Mayor Zehr and Mayor Halloran present Lorna Van Mossel with her anniversary plaque as a past Guest of Honour from 1994. All 25 Guests of Honour or their representatives gathered for a pre-reception and group picture.

Christina Mancini along with Pete Oldridge and Nathan Stretch climbed ladders to sing **All You Need is Love**. Margaret and Bob Nally pose with Joe and Stephanie Mancini after the Dinner celebrating the project that grew from the Nally's kitchen table. For 17 years, long-time Working Centre volunteer Larry Crawford has assembled the Centro de Trabajo jazz ensemble for The Mayors' Dinner.

Myra and Ameilia O'Seasnain danced the Irish Dance of Life. Martha Crealock and Myles Kavanagh hang a leaf on the Tree of Life.

Bob and Margaret Nally with Michael Graham and Hulene Montgomery, friends from the Global Community Centre.

(Photos by Richard Albrecht, Julia Heyens, and Thomas Mancini)

30 Years of Community Building

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the streets and around the locked gates of factories in ours and others' communities. Buses were our form of transportation and community building.

We walked and talked, sang and prayed for ourselves, our planet and our communities. We always hopped back on the bus. We have stayed rooted in this community

with the same concerns. We had families and worked for the welfare of the city, just as Jeremiah reminds us. Always, always coming home.

And home was simple – in apartments in the downtown core, over store fronts, with good simple food at pot-luck suppers, weddings in backyards, playing music and laughing – being home for and with each other.

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Job Café

Keeping People Connected

By Cristina Doyle

I started my student placement at The Working Centre in January of this year. During my short time here working on the Job Café project, I have been able to truly understand the concept of community development, which cannot be fully explained in a classroom setting. I have also been able to better identify the significant barriers that many face in looking for employment, as well as witness the effects of underfunded and unjust social assistance programs.

Job Café is a project that connects individuals who do not fit in the mainstream labour market with odd jobs and casual work in order to earn extra income. Job Café recognizes that there are barriers that many are facing when seeking employment, and has created an environment where people can gain access to the labour market in ways where their skills and experience can be respected and utilized.

This widespread need for this alternative approach to labour was highlighted for me when I reached out to community members and groups of people, often seeking odd jobs that needed completing. However, it was much more frequent for people to approach me looking for work, displaying this significant need in the community. This is a time when job cuts are common, and openings are scarce.

Workers with Job Café come from varied backgrounds, and are facing a wide range of obstacles. Some have recently lost their stable jobs, and are struggling to find work. Others have been living in poverty for some time, and may be struggling with maintaining stability in many areas, including employment. An example is one individual who has faced instability throughout his life, starting with his first foster home at a very young age. As a teenager, he was left to support himself, and looked for whatever work could support his immediate needs. It was often difficult for him to think in the long-term, and a lack of recognized formal education proved to be a significant barrier to permanent full-time employment. This individual has only been in Kitchener for a number of months, and hopes to move on soon to be closer to family. Job Café allows him to pick up work, and extra cash, when needed. He has also shared that he enjoys the people he gets to meet through the work, and the connections he makes.

Another individual had a stable labour job for years, but was let go several years ago - along with all other employees - when the business was closed. He was unable to find another job, and eventually found himself on the streets. With help from many members of The Work-

ing Centre, he was able to secure housing, and is slowly stabilizing in his alcohol use. With Job Café, he is grateful to use his skills to successfully complete jobs he feels comfortable with. He appreciates having the option to work only when he feels healthy enough, and gets a sense of accomplishment for the good work done. Another individual, with a university degree, worked in business for a number of years before being laid off. At 55 years old, and with English as a second language, he continues to actively look for work, and uses Job Café as a stepping stone during this transient time in his life. Other workers struggle with issues of mental health and addiction, and while often unable to maintain steady employment, have the ability and the desire to work.

Many Job Café workers are social assistance recipients looking to supplement their meager earnings, which has opened my eyes to



the unjust and punitive nature of these programs in Ontario. Current Ontario Works (OW) and Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) rates force recipients to live below the poverty line. The recently released provincial budget has announced that there will be a freeze of these rates which, when considering increases in the cost of living, will actually represent cuts to people's earnings. Recipients are required to report their monthly earnings, and are deducted 50% of this from their monthly cheque. For example, an individual who works at \$11 an hour for 20 hours over the period of one month would be assumed to receive \$220. However, this individual would be required to report

these earnings Ontario Works, and give back 50%, or \$110, of this money. Looked at in a different way, this could be described as working for \$5.50 an hour, well below minimum wage. This punitive situation does not provide incentive for recipients to seek out part time labour.

Participants of Job Café are skilled in a number of areas. Pick-ups and deliveries for Worth a Second Look couldn't be accomplished without these individuals. Recently, Job Café workers were also heavily involved in renovations for The Working Centre's new clothing store on Market Lane, as well as the new Recycle Cycle location. These individuals took pride in their work, and, as with all Working Centre projects, felt as they were an important piece of its development. We would often receive a number of people offering to help, or simply asking about how the work was going. Participants in Job Café truly want to work, and often volunteer in various Working Centre projects in between jobs. Workers are readily available and participate in a number of different tasks for community members - including gardening, moving, cleaning and painting. It is clear that all work can create a sense of accomplishment, especially when enhanced with respect and acknowledgment.

Throughout my time here, I have seen that the impact of a program like Job Café has a reach beyond the individual level. The program has allowed for community development that benefits a range of people and groups. Relationships and connections are created as workers and employers alike become more involved in their community, and engage with individuals outside their regular social networks. It is common for relationships that started with Job Café to continue over a period of time. I spoke to a worker who helped a woman with her snow shoveling one winter. A relationship was developed, and this worker would often be called to complete small jobs whenever needed. Soon, this became a trusted friendship, which continued until the woman passed away recently. The Job Café participant still remembers this with fondness, and describes feeling both a sense of belonging and accomplishment.

Job Café is a connecting service that not only gives people the opportunity to find employment and earn extra income, but also to participate meaningfully in their own community. Employers also become more positively engaged in their community, and expand their horizons by meeting new individuals, all while receiving a valuable service. Job Café is a project in which friendships are developed, good work is accomplished and our community is strengthened.

Cristina Doyle is in the Master of Social Work program at Wilfrid Laurier University. Her 4-day/week placement this winter has been to assist in the development of the Job Café project.



Can We Help?



Call Job Café for assistance with any odd job.

We will send you skilled and trusted workers to complete the required task.

Spring Cleaning

Landscaping

Painting

Moving

& more!

**Job
Café**

**97 Victoria St. N.
519-513-9225
don@theworkingcentre.org
cristinad@theworkingcentre.org**

Mennonite Coalition for Refugee Support

Celebrating 25 Years of Welcome and Hope

Editor's Note: The Mennonite Coalition for Refugee Support (MCRS) has lived in The Working Centre as a separate organization for all of its 25 years. Starting small with financial support from Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) and K-W churches, this project has served non-sponsored refugees with legal, housing and settlement support. For the first 20 years MCRS had space in the basement of 58 Queen Street South. When it was renovated in 1998 it was much improved but moving to the mezzanine at 58 Queen in 2007 finally meant getting out of the basement. With Recycle Cycles moving to Market Lane, MCRS was offered the 2000 square foot space at 43 Queen Street South, above the Queen Street Commons Café. The Job Cafe crew did a great job painting and sanding the floor. Tamarack Institute has a small office and MCRS has a bright and open new space, although still windowless, that offers increased opportunities for supporting refugees.

By Eunice Valenzuela

From our nearly windowless office nestled within the walls of The Working Centre building, it is impossible to tell if the weather is sunny and warm or cold and stormy. However, we experience sunshine and storms of another sort.

Sunshine comes in the forms of the bright faces of the people we serve. For 25 years we have seen this light and joy develop in refugee claimants from all over the world: when a mother is reunited with her children after years of separation, upon hearing the exciting news of being accepted as a refugee, and after the birth of a child in Canada. Most inspiring for me are the families who overcome so many difficulties and tragedies, and who make their own sunshine regardless of their circumstances. They work, they learn English, they make friends, they volunteer, and they enrich our community.

Between these shining, joyful moments are periods when storms and clouds form, particularly when claims are rejected and when people we have come to know and love have to leave the safety they have found, and the new life they have worked to create, in Canada.

Regardless of sun or storm, it is the individual's story that continues to fuel our drive to continue this advocacy.

Zahra, a young mother from Er-



Eunice Valenzuela,
Executive Director, MCRS

itrea who arrived in the spring of 2008 with four young children, wandered the streets of Kitchener with nowhere to go and no knowledge of English. She and her children were taken by police to a shelter in Cambridge where someone called MCRS. We used our connections to draw in support from across the community: interpreters, bedding and children's clothing, food vouchers and diapers, bikes for the children, and furniture for their apartment. A stranger in a grocery store parking lot even gave Zahra a stroller for her 2-year old child. The sun shone brightest in Zahra's face when she received her permanent resident card (how many weeks or months later), and I could see the glimpses of hope in her eyes that someday she would be able to see her husband again. About a year after this positive development, however, she received the news that her husband had been killed. He had been imprisoned because of his Christian faith. We gathered around her at a memorial service for her husband.

The clouds rolled in to hide the sun as we experienced Miguel's story. He came to Canada fearing for his life. We worked together on his refugee claim by filling out forms and finding interpreters for the required legal and government interviews. Over the following months, our mutual trust developed into a good relationship. The date for his hearing was set so quickly that he had insufficient time to gather the necessary evidence from his home country. He was afraid to put his family at risk since they were still in his country, hiding from the same people who had threatened him. The Immigration and Refugee Board judge who heard Miguel's case made a decision based on insufficient evidence and denied his claim. Miguel was deported back to his home country.

The last news we heard from him was a plea for help because of ongoing death threats.

One day a young man from Afghanistan arrived at our office, with no place to stay. As usual, we tried to find a place for him but had no luck. While we continued to search for housing, this resourceful young man went for a stroll around downtown Kitchener and came across a Middle Eastern store where he met a friendly clerk. Through this spontaneous meeting, the clerk put us in touch with someone who could help, a contact that resulted in a place for the man to stay with another Afghani family for a few days. This young man eventually received his Permanent Resident status, and he continues to drop by the office to bring us sunshine.

Despite the tales of joy and success, this year has already brought much stormy weather to our office. We had to say goodbye to a family from Mexico whose refugee claim was rejected. They faithfully volunteered their time with us and visited often; they were deported this past winter. Another family was separated and deported to two different counties: the husband to Colombia, and wife and two children to Costa Rica. The authorities didn't pay attention to the plea by the family and the community.

Recent changes to refugee legislation -- the so called "Refugee Reform" -- have created even more difficulties for people seeking protection in Canada. We have observed firsthand the impacts these changes have had on the lives of people needing protection: unjust decisions, families deported to dangerous situations, lives uprooted, and families separated. We share the



frustration of families waiting uncertainly to hear a decision.

One of the most difficult aspects of my job involves relaying difficult news to families who receive negative decisions especially when there is nothing more they can do. The storm clouds roll in and seem to hang like immovable weights above. I struggle to find understanding in a system that closes doors to refugees. It is difficult to find words that will offer comfort.

These experiences have changed my life. After 19 years with MCRS, I have learned so much from the families we have served. People are incredibly resilient and carry a strength that helps them weather the storms they will encounter.

MCRS is an organization whose mandate is to welcome the stranger—to see, in the face of those we greet, the revelation of something more. We strive, as far as our limited means permit, to support and guide refugee claimants on their journey through the storm that is the claims process. Our goal is to help people move towards recognition and freedom. We welcome, we learn together, we build a community and the journey continues.

It is not without the hundreds of volunteers and supporters that it has been possible for us to walk with people through both the sunny days and the storms these past 25 years. From the bottom of my heart, thank you for being with us.

Mission
To create a more just, welcoming, and supportive environment for refugee claimants in our community through the provision of orientation and advocacy throughout the refugee claim process, settlement support, and through the building of a community of mutual support.

The Needs of Refugee Claimants

- legal guidance in the claim process
- shelter, emergency food, health care
- transport language skills, cultural orientation, social support
- housing, income assistance, employment

Over 100 volunteers are integral to MCRS

- legal support workers
- community support workers
- translation services from 18 languages
- Speak English Cafe volunteers
- office support
- housing

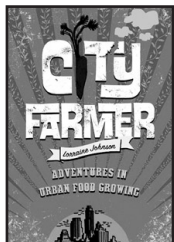
Books



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 mail (see order form below)



City Farmer Adventures in Urban Food Growing

Lorraine Johnson

City Farmer celebrates the new ways that urban dwellers are getting closer to their food. Not only are backyard vegetable plots popping up in places long reserved for lawns, but some are even planting their front yards with food. Woven through the book are the stories of guerrilla urban farmers in North America who are tapping city trees for syrup, gleaning fruit from parks, foraging for greens in abandoned lots, planting heritage vegetables on the boulevard, and otherwise placing food production at the centre of the urban community.

256 pages \$19.95 softcover

30 Years of Community Building

continued from page 4

And what are the signs of this homecoming? What is the outcome of deliberate, prayerful attention to the well-being of our cities by the Grand?

We see it in a community where the dream is at work in the daily lives of people. We see the signs of transformation and belonging in a community where diversity, equality, justice, responsibility, integrity,

and hope reside and where people work together to foster imagination, participation, and joy.

We celebrate the communities of Kitchener-Waterloo as communities that are intelligent; world renowned institutions of education and innovation – CIGI; the PI are among the significant here. Tonight as we remember and celebrate the founding of The Working Centre 30 years ago we name and claim that we are at heart a compassionate community.

An Easy Essay

Walter Wink: Principalities & Powers

By Isaiah Boronka

I have always been curious to look at institutions from a spiritual and/or philosophical perspective. They play such a large role in our lives but there is often so little reflection about them specifically in a way that accounts for their moral reality. As a person of faith I turned to the writings of Walter Wink, a theologian, civil rights activist and non-violence advocate to understand institutions and how they relate to human life and human society in a new way. Below is a brief synopsis of what I learned in the easy essay style. Easy Essays were pioneered by one of my heroes, Peter Maurin, one of the co-founders of the Catholic Worker along with Dorothy Day. Walter Wink died on May 10, 2012. He was 76 years old.

People know,
there is something about institutions,
something that is more than the sum
of it's parts,
more than the individual actions of
individual people

Walter Wink
looked at the bible
and saw that the bible calls these
somethings
principalities and powers

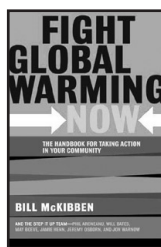
he saw that the powers are good,
the powers are fallen,
and the powers can be redeemed

to most the powers are demons
but wink sees
they are also in institutions, structures
and systems

these powers
can be good, when like the institution
of the city
they can provide safety for it's
citizens,
and things like buses, utilities and
foodbanks

these powers,
can be fallen like when a city's police
force
abuses their authority
and makes crooked deals with shady
characters

these powers can be redeemed,
when people protest corruption
and through diverse strategies and
actions
hold the powers accountable
to the reason for their existence

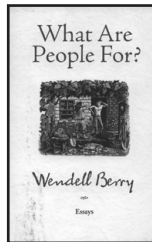


Fight Global Warming Now The Handbook for Taking Action in Your Community

Bill McKibben

With mounting evidence supporting man-made climate change, McKibben, warns that it's no longer time to debate global warming, it's time to fight it. Drawing on the experience of Step It Up, a national day of rallies held on April 14, he describes what must change to save the climate and shows how to join the fight in your community, church, or college. Learn to effectively launch online grassroots campaigns, generate persuasive political pressure, and plan high-profile events. This book offers the blueprint for a new movement against the most urgent challenge facing us today.

224 pages \$15.00 softcover

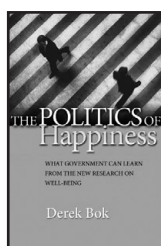


What are People For?

Wendell Berry

Wendell Berry identifies himself as both "a farmer and an artist of sorts," which he deftly illustrates in the scope of these 22 essays. Ranging from America's insatiable consumerism and neglected household economies, to literary subjects and America's attitude towards waste, Berry gracefully navigates from one topic to the next, discussing the ills plaguing America and the growing gap between people and the land. Despite the somber nature of these essays, Berry's voice provides an underlying sense of faith and hope in the power of humanity, not only to fix its past mistakes, but to build on earth a sustainable future for all.

210 pages \$15.95 softcover

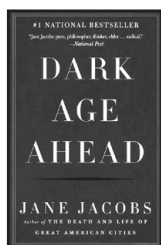


The Politics of Happiness What Government Can Learn from the New Research on Well-Being.

Derek Bok

Derek Bok examines how governments could use happiness research in a variety of policy areas to increase well-being and improve the quality of life for all their citizens. Recognizing both the strengths and weaknesses of happiness research, Bok looks at the policy implications for economic growth, equality, retirement, unemployment, health care, mental illness, family programs, education, and government quality, among other subjects. Timely and incisive, The Politics of Happiness sheds light on what makes people happy and the vital role government policy could play in fostering satisfaction and well-being.

272 pages \$27.50 hardcover



Dark Age Ahead

Jane Jacobs

A Dark Age is a culture's dead end; a result of a society gone awry. Jacobs argues that our own culture may soon be facing a dark age as we move from an agrarian economy to an increasingly technological one. How do we make this shift without losing ourselves in the process? Jacobs identifies several key aspects of society that are slowly degrading, and suggests that to reverse the decay, we must hold on to those key cultural values.

256 pages \$21.00 softcover

Books for Sustainable Living Order Form

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Visa Mastercard

Card #: _____

Expiry: _____ Signature: _____

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Postage: \$3 for the first book, \$1 for each additional book. Free postage for orders over \$200.

Mail completed forms to:
Books for Sustainable Living
58 Queen St. S. Kitchener, ON
N2G 1V6

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Recycle Cycles on Market Lane



On Monday March 15th over 30 Recycle Cycles volunteers worked all day to completely move all the contents of the bike shop from the second floor at 43 Queen Street South to the new location at 37 Market Lane. Five cube van loads took bikes, bike parts, tools and equipment from the old shop while volunteers immediately took on the task of setting up the new shop. Jesse, Scott, and the volunteers had the move and new shop finely planned and within a week Recycle Cycles was open fixing and recycling bikes. Since January Recycle Cycles volunteers have refurbished and sold 250 bikes. The community bike

shop is a popular place to learn how to fix your bike. Our public bike stands have been used over 1300 times since the move.

Come and visit Recycle Cycles at our new location at 37 Market Lane. The main door is off King Street East just past the New City Supermarket and beside the Morning Glory Cafe. If you are dropping off bike donations there is lots of parking.

New Shop Hours:

Tuesday-Friday: 10:00am - 6:00pm
Saturday: 10:00am - 4:00pm



CSA Shares Still Available!



The Commons Market CSA is a Community Supported Agriculture project. Sign up for a share and receive affordable, seasonal, local, organically grown produce and other goods from June to October.

Visit www.theworkingcentre.org/market for more information!

Hacienda Sarria Market Garden



The Market Garden at Hacienda Sarria is off to an excellent start this spring. A great deal of work is already turning the dry land into a productive urban garden. Kim and Adam with many volunteers have been laying out plots, rotor tilling each section, adding compost, and then planting seeds and seedlings. The first crop of spinach and baby lettuce is ready to harvest. Seeds and seedling are being planted every week.

The work of adding interlocking brick pathways has accentuated the beauty of the space. Come out and volunteer. It is a perfect opportunity

to learn how to grow vegetables, meet lots of people and get plenty of exercise.

GROW Herbal Gardens and Greenhouse is located at 79 Lancaster Street East. There is lots of gardening and greenhouse work at this site as well. We are working at this location Monday-Friday from 9am-12pm. Come and join us!

This summer we are inviting students to participate in our youth internships that we are offering at the Hacienda Sarria Market Garden and Grow Gardens and Greenhouse. Contact Jen at 519-743-1151 x176 for more information.

The Green Door Clothing Shop



The Green Door Clothing Shop is now open. The Green Door is The Working Centre's used clothing store which opened on May 22nd at 37 Market Lane in Downtown Kitchener. We are collecting and selling used clothing with care and enthusiasm. Enjoy our welcoming and attractive shop – items in-

clude women's, men's, children's clothing, plus accessories, shoes, and more.

The new store is conveniently located on Market Lane just down from the Kitchener

Market.

Volunteers are invited to help us with the tasks of sorting & tagging items, providing customer service and restocking clothing & accessories. Help us to make the work of re-using clothing an enjoyable and creative activity. All are welcome!



Volunteers Welcome at the Green Door Clothing Store!

Come help out at the store or just come to shop:
Tuesday, Wednesday, & Friday: 10am-6pm
Thursday: 10am-8pm • Saturday: 9am-4pm

Call 519-804-2466 x25 or email jodis@theworkingcentre.org



Volunteers Welcome at the Hacienda Sarria Market Garden!

Come and join us during these times:
Monday, Tuesday, & Thursday: 8am-4pm
Wednesday & Friday: 8am-7pm

The Hacienda Sarria Market Garden is located at 1254 Union Street. Call 519-743-1151 x113 or email adamk@theworkingcentre.org

Targeted Initiative for Older Workers

The Targeted Initiative for Older Workers (TIOW) project continues at The Working Centre. Just before the program funding was set to end in March, we received word that an agreement was made between the Federal and Provincial governments that would allow the program to continue for another year.

TIOW offers a creative package of job search, the chance to explore options for work going

forwards, and funding for training and living allowance. We host TIOW Information Sessions to help decide if this is the best option for people who are 50 years of age and older, are unemployed (or employed less than 20 hours per week), and looking for work.

For more information check out www.theworkingcentre.org - see the link on the What's New section. Or call 519-743-1151 x0 to register for an information session.

Free Income Tax Clinics at The Working Centre



On Monday, April 30th as the deadline for tax season approached, The Working Centre's 58 Queen resource centre was bustling. Through March and April we had been assisting low income earners to file their Income Tax returns. The deadline brought even more people to the centre.

The Working Centre has offered Free Income Tax Clinics in conjunction with Canada Revenue's CVITP (Community Volunteer Income Tax Program) for the past few years. This year, with help from the Region of Waterloo, we piloted a new model for these clinics. By posting a call for volunteers in Good Work News and spreading the word, we had 27 committed volunteers.

Previously, tax clinics were by appointment only. This year in addition to appointments, there were three drop-in clinics a week and a drop-off service.

Altogether we served 90% more people. In 2011 our Free Income Tax Clinics completed 115 returns, this year The Working Centre processed 1145 tax returns.

The success was due to our 27 volunteers who staffed each clinic. The volunteers at the resource centre wove themselves into the tapestry of Working Centre life. Other volunteers worked in the evenings processing dropped off tax returns. In all cases the contributions made by these dedicated individuals was invaluable.

queen street yoga presents...

Yoga in the Park!

Sundays from Jul. 8 - Aug. 26, 4pm-5pm

Gather by Reni's Studio, 79 Schneider Ave., in Victoria Park, Kitchener



By donation. Donations to go to The Working Centre for the revitalization of the May Place Community Garden.

Playful all-levels classes with experienced teachers. Bring a yoga mat or a beach towel, and a water bottle.

See our website for more details: www.queenstreetyoga.com