

# GOOD WORK NEWS

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

Issue 90

September 2007

Subscription: A Donation Towards our Work

## Inside This Issue:

- 25th Anniversary Open House
- 18th Annual Golf Tournament
- Film Festival Builds Community
- Caring for People in an Unconventional Clinic
- Psychiatric Outreach Project
- Partnership Between The Working Centre and UCRC Grows



## 25 Years on Queen St. S.

By Joe Mancini

When the overcast morning turned into a sunny afternoon, it helped usher in a rather special occasion for The Working Centre community, as we celebrated 25 years on Queen Street South. On May 10th, 2007, we made ready all three buildings on Queen Street for a public open house. It was an opportunity to let our many friends see the diversity of projects that have

intertwined themselves within and around these three buildings.

The event was conceived to recognize the overwhelming spirit of generosity that has been part of making The Working Centre what it is has become. The Open House highlighted that the Centre is more than a collection of projects. Rather it is an intentional group of com-

continued on page 3

## New Art Project Starts Up

By Andy Macpherson

The Dagbani people of Ghana, West Africa have a proverb that goes: "Biela, biela, nda nam wobgu" or "slowly, slowly, the elephant was not made in one day." This Biela Biela proverb is borrowed to give name to a vision of a more just and peaceful world realized through meaningful art and design. The Working Centre is hosting this new project that has been taking shape this past year, albeit slowly. It is spawned from the artistic vision of Andy Macpherson and Susie Fowler and supported by others from the community.

A first gathering in February, 2007 took place at The Working Centre and included about 40 interested people of great depth in talent and experience in social justice, the arts, social activism and community building. As well, a local democracy class at The Working Centre was in attendance to observe and participate. What energy and excitement was created!

From that first meeting the following ideas and hopes were expressed by the community:

- to recognize the role that art and culture has in changing the world
- to facilitate connections between artists and groups working for justice
- to produce and provide quality (hopeful, Canadian, spiritual, cool) ethical products



**Biela, biela, nda nam wobgu**

Slowly, slowly, the elephant was not made in a day.  
*Dagbani Proverb*

**Biela Biela is a vision of a more just and peaceful world realized through meaningful art and design.**

[www.RotaryDreamHome.com](http://www.RotaryDreamHome.com)

## Kitchener-Conestoga Rotary Club Dream Home Supports Working Centre

This past winter, The Working Centre and St. John's Kitchen were chosen as the recipient of this year's Kitchener-Conestoga Rotary Club Dream Home Lottery.

Our application was chosen for funding in recognition of the significant community effort that has gone into the revitalization of two old buildings - 97 Victoria, where St. John's Kitchen and Worth a Second Look operate; and 66 Queen, where apartments, employment counseling, Maurita's Kitchen, and Com-

puter Recycling all find a home. Dream Home proceeds will be directed to cover expenses related to the renovation project that transformed these old, tired buildings into vital public space.

Since 1985, the Kitchener-Conestoga Rotary Club has been committed to assisting dozens of local charities and organizations in their fundraising efforts through the annual Dream Home Lottery.

continued on page 8

Twenty-Third Year

Issue 90

September 2007

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 9,500 copies. Subscription: a donation towards our work.

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The Multicultural Cinema Club at The Working Centre Presents...



10 award-winning, thought-provoking films from around the world

From October 4<sup>th</sup> to October 14<sup>th</sup>



Join us for this FREE event each day listed below at 7 PM in the Council Chamber at Kitchener City Hall.

Date	Film Title	Length/Rating
Oct. 4	Hotel Rwanda	121 min / 14A
Oct. 5	Tsotsi	94 min / 14A
Oct. 6	Children of Heaven	89 min / 10+
Oct. 7	After The Wedding	120 min / USA:R
Oct. 9	The Lives of Others	137 min / USA:R
Oct. 10	Water	114 min / 14A
Oct. 11	Sabah	86 min / USA:R
Oct. 12	The Magdalene Sisters	119 min / 14A
Oct. 13	The Syrian Bride	97 min / All
Oct. 14	Maria Full of Grace	101 min / 14A

18<sup>th</sup> Golf Tournament Raises Money 'Fore' The Working Centre and St. John's Kitchen

By Dave Thomas

More than 200 golfers teed off August 22 to support The Working Centre and St. John's Kitchen, raising over \$30,000 in the 18th Annual Golf Tournament

Held again this year at Foxwood Golf Course near Baden, this year's



tourney provided a great day of play for the participants, who came from far and wide, including CAW Locals from Lear plants around southern Ontario. The turnout almost filled the course to capacity.

The top foursome trophies went to Dave Leitch, Jamie Smith, Pete Derviter and Brad Livingston; and the top women's team was made up of Janis Turenne, Susan Oberle, Kim Carter and Cheryl Medeiros. The mixed foursome of Lynn Cameron, Marty Rops, Kevin Morrison and Paul Arsenault also received trophies.

At the end of the night, golf-

ers received many generous door prizes and entered a raffle for items such items as a 3 piece Luggage Set, compliments of TLC Travel & Terri Lynne Woods; an Obus Ultra Forme Backrest & Seating System, compliments of Pioneer Park Pharmacy; a 4 Piece Cordless Combo Tool Kit, compliments of Princess Auto; a Briggs and Stratton Quattro Lawnmower, compliments of MTD; a Deluxe BBQ Utensil Set, compliments of Exacta Precision Products; and two McCulloch Grass Trimmers, compliments of MTD.

It was through the great efforts of our organizing committee that the event was such a success. Special thanks to Tim Mitchell, Rob Pyne, Paul Roeder (CAW Local 1524); Tammy Heller and Jim Woods (CAW National Office); Steve Longeway and Vladimir Malidzanovic (Bell); Frank Curnew and Sharon Lupton (Labour Program of Waterloo Region); John Germann (UA 527); Mike Thibodeau and Fred Murovec (Lear Kitchener); and Fred Walker (Bingemans).

We're also grateful for the continuing support of sponsors Lear Corporation, CAW National Office and Bell, as well as patrons MTD Products Limited and Dennis Murphy Pontiac Buick GMC Ltd.



The Working Centre's Computer Repair and Recycling Shop has expanded!



We have moved into the spacious basement of 66 Queen Street South and have extended our hours!

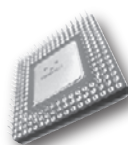
Can you help?

We are looking for donations of working Pentium III and Pentium IV computers, and computer related components such as hard drives, DDR memory sticks, motherboards, power supplies, and video cards.

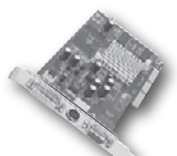
Donated computers will be refurbished and made available to low income individuals. Our recent Microsoft Authorized Refurbisher status helps us to load software onto these computers!

We are especially looking for volume donations from local companies - can you help to spread the word?

Visit our website for more information:  
[www.theworkingcentre.org/cr](http://www.theworkingcentre.org/cr)



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



Call (519) 743-1151 ext. 225

# 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Open House



Many of these photos are courtesy of Tomasz Adamski

## 25 Years on Queen St. S.

continued from page 1

mitted workers and volunteers who have taken hold of the idea of access to tools and have interpreted that idea in ever new ways to build community.

We prepared for the event by setting up thirty nine stations throughout the three buildings each of which were hosted by staff and volunteers. These stations represented most of The Working Centre projects that are familiar to readers of Good Work News. What is surprising is the quality, quantity and the double growth of these initiatives – projects redefining and expanding and new projects taking shape.

As people streamed in the front door at 58 Queen, guides were available to take people on tours through the stations. It is hard to know how many people finished a full tour as it could easily last two hours. Also included were some surprise elements like A History of The Working Centre in pictures, The Art of Andy Macpherson and a History of Queen Street.

A special gift was brought to us

from photographer Doug MacLellan who was a Conestoga College photography student when he undertook to document unemployment issues in the fall of 1982. 25 years later he brought enlarged photos of The Working Centre's first office on 94A Queen Street South, above Global Community Centre, that featured many of the people who first influenced the founding ideals of The Working Centre.

By 6:00 pm with the help of the City of Kitchener we were able to close Queen Street South between Halls Lane and Charles Street for a quick street party. Michael Kelly and Kari Kokko provided the music as people continued to wander through the buildings and listen to the music. A microphone was set up in front of 58 Queen as everyone was invited to join in. Dave Thomas gathered the crowds by suggesting that the Beatles would be reuniting after Bill Clinton took the stage. Stephanie had arranged for daisies to be used as a symbol that would link everyone together. At the start of the formal ceremonies volunteers passed out bunches of daisies for everyone to hold in recognition that

continued on page 8

## Film Festival Builds Community

By Ken Westhues

In June of 2007, in the midst of celebrating its 25th anniversary, The Working Centre added an important new dimension to its work of community development. The Council Chamber at Kitchener City Hall was the setting for the first-ever Multicultural Film Festival, hosted by The Working Centre with support from the Social Planning Council, Generation X Alternative Video, the City of Kitchener, the Waterloo Region Arts Council, and various local news media.

The screening and discussion of memorable, thought-provoking films from other countries formed

part of this event, but the centerpiece was the premiere showing of "Northern Choice," an hour-long documentary about immigrants to Waterloo Region.

In at least four ways, this film qualifies as a means of developing the Kitchener-Waterloo community. First is how it was made. Azam Fouk Aladeh, who brought rich experience and credentials in film-making with him when he moved from Syria to Canada, conceived of the film from the start as more than a personal project. It would involve collaborative learning for all concerned, a practical outcome of The Working Centre's Diploma Program in Local Democracy that he completed in 2006.

With support from Margaret O'Shea Bonner and others at The Working Centre, Azam organized a Multicultural Youth Cinema Club. It was this group of young people under Azam's direction that did the actual production, gaining thereby

continued on page 5



# St. John's Kitchen

## Caring for People in an Unconventional Clinic

By Leslie Morgenson

Permaculture is an idea first introduced in the 1970s by Bill Mollison and David Holmgren. It involves basing a design upon what is most natural and creating beneficial relationships, whether for gardens, buildings, or communities. What makes it unusual in today's world is that its conceptual core is an ethical one, rather than economical. Permaculture design includes precious care of the Earth by being thoughtful about how we garden, what we consume, and implies the care of people, where no one is excluded and the most basic needs of all are met.

The guiding principles of St. John's Kitchen and The Working Centre have for years mirrored the Permaculture design with or without acknowledging it. Juxtaposed with the provision of food for all at St. John's Kitchen has always been the need to listen to people and to implement new interpersonal designs when the needs of the population served were clear.

Such was the case with the advent of the Psychiatric Outreach Project (POP) at St. John's Kitchen, with voices from different corners all addressing the need for a novel if not radical approach to the psychiatric difficulties of the homeless population and those at risk of homelessness.

The result is an early warning system that meets the needs of this community as well as having a ripple effect on the entire community... when just one person is listened to and supported. In many ways, it represents an answer forty-some years later to some of the problems of "deinstitutionalization"... an ill-fated decision that at the time was thought to be a benevolent plan.

Beginning in the 1960s the mass discharge of patients from psychiatric hospitals and the discouraging of future admissions was meant to place people with mental health issues into the care of the community. Unfortunately, the 'care' portion of the plan was woefully insufficient, the result of which has been an unrelenting social crisis for people who are on their own with inadequate community support services. For years, the unforeseen result was police involvement, often placing people with mental health concerns

in settings ill-equipped to address their particular needs and wrongly reinforcing in the public mind that this is a "dangerous" population requiring incarceration.

A study by N.J. Herman and C.M Smith ("Mental Hospital Depopulation in Canada: Patient Perspectives") suggests there are six significant themes associated with deinstitutionalization: 1) stigmatization of people with a history of mental health difficulties; 2) an absence of basic living skills; 3) poor housing; 4) poverty; 5) difficulties getting a job; and 6) difficulties accessing after care programs. Eighteen years after this study The Working Centre's Psychiatric Outreach Project gives reason for hope.

The project presently operates with a physician, psychiatric nurse, social worker, office administrator, coordinator, two outreach workers (who link St. John's Kitchen with the Psychiatric Outreach Project) and a psychiatrist and nurse offering psychiatric and clinical consulting services.

As well we have had a fortunate working relationship with a pharmacist at King Pharmacy who has attended conferences to be specifically knowledgeable about psychiatric medication. But aside from this expertise we now have a connection with someone who understands both the financial circumstances and the logistical hardships for this clientele. We have gained more than a pharmacist; we have gained a kind hearted soul who is willing to go the extra mile for people, reducing barriers whenever possible. The compassionate pastors at the Waterloo Regional Dream Centre have also been instrumental in helping people maintain their medications as well as taking care of their spiritual needs.

Constant consideration is given to the needs of individuals, leading us sometimes to feel that we are tending a garden of tender perennials with an entire team trying to determine how best to keep each person stable and healthy. And, as with

a backyard garden, this setting allows us to watch the many seasons of people's lives, giving the team a much fuller perspective than could be ascertained in a ten minute consultation. Those in crisis are planted near, under a close eye; when behaviour affects the entire community, the team is only steps away, ready to deal with the person in a manner that's acceptable and safe for that individual.

The success of this program began with the simple but central consideration-- people need to be listened to. This open communication provides opportunities for outreach workers



to assess when someone may need and want psychiatric care. People are then referred to the psychiatric nurse who determines whether or not the individual requires the assistance of the social worker, the doctor, the psychiatric nurse or perhaps more than just one, combined with the on-going support of the outreach workers on the floor.

Collectively, this is a team which came to the program for a variety of reasons, but with the same mind set. All share an affinity for working with this chronically underserved population... but they also came for a variety of reasons including a love of grassroots projects, the belief that a few people can make a difference, the appeal of a "Nightingale" non-hierarchical model, a program that lacks barriers for patients, the need to understand how people cope, and a willingness to let the necessary trust evolve in its own time. And sure enough, the program began slowly, enabling people to determine for themselves their comfort in this informal accessible project, but today has grown to include a

file of 253 patients, 161 male and 92 female.

It became clear that the response was to move outside the limits of the "medical model". This unusual setting, bringing a variety of services, clearly benefits many. People don't have to venture to a doctor's office which often involves barriers and discomfort for this population, who respond better in an informal and familiar milieu. Staff too can offer effective support by seeing people in a natural setting, getting to know a person's life more completely.

The success of this program is evident in the richer, fuller lives of individuals. People now have more control over their lives and participate more actively within their own community. People who were often in police custody and in and out of the hospital are now stable, the difference being a team of caregivers so that medication is controlled and people are heard and believed.

Phillip Chan, an MA student in Community Psychology at Wilfrid Laurier University is presently conducting a study of the Psychiatric Outreach Project. The preliminary results of interviews with 33 participants of the clinic indicates people's positive perception of their own recovery and their quality of life after accessing the program. The self-reported changes that occurred for people included: "properly" medicated, waking up earlier, being outdoors often, better hygiene, hope and better outlook for the future as a result of staff's respect, and reduced dependence on street drugs and alcohol.

On a recent visit to St. John's Kitchen, one hospital worker expressed surprise upon visiting POP by the wellness of people she had seen over and over again for years. Another hospital staff asked a patient why, after years of being unwell, he was now so stable with the support of POP. His response summed it all up. "They're where I'm at," he

continued on page 5

## Psychiatric Outreach Project

By Stephanie Mancini & Kara Peters Unrau

The Psychiatric Outreach Project (POP) started as a creative response to the psychiatric needs faced by people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness in downtown Kitchener. Originally, Barb Chrysler had a vision of psychiatric care rooted in a place where people are most comfortable, creating a bridge to traditional health care. The Region of Waterloo supported this fledgling vision with a small grant to give it life. Based on the effectiveness of this small project, the Lyle S. Hallman Foundation joined in helping to flesh this project out -- giving us the capacity to more fully staff and integrate this project within downtown Kitchener. At the same time, the new home for St.

John's Kitchen, located at 97 Victoria, was built to include a medical clinic -- now providing a base for the POP. The POP roves the streets of downtown Kitchener -- meetings take place at Mary's Place, the House of Friendship, Queen Street Commons Café, at Williams, or on a street corner. This project attempts to resist the artificial compartmentalization of complex individual needs, and uses a carefully crafted model of collaboration and responsiveness and flexibility.

The result is that the POP provides respectful and supportive mental health care to individuals who are homeless or at risk. This Project has also provided a context in which Outreach Workers, Physicians, Psychiatrists, and Hospital

continued on page 5



## Psychiatric Outreach Project

continued from page 4

Staff can work together to create effective treatments with the self-determination of the individual as the primary approach. The POP is intended to be a resource available for both medical and community agencies to provide respectful, supportive and effective mental health care for those who are homeless or are at risk of homelessness.

We are currently seeking to build this project in a sustainable way and advocate to the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long Term Care (MoHLTC) to find a sustainable source of funding. This project has effectively bridged medical and community resources and is a concrete example of the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long Term Care's attempt to make the accessibility of health care a top priority during the Ministry's transition to a new model for public health care. For health care to be truly accessible it must push beyond the boundaries of the medical institution to include collaboration between medical specialties and between medical institutions and community agencies. In the context of the Psychiatric Outreach Project, this reduction in walls between medical and community resources means that individuals who are homeless or are at risk of homelessness can access mental health care in contexts where they are already accessing other community services. This approach enables individuals to address their mental health care needs as a part of a wider strategy to meet other needs such as housing, income, employment and community involvement.

The POP focused on building relationships. We provide a regular clinic on Thursday mornings at St. John's Kitchen where individuals can meet with a physician. We have also expanded to include other roles which allow us to build relationships and respond flexibly to individual scenarios and needs. This currently includes a psychiatric nurse, a coun-

sellor, and a medical assistant (who is responsible for record keeping, but also plays an important role in welcoming and creating relationships with people who come to the clinic). These roles are dependent on internal collaboration and are all embedded within the outreach work happening in downtown Kitchener and Uptown Waterloo.

We have seen some good links and relationship develop with some of the more formal services in our community. Local psychiatrists and family physicians are beginning to recognize that outreach workers and POP staff are acting as supports for people with complex challenges, allowing psychiatrists or family physicians to create treatment strategies with their patients which can then be facilitated beyond the medical office. There have been many scenarios in which medical professionals have been willing to provide treatment based on the fact that the patients are clearly being supported by community resources. Outreach workers are also finding the POP to be a useful resource as they support individuals who need to include medical treatment as a part of their strategy for dealing with their own complex issues. Other linkages have been formed with the local Court system, with Grand River Hospital, with London Psychiatric services, and more. Dr. Voreganti, a psychiatrist, has established St. John's Kitchen as a satellite clinic, offering services, support and psychiatric services within this context. The People In Motion project is helping individuals who have diabetes as a side-effect of mental health medications, helping with access to healthy eating and exercise facilities.

The response to the Psychiatric Outreach Project has been overwhelmingly positive. Clearly there is a need for this intermediate role and support for the POP is significant and growing. The Psychiatric Outreach Clinic, psychiatric nurse and counsellor are working at capacity based on current funds available. One thing we could not have imagined was the high volume of people using this service effectively, considering our minimal resources. We hope to expand the project to be better equipped to handle the demand and move towards meeting the potential of this innovative project.

## Caring for People

continued from page 4

replied. Both in a physical and philosophical sense, his reply indicated the hope that the development of this project was exactly what people needed.

Those of us at St. John's Kitchen are in the position of knowing a person well and for a lengthy peri-



## Film Festival

continued from page 3

both technical skills and knowledge of their hometown.

The second way "Northern Choice" nourished community was in the respect shown in every scene for the people being filmed, the immigrants sharing their stories for fellow Canadians. In stark contrast to the sensationalism, exploitation and objectification of interviewees commonly seen on network TV, The Working Centre's film-makers treated their subjects as human beings like themselves, entitled to speak in their own voices and listen with their own ears.

The interviewees reciprocated this respect by trusting Azam and his camera crew. Whether from the Middle East or China, Europe, Africa, or Latin America, they spoke honestly, often with much vulnerability. They welcomed Azam and his camera crew into their own homes and workplaces, and let themselves be filmed amidst the cherished symbols of their respective ways of life.

More than anything else, it was the mutual respect and trust between makers and subjects of the film that defined it as a grass-roots community production. The wide variety of paths toward integration into Canadian society came through in a powerful way.

Being professional and self-critical, Azam lamented the technical inadequacies that a bigger budget might have remedied. The inadequacies that bothered him utterly escaped me, and I think most of those who attended the opening at City Hall. The box-office success of Michael Moore's films and the popularity of youtube are compelling evidence that audiences these days prefer authenticity to politeness, plain truth to pol-

ish. This long-established trust and knowledge has been advantageous when members of our community, who lack family support, are hospitalized.

It's simply the work of inclusion, which is essentially what the Permaculture design asks of us. It's more than just being in a community--it's being in communion with people. As Jean Vanier says in From Brokenness to Community, communion means accepting people as they are. Only then are we all able to grow.

Today's audiences have grown weary of too much stage management. I told Azam I think he should forever be restricted to low budgets, lest his emphasis on democratic filmmaking be corrupted by money.

A third way The Working Centre's debut production nourished community was by its visual depictions of Kitchener-Waterloo. Woody Allen's films took on special meaning for me years ago when I was living in New York, because most of them are set in that city. I could recognize the street or park where some scene was filmed. In a similar way, "Northern Choice" made me want to shout, "Hey, this is our town." It is wonderfully indigenous to Kitchener-Waterloo. The viewer sees the cityscape as it looks to a new arrival wondering what the future holds in this specific place.

Fourth and finally, this film strengthened community by the way people gathered for its premiere showing. The members of the youth cinema club were there. So were most of those whose stories the film told. Those in attendance did more than watch and applaud. In the discussion period afterward, they commented, questioned, and argued. Margaret called the producers and subjects to the front and gave each one a Working Centre wildflower bouquet.

The first Multicultural Film Festival was a triumph. An October Movie Fest is already scheduled. Plans for more films are in the works. The cinematic dimension of The Working Centre is off to a promising start.



The Psychiatric Outreach Project (left to right): David Bruinsma, Dale Shantz, Dr. Neil Arya, Jennifer Mains, Mino Mahmoudi, Ellie Rimmer, Tracey Collins, with Hulene Montgomery of the Lyle S. Hallman Foundation

# The Working Centre - UCRC Partnership

## Women and Bikes Project Adds to Growing Exchange

By Rebecca Mancini

It was a fine June day and as the bicycles were lined up, the six women were raring to go. A determined group, these women were taking on the challenge of a race stretching about 10 km in total. Riding straight and hard for one hour over dirt roads filled with holes and mud puddles, the women arrived back tired but triumphant. It was the first time in Ugunja, Kenya that women had raced on the Ugunja roads and highways. They were sure to have attracted attention as they were



making history. Two days later, people of all ages gathered in Waterloo, Canada to join in a parallel friendly ride to Kitchener, celebrating the partnership between The Working Centre and The Ugunja Community Resource Centre (UCRC). It is a partnership that has grown through exchanges of people and ideas.

The connections between The Working Centre and UCRC were initiated in 2004 when UCRC director Aggrey Omondi approached The Working Centre. Both grassroots groups agreed to begin a partnership to support each other through staff, volunteer, and cultural exchanges. With the financial support of Canadian Crossroads International, staff exchanges would be the foundation of the partnership.

Three years later, there is a growing community of people in Kitchener-Waterloo who have ventured to Ugunja. Living on traditional family compounds in the villages surrounding Ugunja town, five of us have dedicated a total of twenty-one months to UCRC. Sarah Anderson and Julian Van Mossel spent six months facilitating UCRC's development of their own website; Katherine Bitzer and Noel Belcourt dedicated a year to working at the Technical Institute, the Health Centre, the Women and Bikes project and became involved in various other UCRC initiatives; and, for three months, I continued Katherine's work on Women and Bikes and strengthened the accounting systems. During these months each of us has been able to gain a deeper appreciation of the Ugunja

*Three years later, there is a growing community of people in Kitchener-Waterloo who have ventured to Ugunja. Living on traditional family compounds in the villages surrounding Ugunja town, five of us have dedicated a total of twenty-one months to UCRC.*

culture, of how UCRC works and how it affects the community.

The UCRC began in the late 1980s when a group of concerned farmers gathered together to develop their understanding of farming practices. They began looking for ways to build their knowledge and resources and found their solution in creating a library where people could access information. It was not long before a farmers' cooperative and St Paul's Health Centre came to fruition. With other ideas beginning to develop,

The Ugunja Community Resource Centre was officially formed and has worked to facilitate further discussions and community initiatives. In a primarily rural setting with widespread villages and little opportunity for large gatherings, they provide

people with mixed-use space and projects where they can gather, bump up against one another and build on ideas and momentum.

Over the years UCRC has grown to include not only the library, the farmers' cooperative and the health centre, but also a high school, a technical institute, an early childhood development centre, a microfinance project, advocacy and networking groups and various IT related projects. At Nyasanda Technical Institute (NYATI) the Masonry students practiced their book learning by building a new home for a local widow and a maternity ward at St Paul's Health Centre. While a core group of women are learning bicycle mechanics in the Women and Bikes project, they also promote the concept of women and girls accessing bikes by talking to people in the community, by riding their bikes and by teaching others the skills they are learning. These are the tools that allow people to engage society in creative and unique ways, what Ivan Illich would call convivial tools. These tools are helping people to move beyond basic subsistence living, while at the same time people are able to contribute and participate in the community around them.

The philosophical similarities between UCRC and The Working Centre have been obvious to the four UCRC staff that spent a total of ten months in Kitchener. Living with host families and at The Working Centre's hospitality house, Charles Ogada, Rose On'ech, Sylvia Wombare and Aggrey Omondi joined The Working Centre community where they participated in

our projects, and worked at developing community support. From their initiative, a new group has sprung up in the Kitchener-Waterloo community--The Friends of Ugunja network; a dedicated group of people who have strong connections to UCRC, personally or through family.

It is from these connections that the Women and Bikes project was developed to focus on providing women and girls in Ugunja with access to bikes, riding lessons and maintenance training. The bikes are essentially a tool for advocating women's equality and the effects of this were obvious as the women arrived back at the finish line after the race in June. It was not only the competition of the race that excited them, but what it symbolized. On the other side of the world, people gathered after the ride from Waterloo to Kitchener and celebrated the women's achievement. For UCRC and The Working Centre, our partnership has succeeded in building bridges between two vastly different cultures. The spirit that was evident on both sides demonstrates our most important connection, that of exploring and providing access to tools that give people the opportunity to build their community, their resources and, most importantly, their spirit.

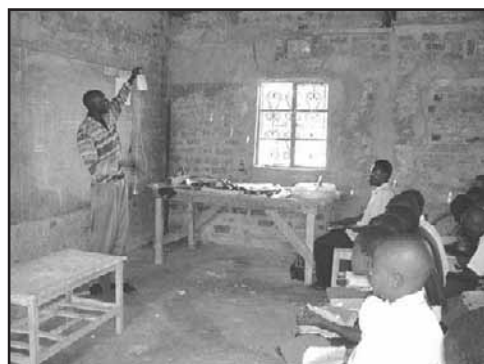


## Education for Living

By Katherine Bitzer

Nyasanda Technical Institute (NYATI) grew out of local ideas for a community that provides accessible education and skills training opportunities to its members.

First, some background. Kenya is divided into seven provinces; these are sub-divided into a total of 69 districts. Ugunja is located in the Siaya District of Nyanza Province, a rural area on the edge of Lake Victoria. According to 2002 data (Institute of Economic Affairs, Kenya), Siaya has a population of 480,000 and a density of 316 people/km<sup>2</sup>. The level of absolute poverty within this population is at 58%, generally defined as



*The Nyasanda Technical Institute (NYATI) grew out of local ideas to provide high school level training opportunities.*

living on less than \$1/day and/or unable to meet basic food and non-food requirements; the mean household income is \$45 Cdn/month. Many children die before their first birthday. The district records a high infant mortality rate of 135 per 1000 live births (compared to Canada's rate of 5.3) and overall life expectancy is 43 years. These statistics give some idea of the challenges that people face in their day-to-day lives: health, education, employment, food and personal security to name a few.

Siaya District enjoys a primary school enrolment rate of 81%. It is important to note that it was only after the 2002 elections that free primary education was granted to all Kenyans. There are still some fees attached to this "free" edu-

cation, and most schools are understaffed, overpopulated, and struggle with a lack of other resources, but most children can now access primary education. Unfortunately, this figure drops drastically for secondary school enrolment which stands at only 22%. This means that nearly 80% of high-school age children are not in school! This is mainly because most families simply cannot afford the secondary school fees and so most people cannot move beyond a Grade 8 education.

Only 14% of people in Nyanza Province are reported as having either wage or informal sector employment. This leaves a staggering 86% of the population unemployed. Now although most people of this region are involved in farming, it is largely for subsistence purposes; most people are not meeting their basic food and non-food requirements. Throw into the mix an HIV infection rate of around 24% (one of the highest rates in the country) and serious land degradation issues, and you can start to imagine the challenges that people face.

The Nyasanda Technical Institute

# Harambee - Pulling Together

By Sarah Anderson

In February of 2006, when Julian and I were volunteers at the Ugunja Community Resource Centre in Western Kenya, our friend Betty invited us to a harambee fundraiser for her mother. In the morning we arrived to a small house full of women drinking tea and eating homemade donuts, looking smart in their boldly patterned uniforms.

This wasn't your typical bake sale or car wash. It was a harambee. And harambees make me nervous.

Another foreign volunteer had warned Julian and me about the process. With pockets full of shillings, people use fines, counter-fines, dares, wit, bravado, dancing and singing to compel, embarrass, or harass others



into giving up their money.

In Swahili "harambee" is a call to pull together - a call so strong that the concept was used as a nation-builder when Kenya gained independence. The UCRC encourages people to put the spirit of harambee into practice - pulling ideas, energy and resources together for community development.

The Twelve Friends Women's Group is a typical example of this spirit, with neighbours gathering regularly to share farming strategies, resources and personal support. Today's harambee, organized by the group, would help Betty's mother cover costly funeral expenses.

The drama began when one member showed up late. The group ordered her to pay a fine of 20 shillings. She threw her coin into the collection plate and, to make up for her tardiness, greeted each person in the room with a French-style cheek-to-cheek hug, wiggling her bum for added flair. When she got to Julian, the women laughed and cheered. He was the only man present, let alone a strange, skinny, white one.



*In Swahili "harambee" is a call to pull together - a call so strong that the concept was used as a nation-builder when Kenya gained independence. The Ugunja Community Resource Centre encourages people to put the spirit of harambee into practice - pulling ideas, energy and resources together for community development.*

Julian and I were at a disadvantage. We had to interpret dramatic gestures, songs and laughter with almost no understanding of the language being spoken. To start the event, everyone was to introduce themselves and put money onto the plate based on how much they respected their own name. Betty translated when she could. If someone pleased the group with a funny introduction or generous donation, the women danced and sang while adding more coins to the plate.

This was when the worries began to roll around in my head. How much should I give? How much will others give? I knew that the women expected that as a wealthy foreigner I would give more. And, since I had more money, shouldn't I? But giving more would only reinforce a paternal dynamic that I wanted to work against. It's better to give modestly and look stingy. Right?

Luckily or not, I was able to shove these questions aside when Julian and I realized that we had forgotten to bring our money. Our wad of shillings was far away in another village, under our bed where we had left it. After a few whispered calculations we realized that between the two of us, Julian and I didn't have enough shillings to introduce ourselves in a manner remotely respectful of our names. Just in time, Betty discreetly passed me a folded up bill and we were back in the game.

When she was introduced and the group rose to their feet, I got up and danced along. I tried my best to copy the local dance moves and I think that for a foreigner I didn't do too badly. Whenever I danced, the women across from me kept catching my eye and laughing. I like to think they were laughing with me.

One member scolded the women for not dancing with enough enthusiasm after her introduction. Everyone threw in their coins as penance and got up to give her a proper show of appreciation. Julian hadn't danced; shyer about dancing in Kenya than he was in Canada. I schemed with Betty, wanting the whole group to put money in to force Julian to dance. But,

before we could fine him, he got up and did a little move in response to Betty's mom's introduction.

I leaned over to Betty. "I have another idea. Julian should fine the group for having too many women at the harambee." Betty agreed, so I whispered my plan to Julian. When ordering a fine, it seemed you needed to give an amount of money large enough to encourage others to join in. All we had were 2 US dollars that happened to be in Julian's wallet. Though not worth much and difficult to exchange in Ugunja, we knew that these foreign bills represented an embarrassing amount of power and wealth. It was time to capitalize on our only assets to get ourselves into the drama.

Julian waved the dollar and placed it in the empty plate. Stepping into the middle of the circle, he proceeded to teasingly insult his hosts. "What a great disappointment and shame to be the only man present. You can help me feel less lonely, by adding to this dollar." The women laughed and clapped when Betty translated, pleased by his money-making complaint.

I used the other US dollar to convince one woman, an amazing

dancer, to give me impromptu lessons. With the group singing, she danced over and started shaking her shoulders. We faced each other and shook our chests, bending over so that our heads almost touched at waist level. I tried to keep up in the dance-off, bum out and shaking high in the air. The whole room laughed. "Ah aah! Sarah, you really danced," Betty said.

After everyone had introduced themselves, guests gave a final offering and the group leader and secretary counted the money. In total about 6,000 Kenyan shillings were raised, or 100 Canadian dollars. Not bad for a handful of people. Especially since one dollar usually stretches a lot further in Kenya than in Canada. To celebrate, Betty's mom served a feast of chicken, tilapia, beef, sukuma wiki kale and ugali. Then it was time to head home to Ugunja.

Meanwhile, back in Kitchener in 2007, I wonder if I'll ever get the courage to organize a dancing, singing, hooplah of a harambee fundraiser like that one. Hmm... For now, I see the harambee spirit living through The Working Centre where, as in Ugunja, people pull together to get good work done.

## Education for Living

continued from page 6

(NYATI) was founded by the UCRC to try to address the dual problems of poverty and lack of employment opportunities for youth and adults. NYATI is trying to be a part of the solution by providing affordable technical education and life skills to youth and adults in the local community. Through the development of trade, business and agricultural skills and knowledge, these students will be in a better position to overcome the obstacles of poverty and limited opportunities and to support themselves and their families. As well, through the development of partnerships, networks and learning opportunities within and for the community, NYATI will help to increase the health and well-being of the local community as a whole.

Much of my time in Ugunja was spent working with NYATI staff to help grow and develop this fledgling institution. I was involved in the development of administrative and financial systems, sourcing/developing funds, strengthening program delivery and income-generating activities and working also at a board level towards strategic planning, site development and government registration. It's not always glamorous or easy but, step-by-step, folks in Ugunja are building a place that will be the hub of "Education for Life" in the Ugunja community.

Now in its second year, NYATI is establishing itself as both a technical school offering skills-based train-

*This means that nearly 80 out of every 100 high-school age children are not in school! A major reason for this number is the cost of secondary school: most families simply cannot afford the secondary school fees and so most people cannot move beyond a Grade 8 education.*

ing in trades such as carpentry, motor vehicle mechanics, and tailoring etc., and a hub for promoting and enabling education within the community. The institute continues to face many challenges; juggling the demands of staff salary, site development, equipment and supply needs, and limited financial resources. Management systems need to be strengthened. Many students struggle or are unable to pay their school fees. The size and condition of the building itself is wholly inadequate, and there is no electricity. But a seed has been planted and the fact that the student population has nearly tripled in size from the initial enrolment of 15, is testament to the fact that NYATI's roots are growing deep and its branches are aiming high.



The Multicultural Cinema Club at  
The Working Centre, in association with  
The City of Kitchener, presents

# So Long, Summer!



A FREE night of film and music on  
Victoria Park Island  
Saturday, September 22<sup>nd</sup>,  
7:00pm - 9:00pm



Bring blankets, chairs, and a bag of popcorn!

**Live Music (7:00pm-8:00pm):**

- ★ Fernan Enriquez - South American Music (guitar & flute)
- ★ Tony tohid Ahdifard - Sufi singer

**Documentary Film: Northern Choice (8:00pm-9:00pm):**

In this first documentary production of the Multicultural Cinema Club, immigrants from Poland, Ethiopia, Guyana, Syria, Guatemala, Peru, Egypt, and China talk about their experiences, opinions, successes, disappointments, and how the journey of immigration affected their lives. Directed by Azam Fouk Aladeh.



## Simple Living Workshops

Are you feeling that life is full of stress – that it's nothing more than a mad rush from one thing to the next? That you never seem to get everything done? That you have no time to just relax? Are you looking for some balance in your life? To find others with similar concerns?

This September, The Working Centre will offer an 11-week pro-

gram on Simple Living. Participants will go through Live Simply: A Simplicity Circle Study Guide which asks individuals "to examine their lives and consider the consequences of their choices." Each week, the program presents another theme for discussion (eg. work, time, celebration, food, consumerism).

Conversations are relaxed and informal. Ideas emerge from participants' own life experiences that make for interesting and, at times, lively and animated discussions.

## Dream Home Lottery

continued from page 1

With the assistance of hundreds of businesses, workers, trades, and the essential support of thousands of loyal ticket purchasers, \$4,870,000 has been raised for Waterloo Region Charities.

This year, everyone is excited by the outstanding organizational efforts of Eastforest Homes. Their management, staff, and suppliers have embraced the 2007 Dream Home project beyond the Rotary Club's wildest dreams. Eastforest Homes set out to build the Dream Home at no cost to The Rotary Club through enlisting the voluntary efforts of their staff, trades, and suppliers. This beautiful home is now available for all to see.

We are grateful to the Rotary Club of Kitchener-Conestoga members who commit thousands of hours of personal time to the Dream Home to make available fundraised money that makes our community stronger.

Tips are shared; fresh insights presented. We learn from each other.

Participation in the Simple Living program is a wonderful way to meet like-minded people and perhaps even be rewarded by a new friendship.

To register, please call The Working Centre at 743-1151 ext. 114.

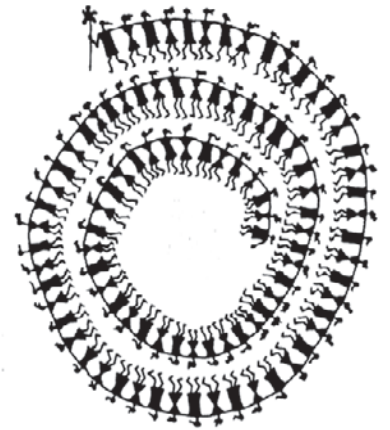
## 25 Years on Queen St. S.

continued from page 3

all who were present had in some way played a role in shaping The Working Centre.

Greetings were brought from John Milloy MPP, Mayor Carl Zehr and Regional Councillor Jean Haalboom. Jim and Sue Hallman were invited to speak on behalf of their philanthropic efforts towards our work. Gord Crosby, President of The Working Centre Board spoke of how The Working Centre community had grown on Queen Street against all the odds.

Queen Street South had a special feeling that day after many years of being down. It was clear for all who spent some time wandering through the projects and buildings that culture and community are alive and flourishing on Queen Street South.



## Alternative Work Catalogue

### Coming this fall...

The full selection of books offered through the Alternative Work Catalogue will be available for sale at The Queen Street Commons Café at 43 Queen Street South!



Over 500 titles on topics such as the environment, education, poverty, social alternatives, the philosophy of work, job searching, simple living, and more.



**The Lichen Factor**

The Quest for Community Development in Canada

Jim Lotz

The collected wisdom of "a very wise man" describing how community development, governments and individuals can work together to create better societies. Reviews the history of community development as he has seen it and explores its potential and limitations using practical experience combined with vision.

288 pages WC04 \$22.95 softcover



**Allow the Water**

Anger, fear, power, work, sexuality, community - and the spirituality and practice of nonviolence

Leonard Desroches

A principled advocate of nonviolence, Desroches imagines a world without armies, guns, or automobiles. Allow the Water provides its readers with a fantastic array of inspiring stories not found in mainstream media. He offers practical, peaceful alternatives for many modern practices that encourage or breed violence such as the penal system, and suggests alternate uses for the world's armies. This empowering message of peace offers hope for those suffering from the tragic consequences of war.

513 pages AW01 \$24.00 softcover



**The Great, Good Place**

Cafés, Coffee Shops, Book Stores, Bars, Hair Salons and Other Hangouts at the Heart of a Community.

Ray Oldenburg

"Third places", or "great, good places" are those public spaces where members of the community gather to put aside the concerns of daily life, enjoy the company of their peers, and engage in lively conversation. Oldenburg argues that these places are essential to a community's wellbeing and are a basis for grassroots democracy. He portrays, analyses, and promotes these places of informal discourse as crucial elements of any healthy community.

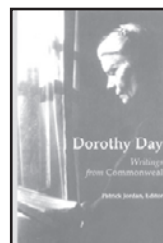
336 pages GG01 \$27.50 softcover

**Writings from Commonweal**

Dorothy Day, Edited by Patrick Jordan

Dorothy Day, arguably the most influential person in the history of American Catholicism, was best known for her writings in 'the Catholic Worker,' though many of her most insightful articles and letters appeared in the Catholic Journal 'Commonweal.' In this book you will find a collection of Day's Commonweal writings, offering the reader an overview of her exceptional life, prophetic insights, spiritual depth, and memorable prose.

173 pages AB13 \$18.50 softcover



For more information on these and other books, visit [www.theworkingcentre.org](http://www.theworkingcentre.org)