

Newsletter

“Working together to build a stronger, kinder and more just community”



MINISTRY COORDINATOR TO FULL TIME

Again this Spring the Board met for a visioning day to review our progress, set priorities and to plan for the future. One of our goals for the past few months has been to increase Emily to full time. There was never any doubt that the need for programs that ministered to our communities was far greater than what even one full time person could adequately address, but when Emily began her ministry last July, we felt it was prudent to limit her hours to half time due to financial realities. We are grateful for the wonderful response from our support base last December, which was most encouraging and allowed us to finish the year in the black. We have now taken a step of faith and are pleased to announce that Emily will work full time in identifying needs, setting up programs, and soliciting volunteers and other resources to help run these programs.

This decision will result in a significant budget deficit but we believe that God will honour the decision and the funds will be there to support this increased ministry. Please pray that as the number of programs and contacts increase, the needs of individuals will be met and lives will be changed as they see Christ's love reflected in our staff and ministry volunteers. Also pray for Emily that she will know God's strength, guidance and presence as she works with the Stonegate and Lake Shore communities.



EMILY'S UPDATE

I cannot believe that it has almost been a year since I joined the Stonegate Ministry team. It has been a year of meeting wonderful people in both the Stonegate and Mimico neighbourhoods and learning the ins and outs of a dynamic ministry.

I'd like to highlight one program this year that Stonegate has facilitated in the Mimico area called "God, Coffee & Me". We run the program out of a local coffee shop where we gather together to meet Jesus in the book of Mark over a free cup of coffee or tea. It has been exciting to meet people from the neighbourhood and watch our study community grow. *(continued on next page)*

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

Stonegate Ministry is an alliance of local Christian churches working in partnership with the community through shared resources, offering programs and opportunities to build healthy relationships, strong families, a sense of belonging and a deeper relationship with God. We endeavour to address the needs of the whole person and families to bridge toward a better life and to be a faithful voice to ensure everyone in the community is treated with justice and Christian compassion.

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We have celebrated new jobs and new grandchildren and have supported each other through depression and injury. Here are two stories I would like to share from the group.

One of our attendees has been wrestling through faith questions and how to live out her faith. One day she walked in and announced, "I'm grumpy." We all smiled and said that we were glad she was honest and expressed gratitude that she had joined us. As we went through what it means to be a follower of Jesus, her whole disposition changed. When it was time to leave she had a huge smile on her face and left with a bounce in her step. It was exciting to see her transformation. In a following session she shared how much she enjoyed the Bible Study, that she liked the venue in the coffee shop and hoped that it would continue.

The second story I'd like to share demonstrates how our "God, Coffee and Me" group has become a caring community. I can see this strongly played out in how everyone has come around and supported one of our participants who had a bad fall and suffered a broken back and corrective surgery. It was heart warming to see the many cards and gifts and visits to the hospital by this group. These visits required travelling across the city via transit. I was especially impressed by one participant's visit that included a haircut and a nail polishing. Each time I have visited she has shared how significant those visits have been. It's wonderful to see the growing sense of caring, love and support for each other.

I look forward to seeing how this community continues to evolve and I am honoured to be part of the process of learning and growing together.

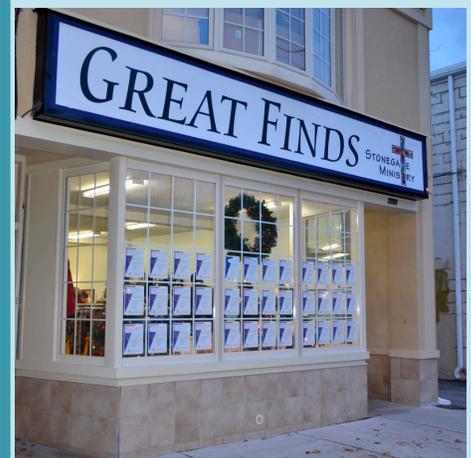
Emily Slotegraaf

Great Finds – Great Ministry

Our store on the Lake Shore has been operating since December 1, 2014 and continues to attract people from the community as they seek not only great finds of clothing and housewares for their family but also find helpful, compassionate staff and volunteers who are their because they care about the people that walk through the door. The store is just one of our ministries, although it is by far the most prominent and visible. As a result, many think it is our only ministry. Besides the obvious help to families struggling to make ends meet, it is a vital link in facilitating connections with individuals from the community. Last month, there were over 850 sales transactions. While this would include clients who came back and bought additional goods, it indicates the number of people who are regularly experiencing the care of volunteers who are interested in every aspect of their welfare. It is the primary contact for introducing people into the varied programs that are run in both the Stonegate and in the Lake Shore communities.

Visit our store GREAT FINDS at

2358 Lakeshore Blvd. W.



An excerpt from the Board Chair's Annual Report

"On a recent visit for an afternoon meeting, I walked into what is not an atypical scene in the back office of the store. Jeannie, our dedicated Store Manager was scurrying to find something to augment the can of soup that was already being consumed by a young woman who had not had anything to eat all day and could not hold back the tears; maybe tears of gratitude, distress, or both. Stories like this illustrate why the Ministry exists and why our staff and volunteers faithfully and joyfully serve.

(Copies of our 2015 Annual Report are available for the asking. Email or phone the office and request either a hard copy or an email attachment.)

Our Indispensible Volunteers

The Ministry is blessed with a group of 30 to 40 volunteers who work in the store, who assist in ministry programs and do the necessary upkeep and facility improvements. Meet several of our committed volunteers.

➤ We both worship at Kingsway Baptist Church and have been volunteering at the Stonegate Plaza store and now Great Finds for several years. We think it is safe to say that Win is our oldest volunteer as she recently celebrated her 93rd birthday. Win is our quality specialist as only clothing that is in very good condition passes her discriminating standards.

➤ A safe haven is what many of our patrons call Great Finds. It is a place where they feel accepted if they are lonely; comforted if they are sad and yes - a store to purchase good products at great prices. On a recent Wednesday afternoon, one of our regular customers told us about one of her patients who has Parkinson's disease and struggles to open jars. Imagine how excited she was to find an automatic jar opener at our store. Who knew there even was such a device!

Volunteering at Great Finds is such a rewarding experience for both of us.



Submitted by Win Fisher and June Roberts

Get to know another GREAT FINDS VOLUNTEER!

2016 marks **Lisa Katona's** 10 year anniversary with Stonegate Ministry. She first started in the summer of 2006 at the Outreach Store at the Stonegate Plaza. At the time, Lisa was retired and was looking for an activity to fill her days. She was encouraged by her friend Sheila Kingsley, another volunteer, to volunteer at the store. During the transition time between the closure of the Outreach Store and the opening of Great Finds, Lisa continued to dedicate her time by volunteering at Stonegate Ministry's Sales Tent at the Stonegate Farmers Market.



Lisa likes volunteering at Great Finds because she enjoys serving others. She often engages customers about their day and tries to help them out as much as she can. She also participates and sometimes volunteers at the Horner Avenue Seniors Centre when she is not serving others at Great Finds.

This 78 year old spunky lady enjoys reading, watching movies, walking and swimming and you can find her Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays usually chatting with the customers and tidying up the store. By her own admission she is quite a neat freak.

We congratulate Lisa on her 10 years of service and appreciate her dedication, loyalty and hard work throughout the years!

GREAT FINDS IS NOMINATED FOR THE GEMS OF ETOBICOKE

2016 marked the second year that Great Finds was nominated for MPP Peter Milczyn's Gems of Etobicoke. This award recognizes and appreciates outstanding small businesses and service organizations that are unique to South Etobicoke and make the Community a more vibrant place to live, work and play. Great Finds opened its doors on December 1st, 2014 and what an honour it was to be nominated in its first year of service to the Community. Though Great Finds did not win in its category this year, it was wonderful to be nominated for the second year in a row.

Congratulations to all the Staff and Volunteers who dedicate their time and effort to help their Community.

SUMMER SIZZLER



Once again Stonegate Ministry hosted its annual Summer Sizzler on Victoria Day. About 375 people, mostly from the Stonegate community, were welcomed to the event. Attendees were able to enjoy the good weather and entertainment with fellow residents. There were games, face painting and a bouncy castle for the children, as well as hot dogs, potato salad and drinks for all. The Christ Church St. James' choir serenaded those attending the event followed by their jazz group and musicians from Threshold Ministries. The Sizzler was only able to happen as a result of the tremendous effort of the many volunteers and the hard-working staff. Thank you to all those involved!



You can find Great Finds & our office at 2358 Lakeshore Blvd. West, Etobicoke, M8V 1C3
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Contact Emily Slotegraaf, our Ministry Coordinator at 416 523 8611 or emily.stonegateministry@gmail.com

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stonegateministryoffice@rogers.com

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Donations may be made by cheque or on line at

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