

Fall 2018

Newsletter

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



Great Finds – more than “just a Thrift Store”



Many know that the Great Finds thrift store is a **great place to shop** because of the affordable prices. There are always weekly specials and new merchandise comes in every day. The store is clean and cozy, bright and cheery, and the staff and volunteers are **helpful and friendly**.

Since we opened the store in December 2014, the Mimico Lake Shore community has made us feel welcomed. Customers come in regularly to get a great deal. Great Finds has truly lived up to its name. But Great Finds has become **more than just a thrift store**. Not only has it become a meeting place for friends and family to get together to shop, it has also grown to become **a place for those seeking comfort, refuge, solace and acceptance**.

We welcome **people who are homeless**, some of whom have come straight from being released from the hospital after an injury and are looking for food and clothing. For those **who are hungry**, we provide food for them to eat right in the store, sometimes with additional food to take with them and any clothing that they may need.

We also see people who have experienced **isolation and rejection** to the point that they are surprised when we greet them by name and want to talk with them. We often can comfort those who come in feeling sad and alone after suffering a loss or a tragedy in their family. We take the time to sit with them at our *community corner* or speak with them in a quiet spot in the store.

Great Finds has become **part of the family** here in our neighbourhood. We have become like a mother to those who need sheltering; like a father for those who need guidance; like a sister for those who need to share their issues; like a brother for those who just need unconditional acceptance. But **most of all we are a friend** who cares and shares their issues, laughter and joy.

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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.

(continued from page 1) Though Great Finds is a modest thrift store, the people that volunteer have made a **big difference** to many lives in our community – beyond the obvious ministry of providing much needed family clothing at very affordable cost. The volunteers and I make every effort to provide a caring and loving environment, and we are always humbled to see how God works in the lives of the people we serve. *We are not just another Thrift Store.*

Jeannie Martinez
Great Finds Manager



You Prayed – They Came



The hope was clear: for a grand time in bringing a children's Bible Club experience into the Stonegate community 'under the big blue sky'.

The hope was realized as children (19 in total) joined us at the Bell Manor Park for 4 days of songs, games, crafts and excellent Bible presentations concerning the life and gift of Jesus.

All of this was in partnership with Kingsway Baptist Church, Park Lawn Baptist Church,

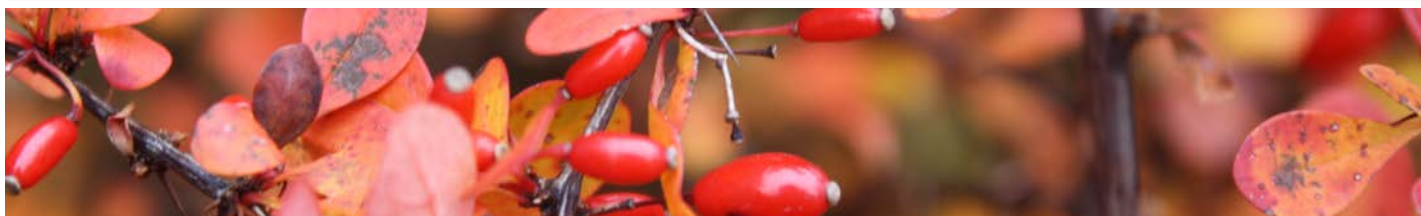
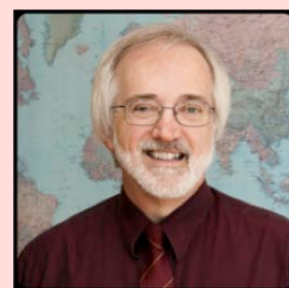
Christ Church St. James and Stonegate Ministry. A team faithfully supported this venture daily in prayer. As boys and girls made new friends, they were lovingly invited into a friendship with the God who made them, loves them, and gave His very life for them.

And there was fun! Great fun.

We have buckets of reasons to be thankful with a huge bunch of those reasons being for all who prayed for and encouraged children to give this a try.

On behalf of all who partnered to make this happen, please accept our deepest thanks.

Bruce Smith
Missional Coordinator, Christ Church St. James





Another helping hand at Great Finds

This past week I sat down with one of our volunteers to see the role that Stonegate Ministry has played in her life. Let's start from the beginning:

Lucy moved to Toronto a few years ago to be closer to family. This meant that she needed to build her whole community over again. When Great Finds moved into Mimico, she saw an opportunity to volunteer. As someone on disability, Lucy explains that she wanted to not just be on the receiving end, but **contribute to her community** as well. After popping in and out of the store multiple times, and mentioning her willingness to volunteer, she was asked to take on a volunteer shift. Lucy explains that her first experience was organizing inventory in the basement of the store where she felt claustrophobic and began to doubt whether she would be able to continue. Lucy loves how Jeannie, the store manager, addressed her fear. Instead of receiving



the expected "good-bye, thanks for coming" response, Jeannie sat down with her, talked about her struggles, and the fears soon dissipated. Lucy still volunteers today and looking back, realizes that the **compassion and caring** she experienced was not unusual but is evident daily at Great Finds. She appreciates being in an environment that strives to find a way to journey with volunteers and customers alike through their struggles. A personal example is when a staff member accompanied her to some intense and often confusing medical appointments.



Through the four years with Stonegate Ministry, Lucy has participated in a number of programs including God, Coffee, & Me and the Food Bank. **Her faith has grown and developed** through these experiences to the point where she was asked to co-lead one of the summer programs. She explains that it really stretched her out of her comfort zone and she is grateful for that.

She shares that before her involvement, she was **lonely and struggled emotionally** and her experience with the Ministry has enriched her relationships and deepened her sense of community. She sums up her experience by describing Stonegate Ministry as "**Christianity enacted.**"



*Emily Slotegraaf,
Ministry Program Director*

Mark your calendar! – Nov. 3rd

Stonegate Ministry *Needs your help*

to make this **Fundraiser Dinner** a huge success

Saturday, November 3rd -6:30 pm pre-dinner drinks, 7:00 pm dinner

Christ Church St. James Anglican Church

194 Park Lawn Road

Enjoy a lovely buffet Dinner & Auction

- ☀ Pre-dinner drinks & nibbles
- ☀ Poached Salmon & Beef Tenderloin
- ☀ Variety of Salads
- ☀ Many Vegan & Gluten-Free options
- ☀ Amazing dessert buffet
- ☀ Dinner music
- ☀ Hear stories about Stonegate
- ☀ Live & Silent Auction including:
 - ☀ Weekend at a cottage
 - ☀ Catered dinner at a home
 - ☀ Blue Jay tickets
 - ☀ Shaw tickets to “A Christmas Carol”

More information at www.stonegateministry.ca



HOW CAN YOU HELP STONEGATE?

- ☀ Come to the dinner – tickets are \$45.00/person or \$360/table
- ☀ Donate items or services to Auction
- ☀ Encourage businesses to donate items to Auction
- ☀ Ideas for possible auction items:
 - ☀ Round of golf
 - ☀ Tickets to a play, concert or sports event
 - ☀ Gift card for restaurant meal
- ☀ PRAY FOR A SUCCESSFUL EVENT



Great Finds store and Ministry office address – 2358 Lake Shore Blvd. W. Etobicoke M8V 1B6

Contact us at 416.255.6282 or office@stonegateministry.ca or stonegateministry.ca

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