

Winter 2018



Newsletter

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

The Domino Effect

When one life is impacted, there's a domino effect. This is so evident in Wanda's life, (not her real name).

Wanda grew up in a home where **alcohol and weed** were the normal weekend culture. She started drinking when she was 16 and smoked pot when she was 26. She married in her early twenties, had two sons and discovered that her husband had become an alcoholic. One of her boys is now a young adult and is struggling with the same culture in which she grew up.

Depression and low self-esteem plagued Wanda, and drugs and alcohol were how she responded.

Searching for an answer, she began attending a church in the neighbourhood and **accepted Christ as her Lord**, and was given the strength to stop drinking.

However, the struggle with weed continued. Wanda kept **her addiction** hidden because she felt shameful and believed it was too big a burden to share with others. She felt her addiction was hopeless and that she would probably die an addict. Wanda is grateful that this was not God's plan for her. One day she happened to read our newsletter and started attending **God, Coffee & Me**, the Bible study in a local Mimico coffee shop. She admits that she would sometimes meet a friend, smoke up, and come to the Bible study high. But she sensed that the people at this gathering loved her as part of the Body of Christ. She started to read Scripture daily. She began to feel hope, strength and purpose in her life and shares that God started to convict her. She realized she needed to quit and would not get help if she continued to hide her addiction. *(continued on page 2)*



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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) . When she heard of the **“Release Group”** program, she knew that this is where she needed to be. It was healing to be surrounded by other people who had similar struggles, and she sensed the love of God as she followed the recovery program.



For almost two months, she has been sober. She says she can clearly see the pain and destruction that alcohol and weed have played in her own and her family’s life. The domino effect? Her husband and boys see the difference. She loves how God is **hearing her prayers and slowly healing her family**. Her husband has been sober for a year now and God is using her to speak into her mother’s life. Wanda has been continually praying for those she used to hang out with and looks forward to the day when they accept Christ as well.

Praise the LORD! for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever. Psalm 106

Emily Slotegraaf, Ministry Program Director



“ALPHA OR BUST”

It has been a real joy to serve alongside Emily Slotegraaf in an Alpha Ministry partnership with Stonegate Ministry and Christ Church St. James. Close to 40 people are taking this Thursday lunch program each week. It is a terrific mix of friends from church, the food bank and the Great Finds Store. There have been **many highlights**, but one in particular *'made our day'*:

*On our 3rd week, a tall gent we've come to know through the food bank walked in. He'd seen a small advertisement on a bulletin board near the library and thought he would give it a try. It was a huge joy to have him come and folks welcomed him with genuine enthusiasm and love. The following week, **he came back for more**, with a 'smile on the dial'. As we prepared to wrap things up for the meeting, the invitation was given for anyone who might like to pipe in with a quick prayer. Many people jumped in, including this tall gentleman. His prayer made our entire Alpha effort abundantly worthwhile: "Thank you, Jesus, for loving me". That was it. **Six words that said it all**. The light had dawned on him. He knew it was real.*

We sure would value your ongoing prayers for this Alpha journey. The meetings resume for the month of January, hopefully with many more stories to celebrate.

Bruce Smith

Missional Coordinator, Christ Church St. James

The Mimico Baptist Church and Kingsway Baptist Church youth groups annually donate their time and efforts to decorate the store for Christmas. The Christmas tree was set up, festive ornaments, garlands and lights were hung as the young people contributed in making the store a welcoming place this holiday season. Even during their dinner break, they took time to reflect on their role in the mission of Stonegate Ministry and how the organization interacts with the community it serves.



Many thanks go out to all who helped out this evening and to **Jon Matthews** (Director of Youth & Young Adult Ministries – Kingsway Baptist), **Pastor Jim Sanderson** (Mimico Baptist Church), **Alvin Lau** (Youth Ministries Associate – CBOQ).

Jeannie Martinez

WHAT CHRISTMAS AT GREAT FINDS MEANS TO ME



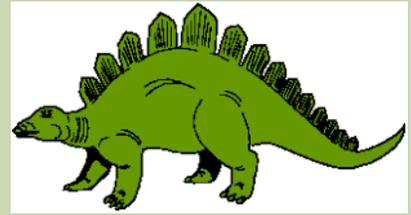
I remember my first experience with **Stonegate Ministry** in 2010 at the old **Outreach store** on Berry Rd. My son and I had just discovered the store during Christmas time, so we went inside to take a look around.

At the time, I was unemployed, having lost my job due to a restructuring process at the company I had worked for 21 years. I had just explained to my son that things were tight with money and that he may not get many gifts for Christmas that year from me.

When we went into the store, we were able to find a couple of shirts on sale for my son. One of the volunteers – who is still a volunteer at the store to this day - helped us out and even tried to accommodate my low budget at the time. However, it was only when we got to the toy section that my son's eyes really lit up, for there on the floor was the biggest toy dinosaur he had ever seen. He went down on the floor, picked it up and then looked at me with pleading eyes.

The dinosaur was \$2 and of course, we had to get it. The Outreach store also had a Christmas tree, decorated with several individual ornaments that my son was able to choose for our small tree at home.

Though it was just a simple toy and some ornaments, it made such an impact on our lives. For a brief moment, we were given a glimpse of hope and light that day, and our lives did not seem quite so bleak and discouraging.



Having experienced that moment, each Christmas here at **Great Finds** I take some time to look around the store. When I see the Christmas tree adorned with ornaments and the festive lights and decorations hung throughout, I think back to that day with my son when we had very little, and give thanks for the blessings my son and I received that day and every day since.

I am so blessed to be amongst the Volunteers of Great Finds who dedicate their time to serve not only our regular customers, but also those who are homeless and need shelter and clothing; those who are hungry and thirsty; those who are lost and alone; and those who are sick and fearful.

Through the years, Great Finds has not only become a great place to shop, it has become a meeting place, a social gathering, a safe haven and an extension of a family home. I thank all the volunteers and the community of customers and donors who have become part of the Stonegate Ministry family, and I count all the blessings that have been given to ensure that Great Finds continues to do God's work during Christmas and throughout the whole year.

*Jeannie Martinez,
Great Finds Manager*

Thank You – Unit 7 of the Kingsway-Lambton's UCW

Stonegate Ministry would like to thank those members of Unit 7 of the United Church Women of Kingsway-Lambton United Church for the awesome job they did in preparing the meal for our fundraising dinner, which was held on November 3, 2018. The meal consisted of a selection of delicacies including poached salmon in white wine sauce, beef tenderloin, scalloped potatoes and an array of delicious salads. The attendees were highly complimentary of the feast that was prepared for them.

What a wonderful and very generous group of women!

*Horace Knight,
Chair, Stonegate Ministry*



THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU!



We had 3 objectives for the first **STONEGATE FUNDRAISER DINNER** held in over a decade, and what a great evening it was.

- To raise the necessary funds to end the year in a financial break-even position
- To give our supporters insight of what God is doing in people's lives through the ministry
- To make the evening a fun and enjoyable time



From all accounts, all objectives were met. You have given us great feedback and we have critiqued all aspects of the evening so the next one will be even better. That does not mean we are not open to your input. If you have suggestions, we welcome and appreciate your input.



Many sincere thanks to the team who put together a fantastic gourmet meal with creative table centers. Thank you for your generosity in donating and bidding on so many great auction items. Thank you for your very generous financial contributions. Thanks to those who were unable to attend but made donations anyway in lieu of buying a ticket. Thanks for those who turned a church basement into a banquet hall complete with a professional pianist. We are very grateful for all who made it a truly great evening. Your support of the ministry is encouraging and much appreciated.

Thank you!

If you missed our fundraiser, your contribution is still welcome. You can mail a cheque to the address below OR go to the DONATE button at stonegateministry.ca OR our Canada Helps page <https://www.canadahelps.org/en/charities/stonegate-community-ecumenical-ministry/> Thank you for your ongoing support of Stonegate Ministry!



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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