

Spring 2019



Newsletter

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

God, Coffee & Me

For the past three years, Stonegate Ministry (SM) has been facilitating a **Bible study in a local coffee shop** on the Lake Shore called ‘God, Coffee & Me’. The heart behind the program is to share Jesus in an informal, non-threatening environment. It is a place where basic Biblical teaching is presented and a place where it is safe to ask difficult questions. What makes this program exciting are the stories of people’s lives being changed. Here’s a little glimpse as one lady shares:

“When I first attended this program, my husband and I had not been going to church for years. I wanted to see what the Bible study had to offer to see if we could reconnect to that world again. The study and discussion aroused our interest and **led us back to church.**”



“Opening the Bible at Mimico Bagel and Coffee”

Not only do they attend a church regularly, they are now a viable part of their church community contributing hours of volunteer work as they give back to the community through the food bank.

Another participant shares: ‘God, Coffee & Me’ made it easier to express myself and declare and share the gospel.”

(continued on Page 2)

IN THIS ISSUE:

God, Coffee & Me	Page 1
Stonegate’s Role at CCSJ	Page 2
Great Finds Goes Above & Beyond, again	Page 3
An Inspiration to All	Page 4
Summer Sizzler	Page 4

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) . We have participants who have struggled, wrestled, and deeply questioned their faith, begin to grow in their belief and are now sharing the gospel with family and friends. For others it has provided “some Christian focus to my week” and “increased my faith, helping me to live more as a Christian.” Often many of us take for granted the blessing of Christian fellowship and community, but for many in the Mimico area it is the poverty of community, and specifically Christian community that is a challenge.



‘God, Coffee & Me’ has become a home for many who do not have a Christian home or church family.

The program started three years ago and because ‘God, Coffee and Me’ is such a welcoming program in a familiar environment, it has been natural for participants to bring their friends. The result is that we have **outgrown our current location**. Our sincere thanks to ‘Mimico Bagel and Coffee’ for their friendly and welcoming hospitality. We have transitioned to Nimman, a Thai restaurant nearby. *What a joy to see so many people thirsting after the Good News!* *Emily Slotegraaf, Ministry Program Director*



STONEGATE MINISTRY’S ROLE IN CHRIST CHURCH ST. JAMES FOOD BANK

We are sometimes asked what the connection is between Stonegate Ministry and the Food Bank. We hope this bit of history will provide the background.

A decision was made in 1992 by the **Outreach Committee of St. James Anglican** (now Christ Church St. James, or CCSJ) to form a food bank to be run out of St. James. Food donated by the parishioners was distributed once a month from a small back room for up to forty families. This initial venture unfortunately declined until, in 2004, the Stonegate Ministry Board tasked the **then Stonegate Ministry Program Director**, Elizabeth Zinder deJesus to do a community needs assessment. After this assessment confirmed the need for food access, she worked with CCSJ to

resurrect the food bank establishing regular food deliveries from Daily Bread and with CCSJ personnel providing the volunteer workers.

Gord Glandfield, who continues as an active member of the Stonegate Ministry board and a CCSJ member, also serves on the **Food Access Committee** which has initiated many programs such as a community garden, a snack program for schoolchildren and the annual Farmers’ Market. The ministry donates \$3,000 annually for Farmers’ Market food coupons. We are also represented on the **Daily Bread Agency Council**.

Our contribution to the CCSJ food bank has continued to grow and now includes:

- The purchase of several refrigerators and freezers
- Our annual Christmas food voucher program now totalling **over \$7,000**.
- Contributions of food and financial support by several of our member churches
- Annual provision of Farmers’ Market coupons
- New partnership with Elisa House Women’s Shelter formed through contacts with Stonegate’s Ministry Program Director, Emily Slotegraaf.
- Regular help from Emily who uses her time at the food bank to also make contacts and build relationships with food bank clients.
- The provision of **Great Finds discount vouchers** to every Food Bank client.
- The Food Bank and Great Finds annually combine their resources by providing gifts to our volunteers in recognition of their service. Many of our volunteers serve at both Great Finds and the Food Bank.

(continued on page 3)

(continued from page 2) And just recently, we were pleased to announce the **appointment of our Great Finds store manager**, Jeannie Martinez as one of three Supervising Directors of the CCSJ Food Bank. At least two



directors are required to be on duty every food bank day. Jeannie will spend 15 hours a month in her new food bank responsibilities.



The Stonegate Ministry / CCSJ Food Bank partnership is a great example of Christians serving together showing God's love by meeting a very practical community need. Stonegate Ministry is privileged to be a **major partner** with the CCSJ Food Bank.

GREAT FINDS goes above and beyond...again

For the last few years, a team of men head off regularly from one of the Stonegate Ministry sponsoring churches to the **Keele Correctional Center**. The residents (inmates) in this Center are able to serve the remaining time of their sentence in this minimum-security facility. However, they are also responsible for their own meals. The men from the church provide a terrific meal for the residents and the staff, and enjoy an evening of fellowship and faith together.



During the most recent "Meal to Keele", the team met a man who had just arrived from a maximum security institution. Everything was quite new for him, including the opportunity to share a meal together with people from the outside world and to experience a taste of Christian fellowship.

Many of the men in this Center are given the opportunity to get back into the work force, or to pursue further education. In the case of this new gent, it became clear that he had a **very real need for some decent clothing**. A job interview was on his horizon, and it was important to appear in a suit.

Enter Stonegate Ministry's 'Great Finds' store. Within days, 3 excellent suits were offered for this man in need. He came to the co-sponsored Stonegate Ministry/Christ Church St James food bank and used the pastor's office as a dressing room. All fit him perfectly! He now has quite the wardrobe. Additionally, boxes and boxes of clothes from a Men's Wear store had been given to the church. We dove into those boxes and found 4 shirts and ties - *the icing on the cake*. His watery eyes showed his **heart felt gratitude**.



Major thanks to Gord Glandfield, Stonegate Ministry Board member, for going above and beyond in finding and providing those suits from Great Finds. Words don't even come close. Kinda lovely, eh?

Bruce Smith

On assignment for Stonegate Ministry

AN INSPIRATION TO ALL!

Great Finds has been blessed with a community of volunteers over the years. Each one of these volunteers brings unique experiences and a variety of skill sets that contribute to the makeup of our Great Finds family. Our eldest and **most beloved volunteer is Win Fisher**. Win has been volunteering at Stonegate Ministry for 6 years and has recently celebrated her 96th birthday. Win volunteers once a week and makes a point of committing to her shift - *rain, snow or shine*. Her



dedication comes from her devotion and desire to help people. Not only is Win **loved by her Great Finds' family**, she is also loved by many customers who often come in during her shift to speak with her. Win enjoys getting to know the customers and she is often seen on the sales floor or sitting at Great Finds' community corner chatting away with someone. **Win is 96 years old** – her energy, kindness and generosity of love for people inspire us all.

Happy Birthday Win! ...We are so blessed to have you in our lives.

COMING SOON!

VICTORIA DAY CELEBRATION SIZZLER

We know, it's just turned spring...but our annual Sizzler is coming up.

Save the date and bring the whole family for an afternoon of fun, music, bouncy castle, games, face painting AND...

- **FREE FOOD** – hot dogs, potato salad, ice cream and drinks
- **When?** Monday May 20 from 4:00 TO 6:00 PM
- **Where?** – Christ Church St. James, Park Lawn Rd., just North of the Queensway.



SEE YOU THERE!!



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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