

Summer 2019



Newsletter

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

"Hunger: for truth, healing and hope"



Appetites - We all have them. This city recently had a huge appetite for a parade - 'the biggest party Canada has ever seen'. Others have appetite for fame; for 'success'; for adventure; for 'love'; for significance. Sometimes life's disappointments create unhealthy, harmful appetites, such as excessive drinking, experimenting with drugs, or a number of other ways to help 'dull the pain'.

We have been privileged to spend a great deal of time, week after week, month after month, with people who desire a change of appetite. For some it has required great courage; for others it was the result of an exhausting, exasperating struggle and frustration. The longing for change became a huge motivator to step out in faith and seek help.

Two of many Stonegate Ministry programs that address 'appetite' are **Fresh Start** and **God, Coffee... and me??**

'Fresh Start' has focused on facing life's hurts, harmful habits and hang-ups by welcoming Christ in to the equation. What was to be an eight-week program was soon extended to ten, as members expressed the need to **experience true freedom, healing and hope**.

'God, Coffee...and me??' has been addressing an equally powerful appetite, namely a hunger to know God. We are losing track now of how long this 'six week' study has progressed...four and a half years? And why? - because **people truly want to know the living, life-changing Lord of heaven and earth**. They know that within every person is a God-shaped hole only Christ can fill. The appetite for the truth of God's Word results in a living, growing, dynamic faith that impacts how we 'do life'.
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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) "Ancient words ever true, changing me, changing you. We have come with open hearts. Oh let the ancient words impart".

Such is the heart-beat of this weekly Bible Class at Nimman Thai Cuisine. St. Paul shared these amazing words concerning our hunger for truth, for healing and hope: *"I recommend Jesus for he is simply dynamic. He has a life-changing effect upon all who put their trust in him"* (Romans 1:16)

We praise God for the joy, the privilege and the opportunities **Stonegate Ministry** has to encourage people toward developing a new and healthy, life-changing appetite. The Lord is all about truth, all about healing, and all about hope. Please pray for more and more people to be impacted and liberated. **The truth really does set us free.**



Bruce Smith, on assignment with Stonegate Ministry

HOPE

Our daily news headlines often focus on some horrific event like a shooting, bombing, or accident – always with horrendous personal loss. If you dwell on it enough, you might start feeling despair, fear, anger and a **loss of hope**.

While we are thankful that we have never experienced such events here at Great Finds, we often hear the despair, fear, anger, and loss that our customers share with us.



For the last couple of months, **Great Finds** has been supporting a customer who had become homeless. Whenever needed, we have provided her with clothing and food along with moral support and prayer. We have also given her leads on possible shelter and housing opportunities that might help her find a place to live. It has been an extremely difficult process for our customer as well as the volunteers who know her, as she struggled each day with the daily challenges and feelings of hopelessness.

Last week she came into the store bursting with joy and excitement because she finally found suitable housing. We discussed her new home and provided her with some boxes to help her pack. We were also able to provide her with grocery gift cards so that she could buy some food to stock her pantry once she moved in. She explained how the support that everyone had given had kept her spirits up and gave her hope throughout her struggle. She knew that she could come to Great Finds for support with no feelings of embarrassment or judgement. After many smiles, hugs and thanks, she left happily and we promised to continue to remember her in our prayers.

I do not know when it started happening. Maybe it started with the warm greetings and smiles whenever someone comes into the store. Maybe it started with the volunteers who live out their faith by how they care for others. Or maybe it started with the *cross with helping hands* that is prominent on our ministry logo and on our store sign. All I know is that people started coming to **Great Finds** not only to buy clothing and housewares or to donate goods. Some came seeking friendship. Some came seeking conversation. Some came just seeking to be part of a community. And there are those who started coming seeking refuge and sanctuary. Here at Great Finds, I like to think that there is no loss – only an **authentic expression of God's love – and hope.**



Jeannie Martinez, Great Finds Manager



VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION BBQ

The first (and probably annual) BBQ for our 30 or so faithful and dedicated Great Finds volunteers was held on June 25. The “Closed” sign was turned around and the clothing racks pushed back converting the store into a cozy, and somewhat crowded café. Delicious Angus burgers, fresh off the BBQ,

were served complete with a choice of fabulous salads. Tasty desserts complemented the good conversation among the volunteers and board members.

We are indebted to our Great Finds Manager, Jeannie and her incredible team of Great Finds volunteers without whom this ministry’s presence and impact on the Lake Shore community would not exist.



DEPRESSION

In both of the communities we serve, studies indicate a deficit in the variety and availability of mental health services. In an effort to reduce this gap, **Stonegate Ministry** has facilitated a series of *Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT)* programs called “Toolboxes”, all presented from the perspective of our Christian faith.



Depression affects many people in our fast paced society. Participants’ progress is indicated by the depression inventory we take each week. One participant shared how she has struggled regularly with the thought, “I am not capable. I can’t do this.” Through our program we were able to help her challenge that debilitating idea and have recently had the privilege of seeing her take steps to start the business she’s been dreaming about for years. It’s inspiring to see her finally have the confidence and courage to take the risk.

Two other participants shared how their decision to return to **a relationship with God** had been influenced by a discussion on the need for addressing our inner spiritual life and how the Christian faith can provide guidance for their questions. They both seemed excited about the encouragement they received to connect with God in this setting. We even observed a significant physical change in appearance of at least two of the participants; warm smiles that encompassed their whole face, and shoulders that indicated a great weight had been lifted.



We’re excited about how these programs have been enthusiastically welcomed by the community and appreciated by participants. We plan to continue to facilitate them and look forward to adding more programs to our list including the Emotionally Healthy Toolbox and the Self Esteem Toolbox.

Emily Slotegraaf, Director of Ministry Programs

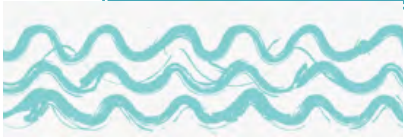
FALL FUNDRAISER DINNER Saturday, November 2nd



It's a long way off and we are all more interested in the summer that is finally here, but our annual fundraiser dinner is set for Saturday November 2.

(change over weekend from Daylight Saving Time) at a new venue – Kingsway Lambton United Church. If you attended last year, or you have heard from someone who did, you will know it was an enjoyable time with a truly gourmet dinner.

Save the date – November 2, 2019!!



HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT STONEGATE MINISTRIES

Stonegate Ministry is grateful for the ongoing support of our partner churches and their regional affiliates. We are also thankful for the support of individuals who have faithfully supported the ministry by donations of quality clothing and small housewares, as well as financial gifts. The programs slow down a bit during the summer but the ministry **costs never go on vacation**. Your financial gift of any size will help keep our volunteers

and staff sharing God's love with the lonely and needy residents of the Stonegate and Lake Shore communities. You can donate by cheque or on line through our website shown below.

CONTACT US

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

Stonegate Ministry is a registered non-profit charity.

Donations may be made by cheque or online at www.stonegateministry.ca

Editor – Graeme Quigley

Layout and Graphics – Priscilla Knight

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