



Newsletter

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

STONEGATE MINISTRY –THIS REFUGEE FAMILY’S FIRST CONTACT



In my new role as Director of Ministry Programs, I have quickly discovered just how valuable our foodbank program is. On my initial visit while being trained in the client intake process, I felt so privileged to hear their stories. I was introduced to a family who had just arrived in Canada from a country where their lives had been threatened. Their nephew had brought them to the foodbank and was acting as their translator, as they spoke no English. The father had served in the military and had refused to comply with an order. After being attacked for his decision and having their home broken into, he decided to flee the country with his family, but his daughter was forced to make the hard decision to leave behind her husband and infant. When they arrived at the foodbank, they had been in the country only three days, and had not yet spoken to a lawyer. Stonegate Ministry was their first contact.



Being able to speak some Spanish, I have been connecting with this family over the past two months, passing on resources, referring them to services, and helping them find clothing through Great Find’s Benevolence Program. I have listened to their pain of leaving family members behind, of witnessing their country struggle in the midst of political turmoil, but also of their hope of learning a new language, putting their daughter back into school, and starting fresh here in Canada. The mother continues to express her gratitude to me every time we meet, offering me her help if ever I should request it. After deciding to begin two new ESL programs in January, I was eager to tell the family the news, and they were delighted. *(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) They now have a lawyer and are preparing for their court date with immigration in January and are also in the process of bringing their daughter's family to safety as well.

It is difficult to imagine the grief of being forced to leave behind your beloved country, home, and family to find safety in the unknown, but to me, it seems that God has brought a new sense of hope for this beautiful family. I am grateful for Stonegate Ministry's presence in this community - for the food bank and its open doors, for the volunteers who offer a friendly face for newcomers, and for **Great Finds and their Benevolence Program**. I am excited to continue to walk alongside this family as they navigate their new life here in Canada.

If you would like to support this family by donating furnishings for their new apartment, such as blankets and kitchenware, please contact me at Samantha@stonegateministry.ca

Samantha Coelho
Director Ministry Programs

CELEBRATING STONEGATE MINISTRY



two low-income communities.

We would like to thank all those who supported our November 2nd Fundraising Dinner. We are grateful to Rev. Kerry Stover, the new Associate Minister at Kingsway-Lambton United Church who sang a wonderful selection of Broadway and Gospel tunes which were especially chosen by Kerry to reflect the work we do at Stonegate. We also appreciate the contribution made by Kim Hanmer in accompanying Kerry on the keyboard and Andy Tulloch's keyboard selections during dinner. The 135 guests also enjoyed a sumptuous meal prepared by members of Kingsway-Lambton's United Church Women Unit #7.

This event was our major fundraising event of the year. It helps to support our work as we help those in need in both the Stonegate and Lake Shore neighbourhoods,



Apart from our fundraising dinner we require other sources of funding to cover the cost of delivering the services we provide. If you would like to donate to Stonegate Ministry, and especially if you missed the dinner, please go to www.stonegateministry.ca or send a cheque to Stonegate Ministry, 2358 Lake Shore Blvd. West, Toronto, ON M8V 1B6. Your support is vital to our ministry and much appreciated.



May you experience God's rich blessing in this New Year.
Horace Knight, Board Chair

“A Sower went out to Sow”...the heart beat of “God, Coffee...and me”

Will was just 16 when he first came to the youth meeting. While a bit rough around the edges, he was open to seriously consider Jesus. His faith was brand new and it was beginning to reshape how he ‘did life’.

For close to 45 years we’ve appreciated being “brothers”. Over those years it was a huge joy to watch him grow in faith, serve in love, and find ways to kindly let folks in on the greatest news the world has ever heard. For him, writing and sharing songs about his faith was an effective way of sowing seeds.

Will died recently, but his songs will continue to impact all who hear them. There was nothing he wanted more than to help others discover the treasure of knowing Christ.

The “God, Coffee...and me??” outreach of Stonegate Ministry expresses the same heartbeat as my friend Will. The seeds are being sown weekly around a table in *Nimman’s Thai Restaurant* on the Lake Shore. Our prayer is to see more people taking us up on the invitation to give this little gathering a try. Or as the advertisement reads, to “*chat about Jesus ...who He is, what He’s done, & consider what life might look like if we got acquainted*”.



We had been praying that someone would feel a nudge to join us. Last week, we were thrilled that some seeds of invitation ‘took root’. Just as we finished with our welcome, in walked a person for the very first time. It had been on her heart to take us up on the invitation for quite some time and she knew now was the time. We were delighted! And she enriched the meeting significantly!



Immediately following, a lady was resting outside a nearby laundromat. After a casual greeting, she asked about the study. While never thinking of coming before, she was intrigued and attracted by the thought. After extending a personal invitation, she replied with “*I hope to join you next time*”. May that hope also take root.

The Scriptures provide great encouragement as we share the invitation far and wide: “*They weep as they go to plant their seed, but they sing as they return with the harvest*”. **Psalm 126:6**



Please pray there will be many reasons to sing in 2020. Pray for those who have just begun to consider the gospel, that seeds of truth will fall upon good ground and begin to reshape lives in the very best of ways.

Bruce Smith
On assignment with Stonegate Ministry

GREAT FINDS CELEBRATES 5 YEARS



Monday December 2nd marked Great Finds' 5th anniversary in the Mimico-Lakeshore area. To celebrate this day, staff and volunteers worked hard in decorating the store and serving hot chocolate, cookies and cake to all who came in. **Over 100 people** came to join the festivities and to take advantage of Great Find's sales.



The highlight of the celebration was what Great Finds does best - **servicing the needy**. Great Finds is where the front line of ministry is done within the community, supporting many people, from the homeless to those living with assisted services. On the day of the anniversary, through our **Benevolent Program**, Great Finds served **sixteen families in need**, providing a value of nearly **\$1,000** in clothing, accessories, toys, books and housewares.



For the last five years, Great Finds has been blessed with **great** staff, **great** volunteers and **great** customers and continues to provide **positive** impact on the lives of so many people in our community.



Happy Anniversary Great Finds!

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

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