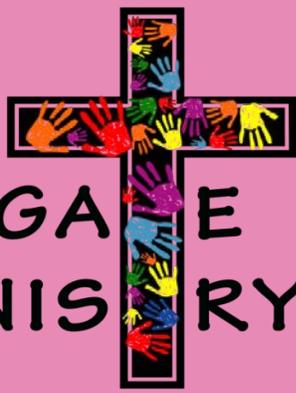


Spring 2023

STONEGATE MINISTRY



Newsletter

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



A WORD FROM THE BOARD

The exciting news is that the Ministry is finally in a position to produce and run the Fundraiser Video that had to be cancelled back in November 2022!

Certainly, the very best thing about this is that it is tangible evidence of God's healing power on our behalf. The cancellation was necessary because we would not have been able to produce a meaningful video representation of our work with key staff members Jeannie Martinez and Natalie Sharpe both facing severe health challenges. Their absence not only impaired delivery of our programs and the food bank, but they were also unable to prepare and present videos in a professional manner.

We are pleased to report that thanks to prayers from you, our supporters and clients, their health issues have

stabilized. With appropriate help from others on the Ministry team, they have both resumed their program leadership, and are actively advocating for those in need. Our programs are running at full strength!

In the companion newsletter articles by Jeannie, Natalie and Bruce, you will see evidence of the ever-growing need for our Ministry programs for the vulnerable in our neighbourhoods. Fortunately, through the generosity of our readers, and the swelling number of volunteers (unlike what is happening in other communities), we have been able to respond meaningfully to these needs.

The one ministry that we still sorely miss is providing gently used quality clothing at a very low cost through our Great Finds thrift store. We have been diligently searching for an appropriate site and we are grateful to a

number of you who have passed along information about possible vacancies in our area. We ask you to continue to alert us to any opportunities that may allow us to recommence this ministry and pray that we will be led to the perfect site. As the pandemic recedes, it is wonderful to have so many of our programs back to in-person attendance, *(continued on page 2)*

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Hold these Dates

- May 18 Stonegate **Fundraiser Video** on Zoom 7:30-8:30
- May 27 **Summer Sizzler** at Christ Church St. James 3:00 to 5:00

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) as this truly eases the loneliness of many clients who regularly attend. We are thrilled to have our first 'Summer Sizzler' in several years – a program for children, families, and individuals outside at Christ Church St James on Saturday May 27th where there will be games, activities, food, and even a 'bouncy castle' to lift everyone's spirits. Please join us on May 27. Bruce's article will give you all the details.

Our Fundraiser Video will begin at 7:30pm on Thursday May 18th – and we ask you to please respond generously! If you are able to join us online that evening, tickets will be available on our website for \$40 each – and we hope that you will consider making an additional donation as you are able, to assist our financial situation.

If you are unable to view the Video on the 18th, you can access it on our website shortly after the event. Your donation can be made in various ways –

- Cheques sent to 71 Riverview Gardens., Toronto, ON, M6S 4E6
- By eTransfer to donations@stonegateministry.ca
 - Don't forget to give us your email so we can send your tax receipt.
- Online using your credit card
 - By going to our website stonegateministry.ca and click DONATE for instructions

Thank you for your continuing support, God's blessing,

Peter Patterson,
Chair Stonegate Ministry Board



STEP INTO SPRING: IT'S TIME TO BLOSSOM BEHIND

Winter has passed, and now it is Spring. It happens so quickly, and even though we know it will eventually come, sighting the first blossom is always a pleasant surprise. As weather is governed by seasons, so it is with our lives. Seasons come and seasons go. Childhood friends become adult acquaintances; lovers become past regrets; small opportunities become life-changing moments. Even some of the simplest conversations can become the start of a lifelong connection.

Each season is an opportunity to make a positive impact for tomorrow. The beauty is that each season gives us the opportunity to make a lasting impression on the life of someone else. That is our goal through our programs and services for the lonely and needy.

The ability to make a difference in one's community is possible for both individuals and organizations. Participating in volunteer work for charities like Stonegate Ministry is an excellent way to contribute back to the people around you, all while learning new skills and meeting like-minded people. If volunteering isn't feasible, you can also support the Ministry financially to meet the demands of operating costs and to effectively serve the needs of our community.

Each new season comes with many new blessings, but it also comes with different responsibilities. You can blossom by rising to the occasion, doing something different, and stepping forward with the boldness that Christ has given to you. May you blossom this season and create lasting memories of a joy for others that will never be lost.

Thank you for helping us to "make a difference".

Natalie Sharpe, Director of Ministry Programs



BEHIND THE SCENES AT CCSJ FOOD PANTRY



Since **January 9**, Nicole Hager, a Humber College student, has been working at CCSJ Food Pantry as part of her Community and Justice Services program. She is required to work 200 hours in the community as part of her field experience. This program prepares students to help create safe and healthy spaces through an inclusive and non-oppressive lens in learning about community and institutional sectors of the justice system. The curriculum combines theory and applied skills focusing on the development of strong interpersonal, program-solving and assessment abilities.

Nicole has learned to work with clients within her community who are marginalized and face social and economic challenges including food insecurity. It has taught her patience and sensitivity in dealing with not only their food needs but also their emotional and mental needs for connection and inclusion.

She recounts helping a new food bank client who was homeless. This client had recently arrived in the city and was sleeping in the airport because she had no home to go to. Throughout the registration process, Nicole, along with other volunteers, took time to listen to the client, heard her hardships, fears and anxieties, and were able to find resources for shelter for this client.

The challenges that families are currently facing are heart-breaking and many are very thankful and appreciative of the help they receive from our food bank. Christ Church St. James Food Pantry has been providing food to record high numbers of families. Appointment bookings are reaching up to 250 families per food bank day. As the number of families needing our food bank continues to climb, donations, both financial and goods, are greatly welcomed and appreciated. Items that are most needed are:

- Canned meat or fish
- Cereal/Oatmeal/Granola
- Crackers and Cookies
- Flour and Baking Products
- Soup
- Canned vegetables or fruit
- Granola/Snack/Protein bars
- Sugar/sugar alternatives, spices
- Beans (either dry or canned)
- Rice, Pasta/Tomato Sauce
- Powdered milk/ milk alternatives
- Baby Food & Formula
- Tea/Coffee
- Nutritional Supplements (Ensure, etc)

We give thanks to all our Donors, Volunteers and Staff that continue to support CCSJ Food Pantry.

Your generosity is making a difference!

*Jeannie Martinez,
CCSJ Food Pantry Co-Director*





GET READY TO 'SIZZLE':

Four years.

Four years since many of us gathered for what had become an annual 'Celebration Sizzler', - a shared outreach venture between Stonegate Ministries and Christ Church St James (CCSJ).

So, What's a 'Sizzler'?

Basically, it's a party for the neighbourhood. All is free (compliments of Stonegate Ministries and CCSJ). BBQ, hotdogs, drinks, games, bouncy castle, music, drama, booths of various kinds, activities for young and old, and prizes galore.

And why? What better way to get people together than with a party? And what an amazing opportunity to 'share the joy' of our Christian faith than by serving others in such a happy and upbeat way.

Would you like to come? Would you like to help? We'd love to see you.

When: Saturday May 27th, 3pm-5pm

Where: 194 Park Lawn Road (just north of the Queensway), the parking lot of Christ Church St James.

If you are looking for a perfect opportunity to bring a friend to something positive, fun, and uplifting, this may well be it.

Having you there will make it all the better!

Bruce Smith,
on assignment to Stonegate Ministry



We Remember Win . . .

For over 7 years until the store closed due to Covid, you could have found Win Fisher on a Wednesday afternoon, sitting at her small table near the *Great Finds* entrance welcoming clients. She would invite people to sit down for a chat and loved the chance to make friends, bring encouragement and relieve the loneliness from which so many suffer. This faithful volunteer loved her time at the store, and many looked forward to seeing her there. Some clients even timed their shopping to ensure they could have a visit.

She was an avid reader, a generous supporter of many charities and was mentally sharp to the end of her long and productive life. She passed away on April 3/23 just 5 weeks after celebrating her 100th birthday – a great lady and a special friend!



CONTACT US

By phone 416-255-6282 or by email office@stonegateministry.ca

Your donation is important to maintain our outreach during this difficult time. You can contribute:

- By cheque mailed to 71 Riverview Gardens, Toronto, M6S 4E6
- Online using the "Donate Now" button on our website stonegateministry.ca
- By e-Transfer to donations@stonegateministry.ca

All donations are promptly acknowledged and a receipt will be provided. Thank you for your prayers and ongoing financial support, and may God bless you and keep you safe during this trying time.

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