



Inside this Issue

- 1 Touched by the Holy
- 2 StMMCM Board Update
- 3 Summer Programs
- 4 You Can Help
- 4 Hope Winnipeg

Contact us:

St Matthews-Maryland
Community Ministry
641 St Matthews Avenue
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3G 0G6

Phone: 774-3957

E-Mail: comymin@mts.net

www.stmatthewsmaryland.ca



Touched by the Holy

Juanita Mackinnon-Smith, Community Minister

In the Drop In, when you think you're having a conversation with one person, the eyes and ears of every person there are watching and listening.

I've come to know Michael mostly through his family – sisters, brothers, brother-in-law and their children. He is a quiet, unassuming young man in his early 20's with a lightweight build, a quick smile and an even quicker wit. He's bright, gifted and very humble. He wants to complete his secondary education, find employment and then figure out the rest of his life.

Before the end of the last school year, Michael was targeted by a gang and roughed up a couple of times. He has no gang affiliation. He changed his route to get to and from school; that and summer holidays seemed enough to deter them.

This fall Michael arrived in my office asking if he could speak with me. Just seeing him I knew something was wrong. Worry had furrowed his brow and fear haunted him. The gang was terrorizing him again – he'd been roughed up, had his glasses broken and suffered various cuts and bruises. He needed help. He didn't want to miss school. He didn't want to get beaten up. He didn't want to tell his sisters and brothers what was happening. He was afraid one of them would retaliate and make matters worse – for one of them or for him. At a time when he really needed the support of his family, he chose to isolate himself with his silence in order to protect them – from the gang and from themselves.

Together we learned the West End Biz has a 'Safewalk' program where they escort people to and from work or school if you live within their catchment area. Michael lives a few blocks outside of their area. We arranged for him to come to the ministry in the morning to confirm a rendezvous point with the West End Biz for somewhere inside their boundaries. I checked with Sam, our custodian, over the next week to see if Michael had shown up. Every morning Sam would report, "No, he hasn't been here." I was starting to worry when he finally showed up again to say on that first morning he was supposed to be at the church to call, the gang caught him before he made it to the ministry and roughed him up again. He called his parents on his home reserve and they counselled him to come home where his safety could be ensured.

Michael told me he had called and quit school. (Cont. on page 2)

Touched by the Holy - cont. from page 1

He shared stories with me about how much he loves learning and how great his teachers are. Here is a young man who wants to go to school and create a better future for himself. A feeling of defeat hung silent in the air.

“Language is a funny thing, Michael. When you say you ‘quit’ school, I worry that you’ll start seeing yourself as a quitter. I want you to know that the man I see sitting in front of me is no quitter. It takes courage and strength to make the decision you made this week. YOU didn’t quit. You were forced to withdraw because of bullies. There’s a difference. When you say you quit , it holds you accountable for something that wasn’t your fault. If you say you were forced to quit, it holds the gang members that did this to you accountable. What is happening to you isn’t right. It isn’t fair. It just is. Don’t let this be the end of your story, if you do, then they win. You might not go to this school or you might miss this first semester, but, don’t let it be the end of your schooling.”

We do what we can; rarely does it feel like enough. The ministry was a safe place for him to come to, he knew we would listen, he knew we would care. We can’t change the circumstances of Michael’s life – it’s too multi-layered, too complicated; but, we can ensure he doesn’t feel alone in the situation. An image flashes before me...one of Jesus stumbling, carrying the cross; as bystanders offered words of comfort, water and one, Simon of Cyrene was compelled to bear the load along with. Sometimes, we, too, are compelled to bear the load.

to be a Board that is listening and responsive. Let us know how we are doing!

This Ministry is a partnership between St. Matthews Church and The United Church’s Winnipeg Presbytery with representation from these two partners and the community. Here are three new Board Members whose two year terms started in June:

Pat Desjarlais is a proud Metis woman with 2 adult sons, Paul and Scott and a grandson, Aiden. She has lived and worked in both the Northend and Westend and has worked at the Aboriginal Centre, Native Women's Transition Centre and Child and Family Services. She has been the site manager at the Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre for the past 10 years. Pat has a Bachelor of Social Work degree from the U of M.

Donna Cawker has a long connection with St. Matthew’s Church where she was baptised and married and where her first two children, Matthew and Maxwell were baptised. She has 5 children in all, lives in Wildwood and attends St Paul’s Fort Garry. There she is involved with the care and nurturing of families and the concerns of the wider community revolving around issues of social justice.

Diocesan Outreach steered her to the National Eco- Justice Committee as well as a Provincial ARC group, and many Aboriginal networks and more recently Sisters In Spirit. The Outreach Committee at St. Paul’s, of which she is a member, has been a long-

StMMCM Board Update

Over the past months, the board of StMMCM has intentionally been attempting to deepen its connection to the community. At our June 2009 Annual Meeting the executive directors of the Spence and Daniel McIntyre-St. Matthew's Neighbourhood Associations were our keynote speakers. This year Jim Silver shared his insights on the tenth anniversary of his book *Fighting Poverty in Winnipeg*.

At our monthly board meetings, we have invited various community agencies to visit us and tell us about their work and offer suggestions and feedback to us. Presentations from Clinic, West Central Youth Program, Mamawi, Canadian Mental Health, Lutheran Urban Ministries, Winnipeg Regional Health Authority, and West Central Women's Resource Centre have helped us to understand the community better.

We have also initiated a series of listening sessions where we have invited members of the community to tell us about their concerns and interests. We want



time partner with this Community Ministry. She looks forward to serving this community.

Daniel Blaikie and his wife Janelle both grew up in Transcona and are now living in Winnipeg's West End after recently returning from a two-year stint in Montreal. He has a Master of Arts degree in philosophy from Concordia University in Montreal, and has recently begun teaching an introductory philosophy course at the University of Winnipeg after spending the summer as St. Matthew's-Maryland Community Ministry Summer Program Coordinator. As a past Constituency Assistant to local MLA Andrew Swan and past board member of the Daniel-McIntyre/St. Matthew's Community Association, he is looking forward to continuing his contribution to the West End on the community ministry board.

Summer Programs

Daniel Blaikie

The label 'summer program' is an ambiguous title for what goes on at the ministry through the months of June, July and August. Programming runs at the ministry throughout the year, so what is it about the programs and events offered in those months that draw them all into something it makes sense to call a 'summer' program, instead of simply more programming? The question was my constant companion as I coordinated this year's summer program. As with so many things, it is only with hindsight that I have begun to get a handle on it.

From the time we go to school we learn that summer is a time to escape from life's humdrum concerns with some light-hearted fun, whether by spending time at the lake, having a picnic, or just soaking up the sunshine. The summer program provides opportunities for all those who are part of the community here at the ministry to do just that.



There are all sorts of reasons why a trip to the zoo, checking out a Goldeyes game, or going strawberry picking are important to the people at the ministry. One of the first that might come to mind is that many do not have cars or cottages, so an organized trip out to Winnipeg Beach is a welcome chance to escape the city during the hot months. Of course, for some people, sending their kids to camp or paying for admission to a Bombers game is simply too expensive.



The summer program, however, is not just about what some people can or cannot afford. Some people may be able to afford to go to the odd game, show or destination, but don't bother because they don't

have anyone to go with and feel strange going by themselves. For some parents, being able to attend an event with their family without having to worry about all the details of organizing it is a welcome break from the stress of getting kids to school or worrying about bill payments or getting to the next foodbank appointment. These activities are also not just good for individuals and

families, but for the ministry too. It's a bustling place with many regular visitors and volunteers. The summer program gives everyone a chance to experience each other's company outside the Drop-In during the fun of summer. It's a chance to see each other in a different light and to form friendships that strengthen the ministry community. Just as families forge bonds through their summer routines, so too do people at the ministry.

Taking a time out from the everyday stress of life and spending that time with family and friends is an important part of summer symbolism, and it's in this sense

that there is a 'summer program' at the ministry.

You Can Help

The inner city Ministry at St Matthew's-Maryland does important work in the community.

What is StMMCM?

- A ministry of Hospitality - a drop-in 5 afternoons a week, a nutritious snack, community computers, telephone and newspaper and lively conversation.
- Women's drop-in every Wednesday afternoon.
- Men's group.
- A food supplement program every Monday and Friday.
- Pastoral Care.
- Family programs during the summer.



one paid full-time staff, summer program staff and a whole lot of Care Team volunteers. And it depends on financial support from the mission partners, some program grants and donations from individuals and organizations.

What are the challenges?

Unfortunately, the United Church Mission & Service Fund will have to reduce its support next year, likely by about 10%. Donations from individuals and

organizations, which make up about 23% of the budget, are going to have make up the difference.

What are the opportunities?

Volunteer Care Teams were introduced this year and support the work of the Ministry. A Winnipeg Foundation Grant will fund an initial, part time, Co-ord

of Volunteers to support and strengthen the Care Team role in the Ministry. The Board's plan is to find sustainable, long term funding for this important position.

1Hope Winnipeg

Supporting Community Ministries

If you were in Portage Place at noon on Tuesday, Oct 19th you would have witnessed a Flash Mob in action for 1Hope Winnipeg.

What's a Flash Mob? It's a group of people gathered in a public place to "spontaneously" perform a group activity – in this case a dance. You can see the results at www.1hopewinnipeg.com.

What is 1Hope Winnipeg? It is an effort to tell more people about the good works being led in our inner city neighbourhoods by ministries like StMMCM. Check out the web site. Watch the video. Share it with your friends.

Who makes it all happen? It is all done with a volunteer Board,

Yes, I Can Help

St Matthew's-Maryland Community Ministry

Enclosed is my **cheque** for: \$10 \$25 \$50 \$100 \$(you choose)

Name: _____ E-Mail _____

Address: _____

Please make cheques payable to St Matthew's-Maryland Community Ministry and mail to the Ministry at 641 St Matthews Avenue, Winnipeg, Mb, R3G 0G6. A tax receipt will be mailed out by the Ministry.

OR

You can also **donate on-line** through the Ministries web site at: www.stmatthewsmaryland.ca (Click on "Donate" and look for the "Donate Now" button. A tax receipt will be issued directly to you by Canada Helps)