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Touched by the Holy

*Juanita Mackinnon-Smith,
Community Minister*

People who come to the ministry often have a well-established routine. They may have breakfast in one location, come here for an afternoon snack and return in the evening to enjoy supper with folks at The Urban. They spend hours on their feet literally putting miles on their shoes.

Experience teaches us that our people struggle with multiple issues. As if poverty alone weren't enough to cope with, they struggle with access to safe, affordable housing, overcoming addictions (*alcohol, prescription and/or recreational drugs*), neighbourhood safety, food security, mental health concerns and the list goes on; each with their own combination of struggles.

Gentrification in the past decade has dislocated some from our community to the North End. As I live in the Inkster/St. John's neighbourhood and travel down Salter and over the Slaw Rebchuk bridge on my way to and from the ministry, it's not unusual for me to see familiar faces along the way.

Often our folks tend to 'loiter' in or in front of businesses or just 'hang out' on the street. Some panhandle or squeegee for extra cash. More often than not, they get 'shooed' along by those in authority. Others live with mental health issues, talk or mutter to themselves or talk incessantly to anyone unable to slip by before being noticed. The uninformed or easily intimidated amongst us might describe this behavior as 'crazy.' It certainly can make people feel uncomfortable.

I used to stop and offer individuals a ride knowing they were heading towards the ministry. I've done that less and less often over the years as I've come to realize that all that walking serves two purposes: it saves money and fills the long, sometimes lonely, hours between sunup and sundown.

I see Tamar quite often on my morning drive to work. The heat and all that walking took its toll. Sometime throughout the day, almost every day, I would come across Tamar lying down wherever she could find shade; sometimes outdoors on the grass, sometimes on the concrete, sometimes in the hallway outside the Drop In. One day I found her whimpering and inquired as to why. She showed me her feet - calloused, cracked and bleeding. We started soaking, washing, drying and applying lotion to her feet every day. We regularly provided her

(Cont. on page 2)

Summer Program

2011 Highlights

Jessica Saprowich and Ryan Eidick coordinated the Summer Program this year. It was great to have their energy and leadership around the ministry. Jess and Ryan ended the summer by writing a great report on all the activities, lessons learned, recommendations for next year and a financial accounting.

Their report will also give you a good sense of what Jess and Ryan thought of their experience at the ministry. For Jess, "This community has taught me that it doesn't matter where you come from, where you live, what background you are, no matter what, at St Matthews (StMMCM) you can find a meal, someone to talk to and a community full of acceptance".



For Ryan, the summer was "nothing short of a whirlwind". He said, "the people of the community, especially the volunteers... are as helpful and understanding as anyone I have encountered."

What a summer it was for the kids and families of the StMMCM community:
(Cont. on page 3)

Touched by the Holy - cont. from page 1

with travel size bottles of lotion and instructions to lubricate her feet every night. We found her a pair of shoes and gave her socks to wear. Within a day or two she'd 'lost' her shoes or, who knows, maybe she decided someone else was in greater need of them than she was. With lots of TLC, Tamar's feet improved for the balance of the summer.

John 13 (selected verses paraphrased)

Jesus got up from his meal, wrapped a towel around his waist. He poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel wrapped around him. He came to Peter, who said "No, you shall never wash my feet." Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me." Peter replied, "Then, wash not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!"

When he had finished, he returned to his place at the table. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked. Now that I have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you."

Just this morning, I left my office and headed down the hallway to find Tamar lying on the floor in the hallway whimpering. Her feet are in a mess again. Out comes the footbath, the soap, the towel, the lotion. This time though we have a plan, a long time church volunteer, a retired nurse, has offered to come every other Tuesday to do foot care for Tamar and others in our community. Tamar is glad she has the ministry to come to. We, however, are glad we have Tamar!

Summer has come and gone. Fall is settling in and the harvest is upon us and Old Man Winter is just around the corner. A stanza from Robert Frost's "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" plays over and over in my mind...

*But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep*

It's good to be back. I hope you're feeling that way, too.

Blessed be!

(cont. from p2 Summer Program)

Sherbrook Pool, strawberry picking, Winnipeg Beach, The Zoo, Bombers game, Children's Museum, Movie Night and



Goledes Game. It all made for a busy, fun summer for a lot of people.

There was also a Summer Family Gathering at the Dr. Jessie Saulteaux Resource Centre (near Beausejour), organized with North End Stella and Jessie Saulteaux.

More than all that, Jess and Ryan ran the Men's Meal program on Friday nights, participated in the Agnes Street Block party and the Daniel Mac Summer Fest, backed up the Food Supplement Program volunteers and helped keep up the North McGee Comm. Gardens



It was a great summer program, well used and much appreciated by the families in the neighbourhood.



Volunteer Spotlight

Paul Schmidt

The Thursday Care Team

A listening ear. An encouraging word. A caring heart. These are some of the gifts offered to our community members by the volunteers on our "Care Team."



Helen and Barbara Ann

Each afternoon these volunteers are in our drop-in providing a ministry of presence, often meeting one-on-one with people who are looking for someone to talk to. Presence, say Barbara Ann and Helen, two of our Thursday Care Team volunteers, is at the heart of the Care Team. For Barbara Ann, the heart-to-heart connections she has experienced with some people have been a special gift. For Helen, she is honoured to share in the lives of others and accompany them for brief moments on their journey.

Other highlights they enjoy while volunteering include preparing and serving food, sharing a laugh, and even some exciting games of Scrabble and Cribbage!

Curious? Interested in knowing more about the Care Team, or our foodbank, or something else? We would love to hear from you or host you for a visit! Please contact Paul Schmidt, Volunteer Development Coordinator at 774-3957 or volcomymn@mymts.net



Diane and Elizabeth

Making Connections at the Ministry

One of the recurring themes at St Matthews-Maryland Community Ministry is about making connections. If you are a faithful reader of Juanita's "Touched by the Holy" you know all about these connections. The story in this newsletter is a good example. Here are a couple more.

A Generous Stranger - West End Common is the family housing project initiated by St. Matthew's Parish to build 25 units of family housing within their existing building at Maryland and St Matthews

(Cont. on page 4)

(Cont. from p 3 Connections) (upstairs from the Ministry). The St Matthews Non-Profit Housing Inc Board has been working hard to get everything in place, including funding. Every potential source is being explored and many of the City's most active charitable Foundations are being approached.

One Foundation wanted to get a feel for the life of this building by touring the Community Resource Centre. During that tour with Rev. Cathy Campbell it was noted that funding for our Volunteer Coordinator, Paul Schmidt, was about to run out and new funding had not yet been confirmed.

Paul's role, connecting volunteers with the ministry and supporting their work, is very important. Cathy's guest immediately recognized the need and offered to personally bridge the gap between the existing and the expected funding. It was a very generous act, made possible by a serendipitous connection between that benefactor and this ministry.

Elizabeth Loewen Genest – Liz came to the visit Juanita at the Ministry because she wanted to volunteer. She already had a strong connection through her husband, Raymond Genest, who is the Treasurer for the StMMCM Board. She knew the work and the needs and she was ready to contribute. As they talked about the ministry, Juanita was excited at the prospect of Liz joining the team. It is the kind of connection with individuals and congregations that keep this ministry alive.

Unfortunately, Liz was not able to begin this new volunteer role. She became ill and passed away in September. Liz's family invited friends to remember her with a donation to the ministry. Many have. Liz was a thoughtful and community minded person and we thank her and her family for their ongoing support.

Jess and Ryan, our Summer Program Coordinators, had never met before starting this job. This neighbourhood, this community and this ministry were all new to them. When you read their final report on the summer program, you can see that this was more than a summer job. They found



Ryan and Jess

connections with the kids, their families, the community and their work at the ministry. They also connected with each other and found a new friendship growing.

It's all about connections.

1Hope Winnipeg *Reaching Out*

[1Hope Winnipeg](#) represents a group of non-profit organizations working together towards a

brighter future by connecting with, supporting and empowering the most disenfranchised people in our city. St Matthews-Maryland Community Ministry is one of the five agencies that benefits from this fund raising efforts. You can visit the 1hopewinnipeg.com web site to get the full story of this initiative supporting inner city ministries.

You Can Help *once again*

It takes about \$135,000 each year to operate St Matthews-Maryland Community Ministry. The ministry depends on donations, fund raising and gifts for over 25% of this budget. We know this will have to increase in coming years as other funding sources shrink.

Donate

By mail at:

St Matthew's-Maryland Community Ministry
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or on-line at:

www.stmatthewsmaryland.ca

Click on "Donate" and look for the "Donate Now" button.

Either way a tax receipt will be issued.

Volunteer

See Paul's article on page 3.

Pray

Please keep this ministry in your thoughts and prayers.