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joy, which
shall be to all
people.”

Luke 2:10

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COMBATTING LONELINESS DURING CHRISTMAS

“Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast.” (Psalm 139:7-10)



Christmas is a joyous time of year. A time for families, feasts and presents. A time for reflecting on the birth of Jesus and gathering together and singing carols. But not everyone has a family and during COVID-19, few, if any, will be gathering together for Christmas this year.

Our work at The Mission has continued despite the risk of COVID-19. We have been there every step of the way to provide our guests and vulnerable members of the community with care and compassion, and our staff will continue to do so through this Christmas season and beyond. Christmas can be lonely for those in the shelter system, but we can take comfort in knowing that there is nowhere our guests can go that God’s spirit cannot reach.

The Mission also marked a milestone this year, one million hours of service to our community since our doors first opened in 1906. Your gracious donations allow us to continue operating year round, and your increased generosity during COVID meant that we never had to worry about not having enough PPE to continue to do the job we have been called to do.

In this newsletter, you will read inspiring stories about meeting an angel at IKEA, the story behind our dental clinic (remember we are more than just a shelter), and the innovation we have striven for with COVID-19 through the launch of our Mobile Mission Meals food truck so we could deliver food to guests who cannot make it to our blue doors.

But none of these stories are possible without an amazing staff and dedicated volunteers and donors. So, on behalf of all of the Board members at The Mission and The Foundation, we say thank you for your support during a trying year and we hope for a brighter 2021!

Matt Triemstra
PRESIDENT, BOARD OF DIRECTORS
THE OTTAWA MISSION

Greg's inspiring story of determination



It's a lucky day when you have the chance to sit down and converse with Greg. He's a thoughtful, articulate, 57-year old man who has plenty to share about his ups and downs in life, and the support and guidance he receives at The Ottawa Mission. Greg readily opens up about "a 35-year history in and out of different iterations of recovery, multiple treatment centres and multiple modalities of treatment."

Greg has been coming to The Mission on and off since the age of 25. "I actually worked there for a couple of weeks, maybe 20 years back," he recalls, "painting bathrooms in the basement with marine quality paint and I remember the fumes were brutal!"

What triggered Greg's return to The Mission after years of stability is what he calls 'reno-viction' - an eviction for the purpose of renovation and rent increase. It was a pivotal moment in his life. "Oh my God," Greg exclaims, "the irrational thinking was 'you want to mess up my life? I'll show you how to mess up my life!'" Sadly, 'reno-viction' frequently leads to the loss of affordable housing and to homelessness.

Greg is currently at the 18-month point in his recovery, and he confidently shares that this time things feel very different. "The 12-step approach was not working for me, but the fact that The Mission has the Day program that is so solution focused, and borrows from rational emotive therapy, that was exactly what I needed." The isolation brought about by COVID-19, combined with the added stress, challenged Greg with thoughts that "tempt me to use again, but I've stayed determined, and it's the best I've ever felt, the most peace I've ever had."

Greg has returned to his love of music and playing classic rock with his pals in his hobby band. He's also made a new pal in his neighbourhood, a golden retriever named Bailey who lights up his day whenever he walks to and from The Mission.

Your generous donation has made Greg's journey to a newfound peace possible. "The Day and Stabilization programs are true gems where something magical happens," Greg says, "because the front-line staff, everybody at The Mission, are just amazing human beings. It's truly remarkable."

Greg is very grateful for your kind support in making these programs available to him and his community of hope.



ADDICTION AND TRAUMA SERVICES STATISTICS 2019-2020

- **31** Daily attendees at Day Program
- **35** Graduates from Hope Program
- **64** Graduates from Stabilization
- **24** LifeHouse Graduates
- **32** Second Stage residents

I met an angel at IKEA



A NEW DONOR HAS SHARED A STORY THAT'S RIGHT OUT OF A CHRISTMAS MOVIE.

Recently, I met an angel named Tom, at IKEA of all places. I had purchased a box spring and was getting ready to place it in my car, when Tom stepped up and asked me if I needed help. I accepted, but unfortunately the box spring didn't fit into my car. Tom graciously offered to place it in his car and deliver it to my home. I told him where I lived, which is quite far from IKEA, near the airport. He had some errands to complete at IKEA, but said he would then drop the box spring off at my house afterwards.

It's not every day we accept such an offer from a stranger, so Tom considerably asked me if I trusted him, which I did, immediately. Every cell in Tom's body radiated honesty and kindness. He returned from the store a few minutes later to tell me that now his stuff wouldn't fit in his vehicle, so he'd have to deliver my box spring first and return to the store. I didn't want to take advantage of his kindness so I offered to pay him for his troubles. Tom kindly refused, but suggested I donate to The Ottawa Mission instead. Once home, he insisted on bringing the box spring right up to the door.

I googled Tom's name and found out that he is indeed a real angel. He founded The Mission's Dental Clinic! For many reasons, people end up living on the street with no money. No one is immune to this turn of events in life. Because of generous, unselfish people like Dr. Harle, homeless people can have free dental care, which they wouldn't be able to afford in the first place. Cavities can be quite painful and if left untreated, can add other health issues on top of already existing ones.

I absolutely did donate to The Mission because of Dr. Harle's generosity and kindness, but also to give to the forgotten ones. God places Angels on our path all the time. Sometimes we see them, sometimes not. I certainly met a true angel yesterday. Thank you again Tom, for your help.

Manon Pilote

Be an angel and consider donating to The Ottawa Mission this Christmas. Your generosity supports free dental care and will put a smile on the faces of so many in need.

Dr. Tom and his team extend “the hands of kindness.”



A confident smile can light up any encounter, especially when we meet people for the first time, but poor dental health can inhibit one’s self confidence, impair proper digestion, and even lead to complications such as heart disease and diabetes. Sadly, people who are homeless or living in poverty simply do not have access to regular dental check-ups. And so, when The Ottawa Mission opened what is now known as the DYMON Health Clinic back in 2007, it was fortunate to count Dr. Tom Harle among its dedicated team.

Dr. Harle (“call me Dr. Tom”) is a faith-inspired individual and dentist who believes in providing a helping hand whenever the opportunity presents itself, although his humility and good nature makes him uncomfortable being portrayed as an angel. Dr. Tom founded The Mission’s free dental clinic after years of volunteering abroad with Health Teams International (Canada) in such places as Ecuador and the Dominican Republic.

“I was telling one my patients about our work and he said, ‘You know Tom, we have a lot of people in need here in Ottawa’ and I thought, yikes, that’s very convincing. If I can travel half way around the world to provide volunteer dental services, surely I can do that for the disadvantaged right here at home.”

Dr. Tom approached The DYMON Clinic’s founder Diane Morrison with an idea. “Tom,” Diane said, “how did you know we had just decided to open up a primary health clinic, and we’d set aside a room for a dental office?” A guiding angel, perhaps? He assembled a team to offer emergency, preventative, and restorative dental care. “As a prosthodontist in the city, I have a built-in network of referrals, and I could tap into that to encourage volunteers,” Dr. Tom says. “We started with 9, and it has grown ever since.” Dr. Tom now leads a team of over 100 volunteer dentists, denturists and hygienists, who treated 471 patients over the past year.

“I once asked a patient about why she came to us. ‘The hands of kindness’ was how she referred to the clinic,” Dr. Tom fondly recalls.

Please consider extending your kindness to help The Mission’s dental clinic. Your generosity can help bring healthy smiles to its patients.



DENTAL CLINIC STATS 2019-2020

- **471** patient visits
- **1509** volunteer hours by dental professionals
- **\$142,232** value of in-kind services provided



We'd like to extend our heartfelt thanks to all of you who tuned in on **November 7th** to the **Blue Door at your Door** broadcast on CTV Ottawa. A very special thank-you goes out to our amazing event Co-chairs Lawrence Greenspon, Sheila Whyte and Chef Michael Moffatt. A big thank-you as well to all of our sponsors without whom the event would not have been possible. Please visit our website at www.ottawamission.com/events for a complete listing.

Events like this not only raise much-needed funds for the life-changing programs at The Ottawa Mission, but also provide the opportunity for our supporters to learn more about the ongoing issues affecting homeless people in our community.



Mayor Jim Watson presents a plaque to The Ottawa Mission in recognition of our **one-millionth hour anniversary**, September 22, 2020.



JOIN OUR YOUNG PROFESSIONALS NETWORK TODAY!

The Ottawa Mission Foundation's Young Professionals Network (YPN) is for those looking to expand their professional network while making a tangible impact on the life-changing work of The Ottawa Mission.

For more information on becoming a member of the YPN, please visit OttawaMission.com/ypnonamission or contact Jennifer Graves at 613-234-1155 or jgraves@ottawamission.com



INTERESTED IN VOLUNTEERING?

At The Mission, we have many volunteer opportunities. If you are interested, visit ottawamission.com/volunteer, or contact Aneesha Sidhu at asidhu@ottawamission.com for more details.

Trust is the number one goal



Peter Naylor is a direct engagement shelter-based case manager with the Housing Department of The Mission. ‘Direct’ means that Peter is a member of the team that is “engagement-focused with the gentlemen who come to the door looking for a helping hand.” Peter supports the guests who have been in the shelter for six months or more, beginning with what he calls “a process of gentle engagement to determine what can be done to help them move forward.”

The average stay in the shelter is roughly 14 days. However, 180 days in the shelter combined with high needs means it is time to meet with Peter to determine a course of action. 90% of his caseload arrive with some sort of mental health challenge. Addiction and mental health-focused issues, or, in many cases, a combination of interconnected issues, must be addressed before moving on to housing and financial support.

Trust is Peter’s number one goal, because trust is essential to formulating a collaborative plan of recovery and stability. “Nothing is forced,” he says, “and the guest must be genuinely on-board every step of the way.” There is no moving forward until there is readiness, and that can take a tremendous amount of time, but it is the only path to success.

Peter is pleased to report that one guest, a gentleman entering his retirement years, has recently moved into an apartment of his own. “This fellow had maybe 10 years of homelessness behind him. He was addicted to alcohol, but that has been greatly controlled, which is amazing, and he feels a lot better for it,” Peter says. “He is finally able to leave the streets behind and retire in dignity.”

There is a severe depression and anxiety component to this gentleman’s story, so moving into a new home, especially during COVID, only amplifies his stress, but Peter is confident that with ongoing support, he will achieve stability. The gentleman has been connected to a worker at The Canadian Mental Health Association, staff at Ottawa City Housing, and, of course, Peter continues to be a positive presence in his life.

Your generous donation supports so many people on the path to a new home. Peter reports that you can see the hope in their eyes when they open that door for the first time. Thank you for your kindness.

Try the new Give Shop app and be sure and check out our first Give Shop donor, Ottawa artist Erika Déruaz

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Mission meals so 'mmm' delicious

Chip wagons have long been a tradition of urban culture in Ottawa. There's a new, one-of-its-kind food truck on the streets of the capital these days, and it specializes in serving tasty, warm meals in neighbourhoods around town. The program has been dubbed Mobile Mission Meals (as in 'mmm' for delicious), and its impact is seen on the faces of the individuals who line up every weekday. The MMM food truck is the result of a partnership with five emergency food providers, and generous sponsors like Urbandale Corporation, Capital Meat, and Orleans Fresh Fruit. Pelican Seafood Market and Grill kindly donated its food truck to The Mission.

There are all kinds of reasons why people need food banks. Swings in the economy, low income, (both made worse by COVID 19) and a lack of affordable housing are just some of the factors that put stress on a weekly food budget. While The Mission continues to offer thousands of meals weekly to those who drop by in person, the MMM food truck program recognizes that a trip to Sandy Hill may be difficult for those with mobility issues or who may be short of funds for bus fare. Bringing nutritious, hot meals to communities where they are needed the most is a dignified response to these challenges.

Filipe Isla Wong is a graduate of the Food Services Training Program (FSTP). He's recently moved from The Mission's kitchen to become driver of the food truck. "I do a tour of the city each week," Filipe says. With the assistance of an FSTP student, ingredients for 400 meals are prepared every morning in the kitchen, then loaded on to the truck to be cooked up and served. "We travel to 10 different locations throughout the city" Filipe thoughtfully reports. "People are so happy to see us wherever we go!"



Your gift of support provides the gift of warm meals to your neighbours experiencing food insecurity in Ottawa.

Thank you for your kindness during this Christmas season.

Filipe Isla Wong and Navin Uppal cook up lunch



For only \$3.47 you can provide a special meal at our Christmas dinner on December 20th and help bring hope to someone in need.

Please give today.

Please donate at **ottawamission.com**

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