

## ELUCO ANNUAL REPORT 2015

November marked the fifth anniversary for Nancy Howard as ELUCO's Community Outreach worker. Women from the Marconi community hosted a surprise party to celebrate this milestone. Nancy told the Board "it is a humbling experience to share their (the Marconi residents) love and their lives each and every day and I feel truly blessed." We, the Board, feel truly blessed to have Nancy on the front line caring and sharing with the folks in the Marconi and Huron communities.

"The Unit" was a busy place this year as Nancy and her many volunteers worked on the many programs that the community has requested to help build the skills they need to live successfully in society. Breakfast programs are providing children with a nutritious start to their day in a nurturing and caring environment. The lunch program has a new twist this year – a small group of children are learning new culinary skills as they prepare the dessert each week for the lunch program. An afterschool program provides a variety activities for children to participate in – games, crafts, reading, physical activity etc. The younger teens were able to develop their culinary skills twice a month for three months through the Growing Chefs program and a Red Cross babysitting program equipped a group of young people with the skills they need to start earning some money.

London Intercommunity Health partnered with us to bring a collective kitchen to one of the women's groups. Each session the women made five dishes they could take home and freeze. The initial group has now branched out on its own and is running its own kitchen so that another group can work with London Intercommunity Health. There is a coffee group that meets regularly and of course Nancy's door is always open to help with the challenges people are facing.

Cheryl Bolton completed the final four months of her internship in April. She was able to provide leadership and support to the community while Nancy was away in January. Cheryl made a huge impact on the families and individuals in both Marconi and Huron. Matthew Burns a student at B. Davison Secondary School did a two week coop placement with Nancy in the spring and a second one in the fall. Matthew is well received by the community and he is hoping to work with children in the future.

The Board was pleased to welcome a new member this year – Amanda Woods. Amanda has a background in HR management and as well as many other skills, a boundless supply of enthusiasm and energy. Fundraising was a once again a major thrust of the Board. Board and community members under the direction of Elma Johnston and Linda De Clerc spent most Monday mornings in February and March making cinnamon buns for our annual fundraiser. In April ELUCO sponsored their 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Voices of Broadway Show Choir Concert at First St Andrews United Church. Although attendance was not as high as we had hoped, the Choir captivated the audience with their music and choreography. The annual Rock and Roll for Families in Springbank Park was held the last Sunday in September and was a very successful fundraiser for ELUCO. The weather was great and everyone enjoyed a brisk/leisurely walk (depending on their state of health) through the park followed by a time of fellowship and "goodies".

**Welcome Wednesday Hospitality Lunch** held weekly at the Huron Street Salvation Army Citadel continues to be well attended. Each Wednesday, a hot meal is provided by volunteer groups from Knollwood Baptist Church, Rowntree United, Siloam United, Valleyview Mennonite and ELUCO, to the 80 plus folks who attend. The doors open early so people can socialize over coffee, play games or meet with a worker to sort out their problems. The annual Christmas dinner with turkey and fixings had over 150 in attendance. We want to thank all the volunteers who are instrumental in keeping this program running.

**The ELUCO Foodbank** situated at the new Gethsemane Gardens complex is open to area residents every Wednesday and Friday morning till noon. A great group of volunteers greet clients and see to their needs. As well they shop and stock the shelves with the multitude of groceries supplied by our donors through cash or in-kind donations. In 2015 the food cupboard serviced 674 families which translated to 1165 adults and 609 children. The number of families was down by 13 from 2014 but the number of adults was up by 87 and the number of children up 23. Thank you to all the donors and volunteers who make this program possible.

**The Christmas Share** program this year was an overwhelming success with 75 families being served. Our donors were churches, school children, organizations, families and individuals. Each donor had their choice of methods –some provided gift cards, some provided gifts, some sponsored a child and still others sponsored a family. Individuals helped with wrapping and others took over the delivery of boxes to the families. Whatever you did we thank you one and all for making this a joyous season for our Marconi Families!

Our **Glen Eagle Scholarship Fund** was set up a number of years ago in memory of Susan Eagle's Dad to provide assistance to financially challenged young people, within our community, pursuing postsecondary education. These funds have purchased books or helped with tuition costs at community colleges or universities. A portion of a sizeable donation from the Grace United Trustees will enable us to continue this very worthwhile program.

Lastly I would like to thank all our donors over the past year. No matter what size your gift, we wouldn't have been able as an organization, to carry out our mandate "to work with and advocate for the most vulnerable in our communities". Thank you and may God bless each and every one of you as we strive to create a more just and equitable society for all.