

# ELUCO

East London United Church Outreach

## Winter Newsletter 2018

### COMMUNITY WORKER:

Nancy Howard  
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### FOOD CUPBOARD

Open Wednesday and Friday  
9:30-12:00  
Gethsemane Gardens  
1461 Huron St. London ON

### WELCOME WEDNESDAY

Lunch and social time,  
Wednesdays 11:00-1:00  
Salvation Army  
310 Vesta Rd., London ON

## Jazz Cabaret at FSA a Spectacular Success!

At First-St. Andrew's United Church on Friday, January 26<sup>th</sup> there was an intimate evening of jazz featuring the Sonja Gustafson Quintet, with Ariel Kasler (piano), Pete Hysen (bass), Barry Usher (sax) and Rich Brisco (drums). With cabaret seating, wine, beer and snacks available, a relaxed atmosphere was created for all to enjoy. The innovative jazz music played by these highly professional musicians was magical to hear. Proceeds of approximately \$2200.00 will go to ELUCO, East London United Church Outreach. We hope to repeat this fabulous musical experience next year!



## Summer Camp

It is not too early to make a donation to send a child to camp!

It is already time to start filling out camp registrations. A week spent outdoors in a natural setting such as at Camp Kee-Mo-Kee is the experience of a life time for many children.

Your donations truly make a difference.



## An Inspiring Service

Nancy Howard, our community support worker, provided the message at First- St. Andrew's on February 4th as our mission speaker. Her text was Micah 6 verse 8, "to act justly, to love tenderly and to walk humbly with your God." and Matthew 5:43-48, where Jesus instructs, "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven."

She told of how ELUCO was formed and gave credit to Mary Elliott, a long-time board member, for inspiring us with her on-going passion for the ELUCO ministry. Putting our Christian faith into action, ELUCO embraces families in need and is committed to our mission to support and advocate for people who build community in the midst of challenging circumstances. "As Christians there is a code of conduct that sets us apart from non-believers. In our hearts we seek to uphold the ways of God, to love one another, to be hospitable and caring to all...And it gives us pause to remember that so many are out there suffering and we can help by contributing. And maybe you can't afford to give financially, but you can find opportunities to volunteer, or simply hold others in prayer, and spread the gift of love to everyone you greet."

She spoke passionately about her work in the community, walking with the people she serves. "There's a stigma with living in east London. People are quick to judge and make misguided assumptions about those who are poor...for the most part, circumstances, not choice brought these families to this place. The stories are heartbreaking... You'd be amazed at the strength and resilience of many of our friends in these circumstances, but the stress and the system beat them down. And it is a vicious cycle. The more people are judged and mistreated, the more they begin to lose faith in themselves, the more guarded and marginalized they become. Poverty then rears its head in isolation, mental health problems, addictions and crime. It's easy to turn a blind eye and assume the social system will take care of this, but the reality is the system is failing. We need to stand up and take action for our most vulnerable citizens."

Through sponsorship to camps, our Post-Secondary Education Fund, programs for children and adults that build social, life and leadership skills in a fun setting, and special events, our families are provided with opportunities they otherwise could not afford. We support and advocate for families with housing, social assistance, legal and personal matters. Along with other agencies, ELUCO advocates for changes within the system, such as income security, bans in winter hydro disconnections, transit subsidies and affordable housing. "Many of our community members have absolutely no support system, so perhaps what matters most and the greatest gift I have to offer is just being there, to listen with an open mind, to reach out in love and understanding, and sometimes to help with a solution or a referral to another agency."

Nancy was able to make connections for the congregation with ways that they've been involved with her community such as buying gift cards at Christmas for the Christmas Share program, driving folks for excursions and assisting with emergency needs. "A non-profit organization, the ELUCO ministry is as vulnerable as the community it serves. ELUCO would be unable to operate without the generous support we receive...We give heartfelt thanks for your generosity and encouragement. We are nothing without you. We are nothing without you!"

Nancy's message ended with applause from the congregation, something that rarely happens at First- St. Andrew's. Thank you Nancy for bringing your work and your love for what you do to the congregation.

Linda Badke

## Nancy's Notes

As a recipient of Mission and Service Funds of the United Church of Canada, it was a privilege for me to be invited to provide the message on behalf of ELUCO for Mission and Service Sunday at my home church, First-St. Andrew's United Church

Always I am inspired by the witness and service of women's groups within congregations as they reach out to those in need both near and far. What an honour and a pleasure to share fellowship and lunch with the Metropolitan U.C.W. and then to inform the ladies with an update of the ELUCO ministry. The Mary and Martha Society at the Good Shepherd Church invited me for a delicious Shrove Tuesday supper to greet me and to ask any questions. Their free will offering was donated to the ministry of ELUCO. We give heartfelt thanks to these ladies for their interest and support.

We are reminded that we all must work together and support one another in our Social Justice Ministries. I am a member of the Canada wide Reference Group of the Community and Social Justice Ministries Network. We recently submitted a proposal to host a workshop at the upcoming Festival of Faith. Our Transformation at the Edge workshop would provide an engaging look at the gifts of four of the Community and Social Justice Ministries, highlighting the social justice work being done around issues of poverty, homelessness and its ramifications. We hope that others will be amazed and inspired by the social innovation at work in community ministries.

A relatively new initiative for ELUCO is our partnership in the London Food Coalition. This group recently purchased a refrigerated truck to transport quality fruits and vegetables that otherwise would be thrown into the dumpsters. An average of 6000 pounds of food a month is being distributed by various organizations to the tables of our families in need. We are continually meeting with others to determine best practices and to get more donors on board.

Our Faith Based Basic Needs Group in Argyle continues to share with one another concerns and initiatives within our communities. We discussed the Universal Basic Income and propose to create a fact sheet including poverty statistics, bipartisan questions for political candidates and existing programs in Argyle to share throughout our networks.

After school we have enjoyed some reading and cooperative games.

Surprisingly, the Valentine's Day crafts were less of a draw than the competitive Valentine BINGO led by Christopher, who is working on his Community Hours for high school. What pure joy to be in that energy!

The higher temperatures, rain and flooding remind us that the winter is drawing to a close. Looking ahead we hope to host some March Break Programs and Easter Activities.



It is hoped that through the sharing of stories we will help people to gain new understanding and inspire all with increased participation and connection to the Mission and Service Fund and the programs it supports. So many people are out there suffering and we can help!

## Christmas Celebrations

It seems like so long ago and yet it seems like just yesterday. Christmas celebrations live in our hearts throughout the year so it feels right to talk about Christmas in our Winter Newsletter.

Early in December over 70 people from our Marconi Community gathered at Royal View Church to begin our celebrations of the season. Our annual Christmas party is always a highlight for our families and for our team of volunteers as well, to see the joy on their faces as we celebrate together. This year Mad Science's own "Hail Storm" captured the attention of both the young and adults as she demonstrated the magic of science in a seasonal presentation with a festival of colour and lights, the creation of snow, and a fun favorite, Fat Santa in the Chimney. No one went home hungry as our volunteers in the kitchen provided a delicious feast of ham, potatoes and vegetables for lunch. Santa knew where to find us and even though he was jolly as could be, some of the children were a little shy and he had to earn their trust before they would accept a gift from him and his helpers. The whole community worked together in appreciation making clean-up a very light chore. What a wonderful way to balance the business of the season.

Our families struggle financially throughout the year so not surprisingly Christmas time can become especially stressful. ELUCO is very fortunate to have so many churches and organizations to support our Christmas Share Program as we reach out in love to our families with gifts and food hampers. First-St. Andrew's United Church donated over \$2500 in gift cards, Richards Memorial provided gifts for 31 children, Siloam gifted us with 5 turkeys and 3 hams, Metropolitan provided food hampers for 4 families, 5 families were sponsored by Rose Birrell and Thorndale UCW, and family groups, each classroom of children at



Stoneybrook Public School sponsored a child. This year we were also on the radar for the Jansen Kids Christmas Project and 137 children each received several slightly used or new toys, books and games. Volunteers from the Marconi community and friends of our Board wrap and cheerfully make deliveries to our families. So many loving hearts come together to make this project a success. Thank you so much. You bring to life the message of Christmas with hope, peace, joy and love.



Continued...

## ELUCO is blessed with a long list of generous supporters:

Many United Churches of Middlesex Presbytery including:

Siloam

Rowntree Memorial

Richards Memorial

First-St. Andrews

Wesley Knox

Thorndale

Metropolitan

White Oaks

UCW Presbyterial

Sisters of St. Joseph

The May Court Club of London

London Conference M&S

Royal View Church

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church

London InterCommunity Health

St. Leonard's Society

Red Cross Babysitting Course

Middlesex London Optimist Club

London Affordable Housing

Stoneybrook Public School

J.P. Robarts Public School

Federal Service Retirees Associates

Bank of Nova Scotia Sponsorship Program

London Middlesex Housing Corporation

Generous individual donors and volunteers

We can never say thank you enough. We cannot operate without you.

## Christmas Celebrations

continued



Mad Science's own "Hail Storm" captured the attention of both the young and adults as she demonstrated the magic of science in a seasonal presentation with a festival of colour and lights, the creation of snow, and a fun favorite, Fat Santa in the Chimney.



## The School Lunch Program

At the unit we continue to have growing numbers at our School Lunch Program. Not all of the children are from the families we serve. It's much more about the social bond. God's love is in our presence as we sit down together to share a hot healthy meal.



presents

the *voices* of  
Broadway  
*show choir*

# 5<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL Outreach Fundraiser

**Saturday, March 3, 2018 - 7:30pm**

**Siloam United Church  
1240 Fanshawe Park Road East, London**

**Tickets: \$20**

**Available at the door, or in advance, by contacting:**

Janice Elliott  
519-859-7183  
janiceelliott04@gmail.com