



Winter 2022/23

Together in Community

We name it the Winter Blues, and between things not quite having returned to “normal” since COVID wreaked havoc, and the long cold and dull days, Individuals have felt alone and many have been crippled with stress, Anxiety and Depression. There’s been increased demand for counselling services and appreciation reciprocated for the support of genuine compassionate listening. People have benefited from shared mindfulness activities and tools to manage their Anxiety and Depression.

As the cost of groceries continues to rise, families are struggling to put food on the table. With our partners, ELUCO continues to provide our usual food security programs to help support families through this crisis. Our Welcome Wednesday Lunch at Rowntree Memorial United Church resumed its indoor format, bringing in extra volunteers for the additional responsibilities and serving a slightly larger crowd. Our volunteer team is serving growing numbers at our Food Cupboard at Gethsemane Gardens. We have been able to provide Harvest Bucks for the purchase of fresh fruits and vegetables at local markets both at our Food Cupboard and at our Marconi site. Each week, new faces are finding their way to our Breakfast Snacks and School Lunch Programs, keeping our staff and volunteers busy at the Unit.

Mindful of everyone’s health, we have yet to return to a full complement of programs. Next steps include small group activities including additional sessions on employment readiness with resumes, letters and interview tips, literacy appreciation with books, rhymes and activities in conjunction with the London Public Library Outreach Team, continued support for Anxiety and Depression, plus new workshops on Grief, Addiction, and Family Support for Concurrent Disorders. Our young people have hopes that we might once again be able to bring the Babysitting Course to the Unit.

Most prevalent on our minds is to take this opportunity to express sincere gratitude on behalf of ELUCO and the families we serve for bringing hope and joy to our hearts with your generous contributions to our Christmas Share Program. Congregations, UCW groups, Individuals, and Jansen Christmas Toy Drive contributed food, gifts and gift cards to support 103 families. Special thanks to all the volunteers who assisted with sorting, wrapping and deliveries. Together we made a difference!

THANK YOU!
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The Story Behind the Jansen Christmas Toy Drive

Inspired to come up with a project when the Jansen family was at church helping to sort Christmas Hampers, young Jacob, then in grade 1, had the idea to give away his toys to kids in need. He wrote a letter to his classmates asking them to bring in toys, books and games they didn't want any longer. Thus evolved the "Kids Helping Kids" Campaign where the Jansens asked kids/families to make room for Santa. That first year, the Jansen family collected enough items for 100 kids.

In its 8th year, this annual initiative has grown into a massive community effort with Drop Zones all over the city. Two 20' storage bins turn into a shopping mall where kids from nearby Elementary Schools help pack bags of gently-used, nearly-new and new toys, crafts, games, books and stuffed animals for over 1000 kids. Also included in the hampers are Blessing Bags filled with toiletries for each child.

The list of recipients comes from collaborating with local shelters, needy communities, drop-in centres, church communities, and schools. Deliveries to organizations in mid-December are handled by Garth and Meaghan Jansen with assistance from volunteers using a truck provided by Bennett Fleet Rentals.

This year ELUCO delivered gift bags from the Jansen Christmas Toy Drive to 51 families/101 children. Imagine the chaos and hours committed to this amazing undertaking by the Jansens and our London community!

WOW!! Amazing Youth Project

Joshua's CREW (Caring, Resilient, Energetic, Witnesses), grades 5-8 youth at First-St. Andrew's United Church hosted a Reverse Advent Calendar to collect a variety of grocery, household and pet supplies. January is such a difficult time for our families. You have gifted us with hope in the love shared with your New Year's donations. Thank you!



SAVE the DATE! 7:30 PM, Saturday, April 1, 2023 Siloam United Church

Join us for our **8th Annual Concert Fundraiser** with the lively and talented **Voices of Broadway Show Choir**, who "acting the song" bring Broadway musical stories to life on the stage. \$25 Tickets available from our Board of Directors and at the door. See you soon for a wonderful experience!