

*Our mission statement: To reach the people in the inner city of Ottawa with Christ's love, through a mercy ministry and being socially active as advocates for the inner city person.*



# Capital City Mission

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A MINISTRY UPDATE OF CAPITAL CITY MISSION | OCTOBER 2005

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## ***Why do people live on the street?***

“I like the freedom and lack of responsibility.”

“Too lazy to get a job.”

“I don't fit anywhere else.”

I have a handful of friends who have been sleeping in doorways, ATM enclosures or under bridges for years. Some are the shaggy, multi-layered folks with haunted eyes that are immediately identifiable; because, in Toronto, it doesn't pay to be visibly homeless, you'd pass by others without guessing that they spent the night huddled in the stairwell of a nearby condo. The former seem so out there that they must be a different order of humanity from you and me; the latter look so much like you and me that you can't help but think, “Why doesn't he just get a job?”

These are the “chronically homeless”, the ones politicians, social workers, journalists and church people struggle to find a humane answer for. I've heard all of the explanations above and a few more from the mouths of homeless friends, but I don't believe any of them any more. I've been around long enough to hear the heart breaking stories behind the bravado and the anti-establishment bluster.

Is it freedom when you live out your life within a dozen square blocks of

a downtown core, and are unable to use the washrooms in a coffee shop? Is a person who hustles sixteen hours each day, every day, walking miles for meals, begging or boosting for change, carrying everything he or she owns everywhere, just to make it to the next morning – is that person lazy? Can a person with the improvisational skills and the sheer will to survive that kind of life really not fit in anywhere else?

It's true that some of my friends have addictions so ferocious that, given the choice between sleeping warm and dry for a month or one night getting high, the money goes to the dealer in a heartbeat. It's true that a room in a flophouse takes all but a handful of change from the welfare cheque – if you can find a room at all. True, also, that an “affordable” bachelor apartment in my city rents for a couple of hundred dollars more than the monthly welfare payment, and almost three quarters of a month's full time minimum wage pay packet, before taxes. And it's true that perhaps a third of my homeless friends are afflicted with psychiatric conditions that make it difficult for them to get or keep housing.

Although they represent some of the huge problems to be addressed if my

friends are ever to find homes, these aren't the fundamental reasons why they have ended up living on the street. The many studies revealing that roughly 85% of homeless youth have experienced significant and repeated physical and/or sexual abuse get a little closer to the bone.

“Greg,” one friend told me years ago, when I asked why he'd bailed out of a good situation and ended up back on the street, “I'm just a piece of \*\*\*\*, and this is where I belong.”

What he said wasn't true, of course, but it revealed how deeply his soul (his ‘self image’?) had been broken. He was living out what he believed he deserved.

Christian communities are uniquely qualified to provide the kind of healing whole-life embrace necessary to make a difference in such broken lives. The barriers to be overcome are huge – there simply are no easy, five-second-sound-bite answers. But at least we begin with these deep “good news” convictions: healing is precisely for the broken; forgiveness is for the guilty; and grace is for the undeserving. For people like us.

*Greg Paul is director of Sanctuary, an interdenominational ministry and faith community in Toronto, and the author of God in the Alley ( Shaw, 2004)*

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## ***The Prayer Corner***

The New Testament is filled with examples of Jesus and Paul praying for the church and for the people they were discipling. It is vitally important that the prayer ministry over Capital City Mission is alive and thriving as we head into the fall and winter months – often the most challenging time of year for those we serve.

Thank you for your diligence before His Throne on our behalf. We have experienced the power of your prayers, and know that the Holy Spirit continues to protect and guide us in all that is before us.

As your small group ministries begin anew this fall, and you have opportunity to pray with brothers and sisters in Christ, please intercede on behalf of staff, volunteers and guests here at CCM.

Here are just a few prayer and praise items to bring before the Lord:

### ***THANKSGIVING!!***

It's Thanksgiving again, and a wonderful time for us to encourage and be encouraged by the folks of lowertown who are "family".

We are Thankful that the Lord

continues to provide for us. He has provided new workers, diligent supporters, opportunities to share the Gospel with guests, healing, strength, wisdom and peace. Thank you Lord!

Please pray for continued provision as we head into winter months, which bring with them tremendous needs in our community.

Continue to pray for our friend Richard, who is continuing to wait upon a hospital bed, and surgery on his foot because of a diabetes-related illness.

Pray for the many who suffer from mental illness and other physical disabilities. CCM is a place of refuge and fellowship for them.

Loneliness and depression are often the greatest tools Satan uses in our midst at the mission. Please pray for protection over our guests, and a great equipping of staff and volunteers as we listen to, and counsel the hurting among us.

God in His almightiness is looking at us with a holy love and knows our every need. He hears our every sigh and loves us with an everlasting love. 'He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think.'

**Please join us for**

# *A Christmas Story*

**Featuring great Ottawa-based musicians and tasty homemade desserts**

**Friday November 11th  
Doors open at 6pm  
Concert begins  
at 6:30pm**

**St. Joseph Church  
151 Laurier East  
(Wilbrod and  
Cumberland Entrance)**

**This event is a gift to  
our inner city, there  
is no charge and no  
offering will be taken.**

## **Supporting CCM**

### ***Prepacked backpacks***

There is a need for donations of durable backpacks filled with all kinds of practical items such as warm gloves, heavy socks, toques, scarves, toiletries (toothpaste, soap, shampoo, razors, shaving cream, deodorant etc.), treats and candies.

Please contact Tim Meisenheimer and find out how you can help.

### ***Angel Tree***

The Angel Tree is an opportunity to provide children of incarcerated people gifts on behalf of their loved one. By donating money, you can help us to purchase and deliver the gifts to the children.

**Thanks to all who  
participated in this  
year's Joy Jam festival  
for the inner-city by way  
of volunteering, music,  
services, and donations.  
We had a great day and  
look forward to**

# *joy jam 3*

**July 15th, 2006**

# Why people come to Capital City Mission

**KEN:** I come to CCM for the fellowship, the guidance to find different ways of getting help in the community, and most of all in my journey back to Jesus.

**SARAH:** I think CCM does great work. The sense of community, the tireless staff, just being a listening ear to someone who may be alone. A lot of people need to learn and see the real gospel; that with God all things are possible. That little things can make a big difference. That sometimes when life is hard you can meet people who love God and each other. Thank you, and keep standing in the gap of the voiceless!

**RAY:** People are being fed spiritually and physically. A need for fellowship is being met for many, amongst the poor and homeless. Please give generously. Come and see for yourself. This is a genuine ministry.

**WAYNE:** This place is good for the support we get from the staff.

**DEBBIE:** Coming to CCM gives me the peace of mind. Meeting people is really great, especially on Thursday nights when church services take place. I feel peace at heart. Everybody is great. I'm glad to live in lower town just because of CCM. May God bless you.

**JAMES:** A good place to meet people and get help with the needs we have in life. A very good outreach for the poor.

**JOHN:** I lost my dear girlfriend to cancer not long ago. CCM gives me a place to come for comfort and spiritual guidance. Thank you Jesus.

**JEAN:** Why do I come to CCM? When I first came here a couple of years ago. I kept to myself, wasn't one to talk about my personal life and problems. The first thing I noticed was how the staff treated everyone with respect. From the environment I came from I found CCM to be a place of peace and tranquility. As time went by I got more comfortable around the staff. They have helped me in more ways than one. One of the staff helped me to deal with some family problems and to solve them. Now I'm getting my life back together and I'm feeling more confident about myself. As I leave the city this week to head home I'd like to thank the CCM staff for what they have done for me over the years. Putting me on the right track and helping me find peace within myself. Thank you for everything.

**DWARAPU VITALRAO:** I like CCM for fellowship, friendship, food and beverages. I've come to CCM for five years and the community here at CCM is helping me.

**ERNIE:** A place to go to call home from the commercial world to meet God and Jesus and excellent people.

**DIANE:** I come here to meet my basic needs and spiritual nourishment.

**THERESA:** I've been coming to CCM for 3.5 years. I come for support and good fellowship. The people here do not judge you.

**JEAN P:** CCM has been good to me, I've been coming here for 4 years.

**SUSAN:** CCM has given me acceptance and a listening ear. The staff have shown respect in difficult moments. Tim's wife Monika and the young pastor on Thursday nights are excellent. During the winter months it is wonderful opportunity for food and a place to be able to be yourself.

**LINDA:** I appreciate CCM being in my community, for supporting and going out of there way to help anybody. I've been coming here for over a year. Some days I feel down and lonely like most of the people who come to CCM. It's like we are family now. The staff are wonderful. I can't imagine this place shutting down. When I come here it makes me appreciate more what I have than what I don't have. I thank the staff for being here.

## This Christmas honour a friend

As Christmas approaches, many of us face the "problem" of choosing a suitable gift for someone who doesn't need anything in particular. If you are in this situation, please consider an *In-Honour Gift Donation* to CCM, a gift that will bless the recipient as well as those whom we serve. Clip out this coupon on which you can write the name of your chosen recipient and then mail it in to CCM with your donation. We will send out a letter, informing the person(s) with whom you are honouring of your gift. Specific amounts will not be stated.

### *In-Honour Christmas Donation*

Please accept my donation to Capital City Mission in honour of

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Mail to: Capital City Mission, 390 Rideau St.,  
Box 20183, Ottawa, ON. K1N 9P4

# An update from Timothy

Rev. Timothy Meisenheimer



## This fall has been so beautiful

- We celebrated thanksgiving in October at our place with a home-style turkey dinner for 3 sittings of 30.
- In November we will be enjoying *A Christmas Story* on a special night for our friends.
- In December we will be making CCM a place to come home for the holidays with many special Christmas meals and celebrations, including Christmas day!

## There are many ways that YOU can help us this Christmas ...

... you can help with a gift to honour a friend. Instead of buying your friends a gift they don't really need, make a financial donation to Capital City Mission in honour of them!

... you can help with a gift for Angel Tree. Your financial donation will give us the ability to deliver a present to a prisoner's child on their behalf.

... you can help by donating a backpack filled with all kinds of practical items (see ad on inside spread).

In this newsletter, we have shared why we exist from our guest's perspective and why people live on the streets from a veteran urban-missionary's perspective.

I hope the picture of what God wants you to see will come clear this season ... of your life.

Timothy

## Capital City Mission Board of Directors

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## About Us

Capital City Mission (CCM) is a drop-in centre in downtown Ottawa that ministers to the inner city's poor and homeless people. It is a centre where Christ's love can be expressed to people on their own terms. The goal of the Capital City Mission is to meet both practical and spiritual needs in its community. With its current volunteers and staff, Capital City Mission offers services such as free haircuts, laundry facilities, computer workstations where people can work on resumes as well as learn important and marketable job skills, counseling, foot care, networking help, visitations (street - home - hospital - prison), food bank, clothing bank and we offer help in finding affordable apartments. We offer free coffee, lunch and snacks. We also offer an alternative to spending the day on the street. Capital City Mission is a place to socialize, talk, read the newspaper, play cards, play games on the computer, etc.

## Get involved

There are many ways to get involved at Capital City Mission. Because our focus is on building community, the best way to get involved is to come and visit us when we are open. If you plan on joining us during our open hours, feel free to call us to let us know of your plans so that we can be prepared to welcome and show you around. Another way to get involved is to support us financially or with donation of goods. We believe that God calls all people to live in community. In community we discover that everyone has God given resources to meet each other's needs; the gifts of the individual become gifts to the whole group. As we discover and empower each other's gifts and acknowledge our own needs, we become stronger and more mature, both individually and communally. Because of this, we invite people to join the CCM community by entering into partnership with us as volunteers.