

GOOD WORK NEWS

The Working Centre, 58 Queen St. S. Kitchener, ON N2G 1V6

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Inside This Issue:

- Gathering with Neighbours at the 36th Mayors' Dinner
- Building Community with Our Neighbours
- Creating Stronger Connections Across Our Community
- Spiritual Care in Small Things
- Fr. Greg Boyle Visits The Working Centre
- St. John's Kitchen Memorials
- Making Home Reaches Its Goal
- Making Home Update



Over 860 guests attend the 36th Annual Mayors' Dinner on Saturday April 5th, 2025; John Loughheed and Fauzia Mazhar were recognized for their community building work; Waterloo Mayor Dorothy McCabe speaking at the Dinner; Jamie Schlegel speaks on behalf of the Schlegel Family Foundation, the main sponsor for the Dinner; Guests participate in the Heads or Tails fundraising game.

Gathering with Neighbours at the 36th Mayors' Dinner

By Kara Peters Unrau

On April 5th, we celebrated the 36th Mayors' Dinner in Marshall Hall at Bingemans. With over 860 guests, the room was at full capacity. It was bubbling with energy, especially as people spent the first hour mingling and talking to friends and neighbours. It is always heartening to see so many longtime supporters of The Mayors' Dinner commit to participating in this community building fundraising event each year.

This year our theme was **Knowing our Neighbours**. We gathered to celebrate the many ways people share themselves with our community, and to hear about building community and celebrating diversity and inclusion. We heard inspiring stories from Fauzia Mazhar and John Loughheed. We also updated the community on the construction progress and highlighted The Working Centre's Making Home project at 97 Victoria. Neil Aitchison and Mike Farwell entertained us with their MC skills, adding humour and insight throughout the evening.

The hosts Mayors Berry Vrbancovic, Dorothy McCabe, and

The night's reflections combined to deepen our understanding about the richness of diversity and the importance of being intentional neighbours.

The Mayors' Dinner was a perfect medium to celebrate this as the room was full of good will and friendly encounters as we gathered together for this evening.

Jan Liggett offered greetings on the theme of Knowing our Neighbours and thoughts on how cities are responding to the issues of our times.

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Knowing Our Neighbours is a theme that resonates at the core of The Working Centre. Proceeds

continued on page 3

Construction Nears Completion at 97 Victoria as the Making Home Campaign Reaches Its Goal

Thanks to the generous support of donors, community partners and government grants, we have reached our goal to raise \$22 Million!

Read more on page 8



Forty-First Year

Issue 161

June 2025

Good Work News

Good Work News was first produced in September 1984. It is published four times a year by The Working Centre and St. John's Kitchen as a forum of opinions and ideas on work and unemployment. Four issues of Good Work News constitutes our annual report. There is a circulation of 13,000 copies. Subscription: a donation towards our work.

Editors: Joe Mancini, Stephanie Mancini

Contributors: Douglas MacLellan, JP Smola, Kara Peters Unrau, Fauzia Mazhar, John Lougheed, Carol Taylor, Katherine Bitzer, Joanna Miller, Celia Gutierrez Reyes, Christina Mancini

Editorial comments, changes of address and new subscriptions should be directed to:

The Working Centre
58 Queen St. S., Kitchener, Ontario, N2G 1V6
Phone: (519) 743-1151 • Fax: (519) 743-3840
Email: kara@theworkingcentre.org
Web: www.theworkingcentre.org
Canada Post Bulk #05306256
Charitable Registration #13092 9607 RR0001



Carol Taylor Receives the King Charles III Coronation Medal

Carol Taylor is widely known for her volunteer work with several different groups over many years, and has a long history of being a supporter of causes and organizations in her roles as senior staff member, Board Member and Committee Member. Her work and quiet leadership style have had a positive impact on many people's lives and have strengthened our community.

In recognition of her outstanding community service, on Monday March 25th 2025, Carol Taylor received the King Charles III Coronation Medal due to her work in the charitable sector over 21 years, serving Epilepsy Waterloo Wellington and the Volunteer Action Centre. Carol retired as the Executive Director of the Alzheimer's Society of Cambridge and North Dumfries where she brought her strong administrative skills, her fundraising abilities and high compassion to that important work.

Carol developed deep connections in the community through her role as a Grants Coordinator at the KW Community Foundation. In this role Carol often brought donors to St. John's Kitchen to learn about our work. These visits started a long connection with The Working Centre that goes back to the

1990's.

Carol has volunteered with the Children's Museum, served on the boards of Block Parents, Waterloo Minor Soccer, the Canadian Cultural Association of Waterloo Region, Canadian Caribbean Cultural Association of Waterloo Region, Win-Win for Affordable Housing and The Working Centre.

Carol has also built a vocation in music, founding her own group as the Band Leader for Acoustic Steel, a four member steelband bringing sounds of the Caribbean to our community. For over 10 years, Carol brought members of her steelband to play Christmas music at our yearly Christmas Dinner and often at volunteer dinners. We have so many memories of people dancing and enjoying her group's steelband music.

Carol Taylor has been a Working Centre Board member for over 10 years and since 2020 has offered her skills as Working Centre Board Chair. Her leadership is quiet while infused with wisdom and knowledge. This has been a time of tremendous growth and creativity for The Working Centre and Carol's role as Board Chair has been crucial in helping the Board carefully analyze each new development and initiative.

Songs for A Healing City



On Sunday May 11th, a unique singing experience was held with members of the Menno Singers, along with the public, performing at local construction sites where affordable housing is being built.

Billed as an "interactive event of singing and learning," the walk-and-sing tour in downtown Kitchener departed from St Matthews Lutheran Church at Benton and Charles.

The goal was to combine "this immersive learning project with the texts and sounds of choral music. We hope to deepen the awareness of everyone's place in our community," said Brandon Leis, Menno Singers' artistic director.

Music was carefully chosen for each site, and includes Thomas Tallis' "If Ye Love Me," Peter Togni's "Prayer of St. Francis" and Jeff Enns' "Litany for Ukraine," among others.

The walk included the Indwell project at St. Peter's Lutheran, House of Friendship's housing project on Charles Street, the new City of Kitchener housing project on King Street near the market, and The Working Centre's 97 Victoria project.

In the photo above Katherine Bitzer of The Working Centre is standing in front of the new Queen Street Apartments while describing the Making Home project at 97 Victoria to a large group of concert attendees.



Income Tax Clinic and Money Matters Help Secure Nearly \$16 Million in Benefits

From March to May 2025, The Working Centre's Free Income Tax Clinic helped 3887 individuals and families file their taxes to secure \$15,957,090 in benefits. This is a critical service enhancing the financial security for many in our community.

These numbers represent more than statistics; they signify the positive change and stability brought into the lives of those we serve.

Tax credits - refund, GST, OTB, CCB, CAIP and more are often a lifeline for covering essential expenses and ensuring secure housing.

We want to extend our appreciation for the exceptional commitment and hard work of our Tax Clinic. They play an essential role as we navigate through another successful tax clinic operation. We want to express special recognition to our volunteers who tirelessly worked behind the scenes and on the front lines—receiving documents, screening, completing intake forms, tackling complex tax situations, filing returns, and ensuring the smooth operation of the clinic. Your contributions have been nothing short of essential to our success.

The photo above shows the teams of Tax Clinic workers and volunteers at our Job Search Resource Centre on Queen St. S.



Gathering with Neighbours

continued from page 1

from the event contribute to our work that supports some of our most isolated neighbours, helping us to host a wide range of spaces where we build belonging and ways to access supports and resources. The evening celebrated the work we do that creates a web of services that brings care and respect to members of our community who need it most.

In this issue we have reprinted the reflections on Knowing Our Neighbours that were offered by our special guests for the evening, Fauzia Mazhar – The Meaningful Connections of Community and John Loughheed – Spiritual Care in Small Things.

Nancy Vernon Kelly welcomed us with a land acknowledgement, a blessing, and an appeal for us all to “harden not our hearts” in times of complexity.

Afterward, Nancy reflected on the evening in this way: “The energy, the solidarity, the heart of the banquet was a wonderful gift locally, in itself [...] and also a gracious and merciful antidote, a grounding in what it means to be neighbours in a broader sense. It renewed my hope!”

The evening ended with an exciting announcement. We started with a new video on the Making Home project produced by Adam Rochon. The video can be found on the Working Centre website at www.theworkingcentre.org/making-home-video/.

Carol Taylor also welcomed speakers to the stage as she announced that the Making Home Capital Campaign reached its goal of \$22 million raised to create 44 units of housing, a new home for St. John's Kitchen, and a main floor medical clinic at 97 Victoria Ave N. See more on page 8 of this issue of Good Work News.

Music was provided throughout the evening by Andy Macpherson and the New Vibes Jazz Quintet.

We are grateful to RBJ Schlegel Family Foundation for generously contributing as our main event sponsor.

This year's Mayors' Dinner theme of Knowing Our Neighbours directly faced the challenges of increasing isolation and dislocation with messages and examples of how people remain committed to shaping our communities and welcoming our neighbours with hope for a better world.

Building Community with Our Neighbours

By Joe Mancini

There are so many people who are here tonight who contribute to The Working Centre. It is overwhelming to think about the deep generosity that has helped sustain TWC's village of community supports.

This winter, the tables at St. John's Kitchen were full as people huddled in the warmth away from the freezing outdoor temperatures. SJK is a haven, serving over 400 meals a day, providing a place of rest, supporting people through heated outbursts and paranoia while the drug crisis rages on. The work of the daily meal is also providing care to those who are most left out and all who come to this daily hub of support.

This fall, 2371 people were counted as homeless. 1000 of that group were unsheltered. What does it mean when on any one day in the Region there are 1000 people shelter-less. Imagine 1000 people who are crashing in other people's apartments, sleeping behind churches and other public spaces, setting up in parks, building encampments in forested areas, opening an unlocked door to find warmth, putting down cardboard in a doorway.

What can an outreach worker offer to someone in a tent, who is frustrated and angry? People living outside have few options. They are nervous, scattered, sleepless, relentlessly dealing with daily survival.

Outreach workers visiting encampments and congregate settings are encountering a growing number of MRSA infections which are antibiotic resistant. These infections, which are a major concern of hospital environments, are now found in homeless encampments and among those who are unsheltered. Wounds and infections won't heal without a roof over their head.

We have learned much through six daunting years of creating shelter projects. We have acted into the desperation, because we walk with it every day. We have not stood against, we have acted in, acted against hopelessness.

The main burdens that we see among those unsheltered is despair which is an utter lack of hope. We also see trauma which is the carrying of woundedness and brokenness.

We have seen the shelter projects address the despair, as people support one another in community and we have watched lives transform in front of us. Literally hundreds who have found housing, but more important, some grasp of hope. A sense that someone cares.

This is the vision that is essential to 97 Victoria Making Home.

Making Home will add 44 units of supportive housing for those who have experienced long-term homelessness. Well-being grows

through a culture of belonging that includes mental health and addiction supports, but so much more.

44 people will find a home nestled in a hub of services. Our goal is to build a person-centred approach creating engagement that shapes hope.

These are uncertain times. We see institutions withdrawing from people. This is not a time to lock doors, but to open them up, it is a time for the virtues of humility, dialogue, and discernment. A call to come out of ourselves, a call to reach out to the peripheries.

Pope Francis calls on churches and society to think like a field hospital, accepting and bandaging up those who have been left on the outside without resources. Can we strengthen the habits and virtues of community?

Who is my neighbour? The Working Centre is like a village, building community through listening and responding on the ground, cultivating wider social bonds, expanding the boundaries of our village.

This year marks the 40th anniversary of St. John's Kitchen continuously serving a weekday meal in downtown Kitchener. Thank you to St. John's church. The ritual of St. John's Kitchen is that it brings community together. It starts with the preparation of the meal, an act of caring that involves so many, ensuring the 700 meals are prepared each day. The ritual is rooted in radical inclusion accepting each visitor, offering hospitality that welcomes the other, living the reality of our interconnectedness. It is the preparation and the generosity that makes the sharing of the meal a communion, a time when all are welcome.

The Working Centre is a village of supports organized under 4 main pillars – Work and Livelihood, St. John's Kitchen and Outreach, Housing and Shelter, Community Tools and Enterprise. Thousands of people find help looking for work or completing income tax returns or problem-solving financial issues; 120 people live in our housing including refugees and those moving past homelessness, shelter projects teach us about simplicity and living communally. Our social enterprises fix and repair bikes, recycle and reuse thousands of houseware and furniture items, create welcoming café spaces, and refurbish and repair computers. Over 400 volunteers contribute to this community of service and hope.

The Working Centre builds community spaces where people join together to support one another through hardships, traumas and joys. In all of our spaces people gather together, contribute to the work being done, and become community together. This is the neighbourhood work that is crucial for our times.



Neil Aitchison, Mike Farwell shared MC duties during the dinner, here they are talking with Mike Morrice; there were three people left for the final Heads and Tails coin flip. The winner generously donated her share to The Working Centre; New Vibes Jazz provided music for the evening; Working Centre Director Joe Mancini giving remarks

Creating Stronger Connections Across Our Community

By Fauzia Mazhar

It is an honour to stand before you tonight to reflect on the power of community and the meaningful connections we can build. This gathering is a testament to our shared commitment to creating a welcoming, inclusive, and vibrant Waterloo Region, where everyone feels they belong.

As I look around, I feel a deep sense of gratitude for the many faces, experiences, and stories that make up our community. It is this sense of belonging that I want to share with you tonight.

My journey to becoming part of this community began over two decades ago when I first arrived in Canada as a newcomer, uncertain about the future. I walked into 58 Queen Street South as a jobseeker, unsure of what to expect. There, I was greeted with warmth and support.

It was at The Working Centre that I found mentors, coaches, and lifelong friends—people who believed in me when I was losing my confidence. The Working Centre, with its commitment to service, provided more than just job search resources; it gave me something invaluable—community.

I felt welcomed. I felt like I belonged. And through that, I found the strength to step into my new neighbourhood as an active citizen and a good neighbour. Being a good neighbour, for me, is about breaking down barriers, building relationships across differences with empathy, kindness, and genuine curiosity.

Tonight, I want to share a few stories that exemplify the spirit of community and resilience we continue to foster in Waterloo Region.

In 2010, a group of diverse newcomer women responded to adversity—Bill 94 in Quebec, which sought to restrict the rights of Muslim women based on their clothing choices. These women feared the bill would affect their lives and their daughters' futures. They came together to act but were unsure if their voices would be heard.

Choosing hope over despair, they invited their neighbours to start a conversation. They organized an event called "Let Us Talk," inviting people from all walks of life to discuss the implications of the bill. To their surprise, over 250 people showed up. They listened, engaged, and stood in solidarity. This event was a turning point, opening hearts, building understanding, and creating stronger connections across our community.

As Henry Ford said, "Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success."



Fauzia Mazhar spoke about her journey as an immigrant in Canada and her community building work at the 36th Annual Mayors' Dinner

The seed planted in 2010 by these courageous women, nurtured by their neighbours, grew into the Coalition of Muslim Women (CMW), a not-for-profit organization known in Waterloo Region for empowering racialized Muslim women and youth. Through CMW, these individuals are provided opportunities for social connection, personal and professional growth, and leadership development.

At the core of CMW's work is building connections—within the diverse communities we identify with, as well as between those communities and the broader region. This work addresses gender-based violence, racism, discrimination, Islamophobia, and xenophobia through culturally appropriate support services, outreach, advocacy, and bridge-building.

But it's also been a journey full of heartwarming stories of reaching out, even in the darkest times. One such time was January 29, 2017, when a mosque in Quebec City was targeted with hateful violence, leaving six worshippers dead. In the wake of this tragedy, CMW members and volunteers came together to share their grief and fears for their families' safety. This sharing led to action—one of which was the "Salam KW, Salam Canada" campaign.

Inspired by a group of women in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, the campaign was simple: bake cookies, share them with neighbours, and spread a message of peace. People from all backgrounds came together to bake thousands of cookies, which were distributed at locations such as Kitchener City Hall, the Winterloo Festival, local schools, and neighbourhoods. The message was simple: "Salam Neighbour, thank you for making KW a safe and welcoming place to call home."

The response was heartwarming. People expressed gratitude and

reciprocated with sweet treats and warm drinks. It was a small act of kindness—baking and sharing cookies—but the impact was profound. It reminded us that even in dark times, small acts of compassion and connection can make a difference.

The "Salam KW, Salam Canada" campaign became more than a one-time event. It grew into a movement—a reminder that the spirit of kindness and understanding doesn't have to be big or complicated to be effective. What matters is that we continue to reach out to one another, especially in times of darkness and uncertainty, and that we show up for each other with open hearts and minds.

As we celebrate these stories of connection tonight, let us also remember that the work of community-building is ongoing. It is not a one-time effort or a single event. It is the small, everyday acts of kindness, the conversations that bridge gaps, and the willingness to listen and learn from one another that truly make a difference.

It's up to each of us to carry forward the spirit of initiatives like "Salaam KW, Salam Canada." We can continue reaching out to our neighbours, fostering understanding, and building bridges of communication and respect. We can bring peace and kindness into our neighbourhoods, workplaces, schools, and homes.

Building community isn't always easy, but it's always worthwhile. It requires effort, dedication, and the willingness to see each other as neighbours—each of us a vital part of the diverse tapestry that makes up Waterloo Region.

There are times—dark times—when we're struck by collective grief or uncertainty. In these moments, it can feel like our voices and actions are too small to make a difference. But it's precisely then when collective action is most needed. We have a choice: retreat into silence or step forward with compassion, support, and presence for those who are struggling.

When our communities face grief or loss, we must listen for the small voices urging us to "do something." These voices may not always be loud,

but they call us to come together, to share in healing by "acting together, by "doing something together".

When our communities are hit by challenges, may we have the courage, compassion and empathy to "call in", even when our voices are trembling.

May we have the ears to hear these "calls for action", May we have the courage, compassion and empathy to join hands to continue to build connections across differences in the midst of challenging times. In doing so, we restore hope by reminding ourselves that we are not alone—we are in this together.

Tonight, I'm reminded of the powerful role each of us plays in building the community we want to see. To Joe and Stephanie, to TWC team, to the incredible women of the Coalition of Muslim Women of KW, to community leaders, and each of you here tonight—thank you for your commitment to making Waterloo Region a place where everyone feels welcomed, valued, and cared for.

Let's continue to nurture relationships, reach across differences, and build a community where everyone feels at home, and has a place to call home. Thank you.



Founded in 2010 by a handful of diverse Muslim women, the **Coalition of Muslim Women (CMW) of K-W** is a charitable organization that empowers women and girls to be leaders and changemakers. The non-profit provides Muslim women opportunities for personal and professional growth, leadership, and skills development while addressing issues of gender-based violence, racism, discrimination, and Islamophobia through innovative programming and services, partnerships, collaboration, advocacy, and outreach.

Learn more at: cmw-kw.org

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Spiritual Care in Small Things

By John Lougheed

One of my mentors in ministry was the late Father Bernie Hayes, of the local Roman Catholic community. I remember him saying in a wedding homily: "You know I've never been married..." and amidst the gales of laughter, with his great sense of timing, Bernie added: "But, I hear it is hard work...and worth the effort!" This remarkable gathering tonight reminds us all that building community is hard – and at times, fun! – work together, and is always worth the effort.

Simply, thank you for this humbling invitation, shared with family, friends like family, colleagues and neighbours. Gathered and remembered.

Of the eight communities across Canada in which I have lived and served in a career of forty years, so far, Waterloo Region has been home the longest. Partly because it has always reminded me of a quilt of communities and agencies, sewn together with faith-based values, including the remarkable Working Centre which we celebrate tonight, as well as the Coalition of Muslim Women of K-W, led so ably by Fauzia, among other local partners and leaders.

Another Roman Catholic religious, the late Saint Mother Teresa, is remembered for saying: "Not all of us can do great things, but we can do small things with great love." And it is to those 'small things' - of seeing beauty and inclusion with some consistent awareness and effort - that I want to turn briefly to now.

It was dawn, and a parent had died, leaving a teen aged son at the Hospital. An 'old soul' of a son, who was receptive to the on-call Chaplain. And as the son was ready to leave, he asked for one of my business cards, which I didn't have handy. "Not to worry" he told me "I'll just put your contacts in my phone. And I noticed he spelled Chaplain 'CHAPL - I - N' to which I said "Oh, you're thinking of Charlie Chaplin." To which he replied: "WHO is that?!" We both smiled. And when I asked if there was anyone else I could call on his behalf, he said: "Please call Mrs. Seiling in Guidance at KCI. She'll know what to do." And he left in a cab, to join his younger brother at home.

Kathy Seiling. Told with her permission this night, and known for her rapport with high school students, their families, and her colleagues, among others, over many years serving the community. Another measure of that local 'quilt of caring' which also includes both School Boards, local Universities and Colleges, faith communities and several counselling agencies, among others. We need them – among



John Lougheed spoke about his community work and spiritual based values at the 36th Annual Mayors' Dinner

other leaders - all the more in these liminal times for our community of Waterloo Region, our Province of Ontario, our beloved country of Canada, and the wider world.

As I have discussed with Fauzia ... when a Muslim family was facing the tragedy of an 'unwitnessed' motor cycle crash, that had claimed the life of a young man, his family and friends were pressing to take his body for burial by the next day, in their tradition. A local faith leader joined us in the Sanctuary, encouraged them to meet with the Police and Doctor to understand what caused the accident, and reassured them that the burial could wait. When I asked this group of family and friends what else they needed, they replied: "we would like to remain in the building to await the meeting" (of course) and, "to order a pizza... halal if possible." It was delivered, and we waited together.

Waiting together is an aspect of 'working together' towards the common good that gathered so many of us tonight - in leadership, sponsorship, staff or voluntary roles.

And there is so much we are working – and waiting for – often with some common denominators including: diversity, equity, and inclusion; housing, food, harm-reduction, recovery; and support of various kinds. It is notable that the three Mayors who host this annual Dinner, all lead their own City Councils, as well as being members of Waterloo Regional Council. And along with their elected and staff colleagues, and partner agencies – as well as other levels of Government - have a high calling of doing what St. Mother Teresa calls 'great things' ... though, partly achieved through doing 'small things with great love'.

One morning, I was washing dishes at St. John's Kitchen with a 19 year old, who was on a placement with his Police Foundations program

at Conestoga College. He and his family had arrived in Canada as refugees from Syria, and he aspired to be a local Police Officer. The student asked me if I could suggest a staff member who he could talk to about their work. As Providence had it, I noticed that Nick the Outreach Worker was on duty that day – I call him St. Nick! - and with Nick's permission, I relate this brief conversation. The student asked Nick: "in a few words, how would you describe what you do?" (Great question!) And the answer came: "Grace and patience". I think Jesus would smile.

Many years ago the legendary Psychiatrist Dr. Elisabeth Kubler-Ross was invited to give a public lecture, in the auditorium at what was then known as 'KnW' or Grand River Hospital. And among the things she is remembered for saying is: "People are like stained-glass windows (image at top right). They sparkle and shine when the sun is out, but when the darkness sets in, their true beauty is revealed only if there is a light from within."

Mindful that stained-glass – without religious symbols – is a sacred art form shared among many faith traditions, this window was recently donated to what is now known as the Waterloo Regional Health Network or WRHN at Midtown, formerly 'KnW', in honour of almost fifty years of 24/7 on-call Spiritual Care provision, by a team of mostly volunteers. Just before COVID, the Team was necessarily disbanded owing to the demands of sixty 12 hour shifts each month. Today, some paid on-call coverage continues at the local WRHN Hospitals, along with a roster of on-call Roman Catholic priests, and many other local faith community leaders.

After COVID, my employers at Erb & Good Family Funeral Home hosted a breakfast for the Spiritual Care on-call 'alumni' (and some supportive spouses!) to express appreciation to these 'last



"Transcending: Pain to Peace" by artist Terri Sparling is located in the 2C Atrium at WRHN: Mid-town Campus (formerly K-W Campus of Grand River Hospital)

responders' on behalf of so many patients, families, staff, physicians, volunteers, Police, Fire Rescue, EMS, Victim Services and Funeral Service colleagues, among others. Another measure of the 'local quilt' of faith-based values and agencies. At the Breakfast, we held a ritual whereby each on-call team member was invited to choose a piece of stained glass and speak briefly about thanksgiving for and lament at the ending of the on-call Spiritual Care program. A local artist then fashioned the pieces into this stained-glass window that now hangs in the 2C Atrium of the WRHN – at Midtown, with a dedication to be hosted by the Hospital Foundation in the coming days.

In these liminal times - all around the world, loved by the Holy One of Many Names - with some familiar things ending, and new opportunities emerging, may this stained-glass window help to celebrate the high value of 'small things done with great love', in our community.

And we can trust that the light from within, will continue to illuminate this window, and all of us.



This photo from The Mayors' Dinner is of a group of workers from St. John's Kitchen and Outreach. This group is involved in daily supports of people who are unsheltered. This includes the work providing all the supports that are available each day at St. John's Kitchen, operating 87 Victoria which is a house across from the Victoria encampment that offers food, coffee, showers, laundry and harm reduction, and nurse outreach to those homeless at encampments, shelters, and on the street.

Starting from the left is Peggy, Kajaw, Hailey, Holly, Alyssa, Tracy, AJ, and Connie.

Fr. Greg Boyle Visits The Working Centre

On May 15th, 2025, we had the pleasure of meeting with Fr. Greg Boyle who was in town to present a Lecture in Catholic Experience at St. Jerome's University. The following is an excerpt from Fr. Greg's talk:

Circle of Compassion

A lecture like this always makes me think of Martin Luther King, what he said about church, that it's not the place you come to, it's the place you go from. For this talk to-night, we go from here to imagine a circle of compassion and then imagine nobody standing outside that circle. You go from here to dismantle the barriers that exclude.

Standing at the Margins

I have to say that I spent the most amazing several hours with the people from The Working Centre and I was so moved by them and how powerful their presence is in announcing what kind of God we have. I really won't forget having been with you this morning. That's exactly what you do for a living, the people at The Working Centre have stood at the margins knowing that the only way to erase them is to stand out on those margins. That's how you end up creating a community of kinship such that God in fact might recognize it.

To be able to stand with the easily despised and the readily left out

And there is a particularity to that invitation which is to stand with the poor and the powerless and the voiceless. And to stand with those whose dignity has been denied and to stand with those whose burdens are more than they can bear. Every once in a while, and I know the folks at The Working Centre have a palpable sense of this, that you feel this



Fr. Greg Boyle with Rebecca Mancini, Stephanie Mancini, Peter Meehan, St. Jerome's University President, Joe Mancini and Carol Ann MacGregor, SJU Dean

extraordinary privilege, in all its exquisite mutuality, to be able to stand with the easily despised and the readily left out. To get to stand with the demonized so that the demonizing will stop and with the disposable so that the day will come when we stop throwing people away. And you brace yourselves when you go to the margins, because the world will accuse you of wasting your time there.

The God of Love

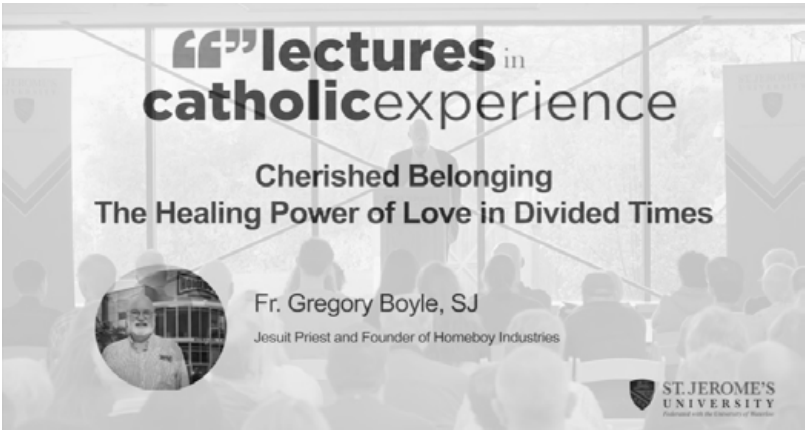
My friend, Mirabai Star, and I really recommend her books to you, she's a magnificent person but a great writer and she says, "Once you know the God of love, you fire all the other Gods." Which I think is a good task of maturing spirituality. Once I had a spiritual director many years ago, he said to me, "You know we need a better God than the one we have". He was a Jesuit, but of course it's true we do need a better one, because we've settled for this tiny one and you know we project onto God all our stuff. Richard Rohr says "Yeah it's true that we're created in the image and likeness of God

but it's equally true that our image of God creates us." And so we want to kind of get beyond that. Anne Lamott says, "You know you've created God in your own image when God hates the same people you do." So we don't want to fall for that. For 40 years I've worked, walked with gang members and the day won't ever come when I have more courage or I am more noble or I'm closer to God than the thousands and thousands of gang members I've been privileged to know.

Inclusion, Nonviolence, Unconditional Loving Kindness and Compassionate Acceptance

Not long ago, a homie ended an

early morning email to me, "Today I will choose to surrender into the arms of God. Then choose to be those arms." I think that's exactly how this is supposed to work and then and only then can you choose to take seriously what Jesus took seriously, which happens to be four things, which happens to be what The Working Centre does for a living – inclusion, nonviolence, unconditional loving kindness and compassionate acceptance. So this talk is not the place you've come to, it's always going to be the place you go from. To take those things seriously and to receive the tender glance, and then to become that glance in the world.



Links to Fr. Greg Boyle's full lecture at SJU available on The Working Centre's website: www.theworkingcentre.org

Working Centre Updates

New Directions for Fundraising at The Working Centre

Throughout our 43 years, The Working Centre has not had a dedicated fundraising team. Instead we have all cultivated relationships and followed details in our daily work. As we celebrate the good work over many years, we have hired a resource development team to help us continue to build on the thoughtful network of support that sustains the work of The Working Centre. Liam Epps and Mike Wozniak are already contacting and listening to our many donors. We see this work as essential for the development of The Working Centre culture and projects which continue to grow and respond to significant needs in our community.

Tax Receipts by Email

We have launched our long-awaited online donation system, that means your tax receipts can now be emailed to you. If we don't already have your email address, please email us at:

donations@theworkingcentre.org

Be sure to include your full name and current mailing address.

Good Work News by Email

We now offer Good Work News as either an online version or a paper copy mailed to you. If you prefer to receive Good Work News by email, please let us know at:

donations@theworkingcentre.org

You can also follow this link to sign up:

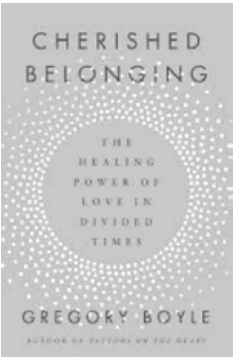
www.theworkingcentre.org/good-work-news

For those that enjoy the physical copy, don't worry! We will continue to be sending out the classic newspaper version.

New Websites

Check out our new website at: www.theworkingcentre.org

You can also visit www.twcinteractive.org for an in-depth look at our community of projects and the ideas that inspire our work. Features include an interactive virtual tour, a comprehensive archive of over 600 Good Work News articles, and more.



Cherished Belonging The Healing Power of Love in Divided Times Fr. Gregory Boyle

In a world increasingly marked by division and discord, beloved Jesuit priest Gregory Boyle offers a transformative vision of community and compassion. Over the past thirty years, Gregory Boyle has transformed tens of thousands of lives through his work as the founder of Homeboy Industries, the largest gang-intervention program in the world. The program runs on two unwavering principles: 1) We are all inherently good (no exceptions), and 2) we belong to each other (no exceptions).

Boyle believes that these two ideas allow all of us to cultivate a new way of seeing the world. Rather than the tribalism that excludes and punishes, this new narrative proposes a village that cherishes. Pooka, a former gang member, puts it plainly: "Here, love is our lens. It is how we see things." In *Cherished Belonging*, Boyle calls back to Christianity's origins as a spiritual movement of equality, emancipation, and peace. Early Christianity was a way of life—not a set of beliefs. Boyle's vision of community is a space for people to join together and heal one another in a new collective living, a world dedicated to kindness as a constant and radical act of defiance. As one homie, Marcus, told a classroom filled with inner-city teenagers, "If love was a place, it would be Homeboy."

Cherished Belonging invites us to nurture the connections that are all around us and live with kindness. Boyle believes that "the answer to every question is, indeed, compassion." Through colorful and profound stories brimming with wisdom, humor, and inspiration, we understand that love is the light inside everything.

211 pages | \$39.00 hardcover

You can place book orders by phone: 519-743-1151 x111

St. John's Kitchen Memorials

For the past two years, Joanna Miller has been leading a quarterly Memorial Service at St. John's Kitchen. Each quarter we have remembered up to 25 people who have died during that time from the wider community of those connected to the St. John's Kitchen community. Here is part of the reflection by Joanna from the service held at St. John's Kitchen on May 27th, 2025:

Henry David Thoreau said, "there is no remedy for love but to love more." And that is the other option, the one that requires us to expose our hearts to more risk, but also to more love."

I went back and counted last week and this is my 8th time leading a memorial service for The Working Centre; some have been at the King St. Shelter and the others here. And I say that only to note that many of your faces are familiar, you have been to almost all of them, and

likely many before I ever led one.

Because you keep showing up – I see you. You keep coming, to meet your friends and community members, the ones you know, work with, volunteer with – all the ones you love. You keep choosing the open heart.

And while that is the very thing that continues to another beautiful human to grieve, it is also the thing that keeps making your heart more tender, more beautiful, more loving.

It is nothing short of heartbreaking that we find ourselves here again: Remembering people who had gifts and talents, who shared their own love and light with us. It is not fair.

So, we do only what we can do... commend them to the One who created them, pray that they rest in peace beyond what we can imagine, and commit that we will keep our broken hearts open to keep on loving.



The Working Centre is blessed by memorial contributions each year. The following list is all those who have requested memorial donations in their name since 2023. Also included are annual memorial donations made regularly in honour of a loved one. We are grateful for all the generous gifts these memorial donations have offered to The Working Centre community.

Saul Ross	Peter McCullough	Alan Cozzarin
Theda Saunders	Denis Taylor	Paul Griffin
Mary Eleanor Merritt	Irma Kadela	Apoorva Yadav
Waltraud Michi	Endla Loney	Pushpa Mathur
Marjorie Guerra-Francis	Carol Southwood	Geoff Malleck
Rosemarie O'Connor	Joyce & Alan Rigby	Ian Martin
Christopher Pedjase	Orval Coupal	Louise Kirvan
Don Reist	Susan Oberle	Robert Dale
Gary & Valerie Lebold	Geoff Fellows	Heather Marie Pickup
Andrew Telegdi	Christine Edwards	Tulsi-Ram Peetush
Kari Kokko	Ray Steinmann	Lillian Isabelle Barnes
Lydia Roser	Michael Bunsch	William Taylor
Susan Margaret Dedyna	Paul McNamara	Peter McCullough
Joanna Gogos	Katie Davies	Crissy George
Bruce Barber	Sylvia Sawatsky	Hope Eaton
Scott Butler	Larry Crawford	Steve Kennedy
Bruce Lippert	Lise Naish	Nada Vrbanovic
Bill Stankiewicz	Barbara "Pinky" Julien	Queenie Wiens
Barbara Howe	Eugene Doherty	Roger Farwell
Nora Kudrenecky	Hawk	Micheal & Rose Steven
Emil Roser	Trevor John Clough	Jackie Mattson
Lucas Sproll	Chone Williams	Elizabeth Montag
Sheldon Goldstein	Gord Crosby	Cathy Maureen Jenkins
Krishnapillai Balaskanthan	Herbert LaPier	Chris Harding
Palmer Patterson	Don Ksenych	Christopher Mitretodis
Gianni Battista Degani	Anita DesRoches	James Nish
Jordan Scherer	Timothy Roedding	Ann Kittler
Mary Pappert	Rudolf Pawelowski	Erma Shantz
Rosemary Paul	Marilyn Voisin	Betty Schierholtz
John Degani	Jean Horne	Marie Schmarr
W. Phil Heinze	Sharon MacDonald	Stanley Reitzel
Anthony Baldasaro	David Milne	Anna Kerty
Pushpa Mathur	Dave Riley	Charlie Roe
Marie Clarke	Norman Davis	Delores Sedlmeir
Ian MacNaughton	John Nuernberger	Earl Martin
Ian Glibota	John Upham	Giovanni Battista Fusari
Rada Jankovic	Oscar "Oz" Cole-Arnal	Janet Carol Prudham
Daryl Reeves	Ian Martin	Julia Hamel
Jim Crawford	George Ashcroft	Kate George
Tulsi Ram Peetush	Kyle Walton	Margaret Wey
Garry Paquette	Arthur Prudham	Scott Hudspeth
June Graham	Mark Keczem	Tim Montserine
	Yvonne Archer	

Thank You for Supporting the 36th Mayors' Dinner

RBJ Schlegel
Family Foundation

A special thank you to RBJ Schlegel Family Foundation for being the main sponsor for the 36th Annual Mayors' Dinner

PATRONS



BOB & JUDY ASTLEY

BE COMMUNITY

COMMUNITY TABLES

BNKC Design + Architecture	Perimeter Development
Waseem Botros	Royal Bank of Canada - Commercial
Camino Wellbeing + Mental Health	Sanguen Health Centre
Cantiro	SRM Architects + Urban Designers
Centre in the Square	St. Mary's Parish
City of Kitchener	Strassburger Windows and Doors
City of Waterloo	Supportive Housing of Waterloo
Community Support Connections	The Food Bank of Waterloo Region
Cowan Insurance Group	Waterloo Catholic District School Board
Dillon Consulting Ltd	Waterloo Region Community Foundation
Duncan Linton LLP	Waterloo Regional Police Services
Faspa	Sean Zister
House of Friendship	
John Loughheed	
Kitchener Fire Department	
Langlois Eco Homes	
Heather & John Motz	

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MUSIC

Thank You to New Vibes Jazz Quintet for providing the music for the evening. Including Andy Macpherson on vibraphone, John Zadro on piano, Jay Boehmer on drums, Sam Meakin on trombone and Dan Brennan on bass

Thank you to all Working Centre donors, contributors, and community partners who supported this year's event.

Making Home Reaches Its Goal

At the Mayors' Dinner, Working Centre Board Chair, Carol Taylor, announced:

Tonight we are celebrating the way that this community has supported Making Home - an invitation to build housing and a new home for St. John's Kitchen - creating a place of hospitality that welcomes our neighbours who are living without housing.

And yes, we are celebrating! In two years we have together raised \$22 million dollars for the Making Home project. In an amazing mix of government grants (of \$12 million) plus over 300 different contributions totaling \$10 million (yes, \$10 million) we pause to celebrate.

We also want to acknowledge the wider community of support, another 3,000 donors who last year contributed \$1.5 million towards



Carol Taylor, Working Centre Board Chair announcing the Making Home fundraising goal at The Mayors' Dinner.

design and construction, and was the key first donor (\$1 million), inviting other donors to contribute.

- Jim Erb, Waterloo Regional Councillor who represented the decision of the Region of Waterloo to support this project with \$9.8million through the Rapid Housing Initiative.
- Bishop Douglas Crosby of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Hamilton also came to the stage to announce their \$1.5 million commitment to the project.
- Other major donors included the Lyle S. Hallman Foundation (\$2 million); Savvas Chamberlain Family Foundation (\$1 million); Auburn Developments (\$1 million) and many others who will be recognized when we officially open the new space in the fall.



David Gibson and Joe Bogdon, Perimeter Development

the ongoing work of The Working Centre.

All of this support makes our work possible, allowing us to walk with thousands of people who come to The Working Centre for practical supports, especially during these complex times.

Carol then introduced some key people who have supported the Making Home project:

- David Gibson from Perimeter Development and BNKC architect Joe Bogdan. Perimeter Development has stood as a key corporate partner in this endeavor, shepherding the



Bishop Douglas Crosby, Roman Catholic Diocese of Hamilton



Making Home Update

By Katherine Bitzer

It is exciting to confirm that construction at 97 Victoria Making Home is moving into its final phases. When we moved St. John's Kitchen and Worth A Second Look thrift store out of 97 Victoria in October 2023, we expected it would be an 18 month construction timeline. The only problem was that it took until February 2024 to start demolition and then it was not until May 2024 that we received our full building permit.

Once we had the building permit, except for some minor delays, construction has moved along quickly and at a consistent pace. It is a complicated project that includes the addition of a third story on the main building, the complete renovation of the two original floors of the main building, the construction of the new St. John's Kitchen mass timber building, and the full landscaping of the property to create a courtyard at the centre of the property.

As of June 2024, just 12 months since our full permit, the new third floor is drywalled and is being painted, washrooms are being tiled, and

the hallways are ready for painting. The second floor is on a similar trajectory with full completion by mid-July. The main floor medical clinic space is fully drywalled as are the washrooms, showers and laundry area. The new St. John's Kitchen will have its drywall finished and ready for painting by mid-June. The landscaping is scheduled to be completed by the end of June or early July as is the exterior finishing of both buildings. We expect that it will take 4-6 weeks to complete installation of mill work cabinets, plumbing and electrical fixtures, fire alarm equipment, door locks, and kitchen equipment.

All of our partners from Perimeter Development, Govan Brown and all the trades are working at a steady pace to ensure that the Making Home project will be completed by early September!



For more information and updates about the Making Home project, please visit:
www.97victoria.theworkingcentre.org



MAKING HOME CAMPAIGN DONORS AND CONTRIBUTORS

\$12 MILLION IN GRANTS

- Rapid Housing Initiative 3
– Government of Canada & Region of Waterloo
- Green and Inclusive Community Buildings
– Government of Canada
- Ontario Trillium Foundation
- Enabling Accessibility Fund
– Government of Canada
- Federation of Canadian Municipalities - Green Municipal Fund

\$10 MILLION IN COMMUNITY DONATIONS

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| Lyle S. Hallman Foundation | Bob & Judy Astley | Randall Howard & Judy McMullen |
| Diocese of Hamilton | BNKC Architects | Libro Credit Union |
| Perimeter Development | Janzen Foundation | Debbie Lowes |
| The Savvas Chamberlain Family Foundation | Krug Furniture | Margaret Motz |
| Auburn Developments | Midtown Counselling & Midtown Rehab | Ontario Realtors Care Foundation |
| Cowan | MTE | Anne & Grant Roberts |
| Fairmount Foundation | Audi – Crosby Volkswagen | Unifor Social Justice Fund |
| Definity Insurance Foundation | Joseph Balan & Associates at Co-operators | Wells Resolutions |
| Mike & Kelly Peasgood | Doon Presbyterian Church | Peter Woolstencroft |
| Strassburger Windows and Doors | Paul & Janet Dullaert | 255 donors who together contributed \$100,000 |
| Vive Development & Woodhouse Group | Marlene Epp & Paul Born | |

CONTRIBUTING PROJECT PARTNERS

BNKC Architects | Delta Elevator | Govan Brown | MTE | Perimeter Development | Strassburger Windows and Doors