GOOD WORK NEWS

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

Issue 167 | December 2026 | Subscription: A Donation Towards our Work

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This illustration was created and contributed by Wesley Bates. It was part of a series of art created for the Wendell Berry book, Roots to the Earth: Poems and a Story. Wesley is an artist with a gallery, studio, and printery in Clifford, Ontario. Wesley connected to The Working Centre at a special screening of a movie about Wendell Berry at the Princess Cinema. Wendell Berry passed away this summer at the age of 92. His belief in farmers, land-conserving communities and healthy regional economies was an inspiration to many.

Love In Action

By Stephanie Mancini

When we opened the doors of St. John's Kitchen 24/7 in July, the number of people facing unsheltered homelessness in our midst became painfully obvious. We have registered 554 individual people who have stayed overnight at St. John's Kitchen – people from our Region, who are registered on HIFIS (Homeless Individuals and Families Information System), who are facing persistent homelessness. Across the street from St. John's Kitchen are over 50 tents, housing people who are caught in a cycle of addiction and mental health challenges. Increasingly the group coming to St. John's Kitchen is frustrated, angry and dislocated. Most are living in survival mode.

"What can be done?" people ask us. The reality of homelessness, drug addiction and mental illness that leaves people barely surviving on our streets is far from the image of Waterloo Region that we work towards. It will take a commitment from all of us to shift this reality. In the words of Fr. Gregory Boyle, "none of us are healed until all of us are healed."

We are glad to see the Federal Government initiative to fund capital housing. Premier Wab Kinew emphasizes housing and affordability as core principles: "No one should be homeless in a wealthy nation." He promotes a strategy of "offering housing and the wraparound supports folks need to stay there. … and more importantly that each person has the mental health and addictions supports they need to succeed."

It is good to see the federal commitment to building affordable housing as a priority; though provin-

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Remembering Wendell Berry (1934 – 2026)

Editors Note: Wendell Berry has been a constant presence in Good Work News since the 1990's. In the essay "Waste" published in ***What Are People For?****, Berry understood the essential issue that "unemployment is not merely an economic problem or a failure of the job market; it is a direct consequence of an industrial, centralized economy that treats both the land and human beings as disposable resources." Berry's writings are indispensable for the work of Conserving Communities. The essay below was written by Isaiah Ritzmann for Issue 130 of Good Work News.*

By Isaiah Ritzmann



The environmental crisis is overwhelming. The sheer scale of climate change and the potential consequence of environmental overshoot is hard to handle in our heads let alone our hearts. Since the beginning of the modern environmental movement a handful of writers and thinkers, modern-day prophets, have cast a holistic vision not only of these hard-to-fathom dangers but of alternative possibilities for building a better world.

These writers perceived that it was our displacement, not from the earth in general but from our unique, particular places, which

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Remembering David Cayley (1946 – 2026)

By Joe Mancini

David Cayley, whose work has been described as the "most remarkable, sustained achievement in public intellectual life in the last half-century", died this June.

David Cayley's production of books, articles, radio shows and lately as a guest on YouTube podcasts, left behind a goldmine of material that reflected his unique way of living scholarship as friendship. Jutta Mason, his wife, wrote on his blog that on June 10, 2026, his heart stopped in the middle of singing a bluegrass song with friends, at home. David worked unrelentingly; it was a wonder to keep up. Amid all his material, he summarized what I think were his main interests, in the closing sentences of the introduction to ***Ivan Illich: An Intellectual Journey,***

"Nevertheless, I think Illich's writings retain a powerful ability to guide, to warn, and to aid understanding for those who are trying to keep their footing in the flood. What cannot be changed can be withstood. Friendship can be kept

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Donate to Support Our Work



Read our fundraising letter on Page 8. Your generous support helps us build community.

If you would like to make a contribution, please visit: **donate.theworkingcentre.org**

Forty-Second Year

Issue 167 December 2026

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.

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Bullafest Raises $6,750 for St. John's Kitchen

For the 23rd year, Paul and Colleen Bulla with Elsie Bulla and Nathan Bulla dropped off a cheque for $6,750 at St. John's Kitchen. This cheque represents the proceeds from their yearly live Bullafest concert, attended by hundreds of people in-person and online. We are appreciative of our long connection with Bullafest.



Climate and Heritage Groups Tour 97 Victoria

In October two groups used 97 Victoria as a teaching site for climate change adaptation knowledge and heritage redevelopment. The first group from the **University of Waterloo Climate Institute** brought a cross-faculty group of students from accounting, architecture, engineering, landscape and planning to explore the innovation of 97 Victoria from a zero carbon design, adaptation and integration of social services perspective.

Later that month the **Canadian Association of Heritage Professionals (CAHP)** held a session focused on 97 Victoria as a demonstration project to explore how heritage conservation, adaptive reuse and housing can work together, using the specific experience of the 97 Victoria construction project. CAHP was meeting as part of the National Trust Conference held at the Crowne Plaza. Joe Mancini presented on a panel at the conference on The Working Centre model at a session entitled, ***Heritage for Holistic Health: Adapting Heritage Spaces for Broad Community Housing and Social Service Outcomes.***

Mayors' Dinner

38th Annual Mayors' Dinner

The Working Centre is pleased to announce the 38th Mayors' Dinner

Building Pathways Home

Connecting people to place, purpose and possibility

Saturday, April 3rd, 2027

The Mayors' Dinner draws together an interesting and diverse group of friends and community members to celebrate outstanding community contributions and reflect on important social issues

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We invite you to become involved by purchasing tickets, sponsorships, a community table for your group, company or church

For more details, please contact us at:

519-743-1151 x109 | mayorsdinner@theworkingcentre.org



Hockey Helps The Homeless Raises $378,000 for Local Organizations

The 13th Annual Hockey Tournament was held on October 30th at RIM Park and was an incredible success! Thanks to the amazing generosity and support of our community, we are proud to announce that **$378,000 will be distributed among the six local charity partners** we support: The Working Centre, House of Friendship, OneRoof, Starling Community Services, Cambridge Shelter Corp, and YW of KW.

This brings our 13-year fundraising total granted, to an astounding $3,284,000! An achievement like this is only possible because of an incredible team of people. A huge thank you to our players, non-skating fundraisers, sponsors, donors, volunteers, shelter partners, volunteer organizing committee, HHTH head office and everyone who contributed their time, energy and support to make our 13th year such a tremendous success. Together, we're making a difference, one shift, one donation and one year at a time.





Love In Action

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cially we would need to invest more to provide the wrap-around housing supports.

Despite the excellent government and community partnership to build the 44 dorm units at our 97 Victoria Street location, it has been a struggle to begin operating with the wrap-around supports we know are necessary to support housing stability. We continue to work towards the funding that will help these units to be fully occupied. We are moving ever closer to getting confirmation, but it is painfully slow when 150-180 people are sleeping on a mat on the main floor of the same building. It is painful because we know these dorms can become home for people where we can provide mental health, addiction and health care supports, group activities, connections to family and connections to work skills, as people shift from living on the streets to settling into housing.

We stand with people daily at St. John's Kitchen, with over 800 daily visits from 9 am to 9 pm. We have been exploring the learnings about supporting people living in survival mode – often people can only see what is right before them as they seek to get their basic needs met. Boredom is a reality as people no longer feel like they have anything meaningful to contribute. Scarcity shapes relationships and no one feels safe. If a person is seen (not watched) they begin to come back into wholeness.

We know there is a threshold between St. John's Kitchen and the street. Our doors open and close thousands of times a day. We work to greet each person, to know each person by name, and to welcome each person to this shared space. We are working to push back the street mentality, to invite people to be the best self they can be, to help people to feel some safety in our space. Each day we show up, reintroducing ourselves and each day becomes a new beginning.

Our doors open and close thousands of times a day. We work to greet each person, to know each person by name, and to welcome each person to this shared space. We are working to push back the street mentality, to invite people to be the best self they can be, to help people to feel some safety in our space.

As a demonstration project, some private donors have supported a team of workers helping to embed activities and therapeutic responses into life at the Kitchen. This team includes nurses, social workers, an occupational therapist and others who help to strengthen our relationship-based approach, as we build momentum to provide group activities, discussion groups, workshops, music, movement and access to low barrier healthcare. This helps to connect people past survival and dislocation and to feel better about themselves. What feels like simple activities form a web of connections and relationships that foster well-being.

These activities are complemented by day-to-day hospitality. Food that changes with the rhythm of the day – breakfast, lunch, dinner. Washrooms used by hundreds of people a day, cleaned and hosted so they are safe and accessible. The showers and laundry queue fill up early in the morning. Coffee, juice, hot chocolate, water. Clothing, socks, underwear, toiletries. Hamper goods. Taking out the garbage. Cleaning the space. Washing the dishes. All done by our St. John's Kitchen team and hundreds of volunteers. We welcome more volunteers, especially in the evenings and on the weekends. Day times too!

Each day we find the beautiful moments where tenderness and compassion shine past the suffering. Despite infections, drug poisonings, wounds and illnesses, we form a place of acceptance and problem-solving together, nurturing human bonds.

Fr. Gregory Boyle describes this as "walking each other home into wholeness" through loving presence and the way we bring our genuine selves into relationships that are healing for all of us.

Repeatedly, we are reminded of the importance of seeing each person, of seeing each person as good, standing beside each other through the storm that takes people over. Sometimes the storm gets worse, sometimes people die and we hold each person in remembrance. Sometimes, people move through the storm and return to themselves.

This work changes when we add the stability of living in a cabin shelter. We see the difference it makes to people's well-being when they have a private space at either Erbs Road Cabins or at Cabins on Ardelt. Combined, both places provide over 100 people with a framework to move past experiences of deep homelessness. We have recently been exploring the importance of group meetings and gatherings in these spaces, inviting our teams and the residents to strengthen our community bonds together. Living collectively brings lots of challenges, along with the challenges presented by mental health and addiction. There are not enough affordable housing opportunities to support people as they hope to move out of shelter.

As we do this work, we are learning constantly about right action, how to support people living through the extreme hardship of living without housing, living without shelter. We continue to work to cultivate the learnings of people like David Cayley and Wendell Berry, who both died this year and are remembered in this issue of Good Work News. Both these elders have emphasized the importance of human relationships, of convivial conversation, of teaching us the importance of place, limits and respect. They call us to live beyond bureaucratic frameworks and celebrate human connectedness. Their deaths this summer mark the end of an era, and we reflect on a common theme they both held, that changing our own hearts is what shifts practices, systems and the realities around us.

As we navigate the daily complexities, we continue to hold each person at the centre of what we do. It is in the expression of unconditional regard for each person that we can move past dislocation, anxiety and alienation. Love in action changes us and opens our eyes to the other in our midst.





The Real Work
by Wendell Berry

It may be that when we no longer know what to do,

We have come to our real work,

And that when we no longer know which way to go,

We have come to our real journey.

The mind that is not baffled is not employed.

The impeded stream is the one that sings.

Dr. Andrew Boozary (Unity Health Network)

Dr. Boozary's ideas on health-care reform:



- Get proximate and stay proximate.
- You can't tackle health injustice from a distance. Whether it's a shelter clinic, drop-in or community organizing event, the work starts by showing up where people actually are. Proximity isn't charity — it's how you learn what the system gets wrong.
- Treat the evidence on social conditions as seriously as any drug trial.
- Housing, income, food — these aren't "soft" determinants, they're clinical interventions with measurable outcomes. If a pill reduced hospital bed days, we'd fast-track it. We have that evidence for supportive housing. The gap isn't knowledge, it's action.

"Integration is so pivotal, especially for scale. It's going to require a much more holistic way of delivering healthcare, embedding housing while understanding that the social care aspects are so central to the success of any housing program."

"The mantra that we've had in health care for far too long is that if you build it, they will come," says Dr. Boozary. "But in reality, we need to deliver care where people are at."

I Knew Him As Murray

By Todd Cowan

Back in 2012, I was given a piece of advice that would ultimately change my life: if I truly wanted to make a difference in the lives of people who were homeless or marginalized, I first needed to understand their world. So, I decided to volunteer.

I visited several shelters and soup kitchens throughout Waterloo Region before eventually finding my way to St. John's Kitchen, operated by The Working Centre. Something about it told me that this was where I needed to be.

I will admit that I arrived with some fear and uncertainty. I had lived a fairly sheltered life, and I had never been exposed so closely to that degree of poverty, addiction, mental illness, hard drug use or violence. It was a world I knew very little about. But as the fear began to fade, something else took its place.

I began to know people. I got to know members of the homeless community not simply as "the homeless," but as individuals—with names, personalities, struggles, humour, pain and stories. I also began to know the volunteers, and I learned by watching how they treated the people who came through those doors.

One volunteer in particular stood out. His name was Murray. Murray often worked near the dish area, where the dirty plates were returned and scraped before being washed. It might not have been the most glamorous job in the kitchen, but from that spot he seemed to quietly keep an eye on everything around him.

When a fight broke out, or someone experiencing the effects of drugs or mental illness became angry or violent, Murray would calmly step in. He was a large man, and certainly his physical presence helped. But looking back, I don't think it was really his size that calmed people. It was his presence. There was something peaceful about him. He didn't approach people with anger or judgment. He simply stepped into the chaos with calmness, dignity and respect.

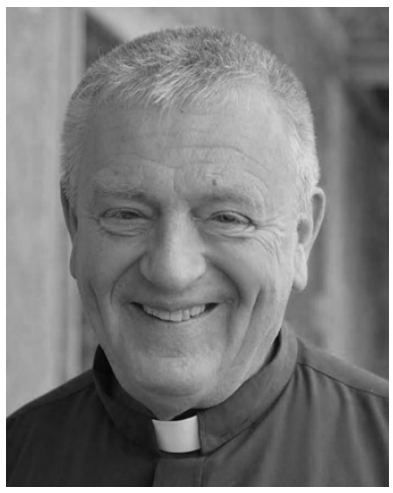
After lunch, the volunteers would sit down together to eat. Murray was always adamant about one thing: we should eat the same meal that had been served to everyone else that day. Why should our meal be different?

Why should we somehow suggest that what was good enough for the people we served wasn't good enough for us? It was a simple lesson, but it stayed with me.

Murray never lectured me about serving the poor. He never gave me a theological explanation of human dignity. He never preached a sermon to me about loving our neighbour.

He simply showed me.

Over the years, through his words—but much more through his actions—Murray helped me understand what it meant to meet marginalized people with unconditional love, respect and, perhaps most importantly, without judgment.



Fr. Murray McDermott C.R. was ordained at St. Mary's Church in May 1977. While a priest he worked for the Stratford's Children's Aid and was a member of the Stratford L'Arche Community. Fr. Murray was at heart a pastor, deeply involved in his religious community and was elected Provincial Superior in 2014.

When COVID-19 arrived in 2020, my years of volunteering at St. John's Kitchen came to an end. Then, in 2022, I began working at the Erb's Road transitional housing project operated by The Working Centre.

The faces were different and the circumstances had changed, but the lessons I had learned at St. John's Kitchen came with me.

So did Murray.

His example helped shape how I approached the newly housed community I was now working with, meet people where they are, listen and do not judge, respect their dignity; remember that compassion isn't something we talk about—it is something we do.

Then came one of the great surprises of my life.

In 2024, I was elected Deputy Grand Knight of our Knights of Columbus Council. Our longtime chaplain, Father Ray Reitzel, was being succeeded by a new chaplain.

When the new chaplain arrived, I couldn't believe it.

It was Murray. Except now he was wearing a Roman collar.

Father Murray McDermott

For approximately eight years, I had worked alongside this man at St. John's Kitchen. We had served meals together, cleaned up together, dealt with difficult situations together and sat down to eat together.

And in all that time, he had never felt it necessary to tell me he was a priest. Suddenly, so much made sense. Father Murray had never needed the collar to show me who he was. His priesthood had been visible all along.

It was there when he stood peacefully between two people fighting. It was there when he treated a person struggling with addiction with the same dignity he would offer anyone else. It was there when he insisted that we eat the same food as those we were serving. It was there in the dirty dishes, the noise, the anger, the laughter, the brokenness and the humanity of St. John's Kitchen.

Pope Francis famously spoke of shepherds having "the smell of the sheep." Father Murray certainly did. His flock included people whom much of society would rather avoid—the addicted, the unhoused, the troubled, the forgotten and those whose lives had become terribly complicated.

Father Murray didn't shy away from them. He walked beside them. He ate with them. He listened to them. He loved them. Remarkably, he did it without drawing attention to himself.

Father Murray passed from this life on August 28, 2026. I know that his death leaves an emptiness in the hearts of many people who loved him. But I also know that his life continues in the countless people who encountered his kindness, compassion and quiet witness.

I am one of them.

When I think back to the day I discovered that Murray—the man I had worked beside for all those years—was actually Father Murray, I can't help but think of Cleopas and the disciples on the road to Emmaus. They walked beside a stranger. They talked with him. They listened to him. And only later did their eyes open and recognize who had been walking beside them all along.

In a small way, that is how I felt. For eight years I thought I was simply volunteering beside a good man named Murray.

Only later did I understand that I had been witnessing something much deeper: a priest quietly living the Gospel in one of the places where Christ told us we would find Him—in the hungry, the poor, the forgotten and the stranger. Perhaps that is Father Murray's greatest lesson to me.

We don't need titles, collars or recognition to tell the world that we are Christians. People should be able to recognize Christ in us by the way we live. By how we treat the person everyone else avoids. By how we respond to someone who is struggling. By whether we judge or listen. By whether we walk past suffering or enter into it. By whether our lives speak of compassion before our mouths ever do.

Father Murray taught me that without ever sitting me down to teach it. He simply lived it.

I will forever be grateful that, for a little while on my own journey, I had the privilege of walking beside him.

Rest in peace, my dear friend, Father Murray.

Thank you for showing me—and so many others—what it means to recognize Christ in one another, and what it means to let others recognize Christ in us.

Todd Cowan has been a long-time volunteer at St. John's Kitchen and presently he is Grand Knight of the Waterloo Knights of Columbus.

Leo XIV Dilexi te – On Mercy

October 2025

26. Jesus' teaching on the primacy of love for God is clearly complemented by his insistence that one cannot love God without extending one's love to the poor. Love for our neighbor is tangible proof of the authenticity of our love for God, as the Apostle John attests: "No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us… God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them" (1 Jn 4:12,16). The two loves are distinct yet inseparable. Even in cases where there is no explicit reference to God, the Lord himself teaches that every act of love for one's neighbor is in some way a reflection of divine charity: "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me" (Mt 25:40).

27. For this reason, works of mercy are recommended as a sign of the authenticity of worship, which, while giving praise to God, has the task of opening us to the transformation that the Spirit can bring about in us, so that we may all become an image of Christ and his mercy towards the weakest. In this sense, our relationship with the Lord, expressed in worship, also aims to free us from the risk of living our relationships according to a logic of calculation and self-interest. We are instead open to the gratuitousness that surrounds those who love one another and, therefore, share everything in common. In this regard, Jesus advises: "When you give a dinner or a banquet, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, lest they also invite you in return, and you be repaid. But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you" (Lk 14:12-14).

St. John's Kitchen Evolves to Meet Community Needs





Responding to Reality on the Ground

Since the 97 Victoria construction project concluded, there has been a growing evolution of necessary services offered at this new hub. The first step was opening the new St. John's Kitchen at the end of October. The new welcoming space offers a wide range of supports and combines height, light and beautiful design. It was not long before the cold, frigid winter weather spurred us into action. By the middle of January, we opened every night at 8:30 to offer a warming/sleeping space until 8:00 in the morning. This continued until the end of April, when the cold began to thaw. It was a learning experience, but it immediately provided warmth, rest and community. It's thanks to the new St. John's Kitchen's flexible space that we were able to accommodate this emergency. The generosity of donors made this effort possible.

Once our doors opened, we focused on responding to the reality on the ground. Each night over the winter, 120 people used the overnight warming space, seven nights a week. St. John's Kitchen became a low-barrier, dignity-centred, overnight service that included washrooms and showers while protecting life and strengthening community well-being. A patron described, "how helpful it is to have a person at ground-zero saying you're still loved and you can still turn things around…People have a chance to see me around good people who are supportive."

St. John's Kitchen Opens 24/7

As the overnight warming centre demonstrated, St. John's Kitchen has been a vital response to the growing challenges of homelessness. It is a gathering place for meals, laundry, showers, public washrooms, hamper goods and clothing for the changing seasons. Outreach workers constantly support access to housing, health care, income support and problem-solving a person at a time.

On July 27th, with help from the Region of Waterloo, St. John's Kitchen opened for the first time seven days a week and as an overnight drop-in space for people experiencing unsheltered homelessness. The schedule was quickly established for daytime hours from 9:00 am to 9:00 pm. From 9:00 pm onwards, we welcome those without shelter for rest overnight.

In the first two months, we have provided overnight shelter for a total of 565 different people who are homeless and in need of shelter. Each night, up to 150 people come in for shelter and up to 600 people come through the doors during the day. Breakfast, lunch and dinner are now served every day of the week thanks to volunteers.

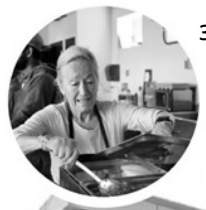




A DEEPER LOOK INTO

St. John's Kitchen

Food



3x Daily Nutritional Meals

Serving and Hospitality

Food Donations

Seasonal Produce

Shelter



Warming / Cooling Centre

Blankets & Clothing

Washrooms & Laundry

Supports

24/7 Outreach Teams

Medical Clinic

Community Dental

Legal Services



Community



Volunteers

Donors

Staff

Community Partners

A Day at St. John's Kitchen

Monday October 28th

743 People supported through the day from 9 am to 9 pm	**859** Total meal servings	**106** Servings of oatmeal
442 Servings of chili & rice and pork pasta	**152** Servings of soup	**150** Sandwiches served
100's Small items and desserts served (muffins, cookies, cakes, toast with PB&J)	**972** Cups of coffee	**143** People supported overnight from 9 pm to 7:30 am

Specialized Outreach Services (SOS) is a mobile multidisciplinary team that supports individuals who are experiencing homelessness or who are precariously housed in the community and experiencing medical, mental health or substance use concerns. SOS is designed to provide low barrier clinical care to individuals who may have difficultly accessing other traditional supports. The SOS team is comprised of social workers, nurses and outreach workers who work alongside physicians, nurse practitioners, hospitals, police and the court/probation system.

On The Working Centre website, you can hear about the Specialized Outreach Services and the folks they walk with in a series of special radio shows produced by Paul Francescutti through CKMS Radio Waterloo and Midtown Radio. Episodes include:

Introduction to Specialized Outreach Services
Walking with Anna | *The Nightingale*
Barbershop Talk | *A Room for Everyone*

Listen online at: **www.theworkingcentre.org/sos-podcast-series**

Remembering David Cayley

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free of those therapeutic designs that are antithetical to friendship. Spaces of conviviality and celebration can be conserved."

In the summer of 1991, I was aware of David Cayley's work on the CBC radio program, ***Ideas***. Maybe I recognized his familiar name when I picked up his freshly published book ***Conversations with Ivan Illich*** at Words Worth Books. The book promised to unravel the insights of the mystical Ivan Illich, a former Catholic priest who questioned the structures of our dominating institutions of health, education and energy, and how these institutions become counterproductive, dispossessing people of the tools they need to fulfill human dignity. The book crystalized the many reasons why our society was stalled and stuck with overdeveloped institutions. Why did the capacity for friendship, common purpose and service take a backseat to calculation and raw ambition to climb these institutions? Why did no one care about the continuing degradation of work? The importance of ***Tools for Conviviality*** and how tools can enhance the dignity of good work in viable local communities.

I couldn't put the book down as I learned about the roots of Illich's disenchantment. David gave Illich a forum that unearthed his core beliefs that powerlessness can only be confronted by changing one's heart. Through the conversations, Illich revealed the faith and philosophical tradition of learning the virtues and holding friendships. These were the keys to building community as the only option for cultural change.

It took a year to absorb the insights from David's masterful summary of how Illich's ideas can be lived. A working document was written called the Art of Living that outlined specific ways The Working Centre could strengthen grassroots communities. The idea of Community Tool projects grew from these conversations. By the following summer David had invited us to his house, to meet his wife Jutta and to talk about these vital new ways of thinking.

David and Jutta had been deeply influenced by hosting Illich over the years. They generously shared that spirit. We immediately learned about the Friends of Dufferin Grove Park, the neighbourhood park where Jutta spent much of her time helping to organize projects like a wood-fired brick oven that was always in use or an earthscape children's play structure that families built together. Between community dinners, dances, music events and sports, Jutta helped to instill community and pride in the shared use of public space. Dufferin Grove Park taught community through the art of friendship, a core Illich principle.

Often with Jutta as his main editor, over 30 years, David produced his own scholarship on CBC's ***Ideas,*** where he was a producer and broad-



caster and followed ideas that he cared about and hoped Canadians would also be interested in. He created series about diverse subjects including alternatives to education and modern medicine, the destruction of forests, how to think about science, and plastic words. It is accurate to say that David's radio programs were like free university courses giving insight on important thinkers like Northrop Frye, George Grant, Simone Weil, Harold Innis, Karl Polanyi, and Rene Girard to name a few. He followed religious ideas such as the Corruption of Christianity and the Myth of the Secular.

David's ***Ideas*** episodes were like comfortable, soothing conversations that gently unfolded major philosophical concepts. At just the right time, his smooth voice would summarize a major point adding perfect clarity. David's series of Conversation books with Ivan Illich, Northrop Frye, and George Grant offer invaluable insight into mid-20th century critical thinking. In retirement, he edited and uploaded his numerous ***Ideas*** broadcasts onto a website and now most of this work can be found at *www.davidcayley.com.*

In some respects, David lived in the world of esoteric philosophy. For example, his last lecture, delivered over Zoom in May 2026 was titled ***The Apocalyptic Illich: The changing place of apocalypse in Illich's thought, and the significance of this figure in our time***, to a conference at a Pontifical university in Rome.

Yet his final book, ***The CBC,*** was filled with common sense analysis that cuts through bureaucratic thinking.

"Change needn't occur through master plans, vision statements and the whole apparatus of outsized solutions to outsized problems. It can occur by changing something within reach: In this case by practising critical self awareness and discerning attention to the available margin of freedom. This is a question of vocation more than of regulation."

Whether in the above quote or in his last lecture, many of David's ideas echoed themes that he had drawn from his conversation and engagement with Ivan Illich. David followed ideas and people who animated him. His body of work is a gift to anyone wanting to look at society with new eyes, reaching backwards and forwards to grapple with a vision for a good society.

Below are a few guideposts to begin exploring David's vision:

A ***Constitution of Limits*** is the call for society to find a way to give measure to self restraint and sacrifice of self. To acknowledge that limits are a necessary requirement for community. This idea grows wider when a deeper recognition of restraint leads to building a society that supports its people, the environment and the shared use of tools for a common purpose.

Multiple Balances are the hope for creating room for decentralized ways of acting that renounce grand plans and instead contribute to projects and simple daily living that make the community better.

The Coincidence of Opposites is an important philosophical reality that people experience on the ground each day. Modern certainties crumble in the face of "ambiguities, incongruities, and violations of logic", these all require an open mind and new societal structures to not only negotiate society but to work together to build communities that create hope.

Tools for Conviviality represents a time and place when it became clear that industrially generated tools and professions were out of balance. Seventy years later, these tools continue to centralize. Meanwhile the vision persists for societies to deploy tools in ways that fulfil human dignity. Convivial Tools is a "demand for balance, localism, and practical wisdom in the application of tools".

All these ideas are integral to The Working Centre's understanding of building community; each have their roots in David's wide curiosity to unpack modernity's malaise. We have been blessed by a 30-year dialogue with David and Jutta. They both helped The Working Centre to think about our growing projects as a vital path rarely taken. This has evolved as we describe our work as a living system, a web of services, a village of supports, community tools – these are all ways of thinking and acting. They seek to build community and friendship – the highest calling. David, Jutta and Ivan would agree.

Remembering Wendell Berry

continued from page 1

helped shape our present crisis. Simply put our problems were rooted in our uprootedness. Renewal would come if people fostered a sense of belonging to their communities and these communities fostered a sense of belonging to the places they inhabit.

One of these people was Wendell Berry – farmer, essayist and poet from Henry County, Kentucky. With an academic background in the Humanities, having taught in universities across the United States, he returned to farm in his hometown where his family had farmed for over five generations. From this vantage point, being firmly rooted in his place and the people of his place, he began writing about the struggles of the family farm in the mid-20th century.

Early on he published ***The Unsettling of America: Culture and Agriculture (1977)*** where he expanded his analysis to the problems facing the farming community including ecology, culture and community. Berry critiqued the industrial mindset which saw bigness and uniformity as unqualified goods, and machines as unquestionably helpful. Berry refused to reduce the complex mysteries of land and people into simple solutions. A sustainable society can only be achieved by building culture from the ground up.

A sustainable society requires a robust attention for the land and for the people. The land must be respected for its unique features and requirements for care. The people, in order to sustain the land, must know the places they inhabit and become rooted in ecological practices that uphold these places.

The Working Centre has been nourished by Wendell Berry's ethic of community rootedness and writings on care for the land for well over twenty years.



Mary Berry, daughter of Wendell Berry spoke to a full house at Fresh Ground as part of the 2018 Summer Institute series. Mary shared her wealth of experience from operating Kentucky's first CSA to more recently establishing the Berry Centre dedicated to reviving farm economies and good land use.



THE BERRY CENTER
IN NEW CASTLE, KENTUCKY

Challenging today's ruinous industrial agriculture system, The Berry Center advances a holistic, "whole horse," approach that takes nature as its measure, consults the genius of the place and accepts no harm to the ecosphere, addressing what it will take to revive farm economies, good land use and vitality for rural America. Learn more at: **berrycenter.org**

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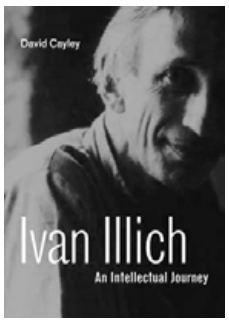
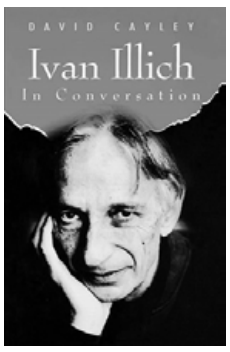


Ivan Illich: An Intellectual Journey

David Cayley

In the years since Ivan Illich's death, David Cayley has been reflecting on the meaning of his friend and teacher's life and work. Now, in ***Ivan Illich: An Intellectual Journey***, he presents Illich's body of thought, locating it in its own time and retrieving its relevance for ours. Ranging over every phase of Illich's career and meditating on each of his books, Cayley finds Illich to be as relevant today as ever and more likely to be understood, now that the many convergent crises he foresaw are in full public view and the church that rejected him is paralyzed in its "folkloric" shell.

560 pages | $43.99 softcover

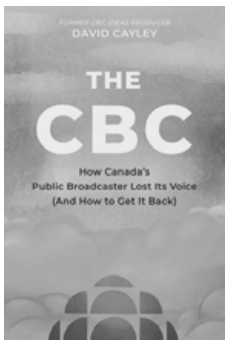


Ivan Illich: In Conversation

David Cayley

In the late 1980's, David Cayley started interviewing Ivan Illich and these fascinating conversations for radio are gathered in ***Ivan Illich in Conversation*** and range over a wide selection of the celebrated thinker's published work and public career. Illich's brilliant mind alights on topics of great contemporary interest, including education, history, language, politics, and the church.

320 pages | $21.95 softcover

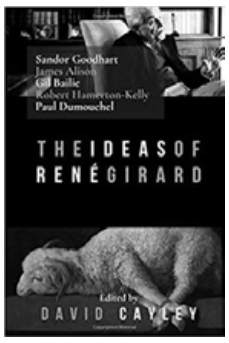


The CBC: How Canada's Public Broadcaster Lost It's Voice (And How to Get It Back)

David Cayley

Conceived as an institution that would embody Canada as a whole, the CBC now struggles in a fractured media landscape. Its narrow programming choices, dogmatic politics, and politically correct hosts cater to ever shrinking audiences. The once proud broadcaster has alienated so many viewers and listeners that Canada's Conservative Party now sees a winning strategy in promising to defund it. David Cayley, who for three decades made radio documentaries for CBC Radio's ***Ideas***, goes back to the CBC's roots to examine how it lost its way and to ask searching questions about the nature of media and the "public" in the twenty-first century. He calls for a bold new vision—a CBC that transcends its recent past and rebuilds as a unifying force, championing curiosity, dialogue, and a pluralistic Canadian identity.

320 pages | $26.95 softcover



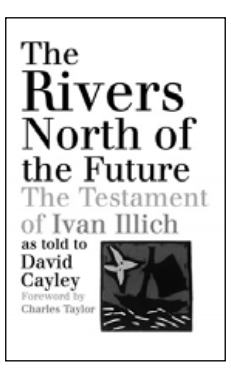
The Ideas of René Girard

An Anthropology of Religion and Violence

David Cayley

René Girard was a thinker who fits no category. His ideas fit no academic niche, but they attracted many followers during his long career as a teacher and writer. A large annual conference, "The Colloquium on Violence and Religion," is devoted entirely to his ideas, as is a journal, ***Contagion***. Those who participate in these conventions believe that Girard's insights are an intellectual breakthrough. Within the growing circle of his readers and intellectual colleagues, René Girard is regarded as one of those fundamental thinkers who changed the way people look at the world. In this ***Ideas*** volume, David Cayley and René Girard explore the whole body of Girard's work. En route, they touch on literature, anthropology, the Bible, and the way Biblical revelation has shaped the modern world.

121 pages | $13.10 softcover



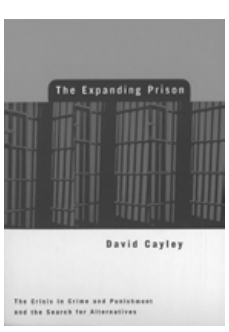
The Rivers North of the Future

The Testament of Ivan Illich

as told to David Cayley

Ivan Illich was an iconoclast who urged a fundamental rethinking of modern institutions. He believed that Western civilization can only be understood properly as a corruption of the New Testament. This book is based on a series of interviews during which Illich explores how 'the corruption of the best is the worst.' As Charles Taylor notes in his foreword, 'from within [Illich's] perspective, the significance of the Good Samaritan story appears obvious: it is a stage on the road to a universal morality of rules.' Illich's analysis of contemporary society is both a bold historical hypothesis and an invitation to believers to revise and renew their understanding of Christian faith.

256 pages | No Longer Available



The Expanding Prison

The Crisis In Crime and Punishment and the Search for Alternatives

David Cayley

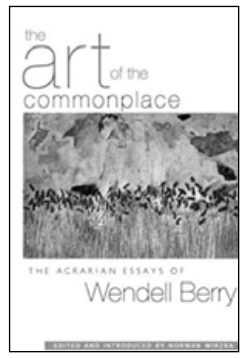
The Expanding Prison is a provocative, cogent argument for prison reform. Cayley argues that our overpopulated prisons are more reflective of a society that is becoming increasingly polarized than of an actual surge in crime. This book considers proven alternatives to imprisonment that emphasize settlement-oriented techniques over punishment, and move us towards a vision of justice as peacemaking rather than one of vengeance.

400 pages | No Longer Available

Working Centre Gift Cards Now Available!



You can now gift a visit to The Working Centre's Community Tools through our new gift cards. Whether you're looking to share the joy of a coffee, delicious meal, bike repair session or homeware goods, these physical gift cards are available to purchase and redeem at Queen Street Commons Café, Fresh Ground Café, Recycle Cycles, and Worth a Second Look. All proceeds will go towards The Working Centre's projects. Any questions? Email us at **genmail@theworkingcentre.org** or visit in person to pick one up for the holiday season!



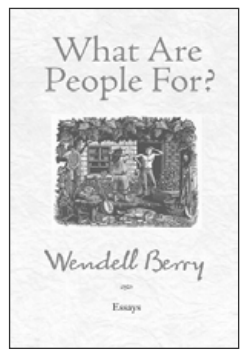
Art of the Common Place

The Agrarian Essays of Wendell Berry

Wendell Berry

A gathering of twenty-one essays by Wendell Berry that explore ideas such as Why is agriculture becoming culturally irrelevant, and at what cost? What are the forces of social disintegration and how might they be reversed? And, how does the corporate takeover of social institutions and economic practices contribute to the destruction of human and natural environments? These essays express support of local economies, farming communities, and family integrity.

352 pages | $24.00 softcover



What Are People For?

Wendell Berry

Wendell Berry identifies himself as both "a farmer of sorts and an artist of sorts," which he deftly illustrates in the scope of these 22 essays. Ranging from America's insatiable consumerism and household economies to literary subjects and America's attitude toward waste, Berry gracefully navigates from one topic to the next. He speaks candidly about the ills plaguing America and the growing gap between people and the land. Despite the somber nature of these essays, Berry's voice and prose provide an underlying sense of faith and hope. He frames his reflections with poetic responsibility, standing up as a firm believer in the power of the human race not only to fix its past mistakes but to build a future that will provide a better life for all.

224 pages | $23.00 softcover

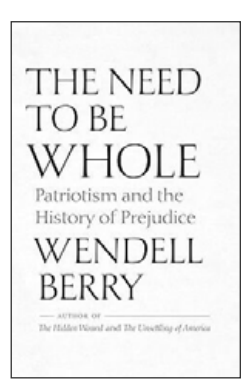


Home Economics

Wendell Berry

In ***Home Economics***, Berry explores what it means to make oneself "responsibly at home." As he argues, a measure of the health of the planet is economics—the health of its households. "Wherever we live, however we do so, we desperately need a prophet of responsibility; and although the days of the prophets seem past to many of us, Berry may be the closest to one we have. But, fortunately, he is also a poet of responsibility. He makes one believe that the good life may not only be harder than what we're used to but sweeter as well."

208 pages | $23.00 softcover



The Need to Be Whole

Patriotism and the History of Prejudice

Wendell Berry

Berry masterfully explores the intricate web of relationships that anchor us to our communities, our land, and ultimately to our own humanity, weaving together themes of integrity, history, and the enduring necessity of place. Through his poignant and reflective prose, Berry challenges readers to confront the fragmented nature of modern life and to seek a deeper understanding of what it truly means to live a whole and meaningful life. This powerful treatise not only lays bare the costs of our disconnection from each other and the environment but also offers a hopeful vision for reclaiming our wholeness.

528 pages | $44.90 softcover

Building A Web of Community Support









November 2026

Dear Friends,

The Working Centre continues to build its web of community. The interconnected links of the web are made up of projects, services, housing, and enterprises. The links are held together by workers who care deeply for the people they see each day. Altogether, this is a village of connections that provides necessities and helps people to navigate the disjointed parts of our society.

The village of supports assists the many who come through our doors. The dense web of connections responds to the complex difficulties people face. Daily, we support people as they encounter the following pressures and concerns:

- Strategies for having enough income to pay high monthly apartment rents.
- Navigating the job market which increasingly needs workers with high technical and language skills.
- Access to tools to face the harsh labour market as employment conditions tighten.
- Choosing housing even though the rents are not affordable and the job market is only offering temporary work.
- The layers of the social assistance system.
- Access to basic needs.

The Working Centre's web experiences these essential questions wherever they are asked at places as diverse as the Queen Street Job Search Resource Centre, St. John's Kitchen, the Erbs Road Shelter, or the Water Street Hospitality House. The social safety net constantly needs to be supported, and this dense web is available daily to walk with people through these hard but important choices.

The web of community also offers hundreds of volunteer opportunities that offer ways for people to give back to the community, to make connections, and to build confidence through skill development. By creating opportunities for collective connections, it strengthens people's ability to use shared spaces together and contribute to the whole. The more people engage, the more they feel part of this web of community building.

Your donations help us support the breadth and depth of this web of community. It responds to the signs of the times with creative projects that effectively address growing poverty and housing instability.

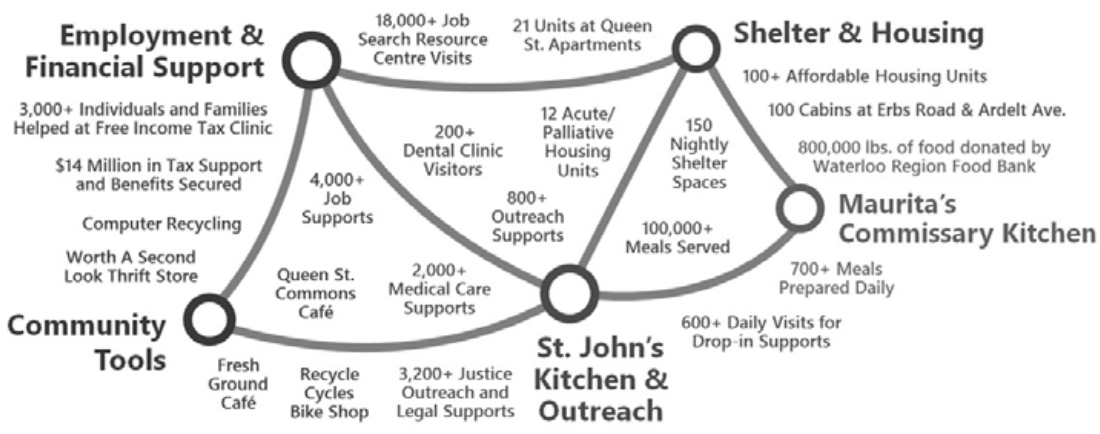
Supporters of The Working Centre have proven, year after year, that community donations are a vital response to local issues. We are grateful for your ongoing contributions in building our community of support.

Sincerely,

Joe Mancini

Joe Mancini, Director

P.S. We share our quarterly newspaper Good Work News with our contributors. Learn more about our community-based initiatives by visiting our website at **www.theworkingcentre.org**



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