

# City of Refuge

A Voice from the Street

Spring 2009 • Vol. 8- Issue 1



## "A Word of Thanks" by Alan Beattie

Towards the end of last year, as recession fears were reaching an early peak, I was invited to sit in a meeting of various social agencies who are involved in caring for folks on the street. It was a diverse group which included representatives from many of the best-known and most visible agencies in the City. We had come together to organize ourselves as a collective voice to speak to the government about the importance of continuing to fund programs like ours - particularly in such a challenging economic climate.

As part of the gathering, we went around the room and were each given an opportunity to speak briefly about who we were, the organization we represented and how the current financial crisis was impacting us. One organization after another spoke about the impact they have already felt or the impending crisis they were expecting to face.

Some of those agencies receive the majority of their funding through the government, others through foundations and still others rely heavily on corporate giving. In all three scenarios, the 'pinch' was inevitably coming: governments are cutting back, foundations have less investment income to disperse, corporate giving inevitably dwindles as profits shrink.

As I listened to these agencies, however, I found myself in a neat position: How encouraging to know that the bulk of our funding doesn't come from any of these three sources which are all anticipated to dry up significantly!

Sure, we get some funding from foundations, some from corporations and a dribble from government. But year-after-year, almost 70 - 75% of our revenue comes from individuals and another 15% comes from churches that support who we are and what we do. That leaves a mere 10 - 15% of our revenue that is dependent on those big funding bodies! Phew...what a relief!

Of course I understand that the current economic crunch will likely touch us all - not just the "big guns" but individuals as well. But taken as a whole, I suspect the impact will not be quite so dramatic.

I'm a "Numbers Guy" so bear with me through a few other figures:

- Our revenue comes, on average, from about 600 different people each year;
- More than 70% of our donors give less than \$1,000 per year - that means that there are a lot of 'small' but faithful friends who stand with us;
- As each of our staff are involved in developing their own base of support, nearly 60% of our total revenue comes from relationships which they cultivate and maintain.

Looking over these numbers, I feel a few things:

First of all, I'm full of gratitude for the 600-ish of you who support us year-in and year-out. Many of you have been supporting us financially for many years. Thank you for your faithfulness!

Secondly, I think it's great that so many of you have a personal connection to and interest in our work at Sanctuary. Many of you are friends of or are related to one of our staff. Thank you for your support of them!

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# A View From Here...



**Greg Paul**

This month's "View From Here" was excerpted from Greg's recent book - "The Twenty Piece Shuffle".

*I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out.  
For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do  
– this I keep on doing... What a wretched man I am! Who will save me from this body of death?*

*Paul, Romans 7:18,19, 24, NIV*

Is there a quote anywhere in Paul's writing that is easier to relate to than the one above?

Benny and I come from very different early life experiences – I don't know much about his, but I can only imagine what home life was like if hustling on the street seemed like a better deal – and our circumstances throughout the course of our relationship haven't exactly been parallel either. In fact, I haven't seen him again since he dropped by that last time. Maybe he concluded our environment was too dangerous for him after all.

Still, he and other friends from the street have become guides on my journey. The very extremity of their lives helps pull the lid off the containers where I tend to stuff my own desires. And I know, if only because he came back after ten years, that friends like Benny also find some value in walking with me. Despite many detours, blind alleys, broken roads and seemingly impassable paths, we – the wild variety of pilgrims in our community (addicts, professional people, university students, people who struggle with mental illness, some who live under bridges and others who live in beautiful suburban houses), together, I believe, with the Spirit himself – are guiding each other home.

It used to be that, when I saw one of my friends doing the twenty piece shuffle, I shook my head in bemused wonder. Now I nod in recognition of its essential likeness to that eagerness with which I anticipate and chase after the things that I hope will grant me pleasure, peace, comfort... even just a momentary relief from the deadly dullness that sometimes sucks the color from my days. Benny used to give almost all his time and energy to arriving at that brief moment of euphoria; it could have cost him his life, and for more than a few friends I have had, it actually has. For my part, I don't seek that kind of blow-the-top-off-your-head excitement, and I parcel out my personal resources more carefully. The 'drug' I crave is usually apparently more benign. It may even be the kind of thing the world around me heartily approves of: material goods, recognition for the work I do, upward mobility, security, proximity to people who are attractive or important. Comfort, happiness. I mask my hunger well, moving smoothly from one 'addiction' to another, spreading my neediness around, coping with my losses and insecurities by medicating myself with another soporific. This may be as simple and obvious as watching mindless TV (seriously, there is some that isn't), or as complex as writing another book.

Yes, Paul's words speak across every demographic ranking. The answer he supplies to his anguished question is not quoted above, but it is this: "Thanks be to God – through Jesus Christ our Lord!" What a trite conclusion.

At least, it would be if it wasn't so manifestly true.

Repeated drug use depletes the dopamine level in the brain. Dopamine is what allows us to feel pleasure, so the addict is actually killing his or her capacity to enjoy what s/he so strongly craves. Most crack addicts will tell you that the best toke they ever had was the very first one. Part of the reason they keep using is the irrational hope that they'll somehow get back to that magical peak. The more they chase that high, the more remote it becomes.

"It doesn't even do anything for me anymore," one friend told me. His face carved by sharp desolation as if he'd been abandoned by a lover. He was mystified as to why he kept returning to something that was consuming him, chewing him up, body and soul, while giving nothing back.

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*Presents....*

## "THE DRAWER BOY"

Sanctuary's drama troupe The Screaming Monkeys is proud to present a new full length production, "The Drawer Boy" by Michael Healey. "The Drawer Boy" is the story of a young actor decides to go out to the country to learn about farming and write a play about it. The actor is taken in by two elderly farmers, one who runs the farm and one who can't quite remember what he's doing here. As the city slicker learns about rural life, he also begins to learn about the history that brought the two men, life long best friends, to work and live together. The power of self-sacrificing care is explored in a funny and moving story that will have you asking, "Sandwich?"



*Shannon Blake - Director*

the screaming monkeys presents

# THE DRAWER BOY

by Michael Healey



**Every Thursday, Friday & Saturday  
between April 16- May 2, 2009**

Doors open at 7:30pm, play starts at 8:00pm  
at Sanctuary - 25 Charles Street East

**Cost: \$12 in advance, \$15 at the door, \$10 for 10 or more**  
**visit [www.sanctuarytoronto.ca/drawer](http://www.sanctuarytoronto.ca/drawer)**

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## "A Word of Thanks"... *continued from page 4*



For those of you who don't have that type of relational connection, we hope that we can make you too feel like a part of our Sanctuary family. We believe firmly that Sanctuary's 'funders' should be more than just that. We talk a lot about being a community here and we think of you as a part of our community too, even if you rarely - if ever - get a chance to visit us on site. We are working to find ways of making you feel more connected to us in the days to come. In fact, Nada joined us last Fall specifically to lead us in that direction.

Finally, I'm profoundly grateful for the support that each of you offers because it gives us freedom to operate in ways that government and corporately-funded enterprises don't enjoy. Large funders, because of their need for financial accountability, often tie their financial support to measures of success which can encourage recipients to care more about numbers than about people. Nobody really wants that to happen but it is often an unintended by-product.

What a gift, then, for us to have the freedom to invest many hours in the lives of our friends on the street without having to obsess about whether or not our investment is going to pay off in a clearly measurable fashion. Very few of the 'results' we see at Sanctuary are the kinds of stories that play well to someone who is looking for dramatic and unmistakable change in someone's life.

Let me be clear: We see lots of growth in ourselves and in our community but it's often very hard to quantify. Thank you, as donors, for understanding that relationship-building is labour-intensive and often doesn't produce immediately visible results. Thank you for funding us in such a way that we can carry on in this sort of absolutely vital work without the danger of being side-tracked by working towards "measures of success" which too often aren't accurate reflections of success after all.

So thanks again to each of you who supports our work financially, has supported it in the past or may support it in the future. We continue to be amazed, year-after-year, how God provides for our needs and we are grateful for your part in that. Thank you for being integral members of our Sanctuary family! Here's to many more years of friendship...

## **And speaking of finances, an update seems to be in order...**

2008 was a good year. Our expenses were in line with expectations and donations held on through most of the year. But the economy caught up with us in December leaving us in a \$60,000 shortfall for the year. Given the tough times, we are grateful that it didn't turn out any worse. Unfortunately however, this leaves us in a tight situation going forward.

As a result, we are taking a hard look at our plans for 2009. We are turning over stones and looking for areas of cost savings wherever we can find them - some small, some large. We are hoping not to have to make dramatic program cuts but are also faced with the harsh reality that such might be the case. Please pray for us as we wrestle through these tough and often uncomfortable decisions and seek godly wisdom.

On an encouraging and positive note, however, we received an unexpected piece of great news right at the end of 2008. Ontario's Ministry of Health has approved us for 2½ years of funding for our Health Clinic! That's a great affirmation to us of the importance of the work that is done in our clinic and the financial assistance will be greatly appreciated.

As well, we would like to express our gratitude to all of the unknown Sanctuary supporters who dropped off clothing, blankets, food and special goodies for our friends last year. Ideally, we would prefer to thank you each individually, but for now, this will have to do. Thank you!

In the end, we continue to look to God to provide through friends like yourselves. He has been faithful through the first 17 years of our journey here and we are confident that He will continue to do so. These are difficult financial times and we are keenly aware of the pressures that we are all facing. Thank you for your prayers on our behalf as well as your financial support as you are able.

If you wish to speak to us in greater detail about our financial needs, please contact Nada at [natad@sanctuarytoronto.ca](mailto:natad@sanctuarytoronto.ca) or 416-922-0628 x.225.

# Faces of Our Community

## - Vera Petkovsky -

Vera first came into contact with Sanctuary when she met two of our staff, Wayne and Steve, at a conference which they were all attending. Their conversation together piqued her curiosity and, before long, she found herself here for a Thursday night drop-in. That was almost two years ago and here's Vera take on hanging out with us:

"I love being here. I have made friends with people I've come to know, week by week, and I treasure those friendships. Sanctuary is a safe place for me - where I can love people that need to be loved, and be loved as the "cracked pot" that I am."

In her "other life", Vera is an executive assistant working in corporate real estate but finds her truest passions are writing and reading. Other hobbies include walking, working out, watching TV (comedies and mysteries), cooking and eating, and spending time with family and friends. Vera's journey towards faith in Christ has been far from simple but we're sure glad that it's ultimately led her to Sanctuary with us!



Vera

## - Humber Nursing Students -

For the last five years, Beth Brown, a nursing professor and a friend of Sanctuary's for 11 years, has been bringing a group of 3rd Year Nursing Students to Sanctuary. The students come from the Humber College/University of New Brunswick Collaborative Bachelor of Nursing Program and join us from the months of September through November to fulfill their course requirements of Community Nursing. As part of the learning experience, they spend time hanging out with us in drop-ins, doing Outreach with us on the streets as well as working on a life-skills website which we expect will be of value to the Sanctuary community long after they are gone.

Thanks to Beth, and the many students who have contributed so much during the course of their placements here!



Humber Students



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Strange, this. The things I so avidly seek have the same effect: I need more and more of them, and they are less and less efficacious. I know by long and repeated experience that the sources of mental, emotional and physical pleasure I chase after generally offer only a fleeting 'high' at best. If I seek them as a source of joy in and of themselves, they actually deplete my capacity to experience joy. This is true even if they are legitimate pursuits - material comforts or job recognition, for example, aren't wrong or bad. It's only if they are sought for their own sake, made the fundamental means of fulfilling my self, that they assume this diabolical character.

Jesus, on the other hand - when he is the route I travel toward fulfillment, I find exactly the opposite. (Remember? He called himself "the Way": the path, the road, the route you travel to get There.) When I seek him, root my values and desires in him, when I found my relationships and sense of self on him, my capacity for joy increases. The more I 'have' Jesus, the deeper my enjoyment of him. He increases my desire for those things which are good, adds value to that which is benign, and diminishes the strength of the negative (the evil) that threatens to throttle me. My dependence on material values and experiences as the means by which I define or please myself decreases.

If Jesus is the Way, God must be "There" - the Destination. Home. "In my Father's house are many rooms... I am going there to prepare a place for you."

When I think that Benny's early experiences of 'home' were so impoverished that he chose, very deliberately and by radical action, a federal penitentiary as the best available place to fulfill those universal longings for health, wholeness, dignity, security, fellowship, meaning... when I think of that, my heart just breaks. It breaks for the robbery done to his imagination, the violence done to his spirit, the perverseness of the relationships that shaped him. It breaks, too, because we at Sanctuary could not be the home he so desperately needed.

**PLEASE HELP US SAVE MONEY BY ... adding your name to the email list.**

Send an email to [info@sanctuarytoronto.ca](mailto:info@sanctuarytoronto.ca) stating that you would like to receive our newsletter and any announcements by email. Thanks!

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