

## **David Dubowits 1994-1995**

It is difficult to believe that my year living at The Welcome Home was more than half my life ago! Despite all that has happened since, I still consider it to be one of the most formative and influential experiences of my life. If the first year at The Welcome Home was about setting up the house and beginning outreach in the Point Douglas community, the second year with me, Andrea and Fr. Larry was characterized by at least three things: trying to establish a regular schedule of afternoon drop-ins, starting the tradition of Thursday Evening Family Nights, and giving Missions to "get the word out" at several Ukrainian Catholic Parishes in Manitoba and Saskatchewan about this new and unique ministry in our Church.

I had only met the Redemptorists a few years earlier as a high school student while attending Grades 11 and 12 at St. Vladimir's College. I don't honestly remember learning very much about the Redemptorist charism during my 2 years at St. Vlad's, but meeting many Yorkton Province members certainly made a positive impression and stirred something in me to find out more of what they were about. After participating in my first SERVE experience in August 1993, it only seemed natural that after I finished my Bachelor's degree, I would spend a year living at The Welcome Home ... and that's exactly what I did.

My positive memories of that year include: volunteering at Norquay Elementary School; many moments of private and community prayer in the Chapel; welcoming various volunteers, parish cooking groups and our neighbours to this new "House Church"; doing more dishes than I could have ever imagined; and learning to live with and appreciate the gifts and talents of both Andrea and Fr. Larry.

It was while living at The Welcome Home that I discovered in a profound way what it means to give - and also receive - while doing ministry, the importance and value of community, and the how much I love offering hospitality to others. All three have been defining features of my high school chaplaincy ministry for the past 15 years. I'm very grateful that those seeds were sowed during my year at The Welcome Home and that this "Mission of St. Alphonsus" on Euclid Avenue in Winnipeg is still continuing for others to experience, hopefully for many more years to come!