



## Urban Christian Outreach (Ottawa)

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**Update #68**

**August, 2014**

Dear Friends in Christ,

When we think of the poor, do we think of someone in ragged clothing, perhaps unclean and unshaven? When we encounter the poor, are we quick to walk away, to avoid conversation? What is it about the poor who stir up feelings of both discomfort and compassion within us?

**“For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich.” 2 Corinthians 8:9**

For **our** sake, he became poor. Why? The Scripture tells us that he became poor, so that **we**, by his poverty, might become **rich!** Could it be that when we encounter the poor, we come face to face with Jesus? When we encounter Jesus, are we not forced to examine our own richness? And so therefore, when we encounter the poor, are we not forced to do the same? Could it be that it is this richness within us

that is the cause of our distress or disconnect, as opposed to the poor themselves. We are challenged to see ourselves through the eyes of Christ. When we look upon the poor, Jesus is reflected back. We can choose to hide or to turn away, or we can stand before him, exposed, without our masks to protect us – for he sees past the exterior, past the protection of fancy clothes, fancy houses and fancy cars – he sees into our hearts – and he sees our brokenness. And yet he loves us just the way we are. He also sees himself, for as the temple of The Holy Spirit, he is reflected in us. Can we seek to see Jesus in ourselves – and in one another?

***“Blessed is the one who considers the poor! In the day of trouble the LORD delivers him; the Lord protects him and keeps him alive; he is called blessed in the land; you do not give him up to the will of his enemies. The LORD sustains him on his sickbed’ in his illness you restore him to full health.” Psalm 41:1-3***

I met Tom (not his real name) again this summer in a park. He was sitting alone and smiled broadly as I approached. It had been years since I had last seen him at our 'street' Alpha course, but God would often put him on my heart for prayer. I wondered how he was doing, and if he had since given his life to Christ. When I last met him, he wasn't ready to do so. But now, from the smile on his face, I knew that something was up. He was beaming! Normally very quiet, Tom began to share his story about how he had been touched by God in a very real and lasting way. He told his story with such joy and enthusiasm; I could barely keep up with him! In his poverty and his despair, he had called on Jesus, and had received the beautiful gift of salvation and hope from our Lord! What a transformation! A seed planted so long ago has taken root. Tom is a new person in Christ; he now has hope! The Holy Spirit is at work in Ottawa's downtown core!

Thank you dear supporters for your prayers, and for your faithful support of our ministry work, which made this all possible. I wish that you could have seen his face. Is there anything more important than introducing those who are suffering to our Jesus? Only He can raise their hopes and lift them from the pit of despair. And He did this through you. We cannot continue our work without your support. Together, with a handful of volunteer teachers, ministers and Board members, we rely on your faithfulness and obedience to our Father, in order that we might go out to minister on the sidewalks of downtown Ottawa.

As part of a commitment to on-going training and education, I attended the **Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST)** course this month, which was offered free to UCO by the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA). It was an excellent course; I now feel well-equipped to offer suicide first aid to those in crisis.

### **UCO's New WEBSITE!!**

**We are delighted to announce that our new WEBSITE is up and running and that it has a brand new look! We give thanks to God for our new Webmaster, Josiah Milnes! Our web addresses are linked; visit us at either [www.uco-ottawa.ca](http://www.uco-ottawa.ca) or [www.urbanchristianoutreach.ca](http://www.urbanchristianoutreach.ca) or email us at [jill@urbanchristianoutreach.ca](mailto:jill@urbanchristianoutreach.ca)**

### **UCO's Quarterly Update**

**Year-to-Date:**

**Budgeted Income: \$30,664**

**Actual: \$20,816.96**

**Shortfall: \$9,847.04**

A few of UCO's volunteers have written about their experiences with UCO, and I am delighted to be able to share them with you. The following pieces were written by Nadia Behmann, who retired after ten years of faithful teaching ministry in our classroom; Elanor Nigh, outreach minister and worship leader, and Jill Blackstock, classroom minister.

With a Grateful Heart,  
Jill Wilson,  
Executive Director



## WHERE HOPE LIVES

It was 2003 and my exciting, positive journey volunteering at the ROH had begun!

Having recently retired from full time teaching at the Elementary and High School levels, I decided to volunteer teach with U.C.O. (Urban Christian Outreach) in their partnership with The Royal Ottawa Mental Health Centre. I would work in cooperation with the most capable, dedicated teacher, Katrine Barton Coward. Katrine introduced and trained me. She emphasized the need to always point the students towards their educational goals and to encourage them as they embarked on their journeys. Lucy Ann Kubina was our special professional O.T.(Occupational Therapist); she was always ready to assist in any way. After meeting the students, I discovered that they took pride in being part of Adult Education. They were focused on learning. They enjoyed meeting other students, making steady advancement, and building friendships. Whether working on Language Arts, Math, Science or Social Studies, the students worked hard, always appreciating positive feedback from the teacher and the O.T.

If I were to choose one word that would describe 'The Class' at the ROH, it would be the word HOPE. Each new student and each returning student had a goal, a purpose and a hope for a bright future. The atmosphere in the classroom was one of respect, cooperation and a sense of purpose. One of the trademarks of the class has been "The Quiz". A student is usually chosen to create, present and conduct the end of class activity. This involved choosing a letter of the day, writing the description on the board and having the classmates guess the word. What a great way to end the class, with a little humour, a touch of competition, a discussion of the spelling and use of the word as well as leading an activity.

As much as we rejoiced when students met with success with their GEDs we were greatly encouraged by the attendance, the pleasant camaraderie and the advancement that students made in knowledge, in study skills and in practical life skills.

At the end of December and June, there would be a celebration, a few minutes taken at the end of class to share writings, to chat and enjoy a few treats.

I have worked with many helpful, dedicated O.T.s and O.T. Students. I would mention in particular Ann Raudoy and Paula Osborne. Since Katrine's retirement, Jill Wilson has been the UCO teacher, a most supportive, encouraging presence.

Thank you, Paula and Jill for your dedication, your support and your gift for assisting the students in setting and achieving their educational goals.

Volunteering at the ROH has been the highlight of my week for the past ten years. It is now time to go out and pursue new goals.

Keep up the great work, students. I encourage you to reach ahead, to plan, to believe in yourselves and to always do your best. To the volunteers, John, Mike, Carol, and Amanda, I've appreciated all your time and energy.

Thank you students and teachers!  
Thank you ROH/UCO!

Nadia Behmann  
Teacher/Volunteer, June 2014

## Experience with UCO

I started working with Urban Christian Outreach about 4 years ago when I came to Ottawa to study Nursing. I was only part my first year so I had a bit of extra time on my hands. I was really interested in getting involved with street ministry and so I decided to find a ministry in Ottawa that I could volunteer with. As I searched on the internet I came across a small ministry called Urban Christian Outreach. I was intrigued as so I contacted Jill Wilson and we meet over coffee. Four years later I am still here and have had an opportunity to be involved in various aspects of this ministry from leading a worship choir to teaching literacy. I have also met many wonderful people.

One experience that has really stood out to me was leading a worship choir. Worship is something that I love and I am very involved in leading worship at Peach Tower Church where I attend. So when Jill asked me if I was interested in leading a choir I was thrilled with the idea. Once a week Jill and I would get together and meet with people off the street at the Salvation Army Church on Catherine Street. We would spend some time worshipping together and then we would have fellowship over lunch afterwards. Before I started this ministry I thought I knew what I was doing but then pretty soon realized I had no clue how to lead a choir. But I knew that the Lord equips those who feel inadequate and he is more than enough for us. As the weeks progressed I felt the spirit of God so strong when we came together and even if we didn't necessarily sound the best I knew God was healing hearts and touching lives through our worship. It was nothing I could do or say. It was just through our coming together and being open to his work that inner transformation was happening in each one of us. I realized that worship is not about flashing lights, or fancy sound equipment. It's not about perfect pitch or hitting that note every time. It's about coming before God with open hands saying "I receive you Lord. Have your way in me."

**Elanor Nigh, UCO Volunteer**

## Volunteering with Urban Christian Outreach

God has continued to remind me of his faithfulness through my experiences as a volunteer with UCO. When Jill Wilson came to speak at my church one Sunday it was immediately apparent to me that she is deeply passionate about God and her work and I knew that I wanted to learn more about UCO. Through my experiences volunteering in the adult education class at the Royal Ottawa I had the privilege of seeing the way that God is working there through the dedication of Jill and the other volunteers who help out there. I was able to see how God is opening doors at the Royal to reach people who might not normally encounter Christians.

My experiences in the classroom were wonderful and encouraging but the experience I had when shadowing Jill while she did street ministry in downtown Ottawa was truly eye opening. Having never had any experience with street ministry in the past I was uncertain about what to expect. That morning, after Jill and I met for breakfast, we prayed together that God would make his plans evident to us and that we would be open to going to where he wanted us to be. I can tell you that God did put us where he wanted us that day and it was not what I had expected! We spent our day meeting with a client, unexpectedly meeting a woman who had just returned from a retreat where she had had a life changing encounter with Jesus, eating lunch at the Ottawa Mission, witnessing God give Jill an incredible and unexpected answer to prayer, meeting with a chaplain and touring the Shepherds of Good Hope. I learned a great deal about the poor, the homeless and the marginalized in Ottawa, about the mission of Urban Christian Outreach but most of all about our heavenly Father's power, love and perfect timing. I was truly blessed by my experience.

**Jill Blackstock, UCO Volunteer**