

**FONTBONNE MINISTRIES**  
Sisters of St. Joseph, Toronto

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Fontbonne Ministries embodies and furthers the mission and values of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Toronto.

The ministries are funded by the Sisters of St. Joseph and individual donations. Your ongoing contributions enable Fontbonne Ministries to respond to many unmet needs in our city.

**To help support these programs,** call or write: Joan Breech at 416-250-3100 or jbbreech@csj-to.ca

**For volunteer information,** please contact: Leanne Kloppenborg at 416-465-6069 or lkloppenborg@csj-to.ca

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## Beef and Beer BBO Fundraiser September 23, 2005



James McKinnon, (in yellow cap above, right), owner of Dangerous Dan's Restaurant, local businesses and Fontbonne Ministries staff and volunteers raised \$1540 for St. Joseph's Academy students, Hurricane Katrina survivors in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

### Bruce and Lydia... continued

"Bruce has incredible cooking talents but he also knows how to treat adults," said Sr. Gwen Smith, director of Mustard Seed. "He doesn't say, 'Do this.' He asks, 'Do you have a favourite way of making gravy?' If they say, 'No,' he follows up with 'This is a way I like to make it ...' He respects their experience."

On Wednesdays, Lydia is an assistant in the Sewing and Crafts Program. Along with Sr. Barbara, she gives one-on-one attention to up to 12 participants with little or no previous experience. She delights in developing her creativity, taking courses in scrapbooking, candle making, and Folk Art.

"What I learn, I'll share," Lydia said. "We're here to extend ourselves."

"Lydia is compassionate, caring and considerate of all who come to her craft program – and also fun to be with," said Sr. Barbara Grozelle, coordinator of the program.

Both Bruce and Lydia are quick to assert that they receive much more than they contribute. Lydia speaks of the atmosphere of camaraderie created by the Sisters at Mustard Seed, and maintains, "That big welcoming hug makes my day."

Bruce found the atmosphere at his former place of work difficult. "Here," he said, "I'm just me and allowed to be me." They state that finding the time to volunteer is not difficult, that Mustard Seed is a part of their community.

Their impact is revealed in the following story. At one point, participants presented Bruce with a white apron they had made for him. To decorate the apron, Bruce produced a pen, inviting all to write or draw something. One woman wrote, "God made incredible beauty when you both came into my life. God bless you – you are family."

# Springs of hope

FONTBONNE MINISTRIES  
fall newsletter 2005



## Bruce and Lydia Watts: Volunteers

WHEN YOU ASK LYDIA AND BRUCE, pictured above, how they came to volunteer at Mustard Seed, you learn that volunteering has long been a part of their lives.

When their two young boys took up softball, Bruce asked, "Is there anything I can do?" There was: he found himself assistant coach and even coach at one point. Lydia also participated as assistant coach and scorekeeper.

Lydia began volunteering in high school through the Legion of Mary, visiting sick people and helping with catechism classes.

"I have had so much given to me that I need to give it back. I feel good doing that," said Lydia.

Bruce and Lydia are a retired couple who have been married for 39 years. They both volunteer at Mustard Seed.

On Tuesdays, Bruce, with Sr. Mary Lou Harris, co-ordinates the Community Kitchen.

Bruce explained what was involved in planning the weekly meal preparation, how the participants decide on the menu the week before, buying fresh produce the same day, how Sr. Mary Lou handled "the baking stuff" and he focused on the main meal.

About 14 participants arrive for about 3 p.m., those coming early helping with the prep work and those arriving later helping with the cleaning up. Bruce assigns jobs to the participants, telling them in simple terms the chopping size needed e.g. "the size of your thumbnail." Participants choose their desired level of involvement. For a \$2.00 contribution, participants learn how to create nutritious economical meals in an atmosphere that is respectful and fun. Once the meal is prepared, all sit down and enjoy it together.

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**WE ARE VERY GRATEFUL** for the compassion and commitment of our many past and present volunteers – so much so that we have dedicated our second issue of Springs of Hope to stories about our volunteers. You will read about these selfless individuals from the perspective of staff, program participants and the volunteers themselves. We can't tell you about each volunteer but have chosen some representatives of this very vital group. We hope you enjoy reading about these individuals who make such a difference in the lives of those we serve. If you are interested in volunteer opportunities, please call Leanne Kloppenborg, our volunteer coordinator, at 416 465-6069.

– Joan Breech, administrator  
Fontbonne Ministries

A newsletter of Fontbonne Ministries, Sisters of St. Joseph, Toronto

Fontbonne Ministries seeks to nurture community with the neighbour – welcoming everyone without distinction.

## “I Want to Do My Best for Them”

When asked about what volunteers mean to Mustard Seed, Sr. Gwen Smith, director, answered, “They mean joy.”

VOLUNTEERS FORM THE BACKBONE of the programs at Mustard Seed, a place of many possibilities. Open to everyone, programs include: sewing and crafts, a community kitchen, a drop-in for women on Fridays, a Saturday drop-in, basic computer training, spiritual companionship and a spiritual lending library.

Volunteer opportunities also exist for high school student groups, young people from Covenant House and students studying to be teachers, nurses and social workers.

Today, volunteers make up a pool of 40 dedicated people. Participants say, “Volunteers give much more than we even ask for.” Volunteers say, “We get back more than we give.” You be the judge as you listen to actual volunteers talking about their experiences:

“I am thankful for being able to come to Mustard Seed where we care for each other and share talents with students.” – *a sewing & craft volunteer*

“I like to help out with things that I can do, like unload the dishwasher. I feel happy when I can do things that help other people.”

– *Christine, a program participant and volunteer*

“Volunteering at Mustard Seed is my way of expressing faith in our society, helping to create hope for people with less, and, for a few hours each week, witnessing the strength and courage that our guests take away from the help that is provided.”

– *Peter, drop-in volunteer*

“The people who come to Mustard Seed teach me a lot about being grateful for what I have and what I can give.”

– *Emily, a student volunteer*

“When I’m cooking at the drop-in, I know that for many who come it will be the only meal they have that day. I want to do my best for them, to give them something nutritious and good.”

– *Debora, drop-in volunteer*



“Gathering around a cup of coffee or tea is central to our ministries. Participants can pause and catch their breath and share stories about what’s been happening in their lives. It’s our chance to listen and hear about who they are and what they may need.”

– *Sr. Georgette Gregory*

## Friendly Visiting Voices

This ministry has volunteers visiting people who for different reasons have difficulty leaving their homes. The voices you hear, who prefer to remain anonymous, are those of a visitor and some of the people she sees, as told to Sisters Georgette Gregory and Patricia Macaulay, co-directors of the program.

“THIS PARTICULAR MINISTRY FULFILLS my desire to follow Jesus as a Sister of St. Joseph by going out to others with special needs, especially those who are shut-in. I try to bring the ‘Good News to the poor’ in their particular situation,” said this volunteer of her In Good Company ministry.

“She’s a darling,” said one of the people she visits. “She always makes me feel good. She says that she likes to talk with me.”

“She has escorted me to my doctor’s office as I am not too stable on my feet and I might trip,” said another client. “She occasionally reads the bible to me when I can’t get out to church. We could solve the world’s problems if we had the full two hours together!”

“It gives me life,” said the visitor. “My visits are usually ones of giving and receiving, i.e. reciprocal, otherwise I am only a ‘do gooder.’ Each person is unique and we share together our joys, sorrows, hopes, dreams and faith. Thus the relationships develop into friendships, some more than others.”

“She took me shopping one day and it was a riot. Each time I picked up a tin of something, she checked the price and said I could get it cheaper somewhere else,” said another client.

“My illness is very isolating, therefore it is a real comfort to have a visit in a week when I may not see anyone at all,” said another. “It’s a

commitment; the fact that the visits are regular is very good. This gives me a sense of security — that I can count on that person to be there for me.”

“She is very good at talking to the nurses for me,” said one client.

“She was here for me at the right time of my life,” said another client. “She helped me to integrate with others when I was isolated. She listened to me.”



(Left to right) John, Sr. Marie Kilcullen, Sr. Helen and Steve move back the furniture after the installation of a new floor.

“To each of you who have become part of my ministry through volunteer work, thank you! You will always be in my prayers.”

– *Sr. Helen Kluge, director and teacher*



## VOLUNTEER NEWS

## An Amazing Collection of People

“I continue to be humbled by the generosity of our volunteers.”

– *Leanne Kloppenborg, volunteer coordinator*

“FONTBONNE MINISTRIES’ VOLUNTEERS are an amazing collection of people who share their skills, passions and creativity with us – some on a daily basis, some weekly, some once or twice a month,” said Leanne. A volunteer thanked her recently for giving her the opportunity to take on a special project,

which she completed enthusiastically. Said the volunteer, “God really took hold of the whole thing... all I had to do was show up!”

Because of the closure of the Women’s Drop-In on Shuter Street, we decided to host a weekly drop-in for women at Mustard Seed this fall. Two of the volunteers from the Women’s Drop-In downtown accepted an invitation to be involved in the new drop-in. It has allowed us to have a sense of continuity for any of the women who decide to come east to the new drop-in.

We recently gathered the volunteers who are working at the Friday drop-in for women and those at the Saturday drop-in. There was lively discussion, and toward the end of our time together, the volunteers asked if we could meet regularly as a volunteer group. It was very gratifying to know that they truly have embraced the vision of Fontbonne Ministries, which is to nurture community with the neighbour – welcoming everyone without distinction.



## FONTBONNE PLACE

## Building a Community

“We see the change not only in how lovingly some residents tend the front garden but also in the friendships among the women.”

– *Sr. Gwen Smith*

“ALMOST THREE YEARS AFTER the opening – what a transformation!” said Sr. Gwen. With 18 apartments for older, single women, Fontbonne Place is the response of the Sisters of St. Joseph to the lack of affordable housing for women.

This past September, many of the residents, working with Dangerous Dan’s restaurant and other local businesses, helped raise over \$1500 for St. Joseph’s Academy

in Baton Rouge, Louisiana to aid survivors of hurricane Katrina. They baked, supplied music and volunteered their time. The women enthusiastically welcomed guests to the event in the garden at Fontbonne Place.

Sister Patricia Macaulay, who spends time with the women, said, “I have noticed how kind the women are to one another by shopping for one person who has disabilities. One of the women who cares in this way has her own physical limitations.” Supporting each other during difficult times is what real community is all about. This spirit of giving is modeled and nurtured by the Sisters

and is evident in the relationships being built at Fontbonne Place.



Astrid and Mona Lisa, volunteers at the fundraiser, pose with Sr. Jane Dwyer.