

2011 East London United Church Outreach (ELUCO) Annual Report

From the beginning (1984) when Gethsemane's Reverend Mary Weir reached out to various congregations in North East London with her dream, the East London United Church Outreach has continued to remain committed to stand with people who build community in the midst of challenges.

2011 was a very busy but very exciting year for ELUCO. We became an incorporated (2007) ministry of London Conference. We are now on the web, www.eluco.ca and our new pamphlet is almost ready to be printed. Special thanks to First St Andrews Jim Silcox, for creating our Web and Paul and Mary Lynn Mansell from First St Andrews for helping along with Nancy Howard, Janice Elliott and Marilyn Carter with the creation of our new brochure. Nancy Howard, our community worker completed her first year working in the Marconi Community and has done a tremendous job of coordinating programs and introducing new ones. Her hours were increased to 30 a week in September allowing her to spend more needed time in the community. Nancy will begin full time employment with ELUCO by March 2012 at the latest.

The challenges for low income families and individuals in London were greater in 2011 than past years and prospects for 2012 do not look any better. Insufficient income from social programs such as Ontario Works or Ontario Disability or from minimum wage jobs translates into problems such as eviction, utility disconnection, and lack of food and in some cases lack of medication.

Marconi Report: Nancy works tirelessly to help the families of the Marconi community providing a friendly ear and open mind to their problems and directing them to the appropriate agency(ies).

Lunch Program: With generous funding from May Court and the weekly help of three volunteers formerly from the Marconi community, the lunch program continued, serving 20 and more children a nutritious lunch every Wednesday during the school year.

Camp: With generous funding from the Hope Book, Siloam, Richards, Byron, Rowntree, First St Andrews United, UCW's across Middlesex Presbytery, and the Optimist Club of London-Middlesex, 23 children and 2 single parent families enjoyed their time at camp Kee-Mo-Kee this summer. In addition to camp Kee-Mo-Kee, 11 seven to eight year olds attended a month long daily Social Skills camp at JP Roberts school. 35 children attended the City of London Parks and Recreation day camp. As well, ELUCO sponsored a child to attend the Stevenson Children's camp and 2 to YMCA camp. 10 sleeping bags for children attending overnight camp were also provided. Camp costs totalled \$5,835.00 enabling many children from the Marconi community to have great memories of the summer of 2011.

Christmas Share: 85 families participated in the Christmas Share this year and an additional 15 families were referred to the Salvation Army. One family from Marconi was provided with gifts thanks to the teachers and staff of River Heights Public School.

New Programs for 2011: Several children's activity programs occurred during 2011 plus an adult craft program.

Coming 2012: a community kitchen project at Marconi community.

North East London Report:

Welcome Wednesday Hospitality Lunch Program: This program started with funding from the Westminster college foundation and is flourishing. Every Wednesday either ELUCO, Knollwood Baptist, Siloam United or Valleyview Mennonite volunteers meet at the Salvation Army Citadel on Huron street to prepare and serve a very hardy lunch to approximately 70 persons primarily from north-east London. This was an increase of 10 persons a week. Our summer picnic style lunch and Christmas Turkey dinners (2 turkeys generously donated by Siloam congregants) were a huge success. Financial assistance was also provided by St Andrews Catholic church.

ELUCO Gethsemane Food Cupboard: Our food cupboard is open every Wednesday and Friday from 9:30 to 12 noon. Thanks to food donations from Siloam, Arva, Rowntree United, Hillcrest elementary school and several special events such as birthdays and other parties, we were able to distribute generous food items to 656 families which include 1108 adults and 682 children in 2011. This is a huge increase from 2010 when we served 485 families. A true sign of the times. We could not have done this with the food donations alone. We are forever thankful for the generous funding from the Sisters off St Joseph as well as cash donations from individuals and the Arva United Church ELUCO is very thankful to Gladys Beaton and Helen Pickard for coordinating the volunteers and for

the consistent assistance of Mary Ella Pettigrew, Anne Donkervoort, Lori Ingrey, Jo-Ann Gramlich, Marion Clarke, and Judy White,. A special thanks to Jane and Dave Hilton for purchasing and lugging much of the purchased food.

Exciting news is that the former Gethsemane United Church has been sold to the London Affordable Housing Foundation. Plans are underway to build an affordable housing apartment building in 2012. The plans include a food cupboard for which there will be a 50 year free lease to ELUCO. This means that we will need to find a new home for our food cupboard until the apartment building is complete.

Fundraising: Our two fundraising efforts this year generated \$7,375.75. Our cinnamon buns generated \$1,905.75 and the 2011 Walk and Roll for Families totalled \$5,470. Please mark Sunday June 10th 2012 at 2 pm on your calendar for an exciting concert at Dundas Street United church sponsored by ELUCO. Many of the choir members will be from our London and area United church choirs.

We thank you for your prayers and support during the past year. There is much still to be done and we are thankful that United Church people have been so willing to stand in solidarity with the poor and vulnerable in our community by providing community workers who can be active in seeking community solutions.

Respectively submitted by Sharon Ashton - ELUCO Chairperson
sharonashton93@hotmail.com
(519) 455-9385