

ELUCO Annual Report -2022

Armed with God's gift of Hope, we moved into a New Year that we hoped would be less challenging for Nancy, the Marconi community and the ELUCO Board than the previous two. Once again COVID reared its ugly head and we were back to conducting activities as we had for the past two years. Board issues were dealt with through emails and telephone calls while Nancy continued her work through front porch meetings and phone conversations. With school on hold she continued to provide activity packs for children as well as recipes and ingredients that they could make at home. Her porch meetings were followed up with phone calls or on-line connections to relevant agencies not yet open for regular communications. As COVID eased its tenacious grip Nancy was able to serve a small group inside the unit for lunch program as well as offering take out to others. Breakfast snacks were also distributed as take-out. Due to limited space in the unit the Outreach Team from London Public Library was able to offer books and activities to children outdoors. Nancy also offered outdoor activities for the children over the summer. Youth requested assistance with creating resumes and cover letters and Nancy provided one-on-one help with this. Anxiety and Depression continue to be an issue for a number of individuals and Nancy was able to provide additional strategies and resources to help them cope. Over the summer we had one counsellor at Camp Kee-Mo-Kee and one child. In order to attend camp the children had to be fully vaccinated and Nancy was surprised to learn that a large number of the Marconi children were not vaccinated. Fifteen children were referred and sponsored to Stevenson's Children's Camp near Dorchester. Two first year Fanshawe College students received funding for books or tuition from our ELUCO Post-Secondary Education Scholarship Fund. In October Nancy received a donation of pumpkins from our pumpkin lady which she donated to families for the annual Halloween festivities. In November we began registration for our annual Christmas Share program. Thanks to the overwhelming generosity of UCWs, member churches, Jansen Christmas Toy Drive and individuals, Nancy was able to provide gifts and food or gift cards to 103 families. Thanks to all who supported us – your generosity made it possible!

Over the summer and early fall Nancy was asked to share the ELUCO message at four different churches. Her challenge for these services was to prepare the entire service including music and prayers with the help of the worship teams. Feedback on her messages was glowing! Thank you Nancy!

Thanks to a United Church Council/ Hope Council grant the ELUCO board was able to have a promotional video produced. In early January the Siloam Audio Video team comprised of Allyn Todd, Wib Dawson and Christine Teleski presented us with the final version. Take a few moments (4 ½ minutes) to view our new video on our website www.eluco.ca and be sure to let us know what you think! We want to express our thanks to the community members who played such an integral role in the making of this video.

In March the Board was finally able to meet in-person at Rowntree United for our monthly meeting. It was decided to post pone our AGM from April to June and hold it outside at Siloam United Church. Our annual fundraiser –Walk and Roll for Families was held in Spring bank Park on the last Sunday in September. Although our numbers were small we had our most successful event ever raising well over \$9000.00- a welcome boost to our depleted bank account. In an effort to augment our funding the

Board decided to sell Rheo Thompson mint smoothies. These are available from our directors for \$3.00. Our next big fundraiser will be April 1, 2023 at 7:30 at Siloam United Church when the Voices of Broadway concert choir will once again provide an evening of outstanding Broadway music. Tickets will be available at the door or from directors! Mark the date on your calendar and plan to attend.

GETHSEMANE FOOD BANK

The Gethsemane Food Bank operates out of the Gethsemane Gardens Housing Unit and is open to clientele Wednesday and Friday mornings from 9:30am to noon. In 2022 they served 402 families (up 75 from 2021) and this translates to 738 adults (up 162) and 274 children plus 2 babies (up 37 plus 2 babies). The numbers were higher from August on and there were more new clients.

Clients are given:

Cereal, spaghetti sauce, spaghetti, pork and beans, beef stew, mac and cheese, canned soup, canned meat, canned fruit, canned vegetables, tea bags, powdered milk, rice, sugar, margarine, bread, crackers, bar of soap, laundry soap, toilet paper

When there are children peanut butter, juice boxes, puddings, granola bars and cookies are included depending on availability. Over the summer and fall the Siloam and Rowntree Community gardens provided fresh produce. Harvest Bucks were also distributed.

The Friday volunteers knit and make available hats, mitts, scarves and dish clothes. Extra items such as cake mixes, toothbrushes, toothpaste, shampoo, deodorant are placed in a box and people can choose two items.

With increasing food costs, it is becoming more difficult to stock the shelves. We are grateful to the Sisters of St Joseph for their generous funding and all those who donate to keep our doors open. Thanks also to our dedicated volunteers. Our clients thank you!

WELCOME WEDNESDAY

Due to COVID the Welcome Wednesday volunteers spent most of their time preparing take-out meals for the 30-35 who showed up at Rowntree United each week. In early November the program was moved inside to the delight of the attendees. There is additional work required to serve the meal indoors but the return of long-time community volunteers –Tim who washes dishes and Al who looks after the distribution of the Food Coalition items helps to ease the burden. Other program participants are always willing to help the WW volunteers set up and take down tables and chairs. We serve 40-45 meals each week. There continues to be a few takeout meals as well. A Christmas dinner of roast beef and all the fixings was greatly appreciated by those who attended.

BUILDING COMMUNITY FOSTERING HOPE

The task of building community and fostering hope within the Marconi community is a daunting task for the ELUCO Board. Our accomplishments are only possible because of you- our too numerous to

mention volunteers, our donors big and small, our member churches, UCWs, our Marconi community who give back with love and support, and of course the glue that holds it all together, Nancy.

A special thank you to London and Middlesex Community Housing for housing our office and programs, the Maycourt Club of London, Sisters of St Joseph, United Church of Canada Mission and Services, Hope Council of Antler River Watershed Region and Westminster College Foundation. Thank you to all our volunteers and donors!

I would like to close with a Prayer of Kindness, recently adopted by the Welcome Wednesday program.

O Lord, give us strength today to show kindness in all that we do. Help us to open our arms to those less fortunate and extend our hands to those who may need it, so that they may see YOU in our words and actions. Amen