

## Outreach Corner

*Compiled and edited by Emmett Will, Communications Coordinator*

### Kanata Food Cupboard

*Submitted by Nancy Kerr*

Thanks from the Kanata Food Cupboard for your special donations through the church this year. To the volunteers: thanks for adjusting to all the changes this year for the distribution of food to those in need in our community. It was quite extensive, but I think and hope the changes will benefit volunteers and recipients next year.

Our next food drive will be close to Valentine's day for our Red & White gift program. Thanks again for your support.



### Monthly Appeal

*Submitted by Cathy Turner*

#### *Christmas Outreach Activity*



This year GCUC will be supporting the Kanata Food Cupboard's Angel Tree program which provides gifts for children of families in our area who are currently being helped by the Kanata Food Cupboard.

Angels will be identified as a boy or a girl, along with their age. Gifts, including the Angel Tag, are to be provided unwrapped but you may include a gift bag or other appropriate wrapping. This ensures that the Food Cupboard team can closely match the child's interests with the gifts available before final wrapping and distribution.

Also, we will be collecting Canadian Tire money which will be used by the Food Cupboard to purchase gift cards for families.

Please see Holly Egan or Cathy Turner to pick up your Angel Tag, to drop off your gift, or to donate some Canadian Tire money. All gifts and Canadian Tire money need to be in to either Holly or Cathy by Sunday December 8.

Let's help a child smile this Christmas!

### The Kanata Stittsville Refugee Sponsorship Group

*Submitted by John Toft*

The Kanata Stittsville Refugee Sponsorship group met on October 23rd at Stittsville United Church under the chairmanship of Rev. Grant Dillenbeck. There were representatives from Glen Cairn, Stittsville, and Kanata United churches, and St. Paul, St. Thomas, and St John's Anglican churches.



The first item of business was the news that Blair Duffy of Kanata United Church had agreed to become the treasurer for the group. Blair reported that the group has \$18,384 in assets. This is sufficient for the year's current sponsorship needs. However, if the Hakam family sponsorship is successful, these funds would soon be depleted.

There were reports updating the progress of those people the group is currently supporting:

Maryan Yussuf Ali arrived as a refugee from Somalia over a year ago through the support and sponsorship of the group. Our pledged financial support was for a period of twelve months. That support is now completed. Maryan is doing well in her new home country.

Another sponsored refugee, Say May, has graduated from adult high school and continues to do well.

The sponsorship application for the Hakam family has been completed on behalf of the group by the Diocese of Ottawa. It is now in the hands of Citizen and Immigration Canada. Their assessment will determine whether the Hakam family can be potential refugee immigrants to Canada.

There was a measured and caring discussion on the length of support given over the years to the four Rwandan orphans the group supports in Rwanda. Sponsorship began when these orphans were aged 2, 4, 6, and 8. That was 17 years ago, just after the Rwandan genocide. Members of the group asked how much longer we should support these orphans and what processes should be in place to enable them to become self-supporting.

The group asked Nash Smith, a member of the group, to liaise with a Montreal family member of the orphans. He is to establish how well each orphan is doing in high school and university and when each might be

reasonably expected to complete their education and enter the work force. At the same time, Grant Dillenbeck is to liaise with the NGO to whom the group sends its financial support for the orphans. When Grant and Nash report back the group will be in a good position to develop an exit strategy for the support that is both caring and compassionate.

Discussion then focussed on how to bring personal engagement to congregations to the work of the sponsorship group. "The Big Soul Project," held at St. Paul's Anglican Church, raised awareness of the work of the sponsorship group and contributed a healthy \$5,685 to the group's assets. The group considered what could be done in 2014 to bring a similar level of awareness and engagement to our congregations, and raised the question whether recently-sponsored refugees could be present at a similar style event. These questions will be discussed further at the January 2014 meeting.

The next area of discussion centered on how to thank the supporting churches for their ongoing support. Grant will send each church a letter of thanks as well as a request that monies for the Kanata Stittsville Refugee Sponsorship Group be included in each of the 2014 church budgets. The need for refugee sponsorship is never ending.

I am a relative newcomer to the Kanata Stittsville Refugee Sponsorship Group, being now in my second year as a representative to the group from Glen Cairn United Church. At each meeting I am struck by the dedication and compassion shown by the members of the group. The perceptive comments, the careful consideration of issues, the prayerfulness that infuses the decision-making process, all these lead me to be thankful that I was asked to join this group on behalf of my church. I will continue to bring support for this vital refugee work to the sponsorship group from my church.

## Senior Outreach

*Submitted by Beverley Armbruster*



Margaret Taylor was our guest at the October Senior Outreach event. She has worked and traveled extensively through some of the most northerly communities. Her presentation introduced us to the wonders of the North, followed by some samples of delicious northern flavours.



## *The Oasis in Kanata*

*Submitted by Emmett Will*

Following September's successful initial public information session, "*Mental Illness - A Family's Journey*," we are very pleased to announce that the October and November events have been equally well-attended. *The Oasis in Kanata* VIM-Outreach program is clearly meeting a need for this type of information for the caregivers of those with a mental illness in our community.



At the October 21<sup>st</sup> session, "*Communication Skills - Where Do We Go from Here?*," Stephanie Brooks from The Royal Ottawa Hospital facilitated a highly interactive session about communicating with a loved one with mental illness, especially when symptoms are present. She discussed communicating with others both within the family as well as with friends and the community about the illness and its symptoms. Over thirty participants shared their personal stories and, in turn, received very supportive comments, information, and practical suggestions from Ms. Brooks. An analysis of the session evaluation sheets revealed that participants found her presentation to be very relevant and helpful.

The November 19<sup>th</sup> presentation, "*Care for the Caregiver - the Importance of Looking after Yourself*," by Dr. Gretchen Conrad from the [On Track](#) program of the Ottawa Hospital, attracted almost forty members of our community. Dr. Conrad gave a very lively and in-depth exposition of key factors affecting the health and well-being of caregivers, focussing on the dangerous negative effects of unchecked stress, and the roles that good nutrition, adequate exercise, and sufficient rest play in maintaining an individual's ability to care for others. Her emphasis on caregivers taking care of themselves so they can take care of others struck a resonant chord with all present. The question and answer period following her presentation permitted participants to raise issues of personal interest and import. Once again, the post-session evaluations manifestly indicated that our church's newest outreach program is providing the information and reassurance which caregivers are seeking and need.

As well as the three public information sessions held to date, Carol McMurdo-Paton, *The Oasis in Kanata's* professional Program Manager, has initiated a monthly caregiver support group. The first small group session, held on November 4<sup>th</sup>, brought together five individuals in a more intimate setting for support and counselling by Ms. McMurdo-Paton, ably assisted by co-facilitator David Rothwell. A second group meeting is scheduled for December 2<sup>nd</sup>. Any caregiver interested in attending is encouraged to contact Carol at [OasisManager@TheOasisKanata.ca](mailto:OasisManager@TheOasisKanata.ca). She will be pleased to explain the purpose and functioning of the support group. She has indicated that, should there be sufficient interest, there is a possibility that she might hold bi-monthly sessions in the future.

The December 16<sup>th</sup> public information session, entitled "*Managing Holiday Stressors*," will once again feature Cynthia Clark of the Schizophrenia Society of Ontario's [Strengthening Families Together](#) program. With the Advent and Christmas seasons fast approaching, Ms. Clark will discuss coping and caring strategies to help caregivers and family members prepare for the challenges the coming holiday season may bring. The session starts at 7 pm. Pre-registration is not required and all are welcome to attend.

At the moment, *The Oasis in Kanata* Steering Committee, under the leadership of Shirley Bishop, consists of Cathy Turner, Holly Egan, and Emmett Will. The Committee would be pleased to welcome some additional members to fill certain key roles which are getting short shrift at the moment. Some responsibilities are short-term or event-specific, while others will require a greater degree of commitment. Please contact Shirley for information, or indicate your intent to assist us in this worthwhile and rewarding effort by sending an Email to [Info@TheOasisKanata.ca](mailto:Info@TheOasisKanata.ca). Check the Web site regularly at [TheOasisKanata.ca](http://TheOasisKanata.ca) for news of upcoming events and developments.

### Recent *The Oasis in Kanata* Fun(d)-raising Events

#### **Santa Claus Parade**

*Submitted by Emmett Will*

On November 16<sup>th</sup>, for the fourth consecutive year, intrepid volunteers braved the inclement fall elements (bitter, howling winds; driving snow; freezing rain mixed with stinging ice pellets; *etc, etc.*) to serve hot treats and homemade Christmas cookies to the folks lining Abbeyhill Drive who were awaiting the arrival of the Jolly Old Elf himself perched atop a fire truck.

Well, okay, so we're exaggerating . . . just a tad. Actually, it was an exceptionally beautiful, sunny, warm late fall day - sweater weather, in fact - when we fed the masses of onlookers. We distributed almost 400 cups of steaming hot chocolate, coffee, and apple cider with the cookies donated by the many generous bakers in

**WE PUT THE  
FUN  
IN FUNDRAISING**

our congregation and local community. We also promoted the upcoming Cookie Walk, Christmas Concert, and Advent church services by handing out over 350 business cards containing the key dates and times of each event.



GCUC Santa's Elves Anne McEwen and Emmett Will would like to thank those who provided, prepared, and proffered the delicious cookies and liquid refreshments, or helped to set up. We wish to extend a special thanks to the Adams family for once again lending us their canopy, and, especially, to Faye and her granddaughter Merissa for arriving so early in the morning to start heating up the drinks. To everyone who helped (*which, this year, included couples from our neighbourhood who do not attend our church, but just wanted to help!*), rest assured that your generosity brought great smiles of delight to the faces of the many folks, both large and small, who approached our tables.

Thanks to the generosity of the parade watchers,  
we collected \$400 in a free will offering  
which will go to support *The Oasis in Kanata!*

### Brian's Birthday Bash

*Submitted by Beverley Armbruster*

Rev. Brian Copeland graciously offered one of his milestone birthdays as an opportunity for us to raise awareness and funds for *The Oasis in Kanata*. If laughter is a measure of success, we certainly exceeded all expectations. There was a musical tribute by the senior choir, a song parody by the Revelation quartet which featured Brian's many hand cute puppets, and several roasts that clearly illustrated the members of the Ottawa Presbytery have incredible senses of humour!

A huge thank you to the many volunteers who contributed both their time and talent to the evening's festivities, and to the countless donors for their generosity.



Brian's "roasters" (photo by Robert Tate)

