



# KINGSTON COMMUNITY CHAPLAINCY

HELPING EX-PRISONERS TRANSITION SAFELY INTO OUR COMMUNITY

## SPRING NEWSLETTER

May 2017

### Chaplain's Message

"He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God." Micah 6:8

This verse has taken on deeper meaning since accepting the position of Kingston Community Chaplain last June. It comes to mind regularly when I consider our mission of working proactively to facilitate and provide spiritual, emotional and practical support to people making the transition from prison to community.

It was this verse which came to mind when I was asked to share at the 6 week Prison Ministry Training course Mary-Jo McKinnon offers through the Catholic Diocese. This is a course I would encourage anyone interested in volunteering in prison ministry to take advantage of. These embryonic thoughts that began at the training have continued to ruminate as I consider what it means for me as Community Chaplain to follow the Micah 6:8 mandate of acting justly, loving mercy and walking humbly.

I am certainly no expert in justice. What is truly fair and just is not always clear, the issues sometimes seeming to me more grey than black and white. There are times when the word justice has been wielded like a weapon in the hands of a novice. Justice then seems to me to have less to do with demanding rights and instead doing what is right. Over these last 11 months, I have developed a sense of what it means for me to act justly, to love mercy and walk humbly in the context of Prison Ministry.

To act justly is to treat all people, prisoner, ex-prisoner, guard, prison receptionist, volunteer, with dignity and respect. It is to recognize and interact with every human being with the understanding that they are each created by God. To act justly is to listen to their truth in love and speak truth in love. To act justly is to seek to restore the well-being of individuals, families and communities.

To love mercy is to desire better for another. To help them to see themselves through God's eyes. To love mercy is to reach out without thought of return with an offer of Hope. To love mercy is to accept the invitation into someone's life with the gift of presence.

To walk humbly is to be reminded that God is God and I am not. He is the perfect Judge and I am not to judge. To walk humbly is to admit that I don't have all the answers and I can't do the work for you. To walk humbly is to recognize that if circumstances or situations had been different, "it" could have been my brother, sister or father. In fact, over the years it has been family, friends and people I care about. More than this it could have been me. It is me. I as much as anyone need God's forgiveness and mercy. I need His love and it is His mercy filled, humbling act of justice that set this otherwise condemned woman free.

What a privilege I have been given in this ministry of presence. What a gift to join in God's reconciling and redemptive work; to extend to others all the grace and mercy that has and continues to be extended to me.



Cathleen Getchell, Chaplain

### HELPING CREATE A SAFE COMMUNITY

**We believe that when crime happens, it is not only the victim and offender who are affected but the whole community. We seek to promote healing and safety for all people as we learn how to live together in community once again.**

## Chairperson's Message

In this message, I wanted to write about Restorative Justice, but there are so many aspects of it that instead of a brief message, I would end up writing a book. So, in short, I will say that Restorative Justice seeks to restore the damage done by crime. It helps reduce reoffending, and can help transform individuals, relationships and communities. Thus, bringing about a healthier and safer community. The hard work of our Chaplain, Program Coordinator and indeed the board of directors attest to Kingston Community Chaplaincy's dedication to the principles of Restorative Justice.

Our Friendship Meals are now up and running affording our clients a sense of community, acceptance and support. Our chaplain continues to offer our clients support and assistance to reintegrate into society. Our program coordinator has developed a volunteer manual. We will be developing a volunteer training program for our volunteers.



Finally, on behalf of Kingston Community Chaplaincy and our clients, I want to, again thank you, our donors and supporters for your prayers and generosity to Kingston Community Chaplaincy. Without you, we wouldn't be able to do what we do. Thank you.

Patrick Callahan, Chairperson

## Interview with Arley Irvine: KCC Board Member

Due to the length of this interview, it has been divided and the concluding part will be included in the next newsletter. Given the strength of content, the Editors believed it would be a great disservice to the article and the readers if it was edited for length.

### Part 1

KCC: Can you tell us a little bit about yourself?

Arley: I'm a relative newcomer to Kingston. I grew up in a rural area north of Toronto and that's where I learned the importance of community and I've carried that on through all my years until now. I'm also a partner and a mother, two things I hold very dear to my heart. I've been involved in the Restorative Justice movement for ten years now, another passion of mine. I currently work at Youth Diversion in the MEND program. It aims to bring restorative values into the Limestone District School Board. We train administration and teachers, as well as kids in the classroom, how to use restorative values when working through conflict and other issues.

KCC: What inspired your interest in Restorative Justice?

Arley: It's interesting, I actually remember the exact moment I heard about restorative justice. I was sitting in a university lecture hall in Guelph taking a criminology course and a very engaging lecturer was speaking. There were two slides on Restorative Justice and in that moment I connected with it and thought, *This is the way. Why are we not doing things this way?* And that was fifteen plus years ago. I held on to that not knowing if Restorative Justice existed outside the lecture hall and then I ran into Community Justice Initiatives in Kitchener where I immediately felt a connection to their mandate and was very blessed to have worked there for eight years in the Restorative Justice field.

KCC: What did Community Justice Initiatives do exactly?

Arley: CJI was started by Mark Jantzi and he is considered one of the pioneers of Restorative Justice. You can look up the Elmira case. [KCC: See [www.iirp.edu/news/2010-mark-yantzi-talks-about-first-case-where-offenders-met-victims](http://www.iirp.edu/news/2010-mark-yantzi-talks-about-first-case-where-offenders-met-victims)]. He was a probation officer who thought to do something different with two young boys who had vandalized homes in Elmira in 1974. From that grew a movement. so CJI runs 15 different programs all based on restorative values. I worked in the youth victim offender [program]. I've always enjoyed children, young people, and thought that their voice was often suppressed. I've been interested in criminology, and the underlying reasons, the root causes of crime. I've always had a soft spot for vulnerable people, for marginalized people and those are people represented in our criminal justice system.

I worked in group homes for a while. It was one of the most difficult jobs I've had. It was a huge learning experience. I really saw how these kids were disadvantaged in many ways. And many of them did end up being involved in the criminal justice system. I remember when I worked at group home, I met a 12-year-old girl who came from a neighbouring home. She was very quiet, very passive. Then when I worked at the Grand Valley Institution for Women, I went to the Max Unit, and there she was doing federal time. We connected, and she was able to share with me her pathway: [how] it all began in her childhood, being brought into care at an early age. Things came full circle for me.

I was working at GVI through CJI doing restorative programming. One of the issues then was overcrowding, so conflict was high, charges were high. We were looking for a way to try to reduce some of this. We introduced restorative programming using a circle model to try to build community, understanding and empathy, to help [the women] have a voice to understand what they needed to live together in a house peacefully. The evaluations we got back from the study were overwhelmingly positive. For us, even if we gave them an hour of peacefulness in a day, that was a success.

KCC: Some people feel that punishment is an important way we deal with crime and criminals. Would you agree with that?

Arley: I definitely agree people feel that way.

KCC: What would you say to them?

Arley: I would say I can understand where that comes from. As a society that is something we've been taught from a young age that you want retribution against someone who has harmed you. I've worked with many people who have committed crimes, from property crimes to murder. I've also worked with victims from all walks of life. What I've learned is that [punishment] doesn't heal them. Where I've seen healing really happen is when people have their questions answered, when people are involved in their case and have a say about what they need and what heals them. In a typical criminal justice system, when we use punishment, victims aren't involved in the case. They don't speak, the crime is against the state now. The crown attorney takes over. The victims are no longer part of the process. To punish that person, not only does it do them harm, but it also harms the victim and so creates a fractured society overall. Working with people who have committed crimes, on the other side, what they need [as well] to reintegrate and be a positive member in society is connection, is understanding; not dismissing the crime they have committed, but they need support. Often, they [ex-prisoners] are traumatized people who have been traumatized most of their lives in different ways and now we are punishing them further for being traumatized. Some are suffering from mental illness. Really support and connection are key to rehabilitating people, if that's what we want to do.

KCC: What is your definition of Restorative Justice?

Arley: To me Restorative Justice is a set of principles, a way of addressing the issues of conflict and harm that includes all parties. It includes the victims, the community; it brings together all parties. It allows people who have offended to accept responsibility for their actions. A lot of time they aren't given that opportunity to admit what they've done in a space where that can be acknowledged. This isn't necessarily about forgiveness but Restorative Justice is a path of healing for victim and offender to use those terms, which makes for a more peaceful, harmonious community.

To be continued in next newsletter...

### Friendship Meals

Our Chaplain is hosting Friendship meals. These gatherings bring together clients, friends, family and volunteers over a congenial meal supplied by KCC. Please watch for details in upcoming newsletters.

### Annual General Meetings

For those who attended our 2017 AGM, we thank you and remind other readers that for \$5 you can purchase a membership to KCC and vote at the following Annual General Meeting.

### Theatre Night Fundraiser

Supporters of KCC were treated to a superb evening of theatre recently at the Domino's production of Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*. The nostalgic 50's style set created an evocative backdrop for the stunning performances by all members of the cast. The sadness of Willy Loman's life unfolded before us as pieces of his past were portrayed, revealing a man who had blindly followed a path which, in the end, proved to be nothing but an illusion. As his son sadly stated at his funeral, 'He never knew himself.' This unmasking of the American Dream was more pertinent than ever, I felt, as in our time we see the wealthy and powerful being given more credence than those who are committed to true justice. Bravo to the Domino Theatre for yet another professional quality production and a huge thank you to all who attended!

We hope you can join us at our next Theatre Night Fundraiser, *The Mollycoddlers* by John Corrigan on June 20, 2018 at 7:30 pm.



#### KINGSTON COMMUNITY CHAPLAINCY OBJECTIVES

- To enact the goals and principles of Restorative Justice in relation to victims, offenders and community.
- To accompany men and women from incarceration to successful reintegration in the community by facilitating emotional, spiritual and practical support systems during their transition.
- To assist those who are at risk of engaging in criminal activity to find constructive and life affirming community resources.
- To dialogue with community groups to further their understanding of and response to the needs of offenders, victims and their families.

## Client's Corner

The following poem is by a Board Member who was once a client of Project Reconciliation which later became Kingston Community Chaplaincy. We encourage you, our readers, to contribute creative writing, musings, poems, etc. which you feel could be of interest to the KCC community. If you have anything to share, please send your work to the newsletter editors care of the KCC e-mail address below.

### *Rrrrruff! Rrrruff! Yelp! Whimper.*

This just isn't turning out as I'd hoped,  
not from the pooch's point-of-view anyway.  
His dialect seems to undermine the gravity  
of the situation,  
some of the spirit shines through but none of the  
tale.  
He (or she for that matter) could just as easily  
be extolling the virtues of a well-loved chewie,  
now lost  
behind that immovable object we know as the  
couch.  
Trauma? Yes.  
Kidnapping? Maybe. It's lost in the translation.

Here we have the sentiment but not the content  
with nary a Rosetta stone for its de-  
mystification. My term.  
The wise would counsel looking close to home  
for clues and insights to the larger world.

“What say you, Cassiopeia? The laneway beckons,  
the foliage lush, a verdant tunnel into which the  
wagon ruts run on to darkness. What say you?”

*Squirrel! More squirrel! Rabbit, rabbit, rabbit.*  
*Squirrel! O, squirrel of all my kicking dreams.*  
I edited in that last refinement,  
but I feel it holds the gist of her disclosure.  
*Chipmunks. Mice.*  
*Coyote. Mmm, coyote pee!*

That last translated from a gruff Rottweiler  
to a standard Canadian English.

*Arf! Arf!.*  
*As strangers batter down the doors of home. I'm*  
*caught. I am afraid.*  
The dog is lost.

And now our struggle is to sense a meaning,  
any meaning in the joy of words unspoken  
from that **time** before  
we tallied our lives  
as consequence of what was taken;

waiting for the Grace to be returned.

~ John Rives © 2012/2017

### **Contact Us**

Chaplain: 613-453-0891, email:

[kingstoncommunitychaplaincy1@cogeco.ca](mailto:kingstoncommunitychaplaincy1@cogeco.ca) CRP Centennial, P.O. Box 26,  
Kingston, ON K7M 0C2 [www.kingstoncommunitychaplaincy.org](http://www.kingstoncommunitychaplaincy.org)

