



KINGSTON COMMUNITY CHAPLAINCY

HELPING EX-PRISONERS TRANSITION SAFELY INTO OUR COMMUNITY

SPRING NEWSLETTER

April 2018

Chaplain's Message

"The other day, as I left a client at the end of our time together, my heart was strangely warmed. I realized in that moment that perhaps the greatest joy I receive from serving as chaplain of KCC, is being able to witness the victories of our clients, to see them successfully overcome some of the challenges and barriers of reintegrating into the community. More than this, it is to witness their personal growth and transformation, be it emotional, spiritual, an increase of self-awareness or self-esteem. All victories are significant; be it a place to live, a first piece of ID, developing a healthy community of support and camaraderie, a job, a reconciliation, a making of amends, a letting go. Certainly, there may be set-backs at times and moments of discouragement, but still this fortitude of moving forward, seeking to learn from and leave the past behind, and live in the present, while preparing for a future of possibilities is a privilege to get a glimpse of. So, one can imagine the joy it brings to see what can only be described as a new life blossoming. A life that at one time could not even be dreamed or imagined is now ripe with plans and purposes, and the freedom to dream even bigger, as one imagines what life could be like five years down the road. It is a privilege in the context of Chaplaincy, to rejoice with those who rejoice in their victories and mourn with those who mourn in times of discouragement and struggle: through it all to encourage and support them as they move forward to a future of greater hope and possibilities.

The old life has gone, the new life has begun!"



Cathleen Getchell, Chaplain



Annual General Meetings

For those planning to attend our 2018 AGM, we remind you that for \$5 a membership to KCC can be purchased and this will allow you to vote at the following Annual General Meeting.

Chairperson's Message

2018 is starting out as a very good year for Kingston Community Chaplaincy (KCC): we have hired a new coordinator, Foluke Akinremi, who will organize some very special events later in 2018. We are thrilled to have her on board! Welcome, Foluke! We will let you know more about these special events in the near future. We would like to thank our donors, large and small, for their contributions. KCC is so lucky to have you.

This year, Karen Raddon and I have decided to be Co-Chairs as this lessens the burden for both of us. It is working well and we are working well together. It is wonderful to have such an able partner in this!

Best wishes for spring!

Brian Hetherington, Co-Chair

Introducing our new Public and Client Liaison – Foluke Akinremi

I feel very blessed to join the Kingston Community Chaplaincy team. With a heart for community development, I have provided leadership for many initiatives in the past 14 years. While working with Emergency Medical Services, I led the submission of the Three Year Action Plan for Access, Equity and Human Rights which was approved by Toronto City Council. I developed dynamic multicultural policies in relation to Emergency Medical Services Programs while implementing educational and promotional activities for several cultural communities. As the Volunteer Coordinator for Toronto Grace Hospital in Toronto, I worked collaboratively with volunteers and staff to provide services for patients receiving palliative care. While working with Supportive Housing in Peel, I acted as a Liaison for clients with mental and physical disabilities by partnering with support workers, physicians and mental health counsellors.

With a continual passion for serving my community, I am currently an associate and volunteer at a faith-based organization in Kingston where I help to coordinate outreach activities including youth outreach. I recently organized a job search, resume writing and interview skills workshop for university students.

I have a degree in Economics from York University and I'm a certified Project Manager with the Project Management Institute.

I am excited and I look forward to continuing to serve the community by working with the Kingston Community Chaplaincy as a Public and Client Liaison.



Foluke Akinremi, Liaison

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.

Interview with Arley Irvine: former KCC Board Member

Due to the length of this interview, it has been divided. Part 1 was included in the previous 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 2

KCC: How do you feel KCC helps prisoners and ex-prisoners?

Arley: I feel KCC is instrumental in assisting people who are transitioning into the community or people who have transitioned, because they aim to provide those same connections and support. Really this is something we all need to flourish, so KCC does that in a marvelous, natural, holistic and not a forced way, which is key.

KCC: What do you feel are the greatest challenges prisoners face as they get out of prison?

Arley: There are a variety of challenges, from the basic, logistical of having to obtain your driver's license, your Health Card again, and once again, with a lack of support it can be very difficult to navigate these systems. You may have been out of society for many years. I remember meeting a lady, when she went in, there were no debit cards, so when she came out and wanted to use cash, everything was debit. It was so overwhelming for her that she just isolated herself. Without the support which came from Community Justice Initiatives at the time, she would have felt lost and [might have] found comfort back in the institution. I feel stigma is a big one. People are stigmatized very quickly for their criminal past. I feel that people who I've spoken to who want to give labels to ex-prisoners, they've never talked to anyone, they've never heard the stories of people who've been incarcerated. Because once you hear their stories, it's very difficult to have those judgments and it's difficult not to find compassion for them and understanding on some level. When I first went into Grand Valley, I worked with some women who were in there for some serious crimes and I was nervous I wouldn't be able to connect with them. Once I looked past their crimes and I saw them as human beings, the connection was amazing. I saw that if they were given the chance they would have so much to contribute to society. They could teach us so much from their experiences, help us understand and do better by these people. They will never be given the chance, because of the crimes they have committed. Once again this is not excusing the crimes they have committed but I feel there's more potential for them, other than just locking them away.

KCC: What do you feel they could teach us?

Arley: So for these women, their struggles were around being impoverished women with mental health issues, the struggles of abuse. I feel that when I heard their stories, I could actually understand how someone could do these things. Because there was one point in my life, I thought, how could anyone do such things? To actually be able to come around to a place where I could actually see how that could happen was transformative for me.

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.

KCC: Are there other things you'd like to see KCC do for people who have been incarcerated?

Arley: The STRIDE program is a Circle of Support type program. There are many programs like this. COSA is another one. They are very well researched; the models are out there with guidelines to follow. They have been very effective. COSA or Circles of Support and Accountability is specifically for people who have offended sexually. There's also the STRIDE model for women coming out. These models have been successful. I think one of the reasons they are so successful is that the people get to choose their circle members. Unlike many organizations that pair up people and say, hey, this person is going to be your friend now; it can be very unnatural. Some people lack trust to begin with, {it doesn't help} to force a person on them. What I find very exciting about the STRIDE model is that they are brought in as a large group of volunteers and the women get to choose who they would like their circle to be, so it really empowers them and creates buy-in to stay connected with their circle.

KCC: What does the circle do for the women?

Arley: The circle can do whatever is needed. Many times they are used as someone to give rides to meetings, to help find an apartment. It's like, if I was in a hard place, I would call a friend and say, 'Can we go out for a coffee? I'm having a tough day.' For a lot of people coming out of prison, they don't have that person to call, so they can quite easily go down a not-so-good path. So, you have that person to call for support if addiction is your struggle or if you have mental health issues.

KCC: How many people would be in a circle?

Arley: I think an average of 4 people. Initially what happens is 60-70 volunteers are brought into GVI on a weekly basis, a weekly recreational program. The women who are incarcerated can come and do the activity. It could be playing volleyball. It could be a movie night. Sometimes they have speakers. They could be making cards with them and they chat. The volunteers are trained. When women are transitioning out of prison, they can say to the coordinator, 'I'd like a circle and I'd like these three or four people to be in my circle.' Sometimes they can meet weekly or more than once a week, sometimes it can be monthly. It's really dependent on what the client needs. Some circles have lasted 5-plus years. Having the circle as opposed to one person means it's not draining. It can be draining for one person to support one person. But the circles provide balance that way.

KCC: Thank you. That's fascinating. Thank you for doing this, Arley.

Arley: You're welcome.

Theatre Night Fundraiser

We hope you can join us at our next Theatre Night Fundraiser, *The Mollycoddlers*, by John Corrigan at the Domino Theatre June 20th 2018. For full details, turn the page.



Kingston
Community
Chaplaincy
Presents

John Corrigan's

The



Mollycoddlers

Directed by: Lisa Flannigan

The Mollycoddlers is set in a barn in 1840 along the St. Lawrence River. Stanley, a life-long farm labourer, decides that working for someone else is getting him nowhere. He has a daring, yet potentially dangerous plan to change all that - pirating! He arranges a secret meeting with his pal, Ed, to discuss the exciting plan. Ed, too enthusiastic about the prospects, cannot keep it a secret during a night of drinking at the tavern. Soon, a whole cast of wannabe pirates have crashed the party. Stanley's plan quickly spirals out of control as he attempts to organize his "gang" and carry out the raid. The inept pirates somehow manage to make it back alive, but their pirated treasure may not be what it seems.

DOMINO THEATRE (52 Church St.)

JUNE 20, 2018 @ 7:30pm

\$20.00

Doors open at 7pm

A fundraiser supporting KCC initiatives



Client's Corner

Reflection

"Very blessed and privileged to take part in the KCC. I felt very comfortable seeing the pastor. She was a very kind, caring, loving lady and for me I got closer to God and I grew spiritually every time I saw her. The program benefited me and made me feel welcome and a part of the Kingston community. After serving a 12-year sentence, this was integral to my reintegration into the community. I would mostly just share with her what I was doing with my spare time, i.e. work, gym and who I was associating with. She would encourage me, pray with and for me and guide me spiritually and give me a fresh perspective on things. I feel this program is a huge asset for people getting out of prison who are serious about changing their life and growing closer to God. I can't thank Cathleen enough and I am extremely grateful for having had the opportunity to have met her. She is an amazing person, spiritual adviser. I feel closer to God every time we meet. Thank you for your love and concern."

Family

A client's mother asked that this note to our Chaplain be included in this newsletter:

" Well all I can say is God does work in mysterious ways and we must wait on the Lord because He does have the perfect plan for us in His PERFECT time. God bless you, you truly are an angel. I am very overjoyed right now, thank you. I get like this when I allow the Lord to take over my life. It is a journey but I am learning and study every day ... thank you for being there for me especially for praying for me as that helped me in my wavering and gave me strength, renewed strength to dig in and pray, not listen to the liar and pull my faith up by the shoe strings. Thank you, *God bless you.*

May your heart be filled with the promise of Springtime!



Contact Us

Chaplain: 613-453-0891, email: kingstoncommunitychaplancy1@cogeco.ca

CRP Centennial, P.O. Box 26, Kingston, ON K7M 0C2

www.kingstoncommunitychaplancy.org