



## Oasis Dufferin Community Centre

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Share, Learn, Grow

### Annual Report for 2018

#### Food Programs

Two of our most active programs are the Tuesday afternoon and drop-in time and the Wednesday morning food bank.

During the drop-in time community members watch a movie, play cards or dominoes, complete puzzles or just sit and talk. Coffee and snacks add to the relaxed environment. By supper time we normally have between 30 and 50 people present. Quite a few volunteers help make, serve and clean up the meal. This is one of the few programs we have that includes friends who are homeless including some who have been part of our community before living on the street.

Wednesday mornings is our busiest time with volunteers arriving at 8:00 am to set out the food and begin preparing breakfast. The doors open at 9:30 and we can have anywhere between 80 and 120 people come through. Our “shopping model” where people select their own food from various categories is quite popular. The atmosphere is quite vibrant for the first hour or so until the main group has gone through.

#### Women’s Counselling

Erika Abele, a registered psychotherapist provides individual and group counselling to Spanish-speaking women who have experienced trauma. While highly confidential, we believe that these meetings provide a tremendous amount of support and encouragement to some of the most resilient members of our community. Erika is completing her social work training which will add to her skills and abilities.

#### Volunteers

Perhaps the biggest impact Oasis has is in its relationships with its volunteers. Scores of people have contributed to the programs of Oasis by volunteering their time, skills and muscles to ensure that people’s needs are met. Many of Oasis’ volunteers are also our clients. The relationships formed have helped all of us to grow. Everyone has something to contribute and everyone has something to learn. Volunteers support each other through difficult passages such as illness, grief, loss and unemployment. Bittersweet is the time when we bid farewell to a volunteer who has found a job or other important role to fulfill.



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### **Spanish Seniors Group**

The sustained interest by the members of this group has been nothing short of spectacular. The group is quite supportive of each other and have moved beyond themselves into finding ways to serve others. Many of the group visited and helped out at our food bank which provided an opportunity for us to learn from each other. The highlight of the year was the Christmas Spanish Cultural exposition with dancing, singing, sharing stories and, of course, food.

### **Education Sessions**

In 2018 Oasis has organized many educational sessions for our community including volunteers and staff. Having specialists come in to provide information on smoking cessation attempts, diet and nutrition, diabetes prevention, housing, law, flu vaccination, seeking employment and a myriad other topics is enormously helpful.

### **Raising Awareness**

Oasis reaches out to raise awareness about food insecurity and compassion ministry. This is a core part of our mandate. We have attended at churches and community groups near and far (hello Aylmer!) sharing our experiences and learning. Two highlights for us was telling the story of one of our recently homeless community members before hundreds of people at the St. Anne's Christmas Cantate and organizing a Volunteerism Conference for 17 local churches and service agencies. The Christmas Celebration had a record number of people attending (120+). We were also pleased to have a table at the CBOQ Assembly for a second year in a row.

### **Summer Students**

For the third year in a row, Oasis had a group of summer students serving and learning at Oasis. In addition to being part of our programs, the students supported local children's day camps, staffed a table at the local street festival and organized an Art Fair.

### **Finances**

While our statements are still being prepared and audited, it is already clear that Oasis had a surplus for 2018. Given that a few short years ago we were desperately short of funds, this development is heartening. The surplus will be added to our still small emergency fund to provide a cushion for the future. We thank everyone who supported Oasis this past year.

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