



Unity Project for Relief of Homelessness in London provides emergency shelter and transitional housing, and supports self-help where people are struggling to escape and avoid homelessness

BEAT

NEWSLETTER MAY 2009

Issue # 6

Relief to homeless: renovations and winter complete

Charlene "Chuck" Lazenby
General Manager

We manage to provide effective, great service despite that our building is not much bigger than a middle-class suburban home and yet houses 35-45 people a night plus accommodating 10-25 who drop in each day. Three dorms accommodate 10 men, 4 men, and 6 women, with crash bed space throughout. Each dorm is not much bigger than many of our own individual bedrooms. Prior to renovations completed in February, frontline staff were crammed behind a tiny reception desk. The kitchen is smaller than the average family's, and residents cook two meals for everybody daily. Yet, the atmosphere is (mostly) peaceful; the food good and healthy. We get the dishes done each meal. No kitchen, janitorial, or maintenance staff - frontline support workers and residents do it all.

These are not complaints, rather convey what we can do with hearts and minds in the right place, demonstrate how much we can accomplish with so little, and how we have turned "cramped" into *community* since our days in tents. It's getting better with each year. We have residents, staff, volunteers, local businesses, partner agencies, foundations, government and many, many individuals from all walks of life to thank for believing in our model and sharing support for the relief of homelessness.



Over this long, cold winter more than \$300,000 in renovations transformed everything above, below and all around us. Massive core system upgrades were completed with core financial assistance from Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's Shelter Enhancement Program and the support of the Arcangelo Rea Family Foundation, Canadian Auto Workers Social Justice Fund, and the City of London. These renovations have significantly enhanced the functionality of our small space and provide residents some much deserved comfort and stability.

The Unity Project saw 668 individuals stay in 2008. 133 were women and include 30 couples. The Unity Project also provided transitional housing to 46 men and women. We saw 30% of Unity Project residents achieve housing after leaving our shelter or transitional housing. While that is a respectable statistic, we caution that we cannot provide qualifying measurement including the safety and stability of the housing or how long it was maintained. Further, we believe that all residents gather and contribute something important from their experience here, and that each and every one enjoys some success by any measure.

Haines Memorial Unity Project Golf Classic



Friday July 3rd
FireRock Golf Club
Komoka

\$175/person

4-person scramble

18-hole event

Men, Women & Mixed

Shotgun start 9 am

Early Bird Special! Register by May 31st and receive
20 Unity Bucks to spend in the Silent Auction.

SPONSORSHIP & REGISTRATION

www.unityproject.ca/pages/golf.html

golf@unityproject.ca

519.433.8809

Members Meeting

June 16 - 7 pm

719-721 Dundas Street

(parking at rear)

Join us to learn more and brainstorm ideas
on how to become more active for our shelter
and the relief of homelessness in London.

New members welcome!

Thank You for Sharing

Events and Activities

These are tough times. Through the long, cold winter, the task at hand, massive renovations, a great event at Christmas, a gala and the outpouring of our community kept us hopping.



LSTAR Holiday Gala Committee members:
Stacey Evoy-Smith, Yvette Helwig and Kristen McNeil

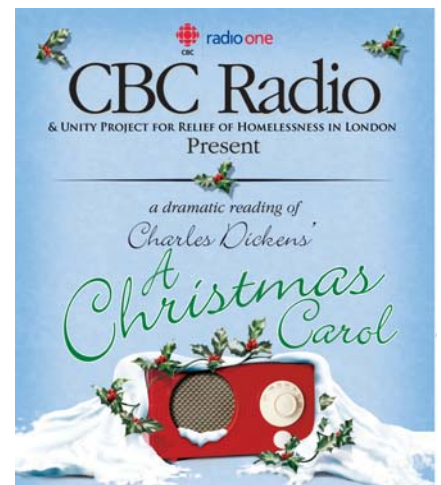
London St. Thomas Association of Realtors Holiday Gala November 14, 2008

"It means a lot to me personally to have been able to donate this money to such a great charity."
Stacey Evoy-Smith, Committee Chair - LSTAR Holiday Gala

The Unity Project is proud to be one of London St. Thomas Association of Realtors principal beneficiaries and fortunate to be invited along to enjoy LSTAR's Holiday Gala, celebrating the good work Realtors do in our community. We dressed UP! We danced! We had a great time! Thank you LSTAR and its business partners, in particular, Titanium sponsors, Filogix, Homes and Land Magazine, Old South Lawn Garden and Construction, RBC Royal Bank, and Realty Executives Elite. Platinum sponsor thanks to RE/MAX City Centre Realty, and Sutton Group - Select Realty. There are many more ... thanks one and all! LSTAR provided treasured support in excess of \$8,000.

A Christmas Carol

Over 300 Londoners celebrated the festive season with CBC Radio, the Unity Project for Relief of Homelessness, the East Village Arts Co-op and Charles Dickens. A Christmas tradition across the country, our dramatic reading of Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* was presented at The Aeolian on December 13, 2008. The production was a feast of drama and music, including dramatic readings from CBC Radio personality Maureen Brosnahan and the local talents of Jeff Culbert, Carly Lucas, Pete Huggon, Patsy Morgan and Claude Pensa and special musical guests the Junior Amabile Singers, The Light of East Ensemble, and Traddicted. With over 100 people in the cast and crew it was a real coming-together of community spirit to help our shelter and the people we serve. We also thank the many who purchased Compassion Tickets which enabled many Unity Project residents and other homeless men and women in the community to enjoy the show in your honour. Thank You All!



Santa Sacks Bring Comfort and Joy for Residents

Unity Project provides knapsacks stuffed full for residents with us over the Holidays. The Canadian Auto Workers provided the knapsacks and many good-hearted Londoners packed them full of great stuff. A special thanks to: Mike Evans, Martha Wilson and their daughters who did the bulk of the organizing and donating, and to McCabe Promotional Advertising, Runners' Choice, Middlesex London Health Unit, Rainbow Cinemas, 3M Employees, McFarlan Rowlands employees, Shoppers Drug Mart and Novacks. Thank you all for the comfort and joy you shared with us - and through some serious weather too!

Welcome New Board Members

Lisa Doka comes with a strong entrepreneurial and service background, operating her own commercial photography business, color box images around being a mom to her 2 young children. Lisa is organizing the UP with Art show upcoming this fall and we welcome her skills and compassion.

James Spangenberg is an Assistant Crown Attorney in the London Crown's office, with a hefty legal portfolio including criminal prosecution, appeals, Coroner's Inquests and the local advisory board at the Child Witness Project. James brings a fine sense of community and transports it by bicycle.

Dimitri Lascaris won a draw at Siskinds law firm to join UP. Dimitri first practiced law in New York City and Paris, France before joining Siskinds and in 2009, Law Day named him one of the 50 best plaintiff's class action lawyers in Canada. Dimitri brings fluency in English, French and Greek and a fine sense of justice.

WHO'S UP

Quality people take their seats at the board table to think hard, raise funds and make good policy for the Unity Project. A diverse and caring staff steer shelter services and help each resident advance a personal action plan for stability and independence.

Board of Directors

Chair - Chuck Grawburg, Associate Partner, PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP

Past-Chair - Rick Odegaard, Broker of Record, London Commercial Realty Inc.

Treasurer - Gil Warren, President, London Coalition for Social Justice

Secretary - James Spangenberg, Assistant Crown

Amanda Grzyb - Assistant Professor, Faculty of Information and Media Studies UWO

Patti Dalton - English Teacher, Clarke Road S.S. President, London and District Labour Council

Bernie Hammond - Director, Centre for Social Concern and Coordinator, Justice and Peace Studies, King's College, UWO

David Empey - President, UWO Staff Association

Pat Malloy - Co-Owner, Duo Building Limited

Lisa Doka - Photographer/Owner, Color Box Images

Dimitri Lascaris - Class Actions, Siskinds

Management Staff

Charlene "Chuck" Lazenby - General Manager

Silvia Langer - Manager, Fund Development

Program Staff

Matti Paquiz - Hostels to Homes Community Support Worker

Rachel Ayres and Mike McGregor - London CARES Street Outreach

Sherry Fama - Volunteer Coordinator

Frontline Support Staff

Rachel Ayres, Yvette Conley, Jim Corbett, Shirley Gordon, Jessica Lang, Peter Lebel, Mike McGregor, Trevor McNaughton, Linda Pimperton, Rebecca Waugh, Maryellen Young, Rob Prettie



Hats off to Fay Weiler and Sharon Sivak for coordinating the London Curling Club Bon Spiel

London Curling Club Bon Spiel for Unity Project

In February, over 75 dedicated members of the London Curling Club participated in a bon spiel to provide much needed financial support and lift our spirits in the middle of the biting cold of winter. UP's Silvia Langer made a presentation over lunch and was grateful for opportunity to speak with the assembled curlers about poverty and homelessness. Thanks for your support ladies and gentlemen.



Claude Pensa and Tracy Leckie
London Lawyers Feed the Hungry

Harrison Pensa McFarlan Rowlands Wearing Jeans Really Helps

Harrison Pensa and McFarlan Rowlands Insurance Brokers host Dress Down Days for Unity. Employees paid for the privilege to dress casually by donating much needed supplies and/or financial support. Such generosity brings direct support to residents and lifts us all UP. Unity Project residents were happy to walk many miles in Claude Pensa's shoes!



Pete Lebel, Savannah Sewel and Rachel Ayres

Share the Love Valentines Day Coffee House

The Black Shire Pub brought in over 75 warm hearts for an acoustic tugging by contributing artists Allison Brown and the Rusty Halos, Aaron Lozinsky, Jason Mercer, Devita G., Jody Tomchishen, and David Usslemen. Share the Love was organized by Savannah Sewell, Pete Lebel, Brittany Newman, and Deanne Kondrat all working for the relief of homelessness in London. More to come!

