



Annual Report 2016-17

Our Mission

The Journey is committed to bringing hope and transformation to the Ardglen/Orenda communities, walking alongside children, youth and families as they take positive steps in their lives.



A Message from the Executive Director

This past year was a very significant one for The Journey Neighbourhood Centre. Our expansion into an apartment unit at 80 Orenda Court brought The Journey closer to the many people in our neighbourhood who live on Orenda Court. By being right in the building The Journey has proved to be a very popular spot, particularly for the local children. With this new space we've seen a significant increase in the total number of families and individuals participating in our programming and events. As one example, our Summer Camps program attendees increased by approximately 30% to almost 80 campers this year, with a corresponding increase in the number of leaders and volunteers making it all happen. It meant that more children experienced the benefits of the camp events and activities including educational trips to the ROM, the Ontario Science Centre and Black Creek Pioneer Village, all while having a lot of fun!

We've also seen growth in many of our youth, family and adult programs such as Think Tank (our after school high school program), our 55+ Club, the Creative Expressions art program and we've been able to offer new programs such as free tax return clinics.

With your support, The Journey is making a difference in the lives of the children, youth and families of the Ardglen/Orenda neighbourhood, as well as enriching the lives of those who lead, volunteer and serve. I'm tremendously grateful for the generous and ever-present love and support of our staff, board members, advisory team members, program leaders, sponsors, community partners and legion of volunteers. We could not do it without you. Thank you!

Steve

We've Grown – Orenda Court!

Last year we announced that we had received a provincial “Safer and Vital Communities” grant to establish a second centre in the Orenda Court neighbourhood. On January 1, 2017 we took possession of a ground floor apartment unit at 80 Orenda Court. Since then, we have established our presence in Orenda with a series of events, community and agency meetings and most importantly the launching of programs within the community. While there is much that can be said about our second Centre, they say that a picture is worth a thousand words, so here are ten thousand words to describe our new Orenda Centre!



From our Open House, to our After School Club, to a Street Party, March Break and Summer Day Camp, this is just a tiny sampling of everything that has been going on at Orenda Court. This Fall we are launching several new programs at Orenda Court including an Empowerment-Through-Art program for women in the community, violin lessons through Hammer Band and a children’s Art drop-in.

Our Programs

The Journey has offered a wide variety of programs over the years: cooking, homework, music, art, women's, seniors, teens, etc. We've also hosted a variety of programs from other organizations: Bridgeway's Early Years, a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) program from Visions of Science, the YMCA's Employment program, etc. We are proud of the programming we offer in partnership with our community and aim to provide superb programming. We continue to refine and renew our programming to meet the concerns and needs of the neighbourhood, as expressed by our advisory team members, partners and visitors.

Spotlight on Children

The single greatest programming need named by our community is children's programming. This takes place in two main forms – after school programming and holiday programming. Parents in our community want their children to do well in school, so we offer The Learning Spot (Ardglen) and the After School Club (Orenda), to assist young children with their numeracy and literacy skills. We also host a Visions of Science STEM program which inspires curiosity and scientific exploration for senior elementary aged children.



We also recognize that there are other areas of children's development which need to be encouraged so we offer ArtStart – a children's art program, KidZone – a program to assist children with their socialization and behavioural skills and we host Hammer Band, which offers free violin lessons for children.

We also offering holiday programming for children – Halloween, Toys for Tots (with the Peel Regional Police), Christmas Break Day Camp, March Break Day Camp, Easter Egg Hunt, and Summer Day Camp. These programs offer the children an opportunity to have fun, learn new skills and give their parents a bit of a break over the holiday periods.

Very simply, our goal is to offer quality programming that will contribute directly to our overall vision of bringing, "... hope and transformation ..." to the Ardglen/Orenda communities.

Event Highlights

Over the course of the past year we have held a number of events. Some of them are strategic, such as a meeting with school principals and officials; some of them are educational; such as a fire safety seminar, and some of them are social in nature, such as our street parties, but all of them are significant in reaching out to our community and fulfilling our vision. The following is a small sampling of the events held over the past year. These are not necessarily the biggest events (i.e. Toys for Tots had a 150 kids), but each has its own significance:

Halloween Night – October 31, 2016: Over 80 kids came out for a fun evening of games, crafts and most importantly candy. This was not only an opportunity to connect with families in our community, but it was also an opportunity for our Sheridan College placement students to plan and run a program of their own.

Community Partners Meeting – November 29, 2016: We gathered together 28 people representing 18 different organizations (police, public health, government, education & social services), to survey baseline services, assess barriers and brainstorm solutions.

Orenda Pizza Party – December 29, 2016: This may seem like a rather insignificant event; however, it was an event held by the apartment management company and we were invited to be there and to meet with the community. Building strong relationships with landlords, as well as agencies and organizations is an important part of reaching a community.



March Break Day Camp – March 13-15, 2017: Offering a day camp during March Break is not new for us; however, this was the first day camp that we have offered at Orenda Court and it was the launching point of our Orenda Court After School Program. Our children's programming at Orenda Court has been successful right from day one.

Community Meetings – April 3, 2017: The Journey has been hosting an ongoing series of meetings with about a dozen agencies who are concerned about sex trafficking in our community. At their request, and with the gracious hosting by the principal of Sir Winston Churchill Public School, we held an evening meeting for the community at the school. The purpose of the meeting was to inform the community of not only the issue of sex trafficking, but also to provide information on other issues such as: by-law enforcement, employment, HIV/Aids, Public Health, etc.

Tax Clinics – April 8 & 22, 2017: This again is a small thing, at least compared to events we hold where over a 100 people show up, but this was our first attempt at offering a tax clinic and the need from the moment of announcing the clinic was obvious. We offered clinics at both our Ardglen and Orenda locations and we will definitely do it again.

What We Left Out: Toys for Tots, Teen Pizza Party, Principals Meeting, YMCA Job Screening, Easter Egg Hunt, Unity Charity Youth Event, Hammer Band Concert, Career Dating Night, Love Brampton, Refresh apartment painting, United Achievers Photo Gallery, CPR Training, and more!

Spiritual Growth



The Journey believes that bringing hope and transformation to our community involves spiritual growth too! Starting last October, The Sunday Gathering was launched on a weekly basis, meeting at The Journey. The Sunday Gathering is a satellite of The Journey's lead partner North Bramalea United Church. The Sunday Gathering and the weekly LIFE group are opportunities for members of the community to explore spiritual guidance to some of the challenges and questions that they have. The Sunday Gathering is a relaxed time of friendship, worship, teaching, discussion and some pretty good food.

Stories

The Journey exists to bring hope and transformation to our community. Here are just four of our stories.

Caring

Some stories are far too personal to share. Every Wednesday morning a group of neighbourhood women gather together at The Journey to talk, laugh, cry, eat and share with one another. Over the years the bond between these women has grown deeper. Their stories are often complex – single moms, financial difficulties, evictions, cancer – but while the stories may at times be challenging, the support and encouragement that they provide for one another is deep. The women have housed one another, fed one another, visited each other in the hospital and cared deeply for each other as well as others in the community.

Resumes

People come on a fairly regular basis asking for assistance with crafting their Resumes, something which we are happy to do. I had a young father of four, who has had a number of jobs over the years come, because he was unemployed once again. He had never written a Resume before, but



he had an opportunity to apply for a job and they wanted to see his Resume. We helped him write one and within a week he had three job offers, based on that Resume! This was a good news story, not just because he found work, but because through the process of writing the Resume, he found a new perspective on just how much he had done and how many job skills he actually had, and because of this, we were able to deepen our relationship with a member of our neighbourhood.

Volunteering – Blessed to be a Blessing

We have had a teen volunteer at our Homework Club for the past couple of years. His dedication has shown up in his consistent attendance and his engagement with the children. This was his last year of high school and in the process of applying for a business program at several universities, he asked for a letter of reference from us. This was an easy thing to do given his track record with us. There was one program in particular that he really wanted to be accepted into. That particular university got back to us for a follow-up to the letter of reference. It was one very excited student who let us know that he was accepted into that program. We will miss him, as will the children whom he has helped over the past couple of years, but it feels good to know that we were able, in some small way, to pay him back for all the hard volunteer work that he put into The Journey.



Christmas Time

We have held a Toys for Tots event for three years now, handing out toys to over 500 children during that period. One story that we hear over and over again from parents is that their children would not have had a Christmas if it wasn't for this program. At the same time, we have directed dozens of families to Christmas meal events sponsored by other organizations and again we hear the story, that if it wasn't for these events the Christmas holiday time would be even more difficult for these families. Finally, we are able to sign up families for Christmas hampers, from several different organizations, and we have been told time and time again that there would have been no special meals at the holiday time if it wasn't for this assistance given to these families. The joy of this story is not just the fact that we are helping families, but also that we are able to channel the programs and resources from so many other organizations to assist our community.

Future Plans

We are constantly looking to the future and what we can and will do next. As with most social service organizations, we look to specific grants to fund programs. As of this writing we have provisional approval of a sustainability grant that will fund some of our core operating costs, and we are waiting to hear back on a grant application in for an employment program. In addition, we are exploring grants for a Youth Worker. We are also continuing our efforts to grow our income through selected fundraising events and personal donations.

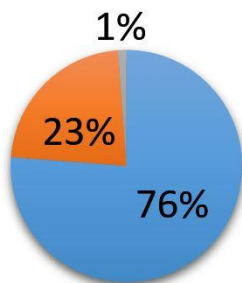
As well as seeking grants for our programming we are always exploring partnerships with other organizations. We have just started hosting a program offered by HOPE 24/7 to provide a setting for women with significant challenges. We are also in discussions with other organizations dealing with physical and dental health issues.



Income and Expenses

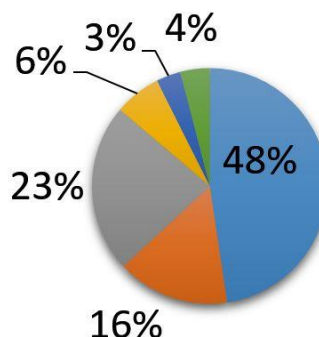
Income 2016/17

- Grants
- Donations & Comm. Grps.
- Other



Expenses 2016/17

- Salaries and Benefits
- Facilities
- Audit/Legal
- Program Supplies
- Admin. and Supplies
- Other



The Journey Staff

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Funding and Programming Partners

The Journey relies on a variety of organizations, community groups and individuals for core funding and programming support – Lions, Rotary, Brampton Caledon Community Foundation, Ride for Refuge – there are too many to list them all, but you know who you are and we are eternally grateful. Thank you!



Check Out Our Website or Facebook Page

www.thejourneyneighbourhoodcentre.ca

www.facebook.com/thejourneyneighbourhoodcentre

Come, Connect, Be Inspired



The Journey Neighbourhood Centre

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