



# ST. JOHN THE COMPASSIONATE NEWSLETTER

Summer 2008

## Journey To Happiness



Sanigul Tarin was born in Afghanistan in Kabul where he served as a judge. When the Russians invaded his country he was arrested and kept in jail for 3 years. During those years he was tortured, to this day he carries the physical disabilities that occurred during this time. After a stay in Pakistan where he sold car parts he fled in the middle of the night and came to Canada with his family of nine children. All of his children are successfully attending University and High School. When asked about Canada Sanigul's face lights up. He loves the country where everyone is treated the same, rich or poor. He says, "the law is the same for everyone." He enjoys volunteering with us; the people he works with make him feel happy. As far as finding a full time job he says, "nobody wants an old man," but he admits, "I am very happy to be with you all."

THE ONTARIO  
TRILLIUM  
FOUNDATION

LA FONDATION  
TRILLIUM  
DE L'ONTARIO

## Children And Youth Programs At St. John's



This has been a busy year with the inception of several new programs for youth at St. John's. St. John's Academy has assisted 21 students in developing their skills in English and Math. Already we have seen as much as 20% improvement in some of our students' school grades. Our once-a-month Movie Night has been popular with kids. Some great discussions have evolved centered on themes of the films, such as moral choices, the meaning of faith, and ways to cope with stressful situations in life. The bakery workshops have also been a huge hit. Even the boys are clamoring to participate!

For the Summer, we are planning a series of recreational activities to keep the kids busy, including some overnight camps to St. Mary of Egypt Refuge. For most of our kids, this will be the first time they get to go away. We hope that you can continue to assist us in any way that you are able to in order to assist us in continuing to serve and mentor the youth in our community. Currently our needs include:

- Magazines and graphic novels appropriate for youth between 11& 16 years old.
- The latest edition of the Guinness Book of Records
- Junior Scrabble set(s)
- Funds to meet costs of running the programs

Many Thanks, Lara Joannou, Children's Program Director

World Vision

## The Torch Is Passed!



I would like to thank everyone who has worked in the kitchen with me over the past year, because it has been such a blessing to be here. The person taking over for me as manager of the kitchen is Sarah, who has already been a helper at St. John's for 4 years. We welcome her and look forward to many tasty meals!

Mother Sophia

# Celebrating 21 Years & Counting!

## Breaking Bread With Jean Vanier



Our annual donor dinner welcomed people who have been with us from the very beginning, 21 years ago, and people who have come to be with us along the way. On 17 June 2008, about 80 people sat down together at St. John's and were served a meal catered by St. Pantaleimon Church, and served by volunteers from the Mission and from St. Silouan parish. It was a great pleasure to see this larger community gathered around our new round tables.

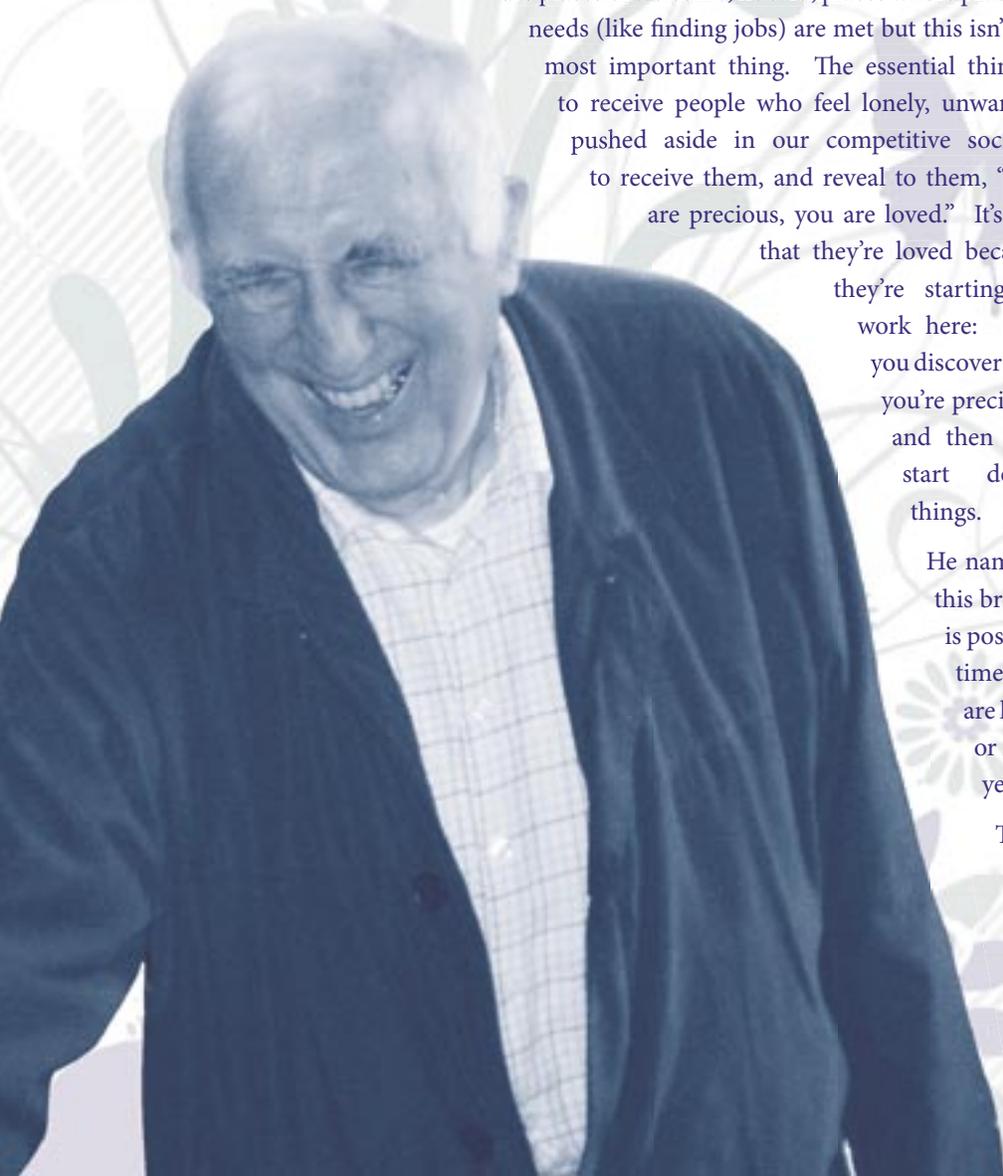
Our special guest speaker was Jean Vanier, founder of the international movement of L'Arche Communities, where people who have developmental disabilities and the friends who assist them create homes and share life together. His presence was a special blessing to us, as he brought a word of truth and love so important to us but so rarely heard. Jean reminded us that St. John's is holy ground, because here God resides, and here people with needs are invited to come. He added that Jesus told us when we make a meal, we invite not family and friends but the poor. We are not to stay in closed clans or tribes, but to open ourselves.

"I see many similarities between L'Arche and St. John the Compassionate," Jean told us. Both are places of welcome, he said, places where practical needs (like finding jobs) are met but this isn't the most important thing. The essential thing is to receive people who feel lonely, unwanted, pushed aside in our competitive society; to receive them, and reveal to them, "You are precious, you are loved." It's not that they're loved because they're starting to work here: first you discover that you're precious, and then you start doing things.

He named St. John's a model, a sign of peace, "a sign that in this broken city there's a place where people believe that love is possible." St. John's is grateful to Jean Vanier for taking the time and effort to be with us, and to see and name what we are living which at times, even to us, can seem unimportant or futile. His gift of himself was a fitting celebration of 21 years.

Thanks go to all who gave so generously of their time and services so that this appreciation evening could happen.

MM



# Blessed Is He Who Comes In The Name Of The Lord.



## Metropolitan Nicholas

On June 19th we welcomed our beloved Father in Christ Metropolitan Nicholas. After serving the Divine Liturgy Metropolitan Nicholas sat down and broke bread with us. He spoke to us as a kind father encouraging us to love the Lord and others. His very presence and words were a blessing that continues to strengthen and comfort us in our daily struggles. The

Cross of Justinian was given to Fr Roberto by His Eminence as a sign of recognition of the work being done by the Mission.

At the end of the Liturgy Metropolitan Nicholas awarded Hilda and Reader Efraim with Grammatas in recognition of all they have done in the parish and the Mission. A Grammata is a high diocesan award given for outstanding service to the Church and the diocese.



Mother Jerry, top; daughter Alycia, right who works in the bakery and Venessa the friend who works in the fridges, left.



Eleni from Switzerland and Jeanie share a moment at St. Mary of Egypt Refuge during a monthly retreat weekend



Women of the Mission



## Bakery Update

After 11 years of in fatigable generous and devoted work Marc, the bakery visionary and to new challenges. Hilda, former president of the board of Directors, is now Director of S continue to manage, bake and design. The bakery is continuing to grow and we pray that t and Shane the seeds planted by Marc will bring even greater results.



## Thrift Store

Well hello everyone from here at the St... John's Thrift Store. Some people are even calling it a boutique. Thanks to all your nice, clean, folded donations and furniture, it does look like a boutique!

Thanks God spring is here! I remember one day I shovelled the front sidewalk ten times. Now that spring is here, I am seeing faces I haven't seen for months, especially the elderly and the handicapped. It is so good to see them.

With the coming of spring we had the celebration of Pascha. I got a little emotional this year however, Fr. Roberto forgave me. We all carry a bit of pain in our lives. Anyway, one evening celebrating the Great Canon of St... Andrew, I got down on my knees, it seemed like 200 times. For 3 or 4 days I couldn't walk down the stair and here I thought I was in shape.

Anyways, I would like to thank the volunteers, Fr. Roberto, Hilda and Mother Sophia for all your wonderful support. To me this store is a dream come true.

P.S. I would like to leave you with a little story. It's about an elderly lady who stops here when she can. Her name is Rose. She picked up a lady's top for \$4.99 and brought it to me. She said, "Christian, can you give me a deal on this?" I replied, "yes, you can have it for \$2.99." She pulled a \$50 bill out of her purse. I kind of chuckled, and I said, "you're rich, you're giving me a \$50 bill." She said, "Christian, the rest of the money has to last the rest of the month for food." "In that case," I said, "go get another top for free."

We are a community store and we are helping people. God bless everyone.

Yours truly, Christian

## Hard Worker

Howard is 32 years old, born in Jamaica. When he was little he suffered a swimming accident in Jamaica and became epileptic. At the age of 12 he moved with his family to Toronto. Howard has a great sense of humour, and loves to wash dishes at the Mission. When he is not volunteering with us he works as a janitor at a building downtown. He would like to become an electrician, like his dad. He comes and helps out at the mission because he loves the people here and because here he makes lots of good friends. Howard believes that the only reason that there is so much violence in Toronto is because everyone just thinks of themselves, about getting to the top and because there is no love. His freckles come from his dad's side of the family. Bob Marley is a favorite musician of his. Thank you Howard for all your hard work!



## Thank You

Thank you to the Brotherhood of St. Athanasios (Toronto) for donation of food at Pascha.

Thank you to St. George's Antiochian Church for feeding people on Saturdays.

Local Coptic Orthodox youth welcomed Fr. Roberto at their Church for a talk on the Mission. Youth from t have been regularly volunteering at the Mission for years now.

Thank you to St Nectarios Old Calendar Greek Orthodox church for Pascha & monthly food donations.



*Please check [www.stjohnsmisson.org](http://www.stjohnsmisson.org) for updates on needs and ne*

*Please do not forget to remember us in your will.*

Ivan not the terrible got our Fountain di treri go- ing, officially opening spring at the Mission.



St. John the Compassionate Mission

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