

### Welcome Home



When asked why he came to the Mission in September 2021 Matthew replied, “it was a good place to start!” Matthew was in a very bad situation, he was homeless, on probation, and had been evicted from his apartment. He met with Brittany Lavin, Programs and Services Manager, and began a positive journey that has led to many positive changes in his life.

“Brittany helped get me in the Sanctuary Program (over night shelter) and coordinated with CMHA to meet with a case worker. I also see a nurse practitioner at Street Health,” Matt explained. With his health needs being met and a safe place to sleep, Matt was able to focus on his personal wellness and regain control of his life. Throughout the journey the Downtown Mission walked with him offering support and encouragement. “They helped me remain positive, focus on my goals and helped me keep my appointments,” Matt said. His road forward was not without some challenges. Despite being fully vaccinated Matt tested positive for COVID. During the pandemic he took advantage of the COVID testing

at the Mission and was surprised by his positive test result. Although he had no symptoms, he had to be quarantined safely in the Isolation and Recovery Centre.

“I understand why I was there,” Matt said, “but I felt like I was being punished.” The DTM’s staff maintained regular contact with Matt and reassured him that he could return to the Mission once he was COVID free.

“They helped keep the experience positive. Checking up on me showed me they cared,” he said.

Matt also registered with the DTM’s Housing First Program and is looking forward to March 15th with great anticipation. On this date Matt will be leaving the Sanctuary and will be moving into his own apartment!

He is very excited and looking forward to the next phase of his life. Matt plans to be a DTM volunteer to assist others living in difficult circumstances and walked in his shoes and be a testament to the power of the Mission.

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**Contributors:**  
 Jim Douglas, Patricia Valleau,  
 Rukshini Ponniah-Goulin, Ruth Dunn

### WYC Welcomes New Program Manager

The Windsor Youth Centre Program has a new Program Manager as of March 1, 2022. Ashley Marchand has taken on the program’s leadership upon the retirement of Donna Roy who will be greatly missed.

Ashley began her career as a student at the WYC in 2013 and was hired on as the Youth Program Facilitator upon graduation from St. Clair College’s Child Youth Worker Program in 2014.

Ashley has acquired a great deal of frontline experience and is ready for the challenges of the Program Manager position. She has worked as a WYC outreach worker and volunteer coordinator. “We help provide our youth with general needs help. I do a lot of 1-to-1 support, assisting with housing and tenant rights as well as screening and training volunteers,” said Ashley.

Ashley has set some priorities to accomplish going forward in her new role. “Better access to mental health services and sustainable affordable housing are important objectives to help support our youth, along with life-skills training. These issues will be an important focus for the WYC.”

With the COVID restrictions beginning to ease Ashley and her team look forward to welcoming youth guests back and opening the facility. “Our ability to meet face-to-face with our youth was limited during COVID. Many of our

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interactions had to be virtual. Being able to speak with a staff member in person is vital to the services we provide,” explained Ashley.

With 40 to 60 young people dropping in on any given day, Ashley knows that WYC is an important resource to assist youth experiencing crisis in their lives. “We have a great team of support staff and volunteers. Coming from the frontline, I understand the needs of our youth and adapting to meet their needs. We are a motivated and hard-working group of staff and volunteers and will keep working together to help our youth and the vulnerable population we serve achieve their goals,” said Ashley.



### Thank You to our Board of Directors

Michele McGregor, Chair;  
Sandor Kapasi, Vice Chair;  
Dolph Barsanti, Treasurer;  
Rev. Dr. Catherine Collins-Barker, Secretary,  
Directors  
Abram Banman, Amy Visser,  
Anna St. Antoine, David Tell,  
Keith Rivard, Kenneth Gray Jr.,  
Kris McInnis

## Enbridge Gas: Home upgrades at no cost

If the cost of heating your home is stretching your budget, the Enbridge Gas Home Winterproofing Program can help. Whether you're a homeowner or renter, if you qualify, you'll receive free energy-saving upgrades to lower your natural gas bill and make your home more comfortable.

### What can I receive?

The free upgrades include draft proofing to seal air leaks, new insulation to increase comfort and a smart thermostat to allow you to save energy easily, even when you're away from home. All upgrades will be installed by a professional, at no cost to you.

### How do I qualify?

The program is open to Enbridge Gas customers who meet the income guidelines or if you already participate in a government assistance program such as Ontario Works. Your home also needs to be heated with natural gas and the account must be in your name.

### If I rent my home, can I qualify?

Yes, if you meet the income guidelines. You'll also need written permission from your landlord before the upgrades can be installed.

### Is this program really free?

Yes! If your household income qualifies, there's absolutely no cost to you. By helping homes reduce energy use Enbridge Gas is doing its part in the fight against climate change. “It feels like my house has a warm blanket around it.” Dwana, program participant.

### How does it work?

If your household qualifies, you'll first get a free home energy assessment scheduled at your convenience from a trusted program delivery agent. Qualified contractors will then complete the installation of all upgrades, plus cleanup. A follow-up visit will also be scheduled to confirm that your home upgrades have been completed and that you're satisfied. Please note that Enbridge Gas is actively monitoring the latest COVID-19 updates from public health and government officials. All program delivery agents follow the recommended guidelines during in-home visits, including physical distancing, personal protective equipment and sanitization precautions.

**Sign up online or by phone** Visit [enbridgegas.com/winterproofing](https://enbridgegas.com/winterproofing) to find out more and apply to the program.

## Annual General Meeting 2022



**Wednesday, April 27th, 2022**

**through Zoom**

**6:00 pm EST**

The Downtown Mission exists as a Place of Sanctuary. In response to the mandate of the Gospel, through outreach we provide: food for the body, nurture for the spirit, shelter for the homeless, advocacy for the impoverished, and opportunity for human growth.

To be added to our list of attendees and request the Zoom information please go to:  
[www.downtownmission.com/events](https://www.downtownmission.com/events)



# DTM and City of Windsor Unite



In February, Windsor and Essex County experiences its coldest days and nights of the winter season.

Exceptionally cold weather creates additional hardship for homeless people and people living in poverty, by putting them at risk of illness, frostbite or even death because of

exposure to the frigid elements. The Downtown Mission partnered with the City of Windsor to provide a warming centre during the day and evening in addition to its emergency shelter for people needing overnight accommodation.

The City of Windsor provided the additional funding from the Provincial Social Services Relief Fund. This supplementary overnight space assisted in alleviating capacity pressures in the emergency shelter system. It will remain in place while shelters are full.

The system has been planning for the onset of cold weather and providing comfort stations for people experiencing homelessness since the

fall. This initiative was actioned in response to demands placed on the system due to COVID requirements and the cold weather. The Health Unit was also consulted to ensure all public health protocols associated with COVID were met.

“With the extreme weather conditions many hurting people were looking for a place to get out of the cold, even for a few hours. No one needs to risk being on the streets when we are experiencing extreme weather conditions, Providing that safe place is core to our being,” said Rukshini Ponniah-Goulin, Interim Executive Director.



## Coldest Night of the Year 2022

This year’s Coldest Night of the Year was a Virtual Event due to COVID restrictions for the second year. Yet, the support for this event continues to be strong and participation remains high with many in our community getting involved as always to raise awareness and funds for the hungry, homeless and hurting in our community! The Mission has been hosting this Event in Windsor-Essex for 11 out of the 12 years that the Event has been running nationally and we were pleased to be one of 165 cities across the country showing our hurting neighbours we care and they are not alone through our participation in this very popular Event. Together we have helped raise over \$11,000,000 to help local service organizations provide supports to individuals experiencing homelessness this year!

The Event’s Lead Sponsor, Ground Effects Ltd helped create a momentum early on in the planning for the Mission’s largest Annual Event and with it, we had 29 Teams and 193 join in and participate at whatever level of comfort they had with walking for the common cause. The Virtual Opening Ceremonies began at 5:00 pm on Saturday, February 26th and walkers participated over Zoom in celebrating the work of The Downtown Mission and the engagement and successes of the Event’s Participants. At the Opening Ceremonies, a total of \$86,897 had been raised which had increased as of the next day to over \$91,000.

The Top 3 Fundraising Teams celebrated at our Opening Ceremonies were: 1. Mission Possible (DTM Board), 2. HUCsters (Harrow United Church) and 3. TD Bank Windsor-Essex. Our Top 3 Individual Fundraisers at the time were: 1. Kristie M, 2. Tracy M and 3. Abram B.

Individuals can still help The Mission reach its Event Goal of \$100,000 by donating any amount to [cnoy.org/windsor](http://cnoy.org/windsor). All donations over \$20 will receive a donation tax receipt by email and each donation will help provide food, shelter and hope to more hurting individuals in Windsor-Essex!



# Message from Interim Executive Director



Dear Friend,

Let me start off by saying THANK YOU! Thank YOU for continuing to support the Downtown Mission with your prayers, your volunteerism and your financial donations. We have been leaning on all three more than ever over the past few years and continue to count on your support in 2022. As we celebrate our 50th year of serving the hurting people of Windsor-Essex, we are grateful that even in toughest of times we are providing food, shelter and comfort and hope. We couldn't do so without your compassion, time and generosity, so thank YOU!!!

Over the last few months, we have seen an increase in the number of men, women and families coming

to our Food Bank and more often encountering lineups of people who've never had to use a Food Bank before. We've also seen an uptick of individuals coming to our Dining Hall, to get a warm meal but also a warm place to be during these cold winter months. Homeless people begin to queue before 5 pm, so they will have a bed for the night on our Overnight Shelter. Although our shelter has been reduced to 84 beds from the 103 to meet public health COVID protocols, we remain at full capacity every night. To help ease the overflow in the shelter and offer a warm place for individuals to escape the evening cold we have partnered with the DTM partnered with the City of Windsor to provide a Warming Centre at 875 Ouellette, offering up to 15 individuals with a warm, safe space to find respite. Our Youth Centre is offering outreach, support, and food to increasing numbers of youth during these challenging days and nights.

With Spring around the corner, we are working closely with our friends at the City of Windsor and the Windsor-Essex County Health Unit to move our Meals and Day

Programming from 664 Victoria Ave to 875 Ouellette Ave. This will centralize all our adult Programs and Services for in one building, allowing for better service, security and efficiencies across the Organization.

In this 50th year of serving our community, we will reminisce and celebrate our achievements as well as the lives we have touched. With YOUR fellowship we look forward to the year ahead and the next chapter of our history. We trust in and have faith in what the Bible reveals to us in Jeremiah 29:11, "For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope." As we are chosen to provide hope for others, we lean on these words to remind us that we can always have faith in our Father's plans for us. We have faith that YOU will continue to bless us so that the Downtown Mission can continue to be a place of sanctuary, compassion and hope for those who have nowhere else to turn.

God Bless you and we wish you and yours a happy and blessed Easter Season!

Rukshini



I want to help provide meals and other vital services to the Windsor and Essex County area's homeless.

- \$19.92 to help 6 people
- \$39.84 to help 12 people
- \$59.76 to help 18 people
- \$79.68 to help 24 people

\$..... to feed and care for as many people as possible

Please charge my gift on my credit card (SEE RIGHT)

Please make cheques payable to:

**Windsor Downtown Mission**

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## YES

*I want to help a hungry, homeless or hurting neighbour today*

I would like to make a donation of \$ \_\_\_\_\_  One time donation  Monthly donation

Please charge my gift on my credit card: Card # \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

Expiry Date: \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ CVV: \_\_\_\_\_

I support the work of the Windsor Downtown Mission and enclose my donation of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Street: \_\_\_\_\_ Apt#: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ Prov: \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Visit [www.downtownmission.com](http://www.downtownmission.com) for more information or to make a secure online donation (Registered Charity #119260420RR0001)

The Downtown Mission issues charitable donation receipts for all monetary donations.

THE UNITED CHURCH DOWNTOWN MISSION OF WINDSOR INC. - 664 Victoria Avenue, Windsor, ON. N9A 4N2 (519-973-5573)

