

Meet Kellen LeClair

Giving back to our community as a firefighter—and a Mission volunteer



If you pop by the Mission at lunchtime, chances are you'll see Kellen LeClair welcoming our guests with a smile and serving hot meals from behind the kitchen counter.

Kellen used to work as a server at a local bar and winery and clearly enjoys the social aspect of volunteering with us once a week. Currently, he's training with the city of Windsor to become a firefighter.

"I like connecting with people and talking with the regular clients," he says. "Everyone has a story. The most inspiring part for me is seeing people who were once clients give back by volunteering."

Kellen is grateful that he's gotten to know a graduate of our Phoenix Recovery & Wellness Program. "He's like a father figure. I had no idea that he was dealing with addiction. But he turned his life in a positive direction—the programs here at the Mission really do work."

Even with his demanding firefighting training, Kellen plans to keep volunteering. "It's fun and very rewarding," he says. "If you've got some spare time, I encourage you to get involved with the Mission. You'll feel great at the end of your shift, knowing you're



making a difference."

Thank you to Kellen and to all of our volunteers and donors! You're changing lives one kind word and one hot meal at a time.

Your Generosity in Action

Look at the powerful impact you made last year:



Provided 55 men and women with employment skills training

Supported 2,228 individuals on their addiction recovery journey



Helped 80 neighbours move from emergency shelter into stable housing



Mission: POSSIBLE

SPRING 2026

Shaundel shares her story of healing

The absolute best part is seeing the light come back into other people's eyes....

I'm a safe person for my kids now.

Having them in my life and knowing they're genuinely happy and secure is amazing. It hasn't always been that way...

As a child, I didn't feel safe myself. My mom had a brain injury and sometimes overdosed on her medication because she couldn't remember if she'd taken it or not. I can still picture all the times an ambulance took her away.

As a teen and young adult, I drank and took drugs. But it wasn't until I was prescribed an opiate that I truly thought of myself as addicted. As soon as I felt its effects, I thought, "This is what I've been looking for my whole life."

I've been trying to recover since that moment.

I went to three different treatment centres, but nothing worked. Then my cousin, who'd been through the Mission's Phoenix Recovery & Wellness Program, encouraged me to give it a try. The Mission's Phoenix Program gave me ongoing support to work on my recovery every single day. The counsellors are wonderful and the participants understand and help each other; we allow ourselves to be vulnerable and, at the same time, we're accountable for our actions.



Once I graduated from Phoenix, I joined the Mission's Enterprise Program which provides employment skills training. After the classroom training, I received on-the-job training as a Shelter Service Worker. I plan to go back to school for addictions counselling or nursing.

The Mission's Phoenix Program gave me ongoing support to work on my recovery every single day.

Right now, I'm volunteering with the Phoenix Program, helping with group sessions and drug testing. The absolute best



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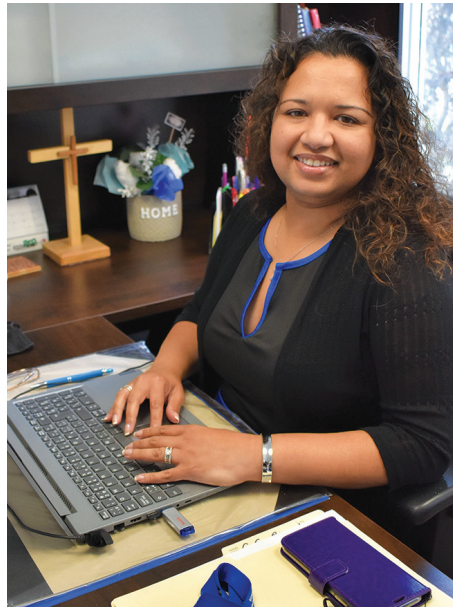


“The desert and the parched land will be glad; the wilderness will rejoice and blossom. Like the crocus, it will burst into bloom; it will rejoice greatly and shout for joy.” — ISAIAH 35: 1-2

There’s nothing like the joy of a brand new beginning! Especially a new beginning that you’ve made possible...

Just a few weeks ago, we celebrated the graduation of four of our neighbours from the Mission’s Phoenix Recovery & Wellness Program. Thanks to you, they now have the tools and support to heal from addiction, and with the help of our staff, all have found permanent housing. With this newfound hope, their lives are moving in a positive direction.

The very next day, the celebrations continued at the Mission as eight graduates from our Enterprise Program—that provides employment training—crossed the stage to receive their



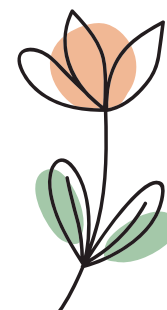
diplomas and certificates. As families and friends cheered them on, you could feel their confidence and optimism fill the room, chasing away the winter gloom.

I want to thank you for your generosity through such a bitterly cold winter. With approximately 20% more people turning to us than last winter, you ensured shelter for 30 additional neighbours per night and an extra 100+ meals per day.

Finally, Easter may be over, but our community members remain so grateful for the delicious holiday dinner you enabled us to serve. Together, we enjoyed fellowship, welcomed the start of spring, and shared the joy of Christ having risen.

Thank you for letting hope and light blossom in so many hearts,

Rukshini Ponniah-Goulin
Executive Director



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part is seeing the light come back into other people’s eyes as they’re healing. It’s an unmatched feeling!

To anyone who feels hopeless and alone with addiction, I’d say “Come to the Downtown Mission! If you want a better life,

you’ll find it here. There’s a whole community waiting for you.”

Thank you for supporting the Mission and the Phoenix Program. I don’t think I’d be clean without you. And I don’t know where the city of Windsor would be without the Mission’s programs.



Coldest Night of the Year

Rallying together for people experiencing hurt, hunger, and homelessness



“It truly felt like Windsor was coming together for a shared mission.”

Kevin Blondin, manager of development and engagement, is describing our Coldest Night of the Year (CNOY) fundraising walk that took place on February 28. That’s when the community rallied together to raise funds for the Mission’s life-changing programs for those among us struggling with homelessness, hunger, poverty, and mental health challenges.

On that chilly Saturday night, we were thrilled to have 406 registered walkers join us on our routes through downtown Windsor. Bundled up in winter coats and wearing sturdy boots, participants chatted together as they made their way through the snowy streets.

Kevin says, “Everyone was very excited because we’d reached



our fundraising goal of \$125,000 by noon of the event day. So, during the opening ceremony, we were able to share that the walkers’ hard work, determination, and generosity had already paid off. This remarkable achievement speaks to the dedication of our walkers, team captains, volunteers, donors, and sponsors, and to the deep compassion that exists in Windsor for our vulnerable residents.”

Volunteers cheered on the walkers and there was an air of celebration. But walking also provided an opportunity for reflection. Kevin says, “Many people said that walking in the cold gave them a deeper appreciation of the hardships faced by everyone who doesn’t have a home. They felt more connected to the Mission’s work—and to their neighbours who rely on our services.

Neighbours like the couple in their 60s who spent a month

living outside after they were forced to leave their apartment. Even with two pensions, they couldn’t afford their rent increase on top of the rising costs of groceries and utilities. Thanks to support from people just like you, they found safety at our emergency shelter. Mission staff helped them find a new home and they still visit our food bank.

Thank you from the bottom of our hearts to everyone who participated in and donated to our 2026 CNOY walk. As of this writing, you have raised a total of \$133,530—107% of the original goal!

