

Oasis Dufferin  
Community  
Centre

ANNUAL REPORT  
2013



## DID YOU KNOW?

- 83% of Oasis Food Bank visitors in 2013 were adults and 17% were children.
- 77% of Oasis Food Bank visitors struggle with their rent.



## DID YOU KNOW?

- Over 38 children took part in after school sports programs.
- In 2013, a total of 75 people participated in the Oasis Urban Training Ground.

## REFLECTIONS FROM THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The highlight of the Oasis Board of Directors meeting is the verbal report and interview of a different Oasis staff person at the beginning of the meeting. Hearing firsthand about the joys, challenges and quirks of working at the community centre makes it all real. Godly passion is at the centre of their labour in His Service.

The Board of Directors of Oasis provides strategic direction and oversight to the organization. Its members are drawn from various walks of life and different churches (and even denominations) to provide a broad perspective to the organization. This past year the Board monitored the programs and **Oasis's financial position and reviewed** the continued appropriateness of the current strategic plan. Because Oasis is a small organization, Board members help plan events and activities, participate in them and volunteer in its programs.

I personally have been blessed by my participation in the Tuesday evening community dinner that is part of the Oasis English-speaking church outreach. Helping the cooks, chatting with those that

come, encouraging everyone to help out and then washing pots in the “back room” are now a regular part of my week. Everyone has a story about their day, their week or their life.

The other members of Board volunteer as well beyond the regular Board meetings. There is a sense of commitment and camaraderie that livens up what could otherwise be a methodical meeting. I thank all of the Board members for their constructive contributions to a truly worthy cause.

I would particularly like to thank Pastor Sigfrido Ortiz for his almost two decades of faithful service on the Board. His wisdom, balance and humility will be missed. He resigned this year upon his retirement from the Dufferin Street Baptist Church.

Richard Steinecke

On behalf of: Richard Kvistbo, Gladys Castro, Rev. Anthony Chung, Dan Clarry, Mary Cowan, Rev. Sigfrido Ortiz, and Nashwa Tawfiq.

## Director's Reflections

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As I look back upon 2013, I am reminded of so many heart touching stories. As you read this report, you will learn much about what it means to be a community. At Oasis we strive to build community and encourage everyone to reach their full potential.

In 2013, Sofia Pazmino joined the Oasis staff and it is her words that best describe the setting of Oasis:

***"Someone asked me once: "what is poverty?" and after thinking for awhile just two words came to my mind : lack of... People usually referred to as "poor" are those experiencing economic issues, but in this world where we face everyday social, political, emotional, psychological, mental, environmental and health issues, economic struggles get all the attention.***



Chris Ortiz

Executive Director

*During 2013, we were provided with a new tool to improve the service to our clients. A new online database, created by Daily Bread Food Bank in partnership with Link2Feed, was implemented to be able to **visualize our client's needs in real time.** This tool not only allows us to determine how many people in the city are in need for food, but also gives us the opportunity to approach our clients in different areas that might need further intervention. These areas would include, counseling, housing help, immigration, tax clinics, legal clinics and our clients are referred internally or externally according to their needs and their situations."*

*"There is hunger for ordinary bread, and there is hunger for love, for kindness, for thoughtfulness; and this is the great poverty that makes people suffer so much." - Mother Teresa.*

It has been a blessing to be a part of Oasis for the past ten years, and I hope Oasis continues to be a place of hope and refreshment for those who are hungry for many years to come.

## Oasis Food Bank and Advocacy

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Well another year has gone by, and it been busy here at Oasis. The food bank has seen an increase in the number of clients served. More and more clients are without jobs, and some can only get part time or contract work. At food bank meetings you hear that those coming out of school are working at low paying jobs instead of the profession they have trained for. As food gets more expensive, our clients find it harder to stretch their budgets. Things that were normally thought of as inexpensive meals like Kraft dinner are now a scarce product on the Oasis shelves.

With more need for the food across the city, there is a greater demand on Daily Bread and Second Harvest for food supplies; not only at Oasis, but food banks across Toronto are having to find other sources of food. Thankfully at Oasis we have had churches and schools that have run food drives allowing us to be able to keep up with the demand, and for this we are very grateful.



Being able to work at the Oasis Food Bank is very rewarding. It is wonderful seeing the **smiles on the clients' faces** when they get the food that they need or get a product such as diapers that allows them to be able to use that money to get something else needed. The reason we are able to do this is because of you, our supporters. Your financial support and your prayers allow us to do this. Thank you for all you do; it does make a difference.

Terrance Allott,

Oasis Food Bank Supervisor

## Counselling

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2013 marked the fourth consecutive year that we were able to provide group counselling sessions for women of Hispanic descent through the Oasis Women's Counseling Program. These sessions ran over three semesters – winter, spring, and fall – and the size of each group ranged from between eight to twelve women. The main objective of these groups is to provide support for women who are in a time of transition as they settle in Toronto.

Each semester we interview participants to determine what types of workshops are best suited to their needs. We are quite pleased to be able to tailor the sessions according to the unique make up of each group. In the spring of 2013, for example, we had several single mothers who were interested in developing parenting skills. This resulted in a workshop which focused on parenting skills for mothers of children and adolescents.

One woman commented...

***“When I heard about the Oasis women’s group I asked myself, “Will it be worth it? What will***

***this group do for me?”*** *Joining the group offered me much more than I ever thought possible. The group became a refuge for me, a place where I found comfort and peace. I found that while I was there, the rest of my worries and daily concerns left me for those few moments. I also formed a friendship with almost all the women. I feel like I have gained some friends that will be long lasting.*

*I was thinking about the fact that we each joined the group for a different reason. Some of us needed information about the health care system in Canada. Others had questions about child rearing. If we had a question we would most likely find the answer to it. There might be just the thing we were looking for somewhere in the city. The thing about it was that we could find what we needed and then take on the challenge to keep going. It helped me to continue on my journey with new insight, new*

*friendships and encouragement.”*

We were also pleased this past year to cooperate with Toronto Public Health as they led workshops on physical health at Oasis. These workshops covered such topics as product labeling and Canada’s Food Guide.

In addition to our work with Toronto Public health, the Redwood (A shelter in our community for women and children fleeing abuse) has been working with us at

Oasis to raise awareness about violence against women. Stephanie Gordon from the Redwood has facilitated several workshops and notes:

***“We’ve discussed a broad range of issues with members of their women’s group. For example, we’ve looked at ways in which women can build healthy relationships. This workshop examines the various elements of a healthy***

*(Continued on page 8)*



## Counselling

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*relationship and how you can incorporate these elements into your life. Often women who have experienced violence have difficulty understanding what a healthy relationship looks like. In addition, we've facilitated workshops on assertive communication and setting boundaries. It is important for women to understand how to communicate assertively. When women find themselves in difficult situations they often have challenges articulating what they want to say. This workshop supports women with working through these difficulties and*

*developing strategies for communication. Lastly, we also discuss how to set boundaries. This helps women to develop ways of creating boundaries when faced with challenges within their families, work environments, etc. We look forward to continuing our work with Oasis Dufferin Community Centre.”*

In addition to support groups we also offered individual counseling for women. Last year we experienced an increase in our case load, especially in the last half of the year. Several of the women have recently found work and seem to be coming to a place of greater health. It is quite gratifying to see such resilience as women seek healing in their lives and for their children.



Erika Abel – **DIRECTOR OF WOMEN'S MINISTRIES AND**  
Carol Ann Stephen - Counselor, right.

# Oasis Spanish-Speaking Seniors Group

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During 2013, the Oasis Seniors Group mainly remained in contact by telephone and with two meetings which made the group realize just how much each senior needs the support and encouragement from the group.

During the month of September, 8 members of the Oasis Seniors Group spontaneously organized a meeting at Oasis to celebrate birthdays and share the ways they have been assisting each other in remembering many of the teachings they had received during the meetings the previous year. The seniors who attended this gathering also reiterated their desire to continue meeting and they exchanged ideas that would help them grow in knowledge and understanding of the Canadian culture.

Also, on Thursday, October 10th, Oasis organized a Thanksgiving tea and about 18 of the group attended that event. All of the seniors gathered around a tastefully adorned table of appetizers and desserts which had been prepared by a group of Oasis vol-

unteers. Much joviality and deep feelings of gratitude were shared as many of the seniors recounted the way they had been blessed during the year. They also were encouraged by a meditation given by Erika Abele on the theme of Thanksgiving. As the members of the group shared their stories, there was sadness as we heard about a member of the group who had died and a few other members who were very ill. Prayers were offered up for those who could not be present and who were suffering from various ailments.

2013 was a time when we were evaluating the Seniors Program and also looking to the future with anticipation for what might be in store for the group in the coming months.



Phyllis Ortiz  
Oasis Founder

## Oasis Urban Training Ground

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In 2013, the Oasis community was blessed to once again receive the support of Toronto Baptist Ministries for the Oasis Urban Training Ground.

The Oasis Urban Training Ground (OUTG) has the purpose of immersing Christians from all walks of life in an eye-opening, heart-touching, life-transforming experience in an urban, multicultural setting.

The approach Oasis takes to sharing God's love is best described as a holistic approach and entails:

*" .. the proclamation and demonstration of the gospel. It is not simply that evangelism and social involvement are to be done alongside each other.*

*Rather, in integral mission our proclamation has social consequences as we call people to love and repentance in all areas of life. And our social involvement has evangelistic consequences as we bear witness to the transforming grace of Jesus Christ. If we ignore the world, we betray the word of God which sends us out to serve the world. If we ignore the word of God, we have nothing to bring to the world. Justice and justification by faith, worship and political action, the spiritual and the material, personal change and structural change belong together. As in the life of Jesus,*



**Agincourt Baptist Church Youth at Oasis.**

<b>Oasis Urban Training Ground Participants 2013:</b>	
2-5 day visitors	44
1 day visitors	28
Interns: 2-8 month full-time placements	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>75</b>

*being, doing and saying are at the heart of our integral task. "*

The above is an extract from the Micah Declaration on Integral Mission. Over the past 20 years, Oasis has followed the Great Commission and the Great Commandment. This has taken shape in various forms through WORDS and DEEDS. Often, Church and Mission are carried out separately, but at Oasis we see them as interconnected and refer to this as Integral Mission.

In order to address the whole needs of the individual, Oasis offers support through the centre which includes Food Aid, Counselling, Advocacy etc. Often, people who are new to Toronto face many challenges, and thus an integral approach to ministry not only makes sense, it forces the practitioner to understand the needs that exist and build genuine community by journeying alongside the person in need.

Being involved in the discipleship of the church is part of our vision. We seek to do this by hosting visits from churches for service

opportunities that include debriefing, theological reflection and contextualization.

Canadian Baptist Ministries is also committed to Integral Mission and in 2012, produced a primer titled "Wordeed" written by Terry Smith. Oasis has used this resource with visiting teams as a way to dig deeper into Integral Mission. It was used in large groups and also individually with youth and was very helpful in bringing about a deeper understanding of the role of Church and Missions.

As Oasis continues to expand its practical experiences for students and young leaders in Integral Mission, we thank you for your continued support, encouragement and prayers.

In His service,

Chris Ortiz

Executive Director



**“How we do what we do, is, in fact, what we do.”**

It was a year of transition in the Oasis Community Centre Church. Pastor Scott Rourk left Oasis at the end of 2012. The faith community carried on for months with a core of dedicated volunteers and Oasis staff, and lots of questions about what the future held.

In May, 2013 Joe Abbey-Colborne was called as our half-time pastor. We soon entered into an earnest assessment and re-evaluation. This is always a challenging period in the life of a faith community whether they are large or small, robust or struggling.

We must shape our expression as a faith community with prayer and open dialogue, in a cultivated atmosphere that invites community input and participation. It is a challenge to be intentional, while allowing the community to evolve organically; sensitive to how the Holy Spirit is moving in the life of the people.

Throughout the summer, the community took a break from the meal attached to the worship time. We went on site visits to other meal programs and debriefed the pros & cons of each. We held open town hall, small group and individ-

ual discussions, asking basic questions around the “why & how” of our activities. With rigorous honesty we looked at how we introduce ourself to the broader community.

Hospitality may be the oldest expression of worship in the Christian faith, and the consensus was that the meal was a core expression of our care and love. The new Community Kitchen was started in October, and attendance has ranged from 15 to 39, but usually hovered around 24. The focus of the new meal is “hospitality and full participation”. It’s an opportunity to get to know our neighbours in a way that offers mutual dignity, respect and an invitation to join in. Everyone helps cook supper together, as they are able, preparing food, setting the table and cleaning up. Everything in the meal encourages interaction, shared responsibility, mutual decision making, and continual reassessment. The goal is not to grow big, but to grow deep.

A separate time for prayer & meditation, bible study & discussion started on

Thursday afternoons from 2-4pm, with a small consistent core of people. We explore creative ways of prayer and meditation journaling, poetry and art. The bible study continues our discussion of the Book of Acts.

The long, slow arc of labour intensive relationship building and community development required for this type of pastoral ministry continues. Over time we are coming to share more of our lives, becoming more vulnerable and honest about where we are with God, ourselves and each other.



Joe Abbey-Colborne  
Oasis Pastor

## Oasis Community Events

### Oasis Spring Run/Walk

On Saturday May 25th, 2013, the 5th Annual Oasis Spring Run took place on the West Toronto Rail Path. Over 80 participants ran in the 4 km or 8 km distances.

MP, Andrew Cash and MPP, Jonah Shien were present for pre-race festivities and City Councilor, Ana Bailao, officiated over the start of the race.

Over \$7,800 was raised, which is much appreciated and will be put to good use. Thanks to all who ran and also those who raised pledges through sponsors!

4km:

- 1st – Kevin Mok – 14:12
- 2nd – Peter Chng – 14:23
- 3rd – Kevin Wong – 15:05

8km:

- 1st – Jose Tellez Suazo – 28:27
- 2nd – Nathan McCoy – 31:36
- 3rd – Nana Mantey – 31:49

And Congratulations to the top fundraisers: "Team Jaguar Land Rover Canada": Linna Nguyen (4KM), Kiley Wood (4KM) and Mary Ellen Belzile (8 KM).



### Oasis @ the Scotiabank Toronto Waterfront Marathon

On October 20, 2013, 12 Oasis supporters braved the cold and ran for Oasis at the Scotiabank Waterfront Marathon

Congratulations to all participants and a special thanks to all who raised money for Oasis, which totaled over \$2,000!

# OASIS



# BENEFIT

# CONCERT

The subway was shut down with only shuttle buses running along Bloor Street West as a misty, slightly frozen rain was lowering itself onto the city. It was dark and cold and may have felt like a better night to stay snug and warm at home. But for those who ventured out into the night, things heated up under the lights at Kingsway Baptist Church into an evening of fine music spanning gospel-inspired classical, comic music hall, jazz piano standards, alternative rock and contemporary praise and worship music.

Richard Steinecke stepped out from behind his role as last year's Benefit Concert MC and allowed himself to be interviewed by the current MC, Joe Abbey-Colborne, the Oasis Community Centre's new English Church pastor. Joe led Richard in a conversation that ranged over his

commitment to a vegetarian diet, the journey that led him to join the Oasis Board of Directors, and his love for the Oasis Community Kitchen. He spoke with practical grace and candor about working across denominational barriers to do something good in the city.

The young people from Dovern Court Baptist Church worship band started the evening, jazz pianist Ed Kopec brought us stylish instrumental jazz piano and accompanied Elizabeth Martin's vocal arrangements of a few jazz standards.

Yorkminster Park's own William Maddox and Lois Bishop lightened things up with wink and a nudge in a hilarious music hall character song about a pining female patient whose doctor admires all the parts of her but still doesn't seem to love "her".

Special guest members of the "Wine Before Breakfast Band" (Deb Whalen - vocals, Dave Krause - guitar & vocals, Nate Wall - Percussion) stirred our hearts with their soulful tunes, and Gail Malcolm (accompanied by Helena Gintere) raised the roof with her classically framed show tunes that brought our evening to a close.

## 18th Annual Walkathon “Prayer-Walk”

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On October 5th, we gathered with old friends and supporters of Oasis, and some new connections to pray with us as we walked around our neighbourhood. We were guided by Terry and George (we call them our “Community Experts”), both members of our faith community who live in the neighbourhood and know it intimately. Each led a route supported by Oasis staff members, and followed by the folks who had come from several Toronto area churches. Our guides shared from their own experience of the struggles of the neighbourhood around issues of poverty, isolation and addiction. But they also showed us where to look to see the good, the beautiful, the brave, and the small movements of God’s hand. They drew our attention to the places where people find services and support, the work of other organizations (both faith-based and secular) who labour alongside us in building a healthier community in this part of the city.

The two groups followed paths to the east and west of our Community Centre. Terry facilitated the west end group as we learned of the early stages of gentrification of the neighbourhood and were asked to think about the effect on people on fixed and low incomes. We talked about women who

are trafficked internationally into the sex-trade here in Toronto and folks who live in sub-standard housing with no stove or kitchen sink, washing their dishes in the bathtub. We prayed for the ethnic and religious diversity and asked to live out Jesus’ grace in our interaction with all our neighbours.

George sees an invisible side to the community behind the pleasant parks, tree-lined streets and quiet houses. He took a group east, sharing his story of living “rough” on the street, battling addiction and the daily work of recovery, and what it has meant to him to have a new life, following Jesus, along with a community who get him and love him as we all walk together.

Through all this exploration we prayed, sometimes silently as we walked, sometimes aloud in a small cluster, lifting up the brokenness and the creativity; asking God’s continued blessing. We also asked to have our own eyes and ears opened to see Christ’s face and to hear His voice in those we see on the streets around us.

The Oasis Walkathon raised \$4,000 and Janet, a member of our own Oasis Community gathered over \$1,000 in sponsorships for the walk.

## Oasis Christmas Celebration

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When Oasis celebrates the birth of Jesus each December, it is always exciting to weave together a program that will effectively portray the essence of the Christmas message and also highlight what the year has meant to the Oasis staff and volunteers.

On December 5th, almost 100 Oasis friends gathered to honour the faithful volunteers. The staff had tastefully decorated the basement and had laden the tables with delicious appetizers and desserts.

One of the highlights of the evening was the musical presentation by the “Wine Before breakfast” duo which captivated us with several Christmas songs. This musical group participates regularly at Wycliffe College at their Tuesday morning worship services.

The homily of the evening was presented by Michel Belzile who is the minister at Central Baptist Church, Oakville. He presented the Christmas story in song and verbal message. All those who attended joined in the singing of the chorus of the well-known song “Hallelujah.”

Since during the Oasis Christmas Celebration we always honour our wonderful volunteers, each was presented with a gift and two of those who had served in an outstanding way were chosen for special recognition. This year Oasis honoured Mina Yang from South Korea and Gabriel Navarro, from Peru.

Oasis would like to extend to you a warm invitation to attend the Christmas 2014 Celebration on Friday, December 5th, at 7:00 p.m. The staff and Oasis volunteers would be delighted to have you join us that evening.

### **Mina Yang, receiving her award at the Oasis Christmas Celebration**



## Statement of Income and Changes in Fund Balance

Year Ended December 31

	<b>2013</b>	<b>2012</b>
<b>Revenue</b>		
Foundations	\$61,504	\$62,000
Government grants	34,585	52,936
Grants	49,470	48,431
Donations - churches and groups	17,746	20,447
Donations - individuals	17,178	15,880
Events and sales	15,444	13,496
Interest and miscellaneous	151	289
	196,078	213,479
<b>Expenditures</b>		
Mission service	153,055	180,804
Office and general	34,716	48,378
	187,771	229,182
<b>Excess (deficiency) of revenue over expenditures</b>	8,307	(15,703)
Net Assets, beginning of year	(7,381)	8,322
	\$926	\$ (7,381)
<b>Net assets (deficit), end of year</b>		

Notes: Audit performed by Grant Thornton LLP. Chartered Accountants. For full audited statement, contact executive director, Oasis Dufferin Community Centre.

Oasis Dufferin Community Centre is a registered Canadian not-for-profit organization.

Charitable Number: 14074 1414 RR0001

# PARTNERS LIKE YOU MAKE IT POSSIBLE

Each year many foundations, churches, groups and individuals give their time, resources and also support Oasis financially and prayerfully. The names are too many to list but our thanks to you is truly heartfelt.

## CHURCHES AND FAITH GROUPS INCLUDE:

Aylmer Baptist Church	Heron Park Baptist Church	Toronto Area Association of Baptist Women
Canadian Baptist Women of Ontario and Quebec (CBWOQ)	Immanuel Baptist Church	Toronto Baptist Ministries
Canadian Baptists of Ontario and Quebec (CBOQ)	King St. Baptist Church	Westmoreland Beaver Bible Class
Dovercourt Baptist Church	Kingsway Baptist Church	<b>Women's Baptist Fellowship</b> - Various
First Baptist Church - Stayner	Mississauga City Baptist Church	Yorkminster Park Baptist Church and Dorcas Group
	Ossington Ave. Baptist Church	

Oasis receives food from Daily Bread Food Bank and Second Harvest for which it is truly grateful.

### Oasis Staff

- Chris Ortiz - Executive Director
- Phyllis Ortiz - Founding Director
- Erika Abele - **Director of Women's Ministries**
- Joe Abbey-Colborne- Church Pastor
- Ron Lalone, Assistant Manager
- Sofia Pazmiño - Administrative Assitant
- Terrance Allot - Food Bank Supervisor
- Chris Clarke - Soccer Coordinator

### Oasis Board of Directors

- Richard Steinecke - Interim Chair,
- Richard Kvistbo - Treasurer,
- Gladys Castro
- Rev. Anthony Chung
- Dan Clarry
- Mary Cowan
- Rev. Sigfrido Ortiz
- Nashwa Tawfiq



Oasis Dufferin Community Centre is an intercultural, missional community – a place of Christian faith where the marginalized are embraced.



Oasis is a training ground for urban ministry and releases others to a Kingdom harvest.



Oasis helps facilitate replicable urban mission models.

The Oasis vision includes the development of an English speaking community of believers.



## Oasis Dufferin Community Centre

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