

TORONTO'S REFUGE

Spring/Summer - 2008

Oasis Dufferin Community Centre

Volume 5, Issue 1



DO YOU KNOW OUR CITY?
HERE IS A GLIMPSE OF THE OASIS
COMMUNITY...

Facing north on Lansdowne Ave. there is a balcony jam packed with possessions. A bright red bicycle and some boxes covered in snow. The wire netting that covers the balcony was designed to keep birds away. Yet it does much more than that.

When Mariza gets up at 4:30A.M. she doesn't have time to sit and stare at the view while she sips on latté . She doesn't drink coffee, it just makes her jittery and she is nervous enough as it is. She doesn't have time to enjoy a sip of anything because she needs to get her two babies out of bed. Although they are half asleep, she takes them across the hall to her neighbour who will feed them and eventually take them to daycare.

As Mariza showers quickly, she lets her mind wander for just a brief moment; she never thought she would turn out like this. This was no way to live. No time for her kids, no time for herself, no time for anything at all.

(Continued on page 2)

In this issue...

- ◆ **A Snapshot of the Oasis Community**
- ◆ **What to Look for this Fall**
- ◆ **The Nervousness of Degradation**
- ◆ **Volunteer Opportunities**

“Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly more than we ask or think...”

What to Look for at Oasis

ESL Café is back at OASIS!

A conversational English class is so beneficial for people learning English. Conversing in a small, comfortable setting builds up confidence and makes learning English fun!

Classes start Sept. 15

Urban Training Ground

This Year Oasis has had the pleasure of welcoming teams from:

- Atlantic Baptist Churches
- Nashwaaksis B.C.
- Kanata B.C. (Ottawa)
- Bon Air B.C. (Virginia)
- Operation Mobilization

Oasis Walkathon Oct. 18

Join us this fall for the 13th Annual Oasis Walkathon.

Take part by raising pledges and praying for the West Toronto Oasis Community.

CONFIRM YOUR PARTICIPATION AT:

(416) 536-3197 OR (416) 536-4431

By E-mail: oasisdufferin@rogers.com

(Continued from page 1)

She remembers her days in high school when life seemed full of dreams, full of opportunities and full of hope.

Everyday wake up tired, everyday go to bed exhausted. There had to be more to life than this.

The other morning Lila, her daughter, clung to her before she had to go. “I just want to smell you mommy”. Lila had buried her head in her mom’s arms and refused to let go. “I love the way you smell mommy”.

That had touched Mariza’s heart; it had triggered something inside her. She felt a longing, a longing for something, but what? She knew she felt a longing to find the same embrace; to bury her head in someone’s arms, but in whose, her father’s? No, it couldn’t be, he had never taken the time to linger in a sweet embrace with his daughter. At that moment she knew there had to be more to life than just this. This was the moment Mariza began her search. She knew she was thirsty, yet not quite sure where to look for the ale that might quench her soul.

Then she stepped out of her apartment and noticed a group of people huddled around each other at the corner of Lansdowne and Bloor. What in the world are they doing? They all had their heads down

and their eyes closed. Are they praying, on this street corner? Don’t they know where they are?

When they finished talking, Mariza heard distantly, “Amen” and saw that some had tears in their eyes while others were smiling. Mariza did not know what she had just witnessed. She just knew that it was somehow connected to her daughter’s embrace this morning. That somehow these strange people had what she was longing for. As she stepped into the Lansdowne Subway Station the crowds overwhelmed her, but deep down inside she knew her quest had begun.

This is a snapshot of the Oasis Community. Please continue to pray for the West Toronto Oasis Community.



Members of the Kanata Baptist Church Mission Team as they toured and prayed for the city of Toronto.

“...to God be the glory... forever and ever, Amen.” Ephesians 3:20,21

The Nervousness of Degradation

She walks in unsure of where to go.

New places and unfamiliar faces stir panic.

Anyone else would not fear, someone not facing eviction,

Or the thought of her starving child.

Worry sets in and begins to cloud,

Then a gentle voice brings calm to chaos.

“Welcome.”

The wait is exhausting, time is not time.

She must focus on why she is here, if not, the fear returns.

The number in her hand, it is her ticket to one more day,

One more meal, one more smile on her daughter's face.

“Now calling # 48!”

Why must I wait, I have a desperate need, why?

My hand begins to shake; I feel an uneasy warmth,

I take a sharp look, those eyes, they are the source,

Piercing like a laser as they stare in my direction.

Control has left me, why can't I stop the shaking of my hand?

My pills, what day is this, oh no!

The glares shift suddenly, a cry echoes from afar.

A baby held dearly becomes the centre of attention.

“Now calling # 74!”

I am uneasy, I feel that warmth I felt before,

But now it envelopes me. I look left, then right,

But no one cares, no one stares, the warmth is in my head.

Its source is my insecurity, my worries

And yet it's clear, I must remember why I'm here.

Her name is Jane, she just turned three.

I'm here for her, without her who knows where I would be.

My God, it's finally me, I'm next, the next to see,

To find out if this will suffice.

Do I have a choice? What else can I do?

The life I left had no future, if I were not here,

I would have appeared, unnamed, yet known across homes

As the girl who passed, in some unknown hotel.

“Goodbye, God bless.”

The fear has left, if only for an instant.

I feel joy, joy of having enough for one more week.

This moment lasts and I begin to think,

Not of my pain, but of this gift, this box of food.

I have been blessed; this thought does not escape me.

I have now one, yes, one thing less,

To distract me from my aim.

My daughter Jane, her future's bright,

So long as I can keep things right.

She will return, and some may say;

A band aid is not a cure.

They may be right, but if you ask Jane

She'll tell you fear left her when she was blessed that day.

**(As seen through the eyes and heart of an
Oasis Food Bank Client)**

TORONTO'S REFUGE

INTERESTED IN VOLUNTEERING?

YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE THROUGH VOLUNTEERING BY: BUILDING COMMUNITY, SERVING GOD, AND SEEING LIVES TRANSFORMED.



Emergency Food Bank

Every Wednesday morning, over 85 families receive emergency food relief at Oasis. Single mothers, young children, refugees and people with addiction issues are among the over 10,000 visitors Oasis assisted last year.

POSITIONS NEEDED: Food Preparation and Distribution, Intake and Settlement Services.

Oasis E.S.L. Café



Many newcomers to Canada must first overcome language barriers. This practical conversation class held on Mondays allows students to practice their English and gain confidence.

POSITIONS NEEDED: Teachers and Program Assistants.



Oasis Dufferin Community Centre

E-mail: oasisdufferin@rogers.com

www.oasisdufferin.org

Phone: 416-536-3197

Phone: 416-536-4431

Fax: 416-536-0122

