

TORONTO'S REFUGE

Welcome to the Oasis Family David!

Finding your way...

By David Norton

There is something to being new to a new job. There is anticipation and apprehension. You look forward to what is ahead and you speculate about what might be challenging. Just like a new sheet of paper (or computer memory stick) it is blank, is waiting for its first words. It has a freshness about that. New patterns to be created. New chapters to be written.

But there is also the matter that there are no previous pages (at least ones with your penmanship) to offer guidance. Even locating the pencil sharpener or the paper shredder is challenging. And even after two months you need to ask where the staple remover is kept – because you haven't found it. Then there is figuring out the organization's culture, understanding the schedule, grasping the organizational structure ... and after not still finding that staple remover, asking again for the mystery location.

I have a lot of company with this "new" thing. As I write this I have been in the position of Director at Oasis for only a bit over four months, wondering when the "newness" ends. But I have discovered Oasis is a place which is "new" for many people.

...Continues on page 2



David Norton
New Director at Oasis

In this issue...

- ◆ **Director's reflections**
- ◆ The 7th Oasis Spring Run
- ◆ Community Stories
- ◆ Upcoming Events

Finding your way....

(...) I met a family outside the Centre looking for the Food Bank schedule.

They were new to Oasis, to Toronto, even to Canada. Oasis hosts a Food Bank for this part of the Dufferin Street area.

Every week we encounter "new" families and individuals seeking assistance. Someone is new to this part of Toronto, moving from some other area of the city. Someone is new to the experience of a Food Bank. Most weeks there will be new people attending our Tuesday evening Community Dinner. Some individuals are new to being unemployed, someone is new to being alone, some are young, newly away from family, some are older and new to this degree of financial challenge. Some are new to the severity of addictions to substances. Some individuals are discovering mental and emotional or physical difficulties. Some are new to feeling fear. There are a number who can check off almost all these boxes.

There are some persons who find themselves residing in a new country, surrounded by new languages (including French and English), adjusting to a new climate, struggling to negotiate new systems and trying to grasp new expectations and attempting to stifle new worries.

Some are refugees, who fled established lives with respected positions and recognized education and who now live in cramped accommodations, on government assistance and now find themselves dependent to their young children to translate for them. They are dealing with new concerns.

I am still fairly new to Oasis, but I have encountered all of these "new" people since I started. All are dealing with newness. Some anticipating new chapters, some incredibly apprehensive about the newness of their circumstances.

We are all still seeking to become part of a new community. But fortunately for all of us welcoming the "new" person is what Oasis has done for over twenty years. Understanding newness is something that Oasis has specialized in. As we do that, Oasis also is reaching out to our old friends and welcoming new supporters to help us continue and expand these vital ministries and relationships. We seek your financial support but we also ask for your prayers that we can dispel fears, worries and concerns and share God's love and peace with the "new" and the "not-so-new" who seek to find community and hope at Oasis.

Oh, I met the family who had asked me earlier about the schedule at the Food Bank last week. They are looking a bit more relaxed. And I found the staple remover!

In ministry with you,

David Norton
Director

[And it] ...will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice.” - Martin Luther King

Spring Run 2015

The sun greeted runners for the 2015 Oasis Spring Run at the West Toronto Rail Path, the site for our 4k and 8k walk and run. While some time conflicts kept some of our usual participants from running this year there were new runners and some old friends who arrived on the morning of Saturday, May 23rd.



The West Toronto Rail Path was the site for our 4k and 8k walk and run. Andrew Cash, Member of Parliament for Davenport and Toronto City Councillor Ana Bailão brought greetings and words of encouragement to our runners and to Oasis.

Our elected representatives also provided a demonstration of their support for fitness. Mr. Cash biked his way to our site and Ms. Bailão joined the runners in the race. Dione Mason and her fitness team got our runners ready to go with their warm-up exercise routine.

Thank you to all these folks.

"I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: ...

Spring Run 2015

Of course, thank you to our runners. Everyone received their medal for participating. Some run fast. And some run even faster. Here are the fastest!



WOMEN 4K

1st – Sharlene Macleod – 17:06
2nd – Allison Dellandrea – 17:12
3rd – Olivia Ness – 17:25



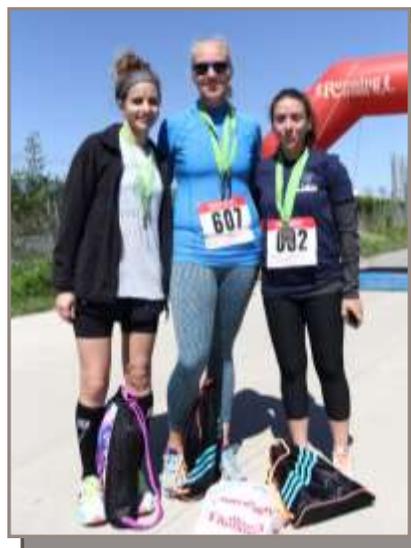
MEN 4K

1st – Edgar Malchic – 13:50
2nd – Peter Chng – 14:12
3rd – Kevin Wong – 14:17



MEN 8K

1st – Edgar Malchic – 13:50
2nd – Peter Chng – 14:12
3rd – Kevin Wong – 14:17



WOMEN 8K

1st – Lauren Drvaric – 36:25
2nd – Elli Kipper – 43:05
3rd – Nahid Alam – 47:04

Spring Run 2015

The Spring Run is an opportunity for Oasis to receive support and encouragement from supporters and friends. However it is also a time when we are reminded about what makes Oasis a special ministry. This comes in committed staff and friends but particularly it is seen in our wonderful volunteers.

A special word of thanks to these inspiring individuals. Volunteers bring their deep and growing faith, marvelous skills, tremendous hard work and generous time to Oasis. Food banks and evening meals happen because of such great people.

They do that every week.

On this Saturday they filled the roles as race director and marshals. They cheered and offered water and even hugs to every runner. They helped with registration, coordination, set-up and take-down and a multitude of tasks. At the end of a busy day this dedicated crew brought all of our tables and gear back to Oasis.

They do that every Spring Run.

And as they left the Oasis Centre they encountered someone clearly needing to know that there are people who care. And so they shared their lunch and compassion with that person. They do that too! It's why there is a Spring Run and it's why there is Oasis!



Our top finisher in each category received a free entry in the Scotiabank Toronto Waterfront Marathon. Janet Brown received the prize for our top fundraiser. Thanks, Janet!

A special thank you to Ventures Car and Truck Rentals at 1260 Dupont Street in Toronto. Once again they donated the use of a marvelous cargo van that enabled us to transport all the equipment and supplies we needed to set up for the Run. We are grateful for their generous support.

We also want to express our appreciation to the Toronto Police Service who send their bike patrol officers to check in with us during our event.

Poverty In Toronto: A Real Issue

Many people who live near the Dufferin Community Centre have low incomes and live in poverty. They have difficulty to provide food for the table, but some of them have the courage to come to the Oasis Dufferin Community Centre food bank to look for help.

When Sebastiao, who was an intake worker for Oasis Dufferin Community Centre, interviewed people who visit for the first time to seek help, he could see that many visitors are desperate, worried and anxious about their lives. They do not have jobs and enough money to feed their families. They live in poverty and do not have any hope to get a job. Most of them are on social assistance, and the money they receive goes to provide a roof over their heads. They do not have money to buy food and clothes. Other people are in a state of depression and stress, but the Oasis staff's duty is to support these visitors by giving them food, information and hope that can make a difference in their lives. When the Oasis' visitors receive our help, they leave with a smile.

Sebastiao was very happy to work with the Oasis staff because they are dedicated. They are positive, and they motivate people in their difficult times. He also thanks all the donors who support the Oasis Community Centre financially and materially. Through their help, the community centre has the ability to provide the basic needs for people and to improve the lives of others.

God says, ***"He who has a generous eye will be blessed, for he gives of his bread to the poor"*** (Proverb 22: 9). God also says, ***"Whoever is generous to the poor lends to the LORD, and he will repay him for his deed"*** (Proverbs 19: 17).

Poverty In Toronto: A Real Issue

JOHN'S STORY

John was a student in the financial accounting program at Ryerson University, and he often visited the Dufferin Community Centre Food Bank to receive food help. He was funding his education through a loan from the Ontario Student Assistant Program. The money that he was receiving was insufficient for him to pay for tuition, books, rent, clothes, and food. Therefore, he needed to get assistance from the food bank to live a very basic life as a student.

Without the food bank's help, John said, "It was very difficult to finish my program because I really need to eat nutritious food every day to improve my concentration for studying". When John finished his program, he found a job in Montreal and was grateful to the Oasis Community Centre for all the help he received. He called the Oasis staff and said, "Thank you so much Oasis Community Centre for opening your door and supporting me when I needed it the most. Your food bank helped me a lot and now I have become independent. Please continue to support students and low income families with your assistance until they become independent in their life. Thank you again for contributing to my success."

When Sebastiao received John's telephone call, he thanked God for all the donors who have contributed to Oasis Dufferin Community Centre. God knows we made a difference in John's life.



This page is about your ministry.

One of the questions we receive is how can someone help Oasis. We like that question. But sometimes we like to reword that question. Could Oasis be part of **your** ministry?

When we respond to God we respond to others. At Oasis we can provide you with the opportunity to be a part of a community that serves others as we follow Jesus. Here are some opportunities.

- ◆ Program Volunteers. Our Food Bank is in need of individuals that can assist with Intake and meeting families and individuals who attend our Food Bank on Wednesday mornings. Our Community Kitchen on Tuesday evenings continue to grow and we are looking for volunteers that help our community members with preparation and to engage with those who come seeking not only a nourishing hot meal but looking for the warmth found in a caring community.
- ◆ Event and Planning Volunteers. We have a small staff so we need help when we plan fundraising activities and special events. If this can be your focus of service we have ministry opportunities for you.
- ◆ Food Donations. Our Food Bank benefits from food drives for non-perishable items. But we can also use fresh produce. If your group or congregation can conduct a food drive or you have an abundance to share from your vegetable garden we can help you share this with our community.
- ◆ Financial Contributions. Oasis is currently facing financial challenges as we seek to operate and develop new programs. Your giving can make a difference for our community.
- ◆ Participate. Watch your email (or your mail box) for upcoming events this Fall.
- ◆ Pray for us. We value your prayers that we will have both the resources and the experience of God's grace to share with those individuals and families who look to Oasis for support and help.
- ◆ Call us. If you have questions or want to discuss ways you can serve with Oasis or if there is a way we can assist you.

Oasis Dufferin Community Centre

1219 Dufferin Street, Toronto, Ontario M6H 4C2 (416) 536-4431
www.oasisdufferin.org email: oasisdufferin@rogers.com

