

Neighbourhood. Through this forum we have been able to establish a very healthy relationship with the school and community centre. This relationship has opened the door for us to advertise our programs and to also freely pick up children from the school so that they can attend our Wednesday Kids Club. Volunteers from the Beasley Breakfast program worked along side Streetlight volunteers to provide a pancake breakfast on Family Day at Streetlight. Our Mission Worker, Hilco deHaan has also been able to give back to the community by volunteering at an after school reading program run at the Community Centre. In this way the staff at Streetlight is actively involved in the community and is building relationships with the children and families in the neighbourhood.

Another major event that Streetlight has been involved in is the signing of the first "neighbourhood charter" in Hamilton. It includes the city, the police, the Board of Education, various social agencies as well as Streetlight. This Charter is an agreement that the plans that are made in the Beasley Neighbourhood are good for the people who live there. What an amazing opportunity that Streetlight church can have that much of a voice in our community!

While there are many other programs at Streetlight that directly affect the neighbourhood such as the food bank and clothing cupboard, the program that I am most involved with as a Youth Worker at Streetlight is the Wednesday Kids Club. All of the children who attend this program each week live in walking distance to the Streetlight Centre. The children are picked up by volunteers from their apartments and homes. On Wednesday afternoons it is wonderful to see the volunteers parading down Wilson St with 10+ children following closely behind them. All of these children are newcomers to Canada and most of them are from Muslim backgrounds. Each week these children hear a Bible story and learn about salvation through Christ alone. The seeds of the gospel are being planted- what a blessing!

If you are interested in assisting this ministry, you don't have to travel far to help to spread the gospel in one of the poorest neighbourhoods in Canada. As Streetlight's programs continue to grow and as the children and adults mature, new programs and more mentoring is needed. We can't do it without your help; all our programs could use a few more eager volunteers! Whether it is volunteering with the youth or the adult programs we'd love to have you join us in impacting the Beasley Neighbourhood with the Gospel.

**Please direct donations and correspondence to:**

**Streetlight Ministries**  
82 Ferguson Avenue North  
Hamilton, Ontario  
L8R 1L4

*A ministry of the Canadian and United Reformed Churches*



**Pastor** Paul Aasman  
**Mission Worker** Hilco de Haan  
**Youth Workers** Tracy Lynn Hoeksema  
& Mieke Zwaan

**T** 905.523.7697  
**E** streetlightministries@bellnet.ca  
**W** www.streetlightministries.ca

# NEWSLETTER

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"You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your father in heaven."

*Matthew 5: 14 - 16*

## BOARD MEMBERS

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*vice chair*
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## BOARD REPORT *Henry Nienhuis, Vice-Chair*

It was a dark and stormy night – that is how I wanted to begin this board report but the opening line is probably copyrighted by Schulz and company so I will begin again. It was a cool, sunny Thursday evening just before 7:00pm when I came for a little visit to the Streetlight Community Church. I was greeted at the door with a friendly smile and an equally welcoming "may I help you". There were already a number of teen-age girls waiting for the regular Thursday evening "Kingdom Seekers". The yellow, blue and red chairs were arrayed in a circle ready for about thirty

participants. Feeling just a little out-of-place, even though a few of the young ladies also greeted me with a friendly smile and a hello, I decided to wait outside on the deck for the person I was to meet. A few minutes later the bus rolled in through the gate and the bus driver stopped just in front of me to say something like "fancy seeing you here". About 20 or so teen-agers came out of the bus literally running into the building greeting one another with a joy to meet one another again. Many, as they passed me by, vocalized a cordial hello or good evening. What a sight to see as they rushed into the building...talk about "stormy"!

All in all it is an experience that I would recommend for all to see. What a blessing that so many young people eagerly come to the Streetlight Church to participate in a Christian learning environment, praising the Lord with songs and crafts and Bible study. I was reminded of the words in Psalm 122: "I rejoiced with those who said to me, Let us go to the house of the Lord." It is that very mission call of the Lord that encourages and directs the SLM board.

The Streetlight board consists of about fifteen members who meet regularly on the first Thursday of the month. In the past year there have been many changes within the board, most as a result of members having served their three year term. Recently our continued..

former chairman, Ed Aasman has stepped down and the Ancaster Council has appointed George Bartels in his place. We want to thank Ed for the work that he did on the board, always with a strong heartfelt dedication towards the well being of Streetlight. His expertise and knowledge will surely be missed. The changing of the guard means that within the executive all are relatively new, none with more than a year of service. This means a great learning curve especially for the executive. However, they are supported by other board members, some who have, on or off, served for many years. We can say that all are dedicated to the Streetlight mission vision...to serve the members of the Streetlight Church and the surrounding community, particularly within the Beasley neighbourhood. With that positive outlook of service and mission in mind, "May there be peace within your walls and security within your citadels."



## Reaching out to the Beasley Neighbourhood

*Hilco de Haan, Mission Worker*

In 2009 we had a vision conference at Streetlight to create a clear vision and mission for the coming 5 years. One of the things that really stuck out is the passion to work more in our direct environment: the Beasley Neighbourhood. The Beasley neighbourhood is one of the poorest communities in Canada and consists of people from about 50 nationalities. It is an area with many new immigrants who are very transient. It is also a neighbourhood with lots of new and exciting developments.

One of the new exciting happenings in our neighbourhood was the opening of the new Dr Davey School in September 2010. The school is located right across from the Streetlight building. Together with the opening of the school a new community centre opened its doors to the public. The community centre is located in the same building as the Dr Davey School. For the community it is very exciting to have such a beautiful building with state of the art equipment right next door in their neighbourhood. For Streetlight, too, this development has been a great blessing. Both the community centre and the school itself give us more opportunities to get more connected and established in the Beasley community.

We are part of two different platforms which are working on future developments in the Beasley neighbourhood. One is focussed on the community centre and early childhood development programs and the other one is the Beasley Charter committee. The Beasley Charter will be a document with plans for community development in the Beasley area. Through these platforms we are also getting better connected with other organizations in Beasley. The Beasley Charter will have an official signing ceremony with a booth for every organization who is involved in the charter. It will be another great opportunity for Streetlight to present itself to the public and get better connected in Beasley.

Another exciting development is the fact that our Kids club is now attracting kids mainly from the Beasley area. This is a concrete result of the Summer Bible Camp at Streetlight which focuses on children in the direct neighbourhood. Lately we also have seen many Muslim kids joining Kids club. This is quite a unique situation since Muslim children are usually not allowed to attend Christian programs. By walking the children home we are attempting to also establish relationships with the parents. At the present time we are also thinking about other ways in

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which we can make contact with Muslims in the Beasley

Opportunities for volunteering in the Dr Davey School are also a great way to get connected with the school and its children. The beginning of 2011 I started to volunteer in an after-school program. It is a Running and Reading program organized by Kids fest. We hope that by volunteering we build up a good relationship with the school. For many downtown missions, contacts in the local school have been very important in the development of their programs.

Hosting neighbourhood meals is also part of our approach to get more connected in the Beasley area. On Family day we organized a pancake breakfast which was a great success and brought in roughly 150 people. This does not mean that one of a sudden everybody will come to church on Sundays but we do notice a difference with more people coming to Streetlight from the Beasley neighbourhood. Please continue to pray for these efforts to reach out to the people in our direct area and may God continue to bless all these different ways of reaching out to the Beasley Neighbourhood.



## Street Beat *Tracy Lynn Hoeksema, Youth Worker*

**The Beasley Neighbourhood** - Imagine your church was picked up and relocated to a different neighbourhood, would anyone from that neighbourhood know your church was missing? How much of an impact has your church had on your neighbourhood? I heard this in a sermon a while ago and it really had me thinking about how important it is for the church to be involved in the neighbourhood.

My church is Streetlight and it is in the Beasley neighbourhood. Beasley ranks as the poorest neighbourhood in Hamilton, Stats Canada lists it as the 15th most distressed community in Canada. The Beasley Neighbourhood runs from James St. to Wellington and from Main St to the CN tracks. If you were to take a quick walk through the neighbourhood directly surrounding Streetlight, you will see high-rise apartment buildings, low-rent row houses, variety stores, soup kitchens and in the warm weather, just down the street you will see many street-people sitting around the Wesley Centre. The average per capita annual income is just \$6,226.

One of Streetlight's closest neighbours is the Immigrant Women's Centre. Newcomers from places like Burma, Hungary and The Sudan often settle into the high-rise apartments in the Beasley neighbourhood where they are close to newcomer resources. A short walk down Wilson Street will also bring you past the Hamilton Downtown Mosque. Yet, one of the most exciting buildings in this neighbourhood is the new 3 story high-tech Dr Davey Elementary school which has been rebuilt and was reopened September 2010. This building also houses an Ontario Early Years Centre as well as the Beasley Community Centre, and it is directly across the road from Streetlight.

So what kind of impact has Streetlight had on the neighbourhood over the years and how do we hope to continue to make a difference in the lives of those living in the Beasley neighbourhood? Over the past few years the Streetlight Staff have been participating in Beasley Advisory Meetings. At these meetings, individuals and various organizations including the school principal, the community centre, Public Health, and Children's Aid meet every two months. We come together to exchange ideas, advertise programs and share resources in order to improve the lives of the people in the Beasley

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