

Streetbeat *Tracy Lynn Hoeksema, Youth Worker*

"I can't come to the program tonight Tracy, I got in trouble at school, the police had to come down and now I am on house arrest."

"Guess what Tracy? I had a baby!"

"Children's aid came and said if I miss any more school I have to go to a group home"

That is just a sample of some of the dialogue that I have had with the teens at Streetlight. It has been around 10 years since Streetlight began working with the children of downtown Hamilton. Many of these kids have grown up at Streetlight.

They have sat through the Bible stories at Kids Club, picked songs during the church service, recited the Lord's Prayer during Kids' Korner and attended Campfire and VBS. The short, Pokemon loving boys have become tall, deep voiced teenagers. The jump rope skipping girls are now cell phone addicted, fashion-oriented young ladies. Yet as they become older they are often less enthusiastic about attending Streetlight programs, they want to hang out at the Arcade Parlor or go to parties at a friend's place.

It is sometimes hard for me to watch them grow up. I often feel like an older sister to these kids, especially since I was in high school myself when I first met some of them. Now when I hold a teenager's new baby at the hospital, I wonder if I somehow failed them – and I worry about their future. Of course this is when I have to stop myself and remember that God is in control. He has a plan, my role is only to plant the seeds and he alone will make them grow! Richard Bultje once told me that the adults that he worked with were the most receptive to the gospel if they had had a positive experience as a teen or a child at a church program. That helps me a bit but it's still hard to see the child that sat on my lap as a 5 year old now tell me stories of the wild party he went to and the drugs he tried. I continue to pray that as each of these children travel on their life journey that they will remember God's promises for them.

The amazing thing about it all is that even though the youth may not consistently attend the programs anymore, many of the Streetlight volunteers and staff members still have contact with these teens. They want us to meet their new girlfriend, to come to their baby shower and to be their 'friend' on facebook. But how can we get them back into our programs? The issue right now is that Streetlight does not yet have programs for the teens that are over 16 years old. In light of this, Hilco and I have begun to set up a Teen Club for youth aged 13 and up. We hope to have a drop-in style program every other Friday evening with music, games and Christian discussions. It is our hope that this program will draw the older teens back.

We pray that this new program will help to engage the older teens and help them to see that God's promises apply to them now as teenagers just as much as when they were very young. I feel very blessed to be able to watch these children grow in their knowledge of God, even if the path they choose sometimes seems more challenging then it could be! I am confident that as the 'Streetlight Youth' continue to mature they will also see how God has been guiding them.

Food Drive??

Thinking of running a food drive for Streetlight? Non-perishable food donations are always appreciated by the families and individuals that attend Streetlight programs. Donations that are needed the most are: Soup packages, macaroni and cheese, pasta noodles, coffee, snacks (for children's lunches), juice, canned tuna, cereal, canned tomatoes, canned veg-gies/fruit, peanut butter, processed cheese spread, pasta and tomato sauce, diapers, wipes, baking supplies such as: flour, sugar, oil, vanilla, seasonings and cleaning supplies. Please check expiry dates on all donations- expired food can not be distributed! Donated supplies are often delivered to individuals and families during visits made by Streetlight staff- it is a blessing to be able to show Christian love in this way!

Please direct donations and correspondence to:

Streetlight Ministries
P.O. Box 78001
Westcliffe Postal Outlet
Hamilton, Ontario L9C 7N5

*A ministry of the Ancaster and Fellowship
Canadian Reformed Churches*

www.streetlightministries.ca



Pastor: Paul Aasman
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Ministry Center
82 Ferguson Avenue
Hamilton, Ontario

NEWSLETTER

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VOLUME 21



"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 REPORT *Case deJonge, Chairman*

Since our last update, the activities at Streetlight Ministries continue. We thank our Heavenly Father that we may continue to proclaim His Word and do His Work unhindered in downtown Hamilton.

December was a very busy month at Streetlight, but thanks to Alida's gift of organizing, all went well. Thank you to all who gave time, money or gifts to this cause.

We especially need to thank all the volunteers for their time in 2008. You participated in program activities, Bible studies, bus driving, cooking, serving, and everything in between. THANK YOU! We pray that the volunteers will continue to be a blessing at Streetlight, for without you we would be lost. And you do continue to give, for all the programs, activities, and other aspects of life at Streetlight have continued into the new year.

God continues to provide for this mission work, and has blessed us through the generous donations received from the churches, businesses, and individuals across Canada.

We can report with much thankfulness that Streetlight Ministries was able to meet its budget for 2008. In fact, while we expected a significant deficit, we were blessed with a surplus of approximately \$10,000. Praise God! Thank-you to all those who support the work at Streetlight financially and prayerfully.

We are outgrowing our current building (that is a good thing) so a committee has been busy for the past year or so on the expansion plans to our building. They are close to sending these blueprints out to perspective builders for a price. The expansion committee and the staff have also had a chance to walk through the empty building that is for sale next door. The recommendation came to the board that to continue with the expansion plans but not lose sight of the building next door if expansion gets too expensive. Exciting times!

We have also formed a few new committees: a transportation committee, a committee of administration, and a pastoral committee.

- The transportation committee will, among other duties, arrange maintenance and repairs to Streetlight owned vehicles, as well as scheduling bus drivers - a job that never has a dull

BOARD MEMBERS

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corresponding secretary

Jeff Tigchelaar
liaison (Rehoboth URC)

Roland VanAndel
liaison (Ancaster)

Ken Vanderboom
vice-chair

Ann Wierenga
recording secretary

moment. We thank these committee members for their commitment.

- The Pastoral committee, among other duties, has the mandate to meet periodically to discuss and advise in the areas of 1) pastoral care 2) preaching 3) liturgical issues 4) development of short and long term goals for establishing the Streetlight Mission Church as an instituted church. This committee includes Pastor Paul, mission worker Hilco and four other members.

- The committee of administration has taken on all the tasks required for the maintenance and upkeep of our building. This includes many different things from snow removal to upkeep of the books used in worship services. Thanks to the new committee members.

The work of all committees is important and we pray that the Lord will bless their work. The board is also seeking to put together a fundraising committee. This committee would be responsible for organizing one or two fundraisers per year, in order to increase the awareness of Streetlight in our communities and beyond. Please e-mail us at streetlightministries@bellnet.ca if you have time and talents to lend us in this regard!

At the time of writing this report we are still in need of one board member. We had to say farewell to Gayle Jansen vanDoorn. We thank Gayle for all the work she did in the short time that she was a board member.

Above all we again thank our Heavenly Father for all he has given us and pray that he will continue to bless all the work done at Streetlight. We ask that you keep Pastor Paul, Hilco, Tracy Lynn and their families in your prayers, that their lives and their work may be blessed.

Jungle to Jungle *Hilco de Haan, Mission Worker*

A year ago I was still working in the jungles of Papua in Indonesia. I vividly remember flying over the jungle and staring at the vast area of green, interspersed with the odd little village. In the very beginning everything looked just plain green but after a while one starts to realize how many different shades of green there actually are in the jungle. Also with respect to sounds, plants and animal life there is an enormous variety of living things in the jungle. Then, in the summer of 2008, we moved as a family from the hot steamy jungle to the urban jungle of Hamilton. The two jungles are very different but have at least one thing in common: the enormous variety in life. Just like the natural jungle, the urban jungle is teeming with life and sounds of all sorts.

It was and still is a big adjustment for our family and it really feels like we previously lived at the end of the world. At the same time the world in fact has become “smaller”. The world has become a “global village”. In that respect we feel “right at home” seeing that “the ends of the earth” have actually come to live right around the corner from the Streetlight building. When Pastor Paul and I visited our direct neighbours to invite them for a neighbourhood dinner at Streetlight we counted approximately 20 nationalities within 60-80 addresses. In the future we hope to connect more with our direct neighbourhood in order to become more of a church for the community.

In many other ways too, we feel very much at home at Streetlight. We have to come to know the Streetlight community as very open and welcoming. At the Streetlight Christian Church there is also a great variety of people from all kinds of backgrounds. In general the members of the fellowship are very open about their faith in Jesus Christ and it is very encouraging to see that many people are so eager to confess that Jesus Christ is their Saviour. Streetlight is teeming with life in other ways too. Many activities like Worship services, Bible studies, Catechisms and Children's and Youth Programs continue to be well visited. It is also a blessing to have so many volunteers to help out with these programs. Without them we would not be able to reach out to so many people.

Since September when I started working at Streetlight, I have been introduced to many people and programs. In the meantime I have become actively involved in some of the programs. As you may be aware from previous newsletters, the mandate for the mission worker has now changed. I will work partly in programs for adults but also focus specifically on working with teenagers. Over the years the children who have become too old for the children's and youth programs, have fallen into the woodwork, so to speak. In the month of March we will be starting with a drop-in program for teenagers with the hope that we are able to keep our teens connected to Streetlight. We

are starting with Friday nights which is one of the few nights with no activities at Streetlight. It is also a night when many teens are actively searching for “things to do”.

God has blessed Streetlight in many ways and it is very exciting to be part of the Streetlight fellowship. Let us remember that He is the One who gives continual growth. Please remember Streetlight in your prayers so that it may continue to prosper. If you are interested in helping out in one way or another just give us a call and be part of this exciting work. May God bless you richly.

The Reason for the Season *Alida Spanninga*

A summary of December activities at Streetlight.

December at Streetlight is always a special opportunity for the Streetlight staff, volunteers, and supporting community. It's an opportunity to share God's blessings with those in need downtown Hamilton. Fundraisers are held, special programs and events are planned, and many gifts are given to those who participate in Streetlight programs. In doing this, we give a small gift in response to the ultimate Gift that God has given to us all: His Son – born to die – the real reason for the season. We can reflect on the many financial and practical gifts that we have given and have received in December, but we can be most grateful that we could boldly proclaim the ultimate gift of God to mankind - the gospel of Christmas, the gospel of Jesus Christ.

In the holiday season, many of you have shown your support for the work of mercy in our Hamilton neighbourhood. We thank you for your time and your gifts. Special mention can be made of so many, but in particular we, as board and staff, acknowledge and thank

- P.V. & V. and Meester Insurance Centres for planning and hosting another successful family skate night. In addition to a fun evening (with lots of donuts J), over \$3000 was raised for Streetlight Ministries!
- The leadership team, staff, and students at Guido de Brés Christian High School. They had another phenomenal fund drive, collecting over \$5000. A group of students purchased gifts for all the children involved in Streetlight's youth programs, and had lots of extra funds left over to donate to other work within our ministry.
- The Home Mission Committee at the Ancaster Canadian Reformed Church, for hosting this year's Christmas dinner – an excellent feast! Streetlight guests were even sent home with a “goody bag” of treats!

Many others made donations of cash, gift cards, hampers, and boxes of toiletries. The Streetlight fellowship and community were greatly blessed by your generosity:

- 34 families received Christmas Hampers loaded with food and other gifts
- Approximately 60 children received gifts of barbies, remote-control cars, craft kits, etc.
- Nearly \$1500 of grocery gift cards were distributed
- 80 individuals received gift bags loaded with toiletries and winter accessories (special thanks to the ladies who made and donated hand-knit items!)

As the Streetlight Christian Church continues to grow, we are humbled and thankful for the generosity of the supporting community of Canadian and United Reformed Churches. We pray that you will be blessed, just as you have been a blessing to others.

