

Streetlight Expansion Report *John Vanderheiden*

The expansion committee had a mandate to look into either purchasing a building in the "Beasley" area of Hamilton or looking into expanding the existing building. After much investigative work on the part of Eric Hart, the expansion committee (consisting of Bert Boersema, Joel Bouwman, Eric Hart, Dave Koning and John Vanderheiden), the board and a local real estate agent, we have come up empty handed.

The expansion committee was originally initiated by the Streetlight Board, and their task of a minor renovation has now been changed to a more committed expansion of the current facilities. As it stands now, the worship hall can hold about 100 people. The first plan that was brought to the table allowed for approximately 145 worshippers. This did not seem like it would be a big enough facility for the current rapid growth in the number of Streetlight worshippers and the many teaching classes that go on throughout the week. Now the discussions are leaning more to razing the existing building and building a newer, more space efficient and properly laid out building on the same site. The proposed plans are looking at seating approximately 200+ people. The committee is in the very early stages of discussing with builders and the local city planners as to which course of action to take.

We hope to have more information for you in our next newsletter. In the meantime, please pray for God to direct the council of the city and the board of Streetlight in the right steps, that in due time we may have more adequate facilities for Streetlight ministry.

Time to Retire That Old Bus! *Francine VanWoudenberg Sikkema*

Almost every day of the week there's some kind of activity going on at Streetlight. Programs like Kids' Club, Kingdom Seekers, Cadets, and Bible studies – not to mention our regular church services – are attracting a steady number of participants. Those who can, walk. Others show up on their bikes or with their trusty electric wheelchairs. Some drive. A few take public transit. But the majority, for various reasons, rely on transportation provided by Streetlight. Usually this means the old white bus that can be seen running along its own special route on any given day. Sometimes volunteers, who are already giving a lot of their time for the programs themselves, share their wheels to pick up a few more people yet. Driving someone may seem like a small thing, but lack of transportation is a significant barrier for many, so addressing this is greatly appreciated. Safety is another important consideration; while it's true that some of the kids who attend our programs probably could walk home, we want to ensure that they get there safely. The same is true for many of the women who come alone in the evenings. They could walk home alone in the dark, but many prefer the option of taking the bus at that time.

Attendance of children's and teens' programs increases with the availability of a bus, since kids feel free to invite friends. It's always full! Inviting others is more difficult to do when individual volunteers' cars are already filled to capacity every trip. And this becomes even more difficult when wheelchairs are involved. Having a wheelchair-accessible bus allows those who don't have the luxury of an electric wheelchair to attend.

The bus has served us well for many years, but it is, unfortunately, showing its age (over 20 years old!) more and more. The time has come to get a new bus, and fundraising efforts have begun to achieve this goal. Wondering how you can help? Why not arrange a fundraising event with a group from your church? Or you could designate a personal donation for the Streetlight bus.

And once we get the new bus, we would love to see a few more licensed bus drivers join this very special team of volunteers. Thanks for considering our needs and contributing in whatever way you can!

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 Worker: Tracy Lynn Hoeksema

Tel: 905-523-7697
Email: streetlightministries@bellnet.ca
web: www.streetlightministries.ca

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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 REPORT *Ed Aasman, Chair*

By the time you receive this newsletter, the main programs at Streetlight will have ended for the season. There has again been good participation in the clubs, the Bible studies and the catechism classes. The Lord has blessed the ministry again with enough volunteers, attendees as well as leaders and capable staff. The Lord has always provided and proved again that His blessings are boundless this past year.

As far as the board is concerned, we have been busy with a number of things over the last number of months including our bus, our building and the board composition. The retirement schedule has seen a number of changes at the board level. One of those changes has been that Ken Vanderboom's term has come to an end. Ken served as our vice chairman for a number of years. We will miss your good counsel at the table Ken, and we wish you all the best as you take up your many other tasks. Henry Nienhuis has agreed to join the board and will replace Ken Vanderboom as vice chairman. Welcome Henry!

Our May board meeting was also the last meeting for Alida Spanninga. Alida has served Streetlight for a good many years as our administrator. I speak for all of us when we say thank you Alida for the many things you have done for the board, for the other staff as well as for the Streetlight community. Thanks to Alida's organizational abilities and insights, the way we do many of the things we do bear her imprint. You were a big part of our growth Alida and we will miss you. Speaking personally, you made my job as chairman much easier and I will miss those gentle reminders of impending deadlines and other things that needed doing. As with Ken, we wish you well as you become involved in other interests.

The search for another building for Streetlight has not been successful, so the Expansion Committee is now looking at our present building for expansion or renovation. We look forward to receiving a report from them in the next few months with their recommendations on how to proceed. We are excited to be looking forward to having a facility that will accommodate both the growing membership as well as the many programs we are, and would like, to run.

You may have seen the ad in your bulletin regarding our bus. Our bus has passed its due date and really needs replacing. Bus repairs are a constant problem for our transportation committee and it is time to get a new bus. You will see a report elsewhere in this newsletter from the transportation committee.

We are excited along with Tracy Lynn and her husband Eric with the anticipated birth of another covenant

BOARD MEMBERS

Ed Aasman
Chair

Henry Alkema
Member

Gerlinda Beintema
Treasurer

Kevin Eigenbrood
Transportation

John Hordyk
board relations

Dave Koning
comm. of administration

Henry Nienhuis
vice-chair

Ryan Schutten
recording secretary

Jeff Tigchelaar
liaison (Rehoboth URC)

John Vanderheiden
expansion committee

Adrian Vanderlaan
Liaison (Providence)

child to their family. Tracy Lynn will be taking a number of months off from the ministry after the birth of her baby. During her time off, Mieke Zwaan will be filling in for her on a part time basis. Welcome Mieke and we wish you Gods blessing on your work with the Streetlight kids and staff.

In closing we ask that you remember the work of Streetlight Ministries in your prayers. Pastor Paul, Hilco and Tracy Lynn could not do their work without your prayerful support. Praise be to God for his blessings everyday!
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Our Neighbourhood, Our Responsibility *Hilco de Haan, Mission Worker*



What would happen if your church would be picked up by a helicopter and moved to another place? "Impossible!" you say? Let's imagine just for a moment that it is possible, and that the place where your church is today, is then empty by tomorrow. How would the surrounding neighbourhood react? Would people in the neighbourhood be upset or would it leave them indifferent? Or is it possible that a lot of your neighbourhood people would not even notice the change?

It is precisely these questions that have been on our minds at Streetlight Christian Church. Approximately a year ago we had a conference at Streetlight to discuss our Vision and Mission and our plans for the coming five years. Initially, in the beginning phases the Streetlight Ministries mission project had evangelized to and drawn many people who live in lodging homes. These homes are both in and outside Hamilton's downtown core. This was a good development. It became apparent that there was a great hunger for the Gospel in these lodging homes. Today this situation is still quite the same: the lodging homes are full of people who long for the Good News

of Jesus Christ. During the conference it was decided that we are going to continue to work with these people. It is important work and there are still many opportunities in lodging homes.

At the same time the question was asked: "What impact do we have in our direct community?" The helicopter question was asked, and we really did not know if the people in our neighbourhood would miss us very much if Streetlight would be picked up and moved somewhere else. At the moment most of our members and also most of the people in our wider fellowship come from places outside of our direct neighbourhood. Most of the lodging homes mentioned earlier are also located outside of our direct neighbourhood.

The area in which Streetlight is located is called the Beasley neighbourhood. It is one of the poorest neighbourhoods in Canada. More than 60% of the people in Beasley live on a very low income (< \$20,000 per year). On this note it is therefore not surprising that our neighbourhood has three important organizations that serve food to the homeless and poor people. Life expectancy is at a shocking 60 years (comparable to a life expectancy in a developing country like Indonesia). Recently, the Hamilton Spectator featured some articles under the title "Code Red". In these articles, it was clear that in downtown neighbourhoods such as Beasley, life expectancy is low and the healthcare is very poor. More than 20 % of the people live in extreme poverty (< \$ 10,000 per year). Of all the people in the Beasley area, 30% move more than once a year. The only school in Beasley, the Dr. Davies School, has a turnover of 75%. Can you imagine being in a school where at the start of a new school year only 25% of the kids come back and 75% of your classmates are new? In short, Beasley is a very poor and a very transient community. No wonder neighbours complain about Beasley having no sense of community.

God has placed us in this neighbourhood for a reason. This was strongly felt during the conference of about a year ago. We just cannot ignore our direct neighbourhood which is poor and needy and very many needs to hear the Gospel. It was decided, in our revised Vision and Mission to continue to work in the lodging homes but also to be much more active in spreading the Good News of Jesus Christ in the Beasley neighbourhood. In the meantime we have already started to become more active in the community by joining two neighbourhood community groups. This September 2010, a new community centre will open right across from Streetlight Christian Church, which will give us plenty of new opportunities to reach out in the neighbourhood. We are also working on a neighbourhood study so that we can be more strategic about our passion to go out and evangelize in our neighbourhood. This neighbourhood approach is both very exciting and very challenging at the same time. We realize that we cannot do this work without your support and prayer. Please continue to pray for this exciting ministry while we are trying to expand our mission to reach those in need in the Beasley neighbourhood.

Volunteer of the Year: Lisa Hills *written by Nikki VanSpronsen*

Each year the Streetlight staff chose a youth volunteer who stands out from the rest and we present them with a gift and a certificate as "Streetlight Youth Volunteer of the Year". This year the award goes to Lisa Hills, not just a volunteer but also a very active member of Streetlight! Lisa was recently interviewed by our Guido co-op student, Nikki VanSpronsen. Here is Lisa's story.

Lisa Elizabeth Ann Longfield was born on August 6, 1963 in London, Ontario. After her birth Lisa remained in the hospital for eleven months due to many health complications. She continues to struggle with these complications but looks forward to Christ's return when there will be no more tears and no more wheelchairs!



Lisa enjoying some singing.

While living in Participation House, Lisa met Barry Corkum. At the age of 24, on June 11, 1988 Lisa and Barry got married and moved to Hamilton. Sadly in the fall of 1996, Barry became ill with a respiratory problem and a few months later passed away. This was a very hard time for Lisa. She even got to the point where she felt she had no reason to live anymore.

In 2000 Lisa was enjoying a Tim Horton's coffee at Main and Wellington when she met Bert Hills. 'The Lord showed Bert to me,' Lisa says and soon after meeting, Lisa and Bert began to date. On Dec 16, 2001 they were married. At the beginning of their marriage Bert and Lisa attended First Pilgrim Church, near their home. Lisa and Bert felt that they were not receiving the gospel that they needed and they began to search for a new church. While looking, they came upon Streetlight Christian Church. They attended a service and instantly knew that God called them to be there. They have been attending Streetlight ever since and are both professed members.

Lisa feels blessed to have been in a lot of Christian homes through out her life. Because Lisa knew Jesus, her Saviour, she always felt comforted during the many surgeries she had beginning at a young age. Even though she was scared before the operations, especially when the doctors told her that she may not make it, Lisa clung to John 14:1 "Trust in God".

Lisa starts every week off by attending Streetlight Church in the morning and in the evening. Lisa can be found at Streetlight almost every day or evening of the week! On Tuesday evenings Lisa attends Adult Bible Study and on Wednesdays she volunteers at Kids' Club. Lisa says she enjoys the fellowship of praising God with the children of the community. On Wednesday evenings Lisa also attends Adult Catechism Classes. On Thursday afternoons Lisa can be found at Streetlight contributing to Ladies Bible Study and again in the evening she volunteers for the teen girl program called Kingdom Seekers. Friday afternoon's Lisa goes to Lifeskills where she learns different self-help skills such as cooking and housecleaning and participates in a devotional and fellowship with other adults from the community. Whatever program Lisa is attending at Streetlight she is there with a warm smile and a loving heart.

Although there were many times in Lisa's life when she felt unwanted and unloved, she now knows that she has Bert and the Lord and she is right where she belongs! In her words, "Streetlight is the best place to be because you get the Lord and you also get to meet a whole bunch of nice people!"

Congratulations Lisa and thanks for being one of those 'nice people!' God continues to bless Streetlight through Lisa and the many other volunteers!



Lisa with her husband, Bert.