



Fostering Community RESILIENCE Through EDUCATION and RELATIONSHIP

December 2011

Dear Friends of Welcome Inn

Vision Statement:

In partnership with others we will dedicate ourselves to combat the poverty of exclusion and loneliness. We will foster healing and justice, trusting in the mystery of faith.

get INNvolved

At Welcome Inn we believe everyone has something to give as well as to receive.

Here are some ways you can get INNvolved:

Volunteer your business skills as a bizPLAN coach or facilitator

Organize a fundraiser or food drive at your church, workplace or school

Provide a dessert for the Seniors Diners Club, or sponsor a Senior for a year's worth of lunches

Knit mittens and scarves for the LAF kids

Support a community event by providing refreshments, entertainment or volunteering your time

Several months ago, I was talking with a community member, someone who has lived in poverty all her life. She told me that it is here at Welcome Inn that she learned that she has gifts to share with the world. In a culture that equates money and value, she tells a different story. Her words were both humbling and a true gift to me, and I find myself thinking of them anew in this season of giving.

A time for celebrating faith, family, and friends, this season can also be a difficult one for people. While for many of us it is filled with shopping and gifts, concerts and family gatherings, others are isolated and excluded. Christmas is a particularly lonely time for those without friends or family.

Welcome Inn is a place where the loneliness and exclusion of poverty transforms into a different story. Deep relationships form as seniors gather around the lunch table on Tuesdays and volunteers visit isolated seniors during the week. Laughter rings out as McMaster students come in each day after school to work one-on-one with neighbourhood kids. Unexpected friendships blossom at New Horizons Thrift Store between volunteers and shoppers as people find affordable treasures. Low income entrepreneurs find inspiration and a strong network of support in realizing their micro-business dreams. And people from all walks of life build self-esteem and feel valued when they find their niche as a Welcome Inn volunteer. More than simply programs and services, Welcome Inn quickly becomes a place to call home and family. The greatest joy for me at Welcome Inn is seeing the depth of relationship that forms between community members, staff and volunteers alike.

As you reflect on the gifts in your life and the gifts you share with others this Christmas season, please consider a financial gift to Welcome Inn. Your gift will provide essential supports for kids, families, adults and seniors who live in poverty in our community. A tax receipt will be issued for all gifts over \$10.

Gifts of time and in-kind donations are also invaluable. Food drives, collecting art and school supplies and donations of clothing and household items are needed year round. And Welcome Inn would not be possible without the generous gift of time from our many volunteers.

Thank you for your generous gifts this season— gifts that ripple outward, allowing others to receive and to discover and share their gifts. Gifts that tell a different story. Blessings to you and your family this Christmas season from all of us here at Welcome Inn.

In Peace,

Carly

Executive Director



Grant to LAF for Financial Literacy for kids!



We are thrilled to announce that, thanks to the generous support of the Hamilton Community Foundation's Edith Turner Fund, and SEDI and the Toronto Dominion Financial Literacy Grant Fund, we will have new financial literacy activities AND an allowance and matched savings program for children enrolled in the LAF program starting in 2012.

Welcome Inn has been offering financial literacy workshops to adults since 2007. In 2009, we introduced our first matched savings program, where people with low household incomes have the opportunity to earn a dollar for every dollar they save. This program helps encourage and augment saving for people on a limited income.

Early financial literacy education is often-overlooked, but incredibly important for children. In addition to reinforcing other literacy and numeracy activities, our financial literacy program will help kids learn about money management. Challenging cultural norms of privacy around financial matters, the LAF children will learn about money in a hands-on way that allows them to explore, ask questions, and share their successes and challenges.

With the guidance of staff and their McMaster University mentors, the kids will set their own financial goals, make choices about spending and saving, explore values and the challenges of consumerism, and make mistakes without devastating consequences. These real-world skills and the chance to build a "saving habit" early will help them to build lifelong skills of money management!

Elizabeth Szkodziak

I am thankful to have been hired as the Seniors Program Coordinator at the Welcome Inn this past August. Having spent the past 35 years working full-time in both Children's and Adult Mental Health, I have enjoyed transitioning to working part-time. More importantly, I feel privileged to have become a part of an environment that truly celebrates and cares (unconditionally) for all the people we serve.



I have had the pleasure of getting to know the seniors who participate in the Diners Club and am looking forward to inviting new seniors to join the program. And finally, I am grateful to all the staff and volunteers who have been readily available with helpful hints and support, as I was acclimatizing myself to the Welcome Inn.

Spiritual care

Spiritual care is an important part of Welcome Inn's history, present, and future. Since the closure of the Welcome Inn church two years ago, we have been figuring out ways to continue to provide spiritual community here. After trying different formats, we're now having monthly potluck 'Soul Food' lunches to share a meal, song, and prayer. This year, Bethel Mennonite Church in Elora once again invited people from the Welcome Inn community to a Sunday worship service and lunch. On September 25th, over 20 people boarded a bus and enjoyed a lovely day of fellowship together with Bethel.

In 2012, we will be starting a group called 'Tapestry' to provide spiritual community at Welcome Inn. A tapestry weaves together different treads, colours, and textures into a beautiful whole. It's beauty lies in its diversity, and every thread is essential. Honouring our Mennonite roots — where quilting holds a special place — we will explore our faith journeys together through interactive activities, music, and prayer.

Remembering Bill Bilton

It is with great sadness that we announce that Bill (William) Bilton died on November 18, 2011. Bill was born in Niagara Falls on August 1, 1921. He was an active member of the Seniors Diners Club at the Welcome Inn for some 30 years. Bill had a wonderful friendship with Albert Willms, and in his last days he expressed the joy that that friendship gave him.



The seniors, volunteers and staff shall miss his stories, his dry sense of humour and his easy smile.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

From December 2003:

"One of our seniors, Bill Bilton, has created a computer skill building class for seniors who are interested in brushing up their skills or who are making their first attempt. They can be seen peer-



ing into blue computer screens two mornings a week!"

Volunteer Highlight

Chris Shaver has been with the bizPLAN program since its launch in January 2007. He has shared approximately 400 hours of his time and energy with us (not to mention the many hours each year that Chris shares with other community programs and agencies!). Chris is a life-long entrepreneur with expertise in both marketing and bookkeeping. His contributions to the development of the bizPLAN program curriculum and to the individual participant businesses have been invaluable, and we are so happy to have him on our team!

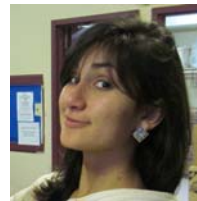


The Women's Exchange

Welcome Inn has had the pleasure of participating in Canada World Youth/ASONOG's Womens Exchange once again. Our participants this year were Karen Tutuak from Nunavut and Victoria Bendeck from Honduras. The young women had the opportunity to participate in all of our programs for 3 months, and you may have met them here or working on Fridays at New Horizons Thrift Store! We wish them best of luck in their futures and hope to see them again.



Karen



Victoria

Robin's Story

I started volunteering for the Welcome Inn as something to do between college and a summer job. I helped out with the LAF program until the end of the school year, and then helped plan the summer camp and was a counsellor for the first week. My work there helped me to prepare for my summer job and gave me valuable experience to add to my portfolio. I felt appreciated more than I have at many paid jobs. It has given me a great deal more confidence and restored my sense of community. I continue to be impressed with the span of programs and resources available for all members of the community and the welcoming and accepting nature of volunteers and staff, who have become like extended family to me and my son. I have been reminded of the importance of a feeling of belonging, both for myself and my future students, and I will definitely take my experiences from Welcome Inn into my career as an educator.



Robin and TJ Rintoul at Open Mic Night

Edna's Story

My name is Edna, and I'm a freelance editor by trade. I haven't been in Hamilton long, and when I got here I was just about running out of work – who needs books anymore when we can read them on a computer, free? I didn't know anyone, I didn't like where I was living, I didn't really have anywhere I could go back to, and it seemed to rain just about every day.

But I have a raincoat, so I went out walking. I found the market – excellent – and the library – one of the best I've ever seen. I met some of my neighbours, who showed me the bike path by the bay, but I still didn't have a way to make money.

I also met up with another free-lance book person, also running out of work, who asked if I would like to start a micro-publishing business. Might not make money, but it surely would keep us busy. Of course, we had nothing to start up with, and really, no idea how to start at all.

Then someone dropped a copy of the local newspaper into my mailbox. I started to read, and when I got near the end, I came upon a notice offering something called bizPlan. It seemed to be offering everything I needed to know to start a business. I wondered if I could scum up the cost – but no need, the whole program was free.

Free! I signed up immediately, and now the three-month program is almost over. I may not be ready to conquer the world, but I've learned a lot, and I've got a path to follow. Plus, I can take the course again if I get nervous – how cool is that?



"I may not be ready to conquer the world, but I've learned a lot, and I've got a path to follow."

Edna Barker

At the beginning of every class, we were told about what was going on in the Inn. One program I was familiar with, the Good Food Box, which I had participated in before moving to Hamilton. I signed up to help as a volunteer. There are lots of other things I can sign up for, one of the first announcements was about child-minding for Mums or Dads taking the bizPlan classes. Free child-minding, which means at least one of my fellow learners can attend every week, without worrying about babysitting costs.

The Welcome Inn really is welcoming. I haven't heard about all of the volunteer jobs, but I will, and I'll sign up for something else once my classes are done. What goes around comes around. Thank you, Welcome Inn.

A Message from Trina Banko

I feel excited and privileged to begin my role on the Board of Directors of the Welcome Inn Community Centre. Although I am the newest member of the Board, my first introduction to the Welcome Inn took place almost 20 years ago! Back then, in 1993, I was a student at McMaster University studying Anthropology and imagining up the possibilities of a future career that would somehow involve helping people.

As a start to making that dream come true I became a volunteer with the weekly youth drop-in program that the Welcome Inn offered. Little did I know that my decision to volunteer at the Welcome Inn would end up changing both my personal and professional life! Through the Welcome Inn I made new friendships, some of which continue today, and gained new skills and experiences that helped me develop my career.

I'm happy to say that my dream came true. Working at Hamilton Health Sciences, I do get to help people. Hospitals can help people when they suffer from acute illness and disease. But there is so much more to "health" than that. And so for me, that's where the Welcome Inn comes in! The Welcome Inn promotes individual and community health and well-being through its many programs and services that impact the "social determinants of health", things like income, education, food/nutrition, social support networks, and more.

I hope very much that I will be able to contribute to the success and growth of the Welcome Inn's programs and services by using the knowledge and skills that I've gained over the past 20 years related to fundraising, business administration and health services management. And, over the coming year, I am especially looking forward to meeting more of the staff and community members who make up the Welcome Inn community!



Donors

At Welcome Inn we are fortunate to have the generous support of many individuals, groups, and organizations. This quarter we would like to highlight the ArcelorMittal Dofasco Community Investment Fund for its support of bizPLAN, helping provide low income entrepreneurs with training and support for their business start up or expansion. We would also like to thank the United Way and the Mayberry Family Fund through Hamilton Community Foundation for their support of the LAF program!

The Board

Art Heidebrecht, Chair
Bob Charko, Treasurer & Vice-Chair
Teresa Bendo, Secretary
Trina Banko
Tim Epp
Michael Bigelow
Margaret Kneulman
Eva Jackson
Theresa Picone
Gale Payne

Upcoming Events

Penny Sale & Quilt Raffle	December 13
Gifts, Crafts, Certificates, Kids Table and Quilts	1-5pm
Holiday Open House	December 16
Join us for music, food and Christmas festivities	6-9pm
Soul Food Potluck	December 24
Bring a side dish or dessert and enjoy a Christmas Lunch	12-2pm
bizPLAN Winter Session	January 18
Interested in starting a small business? Let us help!	6:30-9pm
Soul Food Potluck	January 21
Bring a side dish or dessert and enjoy a community meal	12-2pm

How can I make a donation?

Donations can be made by returning the enclosed self-addressed envelope with a cheque to the address below, or online at www.canadahelps.org

40 Wood Street East
Hamilton, On L8L 1E4
905-525-5824
www.welcomeinn.ca



Contact Us

Carly Gaylor, Executive Director
carly@welcomeinn.ca
Ruth Kaulback, New Horizons
ruth@welcomeinn.ca
Laurie Remillard, Volunteers
laurie@welcomeinn.ca
Kerry Turcotte, PLAN Programs
kerry@welcomeinn.ca
Gladys Flores, Children's Programs
gladys@welcomeinn.ca
Elizabeth Szkodziak, Seniors
elizabeth@welcomeinn.ca
Linda Whitwell, Bookkeeping
linda@welcomeinn.ca
Melanie Haworth, Food Pantry
melanie@welcomeinn.ca