



# THE PULSE

OPEN ARMS MISSION'S NEWSLETTER  
MAY - JUNE 2020

## FAITHFULNESS IN THE CRISIS

The rise of COVID has changed so many people's lives. Businesses and organizations have closed or had to put in place measures to ensure they operate safely. The pandemic has caused Open Arms Mission to change in some ways to adapt to new every evolving situation of this pandemic. We now maintain more frequent cleaning protocols and use the proper personal protective equipment. One other way we have adapted to the pandemic is how we physically distribute the food. Families are given their groceries through the receiving widow in the Food Room rather than coming into the building. This reduces the amount of people in the Mission Centre and allows for physical distancing to remain at six feet. There was some initial awkwardness with this set up, though in time we were able to serve more people more quickly. Families can get the food they need faster while remaining safe. Our drop in centre with breakfast and Saturday lunches are suspended for now but we are looking forward to welcoming people into our building as soon as it is safe to do so.

Another interesting aspect of this change is that conversations continue to take place with the clients. Recently, I was able to serve in the Food Room and spoke with "Sarah" about how her day was going. "Sarah" was in her mid fifties began to share how the pandemic has left her feeling lonely. She expressed that she was sad and was having difficulty since she no longer is able to socialize as she once did. She explained that friends have stopped coming by, social events have ceased, and she has really felt lonely. As she sat on the steps beside the receiving window, we talked for some time about life and the pandemic. It seemed that as we spoke her sadness lifted a little. This simple interaction for a few minutes gave her some of the social interaction she was needing.

The COVID pandemic has brought so much uncertainty, yet God continues to be faithful. This crisis has cause Open Arms to think creatively about how we distribute food to those who need it. We continue to be His presence to those who come bring comfort to those who are feeling uncertainty, hope to those who are feeling hopeless. Even in all the uncertainty, God continues to reveal to us that He is faithful.

-Marty Misener, Executive Director

(Above) Fresh produce grown at our Ministry Campus by our summer students (thanks to Canada Summer Jobs grant).

(Below) Rob Collier, Food Warehouse Manager, loads some of the 80 cases of chicken received last week into our freezer. Rob says, "the average of 2500 lbs of chicken a week that has been donated throughout this pandemic has helped us feed hundreds of families through the Niagara Region."



# NEAR TO HIS HEART

Growing up in a home with a single mom and four siblings, Josh Walsh knew what it was like to not have enough. His mother struggled to put enough food on the table and used food bank services to help meet their needs for several years. When he was a child, a lady knocked on the door and invited Josh and his siblings to the AWANA children's program at her church. In that program, Josh and his four siblings came to know, love and serve Jesus.

As an adult, that has been Josh's desire, to help others know, love and serve Jesus. He's been in vocational ministry for the last 14 years, as a youth pastor at two different churches in Southern Ontario and as the Regional Director of Development for Ontario for AWANA.

Last week, Josh began a new role as the Mission Centre Supervisor. This ministry is "near to my heart," Josh says, "the food bank was a place that helped in my family's struggle. I want to see people released from poverty and inspired to move forward."

Through a grant from Niagara Prosperity Initiative, we are able to expand our service hours into the afternoons. This will allow Josh and our team of volunteers to serve our friends in the afternoon on Tuesday to Thursday. When we were only open in the mornings, sometimes we had too many requests to keep up with the demand during our limited opening hours and had to defer people to another day. Several times a month, we would receive requests from people who had to work in the morning or had other barriers like social anxiety that prevented them from getting the food they needed during the hours we were open. By expanding our hours, we hope to reduce barriers to access to healthy food and make sure that no one is slipping through the cracks.



**NIAGARA**  
Prosperity Initiative

**Niagara Region**

*New Food Bank hours: Tuesday to Thursday 9:00am to 4:00pm, Friday 9:00am to 12:00pm  
New Personal Care Bank hours: Tuesday and Thursday 9:00am to 4:00pm. Come stop by and (socially distant) welcome Josh to the team!*

*Expanded hours funded in part by the Niagara Region and the Niagara Prosperity Initiative.*



We are grateful to Community Food Centres Canada, the Department of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and all of the donors to Good Food Access Fund for their generous support. Their grant of \$10,000 for emergency food and PPE for our staff and volunteers has been helping feed our community while we continue to feel the effects of the crisis and is keeping our staff, clients and volunteers safe. So far, we have purchased dairy products, meat, produce, gloves, masks, hand sanitizer and will continue to purchase more to keep our community fed and safe.

In May, we distributed  
**31,626**  
pounds of food to  
people in need in our  
community

## MISSION CENTRE

22 FIFTH STREET, WELLAND  
905-788-3800

Food bank:

Tuesday to Friday 9:00am to 4:00pm Friday 9:00am to 12:00pm

Personal Care bank:

Tuesday and Thursday 9:00am to 4:00pm

Office/donation drop off:

Monday to Friday 9:00am to 4:00pm



## MINISTRY CAMPUS

933 FORKS ROAD WEST, WAINFLEET  
905-732-8260

Furniture sales by appointment:

Tuesday to Friday 10:00am to 4:00pm Friday 9:00am to 1:00pm

Please call for donation pick up or to make an appointment.

Donation drop off:

Tuesday to Friday 10:00am to 4:00pm

[www.openarmsmissionwelland.com](http://www.openarmsmissionwelland.com)