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# CITY OF REFUGE

## SHELTER EDITION

When homelessness is being discussed, the word “shelter” often comes up, conjuring the image of a big building full of cot beds. Although that kind of shelter is important to many people in the Sanctuary community, all of us—whether we have no home, live in unsafe housing, or feel secure in our comfortable apartments or houses—need more than just a roof over our head to feel sheltered.

In this edition of City of Refuge, we invite you to explore the many different things that “shelter” can mean in the Sanctuary community. Tanja describes the shelter offered by our clinic (pg. 1), Kathleen discusses how shelter relates to the commandment to “love thy neighbour” (pg. 2), Alejandra shares about the sense of home and beauty that the Garden Dreamers team cultivated in our backyard this summer (pg. 3), and Sam explains what shelter means in our worshipping community (pg.4).

## THE ROCKING CHAIR

By: *Tanja Futter*

Sanctuary offers many different kinds of shelter, like shelter from bad weather or shelter from a hectic day. In the health clinic, we see shelter in a different way; we offer a safe space that can provide shelter from violence and trauma.

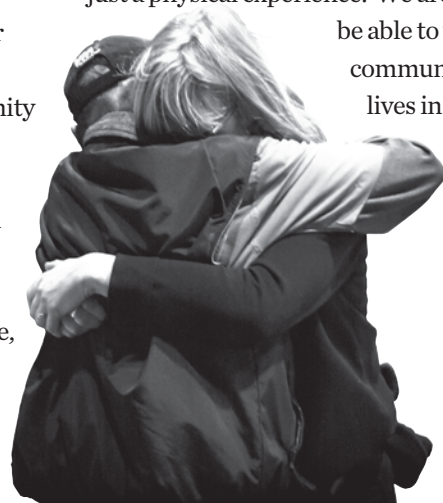
On one side of the clinic is an old rocking chair. It was restored by a community member who died a few years ago. Daniel (not his real name) sat in the chair often, using it as a place to talk about some of the painful things in his life: hard situations that he was dealing with, addictions, or his history of trauma. He found the rocking chair to be a place of shelter, and a place where he could open up about the hard things in his life. When our first rocking chair broke, he made sure that it was replaced right away, because that safe space had become so important to him.

Our rocking chair is a metaphor for the safety and comfort that we aim to offer in our clinic. Sanctuary staff have close, trusting relationships with many community members and, because of this, we are privileged that our community members often share with us about painful things in their lives. The clinic is a particularly safe space, where people have developed deep trust in our team. After episodes of violence, domestic abuse, or sexual assault, people arrive at the clinic and are offered shelter and care.

We feel honoured to be welcomed into a space where people have been hurt or experience pain, and to be able to provide medical care for them. Over many years, we have developed relationships with people that make them feel safe to share parts of their stories that are difficult to share, whether from lack of safety, grief they are carrying, the hecticness of daily life, or because opening up about trauma is always a very painful experience.

We don't pressure our community members to share about these painful moments in their lives, but we are often struck by people's willingness to sit in our rocking chair, start to rock, and in the comfort of that experience, open wounds that have been covered to protect themselves. As nurses, our understanding of shelter at Sanctuary is not just a physical experience. We are blessed to

be able to witness our community members' lives in their fullness.



# Loving My Neighbours

By: Kathleen Smith

This picture is of the entrance to 129 Peter Street, taken about a month ago by Sanctuary outreach staffer Greg Cook. If you find yourself in Toronto with nowhere to spend the night, and every shelter and respite centre in the city is full, this is where you're sent. If you're lucky, they'll find you a shelter space that has become available last minute. If not, you can sleep in a chair or on the floor. I have held vigil with many Sanctuary friends, waiting on hold with the shelter central intake line, praying that there is a bed for them. More often than not, we hear: "There are no spaces available, but you can go to Peter Street."

On the day this photo was taken, people were greeted at this doorway of last resort by signs saying: "don't do this, don't do that and, by the way, you can't do your laundry here." I'm sympathetic to the practicalities of running Peter Street, especially since the housing and shelter crises have meant that it is now serving as a de facto overflow shelter. I understand that they need the ramps clear and that there are rules about smoking near a doorway. But still, to paraphrase Greg's original caption for the photo: imagine that this is the welcome you get when you are living through one of the worst things any of us can think of.

When I saw this picture, I thought about Jesus's command to love our neighbours as ourselves. This hectoring, lecturing greeting is the welcome my neighbours receive when they have nowhere else to turn. In fact, this is the kind of greeting you can expect at many places in the city if you find yourself homeless. You will be kicked out of malls and food courts, protested by your neighbours, and your suffering will be treated like a nuisance. Our neighbours with nowhere to stay, and little to call their own, find very few warm welcomes.

Being part of the Sanctuary community has made our city's and our country's failure to love and honour people living in poverty feel so catastrophic to me.



Because at Sanctuary, my neighbour living in poverty cannot be abstracted to a social issue or charity case. My neighbour is the feisty diva who can get herself looking runway-ready after a shower at drop-in. My neighbour is the soulful poet trying to recover from years in the prison system. My neighbour is the sick friend who insists on running out to hail me a cab when I am on crutches. In order to love your neighbour, it is helpful to know them. Once you know your neighbours, it becomes so much harder to look away from injustice, or to accept half-hearted compromises that do nothing to address the underlying inequities of our society.

Knowing your neighbours also helps you to realize that even if they may be vulnerable, they are not weak or needy. I have come to know my neighbours as resourceful, resilient, and adaptable, sometimes by nature, but often by necessity. What they need is the same thing any of us do to survive and flourish: food, shelter, and clothing, yes, but also respect and love.

As I look at this picture, I feel grateful that Sanctuary exists. I am grateful that there is somewhere in the city where all my neighbours, poor and wealthy alike, are welcomed with open arms and are loved. I am grateful for the ways that Sanctuary strives to build a more just world, like offering housing at our community houses, access to healthcare at our clinic, and dignified jobs at Switchback Cyclery. I am grateful for colleagues like Greg, who call out injustice and advocate for better systems. But I am also reminded of how much work there is left to do to fulfill my duty, to love my neighbours.



# A Garden On The Wall

By: Alejandra Adarve

*Being deeply loved by someone gives you strength, while loving someone deeply gives you courage.*

Lao Tzu

A mattress, a pillow, a hairbrush, a needle, a comforter hanging from a tree. A scene not uncommon at Sanctuary's backyard in the summer. Living room, bedroom, bathroom, and everything for many, our backyard is a territory of survival where even the flowers struggle, so it is always on our agenda to look for ways to beautify the landscape, bring joy to the space, and involve the community in activities and projects.

The Garden Dreamers were planting sunflowers this summer, but it was too hard for them to maneuver the rough environment. During Art Studio, talking to my dear friend Kendall, we decided that if the backyard couldn't give us flowers, we should grab a brush and paint them, with a little help from our friends.

We painted the fence bright blue and then added flowers, bugs, poison ivy, bubbles, and the sunrise on the hands of our Creator. By the second day of painting, an anonymous donor left some plants to help decorate the already blooming space, and on the third, two happy visitors helped paint the picnic tables and had extra time to give the needle disposal container a fresh coat of sunny yellow.




Sanctuary is a community of friends. We are a shelter for each other and treasure the moments of joy we share because that joy makes our lives extraordinary. A big thank-you to the many people who volunteered their time to care for our garden this summer.



# Sunday Community

By: Sam Sundar-Singh



A shelter is someplace one can feel safe and protected from the elements, and from harm. It is a place where one can relax, rest, and refresh.

To many, the Sanctuary Sunday service is just that.

It's always eye-opening to me when someone tells me that the Sunday gatherings feel 'safe'. I've heard this from a number of people from all backgrounds and experiences.

Our Sunday gathering can be a shelter, an oasis, where as a Community of Faith, we can focus on the things we have in common, starting with Jesus. This is one of the reasons we sit in a circle, with the Communion table in the centre.

Because it is a safe space, where everyone can come as they are, and be who they are, things can get messy sometimes. But, it's this messiness that sometimes causes us to be confronted with, and consider, each other's perspectives, and each other's walk with God.

Ultimately, our Sunday gathering is not the Shelter – the true Shelter is dwelling with our Creator in Community, in this space we call Sanctuary.



## ***Psalm 91***

***<sup>1</sup> Those who live in the shelter of the Most High  
will find rest in the shadow of the Almighty.***

***<sup>2</sup> This I declare about the Lord:***

***He alone is my refuge, my place of safety;  
he is my God, and I trust him.***



# Making Strides: A BIG SUCCESS!

Thank you so much to everyone who was a part of Making Strides for Sanctuary 2019!

We had a beautiful day at Tommy Thompson Park and raised over \$115,000.

These funds will have a huge impact in our community, and we are so grateful!



# Financial Update

We are constantly amazed and full of gratitude for each person, church and corporation who offers their financial support to our Sanctuary community.

As we enter the Fall months this year, we are not in bad shape even though we are running \$50,000 behind our projections to this point in the year. While this is not a small amount, we have come through many years of seeing God's provision for this community in often-surprising ways. These last few months of the year are tremendously important for our finances as more than 50% of our total donations for the year have historically come in during this season. So, we find ourselves prayerful and trusting.

If you have already been supporting Sanctuary through this year (or in previous years), thank you! If you would graciously consider supporting us further in your year-end giving, we would also be grateful. And even if financial support is not part of the picture for you, please know that we are very thankful for your prayers, your friendship, and your support in other ways. Thank you.

## Ways to Help *Pray, pray, pray!*

### Board Members

Alison Marthinsen  
Shamus Slaunwhite  
Janice Towndrow  
Cindy Quinton  
Joanna Moon  
Michael Blair  
Simon Beck  
Sylvia Keesmaat

### DONATE

*By credit card: [donate.sanctuarytoronto.ca/](http://donate.sanctuarytoronto.ca/)*

*Monthly by electronic funds transfer use the form at [www.sanctuarytoronto.ca/forms/PAGform.pdf](http://www.sanctuarytoronto.ca/forms/PAGform.pdf)*

*By cheque or money order payable to Sanctuary Ministries of Toronto  
Mail to 25 Charles Street East, Toronto, ON M4Y 1R9*

**For US Donors**, by cheque or money order payable to First Church of the Nazarene  
Mail to Sanctuary c/o Radical Mission, 150 Richview Road, Clarksville, TN 37043  
Attn: Leighanne Guthrie

Tax receipts will be issued at year end. Funds given in excess of an approved or discontinued program will be applied at the discretion of the Board.  
Charitable #89037 9340 RR 0001

**Donate A Car Canada!** Sanctuary can benefit from your donation of any kind of vehicle (cars, trucks, vans, SUVs, motorcycles, boats, RVs) to be recycled in an environmentally friendly manner! Not only that, but also, if you have a newer or estate vehicle that you would like to donate, they have selling agents to assist in maximizing your donation. Simply go to [www.donatecar.ca](http://www.donatecar.ca) or call them at 1-877-250-4904.

### Other Ideas:

**Raise awareness** by showing this newsletter to your friends and family.

**Commemorate** special people and occasions by donating to Sanctuary 'in honour of...'

**Sign-up** to receive newsletters and invitations via email by contacting [info@sanctuarytoronto.ca](mailto:info@sanctuarytoronto.ca).

**Invite** Sanctuary to speak at your church, school or group meeting.

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