

**On May 14<sup>th</sup> Collingwood was loved and impacted by over 250 volunteers from about 20 local churches. Our intent was to express the love of Christ to our community in as many ways as possible through organized acts of kindness ... Working together to make a difference!** As you can imagine, so many lives were impacted including those that volunteered.

Although it was a rainy day (not what we had hoped for) it did not discourage the volunteers. We worshipped together and surrendered our hearts to Jesus so that He could love and touch many lives through our hands and feet throughout the day. The sense of unity and excitement was incredible! By the end of the day, lives were touched and amazing things were done. People knew that God loved them and that they mattered.

**The following are some of the comments we received from volunteers:**

*"Absolutely wonderful to be part of the We Love Collingwood WAC Day!"*

*"Amazing impact at The Door, wonderful memories and love lavished at The Princess Tea, needs met at the Free Store, 37 dump runs, tears of gratitude from several that were blessed with visits from the work teams bearing bags of fresh fruit and vegetables, seniors that were treated to a variety show and daisies, personal and tender touch expressed at the spa, cards of appreciation with gift cards given to nursing home care givers and a wonderful meal enjoyed by hundreds ..... the list is endless! **Wow! Did you know that a We Are Christ Day is more than just a day ....?"***

*"I was helping to organize the Home Visits and we were able to go to the homes of several people and help them with things they were not able to do themselves ... cleaning, gardening .... One elderly lady with cancer was not sure she was up to a visit, but when our volunteer went to the door to drop off a gift for her she was invited in for a visit. The lady opened the gift and found a bathrobe in her favourite colour (pink) as well as some slippers and several other things. She was so thrilled with the gift and the visit that she invited the volunteer to come back again and visit with her. Often the volunteers who went into the homes were told they couldn't believe someone would come and do this for them. The volunteers came home so blessed that they were able to be used by the Lord. We were also able to visit two nursing homes that day and entertain them with a program as well as provide gifts for each of the residents. The one home is small and people with limited resources tend to stay there, so it was an incredible blessing to be able to spread some love to these people who tend to be overlooked. "*

*"I remember lying in my bed praying early in the morning of our WAC day. I boldly asked God for a divine appointment of my own. Well, to be accurate I didn't ask. I think I was more or less whining and complaining that I wouldn't get a divine appointment because I thought I'd be too busy. :) I remember wishing that I could go around to all the events happening that day, and once again, "pouting" because I figured I'd be busy at my own event.*

*When I arrived at the grocery store, I was surprised to see that they had set up a table with cupcakes and balloons. The cooking instructor explained to me that they loved the idea of "We love Collingwood" so much that they wanted to support us, and promote our events. Without hesitating, I drove to all of the events looking for posters and invitations that could be handed*

*out to people stopping by for a cupcake. I literally had to visit each location before I found what I was looking for. God made a way for me to visit each event. My heart was humbled, and content. God had provided a way for one of the desires of my heart to be met.*

*As I was setting up for the cooking class, an older man came in and sat down. He was wearing dirty clothing that was a bit too small for him. We started chatting, and he asked if I minded if he stayed and waited for the cooking class to begin. During our conversation, I noticed that he had some delays and I knew that he would need a lot of supervision and support to cut the vegetables. So, we started cutting his veggies early.*

*While we were cutting, we started to chat. He asked me where I was from, and why I was doing a free cooking class. I was happy to tell him that many of the churches in Collingwood had gathered together to put together many events to bless the community. I told him about the free store, the feast, and the upcoming carnival.*

*"Churches?" he replied... "You know, I used to be a born again Christian". "Really", I replied. "What do you mean, used to be?" Well, he went on to explain that he has paranoid schizophrenia, manic depression, and is full of rage. He gets very angry, lashes out, and hears voices telling him that God wants nothing to do with a guy like him. My heart was so sad for him... that he has believed this lie. Then, I was filled with excitement... I said, "God loves you NO MATTER WHAT! He knows you, and he understands you, and He loves you just the same!"*

*"Really?!" he asked. It's true, I said. Nobody could love you more. Then, he said to me... "All I have at home is an old King James Bible, and I don't understand that... do you think you could get me a Bible of my own, that I can understand?" I have never been more honoured to fulfill a request in my life.*

*That man left the cooking class with a smile on his face. I have never seen a person so proud to make a meal. He was thrilled to take home a healthy, nutritious meal. He left in plenty of time to visit the free store and make it to the feast.*

*I left the cooking class with a heart beaming full of love. I was so thrilled to have a "divine appointment" of my own... God granted me all the desires of my heart on May 14th. "*

*"The free store was another outreach that touched many, many people. People were lined up in the rain hours before the store opened so they could do their shopping. Days after the event I continued to hear stories of how people were blessed with all the things they were able to acquire. It was a huge undertaking and our point person did an amazing job of organizing the whole event. The volunteers spent many hours before and during the event to get everything in order. Collingwood and Area Churches collected new and needed items and together expressed love in such a practical way. It certainly was well worth the effort to see so many people touched in a very tangible way.*

*"I was very impressed when Maury Blair, sharing his story of child abuse and the freedom he has found in a personal relationship with Jesus, held captive an audience at The Door Youth Centre. Maury was able to speak into the lives of many youth after having spent the afternoon*

*working alongside them helping with dump runs and renovations. BBQ and give aways were enjoyed by all! One youth won an iPod and was absolutely thrilled because his had been recently stolen! "*

*"I organized teams of men who did several work projects both outdoor and indoor. Not once did I hear any complaining from the volunteers who were working in the rain. They completed their work with passion and joy! One elderly gentleman confessed he was moved to tears as men took care of some work on a building of his that he could not do anything about. Several men worked at replacing a roof that was rotten and causing great damage to a house that the disabled owners could not afford to have repaired (all the building materials were donated)."*

*"Our crew did dump runs for 37 families who would not have otherwise been able to take things to the dump. Additionally there were several work projects that our crew was able to do dump runs for. We also cleaned up a local park and the train track trail. At days end the dumpster that was provided free of charge was overflowing. "*

*"Little girls dressed up as princesses and brought their Mom to a Cinderella Princess Tea. They were treated like **"princesses"**, enjoyed crafts, refreshments, story time and gifts and were given the opportunity to make wonderful memories together. I heard so many comments expressing appreciation for the love and generosity that was lavished on everyone that attended. "*

*"The community dinner at the end of the day was provided by the Cranberry Resort. They supplied all the food, prepared and served it – all for free! Many businesses provided door prizes and we were pleased to have one of our local radio announcers host the give-aways. Our mayor attended the dinner, and afterward she took my hand, looked me straight in the eye and gave me such a heartfelt "thank you" it almost brought tears to my eyes. She was so amazed at all that had been done for the town that day. "*

*"What a wonderful evening it was! My wife and I really enjoyed ourselves! Congrats on a great job with the day's activities. Here's to next year! " - Local Radio Host*

*"I just wanted to tell you again, thank you. Thank you for all the unbelievable work and love you and your team put into this event. Thank you for the opportunity to extend myself. You were right that I would be blessed and I was. Thank you for the opportunity to love others as Jesus calls us to do. It is so hard to put into words how I feel about what I was part of yesterday. I got to spend the day with so many loving and giving people. God pulled us altogether to touch those who needed it most. You are right; this can't be just a one day event. We need to continue it daily." "It was an amazing day. It was so great to worship and work with Christians from other churches."*

*"Thanks for letting me help with such a wonderful event; it truly was a blessed experience."*

Due to the rain that fell on May 14<sup>th</sup> our Carnival was reschedule for 2 weeks later. This was a wonderful follow-up which allowed over 700 people to enjoy free food, games and carnival events. Another great opportunity to love our community and make Jesus famous!

We Love Collingwood Day is a testimony to what can be done when the Body of Christ comes together with hearts that are tender and hands that are open. Not just one day ..... everyday!

Submitted by Myrna Bustard