

# *Wind in the Sails*

St Thomas had their "We are Christ Day" on May 29th and infused this town with hope so much so that the mayor came to the free feast at the end of the day to thank everyone involved. He was visibly awestruck by what had been accomplished. Nearly 400 followers and lovers of Jesus came together at St. Joseph's Catholic School at 10 AM to pray and be baptized by His love...then went out those doors into multiple places to make the love of our Jesus famous.

The Youth Center downtown vibrated as "Blissed", a Christian Rock band shook the place with not only their music but with the power of God. It was loud. I couldn't understand a word but the kids could and it went straight to their hearts. The lead singer stopped and told them in 2 minutes a message that I'm certain they will never be able to forget. He was raised with 6 other boys in a bad environment. He described how 5 of his buddies all chose a life of alcohol and drugs and how some of them ended their lives or landed in jail. Then he told them that he had made a choice when he was 12 to follow Jesus Christ who rescued him from destruction and gave him life and joy and peace. He looked into the eyes that were hanging on his every word and said...."So...make good choices." The manager of the Youth Center was so impressed by the entire day that she has opened the doors to our church in St Thomas to come in any time and a group of young adults in our church have risen to the occasion!

Pinafore Park came alive with an exciting Kids program. There were skits and puppets and songs and games and free hamburgers and hot dogs, popcorn and candy floss... and hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of people who all heard Jesus knows them and loves them. 40 kids came forward for prayer and we pray that the seeds that were planted that afternoon will take root and grow...

Dozens and dozens of seniors were visited that never have anyone come and see them. Their names were passed on by Social services and described as "having no family". I wish I could copy all the comments that our volunteers wrote down after they left each of these homes. It made me weep. Each of these lonely people were given a basket overflowing with goodies, then listened to for hours. They felt loved, cared for and valued. They cried when our volunteers left asking them to please return soon. No longer will these precious seniors be forgotten. Our church in St Thomas now knows where they live!

A family had their roof blown off in a terrific storm two years ago and although the organization, "Big Brothers and Sisters" had been trying to get other organizations on board to get a group of volunteers to fix it they had no success... so this family had endured two winters with tarps pulled over their roof until May 29th.....:) A group of our men worked in the blazing sun, from 5:30 AM to 5:30 PM and put on a brand new roof for this family.

Brian, who was in charge of this project came to me at the feast at the end of the day with tears in his eyes...thanking me for giving him the opportunity to bless this family, who had come with him to the feast! He said he couldn't wait to do it again! That's what loving The Lord our God with all our hearts, souls, mind and strength looks like! The

love of God in Brian and the team of men superseded the 'uncomfortableness' of the scorching weather! The family was undone and completely drawn to God's love that is sacrificial and so irresistible.

The Free Store and Spa and Tea Room were packed and literally hundreds and hundreds were fed, clothed and ministered to. A Hockey Clinic was held at the town arena with Don Osborne, a former NHL star who also came to our feast at the end of the day and unashamedly told the 400 who came and packed the place out that although he loved hockey...he loved Jesus more. The kids that came to the Basketball Clinic heard that Jesus loved them too as did all the families that came to get free ice skates!

I pulled up to the St Thomas Mental Health Facility and parked my car. I was struck by how large it was and touched deeply by what I saw inside. The walls were grey. The floor was grey. The doors were thick and metal and behind each one of them resided a very broken person whose only hope was Jesus. At the end of a very long hall that seemed to lead to nowhere were a group of our volunteers hosting a Variety Show. The peace of The Lord was tangible the closer we got to the room. The heaviness lifted as we walked inside. Jesus was there in a very real way. I noticed that everyone in the room was holding on to either a stuffed animal, a blanket or a piece of clothing and many of them were rocking back and forth. My heart began to cry out for our Father's arms to bend down and put His hand in theirs. I don't think in all of the WAC Days I have ever been so moved. The need was just so great. Everyone was given a bag full of things picked out especially for them and everyone heard about the love of Jesus that never lets us go. Pastor Peter Cusick received a letter of thanks from the Clinical Chaplain of the Spiritual Care Department....

"Many, many thanks for your recent Variety Show...I would like to speak personally to the events creativity, hope giving and positive energy...Hospitalization along with mental health challenges – can be a very difficult sea through which our clients have to journey. Your variety show, care and support was like wind-in-the-sails for many as they make that journey...."

He has also extended an invitation for our St Thomas team to come on a regular basis and they have gladly said "YES!"

Putting wind-in-the-sails is exactly what our "We are Christ Days" do! I love that picture! God's love swoops in and propels the hopeless forward...it brings direction and purpose and it's absolutely beautiful to watch! May every day be a day when we consciously allow The Lord to use us to be instruments that His hope, His grace, His mercy, His love and His peace blows through....

*Sue Keddy*