

CAMPUS NOTES



“FRIENDS OF THE MINISTRY” NEWSLETTER

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

<i>Community: It's a Verb!</i>	1
<i>C.S. Lewis and his Fiction</i>	1
<i>338 Gordon: A New Ministry Centre</i>	2
<i>Our Brunch of Dreams</i>	2

COMMUNITY: IT'S A VERB!

For two years now, Guelph Campus Ministry has had a student intern working in the Brant neighbourhood—a high-needs area in Guelph. In the past, the intern has helped out with the community garden. This year, Rachel is serving as an intern directly with the neighbourhood association. She's another set of eyes in the community for New Life's deacons; she's a liaison between Brant and our student volunteers; and she's helping out the community support worker. Here are a few of Rachel's recent reflections:

I began to understand "community" as a verb a few years ago; each person belongs in the composition of a community. The degree of intentionality in relationships and purposefully seeking out opportunities to serve one's neighbour in love, I believe, are the foundation of what it means to be 'one body.'

It has been a privilege to be

spending time each week with the Brant Avenue Neighbourhood Group. Community doesn't always work as harmoniously as it could, but like everything else worth fighting for, it takes hard work and it doesn't come easy. This experience at Brant has opened my eyes to the hard work and behind-the-scenes efforts of making resources and services available to people within the community.

Whether I'm making dozens of reminder phone calls, organizing the food pantry, or sipping coffee with mothers on a Friday morning, understanding community development continues to be an increasingly important virtue in my life and even in my academic pursuits. Having the opportunity to enter in and be just a small part of



facilitating these opportunities and relationships has taught me infinitely more than a classroom ever could. And for this, I am forever grateful.

Education consists of more than just what's taught in the classroom. GCM is excited to offer this experiential learning opportunity and be a formative part of a student's time at the University of Guelph.

—Jamie VanderBerg
Campus Minister
—Rachel VanderVennen
Student



C.S. LEWIS AND HIS FICTION: ON THE BRINK OF REVELATION

Friday morning. The coffee maker is switched on and the tea selection removed from the cupboard. Students slowly start to arrive and settle into the living room. Devin is always the first one to arrive. Rachel is always the last. Everyone is thrown off when someone doesn't sit in their usual seat. The conversation begins.

Dr. C.S. Lewis is a Christian thinker. The depth of his

thought makes reading him a pleasure and a challenge for anyone's faith; the lack of tiresome logical justifications makes him a problematic read for any scholar. Lewis does not prove his views; he expresses what seems to be true of life and the ways we live.

Nevertheless, his ideas —article cont'd on page 2



GCM is often found breaking bread together, whether formally during our morning worship or informally within our small groups.

GUELPH CAMPUS MINISTRY



**James VanderBerg
Jenn McIntyre**

University of Guelph
javander@uoguelph.ca
(519) 824-4120, ext. 52392

338 GORDON: A NEW MINISTRY CENTRE

One of the exciting developments at GCM this year has been our move into 338 Gordon Street. After having had the use of space at McNally House for five years, the university decided to demolish that building and move the Multi-Faith Resource Team, of which GCM is a part, back into a renovated Raithby House. The space at Raithby could not accommodate our large group gatherings, particularly the Wednesday Community Dinners, which have become such an important part of GCM's work.

Our concerns that we might not be able to continue with these events were unfounded, and we have been provided with rented space on the main and lower floors at 338 Gordon which is very close to campus and easily accessible to the students who continue to come out for Community Dinners in wonderfully large numbers. The space is shared with students whose rent payments cover most of GCM's costs. We are deeply thankful to a number of donors who have stepped

forward to cover the remaining costs.

We are truly blessed!!

—Gary VanArragon
GCM Board Member



Community Dinner at 338 Gordon

OUR BRUNCH OF DREAMS

Leadership development has always been a vital part of our community. As students make their way into our midst, they're often asked two questions: What are your gifts and passions? And, what can we do as a community to support you in discovering ways to use those gifts on campus and in the city? Over the years, we have seen so many students come to a place of deep recognition: They recognize who they are and the ways in which they are called to serve.

Leadership is a matter of service, and everyone has something to offer. Leaders don't just stand up front or chair meetings. Some have the gift of hospitality and plan a mean potluck; some welcome student refugees to campus; some lead small group conversations; some help out with a local youth group; and still others plan worship events. We ALL have something to contribute to the body of Christ.

That's why we do strategic planning and community development so differently. Many churches organize focus groups, write up a summary of the findings and create an often stale document that sits on the shelf somewhere. Within GCM, we prefer to have a Brunch of Dreams.

This fall, we sat down together yet again. It's a

bit of an annual tradition. Yes, we eat together, but we also give everyone a chance to share their dreams for our community. Every voice matters. We listen to each other and try to discern together where each of us can be of service. This one day of conversation shapes our entire year together.

Our Brunch of Dreams isn't about creating a new list of programs or ministry goals; it's about discerning the Spirit and bringing people together. We don't walk away with a "to do" list. We walk away knowing the others in our community who might be interested in working together. We walk away challenged to use our gifts. We walk away inspired, not obligated. Most of our new adventures in ministry start with a dream shared within the context of a supportive community.

—Jamie VanderBerg
Campus Minister



Doing the dishes after our brunch

LEWIS

cont'd

are penetrating and his theology life changing.

The C.S. Lewis small group looks at what happens when such a man lets his imagination loose on us all, when Mr. Lewis writes fiction. His thoughts on God, Love, free will, salvation, Heaven and Hell roam free, resonating with what we feel is true without first trying to conform to any scriptural or psychological authority. His ideas are inspiring first, provocative second. As we enter into this intellectual giant's fantasy, we let him pull us to the brink of revelation and heresy, then we discuss how, whether or if our faith is changed. An interesting thought adventure.

One morning, as Kai and I were planning the discussion questions for the C.S. Lewis small group, we commented that it didn't really matter what questions we asked. The conversation would be lively and deep. The twelve students who met each week have been drawn in by both *The Last Battle* and *The Great Divorce*. Lewis' stories have provided a lens through which we are reading our own stories of faith. I look forward to Friday mornings all week!

—Jenn McIntyre
Campus Ministry Associate
—Kai van der Meer
Student



Emmalena telling others about GCM

YOUR DONATIONS CONTRIBUTE TO THE FOLLOWING CAMPUS MINISTRY PROJECTS:

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LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNSHIPS—\$8000

Donations can be made online at www.guelphcm.ca, or cheques can be made payable to "Classis Huron" and sent to: Guelph Campus Ministry, University of Guelph, McNally House, Guelph, ON N1G 2W1