

# GUELPH CAMPUS MINISTRY

a bridging Christian community



Volume 8, Issue 1

December, 2013

## CAMPUS NOTES



## GCM WELCOMES NEW STAFF

This year, a new three-person staff team has taken shape! Guelph Campus Ministry has welcomed Becca MacDougall and Katie Brown, both of whom are working alongside Jamie.

At the Donor Coffee House this past spring, Jenn McIntyre announced that she would be leaving her staff position with GCM. After being with us for three years, she is now working on her divinity degree at Wycliffe College and volunteering with refugees and recent immigrants to Canada. We are confident that God will continue to use her gifts to bless others!

Shortly after Jenn's announcement, GCM's Board of Directors decided to shake things up a bit, drafting a job description for a half-time Program Facilitator. Becca now plays a significant role in supporting our student-driven

initiatives and related programming. In her fifth year, Becca is taking a few additional courses for her degree, while serving as an integral part of our ministry team. She is a compost enthusiast and enjoys good food, good people and good conversation, preferably combined.

At the same time, GCM also welcomed Katie to serve as our liaison with local churches. Last year, Kortright Presbyterian Church donated \$5000 and encouraged us to hire a student intern to serve in this capacity. Katie now helps students connect with local churches. She has met with church leaders, become familiar with their student-related programming and ensures that the students are aware of what's going on in



GCM Canoe trip — Canoe spot the staff?

these churches. Katie is in her second year in the Child, Youth and Family program. She loves bringing people together and making new and meaningful friendships!

It has been an incredible semester and such a joy to see the ministry supported by a great staff team!

—Jamie VanderBerg  
*Campus Minister*

## OUR FIRST EVER FALL RETREAT

This September, Guelph Campus Ministry withdrew to Crieff Hills Retreat Center for a 23-hour fall retreat. Though short, this retreat was certainly sweet! We enjoyed the beautiful weather with hikes through the forest, pick-up ultimate frisbee, and even an evening campfire. We sang, worshiped, cooked, ate, played games, and had many good conversations. I felt blessed to have this opportunity to connect with others on a deeper and more personal

level. The school year gets so busy and one can quickly start to feel isolated. But, through these kinds of retreats, I truly relax and can reach out to those around me, while being reached by them in return.

I was particularly excited to meet a couple of first year students at the retreat! Remembering the overwhelming September of my own first year, I certainly admired their courage for taking this opportunity to jump right in! We had an awesome

time together. Meeting new friends, building relationships, and exploring faith together was such a wonderful way to start a new school year!

—Sara Wyngaarden  
*Student*



### GUELPH CAMPUS MINISTRY



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## RUN & READ—EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING AT ITS BEST

In the fall of my second year, I got involved with the Run & Read program at Willow Road Public School, and I couldn't have imagined then how formative that choice would be on my university experience, and possibly even my life. Coincidentally, that was the same semester that I chose my focus areas for the Arts and Science program (Family and Child studies, and Neuroscience). It's one thing

to learn things in the classroom, to create study notes and flashcards, and try to regurgitate key concepts in order to convince the TA marking my exams that I have a decent enough understanding of course material. It's a different and incredibly rich experience to have the opportunity to apply skills from both of these areas and see them woven together within the context of the lives of children that I've grown to care about so deeply.

At the surface level, the Run & Read program has three components: fitness, nutrition and literacy. But I would argue that there are three more things that are at the core of the program: teamwork, goal making, and mentorship. And

even more importantly, it's an incredible opportunity to pour out love. A lot the kids in this program don't get positive messages at home, and many of them have family structures such that they hardly see their parents. By walking into their school gym on the day of the program, and spending two hours with people constantly building them up, they finally have an environment where they feel validated. Even for the university students who volunteer with the program, it becomes a place for community. I was very unsure of my footing in many ways in my second year. I think that pushing myself to get involved with this program was one of my first steps into a sense of belonging in Guelph.

This year, my involvement with the program increased as I had the opportunity to be a part of the leadership team for a new launch of the program at another school in Guelph: Brant Avenue Public School. As someone who hates being the centre of attention, it's been a challenge as I weekly lead some component of the program (usually stretching, running or circuits). As I put myself in this position of vulnerability, the kids are affirming and supportive to me. Run & Read is a great opportunity to pour into the lives of kids and give them support, as well as be in a position to learn from them and be humbled by their wisdom.

-Becca MacDougall  
Student /Staff



Race Day 2013

## SPIRITUAL DIRECTION

I've always loved stories.

My parents can attest to my childhood of avid reading, how I would lock my 7 year-old self in my room and read through my stack of "special books", as I called them. They were simple stories that my heart was particularly touched by; they were stories that resonated with who I am.

While I've grown up being drawn to the Story God is writing, to biblical stories and to the stories of those whose lives have intersected mine, I think I've often felt like a passive observer. My broken self, fraught with imperfections, somehow feels more comfortable listening to others' stories of faith and of Grace in their lives than trusting that God can bring hope and wholeness to my

own. This semester has been one of intentionally creating space to ask 3 questions: ***Who am I? Who is God? How can I begin to see myself as part of God's narrative, and not simply a passive observer?*** These are questions I will continually be asking, but in these past months of journaling, conversation, retreating, contemplating and listening, I've felt God resurrecting my life daily and bringing me joy and hope, in all those small, sacred-in-the-ordinary ways.

To this wearied heart, He has softly spoken who He says I am. And He is beginning to show me how my story, like all of our stories, are part of His Story- the greatest narrative ever told.

-Laura Jane Weber  
Student



Christmas Party 2013 (at Corkshire)

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