

Gone fishin'

The Shoebox Place will be closed for holidays, July 31 until Labour Day.

Please remember to bring shoebox hampers for the fall!

Graffiti

News from Victoria Christian Street Chaplaincy
June 2000

Close Encounters of the Real Kind

*Retiree finds surprises and satisfaction reaching out to street kids.

*Volunteers add spiritual love to shoebox hampers.

*Street chaplain Rick Sandberg takes us for a walk.

Hungry for Spiritual Love

"I think the kids are more hungry for spiritual love (than food)," says Ann Pearson, a volunteer at the Shoebox Place where street youth go to get a box filled with food.

But while there is no end to God's love, shoebox hampers are in short supply. So the Shoebox ministry is looking for people who feel called to organize a small food drive in their home community. People who help collect food for at-risk youth will do more than feed them, they will help bring them into contact with caring Christians like Ann.

"**They get a lot of Christian connections," Ann says.** "When we pray for them it means so much because they know someone cares and is praying for them. If you hug them, you don't know what it means...(because) you don't know what's happened to them. **Some say they come just because it's peaceful.**"

"**We're caring for the least of his, aren't we," says Allan Cobb,** another volunteer at the house where anywhere from one to ten kids come in the hour and a half that it's open. "**It's probably as good for us as it is for them,**" adds volunteer Mary Carder.

Last July we moved into the Shoebox Place behind St. John's Church. There's an office, storage space for shoeboxes and a place for the street kids to come and receive some food and enjoy a quiet place to sit and talk to the volunteers.

We have two volunteers Monday through Friday from 1:00pm till 2:30pm at the Shoebox Place (930 Mason St.). Shoeboxes may also be dropped off at this time. Rick, his support team and the volunteers were not sure how this house was going to work but it has been GREAT for all -- including the street kids.

We appreciate the continued support of money, shoeboxes and prayers. **We are always looking for people to volunteer to give out shoeboxes and if you are interested in this important part of our street ministry, please contact Rick 885-3178 or Bunny 853-6026.**

"For me?"

By Des Corry

For two years now I have been walking the streets of downtown Victoria with Capt. Rick Sandberg on his rounds trying to help homeless street kids. As I am a retired grade 12 English and P.E. teacher and wrestling coach, I am familiar with teens, having taught around 7,500 in 36 years. **I have been surprised to find street kids as bright and polite and well spoken as most I have taught.** When one hands them a "shoebox" filled with food and items useful for the streets, they are appreciative and usually surprised that someone cares for them. They look at you with wonder and say "For me?"

I have also been often surprised at the resentment and aggression of average citizens from time to time. One afternoon Rick and I were talking to a little street girl who had just given up her baby for adoption for she had been persuaded that she couldn't raise him on the streets. Nevertheless, she was in tears and said to us, "I called him Dominic and I think he is missing me." A very well dressed elderly lady probably about my age passed us by about five feet away with no one between us on the corner of Yates and Douglas. I can still see her looking at me with absolute hate and saying, "People who block the sidewalk should be shot." I was about to take after her and give her a piece of my mind when Rick grabbed me and said, "Forget it. There's lots of that."

I can't always tell the difference between a fashionably badly dressed middle-class teen and a street kid until you look closely into his/her eyes. Each street kid has his own story of what has driven him to the streets.

(Continued on back.)

A view from the street.

The question on my heart this year is, "How does God want us to proceed?" I don't sense Him guiding us into significant changes, but a major contributor the past three years has run into its own financial problems and is not giving financially this year. That has left a \$7,500 dent in our income compared to last year.

For right now we are staying the course, letting people know our situation, and seeing what God does. Perhaps this is this a way of increasing our ministry by making it necessary for other people and churches to get involved.

What I do know is that I love the kids I meet, and I appreciate being a consistent presence in many people's lives. For example, after knowing me for over ten years, one young lady decided last winter to tell me about herself.

"I don't know why, I just want to tell you," she said. It led to an incredible ministry time as she revealed horrible abuse, and we discovered together a bit of how it still impacts her today. It's just a beginning after years of laying a foundation for ministry, but she is keen to continue.

My desire is to consistently bring God's love and skillful counseling to youth who don't trust many others to love them and understand them. It's difficult for me to tell about all the opportunities that I'm given to be a small part in bringing comfort to deeply wounded people.

I offer two stories and a here, but they only hint at the way we have been able to help many find healing and, hopefully, God's love in Jesus Christ. **Thanks for your support!!!**

Serving Him,
Capt. Rick Sandberg.

Walking down a street, volunteer Des Corry and I run into some new youngsters and invite them for lunch. A girl and two boys relax and are eager to tell us their stories and their theology. "I was brought up by Christians," the 17-year-old girl announces. (It wasn't a happy experience.) Each kid wants to tell us what's on his/her heart.

The three kids are starving for attention more than food and keep interrupting each other to share personal details and thoughts. We learn that their parents do know where they are, and the two youngest plan to return home shortly.

The girl reveals slash marks on her arms – visible signs of depression and loneliness. Now she's finding a place among peers who are also alienated. But for a few minutes I hope they found a taste of the love Christ has for them.

She looks so young on the corner where she works in the "oldest profession." I didn't recognize her until I was a couple of steps away – she has lost so much weight to her addiction.

She had conflicting emotions – shame but also happiness at seeing a friend. Our encounter was brief, but she shared what good news she had -- her former boyfriend is clean and working in Ontario.

That's great news. Our ministry had bought him a ticket back home

My female friend also wants to kick the dope. When she's ready to go into the detox, I've offered all the help we can give.

"At first kids don't know Rick is a Christian. Then we learn that he loves us. Then we learn the source of his love is Jesus Christ."

Comments from a former street kid at a YFC fund-raiser

(Continued from the front.)

As you get to know them and you find you love them almost like your own kids. The worst is that you begin to worry about them and pray for them, and when you find they have an incurable case of hepatitis it breaks your heart, and hurts far more than the hateful looks of respectable citizens. As Joshua ben Joseph of Nazareth said, "Blessed are the beggars, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." "Give to every man that asketh of thee." "Inasmuch as you have done it to one of the least of these you have done it unto Me." There is a book called, "Sometimes God has a street kid's face." Amen. I think you can find Him there better than anywhere I have been.

(Mr. Corry is a member of All Saints Church, View Royal.)

Victoria Christian Street Chaplaincy
is a joint ministry of

**Youth for Christ (Victoria) and
The Church Army (Anglican).**

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The Church Army in Canada
Suite 301 50 Gervais Dr.
Don Mills, ON M3C 1Z3