

THE

BRIDGES NEWS

SPRING 2021

Volunteer Spotlight



Meet Tom Blain. Cambridge Shelter has many volunteers who consistently go above and beyond. Tom is one of them. Tom has been donating his time and talents to CSC for over three years. Tom retired four years ago and saw a request for volunteers for CSC in the newspaper. He applied, and, as he says, 'I was looking for a meaningful way to give back to my community.' He recognized that there was a need and he wanted to help. Tom's first impression of CSC was one of surprise. The Volunteer Coordinator took him on a tour of the building. He was very impressed with the number of residents that are helped and the variety of services that are available. Tom had no idea of all of the good things that CSC was doing to support its residents. Everyone knows Tom, who can be relied on to come in on Monday mornings to help with breakfast. Throughout the pandemic, Tom has been filling in wherever needed, often at a moment's notice. It is often the simplest of things that motivate people to help. For Tom, the best

memory he has of CSC was leaving after helping with dinner, and being thanked by several residents for feeding them. This experience has stuck with Tom.

Tom is surprised by the number of residents with mental health issues, and finds it hard to understand how so many people fall through the cracks. He knows that our community can do more to pitch in, himself included. One thing that Tom would like to see is more support and treatment for individuals with addictions. Tom wishes that everyone would volunteer at CSC at least once to get an idea of what it is like to be homeless. When asked why he volunteers at CSC, Tom says, 'I have had a number of different reactions. Some think it's a good idea that I am doing it, and others say that it is not something that they could do. Some give me donations to drop off as a way of helping.' Tom's message is, 'If people think that they have it bad during these times, they should come and see how the homeless live every day. My words of wisdom are for the management, staff, and volunteers to keep up the good work, because they are truly making a difference.'

We thank Tom and all of our volunteers at CSC for their help, especially in this difficult time.

Interested in Volunteering?

Please contact Volunteer Coordinator Paul Corkery

519.624.9305 x106

pcorkery@cambridgesheltercorp.ca

Merry Christmas Eve!



For the past two years, **The Cambridge Mill Restaurant** has provided a delicious Christmas Eve buffet for over 200 of our community's most vulnerable. Although the restaurant could not do that this past year because of Covid, they very generously provided the traditional Christmas dinner with all the trimmings for us to serve at The Bridges and as takeout for those living in the community.

We are so grateful for their support. Thank you Alex and Robin for your consideration and kindness. It certainly made it a very special Christmas.

"At times our own light goes out and is rekindled by a spark from another person. Each of us has cause to think with deep gratitude of those who have lighted the flame within us."

Albert Schweitzer

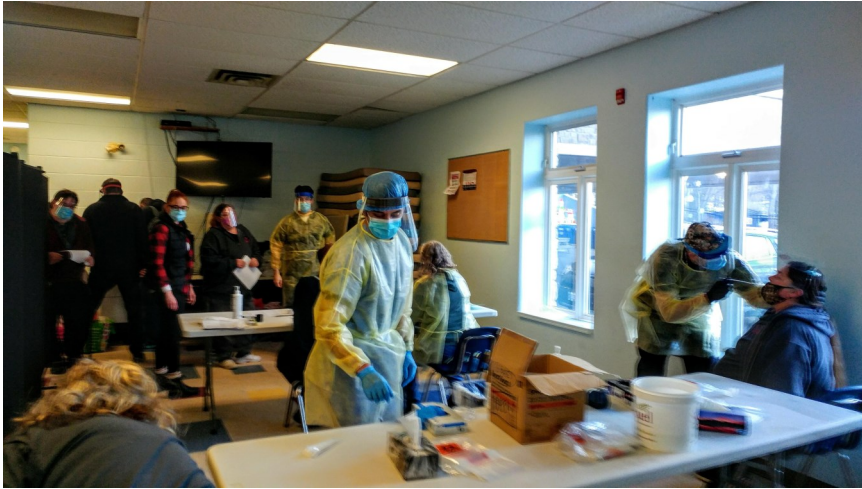
Merry Christmas!



On Christmas Day, Arif and friends from the Galt Islamic Centre prepared a hot lunch for all of our residents to enjoy, along with a thoughtful donation of 25 warm blankets, and kitchen supplies. Our residents were so thankful for this delicious meal!



Covid 19 Update



When the Covid 19 pandemic hit, we were sheltering over 100 individuals each night, many of them seniors and people with significant health issues. We knew that we had to find alternative accommodation for 40% of our residents. Seniors, those with the most serious health concerns, and those who could live independently were relocated to a local motel. All of those individuals, and many others, were successfully housed by our Housing Support Workers.

With the second wave, we have relocated some of the same populations to the motel and continue to search for permanent, affordable housing for them.

Our maximum capacity in the shelter and the drop-in is 64 people. We made the decision to once again keep those residents with the most significant mental health, substance use, and behavioural issues with us at the shelter. With the onset of the cold weather, many of the unsheltered in the community accessed our overflow shelter space in our drop-in centre. And although we continued to do twice daily screening of all residents and staff, and instituted other safety and cleaning measures, we have had an outbreak. Regular swabbing takes place to identify Covid positive cases among the shelter population. Once confirmed, they are immediately moved into an off-site isolation space until Public Health deems them resolved.

We are grateful for our twenty year partnership with Lang's Community Health Centre and their IPC team, who have provided medical support and daily healthcare to those individuals in isolation. We could not have navigated this outbreak without them.

I continue to be thankful for our staff team who show up for work every day to ensure that all of our residents have what they need to stay safe and healthy. They are all heroes.

Anne Tinker
Interim Executive Director

The impact of Covid 19 is being felt around the world. These have been challenging times for all of us. Now, more than ever, we need your help to provide essential, emergency services to individuals experiencing homelessness.

Here, at The Bridges, we are working hard to keep everyone safe and healthy. You can help us make a difference by donating today. Donate online at cambridgesheltercorp.ca/donate. We are very grateful for your ongoing support!



Overdose Memorial Wall

One of the sad realities of the pandemic has been the rise in opioid-related overdoses and overdose deaths. Isolation and an illicit drug supply that is often laced with toxins have increased the chances of drug-related injury and death. This picture is of a memorial wall located in Cambridge. Each square is inscribed with a tribute by their peers to a person who has died of an overdose. We have had our share of overdoses at the shelter. Thanks to the quick actions of our staff and paramedics, many deaths have been prevented.

Did You Know?

Cambridge Shelter Corporation is accredited through the Imagine Canada Standards Program. The Standards Program Ensures excellence and leadership in five key areas of operation:

- Board governance
- Financial accountability and transparency
- Fundraising
- Staff management
- Volunteer involvement

CSC was the first shelter in Canada accredited under this program in 2013, and recently achieved re-accreditation. The program is designed to strengthen public confidence in the charitable and not-for-profit sector. Cambridge Shelter Corporation is very pleased to be able to display the Standards Program Trustmark.

For more information on the program, go to standards@imaginecanada.ca.

Cambridge Shelter Corporation

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CSC Board of Directors

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(Interim Chairperson)

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(Ex Officio)

Board Spotlight

Dr. Erin Dej

I moved to Cambridge two and a half years ago and was looking for a way to help out at Cambridge Shelter Corporation. I sat on the board of a shelter in Ottawa and volunteered in shelters for 10 years before moving here, and I've come to realize that you can tell a lot

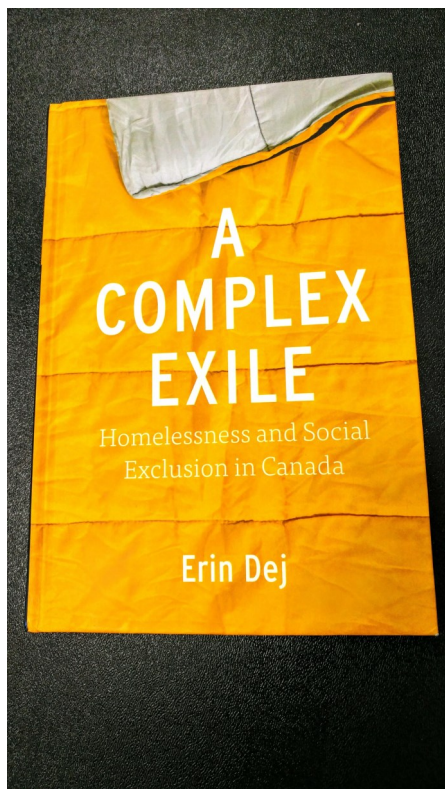


about a community based on how they care for people who are homeless. Meeting the staff, volunteers, and service users at CSC has shown me that there is a beautiful group of people in this city who understand how traumatizing homelessness can be and who are motivated to support people to become safely and securely housed.

Besides my volunteer work, I've been doing research in the homelessness sector for over a decade and I've learned a few things. One thing is that while individual suffering is a factor, homelessness is, at its root, the result of social failures that has allowed over 200,000 people to experience homelessness every year in Canada. I've also learned that the way we respond to homelessness can have a deeply negative impact on their lives and their ability to exit homelessness. This includes what policies and funding are in place, but also how we, as members of the public, treat someone we walk by who is homeless. I've talked about these things in my new book *A Complex Exile: Homelessness and Social Exclusion in Canada*.

I am proud to be on the Board of Directors for CSC. I admire the team's perseverance through the pandemic. When we escape this crisis, I am confident that we, as a community, can do wonderful things to end the homelessness crisis too.

A Complex Exile is available at ubcpres.ca or through Amazon at <https://www.amazon.ca/Complex-Exile-Homelessness-Social-Exclusion/dp/0774865113>



Cheers to 2020!

With the onset of the Covid 19 pandemic in March of 2020, our capacity and the way we provide emergency shelter changed drastically. We began screening our staff, volunteers, and community partners when they entered our building, and screening our residents twice daily. We stopped serving community meals and instead, provided bagged meals for take-away. We moved some of our residents to a local motel to create physical distancing space in our building.

Despite all of that, we had an incredibly busy year and our housing team was able to find affordable, permanent housing for many of our residents, including some individuals who had been in emergency shelter for many months. We are looking forward to another positive year in 2021.

Number of Clients in our Blair Voluntary Trust Program — 182

Total Volunteer Hours—7,120

Number of Covid Screenings Performed — 32,864

Number of Meals Served — 76,029

Number of Unique Residents — 698

Number of Bed/Nights of Shelter Provided — 34,892

Number of Residents Permanently Housed — 80



Meet Our Kitchen Team

Like our homes, our kitchen at The Bridges is the heart of the building. Thanks to weekly donations from the Food Bank of Waterloo Region, the Cambridge Self-Help Food Bank, and many community restaurants, stores, and individuals, we have nutritious food to serve daily to our residents. Our Kitchen Manager, Moe, plans delicious menus from what is 'in stock'. As well as providing three meals and one snack per day to our residents on site, our hard working kitchen team of Moe, Andrew, Noah, and Melanie make bag lunches to hand out to community members, and pack lunches, dinners, and snacks for our residents who are housed off-site and those in isolation.

Thanks team for providing healthy, nutritious, and tasty meals for our residents!



Moe and Noah make soup and sandwiches while Andrew and Melanie offer pizza and salad. Two of the many delicious lunches served every day.

Kitchen Needs

Coffee
White Sugar
Cornstarch
Butter
Parchment Paper
Serviettes





Identification Clinic Update

In 2020, we were able to get 97 pieces of identification for our residents. Birth certificates and health cards make up the bulk of that number, but we can also assist residents with other identification needs.

We all know how important proper, up-to-date identification is to access healthcare, income support, and perform other day-to-day activities. Great job Jonathon in helping our residents move forward with their lives.

Toasty Toes Solves the Problem of Cold Feet!

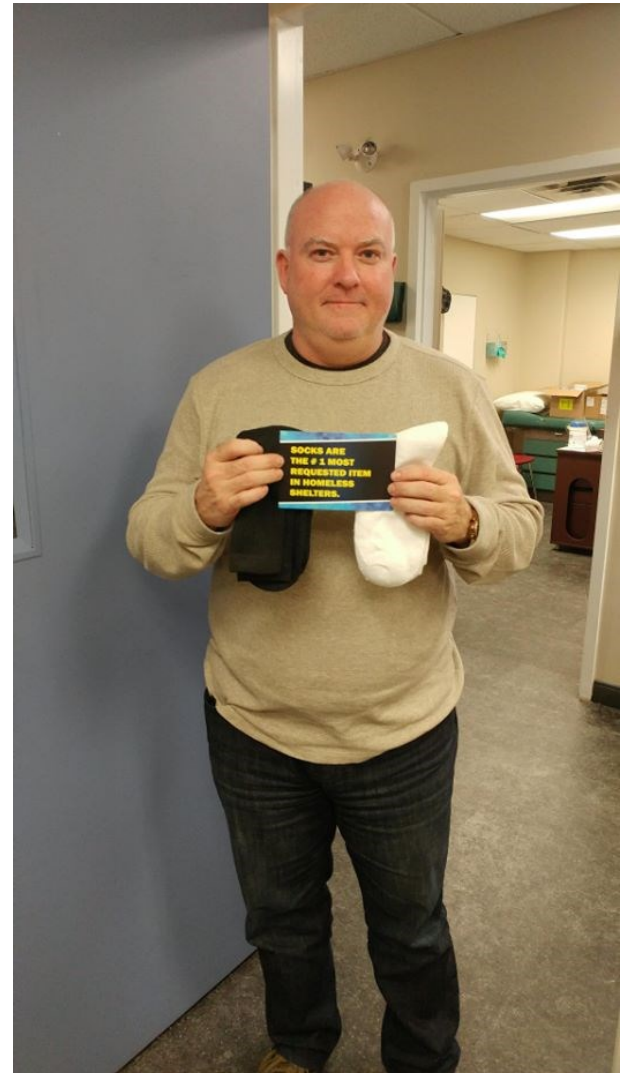


ToastyToes Waterloo
Region Fund

Thanks to a generous grant from Toasty Toes Waterloo Region, through the Kitchener Waterloo Community Foundation, we have been able to purchase hundreds of pairs of socks for our residents. Heavy, warm socks are especially essential in the very cold weather to help prevent frostbite and other cold-related issues. We are very grateful for this thoughtful and timely donation. And many toes are warmer because of it!

"As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them."

John F. Kennedy



Thank you to the Cambridge Muslim Society!



Our sincere thanks to our friends at the Cambridge Muslim Society, who regularly provide delicious treats and other essential supplies. On New Year's Day they provided pizza lunch and other goodies for our residents to enjoy. Our sincere appreciation for always thinking of us.

Bennett Chevrolet Cadillac Stuffs Trucks for the Homeless!

Thank you to everyone at Bennett Chevrolet Cadillac who stuffed two trucks with essential items to support our residents.

We are so thankful for your generosity and kindness, and a heartfelt thanks to all of the staff and friends of Bennett GM who generously donated to the dealership's Cambridge Shelter fundraiser this past Christmas season. They managed to collect and deliver two truckloads of donations to The Bridges. Very well done!





Yes! I want to help today!

Charitable Registration Number: **890259419RR0001**

Donate online: **cambridgesheltercorp.ca/get-involved/donate**

Please make cheques payable to: **Cambridge Shelter Corporation**

Thank You!



Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

Postal Code: _____

Or, by credit card

Credit Card # _____

CVV# _____ Expiry Date _____

Name on Card _____

Signature _____

Donations of \$10 or more will receive a tax receipt

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