

THE WELCOME HOME

A MISSION OF SAINT ALPHONSUS

SUMMER 2026 – THIRTY-THIRD YAER



Dear Friends,

The Welcome Home turns an amazing 33 years old this year. For much of that time it has striven to abide by the motto “feeding the hungry in body and spirit.” It is something Jesus did through the stories he told, the miracles he performed and his personal encounters with people. Food and fellowship often were a significant part of His ministry as they have become for us at The Welcome Home.

Metropolitan Anthony Bloom wrote that “food is God’s love made edible!” We hope people experience it that way in our ministry. However, with the price of groceries these days and the challenges that go with making ends meet, there are some who may not “feel the love” so much. I recall delivering a food hamper to someone who commented, “Father, you are going to live longer than I will.” “How do you know that?” I asked. “Because you eat better than I do. I can’t afford fresh fruit and vegetables or much meat”... a humble lesson for us not to take too much for granted.



Table Fellowship in Jesus’ ministry meant that you were in the company of those with whom you shared trust, respect and friendship; a relationship that eases the loneliness and isolation we sometimes feel in this world and offers a sense of acceptance, belonging and hope... things that feed the spirit.



Feeding the hungry in body and spirit touches every aspect of our ministry: the food bank, the Make & Take program, Family Night meals, the children’s catechism, lunches and snacks for every gathering and special event, all of which are blessed with moments of prayer. Our team of Redemptorists, Br. Eumir and Fr. Larry, our staff, Delores and Abigail and our wonderful volunteers work hard to ensure there is tangible evidence of care and concern for everyone who comes through our doors. We are most grateful for all the ways the Lord continues to provide for the needs of our ministry through the generosity of others who donate their time, prayers, funds or food items that help meet our challenges.

As we look to the future, we pray that others will hear and respond to God’s invitation to be part of this mission to make God’s love edible and tangible!

For You are a God of mercy, kindness and love and we give glory to You, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, now and forever and ever! Amen!

Fr. Larry Kondra, C.Ss.R.

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY AT THE WELCOME HOME

This year, The Welcome Home catechism class met every second Saturday for lunch, followed by a lesson and related craft or activity. This year's theme was stories from the Bible and life of Jesus. We learned about the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, along with many stories of His miracles and teachings. There were an average of six kids with up to 11 on any particular Saturday. It is a multi age group with children ranging from ages 3-15. The catechism group has been meeting on Saturdays for over six years.



Starting last year, we also welcomed a small group of teen girls to The Welcome Home one Friday evening a month to spend time together cooking, praying, and hanging out. Activities have varied from escape room and mystery style activities, to movies, card and board games. There is always a lot of laughter involved when the girls get together.

Sr. Emily Schietzsch, SSMI

ST. JOSEPH'S CATECHISM

This year, St. Joseph's catechism program was honoured to partner with The Welcome Home for two heart-warming events. The first was once again participating in the gift collection and wrapping event at Christmas. For our students, the experience of collecting and then coming together to wrap these presents was a beautiful reminder of the true meaning of Christmas.

Later, we transformed the hall of St. Joseph's into a cinema for a community movie night. Complete with popcorn, snacks, and plenty of laughter, it was a wonderful evening of simple togetherness. Our students have found immense joy in these outreach opportunities, taking them beyond their catechetical classes and learning that the best way to grow in faith is to give back. We are so grateful for these shared experiences and the lasting memories made with our neighbours.

Paul Thullner

In Fond and Prayerful Remembrance

Fran McKercher - a long time friend of The Welcome Home who passed into eternal life on July 23, 2025 after a lengthy battle with cancer.



"Eternal Memory!"



Flora Raven - a long time friend of The Welcome Home community who reposed in the Lord on January 8, 2026.

A YEAR IN PHOTOS AT THE WELCOME HOME



MAKE & TAKE

Anin Hello everyone!

I'm happy to be back at The Welcome Home and to be able to continue with our Make & Take program. Make & Take was developed some years ago for our young moms and grandmothers who live in the Point Douglas area, which I was able to be apart of when I was hired here as Coordinator in 2017 until I retired in 2021.

A little about our program:

Our group of young moms participate weekly for an afternoon of cooking a meal or baking for their families. It's an afternoon of personal sharing, planning ahead and creating a healthy economical meal together. We end our afternoon with a reflection, a short story or bible verse and a prayer. The program helps community of mothers by providing a safe place for them to gather, to build friendships, to share personal struggles and support one another. The afternoons are also a time for us to find recipes online or in cook books that fit their monthly budget. This year we were able to participate in some trainings, a First Aid and a Food Handling course in which they all received a certificate. Networking with our neighbouring organizations, such as Mamawhichitata, has given us this opportunity



by providing a time and location for training for our moms. We also had one of our young teens from the girl's club participate with the classes in which she received a certificate for both classes. Mother's Day was celebrated with a self care day, we had Natasha and her sister, Rheane, come do a couple of the ladies' hair and played a game. Natasha and her sister specialize in hair braiding.

Thank you to The Welcome Home for opportunities and a safe place to gather together.

Delores Courchene
Community Care Coordinator

Comments from our moms

"I enjoy Welcome Home for the activities. For instance, Make & Take, to make a new recipe that we can take home for our families to enjoy."

"I enjoyed being a part of the cooking class and talking with the ladies and the good laughs. Cooking with Delores was a blast!!"

"Cooking class is a great way to bond with the other ladies. I really enjoy all the great laughs and stories we share with each other."

"I enjoy Make & Take. It means to me making memories and healthy food for our families... and it gives me comfort."



A LITTLE GOES A LONG WAY: WORDS FROM OUR WEDNESDAY HAMPER LINE

"I'm on EIA and disability. I've been coming here for 3 years and really appreciate it. I moved from the area but *I still come every Wednesday.*"



"I just moved to the area and learned about The Welcome Home. The bus tickets and food help me and my kids. I like the juice boxes in the sandwich bags, *I save them for my kids after school.*"

"I'm homeless so this food helps very much. *I really appreciate it.*"

"We live close, so it's easy for us to come."

"I've been coming here for 10 years."

"The food helps us make it until the end of the month."

"This place is a *life saver*, it's dependable."

"I always leave one can of tomato soup in my cupboard. That way when I get low or run out of food, I open my cupboard and it reminds me that I can keep going until the next Wednesday. *It gives me hope.*"

UNEXPECTED HOPE

It has been a full year here at The Welcome Home! When I began working here last September, I was warmly welcomed and told that the year would pass quickly through the rhythm of programs and ministry. That has certainly proven true. During my first few Family Nights, I began getting to know many of the individuals and families who gather here each week — some who have been coming for many years, and others who were newer faces. What struck me most on those Thursday evenings was the sense that The Welcome Home is truly an extension of home for so many people: a place of familiarity, faith, friendship, and family. Over the past year, I have especially come to appreciate the "back door ministry." Throughout the day, the doorbell rings with people hoping they may find help here. Each encounter is different, and each person carries their own story. One day it may be a single mother whose cupboards and refrigerator are empty and who needs food for her children. Another day it may be a recent immigrant struggling to find work while trying to provide for his pregnant wife. They come from many different backgrounds and walks of life, yet so often they share a common experience: they find themselves in a moment of hardship and uncertainty. Beneath every request, whether spoken or unspoken, is the search for hope — hope that someone will listen, hope that tomorrow can be a little better, hope that they can take the next good step forward. Sometimes what we are able to offer seems very small: a can of soup, a bus ticket, a warm smile, or a prayer. Again and again, I find that they become moments of mutual

encouragement. In serving others, I am reminded that God continues to provide faithfully, often one day and one step at a time. As this year at The Welcome Home comes to an end, I find myself deeply grateful for the opportunity to be part of this mission of hope: a mission rooted in Christ's love and striving to be a place of welcome and compassion.



Abigail Pyrz
Administrative Assistant

Interested in Getting Involved?



Food Bank — We always welcome non-perishable food items to help support our Wednesday Food Bank and for those who periodically come to our door asking for help with food. Helpful items include: proteins (canned meat, fish or beans), canned vegetables, canned soups, instant noodles, Kraft Dinner, dry cereals, instant oatmeal, canned pasta sauces, and juice boxes.

Volunteers — All it takes is time and a heart-felt presence. A couple of hours preparing and distributing our food hampers. Or an evening helping during our Family Night as a porter, a driver, or being with the children. Perhaps you have a skill or a strong back to offer for special projects. Give it some thought and prayer.



Donations — The on-going support of our programs and the maintenance of the house is made possible through donations from generous individuals, parishes and organizations who faithfully support our Redemptorist mission. Donations can be made via cheque, Interac e-Transfer, or through credit card on CanadaHelps (see our website for more details).

We would like to thank **Fr. Mark Gnutel**, from St. Michael's Parish, for his generosity in assisting at Family Night through this past year.



With Gratitude, we acknowledge the following organizations for their generous support during this past year:

- *The Knights of Columbus: Fr. Shyshkovich Council for Coats for Kids*
- *St. Alphonsus School, St. Joseph Catechism and Lubov Nursery* for our children's Christmas gifts
- *Sevala's Ukrainian Deli* for supplies for our Wind-Up BBQ
- *The Winnipeg Foundation*
- *St. Joseph's Outreach*
- The many groups including *UCWL* and *K of C* for our Family Night suppers
- The parishes of St. Andrew's, St. Anne, Sts. Peter and Paul, Holy Family, Holy Eucharist and St. Nicholas for regular donations to our Food Bank

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