

# The READERS



Volunteers helping at an inner-city facility

**“Churches only exist for the sake of their members ...”** That’s why, we were told, many foundations would rather support non-church agencies than the efforts of churches. All too often, this perspective rings true. How very far from Jesus’ radical self-giving for the sake of others!

Hamilton is one place where things are different. Churches involved in the TrueCity movement aren’t perfect, but they are all developing more of an outward focus in how they understand and live out their purpose and mission.

Whether it is working together to better welcome refugees and new immigrants, connecting in respectful ways with

First Nations communities, getting more involved in neighbourhood schools, or cultivating community gardens ... churches here are contributing to the quality of life in our city in ways that cause people to consider more deeply the good news of Jesus.

**How do we know when we’re on the right track?** This is one of the main questions which leaders from core churches have been tackling over the past several months. Every other week these leaders gather in a **Peer Learning Group**, which Greg facilitates, and ask each other hard questions about where they and their churches are headed. Many churches measure “success” by how many people are “in the pews” Sunday morning. But this group looks more for other indications of healthy growth, things like what people take into consideration when making important decisions, the kinds of conversations congregants have with neighbours, and the way they engage with people around them. In other words, they are looking for how people’s lives are shaped more by the gospel now than before, rather than merely how many people come to Sunday services.

**Board Visits:** Over the next couple of months the board of each core church will be visited by one of our team members together with a leader from one of the other churches. The goal is to get the boards themselves exploring specific ways that their churches can work more closely together “for the good of the city” in the coming years.

**Celebration Community Choir:** Just this past week, our children’s choir performed an original musical written by Ron Hughes (one of the leaders at Bethany Gospel Chapel) and his daughter Katelyn. For two nights in a row the church was packed with families and friends of



Can you pick out Eryn & Daniel?



kids in the choir, many of whom are from the neighbourhood. The children did a fantastic job - they've developed so much over the last year, and their families really appreciate all that has been invested in them. Some have even started getting involved in our church! Can't wait to see what happens next year!



**Formation Training** The weekend of April 30-May 2 we will host a group of 17 here in Hamilton for IT Canada's Formation Training. The main topics are "What is Good news to the Poor?" "What's the Mission?" and "Cross-Cultural Intelligence." The sessions are highly interactive and are complemented by walks exploring the city, billeting in cross-cultural homes, and worshipping in immigrant churches. Helen is looking after most of the organizational and logistical details, so please pray for her. Greg played a key role in shaping the training and normally would teach a couple of the sessions, but this time he isn't able to because of ...

**An Opportunity of a Lifetime!** May 1-15 Greg will be on a study trip in Israel. What a culmination to his MDiv program! Especially for an ancient history geek like him! We pray that the experience will bring the biblical story more alive for him than ever before, and enable him to communicate it more effectively as well.

Until next time,

*Greg, Helen, Eryn & Daniel*

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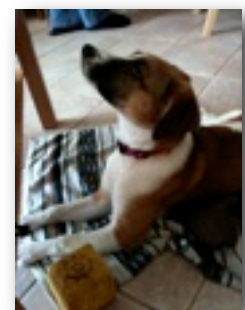
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