



# GOODSHEPHERD JOURNAL

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"I am focused on building a stable foundation for myself. I think this would be the perfect place to do that."

*Image is illustrative and does not depict the individual in this story.*

At the beginning of the year, I was roaming the streets. Before that I was coach surfing for a while. I was drinking a lot, and I was smoking a lot of weed.

In July, I was homeless and roamed the streets. That was when I got in contact with Mike in the DARE program and I am now finally in the DARE program.

My name is Trystan and I am 32 years old...

**Read on to learn how your support is helping people like Trystan and forging new paths for so many others...**

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I'm recovering now. I'm in pre-treatment and I'm waiting to get into a treatment program.

I have ambitions for the future, but right now, I'm just trying to build a stable foundation for myself, and I think this is the perfect place to do that.

I was at CAMH in February. I was on the waiting list and eventually got into St. Michael's Homes. I was there from the middle of April to the end of June, but then I relapsed. I was back on the streets. I was drinking again.

I got into the DARE Program in August. The first week and a half, I used the clothing bank that they offer here, and I got a whole bunch of new clothes, which offered me a better sense of dignity.

The meals offered at Good Shepherd are also helpful because if you need something to eat, the food's here and you don't have to worry about where to eat or when.

Being at Good Shepherd also means you have a bed; it gives you a place to stay off the streets.

The DARE program keeps you busy, giving you a feeling of what it's like to give back to the community by doing chores. It gets you in the swing of having a routine of working. It gives me a sense of purpose, that I am helping others.

There is discipline too because you're expected to show up at a certain time and a sense of teamwork, accountability and responsibility.

They say that connection is the opposite of addiction. Whether it's the people in the program with you, or you make friends with others, including people who come for the 2 to 4 pm mealtime because you communicate with them.

Having a routine helps. And everyone's very friendly and very helpful.

The resources are helpful, we have good volunteers, we have good staff members, and we have good clients. We get a lot of good people that come through here.

The DARE Program is a good opportunity if you are trying to get into treatment and if you're lost and you don't have anywhere to go. A place to figure out your next steps.

The DARE staff are helping me get back on the waiting list for St. Michael's Homes. My goal is to get my life back on track and return to school.

I am going back into treatment, and I feel that this will help me move in the right direction. I am feeling optimistic about the future. I have goals and ambitions, but right now, I am focused on building a stable foundation for myself. I think this would be the perfect place to do that.

I am interested in music and technology, and I would like to go back to school to study something related to those areas. I am also interested in entertainment and possibly starting a YouTube channel or something similar.

With your support, in the first eight months of 2026, the DARE Program achieved the following:

- 183 individuals were admitted to pre treatment
- 49 individuals entered treatment
- 13 clients were admitted to post treatment
- 13 clients secured housing



## You help keep a place of welcome open, close to home



Change happens at an incredible pace these days.

Even here at Good Shepherd, it can be hard to keep up: new services, new coworkers, new buildings!

What stays the same? The warm welcome that people find when they come to Good Shepherd. And the good that you do, right in your own neighbourhood.

Stephen, who tells his story in this newsletter, came to Good Shepherd for shelter and for help rebuilding his life. That was four decades ago – but he still remembers and is grateful for the help he received.

Some of you were donating to Good Shepherd when Stephen rang the front doorbell forty years ago. But whether you joined us decades or days ago, your support is making a difference right here in your community.

By caring for people close to home, you help build a stronger, healthier, and more compassionate community for everyone.

This Thanksgiving, I give thanks for you – for your willingness to act for the greater good, to stand with our homeless neighbours.

Together, we make a world of difference – right here, close to home, one person at a time. Thank you!

Aklilu Wendaferew, MSW, RSW  
Executive Director

## Community Update



Br. Thomas Osario, O.H.,  
Provincial Superior of the  
new Province of North  
America.

**"Hospitality shall be the defining principle of every ministry, relationship, and decision... Our ministries shall give priority to the poor, the sick, and the marginalized..."**  
(2026 Provincial Chapter Directives)

The Hospitaller Order has a new Province of North America, formed in May by merging the Province of the Good Shepherd and the Province of Our

Lady Queen of Angels. At its first Chapter, the new Province reaffirmed the values and vision that have guided Good Shepherd since the beginning.

Br. Thomas Osario, O.H., was appointed Provincial Superior. The former Provincial Superior, Brother David Lynch, O.H., will now focus full time on his duties as General Councillor to the Prior General in Rome, and as liaison with the Hospitallers new 'Region of the Americas' which covers 23 countries.



Five hundred years ago, St. John of God opened his heart and his home to people who were poor, sick, and in need. Today, Good Shepherd Ministries continues his work of radical hospitality here in Toronto.

By making a planned gift – including Good Shepherd in your will, making a gift of securities, designating Good Shepherd as beneficiary of an RRSP or RRIF – you can help this spirit flourish today and in the future. You can make compassion your legacy.

Call Adrienne at 416.869.3619 x 223, visit [goodshepherd.ca](http://goodshepherd.ca), or scan here to learn more about leaving a lasting legacy of care.



## Working to end chronic homelessness in our community

Mathias Place draws closer to its goal of offering a caring home for 95 homeless older adults

A place of hope for older homeless adults is taking shape at 1731 Lawrence Ave. E.

Construction of Mathias Place is moving rapidly, with all seven stories in place at the end of August. When construction is completed in 2027, the building will offer 95 senior homeless adults (aged 55 or older) a safe place to call home.

"Older adults with health issues and little to no income need our help to regain freedom from homelessness," says Aklilu Wendaferew, Good Shepherd's Executive Director.

"The same health issues that make it impossible for someone to work can make it hard to find and keep housing."

When complete, Mathias Place will have a total of seven floors. Floors 2 to 6 will house residents. The ground floor will include a communal dining room, a professionally equipped commercial kitchen, and offices for program coworkers and partners. Floor 7 will

have both indoor and outdoor communal areas, a chapel, and more supportive offices.

There will also be a landscaped outdoor area where residents and guests can enjoy the outdoors.

Mathias Place is a bold new step in Good Shepherd's vision of ending chronic homelessness. Your continued generosity will help Mathias Place welcome 95 frail seniors home next year. Thank you!



Aerial view in August. That's the roof of Precious Blood Parish church at the back!

**Angels** 2027  
**Among Us**  
ANNUAL Gala

Saturday, April 24, 2027  
6:00 pm

Paramount EventSpace ~Woodbridge

Information: [adrienne@goodshepherd.ca](mailto:adrienne@goodshepherd.ca)  
416.869.3619

## Caring for the sick

The Order of Malta leads the way in helping expand and improve healthcare at Good Shepherd

Following its centuries-old tradition of caring for the sick, the Order of Malta has rallied the community and raised funds to renovate the medical clinic at Good Shepherd Centre.

Thanks to this compassionate work, the Healthcare Services Manager at Good Shepherd will have more flexibility organizing the on-site visits of health care partners.

On-site health care partners include medical doctors, psychiatrists, podiatrists, eye-care professionals, and of course, Good Shepherd's own registered nurse. Recently – in a first for Toronto shelters – a naturopath joined the team of caring health professionals who visit the Centre.

The expanded site includes 3 consultation rooms, a procedure room, offices, and meeting spaces.



A new space for health care takes shape in the basement of Good Shepherd Centre. Your generosity supports health care tailored to the needs of people living with poverty and homelessness.

## Stepping inside Granada House

Your support is helping expand help and hope for homeless men with addictions



With Granada House, your donation now helps more homeless men with addictions find freedom and new life.

In August, Good Shepherd took possession of Granada House, bringing homeless men with addictions one step closer to the help they need. The new facility expands the work of the existing DARE (Drug & Alcohol Recovery Enrichment) Program at Good Shepherd Centre.

Granada House's doors will open this fall. Housed in a heritage building near Downsview Park, Granada House makes abstinence-based recovery care available to more individuals in Toronto.

Each year, the beds at Granada House are expected to offer more than 100 homeless men a safe place to prepare for treatment, find a path to stable housing, and rebuild their lives with purpose and dignity. For someone who has become homeless due to addiction, this opportunity can be life-saving.

Your support has helped the DARE Program to become the largest provider of pre and post treatment in Toronto's shelter system.

Granada House is delivered in partnership with the City of Toronto.



Granada, Spain, is where St. John of God opened his first house of hospitality, and “Granada” means pomegranate in Spanish. A fruit whose many seeds symbolize abundance, generosity, and community, the pomegranate appears in the St. John of God Brothers' logo. Granada House carries that spirit of hospitality forward, offering homeless men a safe and welcoming place on their journey to recovery from addiction.

## A 70-year-old remembers the help he was given 40 years ago

Stephen Long's story shows how the kindness you offer today can be felt for decades

The Good Shepherd allowed me to take my first step into a new life.

In the mid 80's, I was an alcoholic living on the street. I would often eat meals at Good Shepherd. After the deaths of two street friends, I decided something had to change before it was too late.

I realized I couldn't do it on my own and would need help. My very first thought was The Good Shepherd on Queen Street East. I knew they had a shelter for men there.

They provided me with a safe place to sleep, to shower, and to get regular meals.

They also provided the clothes I would need for job interviews. I was able to find a job, which led to me leaving the shelter and moving into a rooming house. Without the Good Shepherd, none of this would have been possible. Thank you!



Stephen Long today, against a picture of the dining room at Good Shepherd Centre before it was renovated in the early 1990s. Some of you supported the renovations back then – and you're still supporting Good Shepherd today! Thank you.

## Wanting to make a difference ~ Matthew's story



After graduating from high school, Matthew wanted to make a difference. He ran 55.5 km to raise money for Good Shepherd.

This past June, I set out to run from my house to Good Shepherd once a week for five weeks (a total of 55.5 km) with the goal of raising \$2,000. Despite having no previous running experience, I took the challenge head-on and was full of confidence.

When it was time for my first 11.1-km run, I wasn't sure what to expect. Despite finding the first run challenging, I felt strongly about the fundraiser and was encouraged when we reached my original goal by the third day.

Thanks to the generosity of others, I felt a massive wave of support and became even more motivated to finish the challenge and make as much of an impact as possible.

Over the next five weeks, I kept running. Each goal I set was surpassed: first \$2,000, then \$2,500. In total, we raised \$2,680!

Every dollar was then used to purchase items from Good Shepherd's wish list. Being able to see the physical impact we all helped to create was truly inspiring and made every run worth it.

This experience taught me that helping does not require a perfect plan: just a reason, the desire to act, and the willingness to begin. Good Shepherd Ministries gives people in our community a reason to keep going every day. This fundraising run was one small way to return that favour.

## “I missed taking care of people. I missed having a purpose.”

Volunteering in Good Shepherd's kitchen brings Maureen Reilly purpose, joy, and community



I started volunteering in February of this year. In my previous life, I was a Respiratory Therapist. I worked at Women's College and Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre. I specialized in premature babies.

In 2021, I started to experience

chronic migraines, and I had to stop working. I really missed taking care of the babies and their families. I missed taking care of people. I missed having a purpose.

I knew about Good Shepherd through my church. I decided to fill out a volunteer form and get the process underway.

I was offered a place working in the kitchen. In health care, I helped people from all walks of life, so I was comfortable with the clients. I was ready for the challenge.

What I wasn't expecting was the amazing experience I would have working with the people in the kitchen, in the dining room, at the front desk, in the chapel, the clients, and basically everyone I met at Good Shepherd.

At first, I went home with sore hands from chopping the never-ending supply of potatoes, carrots and peppers. Now my hands are used to the work, and I say bring on another bag of potatoes, Chef Yogi! As I got to know the kitchen staff, I started to appreciate their amazing teamwork, dedication to the job, and professionalism. Everyone was so kind to me and grateful for my help.

I slowly learned how Good Shepherd worked. I learned about the brave men in the DARE program, the different services offered at the

Centre. I now go to mass on Monday in the chapel.

I now know many of the DARE clients by name and they have been so kind to me. I started to ride my bike to the mission, and the DARE boys told me to tell them where I parked it because they would make sure nobody touched it. They thank me for everything and call me “dear”. It just warms my heart. I can't imagine the hardships they have endured, but I am hopeful that Good Shepherd will help them improve their lives. How can we not support them?

When the morning drop-in resumed, I met the nonresidential clients. Now I know quite a few by name. My fellow volunteers say good morning to all the clients. The tall man who wears a mask completely ignores me, but I live in hope that one day he will return my greeting. I have learned that a few particular people have very heated arguments with an imaginary person but always pause that conversation to say hello, thank you and have a nice day.

We are so lucky to live in Canada and Toronto, but we can't forget that there are people close to our riches who are struggling. We can't forget that at this time, by the grace of God, we have been spared. Mental health, addiction, homelessness, and poverty are not life choices, but the outcome of a challenging life.

We can't help everyone, but we can offer them a smile, a warm meal, and a little compassion. That is why I volunteer at Good Shepherd Ministries.

Thank you to all the volunteers who help Good Shepherd offer hospitality, respect, and community to people in need. Your kindness changes lives for the better!

Want to volunteer? Email [volunteer@goodshepherd.ca](mailto:volunteer@goodshepherd.ca)

***Do good for yourselves by doing good for others.***

*St. John of God*

## You Can Fill an Empty Plate

Tuna & Canned Meat  
Coffee & Tea Bags  
Soups & Stews  
Condiments (ketchup, relish)  
Peanut Butter & Jams  
Beans & Chickpeas  
Canned Tomatoes & Veggies  
Pasta Sauce  
Sugar, Salt, Pepper, & Spices  
Salad Dressing



Cooking Oil  
Pancake Mix  
Bagged Rice  
Granola Bars

Drop off your gifts at Good Shepherd (412 Queen Street East).  
For larger collections, please call 416.869.3619 ext. 277 to  
leave a message to arrange a pickup.

Or you can donate to the meal program online at  
goodshepherd.ca or call 416-869-3619, ext. 277.

### Medical Clinic

antibiotic ointment  
muscle rub cream  
antacid-chewable  
non-medicated  
lozenges  
Ensure/Boost

### Men's Clothing

socks (new)  
underwear (new)  
jeans (all sizes)  
sweatpants  
sweatshirts  
windbreakers  
gloves  
winter hats  
winter coats  
winter boots  
running shoes

### Dorm Supplies

razors  
toothpaste  
toothbrushes  
deodorant  
shaving cream  
soap  
body lotion  
shampoo  
bandaids



## "My heaven": return of the morning drop-in



This past April, Good Shepherd's morning drop-in re-opened for the first time since it closed in 2020 due to COVID.

Why such a long time? When the drop-in last opened, Good Shepherd had 95 overnight guests, all staying at the Centre. Overnight guests received breakfast and a generous evening snack, but otherwise visited the drop-in meals offered morning and afternoon to anyone in need.

But with COVID, that changed. Good Shepherd now serves 107 overnight guests three meals and a snack each day, with 47 of those guests hosted off-site. It's not just extra meal servings at the Centre; the kitchen now packs up and transports 150 meals each day. It took time to build up the capacity to bring the morning drop-in back.

Meal guests greeted the return of the morning drop-in with delight. "We started with a one-hour drop-in," says Alex, Client Outreach Worker. "People asked to make it longer."

With help from donors who responded to a special appeal, the drop-in is now one and half hours, giving people trapped on the streets more respite in a safe space. And it's appreciated!

"Good Shepherd is my heaven," said Rahel, a morning drop-in guest. "You give me kindness; you give me good food. Thank you!"

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