



The LIGHTHOUSE

Helping People | Changing Lives

Kingdom Acts

by Tabitha Grace Peiris, Summer Student

The Oxford dictionary defines a lighthouse as a tower or a structure which contains a beacon of light to warn or guide ships at sea; what a well befitting name for the ministry I was blessed to be a part of this summer. As a student studying sociology and social work and a member of a CRC church which received newsletters from The Lighthouse, I was very interested in the programs and services The Lighthouse had to offer. Naturally, I jumped at a chance to work there this summer and to see things from an insider's perspective. Little did I know that I was in for a summer of many new experiences and amazing lessons to be remembered and cherished.

I started my job getting to know the people behind the scenes and I truly admire the effort and sacrifices they put in to helping those around them. In my opinion they are the lights of this lighthouse, and they also happen to be contagious lights. Everywhere I looked I saw the constant stream of kingdom acts both big and small. I began to help out with the food bank and learned so much about the trials and also the benefits that follows running a food bank. It's a lot of work but the reward of knowing you are serving others and that these deeds will spark chain reactions of good in the hearts of everyone involved, is well worth the work put in.

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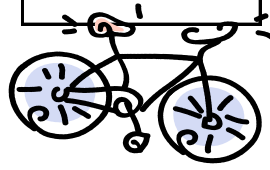
During my time as the Lighthouse, I was also blessed to work with the Hispanic and Vietnamese family camp program co-coordinators. I can honestly say that I am touched and inspired by these women who sacrificed so much of their time and energy into providing a meaningful and beneficial camp for parents and children from Toronto's Hispanic and Vietnamese communities. The camps focused on art therapy and play therapy through a Christ-like perspective and really sought to strengthen, encourage, and equip families as they sought to grow together in Canada. It was an amazing program to be a part of! The families that came to these camps were welcoming, willing to learn and try new things, and were such a joy to work with.

The Lighthouse often caters to newcomers and I was humbled as I learned so much about the struggles, trials and tribulations of newcomers to Canada; it really touched me and resonated with my own family history. I can't even begin to paint the picture of how much the services and programs provided by the Lighthouse means to these people who truly need a light in what is often a lonely and foreign sea. I am grateful to have played a small role in this amazing ministry of God; and I am looking forward to seeing some more of the fruits of labor here at the Lighthouse.

Welcoming New Board Members!
 John Aukema
 Adrian Helleman
 Jane Moore
 Gerry Steggerda

Ride for Refuge

 Thanks to riders and sponsors our ministry receives \$9000.



Phon A Thon

 Thanks to many we exceeded our \$50,000 target and received \$54,265 for the work of The Lighthouse!





Are you Kidding Me?

By Summer Student Hongchen Zhang (Jeremiah)

I remembered my reaction when Rita first asked me about this job. “Are you kidding me? I’ve never dealt with kids. How am I supposed to do that?” Margery, sitting by Rita, said to me, “You can if you really want to, you will have a different experience and it will help you to serve God better. Come on, give it a try!” Her words were so powerful; they touched my heart. Looking back, everything was unforgettable. The biggest impact were not the skills learnt, but of how God’s servants devoted themselves to his work and used actions to fulfill God’s will.

Before the summer camp, we did a lot of preparation. When I saw the numbers of applicants increasing every day, I didn’t know how to feel. Finally, we got 7 volunteers and all of them were very responsible. Two of them cooked lunch for the kids during the summer camp. They came to church early and didn’t leave until everything was cleaned in the evening. Rita was also part of the cooking team, she had to get up early in the morning to buy food, then drive from Richmond Hill to the church in Scarborough. They did it all without complaint. No matter how the kids grumbled or played around, they were never impatient. Even when the kids were crying, they could always coax a smile.

As well, I have learnt many things from the staff at The Lighthouse. Like the Food Bank when many low-income people from the area come to receive food. I was not that helpful because I was only in charge of the registration, while all the heavy work was done by Janet and other volunteers. By observing them, I found something that touched my heart. Patience is a common word that we use every day, but how many of us can really do it? They did it! They dealt with people with all different kinds of tempers and personalities. Yet everyone was nice and patient. Just like the words on the board of The Lighthouse: We offer an atmosphere of respect, dignity, and security in order to address spiritual, emotional, and physical needs, all in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Yes, everything we do is done for God, when you have the ability to act out Jesus’ words in your life, serving is not hard.

Serving people can be a hard thing to do. It needs patience, love, faith, and responsibility. So, I will keep telling myself from now on: Be more patient in serving.

Jane Moore
new volunteer

Tell me how you got involved in volunteering at The Lighthouse?

Actually I saw a notice in our church bulletin late last summer. I was just retired and this type of front line work appealed to me. I’ve been a member of First Christian Reformed Church in Toronto for over 40 years and clearly remember the early work our church did for The Lighthouse. I have been a strong supporter of this ministry ever since and know it has a rich and meaningful history.

What has surprised you most about the experience, place or people?

I was surprised to learn that some 80 individuals every week come through doors at The Lighthouse needing food bank services. I had not realized the need was this great. I have also been pleasantly surprised at how quickly I started to form bonds/relationships with clients. It has been a moving experience for me.

What do you find especially moving in this work?

I have been most touched by the warm loving approach and kindness shown by my co-volunteers to all Food Bank clients. Regardless of their mental or physical state, everyone is received with equal respect, care and warmth.

I have also been moved by the generosity of our clients themselves, in spite of their own hardships. Some offer larger items for family, others minimize what they take so someone else can have more, and yet others offer a hand to those less fortunate than they. The few hours I am at The Lighthouse every week have taught me much about life and living.



Affectionately known as “Carol”

3 year volunteer

Tell me about your volunteer work at The Lighthouse.

Well, I have been volunteering for 3 years in the Hispanic Seniors Program. I cook the hot lunches for the seniors every Friday. I cook healthy meals and give the seniors a short lesson on what to eat and why. Today I served a bean dish and talked to them about the benefits of eating beans. It was fun and they are always interested.

As part of the seniors program we also play Bingo. They love it and never miss it. We laugh a lot and they love the prizes they can win. Of course the prizes are all donated.



What do you like most about the volunteering you do?

I just love working with seniors. I don't have any senior family member in my life here in Canada, and I miss it. This group of people give and need so much love that I am sometimes overwhelmed. They are often lonely and appreciate talking to others, sharing their stories, telling their problems, and just getting a hug.

One thing I like most is sharing devotions with the seniors. After hearing their concerns and worries, we pray together. We share tears, and really walk through part of life together. It is deeply moving for us all, and difficult to put into words.

What have you learned in your time here?

So much! I have learned how to listen and how to give uncondi-

tionally. I have learned to value every life for what it is and be thankful for small things. I have learned to cry with strangers and laugh at life's silly details. I am a changed person because of The Lighthouse.

Can you tell me more about that?

Well, I started coming here when I was just 7 years old. I joined the Hispanic Summer Camp for many years and loved it.

I never forgot those times and years later I wanted to give to others what I had received from The Lighthouse: love and acceptance. So, I started to volunteer here.

Now my son is participating in the Hispanic Summer Family Camp. In fact, I am going to volunteer in this program next summer myself. This is a special place to many people.



Trudy Ormel

15+ years volunteer

What kind of volunteer work have you done over the years?

I started volunteering at reception. In those days, we answered the phones and forwarded calls, but we were also responsible for the Food Bank.

The Food Bank was different then. We didn't check records or register people like today. People came who needed food and just stood in a line outside. Everyone received a number and waited their turn. It was informal but worked.

I also raised \$16,000 for The Lighthouse organizing bus tours. We had a tour to New York, one to Arizona and we even went to Quebec City. It was a great fundraiser, but a lot of work.

I was also a Board member for 9 years, but what I really love doing is helping with the finances. For almost 15 years I have been helping the Executive Director at the time, with the bookkeeping. I started with Ed Vandenberg, then Ben Vanderlugt and now with Rob Datema. In the beginning there was a lot of work recording and managing sponsorship donations for refugees sponsored by various churches. A lot of

good work was done.

Today, I have more responsibilities but things are simpler. I still LOVE the work and plan to continue as long as possible.

What has most impressed you over the years?

I have to say that what has most impressed me is how The Lighthouse is constantly and without ceasing “helping people and changing lives” – the tagline is true! The thing is that they help anyone and everyone. It doesn't matter who you are or what your situation is, this is an organization that has open arms for anyone in need.

What has most frustrated you in your work?

Money! It is frustrating to always struggle to get enough money to do what we need to do. The problem is that we have constant monthly expenses but don't always get constant monthly donations that match. We are a charity and depend on our donors, and this is increasingly challenging.

But...the Lord has always provided. It is so amazing, but although we have been close to not being able to pay the bills on many occasions, the Lord then surprises us with what we need.

This is an amazing place with very special people. I am so happy to be able to give of my time here.

From the Desk of Rob



We are in a season where change is happening all around us. Recently I participated in two Ride for Refuge fundraising events one in Brampton and the other in Hamilton. While riding, I enjoyed seeing the crops coming off the fields, the land being prepared for the next growing season and the changing colors of the leaves. With the sun shining the colours stood out. It was magnificent all these changes taking place.

Seeing these changes makes me reflect on everything happening at The Lighthouse. Recently we hired a new staff person to work one day a week. This allows another staff person to work four days each week. The Lighthouse is also planning to hire two assistants to enable us better serve our clientele; one to help with our Hispanic Community and the other to help with our Vietnamese Community. With new staff coming on board some roles and responsibilities change which creates other challenges.

We see change taking place all around us even when we want everything to stay the same. Change takes place all the time and we need to be prepared for it. Even at The Lighthouse need we to embrace it to better serve our clients. Along with new staff coming to The Lighthouse, we acknowledge that our financial needs change as well. The Lighthouse Board has included two new fundraisers: Ride for Refuge in 2011 and a choir concert in 2012. These new initiatives help, but we also need your support in Helping People, Changing Lives. All these changes enable staff to reach out and touch the lives of people. For this to happen, we rely on your generosity. To learn about different approach to giving to The Lighthouse, call 416-535-6262 or email rob@lighthousecentre.ca.

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Helping People Changing Lives *Thank you for being partners with us in this ministry.*



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