



SPRING 2020



# London Community Chaplaincy

## BUILDING COMMUNITY, SERVING COMMUNITY, IN THE HEART OF THE COMMUNITY ... IN THE HEART OF THE PANDEMIC.

Over the last few weeks, all around us life has changed. We have changed. Fear has risen. Scarcity has been experienced. Anxiety for many of us is at an all time high. Yet in all of this, HOPE remains. We continue to articulate as a country and world that "We are in this together". Indeed, at the Chaplaincy this message has never been more needed or truer.

I arrived 2 weeks ago at my office to an early morning phone call with a mother in tears. Child Tax is critical to our Chaplaincy community's ability to meet the needs of their children. Yet all weekend images of empty shelves dominated the media...and our families waited for the 20th of the month to come. Family after family called or emailed expressing fear and panic over their inability to shop for 5 more days. And they all wondered and asked...will there be any food left for my kids by Friday? As an agency we moved to action and brought up every donation of food we had. Thanks to the generosity of you, our partners, our pantry was full of Christmas donations. For 12 hours we met family after family, sharing with everyone what they needed in terms of basic needs to make it until Friday. More than practical resources, these moments offered hope, comfort and assurance that these our most vulnerable would not be forgotten or left alone in this crisis. May God bless all of you for your generosity this past Christmas that made this possible.

This last week we have watched as a country closure after closure. The rapid rate of change has left all of us wondering what is left and what is next? For many of our families, their practical and mental health needs require

support from many agencies to survive and to parent well. As an agency we have remained committed to being present in the heart of the pandemic. While residents are no longer allowed in the Chaplaincy, I turn our sign each day to "Open" as a visible sign that we are not closed and in this together. We have established online connection groups for children, youth and adults and daily we share together ideas, funny stories and resources. Yesterday we delivered 60 literacy and craft kits giving new meaning to the expression "You've Got Mail". (We also have a secret pen pal program going!) Yesterday we delivered 300 pounds of fresh produce to seniors and single adults living on extreme fixed incomes. Since many agencies are closed, we are still receiving large volumes of fresh food to share with the most vulnerable and we are committed to doing so.



In this next season, we ask for your continued support in any of these three critical ways:

**PRAY**...for the children who are scared and confused. Pray for parents, many whose mental health needs are so precarious and yet now have their children 24/7. Pray for single adults on OW and ODSP whose limited resources and limited access to "open" resource centres create additional challenges. Pray for refugee claimants who do not receive child tax and often have limited social connections for support. Pray for the health of all these vulnerable people... many of our families have significant health concerns. Please pray for me, as I lead and serve in new ways.

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**Every hand that we don't shake must become a phone call that we place. Every embrace that we avoid must become a verbal expression of warmth and concern. Every inch and every foot that we physically place between ourselves and another, must become a thought as to how we might be of help to that other, should the need arise.**

Rabbi Yosef Kanefsky

**SERVE...**The needs of the vulnerable increase in times of crisis. We have many ways to serve with strong physical distancing practices. If you are healthy, have a car and able to deliver food, we are coordinating food bank pick ups for those who simply can't get out (how feasible is it to take 4 young kids on the bus to the foodbank?). Additionally, we are bringing food to shut ins and at-risk older adults (if you are healthy and low risk would you come with me)? Would you be willing to be a "shopper" for a family who may struggle to locate what they need in this season (they will pay you ...as many of our families simply can't go on the hunt for their needed items) or whose health requires them to stay home (mobility challenged and immunocompromised families). Are you crafty and have some time...would you make a craft kit with supplies in multiples of 30 (we can pick up if that is an issue)? Would you be a friend to a lonely person and commit to a phone call a week?

**GIVE...** As a faith-based agency, we firmly reject the idea of scarcity. We know that God provides for all and we are committed to receiving, sharing and ensuring the most vulnerable in our communities can access what they need.

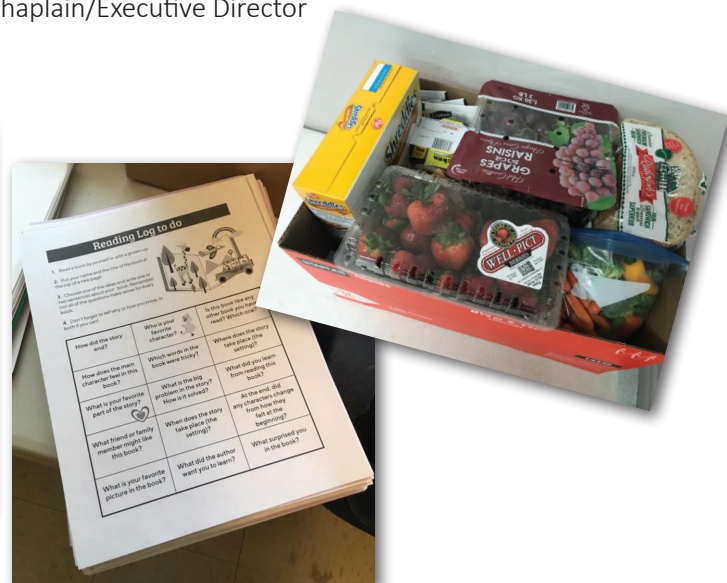
- We are open to receiving practical donations of food/items. Our most needed items are: cereal/pancake mix, peanut butter, canned meat, Kraft dinner, pasta and pasta sauce, soup and crackers and of course...toilet paper!
- With faith communities not meeting in person, our financial needs remain in order to stay present. I am currently the only onsite resource person at both sites.

Most agencies are working only remotely. Practical needs still abound and we are here for crisis problem solving with physical distancing (some examples are printing CAS documents, applying for EI, finding a spot for pets for a unit whose being treated for bedbugs, locating heaters when the furnace shuts down inconveniently in the night).

- Summer is coming...usually our spring letter is focused on a "Summer to Thrive" appeal. Many children call out to me from their windows and doorways asking, "Is the Chaplaincy open for me today?" and I say, "Not yet... but soon"! We look ahead with hope knowing summer will be different, but we are going to be here for the children and youth. And so, we dream and plan in new ways, ever hopeful we will be together in person at the chaplaincy centres soon.
- Financial donations can be sent:
  - By cheque in the enclosed envelope
  - By e-transfer email:  
[officesupport@londoncommunitychaplaincy.com](mailto:officesupport@londoncommunitychaplaincy.com)
  - By Canada Helps via our website:  
<https://londoncommunitychaplaincy.com/make-a-donation/>

May peace, hope and faith be very real for each of you in this season. If you have a personal need, please reach out to us, as we are here for you as well.

Rev. Pam Cullen  
Chaplain/Executive Director



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