

## In Action – Salvation

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In September 2013 our centre – the Barbara Mitchell Family Resource Centre – was able to be the host for the planting of The Salvation Army's Living Hope Community Church. The presence of the church has provided a wonderful 'stepping stone' in ministry for our centre's programming. The majority of our programmes are not funded by The Salvation Army, their funding comes from various government departments and foundations. Consequently, there are restrictions on how much of the gospel, *good news*, we are able to share. However, as people ask questions, we are able to answer and we are able to refer them to the programs of Living Hope Community Church and the spiritual care of the Corps Officer.

In a joint venture with Living Hope Community Church, we opened our doors on a bitter February night for a Jamaica Family Fun Night. This night was geared around providing the opportunity for newcomer families to come to enjoy time together, to have a break from the cold, and to participate in a community needs assessment.

We had 272 people in attendance at this great event. The menu included jerk chicken and Jamaican beef patties. We had group games such as the Jamaican Bob Sled team, and individual stations that included crafts, a community safety wheel, a drum circle and a photo booth.

While all of the 'fun' events happened, we conducted a community needs assessment. From this we have learned that there is real interest in activities for children, spiritual counselling and healthy living education. This is now providing a foundation for strategic planning for the 2015-2016 season.

The majority of our participants are newcomers to Canada, having lived in Canada less than three years. Our neighbourhood has the second-lowest median income of all of Winnipeg so there are many opportunities for incarnational ministry that meets basic human needs and helps provide hope for the future. Having a church located in a social services centre is helping bring this to life. The church has experienced wonderful growth, with over 50 people attending now who live within walking distance. These families are from Nigeria, India, Sri Lanka, Ukraine and Jamaica (to name a few). They bring with them a wonderful spirituality and are teaching us much about spiritual disciplines and faith.

As we are able to accompany these individuals on their settlement journey in Canada, we hear stories of great resilience and salvation. They have been physically saved from refugee camps, poverty, war and fear. They have also been spiritually and emotionally saved through God's sustaining grace in bringing them to Canada. As we hear these stories of resilience, of God's grace and provision, our journeys are impacted and deepened as we live out an Acts 2 faith, church and Christian social services centre.

*Steven and Corinne Cameron have been engaged in ministry as Salvation Army officers for almost sixteen years. They have had a variety of appointments including corps, area youth secretary, family services and newcomer ministries. They have three children, a cat and they both love to walk and read.*

