

VOICES FROM OUR STREETS  
Winter 2016



# Street News

## Celebrating Community

by Susan Venditti

It is December. Where did a year go? It seems as if it was just a few weeks ago when I was setting plans for a new year and suddenly the year is ending. It is scary because time is disappearing too quickly and the work may not get done. Even though it sounds too big, too idealist the work is about building a better world. As winter wraps its icy fingers around me I am conflicted because I want to hibernate and to activate at the same time—one foot on the brakes the other on the gas. So I have decided to go with hibernation. There will plenty of time to hit the gas when January 2017 rolls around. Bear with me as I slow down, reminisce, and celebrate.

**1960** – St. Paul Street was a wondrous place at Christmas. The store windows were decorated, music heard on the street and people actually did their shopping downtown. One could start at Eatons and walk along the street finding everything including groceries or a movie. I loved helping dad shop for mom at Wallace's, then walking on the creaking floors of Marcells as we picked out a china treasure for her. The next sixty years were not so kind as shoppers and stores found Malls. Now fast forward to 2016 and the street is alive again. Different but wondrous too. A rebirth of the heart of the city that took work and vision—something to celebrate.



Centre Theatre, 1940

PHOTO CREDIT: St. Catharines Museum and Welland Canals Centre



PenFinancial Performing Arts Centre 2016

Many people were welcomed into Canada in 2016. Like the biblical Mary and Joseph they too are in a strange land. What are they thinking about the holiday? What traditions and celebrations will be added? How long ago is it since we arrived from another place to this strange land? How many traditions did we bring and meld into this holiday season? Canada is something to celebrate!

Before 1996 there was no place to go if you were homeless in winter when the Booth Centre's beds were filled. It was a cold, cheerless time when Out of the Cold hosted its first Christmas overnight. Twenty years later its host churches and many

volunteers still offer a hot meal and overnight stay for those in need not only during the holidays but all winter long. While there is no celebrating the fact that homelessness is a still a problem we can celebrate the fact that many people care and are willing to help. People working together to do good is something to celebrate.

2009 was the first year that Start Me Up Niagara had its own home. It decided to open its doors December 25 so that no one would be without a place to go on Christmas Day. With just coffee, tea, a few treats and music it would be a simple affair. This year the doors will open at 9 am and we will welcome many. The simplicity continues but now includes not only people who are without housing but participants, volunteers and others who will drop by to offer holiday wishes and enjoy time together. The SMUN community—a place where we all belong—is something to celebrate.

***SMUN wishes everyone a joyous holiday season and a 2017 filled with HEALTH, HAPPINESS and ACTION.***





# EVENTS

**Expressions Art Collective**  
presently on Thursdays: 2 - 4 pm  
15 Gale Crescent  
Everyone Welcome

**Art Me Up at the Garage**  
Tuesdays & Thursdays: 10am - 2pm  
17 Gale Crescent  
Contact RN Wagner

**SMUN Gallery**  
17 Gale Crescent  
New showing - first of each month

**SMUN  
MEMORIAL SERVICE**  
January 25, 2017 | 17 Gale Cresc.  
Time: 2pm

Save the Date & Walk with Us!  
**Form a Team**  
**Join a Team**

save the date  
**coldest\*night**  
OFFTHEYEAR.ORG  
**FEBRUARY 25, 2017**

Help us reach our \$100,000 Goal!  
[www.coldestnightoftheyear.org](http://www.coldestnightoftheyear.org)  
<https://canada.cnoy.org/location/stcatharines>  
**Join us at the Market Square at 4:30 pm**  
**contact Patty: (905) 984-5310 ext. 515**

JOIN US FOR...

*Pasta Dinner*

Dine in or Take Out  
**Wednesday,**  
**January 18, 2017**  
**February 15, 2017**

*only* **\$10.** 

**5 - 7 p.m.**  
**17 Gale Crescent**

**CONTENTS**

Celebrating Community.....1  
 Thanks For Helpng Us Chill.....3  
 Art Crawl, City Hall.....4  
 Why the Artist?.....5  
 Poetry.....6-7  
 Who Gets the Homeless?.....8  
 Interview. with Housing Support.....8  
 Deacon's Bench.....9  
 Game Night at SMUN.....10  
 News from Diaconal Alley.....10  
 SMUN Services.....11  
 In Memoriam | Profound.....12  
 How the Stars Shine on.....13  
 Holiday Schedules.....14  
 Emergency Shelters / Services.....15  
 SMUN Businesses / Supporters.....16

Thanks to our dedicated group of volunteer reporters and poets

Consultant  
Liz Roulston

Copy Editor  
Melissa "Rainbow" Leigh Fowler

Art Director  
Julia Blushak

**Street News**  
**VOICES FROM OUR STREETS**

Published Quarterly ©

**Start Me Up Niagara**  
 Working Together...Moving Forward

Works with individuals whose lives have been impacted by poverty, unemployment, homelessness, trauma, disabilities, health and substance abuse issues to develop level of self sufficiency and quality of life by providing opportunities to improve health, increase community integration and support employment.

  
 Since 1999

To donate or contribute to Street News please contact us at:

17 Gale Crescent  
 St. Catharines, Ontario  
 L2R 3K8  
 Phone 905 984--5310  
 Fax 905 984--8949  
[www.startmeupniagara.ca](http://www.startmeupniagara.ca)  
[svenditti@startmeupniagara.ca](mailto:svenditti@startmeupniagara.ca)

The Opinions expressed in Street News do not necessarily represent the views and opinions of Start Me Up Niagara

**Follow Us On Twitter**   
 @SMUNiagara

**Like Us On Facebook**   
[facebook.com/startmeupniagara](https://facebook.com/startmeupniagara)  
 website:  
[www.startmeupniagara.ca](http://www.startmeupniagara.ca)  
 contact: Jen  
 905 984-5310 ext. 505  
[jpegg@startmeupniagara.ca](mailto:jpegg@startmeupniagara.ca)

For all your printing needs at great rates call

**Minuteman Press**

905 641-9287  
 261 Unit 7 Martindale Road  
 Huntington Square  
 St. Catharines L2W 1A1  
 Fax 905 641-2049  
[mmpniagara@bellnet.ca](mailto:mmpniagara@bellnet.ca)

# Thanks for helping us chill

by **Karrie Porter**

Before summer 2016, staying cool and hearing yourself think on a hot day in our centre were mutually exclusive activities.

Anyone who has spent any time at Start Me Up in previous summer months would have remembered the jet-engine noise of our A/C unit. The noise made it difficult to have conversations and was very distracting—you literally had to choose between keeping cool and thinking. Our dated system was inefficient, had no ventilation capacity and was so loud that it was impossible to run during meetings and workshops throughout much of the year.

Earlier this year, we were very fortunate to receive an Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF) grant in the amount of \$65,000, allowing us to install a modern HVAC system and update our electric service. The

work caused some disruptions this summer but the effort was worth it. The change in air quality and comfort is remarkable and the noise reduction has made it possible to extend hours and activities.

On Saturday November 12, Start Me Up Niagara hosted local MPP for St. Catharines, the Hon. Jim Bradley, to show our appreciation for the grant we received from Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF) that made these upgrades possible.

**“It ain’t the heat; it’s the humility.”**

– **Yogi Berra**

“I’m delighted to announce the Ontario Trillium Foundation has provided this grant to assist Start Me Up Niagara in improving its building and air quality.” said St. Catharines MPP Jim Bradley. “The funding allows Start Me Up Niagara

to continue to expand its great work making a positive difference in the lives of people in downtown St. Catharines.”

“The new HVAC makes it possible for the SMUN Centre to be fully utilized year round. For the first time we were able to hold programs and activities during the hot summer months without having to choose between hearing or melting. Not only did it increase comfort it was more efficient. It’s a double win!” said Susan Venditti, Executive Director of Start Me Up Niagara. “We are thankful for the Ontario Trillium Foundation’s commitment to supporting community and the services SMUN’s Centre offers to the individuals it serves.”

Thank you to the Ontario Trillium Foundation and our fundraising campaigns that made this upgrade possible!



# The Art Bully

by Aaron the Art Bully

**So I'm in the Art Me Up corner again**, staring at the artmeup code of conduct, which is laminated to withstand the coffee and paint that flows free in these parts. In case you're wondering, I had a great time in Newfoundland, and I wish I coulda brought you all there. I took 1300 photos, and if you want to see them, well then you better help me find wall space...you artists at Start Me Up have it all and I'm not sure you wanna share with me. I had a birthday recently, the best part about it was sharing with everyone the chocolate ice cream cake that I demanded. Jimmy Bradley was there too, but he didn't know it was my birthday so he never gave me any gifts. Before I blew out my candles, I yelled at everyone upstairs that I hope we never get arts supplies ever again...

They call me Aaron the Art Bully now, for various reasons, what's yours? The main one I've been hearing is that I peer pressure people into doing art, any art, and that I don't judge too hard unless they want me too. The weird is sometimes the most wonderful, and plain yogurt is just not my style anyway. Christmas is approaching and so is coldest night of the year, you know that giant fundraiser that keeps the SMUN doors open year round? All I want from Santa is an Art Me Up assistant, maybe a downtown studio for all of us to share, to hear my Grandmothers voice (she just turned 96), and spend time with what's left of my family (you know who you are). I don't care if people give me anything, unless they are cards filled with money addressed to 'Team Art Me Up', the team that will take out the 'Tony's Tigers'. There will not be blood, but there will be lots of competitive spirit and creative ways to express it. We will release the Tigers, but only after we catch them in second place. When that happens that Tiger on top of the big outdated TV, will be replaced with whatever we feel like. I also feel that they should all be forced to make art everyday for every dollar they lose by.

Congrats to everyone that never thought I would last this long, to be honest it's been awhile since any employer actually valued having me around and what skills I have to contribute. Art is hanging up in the city all over downtown and we won't stop there, will we artists? One of the the funniest things to happen was seeing Mayor Walter Sendzik and some councilors fight over Loriann Smith's art. It's titled '*Councilors in Colour*', and the city's public arts advisory committee ended up buying her art for their Civic Arts Collection. This means that it's going to be inside city hall till the zombies come for us. But I don't believe in them so it's likely there forever.

Formal Arts workshops with occasional guest teachers, are every **Thur. from 2pm to 3:30pm, at 17 Gale Cres aka Art Me Up Alley**, I changed the name, do you like that? I do what I want, most of the time anyway. Excuse me while I go plunge the toilet once more lol. Oh before I forget, I need help organizing The 2017 Art Me Up Awards. Drop-in to see me anytime, monday-friday, maybe even make some art, or else, you know, the bully comes out!



aug 19, 2016

art crawl



city hall closing party  
nov 14, 2016



# Why the artist?

by Julia Blushak

Why the artist? Why the exchange and celebration of creative expression in this world?

When is a beam of wood hewn with purpose and not meant for a fireplace or bound to become the supports of a small dwelling? How are the sounds of a chisel and carving tool not the same as the ax that echoes in the forest when trees fall? Who is shaping and painting a carefully prepared length of natural wood and is it the same person who bundles cardboard boxes and leftover containers neatly to be recycled?

Now take a walk into the quiet of Centennial Gardens Park or around the property at Rodman Hall Arts Centre in St. Catharines to consider the world without our share of human and natural beauty. Spend time with the Totem Pole by artist Doug Cranmer or visit, for free, the galleries of contemporary and historical works in the elegant RHAC. Then sit under a tree and ponder the art of living.

There is a universal and personal intent inside the artist and their chosen artwork—that gives life meaning and makes life more bearable. To the best of our knowledge, there were no critical schools of thought for the first humans who etched into bone tools, animated caves and rock faces with energetic drawings, or devised distinct markings for record keeping and communication across distances. The urge to translate lived or imagined experience has evolved across cultures and with time. It is manifest within the original people's respect for ceremony and harmony

for living with the planet, as well as in the sometimes silly displays of talent shared digitally, globally and almost magically in our 'next stop is Mars' innovative times.

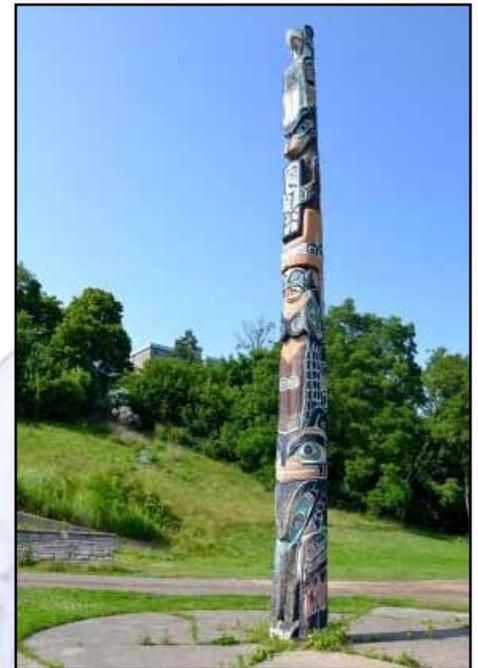
Why appreciate the artist and the arts for what they are and what they offer? Our local public policy gears are now shifting behind the scenes in Niagara and St. Catharines. For anyone listening, there is a serious call to action for a community to change—to transform, to make, and to create the possibilities for well-being. The arts have always invited us to do and share and celebrate and so we all have a part to play. Support a local artist, dare to sing your songs, read a new author, pay attention to your neighbourhood's renewal or attend a cultural event that you can afford. And for those with pride in their own creative daring, learn to maintain a secret smile when sharing your original efforts. People can and will say the darndest things.

## COMMUNITY UPDATE:

Brock University is in a consultation process to devise a transitional capital sustainability plan for Rodman Hall Arts Centre. By 2023 Brock will divest its role as sole funding and manager for this long-time cultural gem. What does Rodman Hall mean to you? Be part of the discussion. Sign a petition. (<http://www.stcatharinesstandard.ca/2015/05/06/herod-rodman-hall-pressured-over-brock-funding>).

As of September 2016 the City of St. Catharines approved a Centennial Garden Partnership Fund, inviting local organizations and non profits to make application

for community projects suitable to this underutilized park. The successful projects will be matched up to \$15,000. in funding for years 2016-2017 (from the Parkland Dedication Fund). We can't wait for the community announcement in 2017. (<https://www.stcatharines.ca/en/playin/CentennialGardens.asp>).



**1967 installation of Totem Pole created by Kwa' Waka' Wak artist Doug Cranmer in Centennial Gardens Park, east of downtown**



**Rodman Hall Arts Centre St. Paul Crescent, west of downtown St. Catharines**



# POETRY

## Untitled 1 *by Amanda Roorda*

As I came to the end of the Welland Canal  
There burst forth a city  
St. Catharines! It seemed to want to yell  
If you stop here it won't be pretty.

The city shone with the glow of the hopeful youth  
Education taught them the way  
Into middle class bliss and ignorance, ignoring the truth  
That the fallen have tried to force away.

I am one of the fallen, broken to my core  
Addiction, loneliness, poverty and hate  
They filled my being till I thought I could take no more  
My life was unable to even follow its preordained fate.

Until I came across a place that opened its door,  
Filled to the brim with the people mostly ignored,  
By a society consumed with acting like they are worth more  
Than the fallen souls that are scattered on the floor.

"Start Me Up" was the name given to this piece of mind  
A feeling of acceptance buzzed into my soul,  
All because of other's open hearts, warm, friendly and kind  
Have welcomed me into their home, making me almost feel whole.

It was filled with loud laughter, and shouts of anger and glee  
Where old drunks and young punks work hand in hand  
Helping those the system forgot about, to acknowledge and see  
Their true value and worth, it is more than prime land.

Encouragement and inspiration is the free gift they give  
Full of concern and praise from the endless volunteers.  
They show you how to become the best version of you and still live  
And how a stranger's kind smile can erase all your fears.

"Start Me Up" opened its arm to my broken heart.  
Overwhelmed with utter worthlessness and pain  
Until I felt a glimmer of hope that was given to me from the start  
They made me believe I could change myself and cover my stain.

A place to many, seems run by the confused, broken and alone  
Overflowing with loneliness, pain and despair  
If only they could look further and break through the stone  
of society's stereotyped, "rejected and unwanted" who do know how to care.

It's a home to many, a home where no one feels abused.  
We are shown our own inner beauty; with our smiles and tears  
we smash down our own walls and become fused  
Into a family created from our own strength; we love and never fear.

I have gained so much from every fallen soul I have passed  
They opened their hearts and held me close  
And even when I came apart, and only wanted to fall fast  
I begged for them to let me go, but they held me the most.

All I know now is I need to say thank you for seeing  
all my beauty, inside and out, forgiving my many flaws  
My mind is now open and aware of it all, completely freeing  
the pain and anger that grew before, releasing me from its claws.

I never imagined a place as broken as me  
would become a home, filled with family and friends  
A home like I have never known before, a home that set me free  
Being a part of the broken and fallen isn't just a sad end.

I am one of society's social rejects, broken and pushed aside  
But with the help from all those at "Start Me Up"  
I was shown that I am who I am, and I do not have to hide,  
My value is only measured by how I hold my cup.

## BELIEVE IN LOVE

*by R. G. Cousins (2016)*

Like the sun, like the moon  
the stars above  
Believe in Love  
Nevermore will we, hear the door close  
on our dreams  
Take me here, find me there, everywhere  
I believe in truth  
I believe in you  
And all I want to do  
All I feel is true  
Let the power of your life, shine bright  
Every day, every night, it's all right  
Like the sun, like the moon  
the stars above  
Believe in Love



## Charity Case *by Cathy Sisler*

Give them your wages so they can give to your charity  
give them your faces so they can label your savagery  
give them your places or they'll take them by robbery  
give them your graces and they'll leave you in poverty

a smiling white man came the other day  
you were quite surprised: he didn't make you pray!  
He said "All I want is a picture of you,  
I'll put it on the web and good fortune will spread. After all:  
God helps those who help themselves,  
we've been helping ourselves to your country for years,  
that's why we're able to help you now,  
so let me take a few pictures, and can you fake a few tears?"

After all, God helps those who help themselves,  
and doG bites the hands who feed the doG,  
and God smites those who fake his name,  
and doG fears those who feel no shame.

Mr. Generic Businessman #1  
showed up in my email the other day, he said  
"Instead of your usual sales tax refund  
we're giving you a sales tax 'benefit' today  
because that's just the kind of Beneficent guys  
me and my cronies are nowadays.  
We're not able to tell you at this time  
when you might be eligible to receive our kind-  
ness, but one of these days (if we're still in power)  
you'll be able to go down to the Giant Tiger  
and buy a can of tuna to go with the Kraft macaroni  
that you like so much,  
maybe even a can of Campbell's Cream of Mushroom  
you could actually make a casserole  
if you have a pot to piss in in your hole.

After all, we like to help those who help themselves,  
and we've been helping ourselves to your pittance for years,  
and we can see that you're still hanging in there  
somehow (though we don't know how)  
but that's why we're able to help you now.  
After all, we've been helping ourself to your pittance for years...  
no, no, don't thank me,  
and please spare me the tears.

So give me your wages so I can give to your charity,  
and give me your faces so I can label your insanity,  
and give me your places or I'll take them by robbery,  
and give me your graces so I can keep you in poverty.

After all, God helps those who help themselves,  
and doG bites the hands who beat the doG,  
and God smites those who fake his name,  
and doG fears those who feel no shame.

**You see things  
and say 'Why?'  
I dream of things  
that never were;  
and say  
'Why not?'**

**George Bernard Shaw**

## Dark Thrasher at Midnight *by Paul Shtogryn*

Darkness in the night, the moon is bright,  
Clouds are grey, the cold makes it brisk and tight,  
The overgrown grass can be seen from with delight  
As their reflections in the water pond makes it quite a sight,  
The days are shorter, colder at night  
But it's only pleasures of things that might;  
Spring is in the distance far from near,  
But we cherish the moment now and dear.



# Who gets the homeless?

by Paul Shtogryn

Its interesting the week of the US elections where Trump won there is controversy again about the homeless. Though it was written by a reporter from The Standard having nothing to do with the presidential election, we had this before. I remember having Sunday lunch at SMUN in October 2006. There was grumblings about how lazy pan handlers were and how many people would not give them a cent if they were approached them. This was a similar article in pan handling and the homeless. the writer did not investigate this man and his pet dog who goes to pan handle in both Niagara Falls and St. Catharines. There was no interview in regards to why he was doing this and what were the circumstances that led to his poverty and homelessness in the first place. There is still a stigma that many are drunks looking for more booze and a bottle of wine before they disappear in some small alley or at a bench in Montebello Park. Mental illness also still scares people and depending on the city it can vary between 25%, 30% or even 50% of the homeless in that particular city. In St. Catharines its about 30% thanks to Mike (the knife) Harris closing mental hospitals. Several of these patients have been hospitalized for 25 years and were dumped on the streets. Without taking their medications they became even worse some even violent.

A few do not trust the characters that stay at the churches for Out of the Cold for fear of either violence, putting up with people



they don't like or something will get stolen what they have. whatever the excuse they preferred their privacy and want on be left alone

I remember a little girl named Phoenix saying "everybody wants to be loved." Just because people say bad things about the homeless does not mean they are." A smart mature little 5 year old.

That brings us back to The Street News. Having a background in writing and taking a course in creative writing at Niagara College I'm one of the first original writers of The Street News. It all got started because of a similar newspaper article how bad pan handling homeless people are. So with all the grumblings going on we decided to tell our side of the story because no one else would. We have been around since December 2006 ten years going on ever since. For all that read our little paper have a safe healthy season ahead. Stay warm as it appears to be a colder winter than last year.

**It's not the size of the mug that matters**

by Aaron Wagner

Interview with Jessica Yendt,  
Housing Support Worker

**Aaron:** How do you start your day?

**Jess:** Coffee, the life blood that fuels champions, and SMUN.

**Aaron:** Do you feel the need to help those in need when you are not working and it is housing related?

**Jess:** I am always offering up my card, directing people to resources, services and the housing department. Helping share the work load prevents burnout.

**Aaron:** What happens when you walk through the door to start your day?

**Jess:** Being pulled in every direction, the day is typically full before it starts. Providing support to participants with the ultimate goal of housing preservation is not a one person job. Even though we are hardly in the same place we always know what everyone else is doing and try to help each other whenever we can. Collaboration is key.

**Aaron:** Do you think housing support should be 24/7?

**Jess:** There are many resources in the community, but there aren't many that offer intensive support. However, the Out Of The Cold hostel program helps bridge the gap by having a housing team member or centre staff at each night that can direct participants to the centre or help with housing on site.



by maurice prindiville ofs

# “What do you want me to do for you?”

Human beings are designed by God to help to one another and to be helped by one another. Helping and being helped make us complete and make us happy. Helping and being helped are the basis (and the truest signs) of human love.

But, sometimes, our attempts to help (and our attempts to love) are frustrated by assumptions we make about each other - and about what help the other wants. I decide what you want (need) without asking you. As well-intentioned as this may be, it is arrogant; it is disrespectful and can be stereotyping. My assuming that I know what you want is a disguised way of saying that you are not as capable or as smart (or as interested in your well-being) as I am.

In the Gospel of Mark, a blind man named Bartimaeus is sitting on the curb when Jesus passes by. When Bartimaeus begins to shout. ‘Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!’ Jesus asks him, ‘*What do you want me to do for you?*’ (Mark 10.51) That seems a foolish question. Doesn’t Jesus know what a blind person would want?

It is not a foolish question; it is a loving and a human question. Asking, ‘*What do you want me to do for you,*’ says, ‘*I will listen to you.*’ It says, ‘*I want to know what you truly desire, not what I desire for you...not what I decide you need;*’ it says, ‘*I respect your right to know what you want, and your right to speak for yourself.*’

In the Christmas Season, we have traditions about giving gifts. Some Christmases I have given a

gift that the receiver asked for...but sometimes I have given a gift that I assumed the receiver wanted...or should have wanted.

This Christmas, and always, might we give the gift of respecting each other, the gift of inviting the other to express her or his own genuine self...the gift of saying

(honestly and lovingly,) “*What do you want me to do for you?*”

Make the God of all goodness bless you through the coming of His Son into the world at Christmas. May your love for others bless you this Christmas and always.

*peace and all good to you*  
deacon maurice ofs

## THE NAME:

### AN ADOPTEE'S PRAYER OF GRATITUDE

You haven't always understood  
and I've not always been the daughter I should  
but you've always lent a supportive hand  
and more and more I understand  
the most precious gift you had to share  
was the Name you gave to me to bear  
and you've loved me through my hopes and fears  
and the inevitable rain of tears  
your Love has sheltered me since I was six  
from the teasing, the names, the stones and sticks  
it was you who came when I cried in the Night  
my parents, not by birth, but Right  
I'm stronger for that pain, I know  
having your Name has made me so  
O' my parents, not by Blood, but Love  
what was it you were thinking  
of when you gave me your Name?  
why was I the one your final decision rested on?  
yet choose me you did and it gives me a lift  
to think of your most precious Gift  
for I'm "store bought" you see, not of "home grown" measure  
and the price was a Name I'll always treasure  
and it makes me sad to know there are some  
who still don't have a happy home  
but I hold up my head with Pride, you see  
all because of the Name you gave to me

by Melissa "Rainbow" Fowler  
Rainbow Zetwal

# GAME Night at SMUN

by Liz Roulston

After a few invitations from Jen Pegg from the SMUN Employment Program I attended Games Night at Start Me Up Niagara. This event happens every couple of weeks on a Friday evening from 6 p.m. to 8p.m. It is hosted by The Willow Community Support Services, a non-profit agency that provides consumers of mental health safe spaces that encourage community, empowerment and healing. They facilitate arts based workshops, host family board game nights, outdoor activities and a host of other activities and outreach programs that provide inclusion and community for individuals and the whole family.

And, that's who was there, families and individuals enjoying themselves with board games, drawing, crafts and conversation. As with every community event there was a counter of snacks provided by the host facility and the participants of TWCCS. People were having fun in a place they felt welcome and at home. Founder/Director, Shauna Senier, told me these game nights, are one of many of their activities that attract upward to 30 people some nights. The conversation is lively and the only requirement is that people take part in an activity. It was a good time and I hope to go back. Thanks for the invite.

**FOR MORE INFO CHECK OUT:**

**Tel: 905-328-9277**

**[www.thewillowcommunity.ca](http://www.thewillowcommunity.ca)**

**[thewillowcommunity@gmail.com](mailto:thewillowcommunity@gmail.com)**

**[shauna@thewillowcommunity.ca](mailto:shauna@thewillowcommunity.ca)**

## with The Willow Community



## News from Diaconal Alley

by Karen Orlandi

As many of you may know, I'm attending school to become a Diaconal Minister in the United Church. School involves making the trip twice a year for an intensive program in Winnipeg I was there for most of October, and came back early Saturday morning on October 29th. Later that day I attended a Youth Festival at Silver Spire Church as part of my student placement.

I have a confession to make. I have never been in a youth group before, not as a youth, and not as an adult – really. So you can only imagine my eyes when after a scant few hours of sleep, I came into the church on Saturday morning to a couple hundred excited youth running all over the place.

I had the privilege of joining with the GO Project to take some of the young people to join in some outreach and service with SMUN. Several of the young people went off to plant garlic at our Vineland acreage, some more stayed at the centre and prepared lunch for 150 participants, and the group I was with donned rubber gloves, grabbed garbage bags and headed into Centennial

Park behind the centre.

Everywhere we went, people said hi, and thanked the group for helping to clean up the park. We ducked a few times to avoid the flying discs of the golfers, but no youth were injured during our clean-up. They were so efficient; we had time to head up Gale Crescent, and down Division St. They had wonderful questions, and we had some really insightful conversations about poverty, volunteering, and what is the difference between fixing, helping and serving.

When we returned to Silver Spire, we gathered in the circle with the three leaders from the GO project and shared some of our experiences of the morning. I can't tell you how exciting it was to hear what they had to offer. The theme they kept coming back to was the sense of community and gratitude that they had witnessed. I was amazed that they caught on to the most important message of the morning, which shows you how inexperienced I am.

I have never been so proud to be part of the community in and around SMUN, that I was brought to tears. Thank you for showing these youth, what it means to be part of. Thank you everyone, for letting these young people see what a wonderful, loving, nurturing place this is!

# SMUN Services

## ODSP Employment Support Program

43 Church Street, Unit 610,  
St. Catharines, ON L2R 7E1

**905.984.4000**

Faye - x 226

Jen - x 225

Casy - x 223

Carol - x 227



## Housing Support

**905-984-5310**

Kyle - cell 289-686-0639 x 507

Tara - cell 289-241-4248 x 511

Caleb - cell 905-394-2241 x 512

Scott - 1-905-512-0781

## the Centre

**START ME UP  
NIAGARA**

Working Together... Moving Forward

Centre - Dawn  
Kitchen Service - Susan  
Income Maximization - Ada  
Art - Aaron  
Volunteers - Karen  
Out of the Cold - Tony



## I'm Dreaming of Homes for Christmas

by Tara Thibodeau

'Tis the season to be jolly! Most of us are looking forward to Turkey dinners, all those delicious sweet treats that moms and grandmas make. Decorating Christmas tree's and gingerbread houses, oh the fun! For some those gingerbread houses are the only home they will get to see. They don't have stairs to run down Christmas morning and a tree with presents under it or stockings hung.

The shelters and agencies do their best to give a Christmas for those that are homeless, they get gifts of socks, hygiene products, and some treats, but what they really want is a home to call their own.

The real estate out there is a tough and expensive market that makes

homelessness extremely difficult to overcome. With prices like \$750 for a bachelor pad homelessness appears to be on the rise because it eats up two thirds of their income.

I dream of a home for everyone, because no matter who they are or what they do, everyone deserves a home. Those who have a home should appreciate it, especially at this time of the year.

So if you're a landlord think about the change you could make—most of the individuals rent would be paid directly to you. **So if you want to give joy this Christmas the biggest Christmas present you could give is a home.**

# go vegan!



~ by Angel  
Alf Woytovich

*I have been a vegan for many years. I eat fruits and vegetables only. Yesterday I had lunch with friends. On the menu was 'vegan' hotdogs. I never thought I would eat something that resembles meat. I was curious and excited to try the 'vegan' hotdogs. I could not believe how good they tasted. Vegan hotdogs are great and I would eat them again.*

**Go vegan!**



## Healthy Recipe for Cold Days

- 1 minced onion
- 2 minced garlic cloves
- 1 tsp. coconut oil
- 2 tsp. turmeric
- ¾ cup cherry tomatoes
- 1 can diced tomatoes including fluid
- ½ cup low sodium vegetable stock
- 1 tbsp. apple cider vinegar
- 1 tsp basil
- ½ tsp sea salt...pepper

### STEPS

1. Fry onion, garlic and coconut oil on medium heat
2. Add tomatoes and turmeric
3. Cook until tomatoes are soft.
4. Add canned tomatoes, veg stock and vinegar and basil.
5. Bring to boil and simmer 5 more minutes
6. Blend/ purée season with salt and pepper to taste.

# PROFOUND PROFOUND PROFOUND



Artist Cathy Sisler gifts SMUN's Dawn McIntyre with painting, *Dawn's Eye View, 2016*

**by Dawn McIntyre**

As I struggle to find the right words to describe this particular moment in my day, the word profound would be an understatement. Many things happen on any given day at the SMUN centre and each one lends to give purpose to my day; however, there are always those that help us to define who we are and what we do, and that is what happened for me. Cathy Sisler, a renowned artist, with her own story to tell, is a name I have been hearing at Start Me Up Niagara for as long as I have been here, but I was actually privileged to meet her approximately a year ago and instantly felt a wonderful warmth from her. Over time I had more interactions and each time drawing closer to her charm; all this being said, I never really knew how connected we were. It started off as any other day here at Start Me Up Niagara and was soon transformed into one of my most memorable. I was approached by Cathy Sisler and asked if she could see me for a

minute; I directed her to the office as she unwrapped one of the most impactful images that I had ever seen put to canvas; it immediately brought me to tears.

As I was regaling this picture and telling her how amazing it was and expressing that I could see each and every one of the people I have seen through these doors in this painting, she gently told me it was for me; I was speechless. The deeper I looked at its images the more emotional I was getting; she truly illustrated a big part of my life on canvas. Everything about this painting felt personal; the fact that she was able to capture that piece of me that I felt was so guarded was beyond anything I could process at that time.

Then as if solidify this extremely magical moment in time, Cathy spins this masterpiece around and I see she has appropriately titled it, *"Dawn's Eye View"*..... What more can I say?



## SMUN remembers ~

- Carol Armstrong
- Alex Bell
- Pat Baretsky
- Rob Bemelman
- Carmen Booth
- Leo Cassie
- Ron Chute
- Khyber Combs
- Christine Creamer
- Eugene De Col
- Nathan Downey
- Johnny Escalate
- Tom Flowers/Wright
- Kaila Brittany Ford
- Bob Goldfinch
- John Hines
- Andrée Jodoin
- Rattan Lau
- Brian Lawrence
- Hector Lauzon
- Teresa A. M. Martin
- Patsy Maskell
- Mari-Anne McLaughlin
- Martin Ross
- George Butch Rush
- Paul Rustenburg
- Joseph Scales
- Sam Scaduto
- Elizabeth Skye
- Gillian Stevens
- Brandon Stickle
- Michael Walton

**SMUN Memorial Service**  
January 25, 2017 at 2:00 pm.

R.I.P. – Pearl Sharon Browne, September 18, 2016

# How the stars shine on

by *Angela Browne*

I now know what it feels like to be an orphan of the universe.

It is 2016. Movie stars, actors, musicians, artists, writers and other celebrities have all met their fate this year.... As somebody told me while I was visiting my mother at the hospital, this is the year that many of those who have helped shape our culture have passed on and made room for new. My mother was one of them, at least as far as my memories and values go. At the same time my mother was transferred to palliative care, another friend's spouse dies ... I learned by coming to the hospital, after a visit with my mother, and accidentally walking into the room where my friend was ... it was that day, I learned he had passed on as well, as another man was there in his place.

My mother was once lively and welcoming and, according to the hospital's staff, had the most visitors of everybody who had been on that floor. There were cards, gifts, candy, mints and other items left behind by other guests. It becomes real to you when everybody is then asked to sign in each time they come to see my mother, and when they leave, as it was getting clear at the end that her days were numbered in single digits, and her memory was fading. When we go through this and watch the passing of our loved ones, we learn what medical science has always known for years most of us do in fact die in our sleep.

Towards the end, my mother would speak as though she were in another room, another realm, another



world. She would refer to people who had long passed, and ask them about where they've been. She would make references to visitors, events, places she had been, but only in her thoughts. Momentarily she would look up and see me, as I continued to sit by her side and simply tell her, "I'm here, Mom". She would then know I was there.

I would bring my iPhone and play its music function using play lists put together from memories of songs from long ago that my mother always loved, and she would sing along with them, knowing them word for word. These songs brought her back to me, if even for a few moments, just so she can hear me tell her how much I loved her and how much I was going to miss her. As time drew on, she began to fade. At first it was one arm, then it was both, and then her legs. The

last thing I seen her do is answer her phone in her room to speak to one of her many friends calling in to check on her, as she fell asleep for the last time.

I left that night recalling the dreadful dream I had several months' prior that warned me her time was near, when I was rescuing people in the community from a large tornado. I saw my mother coming to me, and I tried to walk towards her to bring her to safety, and then suddenly ... she went up into a funnel cloud. That was when I knew her time was coming, the same way I knew years ago, in 1992, that she would survive the metastatic lung cancer blow she had been given back then... in those dreams, we were on a long, dark road with a lighted path to a medical centre, which turned out to be true ... she survived for twenty-four years after that dreadful day we I were told she was to go home and prepare herself to die.

I can now talk more about it and think about her, as I know I did the right thing for her... I said what I had to say, and listened to what I needed to hear, and been where I needed to be, up until her last moments on this Earth. But no matter how prepared one can be, it's a heartbreaker. Today I look up to the sky, and I still think to myself, how much I miss her, as I remember every word of encouragement, every affirmative value she shared with me, and her sense of humour that she kept till the end, as I learn to live on in her legacy.

**St. Catharines**

# OUT OF THE COLD



**Hot Meal with or without Overnight Shelter**

- Sunday: Westminster United Church  
180 Queenston St.
- Monday: Silver Spire  
366 St. Paul Street
- Tuesday: Roman Catholic Cathedral of St. Catherine  
67 Church Street
- Wednesday: St. George's Anglican Church  
83 Church St.
- Thursday: St. Alfred Roman Catholic Church  
272 Vine Street
- Friday: Knox Presbyterian Church  
53 Church Street
- Saturday: Queen Street Baptist Church  
57 Queen Street

**Out of the Cold (905) 984-5310 or (905) 641-2249  
Shelter Info 211**



**OUT OF THE COLD**  
Regular Schedule -

**St. George's Breakfast**  
Regular Schedule

**Ozanam Centre**  
Open Dec. 27, 28, 29, 30 & Jan. 2

**Salvation Army Christmas Dinner**  
Dec. 14, 3 pm & 5:30 pm  
at Westminster United Church on  
180 Queenston St.  
Tickets in advance - pick up tickets  
at Booth Centre 184 Church St.,  
Salvation Army Family Services

**Gord's Place - 84 James St.**  
Full Christmas Dinner  
Dec. 25. 11 am - 3:30 pm  
All welcome - thanks to DeVitis  
Family

**OW Closed:** Dec. 26, 27, 28  
**Jan. 2, 3 OPEN:** Dec 29, 30.

**ODSP Closed:** Dec. 26, 27, Jan. 2  
**OPEN:** Dec. 28, 29, 30.

**QUEST Community Health Centre**  
Closed at noon Dec. 23,  
all day Dec. 30, Dec. 26, 27, Jan. 2  
**OPEN:** Dec. 28, 29

**SMUN office & Employment**  
Closed Dec. 26 to Dec. 30  
Centre - OPEN regular hours  
Christmas Day - 9 am to 2 pm



Please visit:  
[https://canada.cnoy.org/  
location/stcatharines](https://canada.cnoy.org/location/stcatharines)  
contact Patty: (905) 984-5310 ext. 515

- These funds help:
- keep our doors open every day
  - maintain the building
  - increase programming for our participants

Our 2017 Coldest Night of the Year fundraising goal  
is **\$100,000.**



# EMERGENCY - Call 211 for resources | Contact Drop In Centres

EMERGENCY SHELTERS	PHONE	ADDRESS	BEDS	HOURS	RESTRICTIONS (Age, sex, addiction, etc.)
Hope House	905-788-0744	570 King St. Welland L3B 3L2	5	24hrs	Welland, Port Colborne & area residents
Nightlight Youth Shelter	905-358-367	5207 Victoria Avenue, Niagara Falls, ON L2E 4E4	10	24hrs	males and females, ages 16 - 30; no alcohol or drugs
The RAFT	905-984-4365	17 Centre Street St. Catharines, ON L2R 3A6	16	24hrs	males and females, ages 16 - 24; no alcohol or drugs
Salvation Army Booth Centre	905-684-7813 905-684-7990	184 Church Street St. Catharines, ON L2R 3E7	22	24hrs	males only, ages 19 and older;
Southridge	905-682-2477	201 Glenridge Avenue St. Catharines, ON L2R 3G8	35	24hrs	males and females; no alcohol or drugs
YWCA St. Catharines	905-988-3528	183 King Street St. Catharines, ON L2R 3G8	28	24hrs	females and females with children; no alcohol or drugs
YWCA Niagara Falls	905-357-9191	6135 Culp Street Niagara Falls, ON L2G 2B6	20	24hrs	females and females with children; no alcohol or drugs
OUT OF THE COLD	905-641-2249	see schedule	25	6 pm - 7:30 am	days at SMUN, over 16, males, females
CMHA Safe Beds	905-641-5222, ext. 254	15 Wellington Street St. Catharines, ON L2R 5P7	7	24 hrs	must be referred from hospital's community crisis care or mental health agency; 3 to 5 day stay; ages 16 and up; no alcohol or drugs
Men's Detox	905-682-7211	10 Adams Street St. Catharines, ON L2R 2V8	18	24 hrs	men only; no alcohol, drugs or smoking
Women's Detox	905-687-9721	6 Adams Street St. Catharines, ON L2R 2V8	12	24 hrs	women only; no alcohol, drugs or smoking
Gillian's Place (St. Catharines & District)	905-684-8331	P.O. Box 1387, St. Catharines, ON L2R 7J8	24	24 hrs	females and females with children; at risk of violence, no alcohol or drugs

## Start Me Up Niagara T : 905-984-5310 17 Gale Crescent St. Catharines L2R 3K8

**CENTRE** (upper) Mon, Tues, Th, Fri: 9 am-4 pm Wed 9 am-2 pm Sat, Sun: 11:15 am - 1:15 pm

(Christmas Day Dec. 25 9 am - 2 pm, Mon. Dec. 26, Fri. Dec. 30 - 9 am - 4 pm)

(New Year's Day Jan. 1, 2017 11:15 am - 1:15 / Jan. 2. 17 - regular hours)

**OFFICE** (lower) Mon-Fri: 9 am - 4:00 pm 12 - 1 pm Lunch: Closed Stat Holidays: Closed

**ODSP Employment OFFICE** 43 Church St. 905-984-4000

Mon, Tues, Thurs, Fri - 9 am - 4 pm Wed 9 am - 2 pm

## MEALS

St. George's Breakfast Program	83 Church Street	Daily 7:30am-8:30am	no cost
RAFT (ages 16-24)	17 Centre Street	Daily 6:30pm-8:00pm	no cost
Southridge	201 Glenridge Avenue	Daily 6:00pm	\$2.00
Ozanam Centre	235 Church Street	Monday to Friday 11:30 - 1pm	\$1.00
Start Me Up Niagara	17 Gale Crescent	Saturday, Sunday 11:15am-1:00pm	no cost
Out of the Cold		November 1 - March 31, 6 pm	no cost

**SMUN FAMILY OF BUSINESSES**

A Cut Under the Rest  
 Always and Forever, Love Trishxo  
 BBQ in a Bottle  
 Benita Collini Fine Art and Custom Design  
 Brush in Hand  
 Buckets & Brooms  
 Cakes by the Lake  
 Chronic Knitter Design  
 Craig's Making Pictures  
 D & J Packing and Moving  
 D J Contracting  
 Designs by Linda  
 DK Pickups & Deliveries  
 Do It All Landscaping  
 Dove's Gardening  
 Emotions by Corrina  
 Fabulous Beauti  
 Get-R-Done  
 Ghasemi-Montzer Consulting  
 GMH Cleaning  
 Greenough Property Maintenance  
 Home Help and Personal Care by Faye  
 International Resaerch Impact Service  
 Karen Fraser Babysitting Services  
 Kreations Hair Salaon  
 Lany's Window Washing  
 Maid 4 U Cleaning Service  
 Malcolm Cook Handyman Services  
 Mark Aleo Landscaping  
 MD's Caulking  
 Minor Cares  
 Muskoka Wind  
 Neat and Tidy Property Maintenance  
 Odds& Sods Jobber  
 Original Crafts by Loriann  
 Pears & Paws  
 Pebble Pets  
 PEMF Niagara  
 Plastic Canvas by Wendy  
 Scrumtralescence Arts & Crafts

Snapshot Reporting Data management Service  
 Step Into Healing  
 Sunshine Sewing  
 Tech for You  
 The Healing Experience  
 Twist Your Kilt DJ & Karaoke Service  
 Welland Computer Repair  
 William's Renovations

**BUSINESS SUPPORTERS**

7 Eleven  
 Anthony Balardo Insurance  
 Antipastos  
 Bella Noella's  
 Blue Mermaid  
 Canadian Tire - Welland Ave.  
 Carlisle Café  
 Casey's Evergreen  
 Chocolates etc  
 Club Roma  
 Cogeco  
 Con Gusto Artisan Bakery  
 Corporate Facility Supply  
 Costco  
 Dennis Morris High School  
 Desks Plus  
 Duff's Pizzeria  
 Edible Options  
 Event Central  
 Featherstone Estate Winery  
 Fed Ex  
 Fit to Eat  
 First Ontario Performing Arts  
 Fulton Fitness  
 General Motors Canada  
 Giant FM  
 Giant Tiger - Welland Ave  
 Graffiti Hot Dogs  
 Great Wolf Lodge  
 Guilty Burger  
 Gwen Teas  
 H2O Only  
 Holy Cross High School  
 Hoogasian Insurance Brokers  
 John Howard Society

Lucas Lift Truck Services Ltd  
 Mahtay Café and Lounge  
 Martin Farms  
 Minuteman Press  
 Miss Li Cake Boutique  
 MS Society of Canada  
 Niagara Artists Centre  
 Niagara College Culinary  
 Niagara Falls Bridge Commission  
 Niagara This Week  
 OMNI Media  
 Optimal Wellness Niagara  
 Partridge Iggulden LLP  
 Patrick Darte Funeral Home  
 Pharma Viva Pharmacy  
 Post Inn B & B  
 PWD Demo  
 Rankin Construction  
 Regatta Sports  
 Scotia Bank Convention Centre  
 Seaway Farms  
 Seiu Con Jiu Jitsu  
 Sheehan Mechanical  
 Simply Delicious  
 Snapd St Catharines  
 Sobey's  
 St Catharines Standard  
 Starbucks at Fairview Mall,  
 4th Ave, Martindale and Scott at Niagara  
 Stokes Seeds Ltd.  
 Marinelli's True "Italian Pasta Sauce"  
 Storm Hair Salon  
 Subway - Lake Street  
 Subway - Welland Ave.  
 The Laundry Tub  
 The Office Tap'n'Grill  
 Tree'n Twig  
 Trillium College  
 Tzu Chi Foundation  
 Village Wellness - Healing Centre  
 Vineland Research and Innovation Centre  
 Walmart  
 WP Warehousing  
 Wright Brothers Produce  
**THANK YOU - if we missed your business  
 please let us know.**



**Yes, I want to support Start Me Up Niagara**

Enclosed is my donation for: \_\_\_\_\_

\$25    \$50    \$75    \$100    amount\$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please direct my donation to:  \_\_\_\_\_

Street News    The Centre    Where it is needed most

**OR** - Go to [www.startmeupniagara.ca](http://www.startmeupniagara.ca) - 'Donations' - and follow

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_



**THANK YOU. Please make cheques payable to:  
 Start Me Up Niagara, 17 Gale Crescent  
 St. Catharines, ON L2R 3K8 (905) 984-5310**

**Did you know that Start Me Up Niagara is listed on  
 Canada Helps on-line: CANADAHELPS.org. They help!**