



Creativity in all Ministries Finding Beauty in Clay

Fall 2019: New Creations

Fall is the time that we and the Earth “wind down,” withdraw, and get ready to hibernate through a long winter. However, it’s also a time of new creation. In this edition of *Springs of Hope*, you will see how Fontbonne Ministries has been creative in its mission of responding to community needs through our numerous programs.

Creativity includes art, spirituality, companionship, fellowship, dance, and making a home more accessible. It is also about participation and fun.

Over the summer, our whole staff got involved in a contest to create a new tagline for Fontbonne Ministries.

The winning entry, *“Doing the ordinary with extraordinary care,”* is inspired by our founders, the Sisters of St. Joseph of Toronto. It speaks to the care and attention in what we do, and that often involves a good measure of creativity.

We’ve also been creating a new and up-to-date Fontbonne Ministries website. We look forward to the “big reveal” soon. Stay tuned!

Ben Vozzolo
Executive Director

“There are no mistakes, only new creations.” So states the striking art mosaic displayed inside **Studio on the Hill**. The mosaic, created by Sister Helen Kluge, Director & Teacher and her students, conveys a philosophy that pervades the studio.

Sister Helen inspires all who enter her unique pottery workspace with her assertion that creativity for creativity’s sake is more than just okay – it’s vital to a complete experience.

Recently, Jayne and Kathy, two women in the Danforth area, decided to explore their own creativity by taking a class at Studio on the Hill. These two long-time friends have previously taken a variety of classes together including woodworking and painting and were keen to try something new. The class – and resulting personal lessons – did not disappoint.

“I learned that I don’t have to be scared of the unexpected,” says Jayne. “One doesn’t have to throw something away because it’s not beautiful – we can own it and it becomes beautiful.”

Sister Helen agrees: “I encourage all of my students to work with what they have and to let the clay guide them.”

Joyfully modelling their new creations and observing others in the classroom including those with physical, emotional or developmental challenges – has led Jayne to realize, “Everyone has something to share.”

And in addition to artistry, there can also be a spiritual component in pottery – especially for the young adults who attend retreats at Studio on the Hill.

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Pictured above: Sister Helen Kluge’s philosophy for art and life at Studio on the Hill.

Art and Spirituality at Studio on the Hill

“Young people have a longing to connect art and spirituality,” says Erika Viray, Program Coordinator at **Faith Connections** (a ministry for young adults 18 - 39). At a recent retreat, Erika brought young adults to Studio on the Hill in East York for a day of creativity and spiritual reflection.

“Sister Helen asked us to think of shaping clay as God shaping us,” explains Erika. Participants read Bible selections together and responded to the reading by creating with clay.

“It can be intimidating to have a blank piece of clay in front of you,” Erika admits, “but the opportunity to shape it is a wonderful thing.” Many pieces were abstract – Erika herself produced a heart-shaped sculpture with a rough texture.



New pieces created by Kathy and Jayne at the Studio.

“It represented how we can go through hard times and get scars, but God’s love is there for us throughout.”

This event reflects only one area of Faith Connections’ programming.

“Retreats are very faith oriented and attract people who have committed to their spiritual journey,” says Erika. “But we also have programs like **Hike and Prayer** for exploring the city, **Theology on Tap** for faith discussions, **Faith in Action** for volunteering, and other events with a strong social component. Those welcome people who are still searching for and exploring their faith.”

Future programs and events will continue to address both groups and Erika is eager for Faith Connections to continue combining art and faith.

“Art is such an instinctive, evocative means of expression – and when we create, we’re engaging with how we see ourselves as God’s creations.”

Creative Companionship

For Genevieve, a new volunteer with **In Good Company**, creativity springs from a shared love of conversation, coffee and ice cream.

“It’s a win-win,” says Genevieve of her volunteer experience. “What I really wanted was to help seniors who are home-bound or isolated in the community.” And she is doing just that.

Susie is a senior who is visually impaired and lives alone in her west-end home. Weekly visits from Genevieve allow Susie some autonomy as well as a good dose of socializing – two of the main functions of the In Good Company ministry.



Ice cream in good company.

Employed as a school chaplain in the Dufferin-Peel region, Genevieve has also worked for and volunteered with Fontbonne Ministries in various capacities over the years. “One hour a week is brilliant,” shares Genevieve of

this current volunteer experience. “It allows me to help Susie with errands or just getting out for some fresh air.”

Creatively matching volunteers to clients can be a delicate task: “We match people geographically and by their shared interests,” says Lauchlan McInroy, Program Coordinator. “By getting to know volunteers and clients, we are usually successful in finding compatibility.”

“It takes a while to build rapport,” says Genevieve of her match. “But I’m confident that Susie and I will continue to enjoy our time together and also to learn from one another.”

Doing the ordinary...

with

A Community of Beauty

For three years, Karen Eckert, Activities Coordinator, has organized **Mustard Seed's** weekly **Whimsical Wednesdays for Women** where visitors enjoy lunch, socializing, games, sewing, and arts and crafts. "Everyone feels happy making something beautiful," says Karen, "and we're often thrilled and surprised by our own abilities."

A recent creation involves marine life on a wall-hanging tapestry. "All the fish, sea horses and turtles are made of felt, each decorated by a different woman — and together on the wall, they show that we're all part of this community."

Another group illustration presents colourful handprints from individual guests. For one new set of pieces, participants put dark silhouettes against bright backgrounds.



Karen is amazed by the artwork at Mustard Seed.

"A lot of our visitors come on Wednesdays for lunch and serving food is definitely central to all of Mustard Seed's programs," says Karen. "But I like to think they stay because arts, sewing, crafts and socializing are just as important." Participants can take their art home, but they will often leave it to

decorate Mustard Seed's walls.

"It means so much for someone to see something they made become part of the building," says Karen. "It reminds them that they're imaginative, that they've contributed — and they belong."

Creativity in Movement

Dancing has long been a favourite activity for seniors at **Village Mosaic**. "Dance improves range of motion and coordination," says Andrea Linton, Program Director. "That's why we offer everything from line dancing to chair based dancing where dancers sit while enjoying all the benefits."

For seven years, dancers have enjoyed moving to music in their chairs. And since June, there is a new activity, **Sharing Dance with Andrea**, based on a program from Baycrest Health Sciences and Canada's National Ballet School.

"It's a series of seated dances, made for seniors to increase mobility and circulation," Andrea explains. She has spent many



Sharing dance with Andrea at Village Mosaic.

mornings inviting participants to follow her in arm and leg movements as classic songs play. "With the right song and motions that match, we can imagine ourselves as baseball players or fish in the sea or bike riders in the summer." To prepare for leading these sessions, Andrea attended a teacher-training course at George Brown College and has

adapted the material for Village Mosaic's morning program.

One participant, Irene, particularly enjoys the spirit of these sessions. "There's a wonderful sense of sharing," she says, "especially when I see people dancing with me."

"It's all the fun with none of the strain," says Andrea, "and I'm happy to see it as part of Village Mosaic."

Creative Solutions



Fontbonne Place offers a forward-thinking home.

Sometimes creativity isn't obvious: it may not appear as beautiful handmade pottery or a collaborative dance. It can result by finding solutions in a subtle manner.

At **Fontbonne Place**, Leanne Kloppenborg, Director, Mission & Values and Volunteers, defines it by "Seeing a need and responding in a creative way."

To her point, renovations will be implemented to enhance the environment for the 18 residents of Fontbonne Ministries' rent-g geared-to-income building in east Toronto. One suite will be adapted and proposed modifications include: lowering or raising kitchen cabinets, making showers wheelchair-accessible, installing "grab bars" to bathrooms and adding handrails to the building's corridors. "As we age, our needs change and we adapt. Sometimes our surroundings need

to adapt too," explains Amanda Garrett, Facilities Director, Sisters of St. Joseph of Toronto, who is supervising the renovations.

How does Fontbonne Ministries decipher what needs to be done? Periodically, surveys are issued and the most recent survey taken by Fontbonne Place residents indicates they are content with their accommodations but are pleased to take advantage of adjustments being offered to them.

While the building is compliant with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, staff aim to be forward-thinking in their planning. "We want Fontbonne Place to continue being home for the residents and we work closely with them to make sure their accommodations suit them and their needs," shares Leanne.

#GivingTuesday is a global movement for giving and volunteering. It's a time when charities, companies and individuals rally together for favourite causes. This year, Giving Season begins on **Tuesday, December 3** just after the first Sunday of Advent and leading up to Christmas.

For many, Advent helps them to reflect on the season's themes of **Hope, Love, Joy and Peace** in preparation for the celebration of Jesus' birth.

Since Fontbonne Ministries' founding in 2000, we have received many generous donations that have helped build and grow our programs. Many donations arrive during December. Often, there is a note explaining how the donation is in honour of a family member, friend or a Sister of St. Joseph in lieu of a Christmas gift. This is wonderful way to share the Advent spirit.

This Advent, we invite you to consider how you can support our 2019 **#GivingTuesday** Campaign.

Our fundraising goal is **\$10,000**. We will keep the campaign running right up until Christmas Day. Thank you for all the ways that you support us throughout the year.

You can donate to this campaign online at givingtuesday.ca/partners/fontbonne-ministries or visit our website at fontbonneministries.ca. Please indicate your support of our **#GivingTuesday** campaign with your donation.

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Fontbonne Ministries, Sisters of St. Joseph, Toronto, offers diverse programs that are welcoming and inclusive. The charity was founded in 2000 by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Toronto, a community of women who, through their compassionate presence, respond to various needs. Fontbonne Ministries continues, with the Sisters, their mission of reflecting the love of God and neighbour.

The ministries are funded by the Sisters of St. Joseph and individual donations. Thank you for your support!