

Mark Your Calendars:

Physical health and movement are important to good mental health. Shalom will be holding the second

10,000 Steps for Shalom

Saturday, September 16, 2017

Get ready to walk, bike, run, or move in support of Shalom.

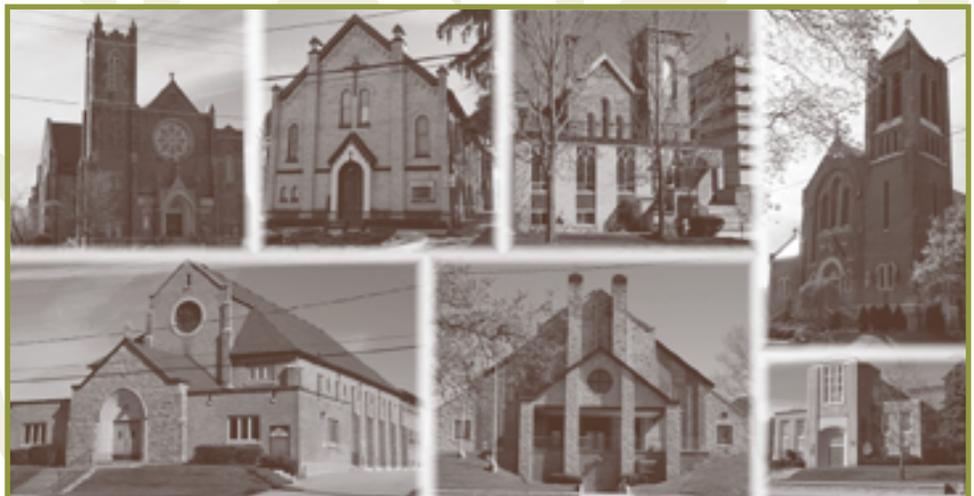
Register Online or by calling Shalom.



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Churches and Shalom: Connecting Through Clergy



A pastor or clergy is often the first person that those of us in a faith community turn to in times of crisis. The leaders in our faith communities walk with us spiritually and emotionally. They provide encouragement and guidance. Yet at times pastors and clergy may feel ill-equipped to address circumstances in their congregations.

This was the realization that Ralph Lebold had when he was working as a pastor in London, Ontario, and he had a person in the congregation who died by suicide. As one of the visionaries of Shalom Counselling Services, Lebold identified the need for a place where health professionals could engage with the faith community. A resource for pastors, clergy and congregations, as well as a counselling environment that was supported spiritually and financially by congregations.

It was in Lebold's vision that 6 years ago Shalom began offering a new program: counselling groups called Clergy and Counsellors in Consultation. Currently Shalom is offering four such groups for pastors and clergy. These groups continue to provide an important space for pastors and clergy to support each other in a safe, confidential setting with a counselling professional. Groups often run for many years, as pastors and clergy develop connections and supports that enhance their congregations.

These groups have been generously funded for the past 5 years by Wallenstein Feed Charitable Foundation. We look forward to continuing to provide this ongoing support for pastors and clergy in our community.

Learning to Ride the Waves: Addressing Anxiety

When young people are overwhelmed by anxiety it impacts their lives in many ways. From suffering academically to panic attacks, from avoiding people to experiencing severe mood swings. The reality is that stress and anxiety are a significant concern among young people.

A recent large scale study of Ontario teens found that one third report experiencing psychological distress. This is significantly higher than even three years ago.

One metaphor that often describes the experience of anxiety is that of a wave. When the wave approaches it may knock you down, you can't breathe, the wave is overwhelming, frightening and leaves life feeling unsafe.

Yet anxiety is part of life. The wave can't be avoided. The goal is to learn to ride the wave, to swim with it, to begin treading water, learning to let it wash over you and stay afloat. Mindfulness tools provide effective ways to manage the waves of anxiety.

Anxiety sneaks up when we are paying attention to everything but the present moment. Mindfulness is a skill that, with practice, can help respond to the waves of anxiety by slowing down, paying attention,

and problem solving with calmer thought processes.

Providing these mindfulness tools is the goal of a new group Shalom is piloting for youth and young adults to reduce stress and anxiety. Groups will be 8-weeks long and will run in the fall and winter.

We would like to recognize the support of Shantz Mennonite Church for the grant they provided to fund the first year of this group.

If you would like more information about Shalom's Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction groups please visit Shalom's website or contact Shalom.



Acknowledging Shalom's Supporters Through Art



Meg Harder installing Shalom's art piece recognizing the support of many donors in our "Growing Home for Shalom campaign".

To recognize the support of the community in completing the "A Growing Home for Shalom" renovation and expansion, Shalom commissioned local artist Meg Harder to produce an artistic piece to recognize the many contributors to this project and to bring to life the work of Shalom.

The piece features a stylized oak tree with special emphasis on the seed. The tree echoes a Tree of Life folk illustration. The names lay in the soil surrounding the seed, fertilizing the work of Shalom, to bring new growth in people's lives.
—Meg Harder

Thank you to Meg Harder for the inspiration, design and implementation of this beautiful addition to Shalom's home, and to the many contributors who made this project possible.

Hope, Help and Healing: Life Promotion in Action

“Courage does not always roar. Sometimes courage is the quiet voice at the end of the day saying, ‘I will try again tomorrow.’”
- Mary Anne Radmacher

Through her stories, information and inspiration, Tana Nash, Executive Director of the Waterloo Region Suicide Prevention Council, encouraged and brought a message of hope to those gathered at Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church for Shalom’s annual Spring Breakfast on May 6.

Tana spoke of the need to broaden our resources to live with the grief of suicide loss, prevent suicides, and promote hope. She used the analogy of a roller coaster. Tana asked, “would you like to get on a roller coaster without a seatbelt?” The obvious answer is no. She described how life has amazing highs and lows, and sometimes moves extremely quickly. “The best thing we can do,” she said, “is to build the best seatbelt possible to experience the roller coaster of life.”

At the Shalom Breakfast, Tana helped provide some possible tools and resources to build our seatbelts. To do this she used the framework of hope, help and healing.

Tana began with her journey of healing. She spoke of the loss of her grandmother and her sister to suicide. Tana described her process of learning to grieve, and she gave examples of the tools that helped her: reading books, journaling, counselling, exercise, acknowledging and remembering her sister. This is the work of healing, an ongoing journey that requires practice and perseverance.



From Left: Steven Reesor Rempel (Development & Communications Coordinator), Tana Nash (Guest Speaker), Susan Schwartzentruber (Clinical Director), and Harold Albrecht (MP Kitchener-Conestoga).

Helping was about intervention. These are the tools and resources for helping someone who is thinking about suicide. Tana provided a range of tools, including listening attentively, and communicating about thoughts of suicide. She promoted “Safe Talk” training, and creating safety plans. Tana described helping as being present with people who are struggling to live. As one suicide attempt survivor described it, “I don’t want to die, I struggle to live.” The journey of helping is about being present and aware.

Tana chose to end with the theme of hope. Life promotion is all about hope. As Tana described, some of the best suicide prevention never talks about suicide. Tana once again provided tools and resources to help on our journeys, including positive messaging, encouraging each other and building our sources of strength. Whether that is taking care of your mental health, physical health, spirituality, family supports or other community connections, the more we build these sources of strength the more resilient we will be. The journey of hope is about building positive messages in our community.

It is with gratitude, that we thank Tana for bringing us a powerful message of hope, help and healing.

“Once you choose hope, anything is possible.”



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***Helping People Grow Toward
Peace and Wholeness***

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The story of 2016: Making a Difference...

“Believing in the possibility of positive change encourages Shalom counsellors to continue to enter into the sacred space of people’s struggles.”

This reflection by Wanda Wagler-Martin, Executive Director of Shalom, in the 2016 Annual Stewardship Report describes the importance of believing in the possibility of positive change.

The differences that Shalom could make this year, through the support of our community, are demonstrated in many ways:

- The dedication of Shalom’s staff who increased counselling and consultation services by 11% this past year.
- The success of *10,000 Steps for Shalom*, where over 60 people walked/ran in support of affordable counselling.
- Staff who spoke at 10 workplaces and congregations on topics related to mental health and wellbeing.
- Statistical analysis of outcome data revealed significant clinical improvement in 87% of people who sought counselling at Shalom.
- Shalom supported 1,995 people through our services.

Thank you to everyone who made 2016 such a wonderful year at Shalom!

You Can Help

Shalom’s ability to continue providing counselling subsidies at our current level is dependent on the thoughtful and heart-felt support of our community. Every donation to our operating budget supports Shalom in providing services and fee subsidies now and into the future. This mutual aid, supporting others in a time of need, is important to Shalom’s mission, “Helping People Grow Toward Peace and Wholeness.”

Shalom is grateful for every gift that is received, and this reminds us of the community of care that surrounds our work. Thank you!

If you are interested in donating to the ongoing work of Shalom Counselling, you can donate in the following ways:

Cheque

Cheques can be made payable to:
Shalom Counselling Services Inc.

Credit Card

Credit card donations can be made online or by phone:
www.shalomcounselling.org
(519)885-9690

Legacy Gifts

Legacy gifts (estates and wills) can be made through Abundance Canada