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Partnership Fund

The Partnership Fund, established in 2005, is an endowment fund created to support the work of Shalom in perpetuity.

It is administered by Mennonite Foundation of Canada.

Consider making a legacy gift to Shalom through your will.

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“Addictions are among us— what can we do?”

Shalom's annual Spring Fundraising Breakfast was held on Saturday, May 7, 2011 at Steinmann Mennonite Church in Baden. About 165 people attended.

The guest speaker was Rev. Brice Balmer. His topic was “Addictions are among us—what can we do?”

Balmer is an Associated Professor of Practical Theology at Waterloo Lutheran Seminary and is Chair of the Integrated Drug Strategy Task Force for the Region of Waterloo. Previously he led spiritual discovery groups in addiction treatment programs at House of Friendship where he served as chaplain for 23 years.

Balmer said addiction has social, cultural, individual and spiritual components. He noted that abuse of alcohol is the largest single addiction problem facing our society. It is exacerbated because alcohol consumption is not only condoned but encouraged and aggressively promoted in many ways.



Brice Balmer (right) speaks with Dave Rogalsky at Spring Breakfast

*“One of our spiritual tasks is
to see the image of God in
every human being.”*

-Brice Balmer

Balmer noted that those of us who struggle with an addiction experience several stages in recovery. The first is pre-contemplation, when we are not yet ready to change but begin to question our situation. The second stage is contemplation, when we start to believe that change might be possible. Third is preparation, when we assess alternatives and prepare to take action. Finally comes action, when we begin the recovery process. It is hard work and slips and relapses are common. Support and encouragement are important components of the recovery process.

Balmer concluded that “Because faith communities believe in the dignity of each person we need to be advocates for the creation of housing, healthcare and social supports that help people consider recovery, journey into sobriety and find long term contentment.”

“Personal and immediate response”

by Rev. Eleanor Epp-Stobbe

I am grateful for the ministry of Shalom Counselling Services; for the holistic and holy care that is sensitively provided.

As a pastor I feel confident in referring individuals, couples and families to Shalom.

I appreciate the personal and immediate response that Shalom offers for people in need of counselling. I am thankful that as I provide pastoral care to those



in need, these people are also able to benefit from the excellent professional counselling services at Shalom.

Our congregation values the insights offered by counsellors from Shalom as they share their wisdom with us in occasionally leading Christian education classes, small group meetings and preaching in Sunday morning worship.

Thank you Shalom Counselling Services for your vital contribution to our wellness and peace!

Eleanor Epp-Stobbe is Lead Pastor at Erb Street Mennonite Church in Waterloo.



Meet the Shalom staff

The staff of Shalom has a variety of interests both professionally and personally that brings a richness to their work. The Shalom team is:

Brian Laverty – enjoys working with couples and also has a keen interest in addictions and building self esteem. Brian’s personal activities include digital photography, gardening and building with stone material.

Wanda Wagler-Martin – our Executive Director is interested in exploring areas that contribute to contentment, balance and well-being in people’s lives (see page 3). Wanda is inspired by reading and always has several books on the go.

Karen Huehn – our Clinical Director is energized when journeying with people who experience a renewed sense of hope and healing in their lives. Away from work Karen is restored by spending time with her family (including grandchildren), reading, camping and travelling.



Front L-R—Wanda Wagler-Martin, Cynthia Cober, Jeanne Kelly, Susan Schwartzentruber; Back L-R—Rod Miller, Brian Laverty, Karen Huehn, Brian Hunsberger

Cynthia Cober – is the friendly face of Shalom who greets clients as they walk through our doors or call on the phone. At home Cynthia keeps busy caring for her family and reading.

Jeanne Kelly— works with a diverse

group of people but has a special interest in grief and loss issues. Jeanne finds peace and restoration in nature and through walking.

Susan Schwartzentruber – is energized by work with teens and is passionate about supporting survivors of abuse and trauma. Susan finds peace and energy as a member of a choir and playing piano.

Rod Miller— appreciates the variety of clients he sees including those experiencing a crisis. To relax Rod likes to golf, play the fiddle and spend time with his family.

Brian Hunsberger—our newest team member works on marketing, communications and fundraising. Brian enjoys writing, biking, hiking, golf and hockey.

Love the questions, live the answers: Living meaningful lives

by Wanda Wagler-Martin, MSW RSW



A recent phone call prompted me to reflect on the struggles of people trying to balance life's many demands. These fine people are pursuing esteemed work roles; doing all the "right" things, putting their education and intelligence to good use. But why is this not enough? Or is it simply too much? What are the missing pieces? Why are so many capable, dedicated, hard working people struggling under clouds of anxiety, depression, fear and uncertainty?

I question the impact of technology on our unsettledness. Is part of the struggle a consequence of the omnipresence of technology in people's lives? The proliferation of portable communication devices has resulted in people being too available; "Always on," to use the slogan of a local producer of such devices.

This reality can have a cumulative and weighty impact. Each checking of e-mail or responding to a voice or text message takes a person out of their present lived experience and shifts their thoughts to another context. The repetitive nature of this checking, and the increasingly compulsive need to check, seems to promote a restless anxiety in many people. The importance of placing limits on this boundary-less availability seems paramount. The "freedom" created by this technology also has the potential for negative consequences. People need permission to set limits. Our very well-being depends on it.

Of course it's not just about technology. To assume that would negate the range of other factors that contribute to our well-being or lack thereof. It would also frame technology only from the shadow side as opposed to recognizing its important and even life-giving contributions. The multi-layered pressures created by our lifestyle choices and the countless opportunities available to us are beginning to cost too many people too much.

How do we respond? From the context of balance—mental, emotional, spiritual, physical and social—how can we realign our values and root ourselves more deeply in those things that matter most? I worry about the risk of not learning how to do this.

"How can we realign our values and root ourselves more deeply in those things that matter most?"

Robert Wicks, in Touching the Holy talks about our "beautiful ordinariness." When we are so driven by our need to "be someone", to accomplish things and prove ourselves to the detriment of listening to what we most need, we put our very souls at risk. These outward signs of success have an accompanying cost if these external drivers are not deeply connected with our internal sense of what brings us peace and wholeness.

As a contemporary society we are searching for what Father Thomas Keating calls "emotional programs for happiness." Will our next accomplishment, purchase, self-help book or yoga class, give us what we most need? While each of these may hold dimensions of helpfulness, they are not enough if they are simply superimposed on lifestyle choices that are not working for us.

I feel deeply for the voices of struggle that we are privy to in our work at Shalom. The role of a counsellor is not to have all the answers but is rather to ask the right questions; questions that prompt people to find needed answers for themselves. Ultimately this is what matters most and will impact desired change in people's lives.

I also believe that within our communities of family, friendship and faith, we have significant opportunities

"The role of a counsellor is not to have all the answers but is rather to ask the right questions."

to ask questions that will aid our quest to live from places of contented meaning. However, we have to give ourselves permission to ask the questions and not fear

them. We also have to realize that the answers will not be immediate and this can be challenging when so many things in life seem instantly available.

Learning how to live from a place of deep contentment is a process that continues throughout our lives. May we have the courage to ask the questions and to live the answers.

Wanda Wagler-Martin is Executive Director of Shalom Counselling Services

Seedlings

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*Helping People Grow Toward
Peace and Wholeness*

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New era at Shalom; mission remains the same

The closing of the Shalom Counselling Centre in Leamington/Windsor in December, 2009 led to a significant reorganization of the agency. Changes include the following:

- The former Regional Committee has become the Board of Directors. Board members are Gladys Bender (Chair), Andrew Roth (Vice-Chair), Marilyn Leis (Secretary), Bob Shantz (Treasurer), Lynne Blake-Dickson, Jim Erb, Rev. Gary Knarr and Gloria Shantz;
- A new logo, brochure, website and newsletter have been created;
- Brian Hunsberger has been hired as part-time Development Director to assist with marketing and fundraising;
- A Development Advisory Committee chaired by Jim Erb has been created to work with the Board and Brian on marketing and fundraising.

Despite these changes Shalom's mission remains the same:

Helping People Grow Toward Peace and Wholeness

Pastors & Counsellors in Consultation group starting in September

Shalom Counselling is committed to being a resource to the faith community. This includes support of pastors. The role of pastoral ministry is complex and multi-faceted. Pastors experience a myriad of situations that call for much wisdom.

Shalom is available to pastors to provide consultation, counselling or spiritual direction. Shalom staff has also pondered if there are additional ways to support pastors that include a "preventive" component, in addition to responding to pastors' requests for help in times of challenge.

In the process of meeting with ministerial clusters in the fall of 2010, pastors named their appreciation of the ways that Shalom counsellors have supported them in their ministry. In one cluster the question was raised as to whether Shalom staff would consider running consultation groups for pastors.

This discussion has led to the development of a group that will be launched in September, 2011 called: *Pastors & Counsellors in Consultation*. It is intended to offer a place for pastors to meet with colleagues and a counselling professional to discuss common issues they are facing in the context of their ministry.

There has been significant interest expressed in this group. One group is full but Shalom is open to starting a second group if needed. This group is being offered at a subsidized rate thanks to the generous support of **W-S Feed & Supply**. Shalom thanks Paul and Darlene Wideman for this special donation.

Pastors who would like more information about these groups should contact Wanda Wagler-Martin at 519-886-9690.