

Report to Board Thursday Community Lunch January 13, 2025

Special Happenings:

- ◆ 26 free tickets to Victoria Symphony's Christmas Pops held on December 8 at the Royal Theatre given out to guests and volunteers
- ◆ 200 pairs of quality socks collected through Cool Aid's yearly campaign
- ◆ 100 beautiful quilted place mats donated by Victoria Quilters Guild
- ◆ members of the congregation signed Christmas cards for all the lunch guests
- ◆ 65 gift bags containing chocolates, nuts, socks and cards distributed to guests before and after Christmas
- ◆ Victoria Foodshare was closed on Dec. 26 and we were concerned about not having food to give out. We talked with the Team Leader and Social Worker at the Urgent Care Centre next door and they conducted a Food Drive to fill the gap. We were thrilled that they responded so readily to our request.
- ◆ The Volunteer team decided to continue with our regular schedule over the holidays and guests were very appreciative that we were open on Boxing Day.

Volunteers:

We now have 24 volunteers, including 6 with the Foodshare delivery. John and two helpers come in every Wednesday 12:00- 3:30 pm to prepare the meal for an average of 63 guests. We had two volunteers who shared the third position but due to health they can no longer come. Jo Jensen, our second, very reliable helper who volunteers Wednesdays and Thursdays, now receives an honorarium. I am always on the lookout for another helper.

We continue to attract new volunteers as needed- through other volunteers and social media. Some are guests who have decided that they'd like to help. A new couple who attend church are seasoned volunteers from Nanaimo and have been very helpful with the dishwasher and cleanup. Many volunteers go on vacation or have other activities and inform me ahead of time, which enables me to plan.

Our Volunteer Appreciation Party, in late November, was a dinner held at Hazel and Ryon's beautiful common room with a fireplace and lovely ambience. Food was paid for by our grant and organized by Hazel, Mark, Ryon, Marilyn and Heinz. We played some games and about 18 volunteers attended. There was lots of laughter, time to talk and delicious food and we are grateful for the work done by the "party team."

It is with heavy hearts that we say "Goodbye" to Kris Unger, who was a faithful volunteer since the family moved to Victoria. Kris passed away over the holidays and will be so missed. He started by organizing the Foodshare table and expanded his contribution to coming in early every week to set up tables and help with anything that was needed. He had a regular table of guests that he served. His calm and gentle presence added so much to the Lunch and his memory will live on for all who knew him.

Community Profile: We were featured in the Spotlight page of our MLA Grace Lore's newsletter, which is sent out to all her social media.

Alan Thurston kindly did a photo shoot on two Thursdays and photos were sent to our contact at the Victoria Foundation. Zunaira has posted them in the church newsletter, on Facebook and other sites.

Plans for 2025

To research and apply for future funding, as we are halfway through our current grant.

To refine and adapt the program to fit the needs of guests and volunteers.

Joanne's Absence:

Due to surgery I will be absent from the Community Lunch from January 22 for about 5 weeks. Hazel, our "winter volunteer," has kindly agreed to take on the coordinator role. She continues to be a huge emotional and physical support for which I am very grateful. Hazel will also have the help of Chef John Carroll, with his knowledge and invaluable experience, as well as that of our amazing volunteers.

Submitted by Joanne Keelan