



JULY 28, 2017



1,000TH HOME CELEBRATION IN HONOUR OF EPHRAIM BROWN

Background Information

In late July, 2007, the life of Ephraim Brown was cut tragically short while attending his cousin's birthday party. Caught in the crossfire of a gang shooting, Ephraim, an eleven year old boy, died on the sidewalk, only a few short steps from home. The next morning, over a hundred people from the community and across the Nation gathered on the streets in a silent prayer of solidarity and determination that such a tragedy should never happen again in their community. In the months that followed, many Torontonians united together to establish Ephraim's Place Community Centre. The name "Ephraim" comes from the ancient Hebrew word which means "to find blessing from adversity."

It is with this in mind that Ephraim's Place Community Centre has started to provide programs and services that give children, youth and families the skills and tools they need to build a successful future and bring about positive personal and community transformation in the Jane-Finch and Jane-Sheppard neighbourhoods.

Beginnings of Refresh

The relationships and partnerships that began in those few weeks after Ephraim Brown's death gave rise to Ephraim's Place Community Centre. One of these partnerships was between EPCC and Toronto Community Housing Corporation. As the weeks passed and

the sense of crisis waned in the community, EPCC and TCHC met to discuss ways to continue our partnership to meet the ongoing needs of our community. The question was asked, *“If people can come together and the community can be strengthened through tragedy, is there a way to bring people together around a positive event?”* Thus, Refresh was born.

Description of Refresh



The concept of Refresh is simple. Volunteers work with residents to paint their homes, build relationships, and strengthen the community. Refresh begins with a registration process inviting all interested residents to sign up for the program. After registration, the next phase of Refresh is the preparation phase. During this phase, pre-inspections are made in each home and arrangements are made to prepare for the painting stage. The third phase is the actual week of Refresh when the painting is done by residents and volunteers (from across the GTA and beyond). This is always an exciting and eventful week. It is important to note that volunteers do not do the work *for* the residents but rather *with* the residents.

All residents are required to participate with the volunteer workers and to even provide a lunch for the crew. In many ways, the lunch is more important than the actual painting. It is during this time that the paint brushes are set aside as people eat together and get to know one another. It is also common for neighbours to work together to provide the lunch thus creating a kind of block party atmosphere. As neighbours get to know each other better, they are encouraged to help each other with the work as well. This strengthens the level of ownership in their community and deepens their community pride.

This brings us to the fourth and final phase of Refresh. It is our hope that the work and all the activity surrounding Refresh will give rise to an increased level of community involvement. It is also our hope that the Refresh program will create ongoing and long-lasting local programs and individual participation in community initiatives.

Ceremony Details

This will be a monumental day! We will bring Refresh full circle, back to our roots. We will be painting the home where Ephraim Brown and his family lived. This will be a reminder not only of where Refresh began, but also how much has been accomplished over the past 10 years. But, more importantly, this will be a fitting way to remember the life of Ephraim Brown and to find comfort in the fact that true to his name, **blessings** continue to come from **adversity** .

- Date: Monday, July 31 2017
- Location: 1876 Sheppard Avenue West, Unit 2
- Time: 1:30 PM Special Ceremony

For those interested in helping us paint our 1000th home, please arrive at the gym of Ephraim's Place Community Center (1875 Sheppard Ave W.) at 9:00 AM for the orientation session.

For More Information Contact:

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Ephraim Brown (Age 11)

5TH ANNUAL BOWDEN CHAPEL WALK-A-THON

The inmates from the Experiencing God Alumni are finalizing plans for the 5th Annual Chapel Walk-A-Thon to take place on Saturday, September 9, 2017.

Last year, 300 inmates and volunteers walked close to 2,000 kilometres around the prison exercise yard. Funds raised by sponsors on the outside totaled over \$30,000.00, which went to support the *Canadian Food Grains Bank* and *World Renew* food and agricultural projects in Ethiopia.

Once again, we are inviting all Chapel Volunteers and friends to promote the project among your networks.

This year, the funds raised will support a World Renew conservation agriculture program in Kenya.

Please find attached to this newsletter a Walk-A-Thon information brochure and poster, along with a sponsor sheet.

To make a donation, please make your cheque payable to Innisfail Church of the Nazarene, designate it as "Walk-A-Thon," and mail it to:

Innisfail Church of the Nazarene
4904–48th Street
Innisfail, AB T4G 1V1

Please contact me directly with any questions about supporting the Walk or making donations.

Rev. William ‘Bud’ Sargent (MA)
Protestant Chaplain (Prairies)
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SYRIAN REFUGEE DISCOVERS CHRIST THROUGH LEBANON CHURCH

As Naseef* helped his parents toil in the fields of the family farm in Syria, he dreamt of a different life. Someday, he told himself, he would become finance manager in a corporation.

Naseef was well on his way to realizing his dream when he enrolled at university to study his passion: economics. But the Syrian civil war broke out in 2011 and shattered his dream.

The Syrian government began drafting young university men into the army. However, they did not draft men who failed in their studies. Some students deliberately failed for two years to avoid government military service. Not wanting to participate in the war, he made the painful decision to fail out of university.

Naseef took a job in a small glass shop and rejoined his family with their farm work. The war came to Naseef’s area of Syria in 2013. When the government sent about 200 troops to fight the opposition forces, the village showed them hospitality. Naseef’s family took 10 of the young soldiers into their house, fed them, and became their friends. They exchanged contact information so they could stay in touch.

After the soldiers moved on to a more intense area of the fight, Naseef and his neighbors could not get any responses from their new friends. They later learned the horrifying news: all the soldiers had been massacred in an ambush. Rumors and fears circulated about traitors.

Naseef says that this was the reason why many young Syrian men are so afraid to join the military.

"It's not like I'm fighting for my country," Naseef said. "I'm going to die because of the traitors."

Naseef's family decided to send him to Lebanon to save his life. He moved into a house with other refugee friends near the Beirut Church of the Nazarene. One day, Naseef was invited by a friend to the church. He was greeted with a warm welcome by the people. Fascinated by the teachings, he began attending regularly. Naseef was raised in another denomination. To Naseef, his family, and his village, going to church was simply a religious practice.

To view this article in its entirety, please visit: <http://www.nazarene.org/article/syrian-refugee-discovers-christ-through-lebanon-church-0>

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