



# THE ARK

## Summer '20 Newsletter



### *Fare Well*

This is my forty-third and final newsletter. I've enjoyed visiting with you over these ten plus years. We reflected on many issues and shared lots of news items. Many have kindly shared with me how much they enjoyed the newsletters and there have been a few corrective comments. Over these years, much has changed and much has remained the same. One thing that hasn't changed, except perhaps grown in intensity, is the role the *Ark* plays in nurturing a supportive community of people who are largely shut out of the mainstream economy, politics and welfare.

In the June 2010 newsletter, I introduced the core team of staff and volunteers who were then helping to care for daily operations. All served at least for several years. Some, like Wayde, the Assistant Director and Larry J. who manages supplies and does our shopping after driving for four years, are still here. We've participated in the memorial service for a several and others have moved on. In recent newsletters, I have introduced new volunteers who function as department heads, such as Dawn M. in Arkware, Mark K. in The New School of Colour and Stan R. in the van, along with navigator and assistant, Albert K. The point I am making is, it takes a team to sail the *Ark* and over the years, we have had the best. People who beg for forgiveness if they are too sick to come in, or in one case, would come in as soon as his chemotherapy was finished. Whatever credit there is for keeping the *Ark* going and making it a more vibrant community belongs equally to these people who have made me look good. I love and will miss them. If you have been thinking about volunteering or wondering if you have a purpose or can contribute anything, I guarantee you there is a place for you here.

Of course, the clients are memorable, too. Everyone has a story and some are heartbreaking. I would say that most are here, not simply because of a bad decision but because of bad circumstances – early home life, trauma, physical or mental infirmities, illness. And here is perhaps the most painful lesson I have learned: in every life, there was a time they reached out for help and it wasn't there. In essence, love failed. And that is why, although the City has an amazing array of resources, the need for a Christian mission remains – our primary service is love.

Donors are also vital members of the *Ark* community, although many never set foot in the building. When I tell other ministry or charity leaders of the faithfulness and generosity of our donors, they are amazed. No one has to give here – there is no direct or indirect benefit to giving, other than the satisfaction, or better yet, joy in knowing that you are expressing the best of human qualities in caring for others. Of course, many give because it is an expression of their faith – that God is honoured when we provide for those who cannot care for themselves. My very first donor passed away last month. She was the first to respond to my first newsletter, calling in to donate via her credit card. She has called in several times a year ever since. Her faithfulness will be missed but we trust there are others to take her place.

The unseen partner in all this, I am convinced, is God. The Bible says God cares for the poor – and that we should, too. People have showed up to volunteer, given funds or asked if we needed something, saying something prompted them. Knowledgeable observers have said they don't know how we accomplish so much with so little resources. The *Ark* is a place of miracles!

It has been an honour and privilege to have served together in a place dear to God's heart.

**The Ark Aid Street Mission, Inc**  
696 Dundas Street E., London, Ontario N5W 2Z4  
Tel. 519-667-0322 Fax: 226-289-3045  
E-mail: [info@arkaidmission.com](mailto:info@arkaidmission.com) Web: [www.arkaidmission.com](http://www.arkaidmission.com)



## **Welcome**

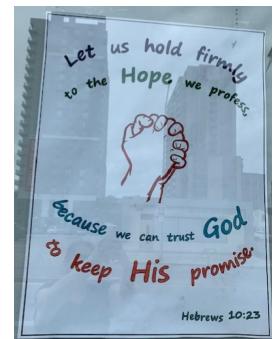
After nearly a year of reflecting, evaluating, strategizing and searching, the Board of Directors has appointed Sarah Campbell as the incoming Executive Director. Sarah has been on site since May 4 and will take the full reigns on June 26, when Doug officially retires. Sarah is a Pastor's daughter, whose first job was directing her church's children's ministry. She has extensive experience in community development having served recently as the Director for Community Development with London Middlesex Community Housing and as the Executive Director of Meals on Wheels London. She is married to Leighton and has four children.

Sarah states, "I am thrilled to be joining the team of staff and committed volunteers at the Ark who serve together to meet physical, emotional and spiritual needs through following Jesus' example of love and grace for all! It is an honour to build on the legacy of retiring Director Doug Whitelaw and ensure that the beautiful spirit and culture of the Ark continues as we envision the future. It is a privilege to be able to add value and accompany people whose life circumstances are difficult, whether for a season or a life long struggle. We can share an eternal hope with others which can bring freedom, belonging and purpose."

We look forward to planning a celebration of Doug's service when we can all gather together again.

## **What We're Doing**

We have provided takeout meals since restaurants have closed, having only missed one night. People and businesses have been generous and we actually have more food than when this started. Teams have also been willing to make and bring sandwiches for weekends. It has been a challenge to get some folks to keep distance but thus far, the virus has not really made its way into this population. Staff has been great, willing to be here, although we have reduced hours for some (while maintaining their usual pay). As of May 25, we are slowly re-opening. Afternoon snacks have resumed via takeout with just a couple in at a time. Arkware is open, with limited occupancy and we are doing tax returns again. We have installed plastic shielding on counters. We have a good supply of hand sanitizer, face shields, masks and gloves have been donated. Sarah has been working on plans to re-open, following the relevant rules. It has been an interesting way for her to get to know the staff, volunteers and programs. We've also put some signs like this one in the window to encourage everyone.



With no one in the building, we have taken the opportunity to tile the walls in high touch areas by the steam table. The compressor to cool the office, mentioned as destroyed in the last newsletter, has been replaced. The roof, last replaced in 2002 will be re-done in the next few weeks. We have also launched ArkMedia, producing video of the stories of the people of the *Ark*. Look for ArkMedia or my channel on YouTube. You are welcome to join our Thursday morning prayer walk to bless the folks of the Old East Village.

## **Finally**

I know you will support Sarah's leadership as you have mine. I am retiring now because I told the Board at the beginning I would not hang on. The *Ark* is in as strong a position as it ever has been, so it is a great time to hand it to new leadership with vision and passion for the future. One thing that won't change is our fundamental character as a Christian mission. I will remain involved with the London Food Coalition and ArkMedia. After a hopefully restful summer at our cottage, we will see what else comes my way.

Thanks again for all your support over these years and especially to those who have given this spring to help during the crisis. This summer's roof replacement will be in the range of \$70,000 - \$90,000 (we're working on quotes now) Help with that, in addition to our regular needs would be a great encouragement to Sarah.

Please pray the *Ark* team and community remains healthy, just as we are praying for you. Although volunteers may not be able to come in yet, we are thinking of ways to keep connected. Stay tuned!

*Doug Whitelaw*  
*Executive Director*

***Enriching a family of caring and understanding  
through the love of Christ***