



## This is us...

### Spring 2018 Newsletter

The programs offered in Fontbonne Ministries are wide-ranging and varied. As you read the articles in this issue, we hope you will see what binds the ministries together: offering people opportunities in safe spaces to flourish.

Each ministry focuses on people and the desire we all experience for inclusion and to share our gifts with others: exploring creativity to make creations of clay or jewellery for family members, sharing insight with other young adults, being supported in recovery from illness, forging a life in a new country or new living situation. What we hope and pray for each individual who comes to us is that they will not only function, but that they will be encouraged to flourish as they move forward in their life's journey. Each story in this edition of *Springs of Hope* encompasses a different idea of success; from the seemingly small to those that are life-changing.

— Leanne Kloppenborg,  
Administrator

### From Bangladesh to Canada: A Newcomer Makes Her Dreams a Reality

Mahmuda sits smiling in the community gathering space at **Mustard Seed**, happy to be “home.” “I love the people here,” she says of the Sisters, staff, volunteers and participants.

Originally from Bangladesh, Mahmuda immigrated to Canada in 2013. Although she enjoyed extended family and a successful career, the political, economic and social climate was difficult and Mahmuda made the brave decision to emigrate.

“It was a hard journey for me and at times I felt so depressed,” she says of the transition. Still, she persisted: Mahmuda found a place to live in Toronto and, after researching the job market, decided to pursue her pharmacy designation. After studying for months, writing four separate exams and undertaking months of training, she was ul-

timately successful. On November 2, 2017, Mahmuda became a licensed pharmacist in Canada.

In no small part, it was the kindness provided by Sr. Barbara Grozelle and others at Mustard Seed that helped Mahmuda fulfill her dreams. “I will always be grateful to them; they are part of my success,” she says. Her new “family” not only provided encouragement but skills. They helped Mahmuda hone her English and, as she says, learn the subtle but important differences in our Canadian business and social etiquette.

What is Mahmuda's formula for success? “Be determined in your goals and don't let your sadness kill you.” Now employed as a pharmacist near Mustard Seed,

*Photos above: Studio on the Hill,  
Mahmuda and Sr. Barbara.*

Mahmuda wants to pay it forward. “I know how hard it was for me and I want to help others make their dreams come true,” she

says. Anyone who witnesses her determination has no doubt that, with Mahmuda’s help, others will prosper.

## Come as You Are: Diverse Approaches Make Faith Connections Stronger

Kataryna (Kat) Ryba may be new to **Faith Connections** but she’s well-versed in the nuances and kinship of Catholic young adult ministry. “I’ve been involved in varying degrees with the church my whole life,” says Kat who came on board as Program Director, Faith Connections in the spring of 2017.

Kat brings enthusiasm, joy and a sincere desire to connect with people and to connect participants to one another and their faith. She also brings a love of social media—a tool that can help to bridge gaps. This is especially true of the ministry’s audience—people ages 18 to 39. “Social media has unlimited potential,” says Kat. “It can be used by people of all ages, ethnicities, genders, religions, and abilities.”

Faith Connections has enjoyed long-term success. Kat feels the explanation is two-fold: The first element relates to the Sisters of St. Joseph themselves. “Faith Connections thrives because the Sisters are part of the programming and actually come out to events,” explains Kat. “Our participants love interacting with them and it’s wonderful to see Sisters listening and being present—young adults want to be heard,” she adds.



*Kat Ryba hosting Theology on Tap.*

A second measure of success: Highlighting issues related to social justice. Today’s young adults are yearning to understand and address issues such as war, poverty, homelessness, human trafficking and Indigenous issues. “Our programs are wide-ranging and relevant,” says Kat. “It’s important that we keep up-to-date and present diverse perspectives. I’m thrilled that we take risks and seek to understand what’s important to today’s young Catholics.”



## Finding Words

In March 2013, Richard had a stroke that left him unable to walk or speak. After months of rehabilitation, he could walk with a cane, but had trouble communicating with words. His live-in friend Peter was an excellent support, but Richard sometimes felt isolated. “I would just sit and watch TV. I wasn’t talking very much.”

In 2016, Richard sought friendly visits from **In Good Company** and, for two years, Lauchie McInroy, Program Coordinator, has been visiting Richard each week for two hours. “Lauchie gets me talking,” says Richard.

Together, they’ll play Scrabble and engage in other vocabulary-building exercises and often, they’ll chat about recipes, travel and sports. “Sometimes, I can’t say the word I want,” says Richard, “but I can say another word that works. Lauchie gives me lots of choices that I can use.”

Lauchie’s background is in education so he had a good starting point. “I did a lot of research into language development and learning,” he says, “and Richard is always so excited to play word and memory games.”

“Since the stroke, I’ve lived, but I want to do more,” says Richard. “I want to tell jokes. I want to cook. I want to talk. And Lauchie helps me know that I can. Having him in my life has been a blessing.”

*At left: Lauchie McInroy with Richard.*



## Joy in Jewelry

In 2015, Pat was enjoying her retirement and her passion for making jewelry (in which she's self-taught). As an occasional participant at **Village Mosaic**, she offered to lead a jewelry making class for seniors.

"We make necklaces, brooches, charms and more," says Pat. These can present a challenge. "As a senior, I know that as we age, eyesight diminishes, fingers weaken and hand-eye coordination is lost." She plans the class with this in mind. "The projects look complex, but I make sure they never need too much dexterity to assemble."

Each session begins with Pat showing a completed version of what each person will make individually. "The samples are inspiring," says Josie, a participant who has made pendants, bracelets and paper

bead constructs. "I love creating something as beautiful as what Pat shows us and with my own hands."

Pat is delighted by how a class planned as a single event has, at the participants' request, become a monthly program. "I find it offers a wonderful group experience

where everything can be made by individuals, but everyone can work together," she says. "By the end, each participant has jewelry they made themselves, and all this socializing and creative success has carried on for three years and counting." This is one of many enriching programs at Village Mosaic.



Pat leads a jewelry making class for seniors.

## An Oasis of Hope in the Urban Jungle

In 2002, more than 100 women applied for a space at **Fontbonne Place**. Founded by the Sisters of St. Joseph as an antidote to a growing need for housing, Fontbonne Place provides 18 rent-g geared-to-income apartments for a vulnerable sector—older, single women.

Interestingly, eight of the original 18 residents still live there. These women enjoy a close-knit community where socialization, volunteerism and support are key to its success. "The Sisters were very deliberate in how they designed this ministry," says Leanne

Kloppenborg, Administrator, Fontbonne Ministries. "Now, almost two decades later, we've learned a lot and continue to adapt our thinking around affordable housing."

As such, Sr. Thérèse Meunier, President, Fontbonne Ministries & Congregational Leader, Sisters of St. Joseph of Toronto, recently wrote to Prime Minister Trudeau on behalf of the congregation and other Religious. The letter affirms his government's recent actions and urges continued efforts to help

provide safe, stable, affordable housing for all Canadians.

Housing is a constant and rising concern: According to the Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association, in 2016 more than 171,360 households were waiting for help in Ontario. This is an increase of more than 45,000 households in a little over a decade. While waiting lists everywhere grow, Fontbonne Ministries continues to support residents who are doing their part to develop and thrive in a distinctly challenging world.



Fontbonne Ministries  
SISTERS OF ST. JOSEPH, TORONTO



## The Life of Clay

Since 1990, Sister Helen Kluge has taught pottery at **Studio on the Hill**, and she has a special place in her heart for students from Grant House, a home for women rehabilitating from addictions. Their program involves art therapy which includes three classes with Sister Helen.

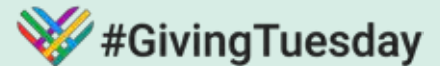
“The women come to the Studio unsure. Most haven’t done pottery,” says Sister Helen, who begins with a demonstration that participants find inspiring.

“I didn’t think I had the skill for this,” says Christine, a first-time student. She was intimidated by the textures in the sculptures on display. “I thought people made those designs by hand, but Sister

Helen demonstrated how we take a patterned fabric and roll it into clay. Now I realize that anyone can make almost anything here.”

Christine is working on a bowl for her mother and Sister Helen is delighted. She understands that everyone from Grant House is trying to change. “I see clay as life itself,” she says. “It starts out unformed, but we can shape it into something beautiful.”

In the final class, the women finish their artwork but leave it for Sister Helen to glaze and fire before delivering it to Grant House. She always anticipates her students’ reactions. “I love imagining their faces as they open the boxes and see their success.”



All of us at Fontbonne Ministries would like to thank those who contributed to our first ever Giving Tuesday campaign. On Tuesday, November 28, 2017, we raised over \$6,400, surpassing our goal of \$5,000! We are thrilled by the generosity and enthusiasm that was shown during this inaugural campaign and are already planning next year!

People often ask how they can support us. There are many different ways. One is to volunteer. Today, we have over 70 registered volunteers and we are grateful to all of them! Currently, we are in need of volunteers for “friendly visiting” through In Good Company. Isolation and loneliness among older adults and seniors is a growing concern in the GTA. We do our best to meet these needs but can always use more committed visitors.

If you would like more information on volunteering with Fontbonne Ministries or to learn how you can support us financially, please contact us. Our contact information is below.



Fontbonne Ministries  
SISTERS OF ST. JOSEPH, TORONTO

[www.fontbonneminstries.ca](http://www.fontbonneminstries.ca)

For more information, email:  
[infofontbonneminstries@csj-to.ca](mailto:infofontbonneminstries@csj-to.ca)

Tel: 416-467-2640  
Fax: 416-429-6414

101 Thorncliffe Park Dr.  
Toronto, ON M4H 1M2

To support these programs:  
**Vickie McNally**  
Development & Communications  
Email: [vmcnally@csj-to.ca](mailto:vmcnally@csj-to.ca)  
Tel: 416-467-2641

For volunteer information:  
**Leanne Kloppenborg**  
Administrator  
Email: [lkloppenborg@csj-to.ca](mailto:lkloppenborg@csj-to.ca)  
Tel: 416-467-2640

Charitable Registration No.  
86408 4090 RR0001

*Fontbonne Ministries, Sisters of St. Joseph, Toronto, offers diverse programs that are welcoming and inclusive. The charity was founded in 2000 by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Toronto, a community of women who, through their compassionate presence, respond to various needs. Fontbonne Ministries continues, with the Sisters, their mission of reflecting the love of God and neighbour.*

*The ministries are funded by the Sisters of St. Joseph and individual donations. Thank you for your support!*