

WOOLWICH COMMUNITY SERVICES

# WCS

Since 1974

COMMUNITY INFORMATION

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

KIDS & I

FOOD BANK

YOUTH CENTRE

THRIFT STORE

CHRISTMAS GOODWILL

CARE-RING

MOBILITY LOAN CUPBOARD

EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

FAMILY VIOLENCE PREVENTION PROGRAM

ST. JACOBS FAMILY SUPPORT CENTRE

Supported by the Government of Ontario

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# Community Connections

SPRING 2011

## Overview by Don Harloff

Hello once again to all our volunteers, donors, and friends of Woolwich Community Services.

We, as always, are so appreciative of the respect and concern residents of this community have for one another. We see it constantly in donations of food given to our Food Bank, donations to our Christmas Goodwill program, and financial donations received throughout the year. This generosity supports the work we do.

Our challenge over the year, and in years ahead is to maintain and grow this amount of giving. At one point in time, government grants were the answer when developing and maintaining social service programs in this community. This no longer is the case. Many government funders are no longer able to provide even modest increases in funding. For instance, two of our current funders have not provided additional dollars in 11 and 8 years respectively. This of course does not keep up with inflationary costs or demand for services.

This fiscal year just ending has seen the agency deplete reserves like no other time in our history. This is not sustainable and must be corrected either through service cuts or by increasing revenue primarily through donations.

We will be embarking on a community quest to look at expanding our donor base of businesses, individuals, and groups willing to support our programs with a multi-year commitment. This will allow us to

better plan in coming years and to be able to have some predictability in a certain area of our donations.

We ask you to consider passing this message on to your connections within the community.



*Your Community Info Centre*

We have finally caught up to the 21st century and its technology, thanks in large part to Leigh-Anne Quinn. Leigh-Anne has prodded me along to where we are now on Twitter and have a Facebook business page.

Those of you with Facebook can search Woolwich Community Services under business pages and can simply check the “like” button to be connected. Others who may use Twitter can find us by typing WCServices or WoolwichCommServices.

We hope to see many of you at our annual Volunteer Appreciation Evening on Wednesday April 13, 2011 at Lion’s Hall. Let’s meet and celebrate your accomplishments over the past year!!!!

**‘Together We Make A Difference’**

# Community Support

Since the inception of WCS in 1974, the agency has been working with the community to ensure that much needed services are available to residents of Woolwich Township and surrounding areas.

In the beginning, Woolwich Community Services started because there was a need for the community to have a place to go to get government forms, and general community information. Today, the agency has transformed into a multi-purpose social service agency, that acts as a one stop location for those needing assistance.

Many of the programs offered through our agency can be attributed to people in the community stepping forward, expressing a particular need.

Kelly Christie, who has been with WCS for over 10 years, has dedicated much of her time with our agency designing new programs and services that are identified as community needs. Kelly also provides individual support to those requiring immediate assistance in times of crisis and she maintains long-term programs like the Christmas Goodwill program, the Food Bank and the Community Gardens.

One of Kelly's first initiatives at WCS was the Woolwich Youth Centre. When members of the community stepped forward with a request to have a safe and fun place for youth to go, Kelly got to work and made it happen. Today, Elmira has its own Youth Centre and it continues to be a thriving and well used program.

Another program created through Kelly's efforts is our annual Backpack program, which began in 2003. The Backpack Program started when a number of Food Bank participants expressed the need for a program that could help off-set the costs of sending their children to school each year.

Kelly got busy writing letters to service clubs, churches and the community requesting financial support to pay for backpacks and school supplies for children in Junior Kindergarten to Grade 12. In the first year the Backpack Program

provided 35 families with 80 backpacks and last year we assisted 68 families with 210 backpacks. None of this would be possible



**2010 Back Pack Program**

without our generous community.

Yet another program that was developed based on community need is our Birthday Cupboard. The Birthday Cupboard is made possible through our Christmas Goodwill Program, and was created to assist low-income parents who have children with upcoming birthdays, to come and get a gift.

Parents come and choose the gift they think best suits their child, much like they would going to the store, and they are also provided with the opportunity to take cake mix to bake a cake for their child.

The Birthday Cupboard also provides the opportunity for children who are invited to birthday parties to come and choose a gift for their friends.

A large part of our philosophy is to provide equal opportunities to children and youth through programs like the Youth Centre, Backpack Program and Birthday Cupboard.

If you have someone in your life or know someone with a low-income, we would like to encourage you to share these opportunities.

In these economic times it is good to know that people have a place to go in their community that can help alleviate some of the costs that arise in our lives.

*"A community is a group of people who have come together, and they work and they live to try and improve the standard of living and quality of life."*

*- William Baldwin*



**Iris Brindley**

## **Yvonne Reid Memorial Volunteer Award 2011**

Iris has been a dedicated volunteer with Woolwich Community Services since 1993. She connected with the agency through our Volunteer Tax Clinic and has become our resident expert in completing annual tax returns for people with low income.

Of course, once Iris caught the volunteer bug, she expanded her role into other areas such as our annual poinsettia sale and food bank volunteering.

Lou, her husband and best friend who she married 42 years ago often supports Iris in her volunteer activities. Iris and Lou had 8 children they nurtured through the years.

Iris noted that “ *when our youngest child left home, we were real empty nesters. We were so busy with all her sports activities that it was a real culture shock.*”

Iris looks forward to tax time and other opportunities to help in her community and we certainly look forward to her smiling face and assistance.

# More Than Just Forms

## Our Programs

- Community Information
- Community Support
- Kids & I
- Food Bank
- Youth Centre
- Thrift Shop
- Christmas Goodwill
- Care-Ring
- Mobility Loan Cupboard
- Employment Services
- Family Violence Prevention
- St. Jacobs Family Support Centre

When you think of what Woolwich Community Services provides the community, what comes to mind?

For some, it may be the Food Bank program that provides food hampers for those needing additional assistance. For others, it may be the Family Violence Prevention Program that assists many women and men each year. Or maybe you associate Woolwich Community Services as the place you come to look for a job, a place where you can go to fax a resume, or the place you can come to get various government forms.

No matter what programs you know the agency for; WCS will assist people based on individual needs on a case by case basis.

When someone walks through the door needing a government form

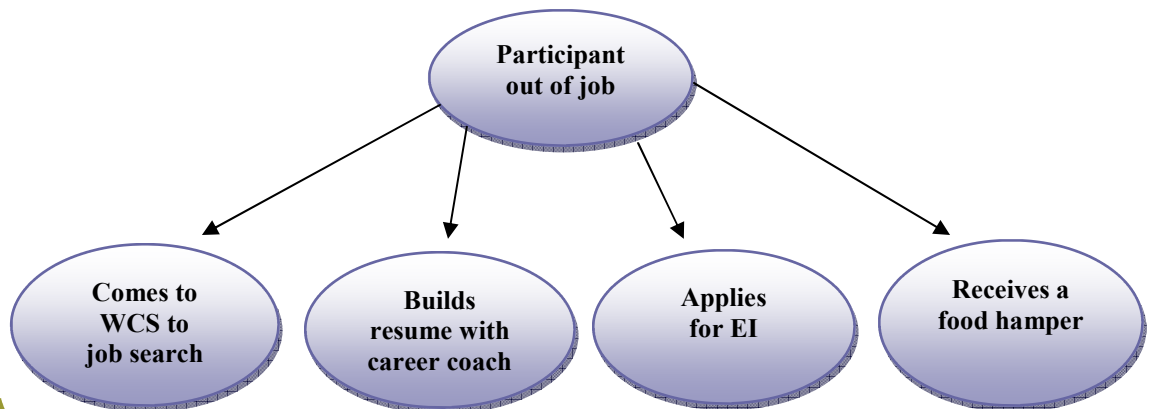
staff can provide one-on-one assistance in filling the form out, making contact with another agency for the first time on behalf of a person, and can even write letters on their behalf. The goal in any situation we encounter, is to ensure a successful outcome for the person in need.

The wonderful thing about WCS being a multi-purpose agency, providing a variety of support programs, is that when one person comes into the office thinking they need one thing we can also connect them to other programs.

An example of this is of someone who has just been laid off. They come into the office to look at our job board and use our computers for job searching. This person may have an out dated resume, or hasn't

looked for a job in a number of years. They can then also set up an appointment to meet with the Career Work Coach, David Brown, for assistance in creating a new resume and finding new employment. Since they are laid off, they may need to apply for employment insurance, so we can then provide them with forms and/or help them with their application. Finally, since they are not receiving a steady income, we might also connect them to our Food Bank so that we can help alleviate some of their stress in terms of putting food onto the table for their family. In the end that one person has been connected to 4 different support programs within the agency, all in one trip.

### Example Of How WCS Can Connect People To Multiple Resources



## Community Gardens



It's that time of year again, the snow is melting the birds are chirping, and people are all

around happy to see the signs of spring. With these early signs of spring, the Community Garden program will soon be in full swing.

The Community Garden program has been providing a place for those with little or no backyard space, a place to plant vegetables for over 20 years. The program boasts two gardens one on Snyder Ave. and the other on First St. Both cater to differing gardening styles in order to appeal to a wider demographic.

The Snyder Ave. garden offers a wide range of plot sizes that meet both individual or family needs based on the quality, skill or interest of the gardener, so that everyone has an enjoyable season.

The Snyder Garden plots vary in sizes and offer more choices for garden space as opposed to the First St location. It's also ploughed and tilled for spring then marked off to divide the garden plots.

The First St. location offers an organic alternative, and uses the square foot method of gardening opposed to offering varied plot sizes

Those interested in gardening at either of our locations can begin as early as the May 24th long weekend up until the fall. For those of you who might be interested in trying our Community

Garden program and may be wondering what all is involved.

### Here is what you need to know:

- Gardening season begins May 24 weekend and ends in October.
- Plot prices range from \$5-\$20.
- All gardeners sign a waiver and adhere to the rules of the community garden.
- Duties include planting, gardening, weeding and maintaining your designated plot.
- Arrange for own compost and seed purchasing.

If you are interested in putting your green thumb to use this year please call the office and ask for Kelly.

## Organic Gardening

The First St. Garden, which was created in 2004 is the newer of our two community gardens, offering an organic alternative for gardeners.

The development of this particular location can be accredited to long time gardeners Gilbert Langerak and Jeff Windatt. Each April, Gilbert and Jeff get busy planting and preparing the plots for gardeners.

Throughout their time with the Community Garden program, they have instilled and mastered the square foot gardening method.

The square foot gardening method combines various organic gardening methods with a strong focus on compost, and closely planted raised garden beds within a very defined area. This system makes organic gardening easier, with emphasis on careful seed placement within 1ft squares in each box, which maximizes vegetable growth and minimizes weed encroachment.

The First St. Garden also offers a double sided composter, in which gardeners are encouraged to bring compost items.

Gilbert and Jeff maintain the composter by levelling it out so that everyone is able to take scoops and spread it onto their plots.

If you asked Gilbert what is so great about the First St. location, he would be the first to tell prospective gardeners that it is open to variation and takes less maintenance than other gardens.

This system has made gardening at the First St. location easier because permanent walkways have been created and weed growth has been cut in half.

WCS is very lucky to have both Gilbert and Jeff assisting with the unique garden, and is looking forward to another great year of gardening.

### Gilbert's Gardening Tips for new gardeners:

- Start small.
- Grow what you like to eat and find interesting.
- Visit your garden plot regularly because it keeps maintenance and work really low.

## IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER



Wed April 6  
**Let There Be Light Conference**  
In memory of Val Ferguson



Wed April 13  
7pm-9pm  
**Volunteer Appreciation Evening**  
"Life is a Carnival"



Sat May 7  
**Wild Woolwich Challenge**



Mon May 11  
**Dig in Food Drive**  
The Foodbank of Waterloo Region



Tues June 21  
**Annual General Meeting**



# Employment Service's Career Work Coach

As many people know, one of the many services WCS provides to the community is Employment Services. What people may not be aware of is that WCS has a Career Work Coach/Employer Liaison named David Brown who comes to the office each Wednesday for appointments. David comes to us from the Conestoga Career Centre which serves *Employment Ontario, Employment Services* for Elmira and the Woolwich community. David has been with the College for 10 years, the last 5 of which he has been providing direction and guidance around employment and training supports to the rural community in Wellington County. The goal of the *Employment Ontario Employment Service* is to help Ontarians find sustainable employment.



*Employment Service Job Search Computers*

David can be a valuable resource for information around the labour market, local training, education and employment opportunities. For those that are eligible for assisted services, he offers individualized assistance in job search, interview and employment preparation. David can also provide information about the Second Career and Self Employment Benefit programs. Employment Ontario also offers job matching and incentives to local Employers who hire the participants of the program. If your business is interested in providing on-the-job training and employment, please call David directly to go over the eligibility requirements for an employer to participate as an Employment Ontario Training Partner. David can be reached at [dbrown@conestogac.on.ca](mailto:dbrown@conestogac.on.ca) or by calling 519.241.4996.



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For agency updates follow us on:

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- Twitter under WCServices



'Together We Make A Difference'