

Christmas & Holiday Appeal

November 16, 2015

Dear Friends,

“I’ve completely changed in my life over the last 2 years. From living in a shelter, to having my own apartment. Wesley has really helped me.”

Richard ended up in the shelter for five months after he and his wife separated.

“I was depressed, anxious, separated from my young son. I was a loner with no friends.”

It is only with **your** help that Richard had the unique opportunity to take the necessary steps to change his life. I wanted to share Richard’s story with you in this special 60th anniversary appeal, to illustrate firsthand the substantial impact you are making in the lives of those in our community.

Two years ago, Richard didn’t know how to get his life to a better place. He’d been homeless once before in 2001 for 6 months, and now at age 36 his future seemed hopeless.

After leaving the shelter, he moved into a rooming house with nine people. *“It was disgusting. There were bug issues, drugs, alcohol, and one man was suicidal. I was denied access to see my son based on where I lived.”* He began meeting with a Wesley case management worker through the Transitions to Home (T2H) program, in an effort to not only improve his housing situation but also his social skills, health and community connections.

He got his health on track after Wesley assisted him in finding a family doctor, dentist and getting orthotics and eyeglasses. He then began meeting with a psychologist to deal with the thoughts of self-harm he had been living with since he was a young child. Richard is not alone in this experience, as a McMaster University Research Study recently found that most chronically homeless in Hamilton experienced some form of trauma in their childhood. The psychologist diagnosed Richard with, “hyperactive disorder, short term memory and a learning disability, which helps me better understand myself.”

While he was hesitant at first, he eventually began attending Wesley’s group sessions and recreational programs. He likes coming to Wesley Day Centre and participating in the daily activities. He’s also part of the Participant Advisory Committee (PAC) for the T2H program. *“I like that we find out information, voice our opinions and get to be an active member.”*

Richard now has his own one bedroom apartment and is proud of his large living room. With help from Wesley, he can budget, grocery shop, and knows how to positively interact with his neighbours and building superintendent. As an example, he proudly shares that he even “pet sits for my neighbour who trusts me with her key!”

From a loner and outsider living on the streets, Richard has worked hard and is continuing to work hard to improve his physical and mental health, social skills and knowledge. Please see over...

However, it’s important to remember that Richard is just one of the **hundreds** of chronically homeless and hardest to serve that we are working with. Many of these individuals, like Richard, become homeless after a



significant personal loss, such as a death or separation. We can only offer these long-term life-changing supports with help from people like you!

This fall, Richard was one of 100 individuals invited to Wesley's 60th Anniversary Gala Dinner, a special celebration meal served to our Housing & Homelessness participants. "It was a very good night, I was so full, and the beef tenderloin was amazing. There was even a gift bag with shampoo, soap, coffee gift card and more!"

Our Gala Dinner was just one of the many events held to honour our 60th anniversary and celebrate the local children, youth, families and adults in our programs for the hard, but necessary, steps they took towards education, employment, independence and overall positive change. Please visit wesley.ca to see the stunning pictures our volunteer photographers took. Don't forget to read our 2014/2015 Annual Report also on our website, featuring milestones and significant moments from each decade.

Please give generously in honour of our 60th anniversary! You can make a donation securely online at <http://wesley.ca/donate/>

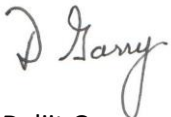
\$50 = Program activity supplies for 10 teens in Hamilton's poorest neighbourhood
\$100 = March Break camp for 1 child from a high priority neighbourhood
\$240 (or \$20 monthly donation) = Bowling recreation session for 16 formerly homeless adults
\$600 (or \$50 monthly donation) = Nutritious home-made lunch for 200 vulnerable adults
\$1,200 (or \$100 monthly donation) = Skills based workshop for 100 low income seniors

I will ensure that we use your donation wisely, guided by 60 years of compassion, experience and financial responsibility. Our fundraising expenses continue to be a low 3%, so you can be sure your donation is making the greatest personal impact.

If you would like to receive your tax receipt immediately, you can make your donation securely at wesley.ca. Also, please consider including Wesley Urban Ministries in your will, as donations from legacy giving help provide annual scholarships for at-risk young adults for post-secondary expenses, as well as adults seeking re-training for new careers. This education is critical to achieving a life of successful independence!

On behalf of the individuals we support, their families, our volunteers and staff, I offer my sincere thank you. I give thanks for the past 60 years, and invite you to join us as we embark on the next 60 years of support, every step of the way.

Sincerely,



Daljit Garry
Executive Director

P.S. We are now working with Richard to help him see his son for visits. Last December Richard put up a small Christmas tree, hoping his 4-year-old son would visit. While it didn't happen last year, Richard smiles, sharing confidently, "I know I will see my son. I'm not the same man I was before. I'm working to be the best for my son when I do see him." We will continue to work with Richard and truly commend him for all his efforts to overcome his own childhood and become the best he can be for his son.