

## *"There's No ATM in the Wilderness"*

*We need to break the silence about money! This sentiment is often expressed in church circles...actually, though; we frequently talk about money - mostly about how much stuff costs. What we are silent about is the significance of money in our lives - how it both affects and reflects our relationships with God, with others, and with the earth. (excerpt from preface to 'There's No ATM in the Wilderness')*

"There's No ATM in the Wilderness" is a resource booklet written by United Church folk for reflection, study and discussion during the Lenten Season.

The booklet includes personal reflections by the writers who have wrestled with their own relationship with money in light of their faith.

Earning, spending, investing and saving money is so much a part of our lives that we often fail to recognize its power in our personal lives and in our society. Interestingly enough, in today's world, our identity as human beings is most commonly that of a 'consumer' rather than that of a 'citizen' or a 'child of God' or a 'follower' of a particular faith tradition.

And while we may resist the notion that money plays such a central role in our lives, the work of sociologists like Michael Adams' shows otherwise. In his book, 'Better Happy Than Rich', he lifts up his research on Canadian attitudes toward money. Barbara Fullerton, the 'Stewardship Development Program Minister' with the United Church of Canada, comments on Adams' research.

*"Though many Canadians would claim to have little interest in money and its associated status, Adams' surveys revealed money to be the second most*

*important thing in the lives of Canadians, after their families. Money is now more significant than religion, ethnicity, nationality, and ancestry both in how it is valued and as a lens for seeing ourselves and others. Adams believes that 'instead of supplanting or eroding our values, money is becoming the primary manifestation of our values. The way Canadians earn, spend, invest and give away their money expresses how they think the world works - and how they would like to see it work.'"*



In my experience with EMUC and other congregations and church-related organizations, the hottest topic for debate is almost always rooted in money - how to spend and allocate it, how to invite people to give it, and how much we need of it. I've also been amazed from time to time at remarkable acts of generosity when it comes to money and church folk.

There are some who would say that as Christians and church folk, we shouldn't be talking about money and financial matters. That doesn't quite square with the biblical record and the teachings of Jesus. The topic of money and possessions is mentioned by Jesus in one of every seven verses in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke, and almost a quarter of Jesus' teachings in his

'Sermon on the Mount' are related to money or possessions.

Thankfully others in our society are also breaking the silence about money's place, value and power in our world. Some of the books on my bookshelf and in my reading pile include:

**Giving** by Bill Clinton (former USA president)

**Banker to the Poor** by Muhammad Yunus (founder of micro-lending)

**Not Buying It** by Judith Levine (journalist)

**The Bottom Billion** by Paul Collier (professor of Economics, Oxford University)

**Rediscovering Values on Wall Street, Main Street and Your Street** by Jim Wallis (CEO of Sojourners, an American Christian social justice organization)

**Overturning the Tables: Consumerism, Children, and the Church** by Julie Kinkaid (author, artist and UCC member)

**Brand Jesus, Christianity in a Consumerist Age** by Tyler Wigg Stevenson (Baptist minister in the USA)

**Cheap, The High Cost of Discount Culture** by Ellen Ruppel Shell (American journalist and most recently contributing editor for 'The Atlantic')

From their various experiences, vocations and perspectives, they write convincingly of our need to grow in wisely deciding how we will earn, spend, save and share our money.

I encourage you to pick up a copy of the Lenten booklet, 'There's No ATM in the Wilderness'... and yes it will cost you some money - \$10/copy!

*Continued on Page 2*

You are also invited to join a Lenten discussion series at EMUC during Lent. We'll use the booklet as our primary resource and supplement it with other current resources such as those mentioned above. Look for the scheduled sessions and registration information in this newsletter edition and in the Sunday announcements.

'For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also'. (words of Jesus in Matthew 6:21 & Luke 12: 34)

*Peace, Kathy Toivanen*

## *Worship with Erin Mills United Church*

Every Wednesday evening at 6:45 a service of readings, reflection, prayer & communion. Sunday worship is at 10:00 a.m. with care for infants, toddlers and preschoolers, EMU Club for children up to Grade 5, Junior Youth for Gr. 6,7,8, & Teentalk for youth in high school.

**Sunday February 14** A Service to Celebrate Black History Month. Readings: Psalm 126.

### *Worship for the Season of Lent* *"The Lenten Journey: A Pilgrim's Practice"*

**"Christian practices are things Christian people do together over time in response to and in the light of God's active presence for the life of the world."** (*Practicing our Faith*, ed. Dorothy C Bass) Since the beginnings of our faith, Christians have held up certain ordinary activities as important practices that can create a pattern for a faithful way of life. Over time, many of those Christian practices became confined primarily to the religious who joined the monastic movements of their day. The Benedictines, for example, follow certain practices in their keeping of the Rule that St. Benedict, their founder, established. (in the ancient sense, 'rule' meant a guidepost that points out the road and leads in a certain direction)

All of the practices of the Benedictine community; those of prayer, of humility, of work and leisure, of hospitality, were intended as ways to strengthen the community and guide both individuals and the community in the way of Jesus.

In our day and age, we all know the importance of practice - in music, in sports, in learning a new language or a new skill. And yet when it comes to living a life of faith, we often take it for granted that we can experience the presence of God and live as Jesus calls us to without practicing. In 'Seasons of the Spirit', Fred Plumer writes, *"I often wonder as I look out over the religious landscape in our world today how many people who call themselves Christian actually practice being one. I don't mean by going to church every Sunday, or memorizing the Bible or wearing an obvious cross around your neck. It does not mean honing a tight absolute argument about what one has to believe about Jesus to be a Christian or blindly reciting creeds. I mean when someone gets up in the morning, do they start the day by actually practicing being a Christian based on the teachings of Jesus."*

Plumer offers seven practices that he believes will strengthen and guide us in our Christian life: compassion, trust, forgiveness, non-judgment, generosity, thankfulness and joy. At EMUC, we'll set out as pilgrims on our Lenten Journey following as 'guideposts' one or more of these practices each week. We'll explore 'practical' practices that make sense in the world we live in today.

**Wednesday February 17** Ash Wednesday Service with Prayers & Communion 6:45 pm.

**Sunday February 21 Lent One** From Alleluias to Ashes. Theme: 'Pilgrims Practice Trust'. Readings: Isaiah 58:1-12, Luke 4:1-13.

**February 28 Lent Two** Sacrament of Baptism. Theme: 'Pilgrims Practice Compassion & Gratitude'. Readings: Philippians 3:17-4:1, Luke 13:31-35. **After worship there will be a congregational meeting to approve the financial report of 2009 and the budget for 2010.**

**March 7 Lent Three** Worshipping with Music. Communion. Theme: 'Pilgrims Practice Joy'. Readings: Psalm 63.

**March 14 Lent Four** Theme: 'Pilgrims Practice Forgiveness'. Readings: Psalm 32, Luke 15:1-3; 11-32.

**March 21 Lent Five** Theme: 'Pilgrims Practice Generosity'. Readings: Isaiah 43:16-21, John 12:1-8.

## *Thanks!*

Eileen Webb, Janet Tait and Muriel Hamdani for assisting with the 905 Faith Group Breakfast meeting in January.

Andy Wilson for fixing a dozen of our folding chairs and a few tables.

The choirs and musical groups who offered their music during the Christmas services in celebration of Christ's birth.

The children and youth along with their directors/coaches who offered dramatic messages in the Christmas Eve services; the scripture readers, Candlelighters; the hosts of the service of Remembrance, Hope & Healing Nancy Sibbald, Mora Cairns, Larry van Goozen, Ross & Janet Gilmour.

Al Seymour, Declan and Mathew West for 'constructing' the stable.

Maureen MacLean for a great Christmas publicity brochure detailing the services and activities at EMUC.

The choirs, staff and Ministry & Personnel Committee for hosting the reception after the Candlelight Carol Service. Sylvia Arnold and the worship committee for their extra effort to provide ushers, coordinator and extra support for the unique needs of each of the Christmas services.

All of the individuals, groups and households who contributed to and delivered the 45 Christmas Hampers and a special thanks for Irene Pajot, Sue Ogilvie, Judi Dissette and Eileen Webb and Peter Kiteley for their coordination of shopping and delivery.

Debra Kigar for leading worship on December 27 and January 3.

All who expressed their Christmas greetings to the EMUC staff with cards and other tokens of appreciation.

Mike Ogilvie, EMUC's envelope secretary for collecting and providing year-end summaries of financial contributions.

Deb Siertsema and Bonnie Turner their leadership at Erin Mills Lodge in January.

All those who assisted with the Deacon's Cupboard Cram a Cruiser.

All who gave generously of their offerings at Christmas for the operating budget of the congregation, for the Mission & Service Fund of the United Church of Canada, and to special EMUC projects.

To Keith Cochrane-Ford and Michael Fontaine for creating the bulletin board display in the stairwell to the lower hall.

Lloyd Freel, Paul Marot & Gord McCauley for coordinating the 'Cool the Kitchen' fundraising campaign.

## *Special Thanks*

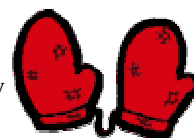
Judi Dissette has retired from folding the church service bulletins. This task has been done by Judi for over 25 years! Thank you Judi for your faithful dedication!

## *Kathy Toivanen Gives Thanks*

On behalf of my extended family, I give thanks to the congregation of EMUC for their prayers, cards, flowers, visits, presence at the funeral service and messages of support at the time of my father's death. A special thanks to: Peter Kiteley & Sylvia Arnold who communicated the news to the congregation and arranged for worship leadership during my absence; the Chancel Choir & Joanne Hedge who led congregational singing and offered an anthem at the funeral service at Aurora United and those who contributed to the Alzheimer Society in memory of my Dad. My family has been blessed and supported by your loving care.

## *Out of the Cold*

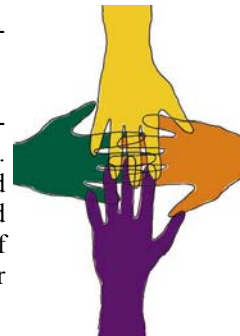
Collection of warm clothing, along with boots continues throughout the winter months. Please drop off gently used and clean clothes or new purchases.



## *News from the Leadership Circle*

The Leadership Circle met twice in January in preparation for the February 16<sup>th</sup> Full Official Board Meeting and the February 28<sup>th</sup> Congregational Meeting.

Encouraging financial news was shared at the January Leadership Circle Meetings. The 2009 year-end unaudited statements show that EMUC received \$257,247 from offerings, fundraising, programs and rentals. This is almost \$10,000 more than the projected 2009 budget of \$247,400. Contributions to the United Church of Canada Mission and Service Fund for 2009 were \$29,330 (about \$4,000 more than in 2008) and the Tithe Fund received \$23,669. Thank you to all who have contributed so generously to the work of EMUC in our life together as a congregation and in our work in the Erin Mills community and the larger global community.



A generous anonymous donation of \$40,000 for the purchase and construction of a new outdoor sign and to upgrade and maintain a new website for EMUC was received in the December Christmas offerings. The Leadership Circle gratefully accepted the donation for enhancing EMUC's communications. Tim Hayes, Focus Circle Leader for Community Life & Communications will be coordinating project teams for the sign and the website. If you are interested in joining either team, please contact Tim or the church office.

Significant repairs and renovations to the church building in 2010 include the kitchen restoration from the fire in August and replacement and upgrades to the lighting in the worship space, outdoor entrances and security lights. Project plans and associated costs were approved by the Leadership Circle along with two fundraising campaigns. At a congregational meeting on January 17<sup>th</sup>, the congregation approved the two designated campaigns - \$25,000 for the 'Cool the Kitchen Campaign' running January 31<sup>st</sup> - February 21<sup>st</sup> and \$16,000 for the 'Lighting the Way Campaign' - Mark 7<sup>th</sup> - 21<sup>st</sup>. Details about the 'Cool the Kitchen Campaign' are included in this newsletter edition; details about the 'Lighting the Way Campaign' will be included in the March Communiqué.

Engaging new leaders for the various positions on the Leadership Circle is an ongoing project of the past Board Chairs of EMUC. Heather Bunting's term as Chair has concluded and Jo-anne Tobey-Fisher will also be leaving the vice-chair position due to her impending move to BC. Other vacancies include: Focus Circle Leaders for Children & Youth and for Administration. If you are approached with regard to any of these positions, please prayerfully consider offering your gifts and time for the important work of EMUC.

To support current and emerging leaders in the congregation, strengths-based leadership workshops are being offered, thanks to the contributions of Laura Macro and Barbara Jennings. Using the 'Strengthfinder' questionnaire, participants learn about their strengths in leadership and in a half-day workshops, discover with others, how their strengths can show up at work, in the community and in the life of EMUC. The next half-day workshop is on February 13<sup>th</sup> from 8:30 am - 12:30 pm. Contact Laura at [lmacro@rogers.com](mailto:lmacro@rogers.com) or Barbara at [Barbara\\_jennings@sympatico.ca](mailto:Barbara_jennings@sympatico.ca) to inquire and/or register.

Kathy Toivanen reported on her participation in further consultations with National United Church Staff and Halton Presbytery with regard to the tithe payments. Both church bodies are working toward a new arrangement that could lighten the burden of debt on congregations like EMUC.

### *EMUC Full Official Board Meeting - Tuesday February 16*

All chairs and members of EMUC committees & Task Groups along with the Leadership Circle are called to attend the full Official Board Meeting on Tuesday February 16 at 7:30 p.m. The Board will receive the 2009 Financial Report and the 2010 Budget in preparation for a full financial report and presentation of the 2010 budget to the congregation.

### *EMUC Congregational Meeting: Sunday February 28*

Come for worship at 10 a.m. and stay for a heartwarming lunch (at modest cost). Gather to review EMUC's life and work in 2009 and to receive and give input on goals for EMUC in 2010. This meeting will include 2009 financial statements and 2010 Budget and election of new leaders. It is the custom of the United Church of Canada for members of a local congregation to pass a motion to permit non-members to vote.

Childcare will be provided during the meeting. Please sign up if you require child care.

## *Youth News*

With January having come and gone, youth programming at EMUC picks up. In addition to generally being the coldest and darkest month of the year (though this past January did seem a little less dreary than normal), January is also the month when attendance is lower especially for Teen Talk and Senior Youth because of the dreaded High School exams! I'm always relieved when the expected low participation of January is over, and find myself excited the moment the youth have been freed up a little bit.

Even though Advent was more than a month ago, this is the first newsletter since then, so I'd like to officially thank everyone who participated in the wonderful dramas in December. EMU Club, Junior Youth and Senior Youth all participated in fantastic shows on Christmas Eve, while the Junior Youth group also created, wrote and performed an original play on White Gift Sunday. So here's one big THANK YOU to everyone for these plays. Whether dramatist, writer, director, or helpful parent, there were so many people who worked hard to bring these meaningful, energetic productions to life. They always bring a little excitement with them.

Another note of thanks is due to the teens of EMUC. They were able to personally contribute enough money to once again purchase gifts through World Vision. This year they chose both to stock a medical clinic, which provides a wide variety of medication for a community in need, and to purchase warm clothing for twenty-five children who live in harsh climates. These gifts were truly a blessing and I'm thrilled to work with such generous youth.

Programs for youth at EMUC include: **Junior Youth** (for those in Grades 6,7,8) meets every Sunday during worship & gathers occasionally for special events (like parties) or outings; **Senior Youth** for those in high school + meets every Wednesday evening at 7 pm. for discussion and indoor or outdoor activities and outings; **TeenTalk** for those in high school meets every Sunday during worship

Take care everyone, and for those in high school, I wish you the best of luck as you adjust to a new semester of classes.

*Cheers, Ian Blackport*

## *Junior Youth News*

EMUC's Junior Youth have been exploring how faith is practiced in other places of worship in our community. Last November we visited Solel Synagogue and experienced their regular Friday evening service. On Saturday January 30<sup>th</sup>, many of the Junior Youth members, along with a few parents, visited Merciful Redeemer Parish (Catholic) and participated in a very engaging Youth Mass. Afterwards the group moved on to dessert and coffee/pop at a nearby restaurant for some lively discussion about all that we saw and heard. Many thanks to our hosts/guides: Jo-Anne, Mark and Shannon Rodrigues, Rob and Keith Ford and Crystal and Tamara Mahbubani for sharing their time, knowledge and experiences with us. We will be planning a trip to another place of worship soon, so stay tuned!

*Lauren Fontaine*

## *Mardi Gras, Pancake Dinner*



On Tuesday February 16<sup>th</sup> all are invited to enjoy a feast of pancakes, sausages, ham, veggie and fruit platters. Gather at 5:45 pm for dinner at 6 pm (or simply come when you can after work) Buy tickets at the door: \$10/ adult, \$5/child (Maximum for a family \$25) Please bring your own dishes and cutlery. With the added challenge of providing the dinner without a church kitchen volunteers are needed to prepare some of the food items in their own homes. To help with the food preparation, or with set up and clean up please call the church office or sign up on the bulletin board in the church foyer.

## *Foodbanks & Breakfast Club*

In the new year, there continues to be a need for ongoing donations of food and financial resources to the foodbanks. Erin Mills United Church has many active volunteers with the Deacon's Cupboard and the Springfield Breakfast Program. Please continue to contribute to these organizations during these winter months.

In January, the Deacon's Cupboard greeted 112 guests who made 148 visits between them to receive \$3,335.75 worth of supplies at Deacon's Cupboard prices or \$6,671.5 at full retail. Thank you to all the volunteers!

## *News from the Green Team*



An energy audit was conducted at EMUC on Wednesday, January 6<sup>th</sup> by Dave Elfstrom of Elfstrom Engineering. When the members of the Green Team receive the report of the audit, they will review it and develop a plan for proceeding with the recommendations. It is hoped that there will be a number of actions that, with the help of volunteer labour, can be taken to increase the energy efficiency of the church without incurring a large cost. Stay tuned for the next issue of the Communiqué for more details.

Are you interested in measuring just how much energy your household appliances are using? If so, contact your closest public library and arrange to borrow a kilowatt meter. Enersource has provided all the libraries with these devices, which you can have on loan for 3 weeks. When you pick up the kilowatt meter, you will be given a low energy light bulb, courtesy of Enersource. Finding out about your energy usage will be a good starting point on the road to reducing your carbon footprint.

## *A Golden Retriever is Born!*

In January, EMUC received this notice: ‘Congratulations!!! As a Paper Retriever® customer, Erin Mills United Church has showed exemplary results by recycling an average of 3.75 tons per month over the past 6 months. We have hand chosen your organization to participate in our new Gold Standard Recycler Program™.’ What does this mean? The key element of the program is that the rate paid per ton of paper has now increased on a monthly basis. Filling the boxes 3 times/month versus 2 times/month will actually double the payment to the church.

## *Earth Hour, March 27*

EMUC will host its 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Earth Hour Event with a candle or flashlight vigil walk through the local community. Gather at the church at 8 pm dressed for an outdoor walk. After turning off the lights inside and outside the church at 8:30 pm, we will venture out into the neighbourhood for a vigil walk to raise awareness about the conservation of energy. The evening will conclude with refreshments and conversation at the church. Save the date now; more information will be available in the March Communiqué.



## *Upcoming Green Events*

### **‘Seedy Saturday’ in Peel**

Every year across Canada, gardeners spend the winter months planning and dreaming of the season to come. In recent years, Seeds of Diversity Canada (a wonderful organization – check them out online at [www.seeds.ca](http://www.seeds.ca)) has helped communities across the country to organize ‘Seedy Saturday’ events. On Seedy Saturday, gardeners come together for workshops, to collect gardening information, and most importantly, to buy and exchange seeds.

Often you will find locally grown, organic, heirloom and other specialty seeds available at Seedy Saturday that you wouldn’t find anywhere else! A comprehensive list of Seedy Saturday events in Canada is available online at [www.seeds.ca/ev/events.php](http://www.seeds.ca/ev/events.php)

‘Seedy Saturday’ in Peel will take place on Saturday February 27<sup>th</sup> from 10 am - 3 pm, at the Unitarian Congregation in South Mississauga; 84 South Service Road, Mississauga, ON L5G 2R9, just South/East of the Hurontario/QEW intersection. Come out to enjoy seedy vendors and community displays, an Organic Café for snacks and lunch, attend workshops, and to view the USC film "Food, Farmers and Climate Chaos", as well as distributing free "seed savior" organic seeds. (excerpted from EcoSource Community Gardens Newsletter)

### **KYOTO, Copenhagen & Beyond - KAIROS Climate Change Workshop**

Saturday, March 27, 2010 from 8:30 a.m. to noon at St. Jude’s Anglican Church, Oakville. Sponsored by Oakville-Mississauga KAIROS. For more information contact Dorothy Wilson at 905-820-8981.

## *Blood Donor Clinic Open Daily at Square One*

Thinking of making a *new* New Year’s resolution? Consider giving blood. The clinic is on the lower level of Square One at the Service Court, down the hall from Pearl Vision. All ages are welcome from 17 to 71. For first time donors you need to be under 61. Donations accepted every two months. Hours: Tuesday to Friday 8 to 8; Saturday 8 to 5. Help make a difference in a new way this coming year.

## *The Christian Life - What's Money Got to Do with It?*

You are invited to join in a discussion series to explore our often conflicted and confusing relationship with money and faith. To participate in the series:

1. Register for either the Wednesday evenings or Friday mornings sessions (there is flexibility to move to the alternate time slot if you need; and it is not compulsory to attend all sessions). Register by either emailing [kathy@emuc.ca](mailto:kathy@emuc.ca) contacting the church office or by signing up at the church.
2. Pick up your copy of the booklet: 'There's No ATM in the Wilderness', available at EMUC for \$10. This will be the key resource.
3. The group is open to interested folks in the larger community and to high school youth as well as adults of all ages - so bring a friend along.
4. The 4-week series will be offered: Wednesday evenings: Feb 24, March 3, 10, 22 from 7:30 - 9:15 pm  
Friday mornings: Feb 26, March 5, 12, 26 from 10 - 11:45 am.
5. For more information contact Kathy Toivanen.



On August 20, 2009, there was a fire in the EMUC kitchen. Fire damage was minimal, but smoke damage was extensive. One wall was scorched. The wood cabinets which absorb smoke had to be removed. The walls and ceiling have been scrubbed, sanded, sealed, and now await repainting.

A Kitchen Committee of Barbara Jennings, Susan Ogilvie, Audrey MacDonald and Debbie Sturgeon have worked hard, designing a new floor plan and seeking prices on appliances, while Janet Gilmour has advised us regarding the insurance claim. The renovated kitchen will have a public-health approved sanitizing dishwasher for the first time, although fortunately the plumbing has always been in place. The three-compartment sink, lazy-susan and the hardware on the cupboards will be all reused. A separate hand-washing sink now required by the Health Code will be installed. The plans also include a new range, freezer, refrigerator, over-the-range microwave, and island countertop. The damaged flooring will be replaced.

The social times when we eat together have been very important parts of both our congregational life and our outreach and hospitality to the larger community. As we eat together, we become more fully acquainted, we hear each others' stories, and we share each others' burdens. And we savour the tasty food that the accomplished cooks in our community prepare for us all. The improvements to the kitchen will cost \$25,000. With your contribution, you will share in meeting this financial goal of \$25,000. With a restored kitchen, the Shrove Tuesday Pancake suppers, Strawberry Socials, Breakfast meetings, Youth Dinners and Parties, receptions and anniversary celebrations and festive church dinners will again draw us together and give us joy and contentment.

A letter has been sent to all the members and friends of Erin Mills United Church giving further details of the planned renovations, and how your financial contributions may be offered. The blue slip and white envelope may be used for your contribution. Thank you for your generous support.

## *Outreach Opportunities in 2010*

EMUC Community Life is collecting personal care and hygiene products (sample or travel sized) to put together in "Comfort Kits" to be distributed to the guests of the Open Door at Square One. Examples of items to include are shampoo, conditioner, deodorant, toothpaste and toothbrushes, combs, tissues, perfume, items for men and children, makeup, hand and body lotion, etc. Small generic gift bags are also needed to put the items in. There is a box in the church foyer for your donations.

## *Transitions*

Condolences to Kathy Toivanen, Thomas & Al Seymour on the death of Kathy's father, Jack, December 26, 2009.

Condolences to Lorraine Newman on the death of her sister Riena.

Congratulations to Melissa (nee Boston) & Paul Scott on the birth of their son, Carson Dudley, January 14 2010.

Congratulations to Ann Boston on her new grandson.

## *News from Erin Mills Youth Outreach Programs (EMYOP)*

A great big thank you, to everyone who donated food and gift certificates to the Springfield Breakfast Club on White Gift Sunday in December. The breakfast food products certainly help to fill the tummies of an increasing number of children who are coming out the breakfast program. Since September, the breakfast program no longer receives donated milk. As you may well imagine, the cost of purchasing milk for 20 to 35 kids per day, has taken a huge bite out of our budget. The gift certificates allow our new coordinator to purchase milk and fresh produce.

Michelle Passe, the new Breakfast Club Coordinator, has made a great transition into the Springfield program. The kids appreciate her nurturing presence in the morning and the food she serves! Michelle has implemented some changes to the program. Everyday the participants have an activity, craft, or game to enjoy after they eat. One of our five college placement students often help with this task. Friday mornings at the breakfast club are 'International Day'. A breakfast meal representing a different culture is served once per week. The kids look forward to seeing what is new on the menu. When it is your birthday, Michelle prepares a special cupcake with a candle.

Three new people have recently joined the morning volunteer team. Mr. Andy, Ms. Angie and Mrs. Dorothy. Mrs. Dorothy likes to bake and treated the children to her famous Spice Apple Muffins which she made from apples donated by a local farmer. YUUMM!! This season we have also been fortunate to receive a weekly donation of fresh organic bread from Cobb's Bakery in Meadowvale. Thank you to all for your kind and generous donations of food, money and your time. The children and their parents truly appreciate what you do for them.

Plans are underway for our March Break Vacation Camp. The week long program will be held at Christ the King Elementary School from March 15<sup>th</sup> to March 19<sup>th</sup>. Applications for employment to lead the March Break Program can be obtained from Grace Buddington, the new EMYOP Program Supervisor. Volunteer assistants will be needed for this week as well. If you like having fun, please think about joining us for March Break!

*Cathy Hughes, EMYOP Executive Director*

## *Book Review*

**'Fifteen Days' by Christie Blatchford** (Anchor Canada, 2008, \$22.00)

Christie Blatchford, an award winning columnist with the 'Globe and Mail', spent time from March to November 2006 with Canadian troops in Afghanistan. Her second chapter concerns an action on August 5, 2006 in Kandahar Province in which four Canadian soldiers were killed and seven injured. Blatchford focuses on Darcia Arndt, the wife of Ray Arndt, a reservist with Alberta's Loyal Edmonton Regiment. A growing number of these part-time soldiers are signing up for overseas missions. Ray was one of them. Ray was with the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, Princess Patricia Canadian Light Infantry. He was part of a platoon that had the dangerous job of escorting the supply convoys which travelled to and from the hottest spots in the south of Kandahar Province. By August 5, Ray had only nine more days to serve in Afghanistan. Darcia had last seen him in May when he was home on leave. With only nine more days before his return, she no longer felt the need to have the cell phone right by the bed at night.

Darcia had tried in 2002 to get in on overseas action in Bosnia. But a medical condition, a club foot that left him with one foot a size 9 and the other a size 6 had prevented him from being selected. Only when he was chosen for duty in Afghanistan, and training started at the huge army base at Wainwright, Alberta, was he finally issued two pairs of boots so that he had a proper fit for each foot. Darcia was able to chat every day with her husband on the MSN chat line, and every Sunday on the phone, but she was told nothing about the dangerous work Ray was doing, escorting the vehicles carrying troops, food, medical supplies, and ammunition to far-flung bases, and fighting the Taliban, especially at a most dangerous point the soldiers called Ambush Alley. On Saturday August 5 at 8 am, the phone rang in Darcia's home; asking her to open her front door. Three men were there with the devastating news. Ray had been killed in a motor vehicle accident in which his vehicle was in a head-on collision with a cattle truck. Among the later experiences recounted by Darcia was the strong advice to look out her car windows as the hearse with Ray's body left the Trenton Air Force base. "Outside the fence around the base, along the road, were knots of people standing silently, as there would be knots of people on overpasses along the 401 highway to Toronto." Many had Canadian flags, many were saluting.

Blatchford writes in an understated way about the human cost of this eight-year long war to the Canadian soldiers and their families. Even to those who doubt the wisdom of Canadian involvement in this conflict, there is no doubt about the bravery, the courage, and the human cost to those most directly engaged in it.

*Lloyd Freel*

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