

# *No letter needed*

We stood in the middle of the Kapuscasings Civic Hall completely undone by the three hundred plus people that had come for dinner. Their plates were mounded with chicken cacciatore, beef stew, creamy mashed potatoes loaded with real butter and home made bread! Freshly made chocolate whopper cheesecake and every other kind of cake known to Martha Stewart were waiting in the wings! There was laughter. There were tears as people poured out their stories. There was prayer. There was genuine community. They were captivated by the love that they couldn't deny or resist, that was tangibly in the room.

A Pastor came and told me that they had been ministering in Kap for several years and had hosted dinners for the needy but had a very low turn out. "Two or three at the most", so they stopped doing it. Seeing over three hundred was simply unbelievable! Already knowing the answer to the question I was about to ask... I just had to ask anyways, because the answer just had to be spoken.

"Why do you suppose this was so different?"

"Because we did it together...."

As the words were spoken the angels cheered! There is such power and blessing when we come together in the Name of Jesus to make Him known!

Six churches within Kapuscasings did just that. They didn't know one another until the preparations for the "We are Christ Day" began. Throughout the journey of planning their WAC Day they have forged friendships and a fellowship that they have determined to be ongoing for the sake of the lost, the lonely, the broken and the forgotten in their town. Five of our churches in the Cochrane-Timiskiming Section drove hours through a snow storm to be part of this day and oh, what a day it was!!

Our Pentecostal Church emptied its sanctuary of all its chairs and tables and transformed it into an indoor fair. Kids were jumping in an inflatable castle, getting their faces painted, decorating cupcakes, playing bean bag toss, doing crafts and learning how to shape balloons into animals. They were all given stuffed goody bags and brand new board games. I was told that two families asked what time the service started on Sunday because they were so amazed at what they saw.

The Pepsi Warehouse was given to 'the team' to store the contents of the rig. They received \$150,000 plus worth of blessings that they sorted and packed in boxes and bags. Dozens and dozens of families continuously came for over 2 hours despite the cold and left with their arms full and their hearts warmed by the love they felt.

The brand new Super 8 Motel gave the team one of their beautiful meeting rooms to host their Spa in. A decorator came in and made that room into a peaceful oasis that seriously took our breath away when we walked in. The recipients of our Spa were all the ladies in the Women's Shelter. Everyone that volunteered was chosen beforehand and had to sign a confidentiality agreement assuring the safety and privacy of these

precious ladies. As they arrived they were all given a white, cushy bathrobe with fluffy slippers. In between treatments they munched on fresh strawberries and cookies and enjoyed a hot cup of tea while they shared their stories. At the end of the day the manager of the Hotel told our team that if they wanted to do this kind of thing again, he'd sponsor it.

War veterans and families that have a son or a daughter in Afghanistan were visited and brought groceries. Our volunteers reminded all of them that they were not forgotten and prayed for. They were welcomed with open arms and lots of tears. While that was going on more of our volunteers armed with Easy Off and Magic Erasers went and cleaned ovens and walls at various homes throughout Kap.

The Nursing Home was entertained by a group of 4 men with 4 guitars. Two of them were two of our pastors in that area and I'm not sure who enjoyed the afternoon more, the 'band of 4' or all the residents. Bingo, apple fritters, and a mix of Johnny Cash and the old hymns changed a day like every other day into one they will be talking about for a very long time.

We were honored to have the MP for the Algoma, Manitoulin and Kapuscasings area with us. She had heard it being advertised on both the French and English radio stations and had read about it in both the French and English newspapers and was intrigued. She asked me how we decided which towns to go into. She wondered if they had to write a letter stating the reasons why they should be chosen. I told her that we gathered together and prayed asking God to show us where He wanted us to go and that each and every time He made it clear to our hearts where that should be. A little while later I gave her my email address and phone number and told her that if she ever came across a town in the North that looked hopeless... 'a town that needed a hug'....to give me a call. I assured her that I would gather some volunteers together and come to that town and give it that hug it so desperately needs.

I hope she calls because that is why we are here. We are here to express the love of Jesus and let our world know that there is hope. There is mercy available to them through the cross no matter what they've done. We exist to empty our church buildings of its stuff so we can fill them with kids who need to know God loves them like they're the only ones on earth.

One of the chefs, whose day job is to manage the French radio station in Kapuscasings, told me that he was so overcome with emotion that he had to leave the serving line during the feast. He found a corner in the kitchen and cried like a baby. He was so blown away that God had filled the place.

He told me that it was the best day of his entire life.

When the family of God comes together as one, when churches are emptied of their things making room for the broken, when hungry stomachs are filled, when hearts are encouraged and reminded they are never alone, when mercy is extended through Jesus....we've done it right.

And we, His followers, will continue to be overwhelmed and so very thankful that He does indeed...fill the place.