

Support for THE COMPASS

By Mike Giguere, December 2018

Yes—this ask always is on the heels of our stewardship campaign. Yes, it is about money

The Compass is the charity that receives the largest proportion of funds dispersed via the “Community Outreach” (Christian) Committee and affirmed in our budget at our AGMs.

The Compass also benefits from our having taken on the responsibility of being the “Shampoo Church”. (You may have seen my recent update on this program—shampoo is dandy, but money is slicker)

Further, there are a few of us who directly volunteer at The Compass.

Why is The Compass worthy of this support?

The Compass epitomises what it means to be Christian. What it means to love thy neighbor. What it means to treat all with dignity, respect and kindness without question.

There are events at The Compass where a casual observer would not be able to distinguish between a client, a client volunteer or a volunteer. This is as it should be. It is not trite to muse about who benefits most, the client or the volunteer. The entire Compass Community benefits from the operation of the Compass and this is a lot of people.

22,000 volunteer hours per year

12,000 client visits

500,000 lbs of food distributed

I can rhyme off statistics until I am blue in the face. What we do not have hard metrics for is the fellowship, camaraderie and general

spiritual warmth that is generated by the Compass activities through our various programs.

If you haven't done so, review the web site, read the news letter and drop in to the Compass. Have dinner at Men's or Women's night. Meet the community up close and personal. Your empathy level will soar from wherever it is now. The folks we serve are us. We all tread a fine line. Some of us are fortunate enough to have a bit more insulation against total calamity than others. That is all.

You may have heard about our winter survival program. It is a shock to many in South Mississauga that we have homeless people. Yes, around 70 that we have identified through the Compass. Roughly half, couch surf or have some means of securing precarious shelter. A few more live in their cars. At any given time, there are somewhere around 16-35 on the streets.

The program was so successful that we amassed a veritable fortune in blankets, coats, tarps, sleeping bags, coats, boots et al. The overflow is currently in the old choir room. We have enough to look after our immediate community and are in a position now to disposition the substantial remainder to other agencies in less well healed parts of the GTA. This is good and right. Not all areas have the depth of resources we have in South Mississauga.

Our client population is growing. We notice an uptick in the 10-12% range.

Housing costs continue to soar. This means less money is available for food and other necessities.

As we move into a new strategic planning cycle at The Compass we have tough question to address. A couple of key ones are:

- How do we responsibly leverage the powerful brand power of The Compass to advocate for our clients?
- What influence can we bring to bear on the political will of our community to make affordable housing a critical platform issue? By "affordable" we mean addressing the folks that live on ODSP and have \$500 for rent.

Of course, we can let things move along, gentrify the entire area and all the poor people can scuttle away out of sight and out of mind. All those volunteers so richly rewarded by the work they do, well they can take up other hobbies. Problem solved.

The Compass remains very efficient as a charitable organization. Under CRA reporting rules we calculate we are 96/97% efficient. We have only 2 part time staff.

Our recent renovation, with grants et al, came in well under budget. When amortized over the expected duration of our tenancy in our current building, and added to rent, we are still below paying market value per square foot.

We, as a faith community, pledge \$8,500 per year. The last few years we have contributed close to \$15,000. We have been punching well above our weight. St Christopher's beats us by a bit over 30% but they are 4 times our size.

Last year at this time we had roughly half of the \$8,500 promised funds covered by designated giving's—we wound up with close to 15 K.

This year, thus far, we are well behind last year, less than a ¼ of designated giving's. Let's ramp it up.

FYI—PAR can be used. Dana's and my PAR is split into 3. Church, Compass and then a designated portion of The Compass is designated for shampoo. Let Christine know. She can handle this.

Thanks for the time.