

Annual Report



2015
-
2016



DIACONAL MINISTRIES
C A N A D A



Dear friends of Diaconal Ministries Canada (DMC),

As you browse through this year's version of our annual report you'll notice that the summer of 2016 was filled with significant transitions. After 15 years of service, Hans Kater retired as DMC's National Director and, after 16 years with DMC (and 32 years in the Christian Reformed Church's Canadian offices), Madeline Wierenga retired as DMC's Executive Assistant. Together they led the organization as it *went national* and laid an amazing foundation for future generations of deacons. DMC can't thank them enough for their years of servant leadership!

And now a new era begins. After almost 6 years with World Renew as an assistant project manager, Samantha Bondy has taken on the role of Administrative Coordinator and, after 12 years as a CRC pastor and 10 years as a church planter, I (Ron Vanden Brink) have begun work as the National Director. Both Samantha and I are excited to use our gifts to help DMC be all that God calls it to be. Please don't hesitate to contact us – we're here to serve you in any way we can. And we, together with the rest of DMC's staff, are confident that just as God has blessed DMC in the past, He will continue to bless us into a new and exciting future.

One thing has not changed: our vision. We will continue ***to inspire, equip and encourage deacons, churches and their partners as we join in God's transforming work in communities.*** As an organization we continue to covet your prayers and ongoing support as we engage in this important work. We can't do what we do without you!

And it's our prayer that as you read the stories and the numbers in this report, you'll be inspired to create more community-transforming stories in the future.

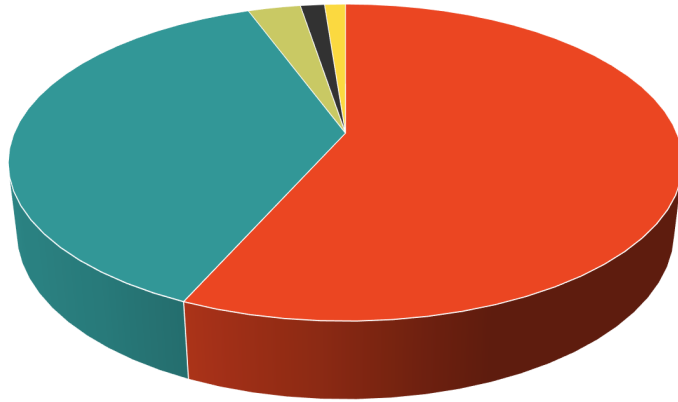


in HIS grip

Ron Vanden Brink

National Director

www.diaconalministries.com



Thank-you, deacons and churches,
for your faithful support and commitment
to Diaconal Ministry Shares and
the Operation Manna offering.
We are blessed to partner with you.

Where DMC's Resources Come From

Diaconal Ministry Shares (57%)

Church Offerings for Operation Manna (38%)

Church Offerings for General Programs (3%)

Individual Donations (1%)

Other (1%)

Total Revenue (2015-2016): \$533,893

financial resources

Where DMC's Resources Were Used

Diaconal Ministry Developer (DMD) Services (6%)

Operation Manna Development Services (13%)

Operation Manna Grants (16%)

Operation Manna Administration (8%)

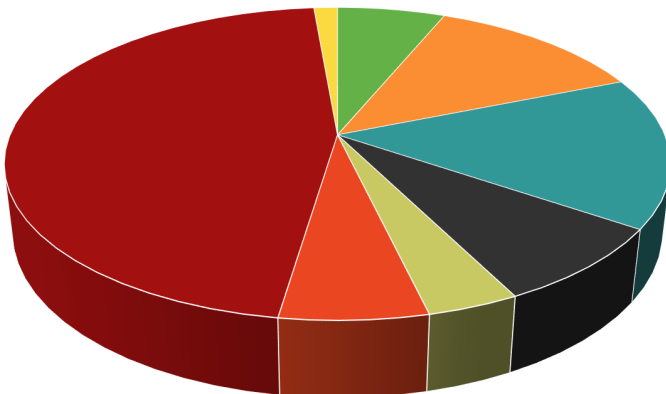
Board & Committees (4%)

Services, Operation & General (6%)

DMC Management (46%)

DMC Promotion (1%)

Total Expenditures (2015-2016): \$528,439



equipping deacons

DMC equips deacons by producing and providing resources on the website, and through both equipping events and the work of Diaconal Ministry Developers in each Classis who help to instill vision and promote resources for skill development.

Deacons Respond to Fort McMurray Fires

Few will forget the fires of Fort McMurray, AB, especially those who had to watch the fires consume their homes. We hope they will also always remember the rally of support and care that surrounded them in their time of need. As the people of Ft. Mac evacuated the city, many in other cities, in other provinces, and in other counties responded to rescue and offer relief. Personally, I rejoiced in what I saw - we are truly created in the image of a caring and compassionate GOD.

While listening to the radio, watching the news reports, and wondering what needed to be done, I received my first of hundreds of emails, texts, and phone calls. That first email was a request from Trinity CRC in Edmonton to a prayer meeting, the evening of May 4. It was a testimony to our faith that in all things we turn to God for our every need and the needs of those in the world around us. Just as the churches and the world responded to the needs of the Syrian refugees, they were not stingy in their giving again.

It was a blessing to participate in being the hands and feet of Jesus. As deacons we were right there. Immediately there were offers of funds, housing, food, transportation, babysitting, information

gathering and the ever helpful: "whatever we can do." It was challenging to know how to help because many of the evacuees were dispersed with family and friends far and wide. Also, overwhelmed by the situation, many of the evacuees did not know what they needed. We did what we could to keep the lines of communication open. We brainstormed, we gathered and we continued to offer help, as needs formed and re-formed.

As deacons in Edmonton, we know we're not in this alone; there was a wonderful spirit of co-operation. As there is no need to reinvent the wheel, we accessed the city's emergency and social services and teamed up with whomever was lending a hand. Again I saw God's image-bearers, whether in the church or not, showing care and compassion.

It is now 3 and a 1/2 months later and many have returned home and are rebuilding their lives; however, we will continue to be there for them as they need us.



Written by Lucinda Klapwyk
Diaconal Ministry Developer
Classis Alberta North

www.diaconalministries.com



18 Diaconal Ministry Developers (DMDs) were active across Canada, ready to serve, support, equip and bless deacons.

59
percent of
diaconates
were visited
and
equipped.

98
percent of Canadian
diaconates were
contacted by DMDs in
Classes where there is
an active DMD.

approx. **1000** Deacons
were
equipped.
Deacons most often ask for
support in areas of responding
to benevolence requests,
refugee support, understanding
the role of the deacon and in
ways to connect to community.

At least

5

Diaconal
gatherings (with
multiple
churches) took
place across
Canada this past
year.

as many as
250 new users log
on to DMC's
website every month,
accessing free resources
like devotions for dea-
cons, COS and Operation
Manna information and
resources, as well as
templates like the
deacons work plan, and
more.



(t-l): Jake Pinsen from All
Nations Christian Fellowship in
Toronto, ON wrote a blog post
about his experience as a first-
time deacon.

(t-r): DMDs Bill (left) and Gary (right)
pose with retired National DMC
Director Hans Kater (middle).

(left): Deacon Karen Jacobi wrote a blog post
for DMC on her participation in the Freedom
Climb which created greater awareness and
promoted advocacy against modern day
oppression, slavery and exploitation in the
world.

engaging community

Through the Operation Manna program, the Community Opportunity Scan and equipping events like the Day of Encouragement, DMC motivates churches to engage in God's transforming work in their neighbourhoods.



15

churches across Canada engaged in the process of a Community Opportunity Scan (COS)

The
COS

Is a process of discovery which affirms the unique gifts and needs of the community and church –to help discern where God is at work and to join Him through community ministry.

More than

1000

People
attended

5

Days of Encouragement in
Ancaster (ON), Edmonton
(AB), Emo (ON), Ottawa
(ON), and Truro (NS).



Widening the Circle

Mother Theresa once said, "The problem with the world is that we have all drawn our family circles too small."

Up until January 2015, my circle was drawn around my church, my family, and the deli, Dutch Store, and catering business I owned in Aylmer, Ontario. In October of 2013, however, I attended the Day of Encouragement in Ancaster, Ontario. It opened my eyes wider to the beauty of our denomination and I think we do a pretty good job of drawing the circle bigger. I felt proud to be connected to many great people who are taking strides to make our world more just. I think I also felt ashamed that my life had become so narrow and self-focused. I felt as though God was holding a mirror in front of me and asking me if my life was fulfilling. He was reminding me of who I was and what He could do through His people. I wept through most of the conference. It was beautiful to me to hear how God was working through the CRC. We're not perfect, but we're willing, and that is what makes the difference.

After the Day of Encouragement I was convinced that God was calling me to other things. In January 2015, I put my business on the market. After my business sold, I had faith that my God would show up. On February 15 I was officially finished. At 1:30 pm I got a text from my friend in Edmonton asking if we could Skype. She and another friend of mine were sitting in her office and she said to me, "Trina, we were brainstorming about who should start this new youth centre in North East Edmonton and we both thought of you." I told them I would look at the job description and pray about it. Working with Youth Unlimited would mean that I would have to raise my own salary, and all the funds to run the centre. Hard work. But as I read through the job description, I saw how each adventure and misadventure that I had was used by God to shape me for this role. Two weeks later I was on a plane to Edmonton to start *The Vault*.

In August of 2015, *The Vault* applied to become an Operation Manna partner. Because of this and the support of many others, the doors of The Vault Youth Centre finally opened on February 2, 2016. Since then, our numbers have grown and we now have about 8-12 teens every Tuesday and Thursday night. And while we spend our time with the teens, we chat about family, school, relationships, hobbies, stress, beliefs and so much more.

The staff at *The Vault* also run clubs in various neighbourhood high schools. For example, I co-facilitate six girls' empowerment clubs where we talk about things like anger, stress, relationships and how the media effects our self-image. While I thoroughly enjoy my time with the girls, I usually leave heartbroken and crying out to Jesus for Him to work His love into these girls' lives. I am also learning that prayer is my most valuable tool. My little red Corolla has become a well-used prayer room.

Through all of this, God called me to step forward into the unknown and worked with me despite my weakness. Though I am weak, He is strong. And although some days I feel alone I know that there are people upholding me in prayer and moving with me to continue to show God's love to this broken world. Though Him I continue to widen my circle.



Written by Trina Miedema (left in photo, with one of the youth)



15 Operation Manna (OM) partners across the country:

Barrie Pregnancy Resource Centre
Ancaster CRC's Christians Against Poverty Debt Centre
Community Partners For Success (Frankford, ON)
Divorce Care for Kids (Bethel CRC, Waterdown, ON)
Westside CRC's Freedom Session Ministry
Heartland Fellowship CRC(Chilliwack, BC)
Hope Centre Ministries (Winnipeg)
Indigenous Family Centre (Winnipeg)
Loyalist Christian Life (Belleville)
Mission Montreal
Neighbour Centre (Edmonton)
Supper's Ready (Brighton CRC)
Ramothe House (Mount Forest, ON)
Refugee Chaplaincy (Vancouver, BC)
The Vault Youth Centre (Edmonton)

181 Canadian CRCs gave \$181,000 for Operation Manna

9 Churches inquired about Operation Manna in the past year.

6 Churches developed a new community ministry with the involvement of Operation Manna



doing justice

DMC equips deacons to mobilize churches to respond to injustices affecting people in their communities.

The Sponsorship Journey of Faith CRC, Burlington, ON

Our sponsorship journey began with the increased media coverage of the Syrian refugee crisis. As a church, we felt that we couldn't just sit on the sidelines with all this suffering going on, and we felt that God was calling us to sponsor a family.

We were stepping out in faith and it seemed like an overwhelming task. We had to choose from pages and pages of families with heartbreaking stories. After praying about it, we really felt God leading us to sponsor the family of 6 from the Congo. And looking back, there is no doubt that it was God's plan. He has shown us time and time again that He had all the details figured out before we even started thinking about it!

With prayer, God has faithfully come through in so many ways - with the funds to sponsor the family, a very supportive church family, Christian school tuition donors, professionals who speak their language at doctor and dentist offices, affordable housing in an expensive city, and recently, jobs! He also used us to answer the refugee family's prayer: unbeknownst to us, they had been praying that Christians would sponsor them!

And God has been teaching me personally so much through this all - that He answers prayer in big ways, that I need to trust him, and that we need to answer His prompts when He asks us to get involved. He will bless when we say "yes" to His plan. We really are on this earth to further His kingdom, and that means investing in others, and using our resources to help those less fortunate.

We can change a family's life, and change ours for the better as well! There's no doubt in my mind that God wanted me to be involved with this. It has certainly been a lot of work, and not without challenges, but my heart is full, my own faith walk has been strengthened, and I have a sense of peaceful fulfillment I have not often felt.

God is good! - written by Kerri Van Luik of Faith CRC

“

While researching the refugee camp that our family was in, we stumbled across the blog of a man who had been a refugee in the same camp (and is actively advocating for those left in the camp), and currently living in Toronto.

We contacted him, and he was excited to hear that we were sponsoring a family from his camp. He said he would like to meet them when they arrived. Two days after our refugee family came to Burlington, my husband and I invited the blogger to come to the house.

As he started walking towards the house, our refugee family started screaming and running towards him! They knew him! He had lived 5 plots down from our family in the refugee camp (a camp of over 150,000 people). God clearly orchestrated the meeting, and they continue to talk to each other regularly. What an amazing moment to witness! (Kerri Van Luik)

”

“

The moment, after living in a camp for 20 years, our 20 year old girl walked into her bedroom, which was all hers, alone, all done up girly, with a home-made quilt from a church member, you should have seen the beautiful big smile on her face! Precious!

It's been good for me personally, as well. I was widowed a few years ago, and this has given me purpose.

(Dianne Zomer, Faith CRC)

”



DMC partners with the Aboriginal Committee and the Office of Social Justice to encourage and promote the Blanket Exercise. Through these partners,

over **100** CRC communities across Canada have been led through the blanket exercise (since its introduction in the CRC).

DMC partners with World Renew by encouraging deacons and churches to sponsor refugees.

<p>29 churches (approx.) welcomed newly arrived refugees.</p>	<p>24 churches submitted a sponsorship in 2015.</p>
<p>27 churches submitted a sponsorship in 2016.</p>	

DMC helps churches to do justice in their communities. In the past year, the following are examples of how DMC has encouraged churches like yours to learn about, and seek God's heart for justice:

- Workshops at the Days of Encouragement and gatherings for Diaconal Ministry Developers
- Attending the JustFaith forum and encouraging conversation during follow-up
- Facilitating blanket exercises in churches
- Leading justice workshops with deacons
- Facilitating justice conversations at the Ministry Networking Day for Operation Manna partners
- Climate change conversations with young adults
- ...and more!



Celebrating God's

This year brought significant changes as three staff moved on, most notably Hans Kater, National Director, who retired after 15 years with DMC. The following is a blog post written as a reflection on his tenure with DMC.



Celebrating the work of Hans Kater, National Director

The last 15 years at DMC has been characterized by Hans' dynamic yet steady vision. Under Hans' leadership, DMC's mission was to walk alongside Canadian CRCs sent to join God in His work transforming communities into places of shalom. And diaconates have an important leadership role in that, Hans maintains, as long as they are able to reimagine themselves as something other than an administrative body.

Becoming a deacon at the age of 40 made a difference in Hans' life and helped to develop his passion and vision. At the same time as he was beginning to feel less fulfillment in his chosen field of accounting, he was, as a deacon, doing more than administrative tasks: he was connecting with people from the community who came to the church looking for help. This fit his gifts well and God used these experiences to encourage him to attend Calvin Seminary in 1993 and serve with World Missions from 1995-2001.

Hans' time in Latin America would provide a different lens through which he

would view the church in Canada. As he witnessed oppression and poverty alongside the growth and development of missional communities in Latin America, he recognized a profound role for the church in pursuing holistic ministry.

In this context, distinctions between elder and deacon, missionary and development worker mattered far less than the pursuit of justice and mercy with the marginalized and poor. In the Canadian context, however, he also saw an opportunity for deacons to be catalysts for community engagement. But it was not just about the deacons – the health of the church seemed to be directly proportional to the effectiveness of the diaconate.

All of these experiences and learnings would bless DMC as Hans became National Director in 2001. By that time, the groundwork had been laid for a centralized mission which, conversely, was strengthened by decentralizing DMC to better serve the churches coast to coast. A national, classis-based model was beginning to be realized. By 2002, Board members stretched across the country and DMC was focused on finding Diaconal Ministry Developers to serve each classis.

This was the first of a number of significant changes in DMC and the CRC that happened during Hans' tenure. DMC contributed its voice to the

conversations on the changing view and role of deacons. Women increasingly brought an important dimension to diaconal work as the full gifts of the body were being represented in leadership. As churches felt called to their local communities, Hans appreciated how they also began to take the risk of the Community Opportunity Scan as a tool for community engagement. And, more recently, the Diakonia Remixed report was not unfamiliar to Canadian deacons because it had already been the language of DMC. Finally, DMC also began to give intentional focus to the area of justice and to help churches love their neighbours in concrete and visible ways, look deeper than charity to seek out the root causes of poverty and marginalization in their communities.

While DMC's focus on justice, for example, is the kind of thing often seen as a measureable indicator of success, it is also the unmeasurable things that have shaped Hans' years as National Director of DMC.

At his recent retirement party, staff celebrated how Hans is a thoughtful, engaged and gentle servant-leader. He has a unique ability to be a strong administrator yet remains flexible to accommodate new ideas. He thinks deeply, lives his convictions, encourages his staff and gives them the freedom to use their gifts. One of his most appreciated characteristics is that he relational and caring: the culture of DMC has been deeply impacted and strengthened by his person, experiences and abilities. We are grateful to God for his character and leadership. He was a great gift to DMC and to the CRC in Canada. He will be missed.

s Faithfulness



Other good-byes

Dan Galenkamp (at right) moved on to another position. Madeline Wierenga (bottom, left) retired after 16 years with DMC and a total of 32 years with the CRC.



DMC's Board of Directors 2015-2016

Classis:	Name:
Alberta North:	Norm Haayema
Alberta South/SK:	John Knibbe
British Columbia S/E:	Michael Prins
British Columbia N/W:	Melissa Van Dyk
Chatham:	Jane Adema
Eastern Canada:	Ineke Neutel
Hamilton:	Scott Plante
Huron:	Mechele teBrake
Lake Superior	Erika Snippe-Juurakko
Niagara:	Peter Kralt
Quinte:	Coby Suurdt
Toronto:	Lesley Millar Toussaint

Staff:

Ron Vanden Brink, National Director	rvandenbrink@crcna.org
Samantha Bondy, Administrative Coordinator	sbondy@crcna.org
Tammy Heidbuurt, Regional Ministry Developer, East	theidbuurt@crcna.org
Rachel Vroege, Regional Ministry Developer, West	rvroege@crcna.org
Marcia Mantel, Communications Coordinator	mmantel@crcna.org



Diaconal Ministry Developers (DMDs):

Classis:	Name:	Email:
Alberta North:	Lucinda Klapwyk	lklapwyk@yahoo.ca
Alberta North:	Harvey Buit	hdbuit@gmail.com
Alberta South/SK:	Jean deBeer	jeandb3@gmail.com
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	Bart Plugboer	bartplugboer@hotmail.com
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	John Klein-Geltink	john.kleingeltink@gmail.com
	Ron DeSmit	rdesmit@live.com
	Doug VandeKamp	djvandekamp@gmail.com
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Quinte:	Bill Groot Nibbelink	bill.grootnibbelink@gmail.com

Photo Credits

Front cover: (top) Operation Manna (OM) partner, Heartland Fellowship CRC works on building trails in the hills in Chilliwack, BC. (bottom): Classis Hamilton deacons meet with DMC staff Tammy Heidbuurt (left)

Pages 2-3: (header, l): from former OM partner Studio Works, Vancouver (header, r): from OM partner Indigenous Family Centre (Winnipeg)

Pages 4-5: see credits on page

Pages 6-7: (t-l): "Go" was the theme at the Ancaster Day of Encouragement in 2015. (t-r): Sue Carr was the keynote speaker at the Ministry Networking Day. (bottom): more trailbuilding in Chilliwack. (see note above)

Pages 8-9: (header, l): *Journey with Me* is a refugee resource for churches. (header, r): Part of the art series the *Creator's Sacrifice* by aboriginal artist Ovid Bighetty; former DMC staff Dan Galenkamp and DMD Rachel Brouwer at a DMD Gathering, responding to presentation by CRC Race Relations Bernadette Arthur

Pages 10-11: (left page): former DMC director, Hans Kater (left) talks with his predecessor Ben Vandezande at his farewell party; (right page) photos taken at Hans' farewell party