

August 1996

Greetings in Jesus' name! Welcome to our faith missionary newsletter, which I will be sending to you and all my supporters about once a month. In this and future issues, you will find out what's new and upcoming at The DAM, read stories about the kids, get a little background information, and hear about the people who work here. I hope this newsletter will be a good way for us to keep in touch, so you can see how your support for me is helping God work in the lives of these young people. If you have any questions or comments about what you read, or want to know more, please call me.

Thank you for your support, and may God bless you.

Yours in Christ,

We celebrate our first anniversary

The DAM was elbow-to-elbow July 6 as several hundred guests joined staff and volunteers to celebrate our first year of operation.

Youth volunteers showed visitors around the drop-in (with the new pool table a particular highlight), invited them to sign the guest book, and served them birthday cake, pop, and other refreshments.

The highlight of the afternoon was the presentation in the mall's Centre Court. The Monday night drama workshop performed their original production about self-worth that they had premiered the day before at the Children's Festival at the Meadowvale Theatre. The series of skits starred a combination of youth and drop-in staff and volunteers, and was applauded heartily by the crowd in the Centre Court. Before the drama, DAM founders Mike

Clarke and Bill Crawford spoke about their first year, and about their hopes for the future. City Councillor Pat Saito brought greetings and congratulations from the City of Mississauga and the Region of Peel, and trustee Tom Billard did likewise from the Peel Board of Education..

Bill unveiled an appreciation board highlighting many of the benefactors that helped make the first year possible, and presented certificates of appreciation to several volunteers. In turn, he and Mike received gifts from the staff.

Honoured guest the Right Reverend Terence Finlay, Bishop of the Anglican Diocese of Toronto, closed the formal part of the program with a blessing.

Special thanks to our friends at Eden United and White Oak Presbyterian churches,

Marilyn Barras, Jean Hill, Ann Smith, Maralyn Cale, and everyone who contributed to the spread of delicious refreshments, to Dominion for the pop, to the art workshop for putting together the appreciation board,

to Judith Macdonald for leading the drama group, and to all who came out and made the day such a success!

Coming up at The DAM

Next month, we start up our drama, art and writing workshops again after the summer break. We're looking for new directions and ideas for the art sessions and continued growth and development in drama, and we're planning a special newsletter for and by the youth themselves. **Also in the works:** We're still working on getting some real office space. Right now, when our director, Bill Crawford, and our new admin/communication/development manager, Anne Levy-Ward, are both in our little back room at once, neither can open their desk drawers. Many thanks to Grand and Toy at Erin Mills Town Centre for donating some of the office supplies. (We're still looking for a big stapler and a white board.)

These are our kids

L. has just turned 15. She is a pretty girl who likes to show off her figure in fishnet stockings and the briefest miniskirts allowed by law. She is a talented artist and a pleasure to be around. Unfortunately, her opinion of herself doesn't come close to reflecting the good things we see in her. The other day she came into the drop-in wearing a leash around her neck, with the other end being held by another girl. "I'm [her] bitch," she announced. Despite our appalled pleas, she wouldn't take it off.

We're working with L., and with many girls like her, to help her learn to value herself, and to appreciate the gifts God has given her. Please pray for her.

Profile: Barry Townshend

Is there anything Barry Townshend can't do? This multi-talented student is an actor, an artist, a writer and editor, a budding psychologist, a valued volunteer at The DAM, and the manager of our summer research project. It's hard to believe he won't be 20 until later this month. Barry became involved with The DAM through Michael Clarke, in his role as youth group leader at Trinity Anglican Church. "I went on a street walk downtown with Mike," Barry says.

"Once I was aware of the culture and the needs, I could never turn my back on that." He continued to volunteer at the drop-in two days a week throughout his first year at the University of Guelph, and plans to commute again this year. What does The DAM mean to Barry: "These kids are part of my life. I get back from them as much as I give, in love and support and good times."

Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper. (Jeremiah 20:7)