

Well-Coming Faces

Friends of Wellspring Find “Crafty” Ways to Help

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Even though the trees are just beginning to burst into leaf and the temperature is hopefully on the way up, thoughts of Christmas are already preoccupying one special group of people. The Friends of Wellspring are hoping that by the time winter rolls around again, they'll be able to put on their Annual Friends of Wellspring Christmas Craft Sale. Everyone has their fingers crossed!

The Christmas Craft Sale, now held in 4 YMCA locations throughout London, is only one of the many activities that the Friends of Wellspring (FOW) organize each year. Each one of these events generate funds to support Wellspring's many programs and services, but according to Kristen Goodman, one of the founders of the group, the mandate of the group goes beyond raising funds. It is also about creating awareness for the organization and giving people the opportunity to give back in whatever way they can, whether by making handcrafted and other items to be sold, helping out at events or purchasing gift cards that the group uses as prizes or to purchase materials. “It is humbling and powerful,” says Kristen, “watching people give what they've got.”

The Friends of Wellspring began as an idea that Kristen, the former Executive Director of Wellspring, and Sandy Payne, another former staffer, had when they were set to retire in 2011. “We still cared about Wellspring,” says Kristen, “and we wanted to stay close to the people we cared about.” Plus, so many people – volunteers, members and others – wanted to give back. So six people met one day in Kristen's living room and the idea for the Friends of Wellspring was born. In the beginning it was all about the FOW Store that was, and still is, located inside Wellspring.



Friends of Wellspring members Maggie Woolcock, Sandy Payne, Carol Dunbar, Lise & Kyle Goettl and Sandy O'Brien get ready for the Annual Garage Sale.

But the group soon branched out, focusing on fun activities including an indoor Garage Sale, Book Sale, Euchre Parties, Ask the Expert series as well as various special raffles and auctions held throughout the year. The group's Executive (Barb Mylemans, Susan Hamilton, Stephanie MacDonald, Carol Ristine, Sandy Payne and Kristen Goodman) is always looking for ways to improve and expand on what they are doing, including looking for new venues as well as new ideas for events.

Nowadays, the Friends of Wellspring membership has grown to over 80 energetic individuals who are excited about what they do. The group “gives the people who are involved something additional to be involved with,” says Kristen. “It gives them the opportunity to be productive and valued, to belong to a group and to develop leadership skills.” And, Kristen says, new “Friends” are always welcome. If you have a skill, a contact or time you would be willing to share and would like to find out more about ways you can help, contact Membership Coordinator, Stephanie MacDonald by email at med-ed@sympatico.ca or by calling the Wellspring office at 519.438.7379.