

SEED NEWS

2018 EDMONTON CHRISTMAS NEWSLETTER

Our Mission

To build hope and wellbeing for our most vulnerable citizens through Jesus' love.



THE
MUSTARD
SEED

CHRISTMAS TIME

"WHEN THE TIME WAS JUST
RIGHT, GOD SENT HIS SON
THROUGH A WOMAN..."
— GALATIANS 4:4



One of my faults, and certainly not my biggest, is that I'm a late Christmas shopper; which is why most of my nieces and nephews get a gift card from Walmart every Christmas. I get down to the last week and rush out to find the perfect gift, only to find that everything on my list has sold out.

Our time is at a premium at Christmas, isn't it? As our calendars fill up, we wonder how we will find time to meet all the obligations of the season. Aside from obligations though, there are things we want to do, that refresh and renew our souls like helping someone else, or serving at our shelter or drop in centre – those things that rarely even make it to the calendar.

It's easy to lose track of time at Christmas and to get caught up in our own busyness. But not everyone gets wrapped up in the holiday spirit like most of us do. For many of our homeless neighbours, Christmas is a solitary time that serves as a reminder of everything they've lost.

That's why we are so thankful each Christmas that so many of you reach out to help or make a special point to give so it can be a special Christmas for the less fortunate.

When I think of the story of the first Christmas, I often reflect on God's remarkable timing. On the surface it seems like nothing is aligning and the time just isn't right, Mary was in a strange city, with no reservation at the inn. But in God's eyes all preparations were complete, and as we read in Galatians 4:4, "when the time was just right, God sent His son through a woman..."

So how will you choose to spend your time this Christmas? My wish for you is that you find time for the important, life-giving events that will bring hope and purpose to your life this Christmas.

Thank you for your generous support of The Mustard Seed this Christmas.

Blessings,

Stephen Wile, CEO
The Mustard Seed



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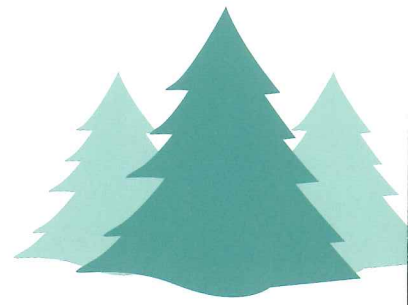
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THESE WONDERFUL COOKIES BRING BLISSFUL JOY TO HURTING HEARTS



The Christmas season can be a tough time for community participants — it often serves as a reminder of broken relationships and things lost. However, for many who are struggling in Edmonton, the 96th Street building is somewhere they always feel welcomed and loved.

Mandie, Food Services Coordinator at the church, says she hopes her new festive menu will bring extra joy to community participants. This year she will be serving not one but five days of holiday cheer meals for community participants.

"Instead of expecting community participants to wait for one annual Christmas dinner every year, they now have more to look forward to," says Mandie.

Keeping spirits up this season through a home-cooked meal is something Mandie says keeps her motivated. "We have so much more to celebrate than a holiday. Christ gave us an opportunity to come together in this time of love and peace."

As a small token of appreciation for your vital support, Mandie shares one of her favourite Christmas cookie recipes. We hope you'll enjoy time with your loved ones baking and cherishing each other this holiday season.



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Download recipe at TheSeed.ca/gingerbread

BRINGING FAMILIES TOGETHER ONE MEAL AT A TIME

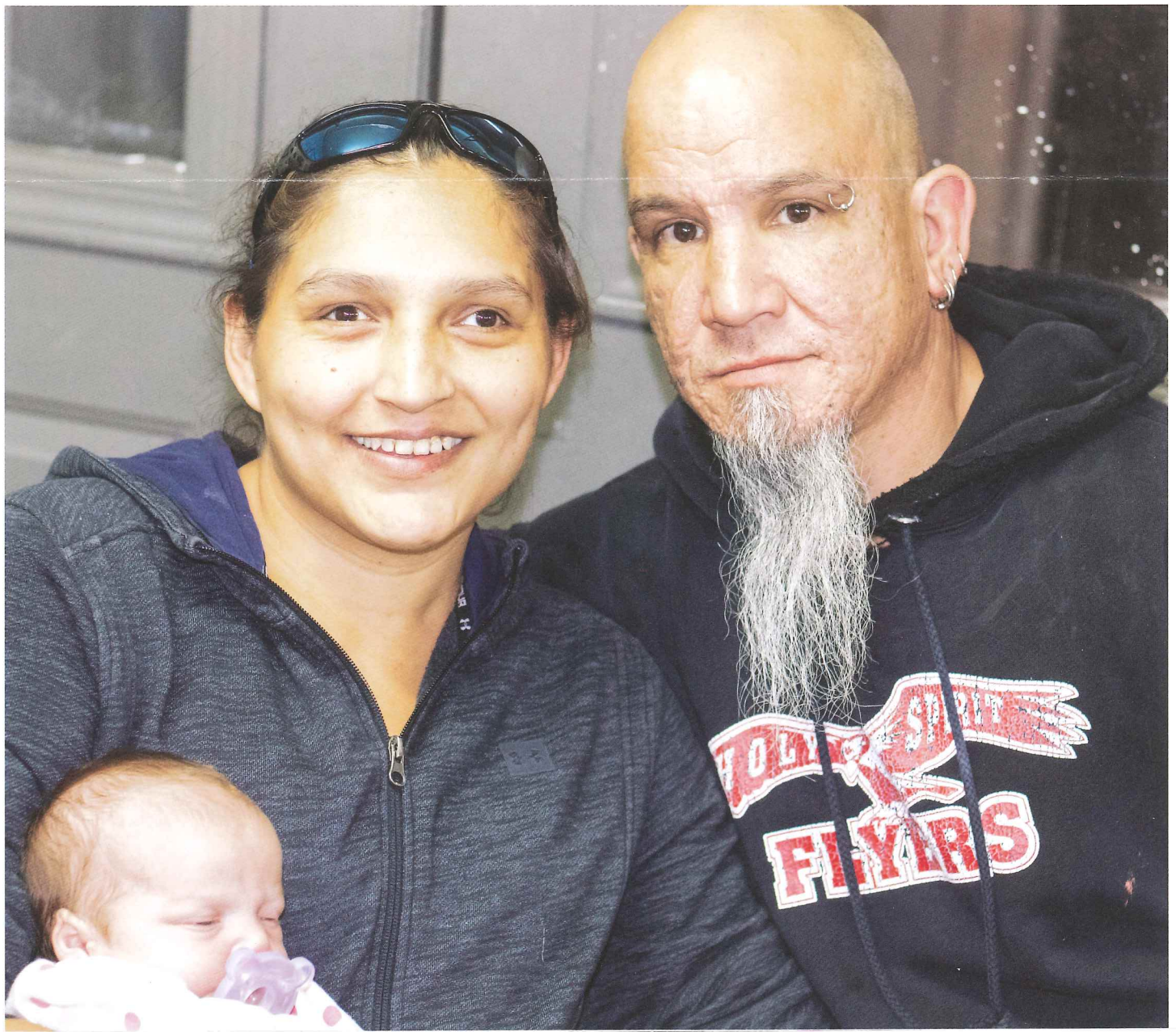
Sharing a meal together at The Mustard Seed has become a family tradition for Crystal and Mike. For the couple, the 96th Street Building is a safe haven they can turn to for quality time with their three boys and one-month-old baby girl. The family says they are very grateful for the time they can spend together during the meal program.

"I would say let's go to The Seed tonight and the kids would be like okay! Because they love it over here," says Crystal.

Crystal and Mike met at The Mustard Seed's New Year's Eve celebration a few years ago and have since been inseparable.

"When I met Mike, I was a struggling single mom of three boys that just came out of a very bad marriage and Mike was looking to get his life together after being released from prison," admitted Crystal.

Although Mike works part-time, the couple still struggle to pay their bills and buy necessities such as groceries and supplies for their four children. Thankfully for their family, The Mustard Seed has been a huge support system.



"I WOULD SAY LET'S GO TO THE SEED TONIGHT AND THE KIDS WOULD BE LIKE OKAY! BECAUSE THEY LOVE IT OVER HERE."



"We go to the food bank at The Mustard Seed to help with groceries, use PAC sometimes for clothes, and come to the evening meal program which has helped us out a whole lot," says Crystal.

Providing for their children is the first priority for the couple, as Crystal remembers being forced to move her children eight times in one year as a result of issues she had in her previous marriage.

"My oldest boy said 'mom, I am scared to make any friends because every time I make a new friend we have to leave', so I promised we will make it work this time until they finish school," says Crystal.

For Mike, it is the environment and friendly staff at the 96th Street Building that assures him it is a safe place to bring his family.

"As long as I am with Crystal and the kids when they come to the meal program I am happy to bring them here. The staff here are awesome. These guys always help us out."

Being a family man is a new concept for Mike as he admits he never really had a family growing up. After losing their four-month-old baby to SIDS a couple of years ago, he is determined to provide the best family life he can for Crystal and the kids.

"Last year was the first time I ever spent Christmas with any family. I am looking forward to doing that again this year," says Mike happily.

A NEW SPACE FOR OUR NEIGHBOURS

In June 2018, The Mustard Seed relocated the Neighbour Centre from 104 Street to 81 Avenue. The new space offers participants a variety of resources, including meals, clothing, laundry, foot care, and community programming. For individuals experiencing homelessness and poverty in south Edmonton, the Neighbour Centre is the only adult drop-in.



"I'VE GOT ONE WORD FOR YOU — DIGNITY."

"I love the food, people, and the staff — it's beautiful and comfortable. I love that I get things like a nice new coat if I need it." — Janice

"It was the first place I came to get the ball rolling towards my goal of getting off the streets. Whenever I need anything I come to the Neighbour Centre first."

— Peter

2017 CHRISTMAS AT THE MUSTARD SEED



8650

CHRISTMAS MEALS SERVED.



336

FAMILIES ACCESSED THE FAMILY GIFT CENTRE LAST YEAR, AND 1,894 TOYS WERE PURCHASED.



360

BAGS OF HOPE HANDED OUT TO PARTICIPANTS.

Help us give a special Christmas to those in need this year.
Donate today at TheSeed.ca/spiritYEG



"NEW LIFE" AT THE MUSTARD SEED

"OUR PLAN IS TO ADD MORE CAPACITY TO EXISTING PROGRAMS AND TO USE OUR EXPERIENCE FROM OUR OPERATIONS IN ALBERTA OVER THE LAST 35 YEARS."

WE HAVE BIG NEWS EVERYONE

We're expanding to British Columbia! On September 1, we officially celebrated our merger with New Life Community, making The Mustard Seed New Life Community a hub for essential services for those less fortunate in the city of Kamloops.

New Life Community has provided outreach and poverty-relief services to people in need since 1980. The faith-based organization has built hope in the Kamloops community by providing nutritious meals and ongoing support services for their clients. Our organizations' shared mission and values rooted in faith, make for an ideal partnership!

"New Life Community has a 40 year legacy in the Kamloops community of doing exceptional work to help people in need make remarkable changes in their lives," says Stephen Wile, The Mustard Seed CEO. "We look forward to continuing this mighty work together in Kamloops."

WONDERFUL DAYS AHEAD!

With the merger coming together smoothly, we have big plans for The Mustard Seed New Life Community. "Our plan is to add more capacity to existing programs and to use our experience from our operations in Alberta over the last 35 years," says John Rook, Managing Director of Calgary and Director of Strategic Initiatives for The Mustard Seed.

Currently, programs and services include an outreach centre with a kitchen — feeding thousands annually — a dental clinic, a health care centre, a hair salon, a thrift store, and a Men's Recovery Centre.

We are very proud, and blessed, to serve those who are struggling in our communities beyond Alberta, and will continue to expand our organization where our ministry is needed most. Wherever this journey takes us, we will continue to help alleviate poverty and homelessness through acceptance, empowerment, and practical solutions.

Not everyone gets wrapped up in the holiday spirit.

Provide a warm meal and refuge from the cold for only \$3.51.

Donate today at TheSeed.ca/spiritYEG



TheSeed.ca

CALGARY

Downtown Support Centre
102 11 Ave SE, Calgary, AB T2G 0X5
p. 403.269.1319
Email: info@theseed.ca

Calgary Shelter
7025 44 St SE, Calgary, AB T2C 4E8
p. 403.723.9422

Neighbour Centre
#24 6060 Memorial Dr NE, Calgary, AB T2A 5Z5
Email: hubs@theseed.ca

RED DEER

Community Support Centre
6002 54 Ave, Red Deer, AB T4N 4M8
p. 403.347.1844
Email: inforeddeer@theseed.ca

KAMLOOPS

Outreach Centre
181 Victoria St W, Kamloops, BC V2C 1A5
p. 250.372.9898
infokamloops@theseed.ca

EDMONTON

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10568 114 St, Edmonton, AB T5H 3J7
p. 780.426.5600

Neighbour Centre
10050 81 Ave NW, Edmonton, AB T6E 1W8
p. 780.250.6840

Mosaic Centre
12758 Fort Road, Edmonton, AB T5A 1A9
p. 780.722.3247

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