

# OUT OF THE COLD



## ***Blythwood Road Baptist Church Volunteer Guide***

*(November 2015 edition)*

See Blythwood and other sites profiled at  
<http://www.dixonhall.org/housing-homelessness-services/>

### **Welcome to Out of the Cold!**

Out of the Cold is an emergency program that provides homeless persons with a hot meal and a warm, safe place to sleep in churches and other public buildings across Toronto.

As a volunteer, you play a key role in reducing the risk to those who lack shelter during winter. You also help offer a warm, safe and friendly human contact that for many is even more important than overnight shelter and food.

**Blythwood Road Baptist Church** hosts the program on Saturday nights from November through March. We first opened for Out of the Cold on January 14, 1995.

## **Our Guests**

Thousands of people live in the city of Toronto without permanent shelter. The guests of the Out of the Cold program are some of the people who are homeless and who have been living on the city streets. During the winter months, a number of churches provide a warm, safe place to sleep on different nights of the week. For many people who are homeless, these churches provide a welcome refuge.

Before coming to Blythwood, the guests may or may not have already tried to find shelter in one of the permanent facilities in the city. In many cases, the guests have had such bad experiences in these shelters (such as assault, theft, or rude treatment) that they prefer to “take their chances” on the streets, where they feel safer. The attraction of the Out of the Cold program for many of the guests seems to be its non-judgmental atmosphere because of the sharing that takes place between the volunteers and guests.

There tend to be more male guests than female, and the ages range from 20-60+.

## *What we provide*

Since 1995, for 22 weekends each winter, we open our doors to guests on Saturdays at 6 pm, providing them with a hot meal beginning at 7 pm, as well as a breakfast on Sunday morning. Our guests receive:

- a warm and friendly welcome;
- a hot dinner, hot breakfast, and bag lunch;
- a safe, quiet place to sleep;
- access to clean used clothing;
- access to health care through the Health Bus;
- a TTC token (for overnight guests – dispensed by staff of Dixon Hall).



## *What we require of Guests*

For the safety of other guests, volunteers, and other users of the building, our guests must agree to the following rules while they are on the premises:

- No smoking indoors
- No alcohol or drugs
- No violent behaviour
- No weapons
- No wandering beyond the program areas (elsewhere in the building).
- Smokers are allowed to smoke outdoors, (Door at the front east corner of church).
- Anyone carrying alcohol or a weapon is requested to give it to the shift Coordinator or to Dixon Hall staff, who will label the item as the property of that person and return it when the owner leaves.)
- Anyone who persists in disobeying the rules is asked to leave.



## High priority: mixing and mingling

Perhaps the most important aspect of volunteering is talking with our guests.

- Sitting and chatting conveys an everyday humanity and respect for one another – something all too often missing for our guests, who experience constant rejection and scorn on the streets.
- You do not have to be able to solve all their problems – indeed you cannot. Remember: the primary goal is to provide a safe warm place out of the cold. Keep this in mind if you start to feel overwhelmed by the problems of our guests.
- Some guests may make provocative statements: avoid arguing with guests; rather, simply listen respectfully and keep the conversation neutral, with non-committal responses.
- Get to know as many guests as you can - by name.

When you are comfortable mixing and mingling with our guests, you will greatly contribute to an atmosphere of calm and peacefulness – this will help to avert any problems which could arise. And you will find it tremendously fulfilling. It is hard to do – but only at first. Take the first step.



## Tips for all of us

### *About food*

Food is a great tool for welcoming guests.

- Handle food safely to protect our guests. Learn the standard food handling rules. (Ask the kitchen coordinator.)
- We are as generous as possible. But some food you see is held for late arrivals and breakfast. Just ask.
- If a guest asks for specific help with food (such as heating their own), we try to assist, within reason.
- Don't snack from any dish or container used to serve guests.
- If your hair is long enough to tie back, please do so. (We have extra hair elastics in the kitchen.)
- Wash your hands regularly.

### *Preserve goodwill & respect*

- Avoid bringing items for specific guests; all other guests are watching.
- If you tell a guest you'll come back to the program another time to continue a conversation, please make sure you come – even though our guest may not.
- Dress appropriately for the setting and our guests. Emphasize comfort, safety, and easy-to-laundry clothes. Don't display expensive items.
- Be really here when you're here. Pay attention, join in. (For example, we discourage wearing ear buds.)

### *Protect yourself*

- Make sure your coats are UPSTAIRS in the closet next to where guests sign in (NOT in the back room or kitchen).
- Don't leave keys, wallets etc. in coats.
- Do not give out personal contact or address information to guests – *very important for female volunteers.*
- Do not give anyone money while you are at the program (If you see someone on the street away from Blythwood, then help as you wish).

## Dividing up the work

A specific number of volunteers are needed for each of the shifts listed below. We appreciate people who make a regular commitment for particular nights.

When you arrive for your shift, let the coordinator know you are there. Various tasks are assigned to each shift, and the team is responsible for maintaining the keys and for all other decision-making during the shift.

Shift teams are responsible for orienting new volunteers and ensuring that all the tasks are covered adequately. New volunteers should report any difficulties to the coordinator, who will ensure that the situation is handled appropriately.



## Volunteer shifts

### Each Saturday evening & Sunday morning

| <i>Time</i>                     | <i>Job</i>                          | <i># of people</i> |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------|
| 4:00 pm - 8:30 pm .....         | Kitchen Crew .....                  | 8-12               |
| 5:00 pm - 7:30 pm .....         | Clothing Room .....                 | 6                  |
| 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm .....         | Welcome guests                      |                    |
| .....                           | Clear dinner dishes                 |                    |
| .....                           | Clean up spills                     |                    |
| .....                           | Clean up washrooms as needed        |                    |
| .....                           | Check church building and grounds   |                    |
| .....                           | Wash dishes & clean up              |                    |
| .....                           | Mix and mingle .....                | 4                  |
| 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm .....         | Wash dishes                         |                    |
| .....                           | Clean up kitchen.....               | 4                  |
| 8:00p.m. - Midnight .....       | Clean up kitchen                    |                    |
| .....                           | Welcome & feed latecomers           |                    |
| .....                           | Check and clean washrooms as needed |                    |
| .....                           | Check church building and grounds   |                    |
| .....                           | Mix and mingle .....                | 4                  |
| Midnight - 6:00 am Sunday ..... | Keep awake                          |                    |
| .....                           | Check church building and grounds   |                    |
| .....                           | Clean up gym tables.....            | 1-2                |
| 6:00 am - 8:30 am .....         | Kitchen Crew                        |                    |
| .....                           | Wake-up call .....                  | 6                  |
| 7:00 am - 9:00 am .....         | Clean up gym and washrooms/toilets  |                    |
| .....                           | Spray and put away mattresses       |                    |
| .....                           | Help guests leave.....              | 5                  |

### **Please say no**

*Guests will offer to come in early and help set up. Please politely say "no thanks." This prevents what can be significant problems.*

### **Your time here is important!**

*Please come if you said you would. It causes real problems when shifts are understaffed.*

*If you cannot attend your shift please call **Susan Thomas** at 416-723-3211 and let her know. We'll try to find a replacement.*

*But that's a tough job at the last minute so please come if you're scheduled.*

## Shift Duty Details

### **Kitchen Supper Crew: 4:00 - 8:30 pm**

PREPARE AND SERVE SUPPER & CLEAN UP KITCHEN  
*The cornerstone of our operation is the Saturday evening meal. Because so many people make such a great effort, we are well-known for providing lots of hearty, satisfying food.*

#### Cooks, helpers, servers

- Arrive in time to receive and sort the food donations and/or shopping.
- Label all items in the fridge as the property of the OOTC.
- Oversee the preparation of the food and maintain an orderly kitchen.
- Assist with serving.
- Organize cups, plates, milk, sugar, etc.
- Assist with preparing and serving food.
- Clean up the kitchen and dining area



### **Early evening: 6:00 - 8:00 pm and 7:00 - 9:00 pm**

WELCOME & REGISTER GUESTS  
MIX AND MINGLE  
CLEAN UP SPILLS, WASHROOMS AS NEEDED  
CHECK CHURCH PROPERTY (INDOORS & OUT)

#### Registration and Welcome

Tables are set up at the entrance (Narthex). Here, volunteers register and welcome our guests. Guests are requested to sign their name (first name or mark) on our OOTC sign-up sheet. They may sign up only for a meal or for a meal and overnight.



Dixon Hall staff also record the arrival of our guests on their required forms, separate from our guest book. The rules of the program are explained, guests are asked explicitly for any alcohol, drugs or weapons, which are labeled for return in the morning.

Any new guests are shown down to the gym area (point out washrooms on the way down).

#### Outside Door and Security

- Post the “Out of the Cold” notice on the front door.
- Ensure that a container for cigarette butts is placed outside the door on the East side, and that the no-smoking-indoors rule is observed.
- Ensure that the door is monitored or locked at all times.
- At least once per shift, someone should walk through entire church building and around the outside, to ensure guests have not settled where they should not.

Early Evening Duties

- Bring mats into the gym from their storage location on the stage.
- Set up tables and chairs for supper.
- Put out books and magazines if available.
- Close off restricted areas (Youth room, Janitor's storage).
- Maintain security to the doors leading from the gym on either side of the stage.
- Circulate, sitting and talking with guests.
- Observe guests and remind people of program rules if needed
- Assist servers in removing old cups, plates as required and keep area clean. Help wherever needed.
- Help settle people down after they have eaten.



Clothing

Generally the same people each week deal with clothing and they have access to the clothing storage. If guests make you aware of clothing needs, direct them to those operating the clothing program.



***Cleaning the washrooms is NOT a punishment – it just feels like one!***

Washrooms are located immediately below the registration area, on the first landing below the Narthex.

If necessary, remind people that smoking is not allowed.

Throughout the evening and in early morning volunteers should periodically monitor the washrooms to ensure they are clean and supplied with soap, paper towels, and toilet paper.

If cleaning is needed speak to the coordinator on duty to get supplies. Make sure you wear gloves.

Except for a true emergency, showers should not be used.

**Late Evening: 8:00 - 12:00**

**midnight**

CLEAN UP KITCHEN

WELCOME AND FEED LATECOMERS

CLEAN UP GYM AND WASHROOMS AS NECESSARY

MONITORING & SECURITY (AS FOR EARLY SHIFT)

GENERAL DUTIES (AS FOR EARLY SHIFT)

MIX AND MINGLE

*Dim the majority of lights by about 9 p.m. and turn them off no later than 10:00 p.m. Any guest who came for dinner but is not staying the night should be asked to leave before 10.*

**12:00 midnight - 6:00 am** (shift may be covered by Dixon Hall staff)

KEEP AWAKE! SERVE FOOD AS NEEDED. CHECK WASHROOMS. CLEAN UP GYM TABLES

Security

We are fortunate to have support from professionals provided by Dixon Hall. However volunteers ensure that Narthex and exterior doors (apart from the one in use for Out of the Cold) are locked. Periodically walk through the upstairs areas to ensure the security of the church. Let in morning volunteers for their shift.

General Duties

- Be available to hear the needs of the guests (usually by sitting in the kitchen or conversation areas).
- Help settle guests if necessary.
- Periodically monitor the washrooms and replenish supplies if necessary.
- Stay with guests who don't sleep. Conversation should be in the hallway or stairwell, away from where people are sleeping.
- Put on coffee and tea around 5 am.
- Assist with breakfast preparation until end of shift.
- Clean up kitchen as necessary throughout shift.
- Ensure tables are cleaned before 6 am for breakfast.

**Kitchen Breakfast Crew: 6:00 - 8:30 am**

PREPARE AND SERVE BREAKFAST  
CLEAN UP KITCHEN  
WAKE UP CALL

- Make breakfast.
- Organize food available and set out on counter.
- Organize coffee and tea, maintaining supplies of milk, sugar, butter, cups, spoons etc.
- Make juice.
- Serve breakfast.
  
- *We usually have bag lunches to distribute. If available, package the lunches, and place on the table at the exit for guests to take as they leave.*
  
- Clean up breakfast dishes.
- Clean the entire kitchen.



**NOTE: TWO MEN ARE REQUIRED TO BE PART OF THE MORNING KITCHEN CREW, TO ISSUE THE WAKE-UP CALL, AND ASSIST WITH GUESTS AS THEY RISE.**

**Morning Cleanup and Close: 7:00 am – 9:00 am**



CLEAN UP GYM AND TOILETS. SPRAY & PUT AWAY MATTRESSES. HELP GUESTS LEAVE

- Assist with kitchen duties as needed.
- Monitor washroom area; replenish supplies for morning use.
- Ensure tables are ready for breakfast.
- Assist guests if necessary to prepare their belongings to leave.
- Encourage guests to leave by 8:00 - 8:30 am.
- Stack tables and chairs. Prepare buckets of bleach solution and mops, sponges and rubber gloves.
- Sweep gym floor and wet-mop floor with bleach solution.
- Disinfect mats with disinfectant, water and sponges.
- Let mats dry thoroughly and return mats to storage area.
- Bag blankets and kitchen linens for laundry
- Clean washrooms thoroughly and stock supplies. Clean up outside areas (i.e. smoking receptacle, litter in vicinity etc).
- Remove *Out of the Cold* sign.
- Ensure all areas are left completely clean.



## Health & Hygiene: Major on the Basics

*Information provided by City of Toronto.*

The health of all involved in the program is of vital concern to the church. It is especially important to reduce any slight risk from communicable diseases. TB, hepatitis and HIV, may be of primary concern to volunteers. However, they are quite hard to contract. Hepatitis and HIV require direct blood-to-blood contact and TB is much more a concern for guests themselves than for volunteers.



Detailed commentary is available on the public health website of the City of Toronto. <http://www.toronto.ca/health> However, the following simple guidelines will ensure that proper healthy and hygienic conditions are maintained in the building.

- 1) Wear household rubber gloves when cleaning and sanitizing;
- 2) Always wear disposable gloves when cleaning body fluid spills;
- 3) Always wash hands after cleaning.

### Cleaning

- a household detergent is satisfactory for cleaning;
- single-use (paper or cloth) towels should be used for cleaning;
- cloth towels must be laundered between uses;
- when cleaning use a rubbing action to remove any dirt on the surface and any germs that may be under the dirt.

### Sanitizing

- reduces the number of germs on the surface;
- is done after cleaning;
- solution is: a quarter cup of bleach to one gallon of water;
- bleach solution should fresh each day;
- all surfaces should be left to air dry.

### Cleaning Body Fluid Spills

*(urine, stool, blood and bloody body fluids)*

- wear disposable gloves;
- wipe as much of spill as possible with disposable towelling;
- clean area with a bleach solution;
- clean household rubber gloves after use;
- discard disposable gloves;
- rinse mop in bleach solution;
- put on fresh clothing if clothes get soiled (with blood, vomit, urine, etc.)
- avoid exposing open skin sores or mucus membranes (eyes, nose, mouth) to blood and body fluids containing blood or secretions from wounds.

### Areas to Clean and Sanitize

- bathrooms;
- gym (includes floor and vinyl mattresses);
- kitchen (includes tables and chairs the guests will eat on).

#### **HANDS UP!**

Hand sanitizer dispensers (using non-alcoholic foam) are located at entrances and elsewhere.

***Use them, for everyone's sake!***

## Public Health

The Centre for Research on Inner City Health (CRICH), part of the Keenan Research Centre in the Li Ka Shing Knowledge Institute of St. Michael's Hospital, has produced a brief primer on health issues among people who are homeless. Find it at:

<http://www.stmichaelshospital.com/pdf/crich/homelessness-health.pdf>

### Regarding the flu

Influenza is always a concern, and in some seasons, the risk of flu is highly publicized. The Ontario Ministry of Health addresses flu prevention and treatment in general. As well, the site recommends flu shots for everyone. Out of the Cold has no recommendation on getting such shots. <http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/public/programs/publichealth/flu/>

### Regarding TB

People who are homeless are more likely than the general population to develop TB disease because a dozen risk factors for TB are exacerbated by all the implications of being homeless. The risk factors range from possible sustained contact with people with untreated TB, to poor access to nutrition and health care, to difficulty in keeping medical appointments or completing TB treatment. Addictions and substance abuse also elevate risk.

For detailed information visit: [http://www.toronto.ca/health/tb\\_prevention/](http://www.toronto.ca/health/tb_prevention/)

### How can we prevent the spread of TB at our Out of the Cold site?

- Encourage guests to cover their coughs and sneezes; provide disposable tissues
- Improve ventilation by ensuring fans are running.
- Know the signs and symptoms of TB.
- If you suspect TB disease in a client, consult your coordinator to refer to medical care
- Place each mat or cot as far from neighbouring mats or cots as possible.

### Regarding bed bugs

Bed bugs dominated public health news last year, but their resurgence was documented as early as 2001. The City of Toronto and private-sector pest control companies provide extensive information. Yet no one has come up with a way to be 100 per cent protected from bed bugs — apart from *never* leaving your home and never allowing *anyone* else in or out of your home. Even offices and five-star hotels – anywhere with high turnover of occupants – are implicated in the spread of bed bugs.

Meanwhile, crowded conditions in year-round round shelters for people who are homeless are of particular concern. No one has advised us of anything we should do differently. We sanitize sleeping mats. The blankets handed out to guests are professionally laundered every week. We already discard any clothing left behind by our guests. And we remain vigilant.

Thankfully, bed bugs cannot jump or fly. They do not like to be disturbed, they spend most of their time hiding, and they avoid light. If additional instructions become available from the City or through Dixon Hall, we will alert everyone who volunteers at Blythwood Road.

<http://www.toronto.ca/health/bedbugs/>

<http://pestcontrolcanada.com/INSECTS/bedbugs.htm>

## Insurance

Blythwood Road Baptist Church carries property and liability insurance which covers church members and volunteers should an incident involving bodily injury or property damage occur, and a claim made by a third person (e.g. guest).

The insurance policy covers the building for fire, among other perils, and we have a fire prevention plan in place to help guard against fire.

We ask all volunteers to exercise normal care and diligence in helping keep the Out of the Cold site and our Guests safe from harm. Any question should be directed to the shift coordinator or Dixon Hall site supervisor.



## Fire

Fire exits around the church are clearly marked with illuminated red “EXIT” signs. Each room in the church (including the gym) has a notice listing emergency fire procedures. Fire exit doors are equipped with “panic-bars” for quick escape.

The church is equipped with smoke and heat detectors throughout, and the alarm system is directly connected to the fire department. If the fire alarm sounds, the fire department will arrive at the church within a short period of time.

Fire prevention is the best protection. Note that no smoking is permitted on the premises at all. Those who wish to smoke should do so outside the East side front door, and should use the smoking receptacle provided. Volunteers should carefully monitor all areas used by the guests to ensure that smoking does not occur within the building.

## Detox & hospital emergencies

Often guests will be able to verbalize their need to go to a Detox Centre. They may exhibit shaking, increased hunger, increased fatigue.

At a Detox location they will manage substance abuser’s crisis, give them time to “dry out” and have them ready for treatment. The guests stay in the Detox for 72 hours.

### *Signs of Severe Withdrawal*

Convulsions - Seizures- Severe pain.

If there are no beds at a Detox Centre, the guest may be taken directly to Sunnybrook or other hospital emergency.

*Note: No one apart from the Blythwood coordinator and the designated Dixon Hall staff should contact emergency services or try to arrange transfers or referrals of guests.*

## Help from the City through Dixon Hall

We are fortunate to have significant help from the City of Toronto, which has contracted with Dixon Hall, a well-known social service agency, to provide services to Out of the Cold sites. You can identify someone from Dixon Hall because they'll be wearing some form of identification.



Through Dixon Hall, we are provided with trained staff in the areas of safety, social assistance, cleaning, nursing and general assistance. They are paid and have job descriptions, and work under the supervision of the coordinator (a Blythwood volunteer) for each shift.

Dixon Hall is a multi-service agency that has been offering programs in the east downtown area of the City of Toronto since 1929. Dixon Hall operates a music school for children and youth, has training and employment programs, and provides services and supportive housing care for seniors.

It also has many programs for the homeless in the Homeless, Hostels and Housing Services Department. This department is responsible for the management of three shelters, a drop-in, breakfast and dinner programs and supports approximately one hundred formerly homeless people in their housing.

### *Dixon Hall's Mission*

“Community partners in creating opportunities for people...to dream, to achieve, and to live full and rewarding lives.”

### *Dixon Hall's Vision*

Good jobs, good health, safe shelter, vibrant cultures and strong communities.

### *Dixon Hall's Values*

- Respect
- Caring
- Compassion
- Integrity
- Accountability
- Equity and accessibility
- Second Chances
- Dreams and possibilities

In July 2003, Dixon Hall and other agencies were approached by the City of Toronto Hostel Services Department requesting a proposal to provide resources and support to the Out of the Cold programs. Dixon Hall eventually was contracted to provide this service and provided a Community Development Consultant to meet with the OOTC Host Sites to understand the unique operations of each program and what, if any, support services Dixon Hall could provide.

Dixon Hall then hired a management team and support staff to implement the support services the sites needed in order to meet the needs of all of the Out of the Cold stakeholders. It has opened an office focused on OOTC, and its contract with the City has been renewed.

For more information on Dixon Hall and OOTC browse [www.ootc.ca](http://www.ootc.ca)  
Contact Dixon Hall OOTC office at 416-699-OOTC (6682).

## FAQ

### ***Are there showers for guests?***

Although there are showers in the washrooms, they are not to be used. We cannot keep them clean enough for health regulations, nor provide towels.

### ***Do guests receive blankets?***

We do supply one blanket per overnight guest each Saturday night. Blankets are collected on Sunday mornings and sent to the laundry so they are clean and fresh each week.

### ***When may people eat?***

We serve dinner at 7 p.m. and breakfast around 7 a.m. But food is available throughout the hours we are open, including hot food for late arrivals. Anyone who is hungry will be fed.

### ***Where do you get food?***

Much of it is donated, often by the churches or groups that prepare meals. The balance is purchased by Blythwood Road Baptist Church. Cash contributions are welcome.

### ***Do only guests eat?***

Everyone who wants to eat -- guests, volunteers, Dixon Hall personnel, van drivers -- we feed all-- as long as guests go first.

### ***What about transportation?***

Transportation for guests can be very difficult. Dixon Hall coordinates the connection between street services, its own vehicle and other options to help guests, especially those in serious need and under certain circumstances. However guests must often use the TTC.

### ***What about TTC tokens?***

We cannot afford to give free tokens to all dinner guests. Overnight guests receive one token each on Sunday morning from Dixon Hall staff.



### ***What is the Health Bus?***

The Health Bus is a service of the St. Michael's - Wellesley Health Centre. This Winnebago customized to include three nursing stations, was donated by the Rotary Club of Toronto. Its fabulous staff offer our guests various kinds of medical attention, and information and referrals.

### ***Where are other OOTC sites?***

See next page. (Also you can go online to <http://www.dixonhall.org/housing-homelessness-services/> Or look for schedules posted near the kitchen.)

### ***What's the best I can do for guests?***

Get to know them as people.

### ***What information do we have for guests?***

The best information we have are the staff from Dixon Hall, who are highly informed about what is available in the city. Literature on various services is often available.

### ***What is the City of Toronto doing about homelessness?***

Quite a lot. Learn all about it by downloading this guide to services. Also, see the previous page. But feel free to pressure all governments to do more!

<http://www.toronto.ca/housing/guide.htm>

| OUT OF THE COLD SITE SCHEDULE 2015 - 2016  |   |  |   |   |   |   |
|--|---|--|---|---|---|---|
| SUNDAY   | MONDAY  | TUESDAY  | WEDNESDAY   | THURSDAY  | FRIDAY  | SATURDAY  |
| St Patrick's<br>139 McCaul St.<br>(Dundas/McCaul)<br>75 Guests<br>Nov 15 - Mar 20<br>4:00pm - 7:00am   | Lakeshore @ St.<br>Margaret's Church<br>156 6 <sup>th</sup> St.<br>(Islington/Birmingham)<br>25 Guests (Men Only)<br>Nov 16 - Mar 28<br>2pm - 8am | Eyangel Hall<br>552 Adelaide St.<br>(E. of Bathurst)<br>30 Guests<br>Nov 3 - Mar 29<br>Tickets @ 2:30pm<br>4:45pm - 7:00am | Yorkminster Park<br>Baptist<br>1585 Yonge St.<br>(N. of St. Clair)<br>60 Guests<br>Nov 4 - Apr 6<br>7:00pm - 8:00am                 | Holy Blossom Temple<br>1950 Bathurst St.<br>(S. of Eglinton)<br>45 Guests<br>Nov 5 - Mar 31<br>6:30pm - 7:00am                      | Eastminister United<br>310 Danforth Ave.<br>(W. of Chester)<br>45 Guests<br>Nov 6 - Mar 25<br>5:00pm - 8:00am | Blythwood Rd Baptist<br>80 Blythwood Rd.<br>(N. of Yonge/Eglinton)<br>60 Guests<br>Nov 7 - Mar 26<br>6:00pm - 8:00am  |
| St Mathew Our Lady<br>Peace<br>3962 Bloor St W/Shaver<br>27 Guests (Men only)<br>Nov 15 - Mar 27<br>5:00pm - 8:00am  | St. Brigid's Annex<br>1099 Danforth<br>(Donlands/Danforth)<br>70 Guests<br>Nov 16 - Mar 28<br>4:00pm - 8:00am                                     | Beth Sholom<br>1445 Eglinton W (Allen<br>Expressway)<br>55 Guests<br>Jan 5 - Mar 22<br>5:15pm - 7:00am                     | First Interfaith @ St.<br>Matthew's<br>729 St. Clair Ave. W<br>(West of Christie)<br>60 Guests<br>Nov 5 - Mar 31<br>4:00pm - 8:00am | All Saints Kingsway<br>Anglican<br>2850 Bloor W<br>(Royal York)<br>20 Guests (Men only)<br>Nov 27 - Apr 8<br>6pm - 8am              |   | <b>NEED HELP?<br/>CALL<br/>ASSESSMENT<br/>AND REFERRAL<br/>CENTRE FREE<br/>FROM ANY PAY<br/>PHONE</b><br><br>1-877-338-3398<br><br><a href="http://www.211toronto.ca">www.211toronto.ca</a> |
|  | Beth Emeth<br>100 Eider St.<br>(Wilmington/Sheppard)<br>30 Guests<br>Jan 11 - Feb 29<br>6:00pm - 7:00am   |  | Chinese Gospel<br>450 Dundas St. W.<br>15 Guests (Men only)<br>Jan 7 - Mar 31<br>6:00pm - 7:30am                                    | Knox United 2575<br>Midland Ave<br>(Midland/Sheppard)<br>20 Guests<br>Nov 6 - Mar 25<br>6:30pm - 8:00am                             |   |   |
|  | St. Aidan's<br>70 Silverburch Ave.<br>(Queen St.<br>E./Silverburch)<br>25 Guests<br>Nov 2 - Mar 28<br>4:00pm - 8:00am                             |  |   |   |   |   |
| <b>Programs not serviced by Dixon Hall Neighbourhood Services:</b>   |   |  |   |   |   |   |
| University Settlement<br>House<br>23 Grange Rd.<br>(McCaul N. of Queen)<br>65 Guests   |   |  |   |   | University Settlement<br>House<br>23 Grange Rd.<br>(McCaul N. of Queen)<br>65 Guests                          | University Settlement<br>House<br>23 Grange Rd.<br>(McCaul N. of Queen)<br>65 Guests  |
| <b>Out of the Cold</b> is a volunteer initiative by Toronto area synagogues, churches and faith communities to serve as Host Sites that offer shelter, hospitality and refuge to people who are homeless in the City of Toronto.   |   |  |   |   |   |   |
| <b>Out of the Cold</b> host sites reach out to marginalized individuals and extend a warm invitation to enjoy food, shelter and hospitality. This is made possible through the dedication and support of the many volunteer groups that offer their time, energy and perseverance. |   |  |   |   |   |   |
| Out of the Cold Resource and Support Services provided by Dixon Hall are funded by the City of Toronto.  |   |  |   | Mosaic Interfaith<br>York Region<br>1-866-392-3777<br>416-948-6682  |   |   |
|  |   |  |   | Dixon Hall<br>Resource and<br>Support Services for<br>Out of the Cold<br><a href="mailto:ootc@dixonhall.org">ootc@dixonhall.org</a> |   |   |

Any changes to this schedule can be found at

<http://www.dixonhall.org/housing-homelessness-services/>

# “World class?”

By Dennis Bruce

You’d think things would be getting better in our “World-class” city. They’re getting worse. The poor are not only always with us but their numbers are growing and, in the shadow of every glass tower and on street corners, they plead for help.

Some say that the reason there are so many poor and homeless in our affluent society is a failure of the imagination – most of us simply cannot imagine what it must be like to be poverty stricken let alone homeless. So imagine you are poor, unemployed, struggling to pay your rent, worrying over every penny, just making ends meet on the meager allowance you get from the government?

Yes, you tried to get a job. Tried to get many jobs. Sent off dozens of resumes into the void. Not a word in reply. You follow up with calls and all you get is voice mail. Your self-confidence begins to desert you. Depression settles on you like a blanket. You feel useless. A drain on society. A bum. Your friends begin to avoid you. They're embarrassed by your failure. When they look at you, they see what they could easily become; you make them afraid. You find yourself hating yourself. You no longer feel in control. Your whole body is wracked with anxiety. You burst into tears for no reason at all.

In the middle of the night you wake sweating. You turn on the TV. A man in a dark suit is selling government cuts. Says they're absolutely necessary. "Gotta pay down the deficit. Can't go on living like there's no tomorrow. No more welfare bums." That's you he's talking about, welfare bum. Why don'tcha getta job? Cut. Slash. The thread you're holding unravels and you fall, tumbling, turning into the abyss. Suddenly, there you are, homeless.

This story was repeated thousands of times as government cuts ripped the social fabric of our once fair province. We have not recovered, little



progress on housing has been made, and prospects for the next few years are grim.

One of our guests said to me: "Dennis, I've been on the street for three years. Some of these other guys have been longer. We've developed the skills to survive. This winter, there will be people on the street for the first time in their lives. What will happen to them, I don't know. They just don't have any survival skills."

The cold hard face of reality in Toronto means that we, as volunteers, must make a place for such people in the warmth of our hearts.

So I thank God for all those who work selflessly with the weak, the sick, the poor, and the marginalized in our society. Some of you labour unheralded and unsung, sacrificially giving your time with no thought of recompense. You mingle with our guests, work in the kitchen, lay out second hand clothes, make sandwiches and casseroles and cakes behind the scenes, and write cheques. I am enormously proud to be associated with you.

On behalf of our guests, thank you, each for your willingness to lay aside schedules, social times and personal responsibilities to come and help.

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***If there is among you anyone in need, a member of your community in any of your towns within the land that the Lord your God is giving you, do not be hard-hearted or tight-fisted toward your needy neighbour. You should rather open your hand, willingly lending enough to meet the need, whatever it may be. . . . I therefore command you, 'Open your hand to the poor and needy neighbour in your land.'***

-- Deuteronomy 15: 7-8

## Want to help?

- You may be able to volunteer. Call Susan Thomas at 416 723-3211 or another committee member listed below.
- We also accept donations. We spend \$15,000 (approx.) on Out of the Cold each season – NOT including the food that some of our partner groups and congregations provide and pay for themselves – for which we are VERY thankful.
- We are entirely volunteer run and volunteer-dependent. We receive NO funds at all from any government at any level. (We do receive some staff support from the City of Toronto via Dixon Hall, but no money.)
- Food is our biggest expense.
- 100% of all gifts made to OOTC through Blythwood Road Baptist Church are used by Out of the Cold and qualify as charitable contributions for tax purposes.



## BLYTHWOOD OOTC CONTACTS

**Host Church: Blythwood Road Baptist Church**

[www.blythwood.org](http://www.blythwood.org)

**Minister** The Rev. David Thomas 416-487-4571

**Associate Pastor:** Pastor Abby Davidson 416-487-4571

### **Key Partner Church: Lawrence Park Community Church**

*Contact:* Cecilia Akeyempon 416-494-6026

### **Key Partner Church: Eglinton-St. George's United Church**

*Contact:* Marjorie Hiley 416-483-2167

### **Saturday Evening Meals**

Marjorie Hiley 416-483-2167

### **Volunteer Scheduling & Coordination**

Susan Thomas 416 723-3211

### **Clothing Room Coordination**

Jennifer Frank 416-487-4571

### **Other committee/ coordinator contacts**

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