



THE PARK BENCH

The magazine of Oak Park Church of Christ | September 2023



**THANKING DAWN
FOR 12 YEARS OF
FAITHFUL SERVICE:
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As you may know, on August 30th, I retired from being a staff member at Oak Park Church. Over the past 12 years my roles have included: Administrator (2011-2023), Children's Pastor (2012-2020), Community Pastor (2020-2023), and Bridge of Hope (First Nations Outreach) Pastor (2017-2023).

They say "a picture paints a thousand words," so I have included a few photos of fond and fun memories of my 12 years on staff. Thank you for being a part of the joy I have had serving as Jesus' hands and feet at Oak Park and in our little corner of God's creation. I love you all so much!

DAWN DRIEDIGER





Your ministry at Oak Park has blessed the hearts of countless individuals. Those who step into our church are often met with your cheerful smile and welcoming hug. The kids are drawn to your warmth and playfulness. Your unique mixture of encouraging words, heartfelt prayers and random outbursts of songs leave us feeling joyful, loved and cared for. You have truly been Jesus' hands and feet.

We are forever grateful for you and your servant's heart!

HIEBERT FAMILY

Dawn has been so much more than a staff member at our church!

We have been doubly blessed not just by her hard work ethic but by her servant's heart, often going above and beyond, stepping up wherever and whenever she is needed and building many relationships along the way.

We want to thank you, Dawn, and pray many blessings as you transition from your staff position at Oak Park. You will be light wherever you land!

LAUREL AND KEITH TRAPTOW



What a joy it has been to serve with Dawn in various ministries through our years at Oak Park. Our sons benefited directly from Dawn's influence in their lives and through the kids' programs she led when they were young. Dawn encouraged our boys to fully participate in church life and to develop and use their gifts to further God's Kingdom.

Dawn will always hold a special place in our family's heart.

JULIE AND MICHAEL KERR



IT'S A BREEZE...

Have you ever forgotten the name of someone at church and been too embarrassed to ask again? Can't remember the number/email for that new friend you made on Sunday? Have you wanted to give online to the church?

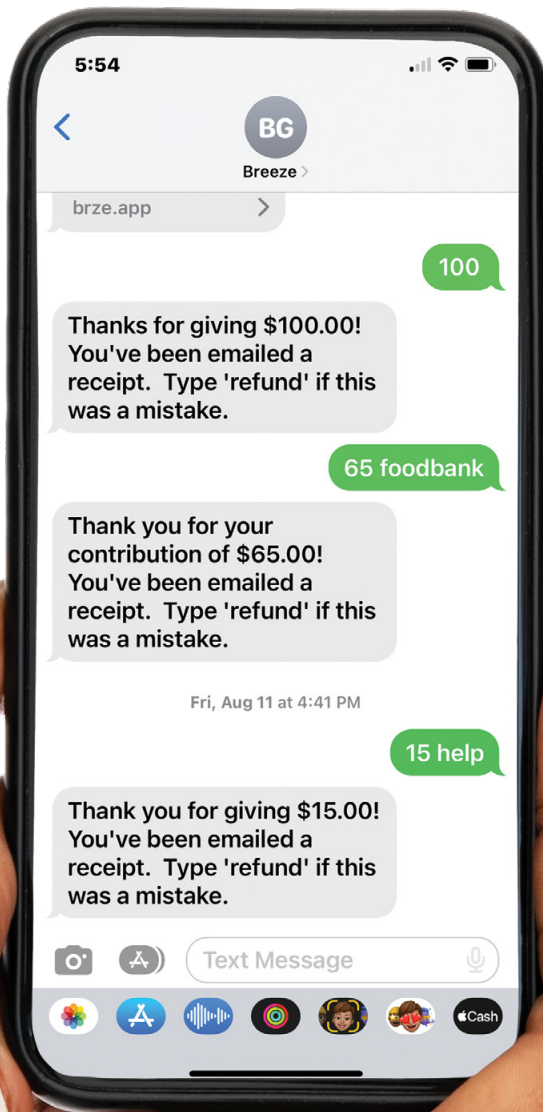
Have a look on Breeze to find the information you're looking for, give to the church, and connect with your community!

Breeze Directory

If you already have a Breeze account, you can access it from oakpark.ca (scroll to the bottom of any page and click on "Member Login"). After you sign into Breeze, click on "My Profile" at the top, and please make sure the following are up to date:

- Name
- Phone Number
- Address
- Email
- Profile Picture

The screenshot shows the Breeze user profile interface. At the top is a blue navigation bar with the 'breeze' logo and menu items: Dashboard, People, Events, and My Profile (which is highlighted). On the left is a sidebar with 'Details' and 'Volunteering' options. The main content area features a profile for Allan Rodgers, including a profile picture, name, phone number, email, and address. Below this are two summary tables: 'Main' (Name, Gender, Status, Marital Status) and 'Contact' (Home, Email, Address). A 'Family' section lists four family members: Allan Rodgers (Adult), Allison Rodgers (Adult), Amelia Rodgers (Child), and Joshua Rodgers (Child). A map shows the location of 11263 Oakfield Dr SW. At the bottom right, there is a section for 'Oak Park Options' with the text 'No information stored.'



Breeze Giving

We are excited to announce that giving at Oak Park is about to become easier and more convenient than ever! This fall, we will be adding Breeze Giving as an option for making charitable donations to the church.

Breeze Giving is an easy-to-use platform that will allow you to give online and by text on your phone. You can make both one-time and recurring gifts.

The church will be charged a small transaction fee for payments made through Breeze.

Here are your options for Breeze Giving:

Option 1: Give on our website

Visit oakpark.ca/donate to access a Giving Form on our website.

Option 2: Give with a text message

Text "give" to **587-742-1151**

Follow the prompts to set up giving via text.

Once you are set up, you can give to the specific funds by texting the dollar amount with the following fund names:

General: \$ amount only (Example: 100)

Food Bank: \$ + foodbank (Example: 65 foodbank)

Benevolence: \$ + help (Example: 15 help)

Missions: \$ + missions (Example: 20 missions)

Infinitely More - Building Project: \$ + more (Example: 100 more)

To ensure your charitable giving is tracked accurately for tax receipt purposes, please ensure your Breeze profile is up to date. The email address you have in your Breeze profile must match the email address you use to set up online/text giving.

Thank you for your generosity. Your financial partnership helps to build the Kingdom of God in our community and world.

For help with setting up your Breeze profile or Breeze Giving, please contact alvin@oakpark.ca or sign up for our Breeze Training Session on September 26 at oakpark.ca.



MISSIONS FOCUS:

TABUK REFUGE OF HOPE INTERNATIONAL

Tabuk Refuge of Hope International (TROHI) was started on June 1, 2020. The three co-founders include Vienna Moilliet from Canada, Cheryl Domingo from the Philippines, and Ellora Couch from the USA. These women came together from different backgrounds, but are united in the mission to restore lives and break cycles of abuse.

TROHI takes in girls ages 8-18 years who have been sexually abused; the youngest girl they received came on her eighth birthday, but the abuse had been going on since she was six. With our committed staff and house parents, we work to keep these young girls safe and guide them in finding hope and healing through Jesus Christ. Some of our programs include education, counselling, creative activities, skills training, Bible lessons, and devotions.

Most of the girls are victims of abuse within the family; sadly, often these cases are kept quiet due to the shame. Sometimes TROHI has had to go into communities to remove the girls, but most often the girls are referred to TROHI by the government social welfare agencies, whom they work with closely. The TROHI team sees firsthand how God has worked in the lives of their girls – almost all of them have accepted Christ as their savior, and the Holy Spirit is active in their lives. A few years ago, three underweight sisters arrived – they constantly fought and cursed; one of them had temper issues and would go through hunger strikes when she was angry. Looking at them today, you see sisters who love each other and their Savior and are on the road to recovery.

Right now, TROHI occupies a building connected to a local church, which allows us to stay free of charge. Unfortunately, space limitations have become a major barrier – currently we have 14 girls under our care, and the maximum capacity of the building is 15. We have been dreaming of a larger building where we can take in 25 girls. At the end of 2021, TROHI purchased a 3-hectare lot, 20 minutes outside of the city; we were amazed at how God provided the funds for the land and



such a beautiful, safe location. We decided to step out in faith with a ground-breaking ceremony on August 28th. The first building phase is already 50% funded, and we keep praying that the Lord will provide the rest.

Oak Park was pleased to have Cheryl give an in-person update in May, and looks forward to a visit from Vienna and her husband Nestor in October.

Some Oak Park members sent Christmas gifts this summer for four of the girls and two of the staff members' children.

Everyone at TROHI is so thankful for all our prayer warriors and supporters. This ministry is not possible without all the people behind us, who extend support in a variety of ways so that we can follow our

Heavenly Father who goes before us, as we strive to care for His lambs.

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(Architect's rendering)

HOW CAN WE AT OAK PARK HELP?

- **Donation of funds for construction of the new building, and for ongoing operating costs. You can support us by designating your Oak Park donations to 'Missions: TROHI'**
- **Prayer for the construction of their new building.**
- **Prayer for their application for accreditation with the government.**
- **Prayer for more staff (and funds to hire them); they will be hiring a social worker soon, and will require more staff once the new building is complete and they can take in more girls.**



JOURNEY OF FAITH.

by Cailee Knappe

Cailee began attending Oak Park on April 16, 2023. She participated in Alpha in the spring, and was recently baptized on August 20, 2023.

There was a time when
I never imagined entering
a church again,
due to previous experiences
and past judgement.
I never expected to find a
community of faith as friends.
In my desperate attempts
to heal and deal with the pains
of my past,
where I was wounded
and lashed with darkness and
covered in ash
from the fires of conviction,
old versions of me struggled
with afflictions,
some addictions – but mostly
friction...
never trusting that love was
enough.
So how could I trust opening up
when I couldn't even
open up to the ones I loved?
As time passed, my past was
pushed back,
and instead of processing and
healing, I was running away...
not feeling the true path that
was always in front of me.
As worldly things were stripped
away, I felt bare.
I could tell something was
missing – I wasn't all there.
Begging and pleading,
I began kneeling and shedding
my layers.
Meeting God in the mirror,
I faced the affairs of my heart
and my mind.

God showed me the truth
inside, and I knew
I couldn't hide.

It was when my grandpa died
that I knew
I'd return to the church.

I didn't know how, as I was still
so hurt.

So I prayed and waited for God
to show me the way.

After fasting and devotions,
there came a day
when I could no longer mask
my desire for truth...

to connect with our God, the
one I'd run from since youth.

In my searching, I discovered
Oak Park
and inside me there was a
spark.

Just a night before when I'd
picked up a glass

I started remembering why I ran
from my past...

but instead of turning a blind
eye to God,

I opened my heart and I opened
my thoughts.

The next morning, I walked in
Oak Park's doors.

My burdens were lessened,
my heart didn't feel the same
as before.

As I sat in the pews, I let the
word of God flood.

My body was calmer and my
mind cleared of the mud.



The mess of my past came
spewing out of my mouth,
and suddenly it appeared
to ease the drought.

The rains of living water
washed away my pain,
and I was able to face God
once again.

Vacating the sanctuary
that first day,

I knew there was
no turning back...

and each decision has been
made facing that very fact.

I finally see the love
God has for me,
through the faces of those
who preach in my very own
community.

It was when God's touch
seemed closer than ever
that I realized I could persevere
through any weather.

In my mind, in my heart,
and in my soul

God began to fill the hole...
of longing, of fear, the grief
of loved ones no longer near.

And He seized the doubt,
and forced me to let it out.

So His name I proudly shout!
And no matter what obstacles
come to confront me,

I have a village to lean on with
the armour of God prepared at
the ready.