

Preparing the Way:

Recently the Board of Directors at Shalom met to consider priorities and the future direction for Shalom. As the Board sought to discern God's direction in the next few years, a theme emerged - preparation.

Currently Shalom's resources are stretched to meet the requests for counselling that we receive each year. Top of the list from recent board meetings was 'increase Shalom's capacity to meet the requests for counselling'. To increase capacity suggested two goals with financial implications. First, we will need to increase the number of counsellors with professional staff who have a passion for Shalom's work. Second, we will need to provide adequate facilities.

The Shalom Board intends to begin addressing both of these areas in 2018.

Having reviewed therapist salaries, the board determined that an increase bringing counsellor salaries closer to the average paid in Alberta was warranted. In a step of faith, the Board approved an increase in salaries that will add over \$20,000 to our annual operating budget, for though Shalom is a Christian ministry, a "worker deserves his wages".

For Scripture says, "Do not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain," and "The worker deserves his wages." I Timothy 5:18

To move towards providing adequate facilities, the Board is taking steps to begin paying down the mortgage on the property Shalom owns. They are inviting anyone who feels led to donate funds over and above their regular Shalom giving to join in this initiative. The first \$7,500 designated to Capital Expenses each quarter will go directly to paying down the principal on the mortgage. Any such designated funds received in excess of \$7,500 will be added to our Capital Fund. In this way, the Board is trusting that when the time comes to follow God where He is leading regarding a future home for Shalom, Shalom will be less encumbered by debt, and have an increased reserve available to fulfill God's plan.

Like David prepared for the temple built by Solomon, the Board members want to prepare for where God is leading. By better providing for our workers and by clearing the financial way they trust and believe they are getting prepared for what God has next for Shalom. This may be a bit out of context, but I like the words of Isaiah.

"Build up, build up, prepare the road! Remove the obstacles out of the way of my people."

Isaiah 57:14

Benno Fath



Shalom is about Neighbours Helping Neighbours

On the way to work this morning I saw three fellows jump out of their cars helping to push another car up the slippery snow-covered hill. One vehicle stranded could be ignored, while we hurry on to important things. But I was thankful to see people who would delay their plans to help someone else get back on the road. That's what we at Shalom do every day, with the help of so many good neighbours, who make it a priority to get out and lend a hand to those who are stuck, stranded and distressed.

So many stories come to mind. The stories that follow are true, but identifying details are withheld to protect the privacy of those Shalom serves. Hopefully these brief examples may help you know why it is important to be neighbours who work together to help our neighbours find peace.



I think of one person who came to Shalom after a series of tragic losses and feeling hopeless, having lost the will to live. Over time he made major changes turning his life around yet still bearing the heartbreak of not being able to win back his family. I'm so glad that the faithful supportive Shalom Friends made it possible for us to walk alongside this man as he found new purpose and meaning for his life. He has found ways that God can use him in reaching out to others.

I'm glad for the young mother who was able to find encouragement and a new sense of her worth that allowed her to set needed and healthy boundaries. She has been able to prevent what previously had been an ongoing cycle of intimidation and abuse. The future is so much more hopeful for her and her child. She was able to afford help because a major subsidy was made possible through neighbours who cared enough to give.

I'm so thankful that there has been opportunity to support a young Christian leader faced with incredible personal challenges. This leader has benefited by having a safe place to come to be heard, accepted and assisted in seeing his challenges with new and fresh perspective. We could lose such leaders if they were to remain overwhelmed and alone. Your support made it possible for us to take the time to help this leader move forward in a God honoring way.

At Shalom it's possible for us to provide life's roadside service, available to whoever believes they would benefit what we have to offer. That is possible because of the commitment of Shalom's friends to give, to pray and to encourage others in their support of the individuals and families Shalom serves. Your gifts allow us to help those in need by providing subsidy based on their household income.

Neighbours helping neighbours. Thanks for the part you play in helping your neighbours make it up what can be a treacherous slippery hill called life. There are times when we all could use a little boost up that hill. When you or someone you know may need an extra boost, we hope you'll call for help. Thanks for caring!

Submitted by Bob McKenzie, Counsellor