



Walking With Ladybugs

On January 31st Agape Table joined The Lady Bug Foundation in Winnipeg, and people across Canada, in the 'Walk a Mile in Their Shoes Campaign' for National Red Scarf Day to help raise awareness of homelessness.

It was 30 below zero that day but that didn't stop 300 Winnipeg community members, students, business leaders, and not-for-profit organizations of Winnipeg from showing their support for Hannah and all that the Lady Bug Foundation does to raise awareness and help fund homelessness initiatives across Canada.

Join their Facebook page and stay updated:

[www.facebook.com/
ladybugfoundation?v=wall](http://www.facebook.com/ladybugfoundation?v=wall)

Amy Ihrke
Social Media & Food Services

Surplus Food, Hard to Say No

You'll see it on the plate at various missions in Winnipeg. You'll find it by the case at every food bank. It's the meat in our soup, it's the cream in our coffee, and it's the bread in our toasters. It makes its way to us from large grocery stores, big food distributors, and surplus food aggregates. It's called surplus food and it's great for emergencies, but if you eat it all the time, it might make you sick.

Our primary concern about surplus food is its typical low nutritional value. Most emergency food is extremely high in sodium, trans-fats, and sugar, is over-processed, and is low in basic nutrients. A diet of only this type of food may contribute to health issues such as diabetes, heart disease, and hypertension.

Another concern is that Manitoban companies involved in the production and transportation of surplus food are protected under *The Food Donations Act*. People who become sick from eating surplus food receive no recourse from the companies involved in its production and transportation. These companies are not liable for their products, and it makes it hard for us to be in the middle, attempting to make the best decisions for our community members who depend upon us for a regular, nutritious meal.

As food banks and soup kitchens become increasingly institutionalized and entrenched in our society, so too does this second tier food system. I have to wonder if this system serves the interests of the powerful food industry rather than those with diminished food security. Clearly surplus food does not increase food security in our society. Yet, what, if anything, can we do about it? The surplus food system serves many interests...it provides cost effective waste management, it creates venues for volunteering and it is an easy way to promote corporate goodwill and it provides opportunities for proselytizing. Saying no to a system that serves so many social interests is very difficult. Remaining silent, however, will only serve to entrench this problematic, second tier food system.

John Kennett,
Agape Table General Manager

Talking With Joe

Joe is a regular volunteer who helps Agape Table in the dish-pit of the kitchen. Like many volunteers, Joe also benefits from Agape Table services that he supports through his volunteer effort.

During my interview with Joe I got the feeling that he knows that his hard work not only benefits himself but also his fellow community members day-in and day-out.

Here is what Joe had to say about his experiences at Agape Table.

Why do you like volunteering at Agape?

I like working in the kitchen, and I like being around the people.

Who are the people?

The staff here at Agape Table.

So, would you say that a community “vibe” is the reason you like volunteering here?

Yeah, definitely. You can work at Agape (through the sweat equity program) and get paid for volunteering through your work if you're on disability among other things.

Do you buy the \$1 breakfast?

Yeah, yeah I do. It's a great price for the amount of food you get!

What are the reasons why you like it?

It's not just affordable, it has good flavor and it's always well prepared.

What are the benefits of the breakfast program, from your perspective?

The price! You can't even go to other kitchens and get a good breakfast.

Agape wants to do a \$2 bagged lunch for school aged kids and folks going to work; like the idea?

Yeah, very awesome idea. You can't get that anywhere, unless you live in the Sally Ann. Buying off the trucks is a waste of money.

The rhetoric that many missions and government programs put forward is the idea of the proverbial “leg up”. Do they?

There is a big difference between saying and doing. And while the government programs promise a great deal, Agape Table delivers.

How so? How do they treat you as a guest?

I wouldn't say it's the best. They are there for themselves. Agape treats you more human. I think Agape does more than just provide a “leg up”. I think that in time they can provide a way out (of poverty and hunger).

How then does Agape Table distinguish itself from other places?

The food is way better. All the staff here treat the guests way, way different than anywhere else. Staff here take time to talk to patrons.



Directors' Retreat:

Commitment to Incremental, Sustainable and Philosophically Based Growth

There is a saying that it is easy to spend other people's money. Nothing could be further from the truth when your role is responsible steward working against an issue as long standing, prevalent and debilitating as a lack of just access to food. This sense of responsibility is what motivates our directors. There is little as difficult as significant financial decision making in this context. The corollary is that there is little as rewarding as seeing our donors' generous and continuing support endorsing our direction and decisions. This is why, on February 13, 2011, the volunteer Board of Directors of Agape Table Inc. took a day away from work, chores, kids' activities, other family commitments and even their usual Agape duties to focus their reflection on the strategic advancement of Agape Table. Purposeful and reflective leadership has been striven for annually at such retreats for some time now. Retreats are useful when board meetings can focus on the day-to-day necessities and practicalities of running a community nutrition centre with expanding programming.

Last year's retreat saw the adoption of Agape Table's four pillars of nutrition, dignity, empowerment, and community. These pillars emerged from a review of the literature, reflection on our experience within our served community, and a purposeful articulation of the values upon which our programming was and will continue to be founded. Building on this statement of values Agape's directors have struck a visioning committee that is charged with making recommendations to the board of directors about vision, mission, awareness raising, and advocacy as well as new programming and implementation. This committee will report to the board of directors at each of the monthly board meetings. While the nuts and bolts of budget, personnel, supply, and maintenance are undoubtedly important, ensuring we are progressing according to a philosophically sound plan cannot be seen as less so.

The Board of Directors are committed to being a transformative force in the discussion of and response to food access inequality in our city. 2011 goals are to continue to refine our existing innovative programming such as Agape Table for Kids, our subsidized breakfast, and our low cost grocery and ultimately to initiate further programming as well. These are and will be programs to assist the community to escape the continuing cycle of food crisis and then the accessing of redistributed surplus food. In our breakfast and grocery programs the community member is changed from passive recipient to consumer empowered to make healthy choices. Purchased food and access to Agape Table's registered dietitian are, we hope, a step away from food emergency or crisis.

Community is very often born and perpetuated around the common meal table. Reflect on your own kitchens and the community table in a place of worship or in a community club and I'm sure you'll agree. We also look to enhance the sense of community with such developments as our music and our arts and crafts programming, and, of course, our Agape Table for Kids program that gathers parents and non-school-aged children for learning, play, and fellowship.

Stay tuned for continuing developments in 2011. We hope to unveil some educational efforts over the spring and summer including budgeting and opening bank accounts. We have ideas about expanding programming but will not until we are satisfied of the sustainability of each step in our program expansion. Finally we hope to follow up our early success in establishing a meaningful presence online at agapetable.ca and on facebook at facebook.com/AgapeTable and twitter at twitter.com/AgapeTable.

Like us! Follow us!

Sean Brennan, *Agape Table Board, Chair*



Please Visit our Facebook and Twitter page for up-to-date information on Agape Table



Cooking up a Community



Nutrition. Empowerment.
Dignity. Community.

In the kitchen, you would think that the most relevant of Agape's four pillars would be Nutrition. We give a lot of thought to balanced meals when we plan each week's menu, making sure that the

guests have some choice and variety in their diet. Choice is Empowerment. We try to treat all of our guests with Dignity but I believe the most important pillar in the kitchen is Community.

While we have some control over the ingredients used in the breakfast plate, the soup is made strictly with donated items and it's not unusual to have an overabundance of one vegetable donated in the middle of the morning. So what do you do with a four-foot stack of mushrooms that weighs 90 pounds? In my case, I turn to the volunteers in the kitchen and ask: "who's ready to chop?"

This is where the Community Pillar comes in. Just as there's an active community of guests out on the floor, there's also an active community of volunteers in the kitchen. Some of them come weekly on a certain day, and I know that they just

need to be appointed a task. Others, however, are new to Agape and I've seen that it doesn't take long for the "veterans" of the kitchen to adopt them as one of their own. After all, there's plenty of time to chat when you're peeling a hundred pounds of beets for borscht on a Monday! Misery does love company!



All joking aside, it's usually a pretty boisterous crowd in the kitchen. Some are putting in a few hours before they have to be at the office, some help out after they've been in to have their own breakfast and usually take on the arduous task of after-service clean-up and next-day-prep.

Different people enjoy different tasks but everyone has the same motivation to help, to do something tangible. Throughout the week the community of kitchen volunteers peel and chop hundreds of pounds of produce that go into the daily soup and breakfast; they wash the hundreds of bowls, plates and cups that our guests use (daily it seems, according to the dishwashers) and do what they can to help put the food on clean plates. It's these simple tasks that are so vital to the meal service and the integration of Agape's pillars.

If you have a little time, we're always looking for another set of hands in the kitchen. Although it's a fun place, there's no guarantee that I won't make you peel onions.

Jody McNarland,
Resident Cook



Friday, April 22nd
Easter Event

Brought to you by:

The Kinsmen Club of Winnipeg

For more information on this event please contact Amy
Ihrke at: amy@agapetable.ca

Message From the Acting Executive Manager

There have been many changes throughout the 2010-2011 year. We have implemented and improved new programs such as the Low-cost Grocery Program, and the Agape Table for Kids program.

One special change to mention is the temporary departure our hard working Executive Manager, Mark Courtney, who will be taking a leave of absence to spend some time with his family as of March 1st.

In Mark's absence, I, Kevin Vandal, will be the Acting Executive Manager for Agape Table. I look forward to giving my all for Agape and trying to pick up where Mark left off while moving forward on improving and expanding the programs offered at Agape Table. To give you a sense of my transition into this position I would like to reflect on my experiences with each program and service offered at Agape Table.

Low-Cost Breakfast & Soup programs

Delicious, nutritious, and at a low cost to our guests! When I first arrived at Agape Table I was immediately put to work on the service floor to bus tables and get a feel for who our community of guests are.

Everyone I encountered was so pleased to be out of the cold for an hour or two and to enjoy a nutritious meal with their friends. Agape Table was like a warm oasis offering both nutrition and a community of fellowship.

Agape Table For Kids (ATFK) Program

In light of Mark's departure I was to fill in the coordination of the ATFK. I see parents who have

similar needs and concerns for their growing bundles of joy.

I spoke with one mother in ATFK and she flatly stated that: *"without Agape Table, I don't know how I would survive and without them [the other mothers] I don't know how I could cope"*

This conversation made me realize that not only are we providing a weekly source of nutrition for these growing children, but we are also providing a source for fellowship among parents.

One of the most rewarding things that I've seen so far is a young child smiling at her mom because she was having so much fun playing with "Agape friends".

Low-Cost Grocery & Food Bank Programs

The Food Bank graciously provides donated emergency staple food items which are meant to fill the stomach but are not necessarily the most nourishing items on the menu.

The real eye-opener is in the Low-Cost Grocery Program where we purchase healthy foods for our guests at or below cost. I like that we can provide the choice of healthier eating habits to those who in a regular grocery store would have to go without.

At Agape Table I am learning what it means to give back to the community that I work in while hearing of our guests successes and hardships. Some of us take for granted the simple things, and I hope to change that.

Kevin Vandal, A/Executive manager

LAST NAME _____
FIRST NAME _____
ADDRESS _____
CITY, PROVINCE _____
POSTAL CODE _____
TELEPHONE/EMAIL _____

WITH A:

- Contribution of \$ _____ . ____
 Cheque Telpay
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CARD NUMBER _____

EXPIRY _____

SIGNATURE _____

I WOULD LIKE TO SUPPORT:

- Most Needed Agape Table for Kids
 Emergency Food Endowment Fund
 Grocery Co-op Subsidized Breakfast

I would like to contribute monthly in the amount of \$ _____ . ____

Withdraw on: ____ / ____ / ____ (MM/DD/YY)

THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING AGAPE TABLE

Please send your donation to:

Agape Table Inc

PO Box 26111, Winnipeg, MB R3G 3R3

Registered Canadian Charity
10668 7833 RR0001

I would like to remain anonymous

I would like the Chair of the Board to contact me about a gift of securities or a bequest

Oct2010

YOU ARE INVITED...

To our Annual General Meeting!

Date: Saturday, April 30th

Time: 9:00 am to 12 p.m.

Location: All Saints Church at 175 Colony Street.

The Annual General Meeting on April 30, 2011 is an opportunity for donors, supporters, volunteers, and members of the public to come and observe the governance of Agape Table Inc.

Those attending the Annual General Meeting will have an opportunity to meet the volunteer directors of Agape Table Inc., hear an address from the Chair of the Board of Directors, receive copies of the not-for-profit corporation's audited 2010 financial statements and have an opportunity to pose questions to the Board.

For those interested, 2010 audited financials will be posted on our website once approved at the AGM.

Our Website can be visited at: www.agapetable.ca.

THANK YOU

Red River Co-op Ltd.

Winnipeg Foundation

Border Chemical Company Ltd.

Randy & Kathryn Wallack

Dr. Alfred E. Deacon Medical Research Fdn.

Winnipeg Honda

Messiah Lutheran Church

Jewish Foundation of Manitoba

Our gratitude goes out to the hard working volunteers. You are truly making a difference at Agape.

We would not be able to help as many people as we do without the generous support from our donors in action. Thank you!

Agape Table was awarded a Grant of \$20,000 from the Winnipeg Foundation to enhance the Services of a Registered Dietitian!

A Message from our Dietitian:

My goal for Agape Table is to work closely with its clientele, staff, and board members to create a nutrition program that reflects the needs of everyone for dignity, health and empowerment.

*-- Phyllis C. Reid-Jarvis
President of PRJ Consulting*

We welcome you to be a part of the community at Agape Table

Did you know that Agape Table runs on volunteer power? Every day you can see our dedicated service team chopping vegetables, cooking stock, mopping floors, and stocking shelves. Many of our daily volunteers come from our served community. These community members value the services offered at Agape Table and are proud to play a central role in the delivery of those services.

Many groups and individuals from outside of our served community also contribute to Agape Table. Drivers, carpenters, artists, musicians, and many more contribute their time, skills, and energy to keep Agape Table running.

Behind the scenes are the volunteers who contribute on our Board and various committees. Many work on our online content, assist with printed communications, offer legal services or training programs, assist with I.T. services, offer nutritional counselling, and much, much more.

Why not you?

To find out more, please contact us at general@agapetable.ca or 783-6369. We will be happy to review your goals, skills, and availability and find a rewarding spot for you in one of our teams.