



*“It boosted my confidence to be an active bystander. I learned skills and tricks to step out and ‘defend’ targets.”*

–Training Active Bystanders participant

TAB Trainers  
MCC Photo/Ken Ogasawara

# Restorative Justice

FALL 2019

## Highlights

- 29 Circles of Support and Accountability (CoSA) core members were supported through 183 Circle meetings and a total of 606 volunteer hours in Kitchener, Hamilton and Toronto.
- 42 individuals were supported to participate in a faith community of their choice after release from prison.
- 9 incarcerated individuals at the Grand Valley Institution, Main Unit, produced 26 blankets for MCC Material Resources.
- 8 incarcerated individuals at the Grand Valley Institution, Minimum Security Unit, produced 350 handmade items that generated \$3,100 in sales for MCC.
- 145 individuals received training in peacebuilding.

## Faith Community Reintegration Program – “God wanted me to meet you.”

MCC Faith Community Reintegration Program Associate, Carol, meets regularly with individuals on federal parole leaving institutions. Over a coffee at Tim Hortons, Carol listened to Lisa as she shared her story of desperation. As a heroin addict, serving a life sentence since she was young, Lisa had found herself in the cycle of parole, anxiety, drugs and being sent back to prison. She felt she had no other option but to take her own life. Carol listened and never pushed, and gradually a relationship of trust developed. They talked about Lisa getting a job, but she was worried about the stigma of being found out for who she was.

Lisa now is employed and earns income for her sewing skills.

She is on her way to recovery and getting married. We know Lisa is a good person who got very lost within herself. Many participants, like Lisa, come to the program with no faith, yet they feel compelled to tell staff members like Carol that “God wanted me to meet you.” \*Lisa = pseudonym

## Training Active Bystanders

During the second weekend of September, 72 individuals trained to be Active Bystanders. This three-hour workshop teaches participants how to intervene when witnessing abusive, isolating or stigmatizing behaviour. We teach pro-social behaviour, making people more aware of why they hesitate to intervene and encourage them to care for others by taking action in the future.

Comments from Participants:

- “It was great to have time to reflect on bystandership and how even a little action produces change.”
- “Gave language to what I already do, and ways of thinking about what I could do better.”
- “The training was useful in identifying a framework for engaging in conversations individuals often avoid. It also provided an opportunity to recognize that we exist in spaces of change. What role will I have in that change?”

**Thank you for supporting MCC  
Ontario’s Restorative Justice  
Program. Your gifts are building safer  
communities in Ontario.**