



CAMPUS NOTES



GUELPH CAMPUS MINISTRY



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ARTS GROUP OPENS UP CONVERSATIONS . . . LOTS OF THEM!

University is a wonderful place for discovering where our interests lie; yet, in the midst of all the academics, many of us students neglect other passions and hobbies. Sometimes this is due to lack of time, or sometimes we simply don't have the materials or space required. So this year we started an arts group that is held on Wednesday evenings right after *Community Dinner*. Artists and newbies alike always get excited when we bring down the big box of art supplies, full of bright acrylic paints, canvases and sketchbooks, markers, pencil crayons and other art supplies.

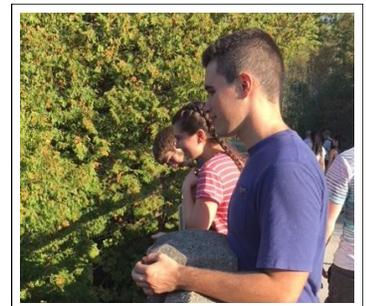
The group is a safe space to experiment in creativity however you want, so some of

us paint, others draw, and others even knit and crochet! I know many of us have truly appreciated meeting at *Arts Group* every week, as it is a time opened up to work on our passions.

To me, though, the best part about this group is the way it has formed community and sparked joy. Newcomers have even been drawn to GCM, because they've heard of the *Arts Group* and want a place to work on art in a group setting. Many others who have never called themselves artists stay after *Community Dinner*, simply to enjoy the conversations coloured by the creative atmosphere. I have discovered that deep thoughts are shared more easily when people can occupy themselves

with a project and that, though we are all working on our own art, community has grown between us and laughter is never in short supply. I am so grateful for this weekly time spent getting to know people better and building community through art.

—Meghan Snyder
GCM Student Leader



Community, one friend at a time

COFFEESHOP CRAWL: O-WEEK SUCCESS

First-year students are bombarded by the equivalent of 30-second commercials during Orientation Week, with literally hundreds of groups on campus vying for their attention. Guelph Campus Ministry has always tried to break through the chaos and host events that give students a fighting chance to meet other students and get to know one another in substantial ways. This year, we hosted an event that even caught us by surprise! Who knew a Coffeeshop Crawl would open up the possibility of experiencing community in such a substantial way?

The event wasn't successful because we visited some of Guelph's best coffeeshops. The event was successful because we had the entire afternoon to walk and talk. We started off by teaching the students how to use the Guelph Transit system. Once downtown, we walked and were able to easily exchange conversation partners. Often in crowded rooms, you only have the opportunity to chat with a few people. Because we were walking, though, it was easy for people to turn around and introduce themselves to others. There were over 45 students at the event, and

many of us managed to talk to everyone. It gave us all a taste of the kind of fellowship that can be enjoyed in the Body of Christ. It was a small glimpse of genuine communion.

—Jamie VanderBerg
Campus Minister



Fall Retreat 2017

SATURDAY GATHERINGS: STUDENTS TAKE THE LEAD

Guelph Campus Ministry decided to introduce a new initiative this year, which we call *Saturday Gatherings*. The idea is to meet every Saturday to explore activities in Guelph and to create a warm and welcoming way to get to know one another. The idea was conceived by me and some peers at the end of our first year. A group of us spent an evening at Jamie's house dreaming up ideas and events that would shape GCM the following year, and the notion of organizing *Saturday Gatherings* was one of the most exciting products of the night.

First year was extremely difficult for me, as I struggled to be away from home in an environment that challenged all that I thought I knew about myself. Weekends were particularly hard. Campus always felt very quiet and residence felt even more lonely once the weekend hit, because the majority of students go home. Reflecting on my year and this experience, I wanted nothing more than to try and reduce the number of first-year students that might be feeling the same way.

When the idea to offer weekend activities was

brought up in the group, it just took off with everyone contributing their own thoughts on how we were going to execute our plans. We have now hosted a *Saturday Gathering* every weekend of the semester, spending time at the Guelph Farmer's Market, walking in the Arboretum, watching movies, and once a month, volunteering at the Agape Café run by Royal City Church. Students have connected and deepened relationships, and we have also had the opportunity to explore off-campus and serve others together. It has been



Enjoying some afternoon games

rewarding to see good intentions come to fruition, and I am so excited to see *Saturday Gatherings* continue to grow and improve in the semesters to come.

—Anna McMenemy
GCM Student Leader

MATTERS OF FAITH: A FACULTY MEMBER'S PERSPECTIVE

Three years ago, we launched a brand new initiative. *Matters of Faith* was our way to learn from others and grow in our faith together. Instead of bringing someone to campus whose book just made some Top 10 list, we decided to invite local leaders that were trying to live out their faith in their everyday life. For the first two years, we heard from leaders that were working in the Guelph community. These leaders worked for organizations like the Guelph Neighbourhood Support Coalition, L'Arche and the

Upper Grand District School Board. This year, we decided to invite our own University of Guelph faculty to speak about their faith and how it has impacted their research and approach to teaching.

We've heard from Dr. Brandon Plattner, Dr. Cate Dewey and Dr. Warren Dodd. Cate Dewey is a faculty member at the Ontario Veterinary College, and she founded Children of Bukati. Here's what she had to say about her experience at *Matters of Faith*:

If you were to describe how your faith impacts how you do your work, what would you say? I am a professor and a Christian. It is who I am, so how can I separate the two? In the Matters of Faith gathering I shared my reflections. I believe God made and loves each of us. Jesus taught us to love our neighbours. Everyone is put in our lives for a reason.

As a professor, I try to treat students, staff, and faculty with respect and learn from those I encounter.

Students feel pressured to make the right decisions to ensure they fulfill their life's plans. I know when dreams are not realized, it can be disappointing. But I believe that there are positive reasons for these unexpected diversions. If we focus on what God wants of us, we can see these new directions in a positive light.

I also believe God gives us opportunities to do Jesus' work on this earth. Sometimes we miss the invitation or we choose to say no. But if we go out on a limb and accept the invitation, God will enrich our lives in ways we could not imagine. Through God, we can help others in significant ways. Matters of Faith was an opportunity to share fellowship with the students, talk about



Enjoying our annual canoe trip

how faith shapes our lives and how we listen for God's support and love and direction in our lives.

Guelph Campus Ministry is eager to bring students, staff and faculty together. We are all part of the Body of Christ, and we have much to learn from one another. Growing in faith together has been one of our core values, and *Matters of Faith* is one of the ways it has taken shape in our campus community, thanks be to God!

—Dr. Cate Dewey
UoG Faculty Member
& Jamie VanderBerg



Hanging out at Matters of Faith

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