



SUMMER 2024

NEWSLETTER



Communicating well with all of the stakeholders at Niagara Christian Gleaners (NCG) occupies a good portion of my time and effort as NCG's General Manager.

In a single day I have countless interactions with volunteers, staff members, produce partners, distribution partners, supporters, suppliers, transportation partners and just about anyone else who may have a reason to cross paths with us at the Gleaners. Every connecting point is an important one. Each conversation or email has the potential to bless and expand this ministry. It's a joy to humbly share the amazing story of what God is doing through the Gleaners. If you are holding and reading this newsletter, then you are reading one of nearly 6000 printed copies which we share in a cost effective and efficient way through our network of supporting churches.

Why is it so important to keep others informed about what goes on at Niagara Christian Gleaners? I've learned that we can quite easily assume that many already know about the Gleaners, when in fact, I often hear comments such as; "I live right here in Niagara and I had no idea that this wonderful, local

PETE'S PEN

ministry existed". It will likely not matter how many years we may be in existence, the need to spread the word about NCG will be ongoing. We love to tell others about how the Lord is shining His face on this ministry and accomplishing great things - all for His glory. Sharing the stories of lives being touched both locally and globally never gets old. Raising the profile of NCG, in any way possible, helps us grow the ministry and creates opportunities for others to get involved and ultimately share more food for those in need. Our army of volunteers are also tasked with being our ambassadors. We really do need everyone to help spread the word about NCG. Every message we send out includes an invitation to come check us out - to come spend a morning with us, or come for a tour, and learn all you can about what gleaning is and how NCG is making a local and global impact.

Over the last few months we have had a number of meaningful ways in which NCG receives heightened exposure. Our recent fundraising dinner weekend was well attended with over 600 guests coming out to enjoy a wonderful evening of fellowship, food and information. We notably saw a large number of

unfamiliar faces in addition to the familiar ones at our dinners, which is great. Prior to that, we hosted a Pancake Supper which allowed us to open our doors for anyone who was keen on checking out our plant. We frequently have elementary and secondary school age children and their teachers join us for a morning of learning and serving. Corporate team building events are also great opportunities for employers to bless their employees by sending them out to serve and to be refreshed by a simple gesture of unselfishly blessing others.

The sign on our wall in the cutting room appropriately states "You will be blessed when you come in and blessed when you go out" Deuteronomy 28:6. I invite you to come and find this truth out for yourself with a visit to Niagara Christian Gleaners. PW



BOARD REPORT

CHANGE...Isn't change an interesting word? This word can grip us in fear, it can dredge up worries and concerns about all the unknowns, what don't we know, what don't we see.

However, that same word can bring about feelings of excitement, curiosity of new possibilities, new and efficient opportunities or capabilities – open doors to discover! I will admit, sometimes the first description fits my frame of mind: don't change, I am secure where I am. Whereas other times I am immersed in change, and it is exciting. Isn't it wonderful to hear the song of the first robin returning to our area after a winter without, to see the trees come to life, blossom with color and carry on to produce food just ripe for the picking?

Well, we here at Niagara Christian Gleaners are in a season of change – exciting and blessed times. As you may or may not know, the NCG board has undergone some change. Our past chairman, Arthur Struyk – who has led the board for over 6 years (thank you very much Arthur!), is stepping down (sideways maybe) and filling in an advisory role. A change for him for sure as he has poured so much into this organization. With that opening, I will be making a change and taking on the role that Arthur has left. Now, as a larger board with some new, some more experienced members,

CHEERFUL CHOPPERS VOLUNTEER PROFILE

It's about 8 p.m. on a Wednesday night at the Niagara Christian Gleaners. The cutting tables have been wiped and cleaned, the floors have been swept and washed, and the bowls have been stacked and are drying, ready to be used the next day.

Though the daytime work at NCG has finished, it's about this time that the Evening Dryer Operations are just beginning.

Marinus Koole is one of twelve evening crew volunteers who come in to switch out the carts in the dryers. The dryers are loaded around 10 a.m. on any given morning, and by 8 or 9 p.m., the dehydrating process is done and more carts of freshly diced fruits or vegetables are

Making Giving Easier



12:00 pm



SCAN ME

registration mandatory

Lunch

TWO EVENTS ON

June 13th

6251 Spring Creek Rd,
Smithville, ON

marinusk@csservices.ca 1.800.267.8890 x 225

Provided by The Gleaners

7:30 pm



SCAN ME

registration recommended

Coffee and desert

JOIN US AND LEARN HOW-TO

- Plan or update your Will
- Protect and provide for your loved ones
- Minimize taxes and maximize your gifts
- PLUS a Question & Answer time



CONSULTANT
PRESENTING:
MARINUS KOOLE



NIAGARA CHRISTIAN
GLEANERS



CHRISTIAN
Stewardship
SERVICES

THE NIGHT SHIFT

with Marinus Koole

ready to be put into the dryers to start the whole process over again. This maximizes the running capacity of the two dryers; they operate about 20 out of a 24 hour period, six days a week. It also means NCG can get the products out faster to those who need it. Marinus loves to do his part by helping in the evenings which, for him, is about one evening a week. "I'm still working full-time, so this gives me a chance to help out," he says. The work takes less than an hour with two people. Marinus' regular partner is Pieter Zijlstra and the two quickly unload the carts out of both dryers and neatly park them in rows where they will be all ready for the morning crew of volunteers. They then move the carts loaded with freshly-diced produce into the dryers, lock the doors securely, ensuring the correct program for the type of produce is selected, and start up the dryers again. Marinus jokes that it takes him almost longer to drive from his home in Pelham to NCG in Smithville, than it takes to do the actual work there!

But that work is vital to the operations of the NCG. It helps to keep the whole process moving smoothly by having the carts switched out and dried product ready for measuring and packaging. When asked about what makes NCG different from other volunteer organizations, Marinus said that the commitment of the core community is exceptional. "And when the NCG needs money for an addition or a specific need, it's always right there," he says. "It's a beautiful thing that we can take surplus food and send it around the world. It's also a witness because of what it says on every box: 'We love because He first loved us.' 1 John 4:19."

Marinus has volunteered in this capacity for about five years. He and his wife have three children and four grandchildren. Thank you to Marinus and the rest of the evening crew workers for their important role at NCG! Instead of calling them the Cheerful Choppers we could call them the Mighty Movers! (of the carts) or the Energetic Evening Crew! Well, you get the picture, and we sure do appreciate them.

If you would like to be a part of the evening crew at NCG just contact our General Manager, Pete Weirenga



we look forward to a new season and seeing what God has in store for us. A change has also come for our bookkeeper, Joyce Sonneveld – after 6 great years of service, Joyce is stepping down from this role and we thank her very much for the time and effort she has offered us, a blessing indeed. With that opening, we change the person behind the desk and have the pleasure of welcoming Marianne Overduin. Marianne has been a Gleaner supporter for a while now already, living in the Vineland area with her husband and family. She is excited to make the change in her schedule and become an NCG employee. Welcome to the team Marianne. All in all, we look forward to the many possibilities of how, through these tasks, our God will help us serve.

We here at NCG are still working through some other big changes yet I daresay the changes are all bringing about positive outcomes. Our building addition is still in motion; a number of items are functional and operational, yet more is to be completed. A rotating table that simplifies operation, took a bit to get used to but it is good. Heat exchangers on the dryers took a bit to revamp and adjust but they are good. Altering the building space and trying to work within new confines as a construction project carries on has been challenging but it is good. We are still working on the holding room space, cooler space, various equipment alterations, exterior parking lot changes – lots of things to come, but they too will be good. This year, to date, we have been able to handle approx. 20% more produce than last year; a blessing that our produce partners are able to continue to grow in their support to us. It is all good indeed.

As exciting as it is to be immersed in all of this change, we can also find thankfulness and blessing in the fact that some things never change. The love of our God and Father through the gift he gave us in his Son Christ Jesus, the support he shares with us each and every day through his Holy Spirit, these things never change. It is by His hand that Niagara Christian Gleaners has, over the past 6 plus years, changed from an idea to the physical existence what we are working with today. It is by His hand that we are faithfully supported in so many ways – produce, transportation, financial support. Thanks to all for supporting us in our annual Fund-Raising dinner this

past month. It seems so long ago yet just last month over \$130,000 was raised to help carry on in the mission. We thank you for that. It is also by His hand that we continue to have so many volunteers coming in and giving of their time to support this mission. God has blessed us in so many ways and we humbly thank Him for that.

Life is change, we experience deaths in our families, we experience new births. We celebrate the lives of those around us and as life changes, we learn to celebrate that as well. Therein lies another blessing at NCG, we all do life together and in so doing, celebrate and support each other as we are called to do... while having a lot of fun doing it.

On behalf of the Board at NCG, I wish to thank you for your work, your support, your prayers, for the fact that so many share our desire to “subdue” this world we live in by sharing in what we have and, in this small way, fulfill the will of our Father.

In His Service,
Jack Smit
NCG Board Chairman



FREE FAMILY FUN

NIAGARA CHRISTIAN GLEANERS

Strawberry SOCIAL

SATURDAY, JUNE 22

Niagara Christian Gleaners is once again hosting a *Walk-Through and Strawberry Social.*

YOU'RE INVITED TO COME VISIT OUR FACILITIES and learn more about the mission of NCG

COMPLIMENTARY STRAWBERRIES AND ICE CREAM FOR OUR GUESTS.

SATURDAY, 22 JUNE 2024/ 1-3 PM.
6251 Spring Creek Rd, Smithville, Ontario L0R 2A0.

YOUR DONATION MAKES AN IMPACT!

As a non-profit organization, we rely on donations from people just like you.

3 WAYS TO GIVE:

DONATE ONLINE

niagaragleaners.org/donate

E-TRANSFER

givingncc@gmail.com

CHEQUE BY MAIL

TO: Niagara Christian Gleaners