Ginn (pronounced with a hard “g” sound) was hooked on cocaine, alcohol and tobacco. His days and nights were an endless blur of getting high on crack cocaine and coming down on alcohol. Usually by the third day after he got his government cheque, the money was gone – spent on his addictions, with no food purchased for the family. His life was a void; a horrible place filled with darkness.

One day Ginn’s wife came home with some food she had received at the Friendship Outreach in town and soon both were visiting regularly for hot soup and sandwiches.

One of the first people Ginn met at the Outreach was Dorothy. She took an immediate interest in him and in the weeks that followed learned more about his life. She soon discovered that in his youth Ginn had taken courses in animation and could paint. Hoping to help him achieve freedom from his addictions, Dorothy handed Ginn a canvas, some paint and paintbrushes, and said, “Paint”!

When he was under the influence of his addictions, Ginn had often dreamed of creating fabulous paintings, but was always too high to actually paint.
Dorothy’s encouragement gave him the push he needed to begin using his talent again. It wasn’t long before all the canvas was painted and Ginn needed another challenge.

Dorothy’s husband had a 12-metre container on their property in which he kept his equipment, and that unlikely medium became Ginn’s next canvas. He spent the summer painting a beautiful landscape scene on the container, and as he worked, Ginn realized that something inside him was changing. He says, “it was like a light or something went on”.

With new purpose, Ginn completed Dorothy’s container, enrolled in a treatment centre, completed his treatment and was able to kick his addictions.

He began volunteering at the Friendship Outreach – giving the gift of his time to repay what was given to him.

“I’m proud to be an example of someone who is working toward addiction recovery. I have a great support system here – they moved me into my new home and they provide me with food when I need it. Addiction is a void – it’s darkness – it’s a horrible place to be. I’m grateful because it’s never too late to stop and I’m becoming free of my addictions because of the support I receive here”.

Ginn has been clean and sober for almost two years and is currently enrolled in college. He wants to give his life back to helping people with addictions, so he’s taking a social work program, mixing it with history and art so he can use his talents through art therapy.

On a busy day, the Merritt, BC Friendship Outreach staff serve food and dispense hope to 82 people. The majority of those who come are poor and struggle with addictions, major health issues, and disabilities. Some have just been released from jail, and some prostitute their bodies to get money for drugs. Other clients don’t have addictions or health issues, but struggle with loneliness and unemployment.

At the Outreach, clients are served meals as if they are in a restaurant, are provided entertainment in the form of live music, are loved and accepted as they are, are encouraged toward addiction recovery and a meaningful life, and have constant access to hugs and prayers.

“I was an alcoholic for 35 years and for 35 years my life was filtered through a fog. I don’t remember any of it. But I’m awake now and I remember everything! Leaving addiction is the best thing you can ever possibly do for yourself. It’s an easier ride and the benefits far outweigh any disadvantages. I wake up well every day; I’m in a happy place”.

Ginn has been given the gift of hope and is now being trained so he can give others the same gift.
ADRA Canada’s World Focus 2010

You won’t want to miss our special World Focus speakers ...

From the steppes of Mongolia to the deserts of Sudan, ADRA Sudan Director, Llewellyn Juby, has demonstrated the joy of service in his work for others; helping those in difficult circumstances to reach their potential and achieve sustainable livelihoods.

Juby is the recipient of the Agricultural Award, awarded by the Mongolian Ministry of Agriculture, and the Friendship Award, the highest honour to foreigners for their contribution to development, presented by the Mongolian State President.

Chosen by Maclean’s Magazine for their annual Honour Roll as one of “12 Canadians making a difference”, Dr. Samantha Nutt is a medical doctor with more than 13 years of experience working in war zones. Committed to peace, human rights and social justice, her ambition has always been to help war-affected women and children. She has worked in some of the world’s most violent flashpoints, with War Child Canada, the UN, and NGOs in Iraq, Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Burundi, northern Uganda and the Thai-Burmese border.

Nutt is a role model to many Canadians and has received numerous humanitarian awards for her work in support of war-affected children.

A specialist in Maternal and Child Health in zones of armed conflict, Family Medicine, Public Health, and Women’s Health, Nutt is also on staff at Sunnybrook and Women’s Health Science Centre and is an Assistant Professor at the U of T in the Department of Family and Community Medicine.

“Why doesn’t ADRA Canada support initiatives such as filling a shoebox to send overseas?”

The experiences of people doing development and relief work in developing countries have taught us a great deal about projects like the shoebox operations.

We know that many cultures do not celebrate Christmas in the same way we do. In fact, many recipients do not observe Christmas at all because they belong to other faiths that have their own celebrations.

Some of the gifts are culturally unacceptable. Toys that require batteries, for example, are useless in countries where batteries are unaffordable or unavailable.

To send North American glitter is to impose a kind of materialistic North American value on these poor people.

One Canadian missionary to Kenya noted: “There are many stories of some children receiving gifts while others look on longingly, and even some stories of communities fighting over gifts because there weren’t enough for everybody. It seems that this project is more effective at making Canadians feel good than it is at meeting the real needs of children in other countries”. Unfortunately, there are never enough boxes for all the children, which creates feelings of jealousy and low self-esteem.

Shoebox operations are also costly. Shipping, publicity, and distribution costs could be better spent on helping recipients meet the basic needs of clean drinking water sanitation, food, health care, and education. The bottom line is that shoeboxes offer a great opportunity for people from wealthier countries to feel good about themselves, but almost always have a negative effect on impoverished people in the developing world.

In all its initiatives, ADRA Canada looks at the fundamental issues of justice, fairness, and re-distribution of the world’s plentiful resources, in an effort to support durable, documented and measurable changes for poor children here in Canada and in other parts of the world.
Turn Plastic into WATER for Sudan!

If you are one of the many Canadians who collect Aeroplan miles whenever you travel or use your credit card, during the month of February 2010, you can help ADRA Canada turn plastic into water!

Simply download the “Aeroplan Charitable Pooling Program” form from our website (www.adra.ca), print it off, fill it in, SIGN it, and fax, mail, or scan and email it to us.

- Here’s how it works:
  - Aeroplan transfers your donated miles to the ADRA Canada account.
  - ADRA Canada redeems donated miles to purchase air travel to projects around the world.
  - ADRA Canada takes the dollar cost of the travel and allocates that amount to the Darfur Wells project.
  - Cold, clean water is accessed through new wells funded by ADRA Canada supporters.
  - Refugee and displaced men, women and children in Darfur, Sudan have better health and a chance at longer, better lives.

THANK YOU to those who transferred airmiles in July '09!

An It Is Written program featuring ADRA Canada will air on December 19, 2009 at 11:00 am on CTV coast to coast.

It will also air at 8:30 am on December 20, 2009 on CTS in Southern Ontario and Nation-wide via Star Choice and Express V u.

Email: karen@adra.ca or call toll-free 1-888-274-2372 ext. 142 to get your free catalogue.*

The new, redesigned, larger size 2010 ADRA Canada Calendar is NOW AVAILABLE!* Email karen@adra.ca to order your free calendar/s today!

* to Canadian addresses only
A Snapshot of Poverty in Canada

Poverty is like punishment for a crime you didn’t commit. - Eli Khamarov

Poverty:

Many factors contribute to poverty in Canada among them are the following:

- Shortage of fulltime jobs with stable, liveable wages
- Income security system that fails to protect those in need
- Lack of affordable social housing
- Lack of affordable and accessible child care.

Food Banks:

- The percentage of working poor who use food banks has more than doubled, from  in 1989, to 14.5  in 2008.
- Of the over 700,000 hungry people who use a food bank each month in Canada, 14.5  are employed, 37  are children, 50.3  are families with children, and 50.8  are seniors.
- 50.8  of food bank clients receive social assistance cheques that don’t cover their basic needs.
- 12.7% receive disability support cheques that aren’t sufficient to provide adequate food.

The Homeless:

- It’s estimated that up to 300,000 people are homeless in Canada living in shelters or on the streets.
- On any given night, 40,000 people stay in homeless shelters.
- Single men make up the largest segment of homeless people, but homelessness is rising among both single women and women-headed single parent families.

you + ADRA = hope

ADRA Canada provides funding to a variety of projects across Canada that offer:

- Food hampers
- Breakfast for school children
- Homeless feeding
- Soup kitchens
- Food pantries banks
- Depression seminars
- Emergency aid
- ESL (English as a second language) instruction
- Assistance for women leaving shelters
- New immigrant assistance
- Youth empowerment camps
- “Bags of Love” for children uprooted from their homes
- Community service centres
- Community gardens
A Second Chance for Margaret

Margaret has struggled all her life with difficult health problems. Unable to work and earn a good wage, she usually purchased low-quality food, and didn't eat properly. She was very glad to find out about an ADRA-supported foodbank near her home and quickly became a regular client. As she was encouraged by the staff to choose nutritious food, she began to eat more fresh fruit and vegetables.

One day Margaret didn't show up for her usual visit to the foodbank and it was discovered that she was in the palliative care unit at the hospital. The doctors felt that she wouldn't leave the hospital alive and had given her only a few days to live. Margaret could barely breathe and was on 70% oxygen. In addition, her diabetes was adding complications to her condition. Staff members from the foodbank went to visit and bring her encouragement.

Miraculously, within a few days Margaret was moved to a different location in the hospital. The doctors called her “Miracle Lady” and released her later that week.

When Margaret was released from the hospital, the foodbank staff made a special delivery of healthful food including a variety of fresh fruit and vegetables. Margaret was pleased with the selection and vowed to eat healthier.

Her recent brush with death has made Margaret more aware of the value of life. She wants to be sure to spend more time with her children and grandchildren.

Shortly after her release from the hospital, Margaret made a special trip to the foodbank to thank everyone for their concern and well wishes. She attributes her new lease on life to the words expressed and the actions conveyed by the staff.

Margaret is just one of the many people in Canada who need help and hope.

Won't you join us and become part of the solution by donating to ADRA Canada's National Program today?

ADRA Canada national projects range from foodbanks to skills training centres to community gardens, and although the services offered vary from place to place, the goal remains the same:

to make measurable, documented and durable changes in lives and society.

Please accept my gift of:

- for the National Program
- for Emergency Management
- for wherever needed most

OR Donate online: www.adra.ca

Make cheques payable to ADRA Canada.