

# GOOD WORK NEWS

The Working Centre, 58 Queen St. S. Kitchener, ON N2G 1V6

Issue 129

June 2017

Subscription: A Donation Towards our Work

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This photo, taken in Maurita's Kitchen, ties together a number of themes from this issue of Good Work News. In the photo are Maurita's Kitchen volunteers, along with Dr. Helena Jaczek, Minister of Community and Social Services, and Daiene Vernile, MPP for Kitchener was taken during a tour of The Working Centre on March 7.



by Dave Thomas

For Neil Aitchison, the 30th Annual Mayors' Dinner was a very different experience. The well-known personality has hosted 24 of the 29 previous dinners, but this time he was the community member being fêted.

A capacity crowd of more than 950 people were on hand to celebrate Neil, whose many community contributions over many decades include worthy causes such as Sleeping Children Around The World, United Way of KW and Area, Waterloo Region Home Builders' Association, Western

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## New Social Initiatives

By Stephanie Mancini

Dr. Helena Jaczek and Daiene Vernile, were at The Working Centre on March 7, 2017 to announce four year funding for four Financial Empowerment and Problem Solving projects and five Financial Champions projects across Ontario. The Working Centre is excited to be part of these projects that offer financial supports and problem-

solving for people living on a limited income.

Our recent Volunteer Income Tax Clinic was supported through this project. We had a record turn-out to the Income Tax Clinics; there were many days that with line-ups around the corner as people waited their turn to register. Thanks to the 50 volunteers who joined us to

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## An Alternative Way to think about Basic Income

By Joe Mancini

The Ontario government is going forward with three pilot projects on Basic Income. It will study whether a basic income can support vulnerable workers by giving security and opportunity. Will it be simpler and more economically effective? The experiments will last 3 years and involve up to 4000 people. At this time, it is highly unlikely that a Basic Income scheme can be generalized to the wider population, because the costs would exponentially increase government expenditures.

This article suggests a different approach to Basic Income by answering two questions

1. How to develop a Basic Income that supports precarious workers, who now make up nearly 34% of the labour force, without exponentially increasing government expenditures?
2. How to ensure that Basic Income schemes enhance rather than diminish the human need to contribute positively to society?

We live in a society where there

has never been greater abundance. It seems reasonable to pay people not to work rather than creating frustrating cycles of unemployment. There is a belief that if people do not have to worry about income, then families will thrive, social problems will go away, the cost of health care will be reduced. The Working Centre wants to add caution to this social myth. Our experience is that money is only one factor that organizes people's social experience. Community grows; social connections grow when people use tools to define their dignity by producing goods and services that are useful to others. A Basic Income that leaves people isolated and not participating in society does not add to the social good.

This paper argues for a soft Basic Income which encourages choice, and importantly, agency, ensuring workers have control and motivation to earn through the labour market. This form of a Basic Income retains social assistance payments but

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## Thirty Third Year

Issue 129

June 2017

## Good Work News

Good Work News was first produced in September 1984. It is published four times a year by The Working Centre and St. John's Kitchen as a forum of opinions and ideas on work and unemployment. Four issues of Good Work News constitutes our annual report. There is a circulation of 12,000 copies. Subscription: a donation towards our work.

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## New Social Initiatives

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complete 4,000 income tax returns, which resulted in \$9,426,358 in tax credits for people living on a limited income.

During this tour, we had the chance to share with Minister Jaczek our ideas on Basic Income which are featured in this issue of GWN on page 4 and 5. We also toured a number of The Working Centre's Community Tools enterprises (Maurita's Kitchen, where this photo is taken, is one of these – see article on page 6) – projects supported through the volunteer efforts of 500 people, many of whom depend on social incomes, and who offer their gifts to support creative community development activities.

All of these projects at The Working Centre help to build skills, create community, and to make it possible to live better on a limited income (providing affordable meals, refurbished computers and bicycles, used furniture, housewares and clothing), while also living in environmentally sustainable ways.

Daiene Vernille has also been instrumental in supporting our work with the Region of Waterloo to explore affordable transportation options. We are participating in an

*“These financial empowerment supports will help people with low incomes participate more fully in their communities and build their financial security. The government is committed to improving opportunities to support the economic and social inclusion of everyone in Ontario.”*

— Charles Sousa, Minister of Finance

*“Increasingly, supports for people living on a limited income are being delivered through the tax system; managing your finances is highly complex work when there just isn't enough money to go around. The FEPS project helps us work together with people to problem-solve through these complexities. Last year with support from the FEPS project, The Working Centre helped over 4,000 people complete their income tax returns.”*

— Stephanie Mancini, Co-ordinator, The Working Centre

Ontario Poverty Reduction Strategy project to explore affordable bus transportation. More on this in a future GWN edition.

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at the

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## 30<sup>th</sup> Mayors' Dinner Honouring Neil Aitchison

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Ontario Athletic Association, KW Oktoberfest, Cambridge Chamber Business Awards, Rotary, Probus, as well as his beloved Drayton Entertainment.

There were tributes from family (his daughter Tammy, his son Todd and two of his four grandchildren, Rebecca and Patrick), Drayton Entertainment colleagues Alex Mustakas and Steven Karcher, former premier Bob Rae, and video greetings from NHL hockey star/former MP Ken Dryden and CTV anchor Lloyd Robertson.

Todd performed a fitting tribute to his father by singing New York, New York while the grandchildren Rebecca and Patrick spoofed their grandfather by dressing up as Mounties.

Lloyd Robertson recounted meeting Neil: "I pretty well knew, right from the outset, that behind that larger-than-life character with the hearty laugh and the beaming smile, was someone absolutely and sincerely dedicated to helping his community," he said. "And time and again you have proven that while you want to highlight the Region's successes, you also understand its needs."

Neil and this year's MC Michael Higginshadan on-stage conversation relating some of the highlights of Neil's personal, professional and community life, including his years in broadcasting and media sales, his long-standing association with Drayton Entertainment, his work with construction firm Melloul Blamey, his relationship with comedian and mentor Dave Broadfoot, and Neil's Mountie alter-ego character, Constable Archibald F. Inkster.

The Million Dollar Quartet, preparing to open at Dunfield Theatre later that week, performed a set from their show in honour of Neil's long-term connection to Drayton Entertainment. It was a rousing closing act!

Neil didn't totally escape hosting duties, though. He led the live auction segment as only he can, knowing his audience and using humour to great effect.

The event, hosted by Mayors Berry Vrbanovic, Dave Jaworsky and Doug Craig, raised over \$80,000 to support The Working Centre and St. John's Kitchen.

What a great way to celebrate 30 years of this community celebration.



This year Michael Higgins served as Master of Cerimony while Neil Aitchison was the Guest of Honour



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Bob Rae, Alex Mustakas, Steven Karcher and video guests Lloyd Robertson and Ken Dryden offered tributes

### Thank You to the Community Groups

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The three Mayors (above) with Neil and the Macpherson family(below)



# An Alternative Way to think about Basic Income

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encourages workers to add to their income without penalty. It would recognize income transfer programs that are already in place such as the Child Tax Benefit (CTB), HST rebates and an enhanced Working Income Tax Benefit (WITB) as part of a Basic Income that supports the precarious workforce.

Basic Income is only partially about income. The social context of cooperative supports defines how people live richly in a community. The Working Centre has been testing Basic Income concepts for 34 years. Long ago we interpreted social assistance as a Social Wage. We have long admired our volunteers who put in full weeks cleaning tables, preparing food, growing vegetables and microgreens, sorting clothing, fixing furniture and repairing computers while on social assistance. This type of work serves and feeds community, it helps the individual contribute to society and it provides opportunities for skill development. Our analysis comes from on-the-ground experience.

## Defining a Soft Basic Income

A “soft” Basic Income approach is a non-bureaucratic method that allows people to add work income to their social assistance and EI. Whatever the income floor is, what is important is allowing the worker to earn the rest of their income from part-time work. Adding a part-time job that earns about \$150 a week (about 13 hours at minimum wage), would mean an individual could earn another \$600 a month and this would be a substantial improvement.

Basic Income could be instituted



Julie Lonneman

by dropping OW/ODSP rules that taxes earned income at 50% after \$200. There are hundreds of small earning jobs, from cutting grass and shovelling snow to filling thousands of gaps that employers and community groups are constantly looking to fill. These would allow workers to piece together an income as a “freelancer” in the labour market.

Low income precarious workers who are not on social assistance should benefit from the tax system through the CTB, HST rebates and an enhanced WITB. The recent change to the CTB already

*Social connections grow when people use tools to define their dignity by producing goods and services that are useful to others. A Basic Income that leaves people isolated and not participating in society does not add to the social good.*

constitutes a form of Basic Income for families with children who are under 18 years of age. The WITB should be increasingly targeted at workers who do not have children under 18. These changes would unleash a substantially healthier labour force ready to do odd jobs and contribute to society.

The advantage of using the established mechanisms of OW/ODSP bureaucracy and CTB/WITB infrastructure is that a soft Basic Income would be introduced incrementally using social programs that have a known quality. It would avoid implementing an expensive big plan that is guaranteed to cause new problems.

## A Social Wage

The first step towards implementing a Basic Income is to forge a broader conception of the meaning of work. If society is to



Drawings by Linda Carson

embrace a Basic Income distributed by the state, then it is imperative that this wage be understood as a social wage and through it, greater opportunities and responsibilities for workers to voluntarily offer skills and abilities to support communities and neighbourhoods.

Social assistance was first used to support workers and their families during short periods of unemployment. In its present context, social assistance provides few incentives to enter the labour force, acting more like a sponge than a trampoline. These proposals look to improve and add a new twist, by envisioning how a philosophy of a social wage can enhance and transform the labour market.

## Supporting Precarious Workers

A guaranteed basic income should first be targeted at precarious workers and those on social assistance. One

definition of precarious workers are the 7% who are unemployed, the 20% who are temporary and part-time workers, discouraged workers and the 7% who are self-employed but who earn less than a living wage. In total this group represents more than 34% of the labour market. The percentage grows if you add in those on social assistance.

The temporary labour market has the potential to be a bridge for those supported by a soft Basic Income. It would create new opportunities for workers who increasingly are left out. An investment in a soft Basic Income could substantially change the nature of the labour market by developing a mechanism for businesses and the non-profit sector to support temporary workers.

A soft Basic Income will accelerate the trend of increasing the number of temporary jobs. While growing temporary work might not seem ideal, its greatest defect is leaving people without the ability to pay their rent. Another defect is that it leaves people dislocated from their work. Yet an income floor, whether from Social Assistance, CTB, or the WITB has the potential to reduce dislocation as people meaningfully craft an income and have more options and control over their work. At the same time, businesses could be encouraged to provide increased opportunities for those who receive the income floor. Temporary work in this light could become a social good, an efficient way of getting work accomplished.

## Creating a Soft Basic Income

A soft Basic Income would create new incentives to increase participation in the labour market by giving individuals more control over meaningfully crafting their own income. It would reduce the dislocation that temporary work has traditionally imposed on workers. It would reduce the disincentive that OW/ODSP rules have had on labour market participation. A soft Basic Income policy would enhance choice and possibilities for income by opening up work opportunities for odd jobs, short term fill-in-labor, and cash agriculture work. Presently these choices of income are available but social assistance recipients

# Community Tools and the Social Wage

The Working Centre’s experience creating Community Tools demonstrates how a Basic Income can enhance opportunities for offering one’s social wage. Community Tool projects evolved at The Working Centre by combining community service with social enterprise. Each tool is structured to create an environment that allows maximum involvement, creating ways for people who have been excluded to contribute. The resulting projects invite people away from isolation to become involved in serving others, to use tools productively, and to become part of a group that serves a public need. These are examples of how OW/ODSP income can be enhanced through opportunities to contribute to the wider community.

Examples of Community Tools at The Working Centre include projects like Recycle Cycles Community Bike Shop, BarterWorks, St. John’s Kitchen, Maurita’s Kitchen, Queen Street Commons Café, Computer Recycling, Worth A Second Look Furniture and Housewares Thrift Store, Hacienda Sarria Market Garden and Greenhouse, Green Door Clothing and Arts Space, the Commons Studio, and Community Access Bikeshare. These projects are productive. Recycle Cycles fixes over 5000 bikes per year, Worth a Second Look sells over 3000 items a week, the Hacienda Sarria Market Garden grows over 18,000 units of vegetables. Community Tools projects create access to tools so that people can live more simply, combining community with the easy ability to get your bike fixed or your computer repaired. They can replace centralized services with face-to-face relationships with a structure that provides a pathway to address issues like unemployment, isolation, on-the-job language training, skills training, confidence building, or a place to go when overcoming an addiction.

At The Working Centre we count over 500 volunteers who contribute to our Community Tool projects. The design of these projects demonstrates how to create organizational structures that invite participation to serve the common good.

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# Basic Income

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are discouraged and punished for accessing them. This model seeks to open up these opportunities.

Those not on social assistance and who are single find it almost impossible to make a living from temporary work. This is why enhancing the WITB (a mechanism already in place) would be a way to create a Basic Income for this group.

## Basic Income Becomes a Social Wage

A Basic Income becomes more than a wage when it offers a social vision to enhance work opportunities that build community. When the Basic Income is deposited into a bank account, it should represent the potential for offering socially beneficial labour to the wider community. This new freedom of income should encourage people to become involved in their neighbourhoods.

A soft Basic Income with a social wage philosophy could enhance community projects. Workers could match their Basic Income with a 15 hour a week job at a social enterprise and also volunteer another 15 hours as their own contribution to recognize their social wage. Others may receive a bi-weekly stipend. This would create a whole new culture of work. An individual who was depressed on \$560 per month might now earn upwards of \$1,300 - \$1400 per month plus find volunteer work that enlivens their sense of responsibility and affirms their wider ability to contribute.

This scenario is not a simple calculation; it takes organizations willing to utilize gifts of labour and skills along with supporting people with different abilities and experiences. Constant support and peer examples will slowly reveal a future potential of wider skill sharing in community services. There is so much meaningful work that people can accomplish together using the Third Sector as the basis for new work opportunities.

Every single human being can contribute in meaningful ways. Poverty is the lack of access to tools. It is the result of being abandoned by community and of being disconnected from sources of support. It is a cycle where the inability to overcome barriers reinforces hopelessness. Can a soft Basic Income reduce isolation? Can it encourage a network of social enterprises that are open to employing those with a Basic Income? Can those who receive a Basic Income recognize this gift of income as a social wage that can then be contributed back to civil society organizations? These core questions are important to answer before a Basic Income is implemented.

*A soft Basic Income would create new incentives to increase participation in the labour market by giving individuals more control over meaningfully crafting their own income. It would reduce the dislocation that temporary work has traditionally imposed on workers. It would reduce the disincentive that OW/ODSP rules have had on labour market participation.*

## A Commitment to Citizenship

A soft Basic Income as a social wage could mean a different kind of commitment to citizenship. It would be based on inspiring people to contribute to their community. People already want to do this but often find their efforts blocked rather than encouraged. A community with a soft Basic Income could highlight projects and useful work available. People would read such a list with interest. Community agencies know this kind of work well. The Working Centre has always been a place that matches skills, highlights work opportunities and directs people to retraining.

A soft Basic Income means an income floor that is expandable by the efforts individuals make to participate in wider community building. Food co-ops, urban agriculture, bread making facilities, and community kitchens are examples of community-based accessible tools that reduce consumerism, create meaningful work and deepen community connections. Public housing costs are reduced when people are given opportunities to be involved in meaningful ways in the areas of administration, maintenance and landscaping tasks. Bikes and public transit reduce the expense of car use. Urban agriculture reduces food purchases and increases fresh

vegetable production. These are example of how the combination of a soft Basic Income along with community supports can help people reduce the costs of living.

The soft Basic Income would be designed to give people the freedom to create a large portion of their own income, and the opportunity for a grassroots labour force to become actively involved in the work of building community. Poverty is about the lack of social solidarity. Money alone cannot help people out of poverty. There are too many complicating issues. The income floor needs to be matched with access to tools, friendships, peer supports and community strategies all working together to rebuild connectedness.

## Conclusion

In the regular workforce people roll their eyes when they talk about a Basic Income. It is counter-intuitive to believe that people will choose work when they are given a free income. Human beings are imitative. We do not need examples of people taking free government money and using it for minimal social purpose.

This paper argues for developing a soft Basic Income for those on Social Assistance that eliminates work disincentives and builds on existing social income programs such as the CTB, WITB, HST rebates.

All of the ideas contained in this submission are based on the social experiment of The Working Centre which has been developing and implementing these ideas over the last 34 years. A Basic Income can reinforce a broader understanding of work that includes voluntary work, child care, assisting the elderly, supporting the disabled.

A soft Basic Income that recognizes a philosophy of the social wage will broaden the meaning of work and unleash new possibilities. The changes proposed would eliminate work disincentives and help the economy evolve towards better care for the environment, stronger neighbourhoods and living wage opportunities for precarious workers.



## Job Café: Creating an Infrastructure for Day Labour

A key project that adds to a Basic Income is the development of infrastructure to support day labour work. Job Café at The Working Centre, operating since 2002, was developed as an alternative to private sector day labour businesses. Our goal is building relationships and ensuring that the earned dollars go directly to the worker. To construct such a service has meant overcoming labour market barriers that have been erected by government agencies like WSIB, CRA, Employment Ontario, Service Canada and Ministry of Community and Social Services. They have all biased their rules towards full-time employment and have been uncooperative in helping us re-create the temporary job market.

At Job Café we connect individuals to community members looking for short-term (often single-day) workers. We assist people to earn additional income and contribute to the community in a variety of ways. Jobs include moving, landscaping, window washing, street sweeping, and more. Job Café facilitates job details and helps establish a pay rate for the job, arranges for workers to complete the work, provides initial support if required to get the job started and follow

up to ensure the job is completed. We help employers by ensuring that the workers meet expectations before the job begins, help supervise and guiding the workers, provide tools and other services like transportation, and look after the payouts. A Basic Income can strengthen the temporary labour market by providing a more seamless integration with contingent workers.



# Maurita's Kitchen: The Spirit Behind Producing Food Together

By Rebecca Mancini

"Phone" calls out the fellow from the dishwasher as the phone rings. "I'll get it" calls a young man from across the room as he dashes through the hub of activity. "Maurita's Kitchen", he says as he picks up the phone. At the stove, Jenny and Sheena smile at each other as he starts describing all the activity that is happening in the Kitchen on this particular morning. "Someone is making wraps and burritos, there's Carrot Ginger Soup and Thai Chili on the stove, the beans just boiled over, chickpea burgers are on the grill, we're making a bunch of salads, Jenny is making quiche, Clive is delivering the pizzas and all of Myrna's baking to the Cafe, there's a batch of hummus being made, there's a game of jeopardy going on, we're gonna make some falafel and spanakopita and someone else is cutting 40 cups of sweet potatoes for a catering order". We know who is on the other end of the phone without asking. John has been a part of many Working Centre projects for the past 15 years but as he has gotten older, he is no longer able to leave the house independently and

## Working at Maurita's Kitchen

Those who work every day in Maurita's Kitchen work to weave all the pieces together, to foster people's creativity but to also hold consistency, to maintain the pace and quantities but still allow each person to offer what they are able. They are at the core of those who help to build this distributive web that allows each person to meaningfully contribute while also building meaningful relationships. It is complex work each day and it needs someone who has an innate knowledge of food and cooking from whole ingredients; who finds joy in each person's uniqueness; and who can handle the multiple complexities of both of those things at the same time. If you are drawn to such work, please check out our permanent job posting at [www.theworkingcentre.org](http://www.theworkingcentre.org) under the "Contribute" link.



*In the lively hub that is the Queen Street Commons, the breadth of variety, the quantity and the quality of the food offerings often gets taken for granted, but in Maurita's Kitchen it is part of the air we breathe. Every day we craft approximately 30 different recipes, making about 20-40 portions of each item and we make everything from raw ingredients, using very few shortcuts. The dishes range from soups and stews; to pizzas, salads and handheld goodies; to cakes and cookies. On top of this daily production, we also offer a popular catering menu that includes some of our favourite salads and entrees as well as some tasty sampling trays.*

so each morning he calls Maurita's Kitchen to learn who is there and what we are making.

The description of the hub of activity that John hears each morning varies with who is present and what they are doing but the spirit, the energy and the sheer volume of production of food remain the same.

Maurita's Kitchen is the spot where we prepare the food that is served at the Queen Street Commons Café. The Queen Street Commons can have anywhere between 300-400 people come through in a day and Maurita's Kitchen works to make sure that there is a diverse enough selection available that everyone finds something they are looking for.

In the lively hub that is the Queen Street Commons, the breadth of variety, the quantity and the quality of the food offerings often gets taken for granted, but in Maurita's Kitchen it is part of the air we breathe. Every day we craft approximately 30 different recipes, making about 20-40 portions of each item and we make everything from raw ingredients, using very few shortcuts. The dishes range from soups and stews; to pizzas, salads and handheld goodies; to cakes and cookies.

On top of this daily production, we also offer a popular catering menu that includes some of our favourite salads and entrees as well as some tasty sampling trays.

## A Dedicated Crew

It's a vast quantity of food and there is a very dedicated crew of people who join the Kitchen each day to make it possible. These are people who are drawn to the idea of food, who are looking to build their cooking and kitchen skills, who have community service hours, who want to be out and about with others, who want to build their language skills. The range of people who come is wide and each of them joins the crew, learns the ropes and offers what they have.

## How Maurita's Kitchen Responds

Many kitchens would respond to this high level of production, the pressure to hold quality and the diversity of cooks, by running a tight ship. In Maurita's Kitchen, we have decided to embrace the communal nature of food and we trust in each person's capacity to create an offering for the daily production. One thing that is very clear is that everyone has an opinion about food and as it is something that is very close to people's hearts, everyone has their own way of crafting a meal. You might think that cooking from a recipe is a very clearly defined process with instructions that will produce something uniform, but as we have discovered time and again, a recipe is merely a way for people to demonstrate their innate creativity. No recipe ever comes out the same way when it is made by different people! And yet, as each person walks through the door, we give them a recipe to craft. When cooking for a restaurant, this approach may

seem counterintuitive, but it is this distributive approach that is at the core of the life and spirit of Maurita's Kitchen.

People take great joy in what they are able to create and contribute towards the whole. Sometimes people are learners and need lots of help as they work through the recipe but next time, they might be helping someone else learn a technique or trick. Sometimes people come with food knowledge in their bones and delight in learning new recipes. If someone is not able to read or follow a recipe, they join up with someone or we find tasks that don't need a recipe. By assuming a person's capability and not letting our concern for speed and quality be the judging factor, we let ourselves be surprised by each person's contribution.

Food naturally draws people together and as each person tries to find a corner of a table to work at, they are drawn into conversations. Around food, people easily find things to talk about – whether it's the size of the carrots or the heat of the space. People work together, everyone tastes and comments, adjustments are made and each person's contribution is celebrated. We find that people relax into the food, allow themselves to be their quirky selves and new connections spring up. If you ever come by Maurita's Kitchen, it is a buzz with conversation, music, the sounds of chopping, stirring, blending, and the whirl of many different people in a small space. It is a genuine community where people come, offer themselves and receive plenty more in return.

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Hacienda Sarria Market Garden

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## Books for Sustainable Living

### BOOK REVIEW

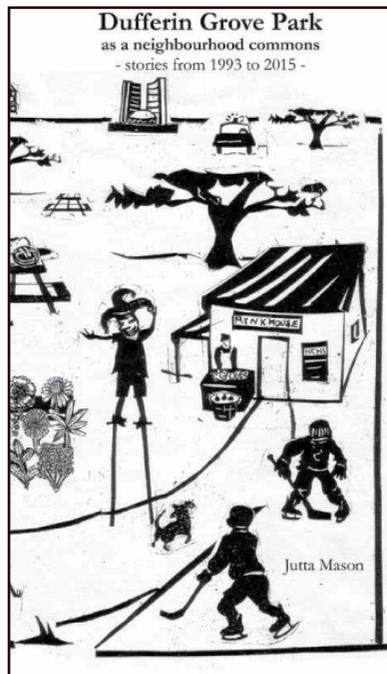
**DUFFERIN GROVE PARK** as a neighbourhood commons. Stories from 1993 to 2015. Jutta Mason, **CELOS: Centre for Local Research into Public Space**, Toronto 2016, 81 pages. This book can be downloaded off the CELOS website at <http://www.celos.ca/wiki/uploads/CELOSBooklets/dgpccommons.pdf>

Reviewed by **Isaiah Ritzmann**

In Jutta Mason's self-published **Dufferin Grove Park** as a neighbourhood commons – Stories from 1993 to 2015 she recounts, in under 70 pages, the personal and communal stories of the park-as-village over the course of twenty years. It is a story - or better put, a collection of stories – of the park's people and their work together which brought life to their place. This small book, a samizdat, is a delightfully earthy hagiography of the friends and neighbours of Dufferin Grove Park. It is a mixture of biography, auto-biography and community saga, that records the kinds of imaginative possibilities of parks seen and used as neighbourhood "commons."

In late 1992 Dufferin Mall in Toronto got in trouble with its neighbourhood for its plan to build Condo towers in the area. In a gesture of good-will the mall manager made a peace offering to the neighbourhood: \$25,000 for a park playground. After nobody came to a neighbourhood meeting to discuss the offer Jutta Mason, who lived in the neighbourhood, decided to spend two days calling up her neighbours to hear what they wanted to do with the money. Little did she, her neighbours, or the city know that this was the small beginning of the flourishing of the Dufferin Grove Park as an experimental, convivial neighbourhood commons in Toronto's West End.

From this initial conversation came not only a playground and sandpit but a process that over the



next twenty years saw neighbours coming together to create community gardens, bake ovens, skating rinks, Friday night suppers, art festivals, camp fires, farmers markets, puppet theatre and so much more. It was almost as if once neighbours started getting together and doing stuff there was no end to the kind of creative, down-to-earth, useful, community-building things they could get done. The gifts, contributions and happenings at the park were so keenly personal and not institutional – a reality illustrated by the endless litany of names and stories of people who contributed to the rhythms and life of the park over the years. People like Elyse, Fernando, Isabel, Pat, Margie, Lily, David, Fabio, Yo, Arie, Gene, Lin, Alan, Claire etc. Even celebrated thinkers and intellectuals, on the level of personal friendship, have

been woven into the fabric of the park community – people like urbanist Jane Jacobs, itinerant scholar Ivan Illich and Nobel Prize winning economist Elinor Ostrom.

This personalist telling of the story of Dufferin Grove Park is key. Always lurking in the background of Jutta's story is the possibility that all that the community has created could come crashing down under the weight of by-laws, regulations and anonymous activities of unresponsive systems. On the bright side this makes for a whole series of delightful stories of community members "just doing stuff," without official sanction even when required, and often obtaining beleaguered forgiveness after the fact. Stories such as demolishing indoor walls at the park skating rink, which would have cost the city a prohibitive \$16,000, without permission but getting it done. It is these positive, hopeful stories that this booklet recounts.

Framing the story of the Park as the story of a "Commons" evokes the history of the enclosures where English lords kicked commoners off sheep pastures and, in the process of privatizing what was once common, created a new class of the dispossessed. In this modern tale of enclosure the threat shifts from the greedy Lord in his castle to the rule burdened bureaucrats at Toronto City Hall. Jutta does not give details about the enclosures of the Park but the dates she gives, 1993-2015, suggests that at some point in the recent past Toronto stepped in and, in her words, "the corporation reasserted its control and the commons has steadily been fading." To her credit she does not dwell on these stories or satisfy the possible rubber-necking sadism of readers who only want to hear painful stories of corporate enclosure. Her book is decidedly not a tale of the loss of something beautiful at Dufferin Grove Park. Rather it is a celebration of awareness. The awareness that ordinary people can do amazing things, build community and imaginatively do so without permission.

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- Fermented Thoughts: Institutional Inversion (\$25.00)

\* For Summer Institute participants, registration for Institutional Inversion is included – no need to purchase an extra ticket.

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do  
we...

offer sustainable, reliable resources that are agile and responsive to change?  
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Are you interested in learning more about the practices that we have developed in emergent thinking, personalist practices and local democracy? Whether you are an individual or part of an organization, we invite you to join us in reflection and conversation at our second Summer Institute in Grassroots Sustainability.

The 2017 Summer Institute will take place at The Working Centre's Fresh Ground, located at 256 King St. E. in downtown Kitchener. Registration is \$250 per person. To register, please fill in the form on the back of this page or email Heather Montgomery at The Working Centre: [waterlooschool@theworkingcentre.org](mailto:waterlooschool@theworkingcentre.org).

July 19, 2017

## The Daily Circus

*A gathering to explore the continued significance of the thought of Ivan Illich*

Come join us for a day-long Illich-inspired convivial gathering of friends, with food, drink and clarification of thought. We invite you to contribute to this gathering by writing a short article which explores or applies an aspect of Illich's work. At this gathering you will have a chance to share your thoughts with others.

July 19 2017, 9am-5pm  
Fresh Ground  
256 King St E, Kitchener

Lunch will be catered by The Working Centre. Suggested payment is \$10/person.



## Institutional Inversion

*Ivan Illich's Institutional Vision and Its Misunderstandings*

Often misunderstood as being crassly anti-institutional, Illich in fact saw possibility in turning institutions inside-out and flipping them upside-down.

Join David Cayley from CBC Radio's IDEAS (now retired) for a presentation and discussion about Ivan Illich's thinking on institutions and their contemporary relevance.

This event will open both our Fermented Thoughts series and this year's Summer Institute.

July 19 2017, 7pm-9pm  
Fresh Ground, 256 King St E, Kitchener

Fermented Thoughts is our new forum for imaginative thought on social, economic and ecological issues. Join our guest speakers for discussion over wine and snacks.

Tickets are \$25 per evening, including food and a drink.

\* For Summer Institute participants, registration for Institutional Inversion is included – no need to purchase an extra ticket.



If you are interested in joining us for one or both of these events, please fill in the form on the back of this page or contact Isaiah at The Working Centre for details: [waterlooschool@theworkingcentre.org](mailto:waterlooschool@theworkingcentre.org) or (519) 743-1151 x 175.