

NEIGHBOURHOOD MINISTRY NEWS

After a five-month hiatus because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Neighbourhood Ministry's Street Outreach team resumed its weekly activities on Saturday August 29. Safety protocols, approved by the diocesan COVID-19 committee, have been put in place to ensure best practices. The team described their experience as a rewarding outing, meeting about 11 people—some regulars and others new to them—during a four-hour stint on the streets. Following is a report of their experience. For privacy reasons, only initials are used for the people they met.

Reported by Jane Davis and Janice Hope

At 9:45am on Saturday, August 29, Joan Stewart, Jane Davis and Janice Hope (yes, it's a lot of J's) met at St Philip's. With facemasks on, we briefly discussed the COVID protocols and Joan took some pictures to document the first Neighbourhood Ministry outing since March 2020.

Jane and Janice, travelling in separate cars with our respective cell numbers, headed out to the first stop: West Point Grey United Church. No one was there, so we continued to St. Helen's to hopefully find *Bl*. He was not at the church, so we planned our next stops at Jericho Beach and No Frills at 4th & Highbury.

Da was happy to see us at No Frills and not sure where everyone else was but said he would let people know we were back for Saturday mornings. We left a packet and some face masks as well as McDonald's and President's Choice cards.

At 4th Avenue we said hello to *Pe* selling his calendars and left him with a packet and some face masks.

Next to Jericho Beach Parking Lot and the area around the youth hostel, where we didn't find any individuals in the area or vehicles that appeared to possibly be a home. On to our way to VSB, Jane spotted someone sleeping on a bench located between 7th and 8th avenues. We approached and introduced ourselves to a young woman, *Ju*, who had several pieces of luggage with her and was wrapped in a comforter. She declined our offers of a packet and other supplies, saying she was "Okay."

Back to VSB, we saw *Jo* at his usual spot. He was happy to receive face masks, a packet and McDonald's and PC cards. We also met *Ch*, who was resting on a park bench at VSB; he accepted a packet and some cards as well.

Behind the Granville and Broadway McDonald's location, we found *Ba*, who accepted a packet, some cards and facemasks and told us *Ir* was up by the Firehall library. We did not locate him at the front, but the library staff at the door said there was someone meeting our description behind the library, which is where we found him dozing on a narrow walkway behind the building. We left him with a package.

Down under the Granville Street Bridge, we met *Da* and *Dr*, who, along with two other friends (who were not present), had set up some tents and a common living area. They were happy to accept packets and some cards. Near the cement 100, there was another tent set up with the entrance covered so we were unsure if anyone was present. After identifying ourselves—just in case someone was home—we left a packet by the tent entrance.

Travelling west along Broadway, we met *St* outside Tim Hortons, as well as *Ro* at McDonald's, who accepted PC and McDonald's cards.

We explained to several people that we are not able to provide sandwiches or hard-boiled eggs at this time, due to COVID protocols. One or two also asked about Kits showers program, but we said the status of community centres re-opening was still pending.

Thank you, all parishioners, for your continued support and donations that are used in this ministry.

