



jacob'sWELL

October 2013



In this issue, we've asked people to take inspiration from the idea of "integrated beings." In the West we have a tendency to compartmentalise and separate life into categories. For example, we have our 'home life' and our 'work life;' we sometimes talk about our 'spiritual life' as though it were something quite separate from the rest of our life. Jesus' Hebraic culture had a much healthier way of treating humans as a whole persons with physical, emotional and spiritual needs, people who reflect the image and creativity of their Maker. Over the years at Jacob's Well, we have been trying to operate out of this worldview.

The Power of Creativity to Transform

By Felicia Wall

Felicia Wall is a Capilano College student and has been part of the Jacob's Well community for just over a year. She is a gifted musician and loves to see people in our community find ways to express themselves.

Art has a profound ability to revitalize communities and bring life to spaces that are otherwise lacking it. Sometimes I find it is easy to focus on the ugliness of the complex difficulties of the DTES. I have to force myself to also focus attention on the humanity, beauty and joy in the neighbourhood that is experienced when people come together to create and make meaningful connections.



Above: Variety Show performances!

One friend in the community told me that the space of Jacob's Well is an 'oasis' to him. He said the most striking aspect of Jacob's Well was the people who seem compassionate and non-judgmental. It is this genuine care and mission of intentional friendship that got me interested in Jacob's Well almost a year ago. I believe in the transforming power of a relationship and think its basis in ongoing effort and support is much more meaningful and lasting than superficial or brief moments of change. One way Jacob's Well empowers change, fosters relationships and brings people together is through art and music. Art sparks interest and fosters unity. *(continued on page 2)*

INSIDE FEATURES

- Page 1 The Power of Creativity to Transform
- Page 3 Hummus Recipe
- Page 3 Community News
- Page 4 Where Change Really Takes Place
- Page 5 Important Things I Have Learned from 10 Years at Jacob's Well
- Page 5 Jacob's Well Wish List
- Page 7 Learning to Integrate All of Life's Experiences

(continued from page 1) Life in the neighbourhood can be chaotic. In the midst of the chaos, Wednesday's art time with Yolanda creates an inclusive space of peace and acceptance. Anyone who wants to participate comes each week and has the opportunity to do canvas painting, poetry, collage, mono printing, collective art pieces and group murals. Participants appreciate the opportunity to give voice to their identity and express their thoughts and feelings in a creative manner. Art time also provides a fulfilling way to connect with community members who otherwise spend their days in the isolation of a single-room-occupancy apartment. The artists on Wednesday just recently completed a community project which has been displayed in a couple coffee shops in the DTES!

Some of my favourite moments at Jacob's Well have occurred at our monthly Friday Variety Show in which members of the community showcase their talents in music, drama, art and poetry. The storefront is warmed by smiles, applause and laughter as each performer is supported and celebrated upon taking the stage. "Music" one of our friends told me, "is good for the heart. It brings people together." The connective power of music is evident during our group sing-along times where there are rhythm instruments shaking, harmonicas blaring, and voices ringing - the life that fills the space brings people pouring in from the street through our open doors. Music holds the space as an oasis of beauty and joy in an oftentimes weary reality.

Psalm 98 ushers us to "make a joyful noise unto the Lord... make a loud noise and rejoice." It doesn't ask for beautiful music. It doesn't say to write a melodic song. It simply calls us to make noise and be happy making noise. This sentiment is the foundation of the Variety Show - it is not the musicality of the acts, but

the meaning and intent behind them that makes them so special. Last month a friend put his name on the list as a performer and when his name was called he walked up and sat on the performance chair. The audience looked at him expectantly as he had no instruments to play, no poetry book to read from. He looked at me holding a guitar and said, "So, what are we going to play?" Caught only slightly off-guard, I asked him what song he wanted to sing and he had no preference. So he told me to play two different chords and began to rap along to the music. He spoke about things in his daily life, in his past and about general people in the room. His spontaneous words were not particularly eloquent or superbly rhythmic, but his joy and spirit were contagious - he was met with thunderous applause when he finished!

Whether it is ad-lib rapping, a capella versions of Patsy Cline songs, audience members jumping up to sing the Beatles or unlikely duet partners, the Variety Show is filled with moments of hope and grace that are often unrelated to the technical ability of the performance. When we as a community share a part of ourselves through art, barriers of misunderstanding and marginalization are slowly broken down. I truly believe that this sharing, understanding, expression and self-fulfillment would be much more difficult without the outlet of music and the safe space Jacob's Well creates.

The work we do at Wednesday Art time and the Friday Variety Show may seem small, but it holds profound meaning. I can see transformations in the way people carry themselves and in the way they relate to one another. I see an almost tangible bond being built as the power of music connects us. I see value and worth blossoming in people as they plant beautiful seeds within themselves through their artwork and music. These artistic outlets restore our self-confidence and our life worth increases exponentially. And when we feel we have worth, this shines through in our day-to-day lives, resulting in the possibility for positive transformations in our lives and in the lives of others.



Pencil drawing - a gift to Jacob's Well from our artistic friend Harry.

Five-Minute Hummus Recipe *Submitted by Beth Malena*

I became a vegetarian a year and a half ago, and I feel a little sheepish admitting that until now, I've been too lazy to make my own hummus. But on a whim, I tried making it the other day, and now realize how easy it is. I think this hummus-making will be a regular occurrence at my house. In case you're lazy like me, let me tell you it only took five minutes, and it's worth it. Here's the recipe that my friend Jill gave me.

Ingredients:

- A 19-oz can of chickpeas (aka garbanzo beans)
- 2 chopped cloves of garlic
- 2-3 T lemon juice (about one medium squeezed lemon)
- 2 T tahini (buy a big jar at Superstore and it will last you a year!)
- 2 T olive oil
- salt and pepper to taste

Directions:

Get out your blender. Spoon the chickpeas into the blender, and try to keep most of the liquid in the can. Put everything else in the blender. Blend, and add the liquid from the chickpeas to the mix as needed to achieve the consistency you want. It should be nice and creamy, but some like it thicker than others.

You can vary the amounts of garlic and lemon juice as you experiment with this recipe. You can also blend in other ingredients to flavour it - roasted red peppers worked well. The next challenge for this lazy vegetarian: soaking and cooking my own chickpeas instead of using canned ones, for an even cheaper and healthier hummus!

Community News

Welcome to: *Ricki, Mallory, Megan, Dave, Jacqueline, Madie, Michael and Kirsten* who have joined our community since our last newsletter, as well as two new babies in our community: *Jacob Stephens-Rennie and Leo McTaggart.*

A goodbye and farewell to: *Joanna, Joel, Rachel, Patricia and Marion.* We want to thank everyone who has shared in the life of this community.

A sad goodbye to our good friend Wendy Collie who passed away this summer. She was an enthusiastic knitter and made many baby blankets over the years for new mums, and she loved talking about her grandchildren. We will miss our regular visits with Wendy.

Congratulations to Alberto Jaramillo who married Laura Smit this summer!



Berto & Laura



These tomatoes grew in the front window of the storefront at Jacob's Well! Now that's news!



Leo Martin McTaggart

Where Change Really Takes Place

By Ian Oakes

Ian has been part of the Jacob's Well community for several years. He has a wonderfully bizarre sense of humour and a great hearty laugh. He is thoughtful and passionate about life and justice.

The sum of all my parts is probably the fact that when I look in the mirror I am pleased with the person looking back at me. I am most definitely a dirty sinner, but I can honestly say it seems well with my soul, and that I have done the best I could with who I am and what I have had. Yet even knowing this, I struggle to have peace. "Peace comes from within" – why do we hang on to these kinds of phrases? We think we can change the world, as if we have the capacity to change the rise and fall of the tide! I know that sounds cynical of me, but I'll do my best to try and explain what I have been learning about change on the inside.

There are times in a person's life when our main concern is another person. It could be a brother, a daughter, a sister, a son or a friend. We see this person making foolish choices, bad decisions and we become frantic because we want to help alleviate or change the situation. And often what happens is that we can end up getting involved whether the person wants it or not. In fact we can get so involved, that we can begin taking on some of the angst of the person we are trying to help and then find ourselves feeling scared, tired, vulnerable and lost, often carrying these emotions with us wherever we go. What if the friend or family member, despite all the help that we have offered or given, keeps making foolish choices? How do we feel then? Betrayed, ineffective, unappreciated? It's enough to make a person angry. But once we start to let feelings and circumstances overwhelm us (and possibly rule us) we become less effective at running our own lives. Have you ever found that if you are more concerned with the welfare of someone else, you end up feeling like you're trying to manage two lives and you can't function therefore at 100%? And yet, if we look at it another way, maybe two people who are only functioning at 50% could end up supporting each other at the 100% level :).



The community gathers for a group photo after another fun Friday coffee time.

I want to reflect on change again. We can impact and change the world but it will come more easily and with less sacrifice and potential damage if we stay true to ourselves and if we find our passions, pleasures and seek to bring happiness, peace and an understanding of others' pain and worry. So be patient and slow to anger, understanding that God in His infinite wisdom, mercy and grace has blessed you, whether it is a little or a lot, and that you can pass on and share that grace with others through your hands and the way you serve. Perhaps it only enriches a moment in the day for a stranger or a friend who really needs it, but it is in this simple act of kindness and generosity (although sometimes challenging and complex), that change really takes place. I worry very little about my daily needs and wants - perhaps for reasons I cannot fully understand - but mainly because I always try to remember that whether we are good, bad, black, white, short, tall, young or old, rich or poor, male or female, we are all part of this spinning crazy unpredictable world together. And I therefore try to help people regardless of my opinion and criticisms of them. I have tried to live this way for quite a while now and God has blessed me in the most unexpected ways - perhaps some Christians might scoff that it can't possibly have been God but I know myself that it was.

In conclusion, integrating effective change comes when we don't judge by appearance and when we learn the value of forgiveness and the importance of following our faith. We must be less concerned with what others think about us because it is God we must impress and implore. So I urge everyone not to abandon the things you enjoy or cherish, but to learn to happily share and give them away to those in greater need, because the more you empty a cup, the more opportunity God has for filling it to overflowing.

Important things I have learned in 10 years at Jacob's Well

by Jane Halton

Jane Halton has been part of Jacob's Well for 10 years as both a volunteer and staff member. We are so thankful to Jane for her years of faithful service and her deep love and investment in the Jacob's Well community. This year she embarked on a new chapter in her life and became certified as a Life Coach. Her vision is to help people integrate their faith more thoroughly into their life as they wrestle with tough issues, deal with religious baggage or make big decisions. She describes it as "pastoral care meets your to-do list." If you are interested in knowing more please visit her at: www.janehalton.com



Jane Halton

At Jacob's Well, I learned:

- How to have a conversation with someone who I assumed had nothing in common with me.
- That I am much more scared of roaches than mice.
- Not be afraid of people who are talking to themselves.
- That the staff laugh easily and I love to bring a little humour to the office.
- To be more generous with my time and money.
- How to explain God's heart for the marginalized and how to have my heart changed in the process.
- To own the fact that I can be both pastoral and administrative.
- There is always a reason someone ends up in addiction and that it involves something I have most likely never gone through.
- That the most efficient way is not always the best way (note: this is a very big learning curve, I have not arrived).
- I also made some of the best friends of my life.

Thanks you guys!

Jacob's Well Wish List:

(A number of people have asked us what would help our community life as we begin thinking about Christmas...)

For the social butterflies...

- \$10 buys a round trip pair of bus tickets to go visit a friend at St. Paul's hospital.
- \$20 buys gas for a trip outside the city to see a friend who has intentionally left the DTES.

For the foodies...

- \$25 allows us to serve homemade treats, fruit & fresh coffee at our weekly Coffee Time
- \$50 supplements a Community Kitchen dinner for 45 people (all planned and cooked by our community and neighbours).
- \$500 replaces our ailing refrigerator so we can keep our milk and leftovers cold.

For the techies & geeks...

- \$100 pays for for our website hosting for the year.
- \$500 would buy our CFO Beth a new computer (ahem, Windows 95 is not cutting it).
- \$1000 covers our phone and internet costs for the year.

For those with more to give...

- \$1400 - \$1800 pays a staff member for one month, or allows us to hire much-needed additional staff.
- \$2000 covers one month's rent at the storefront.
- \$600 in twelve \$50 cheques would help us create a more sustainable income base.

Community Arts Project



Prior to the summer, Jacob's Well was given a small neighbourhood grant. Yolanda, who headed up our Wednesday Art times, conceived and led us in a group mural on "community" that was then displayed at Waves coffee shop, and later at the Radio Station Cafe, both in the neighbourhood.

Thanks to all who worked on this project and brought Yolanda's vision to life!



Annual Gleaners Trip – Summer 2013



Worship evening in the Gleaners orchard.

Chopping vegetables for dehydrated soup mix that is then shipped all over the world.



Dinner around the picnic tables.

Learning to Integrate All of Life's Experiences *by Joanna Tan*

Joanna has been at Jacob's Well for a year and wishes she had found us sooner!! She has been doing an M.A. in Human Development, Learning and Culture at UBC for the past two years. She is returning this month to work at the Ministry of Education in Singapore where she previously worked in a department that supports schools in the social and emotional development of students. She has been a wonderful addition to various teams here and will we miss her lively spirit.

It's been a year at Jacob's Well and just about a month before I return to Singapore in October – an opportune moment to reflect on how the Lord has woven themes from my time at the Well into the larger context of my life journey. I first joined the community with a sense that the Lord was going to teach me reciprocity in friendships with people who had experienced more brokenness in their lives than mine and to celebrate the image of Christ in each person. That, He has ... and more ... purposing my time here for His continued work of healing and redemption in my life.

From the first day I joined Community Kitchen (CK) on Tuesdays, I felt welcomed: from friendly teasing about the "women's role being in the kitchen" as I began clumsily chopping onions, to being roped in for a game of Big 2, to gradually putting names to familiar faces (after repeated rounds of forgetting). Most interactions tended to revolve around the food (which is always so appetizing), weather, or neighbourhood happenings. Every now and then, I was privileged to hear personal stories of resilience that characterized the journeys of many of our friends and team members, with hints of the loneliness and pain they have carried and are still carrying. I shared a little of my own story too, tentatively.

Loneliness has always struck a familiar chord with me. I often feel the barriers that we erect to protect our identities and vulnerable hearts, mine included. For me, loneliness is a sense of not being seen, known or understood for who I really am, sometimes ironically heightened in social situations (rather than times of solitude) where we may be among people with whom we do not connect at a deeper level. As I am reminded that it is the Lord who sees perfectly, as He did for Hagar, I longed to be able to see my friends the way Christ sees them. Yet the Lord had a special gift for me. In one particular interaction, a friend whom I met for the first time spoke specific words of knowledge about things that the Lord had already been speaking to me. This reinforced my experience of being seen, known and loved by God and it started for me a process of acknowledging with greater honesty my own desperate need to constantly turn to receive from the Lord whenever the thorn of loneliness presented itself. What began with a vulnerable exchange developed into a mutually encouraging friendship. Indeed, one cannot discern where giving ends and receiving begins.

The more I endeavoured to connect with friends, the more I felt the limitations of my desire and ability to do so. Sometimes, I had the impulse to touch base with a number of regular participants in Community Kitchen one evening, inadvertently turning myself into a social butterfly which I believe made my friends feel objectified, as if they were items on a checklist to be ticked off. Over time, the Lord has been teaching me not to strive at "doing" relationships, as if my talking or listening provided the evidence by which I would measure "success". He is continually redeeming my strife for approval and perfectionist tendencies to turn relationships into tasks and responsibilities. It continues to be a journey toward freedom, learning to be present and attentive to both the person as well as the Spirit's leading in the interaction. I have also learned the irony of how the desire to be equally close to all friends results in inauthenticity and disrespect toward the uniqueness of each individual. As I went through an experience of compiling an invitation list of selected friends and members to my birthday celebration, my fear of being exclusive was transformed into an acknowledgement that relationships are justifiably unequal, just as Jesus had varying levels of intimacy with his friends.

Amidst these experiences, I have developed an affection for the idiosyncrasies of my friends, and begun to look for beauty in the overlooked, broken or forgotten (at Jacob's Well and beyond). It is sometimes difficult to be conscious of the face of Christ in every person I meet. I am challenged to recognize the tension of the already-and-not-yet kingdom of God precisely by beholding Christ as our brokenness. The Lord has been teaching me to be patient for things that have no quick or efficient resolution, and to recognize that I stand in solidarity with our friends in terms of vulnerability to addictions, fears and anxieties. Mine may be more hidden, but are nonetheless in deep need of redemption. Spending time with disenfranchised people at Jacob's Well has not only led me to more deeply embrace and surrender my own poverty, but also identify with kingdom values. As I return to Singapore, I pray that my time at the Well does not become relegated to and compartmentalized as a past memory of "ministry experience", but that life at the Well continues to be the mystery of Christ's life hidden but very much continually at work in us, whether we be physically gathered or spread across the earth. Peace and blessings, my friends. You are a great treasure to me.

About Jacob's Well

Jacob's Well is a faith community located in the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver, Canada. This neighbourhood has complex difficulties, some of which are extreme poverty (the poorest postal code in Canada), drug addiction (more than five thousand needle users), widespread disease (highest HIV & AIDS infection rate in the western world), and prevalent mental illness (estimated more than 50% of area residents). It's also a neighbourhood full of beautiful, caring people who have much to give.

We have a relational approach to sharing life with residents of our neighbourhood. We seek meaningful friendships where we both give and receive from one another. This guiding principle we have inherited from Pauline Fell, who founded our community in 2001. She is a remarkable ninety-seven year-old woman who has spent over thirty years building friendships with countless people in this neighbourhood.

We spend our days visiting people, gathering around the table, worshipping, praying and serving. If you would like to know more about our community, we encourage you to visit our website or Facebook page, or give us a call and arrange a visit in person.

Life in the Margins Workshop

This is a weekend workshop where we explore God's heart for people on the margins of society.

We will examine stories from the Bible and talk about the theological mandate to seek relationship with marginalized people, who bear God's image. While we will speak out of our experience from life in the Downtown Eastside, we will discuss how these principles apply to all the places where we live and work.

Next Workshop:

Friday, January 31st 2014 (6:30 – 9:30 pm)

Saturday, February 1st 2014 (10 am – 4 pm)

Cost: \$20 in advance or \$25 at the door.

All participants must pre-register by emailing workshop@jacobswell.ca.

Please join us!

Our Information

Visit our website:

www.jacobswell.ca

Email: info@jacobswell.ca

Phone: 604.681.4898

Address:

239 Main St.

Vancouver, BC

V6A 2S7

Giving:

Visit our website for more information about donating. We are a registered non-profit charity.



jacob'sWELL

239 Main Street, Vancouver, BC V6A 2S7