



STAFF REPORTS

Larissa Amour - Youth

2019 was a year of growth, consistency, blossoming relationships and friendships in our youth group.

This past year we saw our Commons Youth numbers grow to include a consistent group of students attending on a regular basis. We have been gathering regularly for 3 to 4 Sundays out of the month for the last 2.5 years. Along with our regular gatherings, we've seen an increase in students from our youth group branching out in various volunteer positions with the children's ministry.

A typical youth event will take place Sunday afternoons following the 12pm service. We do anything from tackling a lesson or story from scripture over lunch, community based events that focus on being good stewards and disciples in our neighborhood, to fun off-campus event such as escape rooms or laser tag.

This past year we focused on how we are called to be caring and involved members in our various neighborhoods – how does scripture instruct us to live meaningful and holistic lives outside of the church. Friendships and building up relationships between students and our youth leaders has been, and continues to be top priority, with the hope that students will find intentional and sincere community within the larger Commons community.

2020 is shaping up to be another fantastic year with this lovely group of students, and were excitedly looking forward to all the grade 6 students set to join us in the fall.

Kevin Borst - Creative Arts

2019 was such an incredible year for our community as well as our Worship & Creative Arts department!

In early 2019 our Music Team made a very big change by removing our mid-week rehearsals, and moving to a new pattern of preparing as a team on Sunday mornings only. This was an intentional change to create space for our Creative Team (Music, Production, Set Design, Photography, Film) to have opportunities for development and other creative community gatherings. In 2019 we hosted events for select teams within our creative community and we are excited about 2020 and beyond as we have lots more planned for our team! Our goal of developing our skills and relationships as a team is well underway and we are very excited!

We are so blessed to have over 80 people in our Creative Team, this is those who are involved with Music, Production, Set Design, Photography, Film! I am so thankful for each person on our Creative Team who pour so much into our Church.

I am thankful how I see God continuing to shape our worship as a community. Each Sunday the space in Inglewood and Kensington is filled with praise. Our people are singing at the top of their lungs, praying together, and sharing in the Eucharist. There is a growing maturity in our worship together.

Colette Dejordy - Local and Global Development

With gratitude for your steadfast generosity in these uncertain times, we have been able to continue to consistently support our Local and Global partners when they have needed us the most.

This includes an increase in the number of children we are supporting in Kalende, Zambia, as we work towards our goal of 125 children cared for a month.

Following major successes in the projects that we were supporting with IJM in Thailand, which have now become a model for other projects in the region, we have moved our support to Guatemala where funding is needed to maintain the strength of their programming as US funding backs away.

This year, we increased the number of our local partners as well, donating to Horizon Housing, the Jack Long Foundation and the Alexandra Centre Society.

Our refugee resettlement work continues with our volunteers focussed on practical supports like tutoring and necessary advocacy. Current refugee applications in process are for family reunification.

Dedicated volunteer teams and leaders continue to serve the families at Inn from the Cold, as well as the Mustard Seed clients and the guests joining Pneuma Ministries in their activities.

Jeanne New - Kids

Commons Kids is a part of our community that is packed full with change and growth! As we look back at this last year we are very aware that our area is always changing as babies grow and make the move into our Toddler room and older kids are on the verge of becoming part of our youth and even our staff changes with maternity leaves and having a baby to returning as staff again. These changes have included these very valuable people, Ryan on maternity leave, Val stepping down, Myra being hired, Brittany returning from maternity leave, Keeley on maternity leave and Ashley stepping in at Inglewood. Our Kid's program at Commons was only possible because of these people and I am so grateful for what each of them has given to our kids at both parishes!

At both of our parishes our Kid's numbers have remained steady and continued to grow, as families find a place where their children are welcomed and accepted and invited to learn of God's love for them.

Looking ahead I know that 2020 will be a year of overflowing with great things for our Kid's program at Commons. I am deeply thankful to be part of this wonderful part of our community!!

Yelena Pakhomova - Groups

Yelena Pakhomova - Community

In 2019, I saw our community come together in beautiful ways.

We learned together, we ate and danced together, we served together, and we ministered to each other.

Just to give you a snapshot:

- We hosted 22 dinners (7 in people's homes, 5 women's brunches and 10 men's pub nights)
- 155 volunteers made our Inglewood and Kensington Stampede Breakfasts amazing, welcoming and serving breakfast to over 2,400 people
- In February, we hosted a two-day workshop on how to journey with victims of domestic violence and sexual abuse

- In March and April, we had a series of Pop-up Theology events at the new public library and our Kensington parish: “Faith and Work” and “Theology of Food”
- In May, we had an indigenous elder lead us in the Kairos Blanket Exercise as part of our reconciliation journey
- In the fall, we hosted our first dance class, as well as the “Aging Well” art workshop
- Our Serve Nights at the Mustard Seed Foothills Shelter had been getting an incredible response from the community, we had no lack of volunteers this past year
- We created a Special Events Team - a task force to help with major events throughout the year

This fall we added 6 new regular groups and tried out an online connection space via Slack. One of the gifts of my role is that I get to work with 59 group leaders who care for and intentionally invest in the wellbeing of about 290 people. These leaders open their homes and lives and make it possible for us to say that we have 31 Commons Groups in this community. To provide ongoing support to our leaders, I’ve been sending out monthly updates highlighting resources and training and community building opportunities. In winter and fall, we hosted a workshop on group dynamics and a conversation on the role and responsibilities of a leader. We also created a quick guide for starting a group for new leaders.

There’s no space to thank everyone with whom I got to partner in all our community-building efforts this past year. Still, I want everyone who is shaping our community to be a place of Christ-like welcome to know that it is my joy and privilege to come alongside you and support you in what you so generously bring here. I am profoundly grateful for you and love partnering with you!

Bobbi Salkeld - Kensington

I want to highlight two major accomplishments in 2019.

The first is the creation and implementation of our First Steps series in both of our parishes and the second is the making of a new podcast at Commons.

With First Steps, we expanded our Second Sunday and membership classes initiative to create better inroads for people in the community. The four-part conversations follow a format of videos mixed with opportunities for interaction and connection. Since September, we’ve had 287 classes completed and an average of 13 people attend each week. We are noticing an uptake from First Steps into Groups, Dinners, and Teams.

In 2020 we will have a similar First-Steps format for our Adult Baptism and Affirmation of Baptism class.

Between Sundays is a new podcast initiative that by the time of this writing, had 1610 downloads in its first season. The podcasts are long-form interviews with myself as the host. The theme for the podcast conversations is “finding the sacred in the everyday.” Our first season was about the creative urge. Between Sundays helps Commons have more diverse voices in more diverse places. It’s been a rewarding creative endeavour and I’m so thankful to Jon Petkau for volunteering his time to make this podcast dream come true.

You can look for season two of Between Sundays in the spring of 2020. We’re calling it “Ugly Feelings” and it will be about adding emotional resiliency to our intellectual honesty.

I’m so grateful to our staff, board, and congregation for the ways they continue to encourage and affirm my leadership and contribution at Commons.

Scott Wall - Inglewood

I’ll start by offering a big thank you to the entire Commons staff team, our board, and the support of our members and volunteers who make this work we do so fun and rewarding!

It was a great second year in Inglewood, and here are a few highlights.

We celebrated the work done by Keeley Craig as our initial Commons Kids coordinator before she stepped down to go on maternity leave, and in August welcomed Ashley Hill into this vital and important role. Our community continues to be a lively space filled with kids and young families, and we’re committed to improving how we create meaningful moments for our youngest community members.

Feeling more settled in the neighbourhood meant that in July we hosted our first Stampede Breakfast (serving pancakes to more than 500 guests — which means we expand this year!), and in December we welcomed a full house to our first Christmas Eve service. Both of these efforts were, of course, only possible because the hard work of our volunteers!

And finally, this year saw our Inglewood-Ramsay Collaborative really gain traction — and I want to recognize the work done by Colette Dejordy and Regina Chan to make this project a reality. At a time when the non-profit sector in Calgary is seeing significant cuts and restructuring, Commons’ efforts to provide support and generate collaboration with groups doing valuable

advocacy are so significant. We're excited to see where these connections lead us as we try to engage local challenges in meaningful ways.

Looking ahead - on a personal note - I'm very excited to be leading our Commons team to Kalende, Zambia, this summer. Stay tuned for more info about our team preparations, fundraising events, and opportunities to hear more about this partnership in Africa!