

## MESSAGE from the CHAIR

As the new Chair of BSM, I had to ask myself what did I know of poverty? As a kid in the depression, I remember men who came to the door asking for a meal in exchange for any work. I lived in mill towns, and I saw poverty all around. On my paper route I remember the family that sat down to a supper of mashed potatoes. I even learned to jump freight trains.

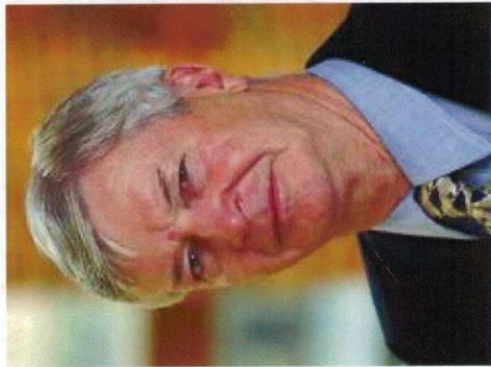
I worked hard to become successful in life, but looking back I can also see that I had more opportunities and advantages than some. As a Doctor, my experience of poverty in Halifax was house calls, including poor neighborhoods around Brunswick St. and Africville. I've always known about the Mission because my family knew those who 'ran' it for years, so when I was asked to become involved, I thought maybe I could make a difference in what I was seeing.

But things have changed. The gap between the "haves and have-nots" has grown, making it harder than ever for someone to improve their economic situation. I wish I knew the answer to solving poverty.

But I can at least follow my mother's example; when someone knocks on the door needing a meal, I can help. That's what the Mission is about. Its programs provide a helping hand and even just a handout. We don't ask if a person is "deserving" because we believe everyone deserves to eat, be clothed and have shelter. But in helping with these basic needs we can sometimes go a little further; help someone manage their lives a bit better, connect to health care, move to a safer environment, or access a retraining program. We can count how many breakfasts we serve, but the real changes occur in individual stories and not in statistics.

Chair, *Doug Brown*

## STEWART MCINNES



### IN MEMORY

July 24 1937 - Oct 3, 2015

Stewart McInnes was well-known as a partner of McInnes Cooper, as a former P.C. Member of Parliament for Halifax, and a generous philanthropist.

Stewart believed in the Mission. In 2007 when the Mission had fallen on very hard times, he helped create our most successful fundraising event - the annual Mission Breakfast. Over the next few years he didn't just build the event, he also recruited the support of the larger business community in Halifax and helped put the Mission on a solid foundation.

Stewart was always the optimist, and always a pleasure to be around. To the Brunswick Street Mission, he was a true friend and will be missed. Ultimately though, Stewart's gift was not to the Mission, it was to those who turn to the Mission for help.

He is missed



# BRUNSWICK STREET MISSION

## NEWSLETTER FALL 2015

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*Barb, Doug J., Paul, Susan, Doug B.*

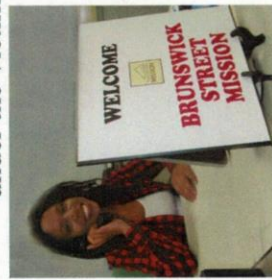
## Receptionist or Detective?

The Mission asks a lot from our office receptionists. It takes weeks of training, but on-the-job experience is the real teacher. They will spend most of their time helping people solve problems, which often means a fair bit of detective work.

For example, if a person needs to file a tax return, but has no documents, the volunteer will help solve this. Often there is no set answer to the concerns we see; volunteers must be persistent, patient and creative. In another example, a person asked for a bus ticket to attend a court date. The volunteer asked questions and made phone calls, and discovered the person was eligible for significantly more support under the Victims Services Program.

The volunteer then contacted Victims Services and helped remove barriers that prevented the person from accessing the service.

All in a days work for our Detectives.



*Victoria*

*You don't realize how important dishwashers are until you do the job.*

*Kelsey Grammer*

We serve breakfast 6 days/week. We also host a few barbeques, and events like Christmas Eve Dinner and Volunteer appreciation. In a typical year, we will wash an estimated 10,000 plates, forks and cups. Coffee mugs add probably twice that number!

Where would we be without our dishwashing volunteers?

## Congratulations!

As a single parent, Vanessa found the Trustee program at the Mission to be helpful in insuring the rent and power were always paid, and she's occasionally had to use the foodbank.



*Vanessa*

But Vanessa was enthusiastic about re-entering the workforce as her kids grew older, so enrolled in the Business Administration - Software and Information Mgt. program at NSCC, and came to us when she needed a workplace practicum. She graduated June 2015, and we were so proud!

We thought we'd lose Vanessa following her graduation but it takes time to find a good job. Meanwhile she chose to remain as a volunteer and even helped find a grant to support a project. She is now finishing development of a donor database which we hope will help us keep up with receipts and letters for our supporters.

Can't wait to see what she does next.

## BACK TO SCHOOL!

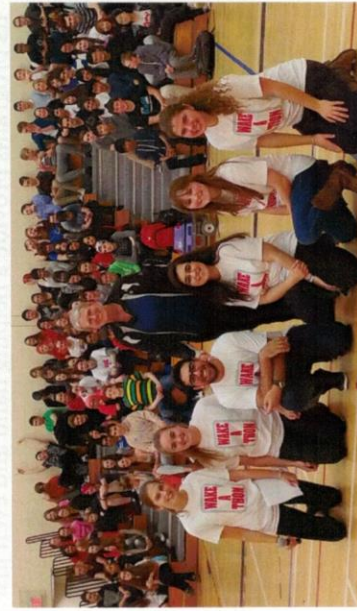
HALIFAX WEST HIGH SCHOOL

Every year, the Halifax West High School Community Involvement Committee organizes several initiatives in support of Brunswick Street Mission.

The first event in October is an amazing Wake-A-Thon. More than 100 students collect pledges to stay up all night, Good thing the school is not too close to the neighbors as loud music is a great way to stay awake!

In November and again in Spring, the students run a school-wide clothing drive. If not for this, the Mission would be hard-pressed to provide youth-appropriate clothing to those in need.

On top of all that, every time the Mission needs a lot of willing hands, such as switching the clothing centre from summer to winter, we just make a call to our friends at HWHS.



*Wake-A-Thon*