

Presbyterians Sharing . . . March 2010 Update

Presbyterians Sharing is the national fund supporting the mission and ministry of The Presbyterian Church in Canada.



Mary Gorombey (right) and her colleague in the refugee ministry worship together at St. Columba's Scottish Mission.

Looking forward to Sunday

Your gifts to *Presbyterians Sharing* enable Mary Gorombey to minister to refugees in Hungary. The daughter of refugees who came to Canada from Hungary, Mary knows what it is like to adjust to life in a new home. She is sharing her gifts with our church partner, the Hungarian Reformed Church, as they reach out to refugees building new lives in Hungary.

I look forward to Sundays. It's my favorite day of the week. I know it means that the next day, Monday, is the start of a new work week with new challenges and concerns, but that part doesn't bother me. I like what I do and feel blessed that I have a job I love to do, so I look forward to Mondays. But I'd like to write to you about Sunday.

One of the challenges of being a missionary overseas can be finding a spiritual home away from home; a place where you can hear and learn from God's word, understand what is said and be nourished for the following week. It's also a place for community; a place where you can meet fellow Christians and worship together and encourage one another. Language barriers, cultural differences and differences in tradition and liturgy can make finding a new church home difficult for missionaries. While churches are abundant in the big metropolis of Budapest, and language is not a prob-

lem for me (being able to worship equally well in English and Hungarian) it still took me a while to find my spiritual home here. I alternate between a Hungarian congregation and an English speaking congregation, but it is the English speaking congregation at St. Columba's Scottish Mission that I call home on Sundays.

Most people may look forward to Sundays because it can be the one day where they don't have to work. But on Sundays at the St. Columba's Scottish Mission I meet with the colleagues and refugees I work with throughout the week. While I am here I may discuss matters of the children in our school integration program with their parents or hear about a refugee brother's search for work, a rejected asylum claim, a search for housing, landlord matters, legal matters, discouragement at the continued separation of family members and joy at reunions - all related to my work.

Presbyterians Sharing

Goal for 2010: \$ 8,675,000

Received by Feb. 28, 2010: \$375,154

Received by Feb. 28, 2009: \$419,171

Thank you for your faithful support of *Presbyterians Sharing*. Let us continue to work and pray together as we encourage congregations to reach and surpass their commitments in 2010.

But we also worship together. I get to see these brothers and sisters participating in worship, collecting the offering, singing, praying and hearing the word together. After worship, as we break bread together, I am given a little image of what it might have been like among Christians in the early church.

Each week a different family or group of friends offers to cook a Sunday lunch. Within minutes of the after-church coffee and tea, tables are arranged, chairs placed and plates, cutlery and cups set at each seat. People take their places and grace is said. Here, Hungarians and other expats have a chance to cook with refugees and refugees have a chance to give; to be proud of their traditions, their heritage and their cuisine. There is no separation in the kitchen or at the table, not by outward appearance, by language spoken or by spiritual maturity. Everyone is made to feel welcome. We are all one.

In a busy week I often find myself rushing through a city, pushing through crowds, hurrying to catch buses while answering numerous telephone calls, always watching that my personal belongings are safe. I deal with whiny teenagers who think they know everything. I am stood up by students who forgot to tell me that they decided not to come to tutoring. I become frustrated at reviewing the same material for the nth time.

This time on Sunday offers me a time of community, sharing with a spiritual family, meeting with those same teenagers in a setting filled with God's grace and mercy, being with those who know me, care for me, who I can know and care for. Although it may seem to some a continuation of work, it really is a great way to spend a Sunday, my day of rest.



Some of Mary's church family in Hungary.



Action Réfugiés Montréal connected Bridget and her daughter Jesse with Maro, who helped them adjust to life in Canada.

Feeling welcome in a strange land

Action Réfugiés Montréal met Bridget when she was being held in Immigration detention, which looks and feels like prison. Like most refugees she had fled her home in west Africa without any documents, which was the reason for her detention. Pregnant and alone she felt like she was treated like a criminal although she knew she had done nothing wrong.

Once released from detention, Action Réfugiés Montréal matched Bridget with a volunteer named Maro who offered friendship and support. Maro's friendship provided stability for Bridget for almost two years as Bridget found her place in her new city. Action Réfugiés Montréal also helped Bridget complete the complicated forms which allowed her husband to join her in Canada.

Presbyterians Sharing provides an annual grant to support the work of Action Réfugiés Montréal. Part of this work includes helping refugee claimants through their claim process. ARM trains volunteers who support claimants in detention and help them in the legal process leading to their release. They connect claimants with Canadians, who help them adjust to life in Canada. With your support ARM helps refugees feel welcome in a strange land.



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