

## SERVICE CHANGES OUR VIEWPOINT

Reflections from the Jubilee Outreach Community  
Service Day

The other day I took part in a day of community service through the church my family attends. After the day of work several of us shared dinner (pot-luck) and exchanged stories about what we had done, seen and observed. It was an eye opening day for me, even though I run a regular program at The Compass, a food bank and community centre in my neighborhood. Here are some things that I learned, which apply to my home life as much as my business life:

1. *Experience is key.* Observing for yourself makes a much bigger impact than hearing a story. Seeing for yourself that the shelves at the local food bank are bare is a better call to action than hearing someone tell you that food is needed.

2. *I often underestimate the size of the job.* Sizing up the job or requested action I frequently guesstimate how long it will take, how much I will charge and what other resources are needed. I have learned over time, and again while helping to clean my church building, that it is easy to underestimate how long a task will take and how much is required to complete the task. I learned that I need to step back and look at the big picture before identifying all the tasks/ items needed to complete a job. I also learned that in any job the unexpected happens and that being flexible and accommodating works better than becoming uptight and frustrated.

3. *We need to recognize and appreciate the work that is done.* We have many unsung heroes in our workplace and in our homes. They often quietly do the “unnoticed” jobs (tidy up the staff room, stay late to help with a project, come in early to finish a report, do a favour). Walking a mile, or in this case, cleaning for a few hours, in someone’s place helps you to realize the size of the job and



appreciate that many hands do make the work lighter. I learned to be more aware of those quietly completed tasks and to express my gratitude and thanks more often.

4. *The supporting player plays as important a role as the star player.* Stars tend to shine and everyone sees them. However I was reminded that behind every star, every successful person or company is a great support team that helps them achieve success. Whether you are building a house or feeding the crew, teamwork is crucial. I need to remember that every member of the team plays an important role and contributes to the success of the project and organization.

5. *When no one takes responsibility or takes charge the work is left undone.* I discovered that weeds take over when no one is tending the garden. At our church the gardens are no one person’s particular responsibility, rather they are the community’s. However, with no one responsible for their upkeep they are often forgotten until the weeds are bigger and more numerous than the flowers. This means that a small overseeing job requiring a few people and a few hours becomes a large job requiring many hours and many people. I was reminded to tend my garden, cull my email inbox, tidy my desk, work on those less important jobs a bit at a time rather than waiting until I am overwhelmed by number and need.

One more thing we learned during our service day. *Everyone, regardless of age, had a role to play and a job they could do.* From the youngest child to the most mature church member everyone contributed in a meaningful way. I also think we all left our service having learned something about each other and about how we can serve our community and our church family at St. Bride’s.

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