

Speechcraft at the Mustard Seed

By Kathryn Henry

For years I had “thought” of doing some volunteer work at the Mustard Seed. But like many great intentions unless we act on them get pushed to the side as “life” happens.

My reasoning for wanting to support the Mustard Seed is because of the commendable work they do, and my values are similar to the Mustard Seed. They are a Christian organization and are very financially responsible. Did you know that most of their finances comes from the private sector rather than the government?

In October 2003 I phoned and met with the Creative Director regarding the possibility of having a Speechcraft at the Mustard Seed. There were planning meetings and dates set. Our Speechcraft began in January 2004. Next, I recruited a fabulous team to work with me on this project. They were as excited and ready to begin this project as I was. On the first evening we had 16 people present – two of whom were volunteers for the Mustard Seed and were present to assist us with the set up of the room. The first evening I presented the Table topics Session. The Table topics Session was educational and informative for us the Toastmasters to hear the stories that came from our Table topic Session. If you are even inclined to feel sorry for yourself I highly suggest you come out to the Mustard Seed and Volunteer your time. In life we have many choices and are often very busy making a “living” but perhaps not making a “life”? It’s my belief that each one of us needs to find some area in our life to help those less fortunate. This will fulfill our lives and give more meaning and purpose to our own existence.

All volunteers must go through a police check and Volunteer Orientation. With the great orientation we receive we are more able to go forward confidently armed with the experience and knowledge from others.

For our 1st Speechcraft we went for 10 consistent weeks. At the end we had a final dinner where the participants were able to show what they had learnt. It thrilled me to watch as the participants stretch a little bit more out of their comfort level to practice a new skill.

Change is one constant we have in life. In order to keep growing and moving forward I believe we need to embrace “change” and look at each situation in life as an opportunity for growth and learning, especially for those situations where we might not like the circumstances!!

At the end of our first Speech craft I met with Bill Nixon (Executive Director) – brother to Pat Nixon who was the founder of the Mustard Seed. We prepared to go into another Speechcraft very quickly. Our second Speechcraft started on May 13/04. Since I was busy with other projects, Gordon McCann took over the organization of this session. Our second Speechcraft will wrap up on June 24th, 2004. I’m thrilled that Bow Valley Toastmasters would like to continue this project with the Mustard Seed in the fall.

In Toastmasters we learn Communication and Leadership Skills. I challenge each Toastmaster to start a project in order to pass on the skills you’ve learnt in Toastmasters to those less fortunate.