



**AGAPE  
TABLE**  
MARCH 2014

Spring Radiothon

APRIL 15-17, 2014

CHVN radio (95.1 FM) | [goldenweststreaming.com/chvn\\_stream](http://goldenweststreaming.com/chvn_stream)

Hear about recent activities from our program coordinators, volunteers, supporters, and those we serve everyday.

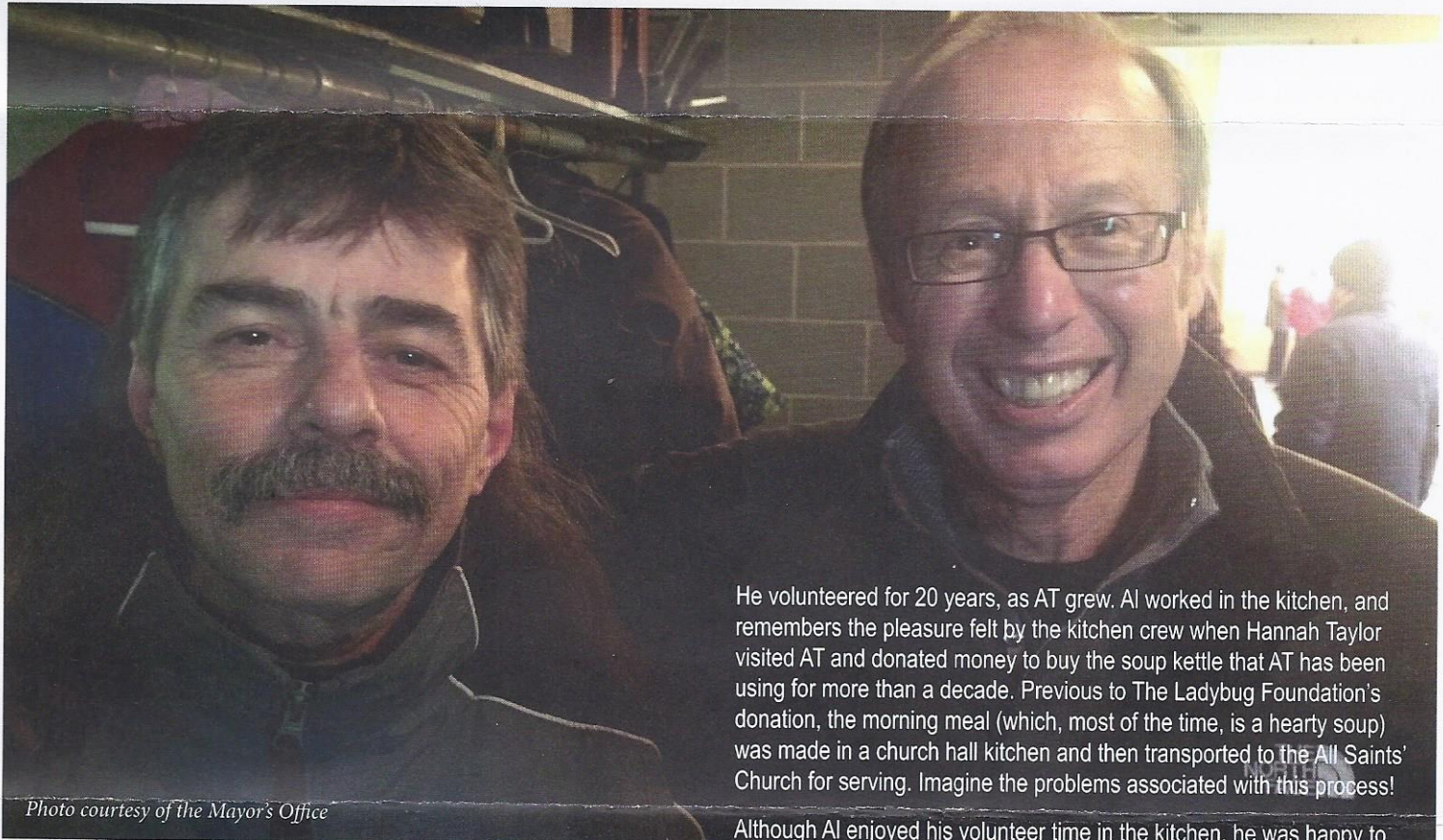


Photo courtesy of the Mayor's Office

He volunteered for 20 years, as AT grew. Al worked in the kitchen, and remembers the pleasure felt by the kitchen crew when Hannah Taylor visited AT and donated money to buy the soup kettle that AT has been using for more than a decade. Previous to The Ladybug Foundation's donation, the morning meal (which, most of the time, is a hearty soup) was made in a church hall kitchen and then transported to the All Saints' Church for serving. Imagine the problems associated with this process!

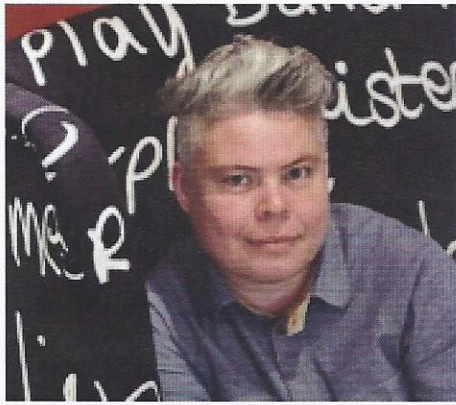
Although Al enjoyed his volunteer time in the kitchen, he was happy to take an opportunity to become more involved with the people who make-up the AT community. In 1993, there was enough money in the budget to hire Al, so he started working directly with those who needed a hot, free meal in the morning. Now, Al is the building caretaker and program assistant overseeing AT's daily operations. He begins each morning early at 6:30am unlocking doors for staff and volunteers, setting-up tables and chairs, helping to prepare food, ensuring coffee is made, and cream and sugar bins are full. By 7:30am, he ensures everyone is "ready to rock" for three hours of food service, which includes feeding about 250 hungry (and currently cold) men and women of all ages. Al welcomes and talks to everyone who comes for breakfast, and knows most visitors by name. Using AT's Code of Conduct, he also keeps the peace during this time, when, on occasions, patience is short and conflicts that began outside of AT's doors seep in. Al maintains the rules and those who use AT's services respect his decisions. Like many of AT's staff and volunteers, Al has Crisis Intervention and St. John's Ambulance First Aid training. If you ever meet Al, ask him about the two lives that he saved with this training!

## My Story: Super Al

Over the last few months, thanks to being named as one of Ace Burpee's 100 Most Fascinating Manitobans, thousands of Winnipeggers have been introduced to one of Agape Table's (AT) long-time community members, Allen Rogowski. AT has known "Super Al" for 33 years. That pre-dates a majority of AT's community members and volunteers, and all of the employees and volunteer board of directors. There are only a handful of people who hold AT's whole history and Al is one of them.

Al was at AT on our first day, back in 1980. He had recently moved to Winnipeg on his own and had no place to live. Al visited on the first day, back when AT was nothing more than a soup kitchen, providing a free morning meal to people in the West Broadway community. Apparently, Al enjoyed his experience and has been coming back ever since, and calls the place his "second home." Al credits the AT community for getting him off the street and into a secure home situation.

## Writer-in-residence inspires creativity



In late 2013, Agape Table received a request from the University of Manitoba's Centre for Creative Writing and Oral Culture. Louise Wallwein, their writer-in-residence for early 2014, was looking for a diverse and dynamic inner-city group of individuals to work with. Louise has stirred the creative juices of similar groups around the world.

During her short visit to Winnipeg, she wanted to quickly connect with a group of creative individuals and we are thankful that she chose AT.

Once a week, Louise and a group of volunteers from the University of Manitoba host a storytelling and writing group at AT. Thanks to Louise, there is no cost to participating in this creative group, and given that AT has been having difficulty recruiting volunteers to facilitate creative programming, we are absolutely thrilled.

Please stay tuned to our website ([www.agapetable.ca](http://www.agapetable.ca)), facebook page, and twitter feeds for further developments with this project. Currently, we are working with our friends at the Downtown BIZ, Portage Place Shopping Centre, Winnipeg Art Gallery, and University of Manitoba to find the best way to feature creative work by those in our AT community. Below is an excerpt of a longer story, written by one of AT's writing group participants, Brian Smith.

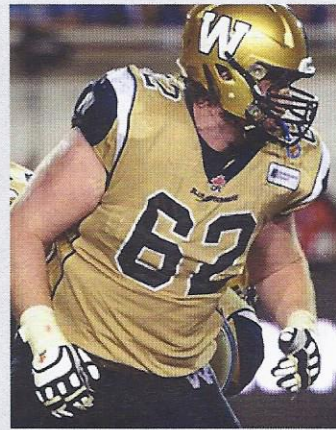
*"The boy was crippled. But not by any of his own physical, mental, or otherwise, impairments. No. The boy was disabled, by the act of shunning. Not the straight out, in the darkest sense of plain, old, meanness. But rather, he was "swept-under-the-rug," ignored by the lack of caring by others. The lack of humanity. The lack of "society." And this is the very worst kind of disablement. I know this; both from the teachings of my spirituality, and, by my own experiences."*

## Update on Agape Table for Kids (ATFK)



ATFK takes every opportunity to promote early literacy among children. By practicing our writing skills and using images of toys from flyers, children created personalized letters to Santa for the 2013 holiday season. Given that ATFK is all about nutrition education, families were encouraged to include in their letters, a suggestion about

healthy snack alternatives (to cookies) to leave Santa on Christmas night. Parents suggested strawberries, tuna sandwiches, and cheese for Santa. Thanks to the great volunteers at Canada Post, Santa was able to respond to each ATFK child. Thank you to the Teamsters, who gave \$500 to purchase Christmas gifts for each registered child and their siblings. Santa also visited ATFK on December 18; more than 50 children, parents, and other caregivers were there to greet him. One family invited 18 additional relatives to come on that special day. Our youngest member of ATFK (barely two-months-old) enjoyed meeting Santa for the first time.



## A special visit from Bomber Steve Morley

In December, Winnipeg Blue Bomber Steve Morley sat down for our community breakfast. Below are his first impressions of our community.

*Being a Blue Bomber offensive lineman for the past five years has given me special opportunities on and off the field, one of which happened December 17, 2013. This was when I arrived at 175 Colony Street and saw the large number of guests requiring meals from Agape Table. The kitchen facility was small and had mismatched and small appliances, but the volunteers happily did all they could with what they had.*

*After meeting the volunteers, seeing the facility, and talking to some of the people who use the program, I knew Agape Table would be a good place to help out. Entering my 12th season of professional football and sixth with the Blue Bombers, I know how important it is to eat nutritious meals like the ones Agape Table provide.*

## New program coordinator gets busy



Late last year, Maria Sanchez joined Agape Table to oversee our diverse programs. Within her first week, Maria organized a local fundraising Halloween event to raise money for our programs. After only a few weeks of exposure to our programs, Maria seemed like she had been with us for years. She is involved in all of our programming, including the emergency meal, subsidized breakfast and lunch programs, Low-Cost Grocery, and AT for Kids.

Below are some recent projects Maria is involved with:

- Working with the West Broadway Community Organization to educate AT visitors about a community safety program that includes the installation of deadbolts, swing locks, peepholes, etc. in rooming houses.
- Along with Louise Wallwein, she is getting creative storytellers and writers in the AT community involved in a three-month writing program.
- Collaborating with the West Broadway community to produce videos for The Winnipeg Foundation's "Recipe for Success" cooking contest, which is open to students in grades 4 to 6 making a nutritious and delicious sandwich.
- Organizing a weekly yoga session for anyone who wants to participate in the calming exercise.