



Transforming Community Engagement:

SOUTHPORT CHURCH'S INNOVATIVE APPROACH WITH ANYONE PRAY

This summer, Southampton, Ontario, a picturesque town of 4,000 nestled along the shores of Lake Huron, experienced a significant increase in population as tourists and cottagers flock to enjoy its beautiful, unspoiled beaches, outdoor activities, and scenic charm. Located in this vibrant community, SouthPort Church took a bold step into the future of their community outreach. This case study explores how an early adopter of Crossroad's Christian Communication's Anyone Pray prayer line has sparked a movement of compassion and connection in their local area.

THE LAUNCH

On a recent Sunday, SouthPort Church, who enjoys a regular attendance of about 150, officially became an Anyone Pray subscriber. The launch event, led by Crossroads prayer advocate, Sherry Stahl, was met with enthusiasm and excitement from the congregation. Pastor David Baker reported, "The event was great. Sherry was awesome! People are still talking about her message on prayer. The entire day was wonderful!!"

IMMEDIATE IMPACT

Within days of the launch, the effects of this initiative began to ripple through the community:

- 1. Media Engagement:** The local Rogers TV station embraced the concept, integrating 30-second "spots" about the prayer line into their regular programming. This exposure has significantly increased awareness of the service among local viewers.
- 2. Healthcare Integration:** In a touching development, the local hospital requested Anyone Pray posters to display in their palliative care units and now have over 40 posters around the hospital. This partnership demonstrates the recognized need for spiritual support in challenging times.

- 3. Business Involvement:** A local business owner, inspired by the church's initiative, began attaching Anyone Pray prayer cards to customer receipts. This simple act has extended the reach of the prayer line into everyday transactions.

COMMUNITY RESPONSE

The Anyone Pray line has tapped into a deep, previously unmet need in the community and it's being confirmed by people calling the church. Recently, *Justin called the church to express his gratitude to Pastor David and SouthPort Church for having a Prayer Line. In the middle of a difficult night, feeling isolated and without anyone to turn to at 3:30 a.m., Justin remembered a card given to him by a friend who attends SouthPort Church. He decided to call the prayer line and was astonished when someone answered immediately. The Prayer Partner spoke with kindness and without judgment, opening Justin's heart to the gospel and the love of Jesus Christ during a challenging time. A few days later, Justin called the church to express his gratitude! Since Pastor David was the only staff member at the time, he answered the call and began discipling him on the phone. Now Justin is a serving member of SouthPort Church. This compassionate response provided Justin with much-needed support and has left him a growing disciple of Christ.

A month later, just five months after the SouthPort prayer line went live, 52 people came to faith in Christ, with many people getting baptized at conversion! With members handing out thousands of prayer line promo cards designed by the Crossroads Marketing team, Southport is seeing new people attend weekly and a steady number coming into a relationship with Christ.

LESSON LEARNED

- 1. Outreach Tool:** Anyone Pray has proven to be an effective tool for outreach, providing a non-threatening way for the community to connect with the church and seek spiritual support.
- 2. Prayer Partner Ministry Training:** The implementation of Anyone Pray highlights the need for and benefits of training church members as prayer partners, equipping them to provide meaningful support to those who reach out.
- 3. Community Partnerships:** The rapid adoption by the TV station and hospital shows the importance of forming partnerships beyond the church walls.
- 4. Diverse Outreach Methods:** From TV spots to business receipts, the varied approaches to spreading awareness demonstrate the need for creative, multi-faceted outreach strategies.
- 5. Meeting Tangible Needs:** The hospital's request for posters in palliative care units highlights how spiritual support can be integrated into healthcare and other long-term care settings.
- 6. Empowering Congregation Members:** The business owner's initiative shows how individual church members can become ambassadors for community engagement and the sharable cards created by the Crossroads marketing department are making it easy for church members to share their faith with others

LOOKING AHEAD

As SouthPort Church continues to explore the potential of the Anyone Pray line, they set an inspiring example for other churches looking to deepen their community connections. Their experience suggests that by offering accessible spiritual support, churches can play a vital role in the emotional and spiritual well-being of their broader communities.

The success of this initiative in Saugeen Shores raises exciting questions about the future of church outreach. How might other communities benefit from similar programs? What other innovative ways can churches use such resources to extend their support beyond Sunday services?

SouthPort Church's journey with Anyone Pray is just beginning, but it's already clear that their bold step has opened new doors for community engagement and support. As they continue to gather "many more stories," they're not just changing their church – they're transforming their entire community.