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"SUCCESS STORY"

Let's Connect ^{25th}

Western Ottawa Community Resource Centre

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SPRING 2012

CELEBRATING VOLUNTEERISM AT THE WOCRC!

In April, the WOCRC hosted its Annual Volunteer Appreciation Breakfast as a tribute to the incredible contributions of its volunteers assisting with the delivery of programs and services provided to the catchment areas of West Carleton, Goulbourn, Kanata and Nepean.

Joining WOCRC staff and members of the Board of Directors were Councillors Allan Hubley, Kanata South, Marianne Wilkinson, Kanata North and Jack MacLaren, MPP Carleton-Mississippi Mills.

Highlights included the presentations of years of service pins and the Eva James award, in honour of Eva James, who enthusiastically volunteered in the community for over 15 years and was one of the key people who helped to create the WOCRC.

Sitting down to enjoy a sumptuous breakfast several volunteers shared their reasons for helping the WOCRC. Greta, a 15-year veteran, likes the social aspect, while Shirley with 19 years of service, enjoys doing administrative work. Gordon, who delivers Meals on Wheels, sees it as a way of being active and getting out of the house. However, all were in agreement it is about giving back to their community.

"WOCRC is a successful organisation with a great volunteer base that has an impact on a lot of lives." Robert McGaraughty, Chair, WOCRC.

As a not-for-profit organisation, the Centre serves over 18,000 clients. Over the past year, volunteers generously provided over 21,240

hours of service contributing on many levels to ensure that the quality of programs are not compromised. "If one were to put a dollar value on the support of our volunteers, it would amount to a minimum of \$360,000," exclaimed Cathy Jordan, WOCRC, Executive Director, adding, "The help you give us is more valuable

than that!" In their address, Councillors Allan Hubley and Marianne Wilkinson referred to their personal experiences as volunteers. "Volunteering is absolutely critical to building a community as good as ours," said Councillor Hubley. And, as Councillor Wilkinson expressed, "You have to stand up for what you think is right, and love what you do. The older you are, the more you need to

volunteer because it keeps a person young!" MPP Jack MacLaren referred to the volunteers as the heart and soul of the community. "Government's place is secondary to the work that you do," he said.

As Chair of the WOCRC Board of Directors, Robert McGaraughty provided some valuable statistics related to the Centre's volunteers. Referencing the 2011-12 fiscal year, he pointed out that out of the 255 volunteers there were 20 volunteers who contributed between 100 and 200 hours, while another 30 donated over 200 hours of service. He also acknowledged the astounding numbers from two volunteers, Brian Booth with 690 hours, and Mino Zadeh, who contributed 456 hours. Rounding off the festivities, Cathy Jordan presented pins to volunteers who contributed 2, 5 and 10 years of service ending with the presentation of the distinguished Eva James Award to Brigitte Sharma, WOCRC Peer Supporter for the Violence Against Women program.



L to R: Jack MacLaren, MPP Carleton-Mississippi, Brigitte Sharma, Eva James award recipient, Cathy Jordan, WOCRC Executive Director and Councillor Allan Hubley.

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

In April, the WOCRC hosted its annual Volunteer Appreciation Breakfast (VAB), and had the honour of paying tribute to the volunteers

who graciously donate their time and energy in supporting the Centre.

WOCRC's volunteers help out in a variety of ways, and bring a wealth of knowledge and skills, which contribute to the implementation of programs and services. For example, some of our volunteers have backgrounds in finance, education, and child care. They take on numerous roles such as serving on the WOCRC Board of Directors, assisting the staff in the Ontario Early Years – Carleton program, or providing support at Chrysalis House, a shelter for women and their families who have experienced violence in the home. Their dedication, commitment and expertise continue to benefit the thousands of clients that are served by the WOCRC.

The breakfast was also a time of reflection as we fondly remembered volunteers who recently passed away - Jean-Pierre Beaulne, Lorraine Clark and Phyllis McLean. A 2007 recipient of the Eva James Award, Jean-Pierre was a model of service taking on many tasks such as CSS transportation driver, providing his expertise on the WOCRC Board of Directors, and lending his talents as Chair of the Finance Committee, and the French Languages Services Committee. Jean-Pierre was a dedicated family man and community-spirited individual who will be greatly missed at the WOCRC.

Lorraine Clark became a volunteer with the former Nepean Seniors Home support (NSS) agency in 2004. Gracious at all times, Lorraine volunteered with the Friendly Visiting program, and also helped out with events held each year. In 2010, Lorraine became a volunteer driver for Meals on Wheels. Her warmth and friendly smile will be missed by all who came into contact with her.

Phyllis McLean was one of the first volunteers to join the Adult Day Program in 1999. In addition to volunteering on a weekly basis for 12 years, Phyllis was also a regular back-up worker to the program. Some of her outstanding contributions to the Adult Day Program were participation in projects to enhance the quality of care for people living with Alzheimer Disease, mentoring new volunteers, and assisting local artist Susan Goold in painting two beautiful wall murals for the ADP room. Phyllis will always be remembered for her quiet, competent, and caring demeanour in the ADP program.

The WOCRC is hosting another Open House. Please join us on Monday, June 25th between 5:30 and 7:30p.m. to learn about Who We Are, What We Do and Why We Do It! At this event, you will enjoy a presentation by Robert McGaraughty, Chair, WOCRC Board of Directors, and myself, about the accomplishments in the past year, and what we envision for the 2012-2013 fiscal year. We will also be acknowledging staff contributions with the presentation of years of service awards, and the contributions of our community-minded donors.

Cathy Jordan

WOCRC - YSB SERVING YOUTH AND FAMILIES IN WESTERN OTTAWA!

"The timing is just right."

Cathy Jordan, Executive Director, WOCRC

On Wednesday, March 21, the Western Ottawa Community Resource Centre (WOCRC) www.wocrc.ca and the Youth Services Bureau of Ottawa (YSB) www.yzb.on.ca launched their new partnership to improve access to mental health services for youth and families in western Ottawa.

Agreed upon was the allocation of office space provided by the WOCRC in Kanata for two highly experienced YSB counsellors. Held at the WOCRC, the event was attended by community leaders, educational and health professionals and concerned citizens within the western Ottawa community. Also featured were cheque presentations to both organisations by dedicated community members who raised money in support of youth mental health.

In her opening speech, Cathy Jordan, Executive Director, WOCRC spoke of the need to address the issues of youth mental health, and the opportunity that has now presented itself with the new partnership with the YSB. "For years we have had a standing relationship with YSB. Meeting with them to discuss the issues gave us the impetus to move forward and develop a partnership to work together," she expressed to the audience. Given the ongoing expansion in both the rural and urban areas of western Ottawa, a partnership between the organisations will ensure that the demand for the services will be met. In a 2011 census conducted by Statistics Canada, it was reported that from 2006 to 2011, the areas of West Carleton, Goulbourn and Kanata experienced a 16.6% growth in population compared to 8.8% in other parts of the city. Ms. Jordan also expressed her gratitude for the fundraising efforts of Reach Up for Youth Mental Health (www.reachupottawa.com) and Stephanie Wheeler, student at A.Y. Jackson High School, including the support of Councillor Allan Hubley, Kanata North.

"Children and Youth are our Future."

Joanne Lowe, Executive Director, YSB

In her address, Joanne Lowe, Executive Director of the YSB, spoke of the growing awareness of the need for increased services for children and youth and families. "We want to make it as accessible as possible, and a partnership with WOCRC provides opportunities for early intervention," she said. Ms. Lowe referred to the benefits of the partnership expressing the fact that both



\$5,000 Cheque Presentation - L to R – Councillor Allan Hubley (Kanata South), Stephanie Wheeler, student, A.Y. Jackson High School, and Joanne Lowe, Executive Director, YSB of Ottawa

organisations are in harmony sharing the same philosophies of a model of community-based care, which provides a direct link and referrals to clients that can benefit from their services. Upon referencing the highly-experienced YSB counsellors now stationed at the WOCRC, Ms. Lowe acknowledged the expertise and leadership of Francine Gravelle, YSB Director of Mental Health Services.

Having lost his son Jamie, who suffered from depression and committed suicide in 2011, Councillor Hubley, expressed his support of the collaboration between both organisations, and also applauded the fundraising efforts of his son's friend Stephanie Wheeler, a grade 12 student at A.Y. Jackson in Kanata. Ms. Wheeler raised funds for youth mental health by creating 'Coloured Acceptance Bracelets', which continue to be sold locally and internationally. In presenting a \$5,000 cheque to the YSB, she shared her thoughts, "It has been so hard, and at the same time so incredibly amazing. It is making a difference, and I could not be happier." Before presenting a cheque to the WOCRC, Michael Dixon, Chair, Reach Up For Youth Mental Health (reachupottawa.com) gave credit to the Reach Up volunteers,



the support of the western Ottawa community, and the Kanata Minor Hockey League. "I am filled with so much pride. I choose to live in this community and raise my children, because it is the best community in the world!" he said. Mr. Dixon spoke of the Centre's Guiding Beliefs – Empowerment, Equity, Partnership, Innovation - which resonated with Reach Up's value system. Amidst a round of applause, a cheque in the amount of \$13,500.00 was presented to the WOCRC.

The WOCRC partners with others to develop, provide and coordinate accessible community, health and social services for all members of our diverse communities. We are committed to ensuring access to permanent and quality French Language Services in our designated programs and services.

"It was the right people in the right place at the right time"

Kelly Burke, President of the Kanata Minor Hockey Association.

RURAL CONNECTIONS! by Julie Mc Kercher, WOCRC Rural Community Developer

The WOCRC Rural Community Development program encompasses a range of approaches and activities that aim to assist with identifying, and raising awareness about the issues faced across the demographic spectrum in the rural area. It is also about engaging in advocacy efforts to ensure that rural voices are represented in the context of the larger community. As a branch of community development, this approach pays attention to social issues and particularly to community organisations. The most critical elements for success in this endeavor is the commitment of community members and strong partnerships among businesses, community associations, informal groups, faith communities, service providers and other supports as available.

The rural community development approach undertaken by the WOCRC has been to adopt and implement the Asset-based Community Development (ABCD) approach. This technique of community development is not new, nor is it complex. It is an approach that assumes there are strengths and opportunities in all communities, and demands that the assets present in the form of people and space is respected.

ABCD requires dialogue, a commitment to relationship building, alliances among service providers and community members, trust, and the ability to discuss issues common to people in the community. It is an approach that values and honours the reality that there is leadership and knowledge inherent in the community. It calls upon leaders to rally for both expansion of community programs, and development of beneficial programming with foundational support from service providers. Finally, rural community development is about building capacity in the community to deal with issues as they arise. Building capacity ensures that the community is empowered to collaborate and to reconcile visions for a united and stronger community. The ongoing action in Constance Bay is a great example of ABCD. With the support of the

rural community development program, volunteers in the community have worked tirelessly to develop a skill-set and outreach strategy to deal with issues faced by isolated community seniors. The group is called Bay Community Connection (BCC), and while seniors are the demographic they have opted to start with, the BCC also has its sights on working with other segments of the population. To this end, with the support of the WOCRC, they planned a conversation café style meeting on April 21 to follow up on survey results documenting current community priorities, and to open a face-to-face dialogue about next steps for the community.

A second example hails from the opposite side of the catchment, in Richmond, where synergy between both community members and a church leader resulted in the identification of the same issue from differing lenses that of caregiver support. The church leader wondered how best to help the multitude of families coming forth with questions about where and how to access supports systems. A community member, exhausted from her own life experiences with caregiver support, cited knowing dozens of folks wishing they knew how to help one another. A day of learning with a focus on caregiver supports, and a tutorial on getting caregiver groups going resulted from these conversations; and, with the support of the faith leaders, Bridging Two Worlds was a resounding success with 44 participants attending from Richmond and the surrounding area. Tangibly, the participants and service providers walked away from the event with ideas pertaining to the next steps, and with connections to both service providers and neighbours that were not previously in existence.

Since being in this role, I have eaten more cookies and been offered more coffee and pancakes than I care to count. I've also made a lot of friends and connections that are at the heart of working in the community, and that make working in the community a privilege. At the end of the day, it's the people that have made this project a success!

WOCRC SALUTES THE CSS-NEPEAN CRAFTY SENIORS!

Every Monday, the Western Ottawa Community Resource Centre's (WOCRC) Community Support Services (CSS) Nepean Crafty Seniors gather at St. Richard's Anglican Church to create crafts.

Their works of the heart are sold at craft fairs with the profits donated to organisations that support seniors. They also distribute their wares to help those most vulnerable in the region. For many years, the group operated under the umbrella of the former Nepean Support Services (NSS), which merged with the WOCRC in 2009. Besides being of service to the community, supporting each other is also a major component of the group. The longevity of the group is a testimony to their commitment, dedication and support extended to communities in the national capital region.

The Nepean Crafty Seniors create items for all age groups. For example, they have supplied knitted garments for the Snowsuit Fund (www.snowsuitfund.com), and the Ottawa Mission (www.ottawamission.com). They have also supported the Perley and Rideau Veterans Health Centre (www.prvhc.com) with a donation of items such as lap blankets. Sweaters, mittens, blankets and handcrafted dolls are made for womens' shelters; for example, WOCRC's (www.wocrc.ca) Chrysalis House, a shelter for women and their families who have experienced violence in the home.



Emily and Bobo the Clown

Entrepreneurship, excellent quality of work, and ingenuity are some of the qualities that make up the fabric of success for the Nepean Crafty Seniors. To prepare for the craft fairs, they are always looking at ways to create 'good sellers'. Inspiration for their work comes in many forms, such as pattern books, and ideas from friends and family members. Marlin loves to research craft ideas via the internet, and just recently made

colourful dog pull-toys. Sara, who is a five-year veteran, tries to make something that will sell, while at the same time is relaxing to do. As she pointed out, "Shawls are a good seller." Originally from Finland, Eila's 'Emily and Bobo the Clown' dolls are a popular item. "Knitting is my first love," said Eila, who learned how to knit the 'Finnish' way by her mother. Margaret gets inspired by ideas her daughter passes on, while Monica works her magic knitting tweeting and texting mittens, an ideal spring gift for the younger generation! Allan, the groups' resident sewing machine artist, lists casserole covers as a good seller, whereas Ariane leans towards making afghans and scarves, always a hit with the crowds. New to the group, Carol is transferring her

talents in cross-stitching to making a quilt, which is another product that sells well in the marketplace.

Being part of the group has personal and social benefits as well. For Orian, focusing on a project is a great way to relax and enjoy the time. "I see it as a form of meditation," she said. Marjorie, a veteran of 15 years shared, "We socialize and have a good laugh. You might feel down in the dumps on the day that you come, but when you leave it is with a smile on your face. It is a fantastic support group!"

"There is something very special about a group that will get together year after year and create works of art to help out the community."

Cathy Jordan, Executive Director, WOCRC.

Allowing for the aging process, the seniors adapt to their environment by transferring their skills; for example, due to failing eyesight, Thelma, who started in 1992, crochets coat hangers, which are in high demand at craft sales. Helen, one of the original members of the group who suffered a stroke a few years ago, does what she can to help out, and enjoys the fellowship of the group. Harold, the group's resident carpenter, is currently working on building a stand-alone cupboard for the crafty group's supplies, while Barbara, who is married to Allan, is engaged in the administrative tasks and keeps tracks of the members, by sending birthday and get well cards. "It is a very social group," explains Barbara, who has 15 years of service, adding "Each takes their turn in preparing refreshments including baked goods for the afternoon get-togethers." Commonly echoed is the feeling of camaraderie and fellowship. Yolande, who has a large repertoire of items that includes toques with a hockey theme, such as the Montreal Canadians, Ottawa Senators or Toronto Maple Leafs, expressed the sentiments of the group saying, "I like coming here. It is a social thing, and it's the friendship. We have a big luncheon at Christmas time." A fitting end to the story on the CSS-Nepean Crafty Seniors is the glue that holds it together - "We care about each other an awful lot!"



WOCRC – ONTARIO EARLY YEAR'S CARLETON SCHOOL'S COOL!

Article submitted by Susan Wheat and Melanie McCool, School's Cool Facilitators



"I loved how you kept us informed, paid attention and adapted to the children and the circumstances...It has made a huge difference in my son's academic future."

Entering kindergarten can be intimidating for both children and parents. A free school readiness program offered through the Ontario Early Years Centre Carleton (OEYC) aims to relieve some of that anxiety. This past winter thirteen families participated in the six-week OEYC School's Cool program.

Children learned routines and self-help skills such as dressing in coats and boots, opening their own containers at snack time, manners (how and when to interrupt), and personal hygiene skills (proper hand washing, nose blowing, etc.). They enjoyed visits from a police officer, dental hygienist, dietitian and school bus driver, as well as a field trip to Farm Boy. Friendships were formed as the children learned how to work together as a group, sharing and turn taking. They learned how to be away from their parents and take direction from their teachers. Parents are a child's first and best teachers, so it is important that parents and teachers work closely together. Parental support and education is a vital part of School's Cool. Two parents' meetings were held throughout the program with included a question and answer period, and discussions related to topics such as healthy food habits, and the different ways boys and girls learn. Weekly reports were given to parents about program activities and the child's successes and goals.

"The staff and volunteers have been fabulous, not only with the kids but with me, as a parent, too, giving advice, discussing current problems and issues and giving information." Many thanks for walking [my son] and I through the first separation process and showing us both that we're ready for school."

Cool Bear, the program's mascot, was a welcome addition to the groups. Each child had a turn in bringing the mascot to their home, while the parents were assigned the task of writing about their youngster's experiences with Cool Bear. Added to the agenda was a trip to Winterlude with one family, and Cool Bear had his eyes tested when another family went to the optometrist.

"My child's confidence has really improved. When she enters a room, she holds her head high and easily initiates conversations. She also uses her manners and is getting a lot more patient when waiting her turn to speak or play with a toy, etc."

Research shows that a positive experience in the early school years results in more success throughout a person's life. Through the use of pre- and post-developmental checklists, School's Cool has demonstrated that participation in the program promotes greater success in kindergarten. OEYC Carleton, as well as other Ottawa OEYCs will be offering School's Cool again in the summer. This free program is funded by the United Way.

SUCCESS STORY

The Western Ottawa Community Resource Centre (WOCRC) offers a wealth of services to assist children in their academic and social development. The following success story is a good example of the importance of partnerships, and how engaging students in the WOCRC's after-school program, the Homework Club, can assist the educational institutions in helping children to improve their academic skills.

Since 2007, the Bridlewood Community Elementary School has been a strong supporter of the WOCRC. One of the WOCRC programs hosted at the school is the Homework Club, which provides academic assistance to students. In forming a partnership with the WOCRC, the school's primary hope was that the Homework Club would provide coping mechanisms, improve concentration levels and increase students' grades. Vivian Petrie, former teacher at the school shared her enthusiasm and support for the help that students receive from attending the program, by saying, "Many students have benefited from the Homework Club, and each year many more students take advantage of this after school help. Students and parents are very pleased with the commitment and education of the students who attend regularly." Vivian pointed out that the staff had noticed a significant improvement in the students, such as taking responsibility for their work by completing their assignments and improving their time management skills. As Vivian pointed out, "Establishing strong homework routines is so valuable for students in elementary school, and the service provided by the WOCRC offers an array of valuable initiatives to benefit the students both in the short-term and long-term." The Homework Club is committed to providing quality support for the students by engaging a support staff such as retired teachers and university students. "The Homework Club staff are incredible. They support the students in a gentle and caring way with a strong focus on completing tasks. They are very knowledgeable about curriculum expectations and are always eager to communicate with our staff so they can support the students with their work," said Vivian. The Bridlewood Community Elementary School' partnership with the WOCRC also extends to referring families for short term counselling and counselling services, and is also home to the WOCRC Best Start Hub, which is an early learning and care strategy designed to give children the best possible start in life.

Keeping You Connected

Let's Connect is published a minimum of four times a year – spring, summer, fall & winter – to keep you informed of news and activities at the WOCRC. If you would like to read more about a specific topic or have a story idea, please email info@wocrc.ca and we'll try to cover it in an upcoming issue!

What Our Clients Are Saying ...

“You guys are awesome [counselling services]! Thanks for all your hard work.”

“I have always been very pleased with the service. I have found each of your drivers [CSS – Transportation Services], who have driven me to the hospital for check-ups, extremely helpful and have been equally as pleased with your office help (pleasant friendly gentlemen). Thank You.”

“We met a lot of great people in our community. We have learned a lot of really pertinent things about parenting, the community and services offered by the WOCRC-OEYC.”

“My girls and I have had the opportunity to spend time outside the home together. They looked forward to coming [VAW – Child Witness Program]. They have begun using some of the learned strategies in their relationships.”



Bringing Care and Community Together
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