

Let's Connect 25th

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THE ONTARIO EARLY YEARS CENTRE - CARLETON TURNS 10!

SUMMER 2012



Hundreds of parents, children and caregivers joined WOCRC in celebrating the 10th anniversary of the Ontario Early Years Centre – Carleton (OEYC). This popular provincial program allows children aged 0-6, along with their families and caregivers, to take part in activities and gain valuable information about their children’s development.

“The program is invaluable for new mothers,” said Joanne Perry, whose children Owen, 6, and Olivia, 9, both attended the Baby Drop-In sessions every week when they were toddlers. “One week a dietician would be there to teach us how to make baby food, and the next week, we would learn about managing childhood fevers and colds. Every week mothers and caregivers had a chance to get to know one another and gain confidence from all they learned together. There is a lot not written in the text books about raising young children.”

Families in western Ottawa can access a multitude of services through the OEYC-Carleton, including a ‘baby and me’ group, drop-in activities, special needs programming, and a resource library. But what makes OEYC - Carleton so popular amongst children and adults alike is the dedicated and knowledgeable staff, many of whom have been with OEYC – Carleton since its inception.

“The Early Years’ team is an integral part in enhancing the lives of our children, families and caregivers,” says Mia Doré, Manager of Children and Youth Programs. “They go above and beyond for our community and we are very lucky to have these ladies on our team.”

“In western Ottawa, OEYC-Carleton connects parents to other parents and families to their communities so that children are able to thrive,” said Larissa Silver, Director of Programs and



The McStravick family helps celebrate 10 years

L to R: Sarah McStravick, Cathy Jordan – Executive Director of WOCRC, Marianne Wilkinson- Kanata North City Councillor, Keynote speaker Nicole McStravick , Steve McStravick, and Amy and Beth McStravick.

Services, WOCRC. “By offering programming in a child-friendly, family-focused environment, OEYC-Carleton helps make an important contribution to ensuring children in western Ottawa reach their full potential.”

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

At the helm and a key ingredient in the success of the WOCRC are its board members. All bring specific areas of expertise

that contribute to the longevity and stability of the organisation. Board members spend many hours throughout the year attending meetings and events, while providing leadership respecting the values and mission of the Centre. At the WOCRC's Open House, our community had the privilege of honouring five retiring board members, who made a significant impact on the continued growth of the Centre.

Retired board members Berta Aboud, Cindy McGann and Michelle Hynes were engaged for many years in various committees, and were instrumental in spearheading many initiatives that have left a lasting mark at the WOCRC. Their goal was always to lend their talents in ways that would assist in the governance of the Centre. Although Moira Winch and Tania Rosarian were engaged as board members for a short term, their respective talents also added to the richness of expertise within the board. It is with gratitude that we extend a thank you to all for their hard work and dedication in serving the western Ottawa community.

Moving forward into the 2012-2013 fiscal year, the Centre is very pleased to welcome four new board members, Teisha Gaylard, Cathy Smithe, Cindy O'Leary and Trevor Kraus. Whether it is providing their expertise in policy development or strategic planning, our new board members will certainly continue the tradition of excellence in serving the WOCRC.

It is my pleasure to introduce the 2012-2013 WOCRC Board of Directors:

- Robert (Bob) McGaraughty, Chair
- Johanne Lamarre, Vice-Chair
- Mike Merpaw, Vice-Chair
- Todd Sloan, Vice-Chair
- Eric Saemisch, Director
- Mary-Ann Rowan, Director
- Shelley Bond, Director
- Teisha Gaylard, Director
- Cathy Smithe, Director
- Cindy O'Leary, Director
- Trevor Kraus, Director

In closing, on behalf of the Board of Directors and staff, I extend to the western Ottawa community a safe and happy summer.

Cathy Smithe



Top row L to R: Todd Sloan, Mike Merpaw, Cathy Smithe, Cindy O'Leary, Eric Saemisch
L to R: Robert McGaraughty (Chair), Trevor Kraus, Mary-Ann Rowan, Johanne Lamarre, Teisha Gaylard, Shelley Bond

WOCRC'S OPEN HOUSE CONNECTING TO THE WESTERN OTTAWA COMMUNITY!

"At the end of the day, it is about serving the clients better." Robert McGaraughty, Chair,
WOCRC Board of Directors

On June 25th the Western Ottawa Community Resource Centre (WOCRC) hosted an open house to celebrate the successes of the 2011-2012 fiscal year, pay tribute to the staff and volunteers, and to thank its donors for their financial contribution to the community. Over 150 residents from the catchment areas of West Carleton, Goulbourn, Kanata and Nepean attended the event, which featured information booths highlighting the programs and services offered by the WOCRC. Also on-hand were some of the Centre's partners, which included the Ottawa Children's Treatment Centre, Community Child Care of Ottawa, Youth Services Bureau of Ottawa and the Ottawa Community Immigration Services Organisation. Special guests at the event included Kanata South Councillor Allan Hubley, Kanata North Councillor Marianne Wilkinson and Jack MacLaren, MPP, Carleton-Mississippi Mills.

The formal part of the event was hosted by Cathy Jordan, WOCRC, Executive Director, and Mr. Robert McGaraughty, Chair, Board of Directors. Referring to the WOCRC's 2011-2012 annual report (www.wocrc.ca), Cathy Jordan spoke of the successful year with its completion of specific projects, evaluation of programs and services, and new partnerships, all of which enhanced the services to over 18,000 clients in the past year. A special acknowledgement was extended to both staff and volunteers including board members for their commitment and dedication to clients. In his opening comments, Mr. McGaraughty shared his enthusiasm for the excellent work of the past fiscal year's board members by stating, "It is an honour and privilege to be serving the board in the past few years and working with such an efficient and respectful group." He also stressed the board's on-going commitment in maintaining contact with the western Ottawa community.

"It is important to have a relationship between the province and the WOCRC, as the work the Centre does is important and essential to the western Ottawa community." Jack MacLaren, MPP, Carleton-Mississippi Mills.



Jack MacLaren, MPP, Carleton-Mississippi Mills

Addressing the crowd, Mr. MacLaren applauded the 255 volunteers for their contribution to the success of the WOCRC. "Volunteers are the backbone of the organisation," he said. Mr. MacLaren ended his speech by stating, "We have a moral obligation to look after people, and the WOCRC helps a lot. I applaud all of you for the good work you do." Marianne Wilkinson, one of the Centre's pioneers in the development of the Centre praised the organisation by saying, "I see results every day of the work you do. The staff are kind and nice to everyone. And, the volunteers are the gold of the organisation."

"When we meet again, we will have lots to celebrate." Cathy Jordan, Executive Director, WOCRC.

As is the tradition throughout the history of the Centre, Cathy Jordan awarded 'Years of Service' pins to staff. Amongst staff members receiving their pins was Shelley Evelyn, coordinator of the WOCRC's Peer Support Program. Amidst a loud cheer from staff and volunteers, Ms. Evelyn received a 20-year pin and gift in recognition of her many years of outstanding work delivering programs to the community. Followed was a special presentation of plaques honouring the donations of community members. Accolades were given for the excellent contributions of retired board members Cindy McGann, Berta Aboud, Michelle Hynes, Moira Winch and Tania Rosarion, which ended with a formal introduction of the 2012-2013 WOCRC Board of Directors.



Paint It Up!

FROM VANADLISM TO COMMUNITY INSPIRATION

by Julia Valley, WOCRC Youth Community Developer

At one time, they were simply another part of the City's infrastructure. Two ends of a tunnel, known as the March Road underpass, see frequent cyclists and pedestrians passing by. These walls used to go unnoticed or would draw criticism and anger due to the frequent graffiti vandalism that they seemed to attract. On one side, the beauty of the National Capital Commission nature trails, on the other, the neighbourly Salter Square community.

When a group of community members came together to address the challenges associated with the graffiti, they decided to pursue a Crime Prevention Ottawa Paint it Up! grant, with the support of the WOCRC, the Kanata Civic Art Gallery, the Kanata Beaverbrook Community Association, and Kanata North City Councillor Marianne Wilkinson. The goal of the Paint it Up! program is, through the creation of murals, to deter graffiti, while also supporting local arts and culture, providing neighbourhood beautification, and encouraging youth to become involved in their community.

The response to the recruitment campaign was overwhelming, with 60 young people applying to participate. In the end, nine youth from Kanata, Stittsville, West Carleton, and Ottawa West, under the supervision of local artist Nicole Bélanger, took on the challenge. The murals, designed by the youth, were based off of the concept of

Nature meets Garden City, and involved feedback from the community as part of the design process. Work began in late June and took approximately two weeks to complete.

Remember those two tunnel ends? According to numerous cyclists and pedestrians who have been using the pathway as the youth have been working on the mural, they are now 'beautiful' and 'breathtaking'. Gabriel, a Paint it Up! participant, fondly recounts a jogger who stopped, took a picture, and then, as she ran by, told them that the mural was now her Facebook profile picture. Path users have also frequently called out comments like "great job" and "keep up the good work" which a participant, Paisley, found to be helpful with keeping up motivation, especially under the blazing sun. "It's nice how people seem to appreciate our work," said Paisley.

Jim, a member of the community, commented: "As a muralist myself, I've been so impressed with the work and rapid progress, given the heat we have experienced. Kudos to the team. They 'painted it up!'" While comments like these, and others that the youth have heard by those passing by, cannot truly capture the impact of the hard work and creativity that went into the development of the murals, one can only imagine how many people will be influenced by those two tunnel ends that now have a new purpose – to inspire and bring a community together.



On this page

The Paint it Up! Project participants strike a pose

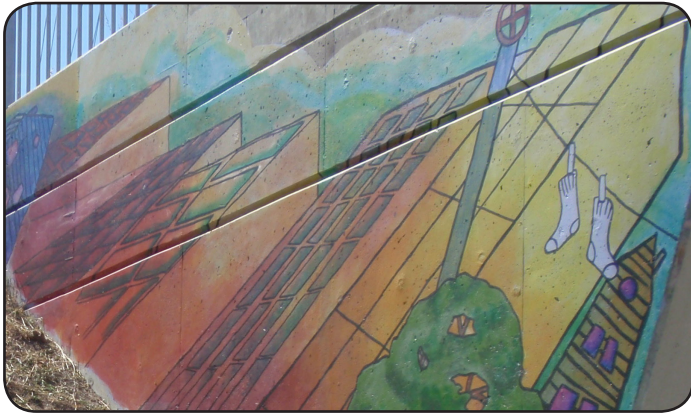
Bottom row, L to R: Allison, Khalid, Gabriel, Paisley, Caitlin Top row, L to R: Nicole, Lee, Eric, Jason, Katherine

Opposite Page:

Mural photos taken by Julia Valley

Cutting the Ribbon photo taken by City of Ottawa Photographer Roger Lalonde

Pictured L to R: Rebecca Coxon, Cathy Jordan, Gabriel, Allison, Eric, City of Ottawa Mayor Jim Watson, Paisley, Marianne Wilkinson, Lee, Caitlin, Katherine, and Nicole Bélanger



RAISING AWARENESS ON TEEN DATING VIOLENCE

From Facebook groups, trending Twitter topics, suggestive ad campaigns and 'humour' t-shirts, it seems as though violence against women is no longer just a social crisis; it is sadly becoming a social norm. This mindset is fueling an epidemic of teen dating violence with approximately 1/3 of high school students experiencing dating violence.

It is estimated that between 25 per cent and 50 per cent of Canadian teenage girls experience psychological, physical, or sexual violence in their first romantic relationship yet it continues to be a largely unspoken issue. Once learned, abusive behaviour is extremely difficult to change. A teen who has been the subject of dating abuse is at greater risk of being abused later in life. Because of this, education and prevention are an integral part of helping teens stay safe in their relationships.

This spring, WOCRC's Peer Supporters (Violence Against Women Program) went into several area classrooms to educate and engage students on dating violence. At the end of each presentation students were asked to contribute to the 2nd annual high school poster contest.

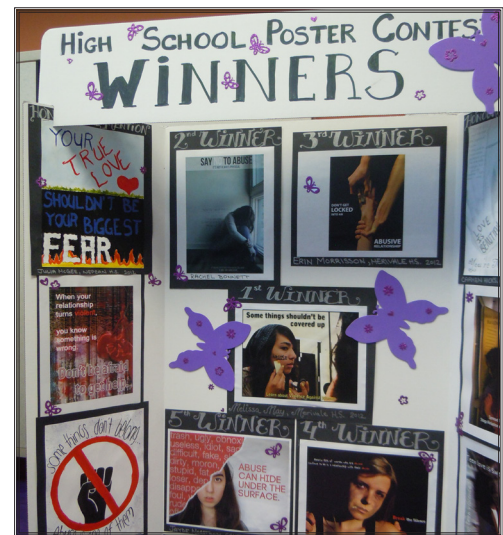
"We hope to educate our youth on the signs of unhealthy relationships by getting the students to express their views through an art medium and to share their experiences with others," said Shelley Evelyn, Peer Support Program Coordinator.

The contest, entitled 'What you would want your friends and family to know about unhealthy dating relationships?' garnered a variety of dynamic and creative entries from schools across the city.

After careful consideration five students were recognized as creating the most impactful posters with first place going to Melissa May, of Merivale High School. Rachel Bonnett, Erin Morrison, Scott Craddock and Jayde Norstrom also contributed award winning pieces. Honourable mentions went to local youth Julia McGee and Carmen Hicks.

For more information on the poster contest and how your school, student or teen can get involved contact Shelley Evelyn at 613-591-3686 or by e-mail at evelyn@wocrc.ca.

Top picture: L to R -Award recipients Melissa May, Erin Morrison, Rachel Bonnett, Erin Morrison, Jayde Norstrom and Cathy Jordan, Executive Director of WOCRC
 Middle picture: A display highlighting the winning entries
 Bottom picture: Melissa May's winning poster





While students, teachers and VAW Peer Supporters celebrated the successful poster contest inside the Centre, awareness surrounding violence against women and children was being raised outside the building via the Clothesline Project.

“We have participated in the clothesline project for over 10 years,” said Cathy Lawery, Program Manager -Violence Against Women and Counselling Services. “My office window faces the clothesline every year and I am amazed at the number of people, of all ages, that take the time to stop and read the statements.”

A national program that started in 1990, the Clothesline Project has become a symbolic art installation piece that provides a unique platform to express the violence experienced by a woman. For the past few years, WOCRC's Peer Supporters have carefully hung each shirt on a clothesline outside the WOCRC as a testimony to the problem of violence against women and children.

WOCRC SUCCESS STORY

We moved to Ottawa in 2006, and when Vera was born in 2008, we knew one other couple with children. All of our immediate family lived on opposite ends of Canada, and when the initial visits were over, I found myself with long days ahead of me with little to do.

I am the type of person who needs to get out every day. I happened upon the Western Ottawa Community Resource Centre's Ontario Early Years Centre – Carleton (OEYC) when Vera was 2 months old, and found myself going twice a week to the baby drop-ins. Through these drop-ins, I met many great moms, including two of my favourite Mommy friends. From there, we joined the baby massage workshops offered by OEYC and did many other play dates together. To this day, we are still friends, our families have grown and we try to get together once a month if we can.

I attended the baby massage workshop with Vera, and we benefited greatly from it. My husband was off for two months with Vera and happened to get into the Mother Goose workshop, which gave him something to do and

other parents to talk to. It is hard for dads to find fun things to do with babies, but the OEYC is papa-friendly. We sing a lot in our house, and after knowing just a couple of songs when Vera was a newborn, we can now find a song to accompany any activity and keep our girls happy. Later, I left my job, and came back to the baby drop-ins, and subsequently to the toddler ones with Vera. I met more nice people, and Vera always got to try new things that I wouldn't have thought of at home.

The parent resource workers and volunteers always provided suggestions and books to borrow when we had concerns. I had difficulty with breastfeeding and have learned much more about it in the last couple of years from Susan Wheat. The staff are quite knowledgeable. For us, OEYC provided new great friends, guidance and a plethora of songs. All of these things have made the daunting task of raising young children in a city far from our families into something enjoyable!

Allison, Chad, Vera and Elise

ATTENTION ALL VOLUNTEERS

In compliance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) and the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07, the Western Ottawa Community Resource Centre (WOCRC) is mandated to ensure that all staff and services are responding to the needs of clients with disabilities.

The Accessibility Standard for Customer Service applies to all people or organizations in Ontario that provide goods or services and have one or more employees. It affects private, non-profit and public sectors.

In order to ensure WOCRC's compliance with this legislation, all volunteers and staff are required to complete training on accessible customer service. Please be advised that we will be asking all current and new volunteers to complete online or in-person training over the course of the summer and fall of 2012. All training is to be completed before the end of 2012.

Should you have any questions, please contact Laine Johnson, Volunteer Resources Coordinator, at 613-591-3686 x 280, or johnson@wocrc.ca



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 ...

“ Fabulous service [CSS Transportation Services] with most pleasant, prompt, knowledgeable and courteous drivers.”

“ My family and I have had such a positive experience at Chrysalis House. Both my children are in their teens, and the staff has been amazing in trying to assist my children in community living. It's a shame there aren't more Chrysalis Houses available for other families.”

“ My experience has been extremely positive [OEYC-Carleton], no doubt due to the efforts of the very professional staff.”

“ [My son] has demonstrated much more confidence in himself. He now sleeps alone and does not feel as scared. He also realizes that other kids have been through the same thing.” VAW – Child Witness Program.



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