



OPTIONS BYTOWN
TWENTY - FIVE YEARS STRONG
VINGT-CINQ ANS ET TOUJOURS DYNAMIQUE

2015
Annual Report



Message from the Executive Director and President

In 2014 Options Bytown faced a major change in funding and service priorities with our principal funders at the City and the Federal levels emphasizing a federal shift to a “housing first” approach.

Options Bytown’s services encompass housing first and so much more. We offer permanent, barrier-free housing to people who have lived in homeless shelters. We also provide long-term and on-site supports and community building in our resource centres and in our own buildings, services that are not usually included in the housing first model.

We are pleased to report that the City of Ottawa endorsed our model and chose to partner with Options Bytown in their transformation of the housing and homelessness system to “housing first” with the ambitious goal of finding permanent housing and offering the right support services to those who have lived in homeless shelters for over 2 years, many as long as 10 years or more. We have received sufficient new funding to create a new service and hire four new case managers, ready to take up the challenge of supporting 80 people a year of the approximately 450 shelter residents whom the City has identified as needing help to find and keep their housing.

Our efforts in the past year also set the stage for Options Bytown to successfully launch a new partnership with Montfort Renaissance to conduct research, provide training to front line staff and implement specialized services in our two organizations to address the needs of tenants who display hoarding behaviours. Funding for this project comes from the Provincial Ministry of Health and the Champlain Local Health Initiative Network.

The need for additional supportive housing units in Ottawa is critical. There are 2000 people waiting for supportive housing. It is our goal to help address this serious gap in needed services and housing. Our dedicated board members have worked hard in the past year to form an effective fundraising committee with the goal of raising funds to build a new Options Bytown supportive housing apartment building.

Lorraine Bentley

Executive Director

Brian Davidson

President

Cheryl's Story

Cheryl told her story to Kelly Egan of the Ottawa Citizen on June 15th, 2015: "If you have to be sick, Ottawa's a good place to be," she said . "And boy, did they ever take out a medical bazooka on me." Cheryl was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2011. At the time, she was single, living in a rented room, making ends meet as a guitar instructor. Then came the visit to ER, the biopsy, the chemo, the surgery, the post-surgery medications and complications. "Chemo is a son-of-a-gun. It takes so much energy out of you, basically you have nothing left."

Cheryl fell into a depression, with a side of anxiety. "I had a lot of things go on. I just couldn't function anymore." There are lots of people in this world who have the wide embrace of family to rely on in a crisis. What is the plight of those who don't? She ended up homeless, living for several weeks at the Shepherds of Good Hope, spending her days just surviving. "I was in a fog." A crowded, temporary shelter is not the best place to clear the head, but eventually a worker guided her out.

Cheryl was directed to the YMCA, which runs a supportive housing program for vulnerable women called TRY. It stabilized things for her. Then, about a year ago, she found a permanent home at Options Bytown, where she has a bachelor unit for which she pays \$115 in monthly rent. Meanwhile, Cheryl hopes to return to teaching guitar fairly soon. Because her son is now an adult and on his own, she is, in effect, trying to rebuild a life for herself, post-cancer. "I'm wondering how to phrase this properly," she said, sitting on the edge of the bed. "I had never been homeless before any of this happened. I had never gone through half of what I've learned, before I got sick. So even though I don't know why I'm here, when I'm asked to do things like (speak out), it tells me, OK, maybe that's why I'm here."

She looks nothing like a typical street person and has never had an addiction problem. "That's the irony of it, isn't it? If I walked down the street, nobody would know I'm having a panic attack. My situation could happen to anyone." She finds it comforting to know Options Bytown has support staff present seven days a week, for counselling, or to navigate a myriad of health and social-issue portals. "It's a phenomenal place. The staff have been fabulous, gung-ho on your side."



Cheryl Davis speaking at Options Bytown's 25th Anniversary Celebration

25th Anniversary Celebration

On June 18th, Options Bytown celebrated its 25th anniversary at a gala celebration event. Paul Dewar, Member of Parliament for Ottawa Centre kicked off the celebration with his reminiscences of the early days of Options Bytown. Ottawa City Councillor Catherine McKenney brought greetings from Mayor Jim Watson.

More than 150 prominent people from the business, philanthropic, non-profit housing and social services communities attended this celebration. The theme for the event was "Twenty-Five Years of Housing, Supporting and Enriching Lives".

The keynote speaker was Frank O'Dea, who shared his inspiring story of his personal journey from homeless alcoholic to co-founder of the Second Cup chain of coffee shops in Canada.



Board of Directors with keynote speaker and "Make Homelessness History" award winner, Frank O'Dea

We also launched a capital fundraising campaign to generate \$4-million for a new supportive housing facility in Ottawa. We very much look forward to meeting our new campaign targets in order to provide even more housing – and hope - to those who need it most.

Two annual awards were given to worthy recipients. Frank O'Dea received the Make Homelessness History Award, presented to him by Ottawa City Councillor Catherine McKenney; and Ottawa Citizen News Reporter Matthew Pearson received the Media Award for Excellence for raising awareness about homelessness in our city from the evening's MC Kimothy Walker.

Photograph by Ellen Bond

Statement of Operations

**Options Bytown Non-Profit
Housing Corporation**
Statement of Operations

For the year ended December 31

2014

2013

Revenue

Consolidated Homelessness Prevention Program (CHPP)	\$ 693,645	\$ 690,920
Ottawa Community Housing Corporation (OCHC)	346,620	344,928
Support for Social Housing (SSH)	215,625	212,759
Homelessness Partnership Strategy	388,926	379,435
Stewart Street (CCOC)	77,270	76,835
United Way	70,613	71,291
Tenants' rent received	252,773	240,837
Donations	20,685	40,937
Interest and other	17,408	21,715
Small Projects	1,124	4,884
Amortization of deferred contributions related to tangible capital assets (Note 4)	<u>75,315</u>	<u>111,796</u>
	<u>2,160,004</u>	<u>2,196,337</u>

Expenses

Administrative fees and services	31,739	67,671
Amortization of tangible capital assets	83,453	113,175
Bad debts (recovery)	78	(72)
Board expenses and volunteer services	9,768	7,160
Insurance	9,406	9,234
Office	33,848	37,838
Office rent	6,139	6,072
Repairs, maintenance, and security	43,770	61,707
Salaries and benefits	1,630,123	1,601,896
Staff training and travel	27,795	23,518
Tenants' rent disbursed	252,773	240,837
Tenant services	29,057	27,066
	<u>2,157,949</u>	<u>2,196,102</u>

Excess of revenue over expenses for the year

\$ 2,055 \$ 235

Options Bytown - a solution to homelessness

1. We are unique

Options Bytown combines affordable housing with on-site support services to people at risk of homelessness in Ottawa. We *reduce and prevent homelessness*.

2. We help people to turn their lives around

We support clients so they can make positive, healthy choices, live independently, and become active members of the community. *We care about people and communities.*

3. We are an effective model of supports and housing

We partner with other organizations to prevent homelessness for thousands of Ottawa residents. *We offer an effective, long-term solution to homelessness.*

4. Our model is lean and efficient

Homelessness costs over five times as much per individual compared to the cost of supportive housing. *We are a wise community investment.*

5. We are part of your community

Our doors opened at 380 Cumberland in 1989, and have since expanded to 375-379 Gilmour and 369 Stewart. We have expanded our successful approach and will continue to do so.



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www.optionsbytown.com



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