

**1. We are unique.**

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

**2. We give people the opportunity to turn their lives around.**

We support clients that make positive, healthy choices, live independently and become active members of the community. *We are 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.*

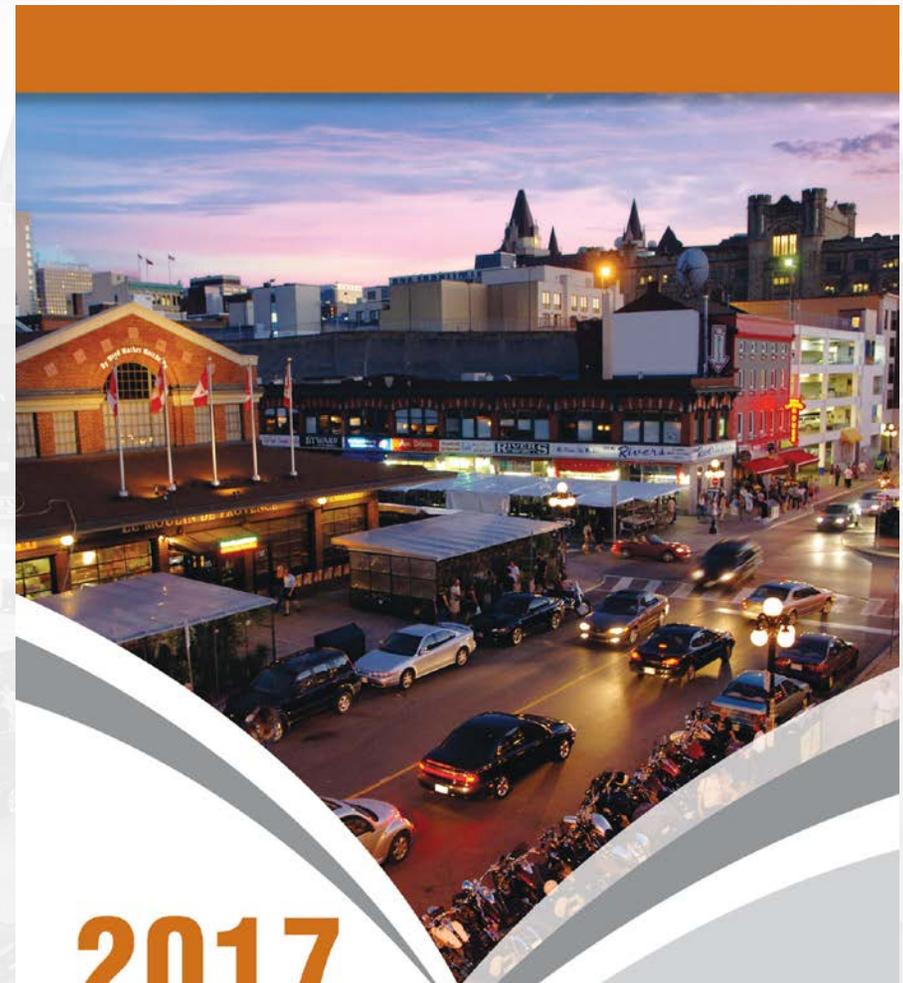
**4. Our model is lean and efficient.**

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 Street and 369 Stewart Street. We have expanded our success approach and will continue to do so.

[www.optionsbytown.com](http://www.optionsbytown.com)



**2017**  
ANNUAL REPORT





I am so pleased to have joined the Options Bytown team as Executive Director and I have been busy getting to know all the wonderful people that make up the Options Bytown community. I intend to work very hard to seek out innovative opportunities to prevent and end homelessness in Ottawa. I will ensure that we continue to deliver and expand our unique approach of offering permanent housing with no readiness conditions along with personal supports to ensure housing stability and enhanced quality of life.

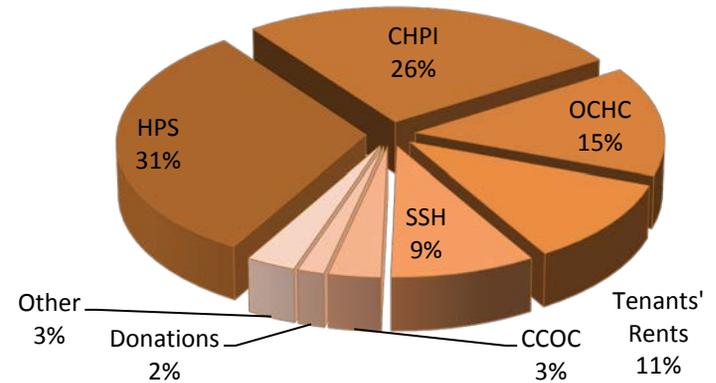
Did you know?

- **Options Bytown ends homelessness:** there are currently over 220 people who were formerly homeless living in Options Bytown buildings and various apartments across the city. They receive ongoing support from the Options Bytown team to help them maintain their tenancy, work towards personal life goals, and connect them with their surrounding community.
- **Options Bytown prevents homelessness:** Close to 1000 people access Options Bytown housing support through 8 Resource Centres that are set up within Ottawa Community Housing buildings. Staff in these centres provide tenants with support to maintain their housing, access community supports, and any other assistance they may require. Options Bytown staff also provide support to tenants living within Centretown Citizens Ottawa Corporation (CCOC) housing who may be particularly vulnerable to housing loss and require additional personal supports.

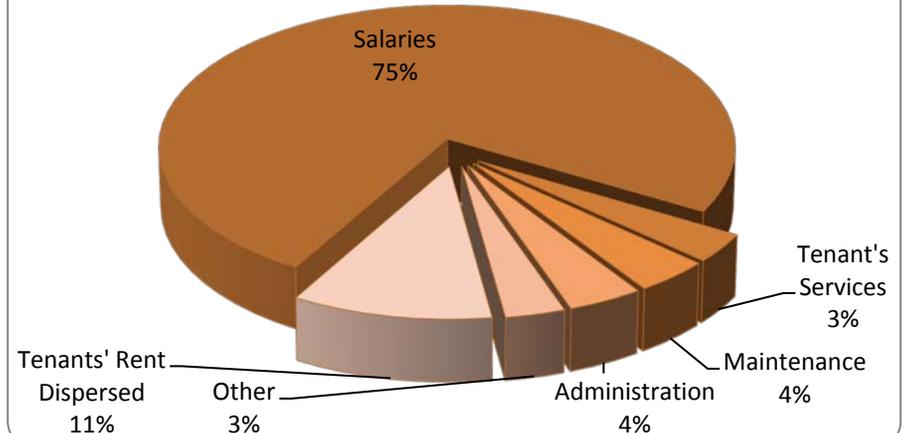
We are eager to learn more about the National Housing Strategy, and the plans of the federal and provincial governments to address homelessness across the country and in our province and city. **At Options Bytown, we are committed to seeing Ottawa become a community where everyone has a home.**

Catharine Vandelinde

### Revenues \$2,490,9761



### Expenses \$2,557,851



- *The deficit for 2016 is \$66,000 however \$24,000 of that amount is unspent restricted donations which is recorded as deferred revenue.*

HPS(Homelessness Partnering Strategy/City of Ottawa); CHPI (Consolidated Homeless Prevention Initiative) ; OCHC (Ottawa Community Housing Corporation);

Options Bytown is ending homelessness one person at a time by providing safe and permanent housing. In addition to housing, our staff provide tenants and clients with individualized supports to maintain tenancy and work on other goals.

***“With hope, all the horror could be faced. Options Bytown restored my hope. That’s why I say they saved my life”*** Nick,  
Options Bytown Tenant

At Options Bytown, we believe that living with mental or physical illness or substance use is not a barrier to permanent, affordable, safe and independent housing. With our supportive housing model, it only takes \$30 a day to provide people with specific supports which are tailored to their needs. And Options Bytown tenants enjoy an 80% success rate in permanently maintaining their housing.

### You can help

Options Bytown relies on individual donations, major gifts, fundraisers and volunteers in order to provide affordable and effective solutions to homelessness. We can all take steps to ending homelessness; take yours today.

To Donate: visit [www.optionsbytown.com](http://www.optionsbytown.com)

Or send your donation to:

Options Bytown  
380 Cumberland St.  
Ottawa, ON K1N 9P3

Options Bytown is grateful for funding from the City of Ottawa, the Provincial Government and the Federal Government.



It has been one of my great pleasures to be part of the Options Bytown Board of Directors. Once again, we’ve had a very busy, productive and enthusiastic year. A few highlights of our activities include:

- Recruiting our new Executive Director, Catharine Vandelinde, who we have been delighted to welcome into our community,
- Reviewing of all of our key policies, culminating in an updated bylaw for presentation at this year’s Annual General Meeting,
- Developing a membership policy, enabling people who are previous Board members, tenants and staff, as well as long-term donors and key partners to become members in our organization,
- Implementing numerous fundraising activities, which supports the crucial work of our staff and tenants in building community; including the Ottawa Little Theatre event which gave many residents of Ottawa the chance to learn more about our organization, and
- Reaching out and working with our tenants and clients on meaningful ways in which they can shape the direction of our community.

As always, this work simply wouldn’t be possible without the dedication of our volunteer Board, our staff team, and our tenants and clients. I extend sincere thanks to all of you. Because I’ve had the privilege of being involved with this organization over a number of years, I’ve been witness to the real evolution in the service model. This includes, to name a few, implementation of resource centres in social housing buildings across the city, serving hundreds of community members every year; strong partnerships with social housing in providing mobile supports to empower people in keeping their housing; and implementing housing first practitioners, actively working with people in shelters to find and keep housing. I look forward to seeing the next phases in this evolution and have the deepest admiration for this organization, and the people who are actively working to end homelessness – an achievable, needed vision for our City.

Natasha Poushinsky



### Meet Donna van den Oever

Donna is a 16 year veteran staff person with Options Bytown – a journey that has been both challenging and a pleasure for her every day. From early childhood Donna seemed destined to assist those in need. Donna watched as her parents volunteered in the community in whatever capacity they could and she knew she would follow in a similar path.

Donna's father often told her, "When you give to others, you are really giving to yourself." This was more than a saying to Donna; it was her creed. As a small child Donna witnessed her neighbours caring for children with disabilities. That had a profound impact on her and at 12 Donna volunteered at CHEO. She was so good with the children that families would pay her to be a part-time companion to their child until they were fully recovered.

At 16, Donna worked at the Easter Seals Camp and took immeasurable pleasure in working with kids around her. Donna attributes her success with others to meaningful relationship building. She is easy to talk to and listens attentively but more importantly, people trust Donna. Throughout her life people would approach Donna when they were in crisis and she responded.

It is no wonder when the time came that Donna entered the Social Service Worker Program at Algonquin College. After graduation Donna worked the YMCA Emergency Housing Program and in a shelter



Annie



Madge



Chico



Champagne



Ruby



Dippy



Tweety



Shady



Willow

Patience



Benji



at another service agency which were both geared to crisis response and left less time for relationship building. That is when she came to Options Bytown.

At Options Bytown she has found her calling. As a Housing and Community Support Worker in one of the many Ottawa Community Housing Resource Centres she is responsible for working closely with tenants to help them fulfill their own needs. Whether it is making a plan to manage their debt, negotiating with landlords, participating in coffee groups to combat isolation, advocating with outside agencies, facilitating creative programs that help tenants express themselves, reminding tenants to attend appointments or working with others to curb hoarding habits Donna is making a very positive difference in the lives of many.

At Options Bytown all staff experience countless training opportunities to better assist those in their care. They learn from building strong relationships with each other and working closely with First Responders, the Royal Ottawa mental health workers, tenant community workers, community resource centre employees as well as those working in community health centres. Donna believes that "We really are a compassionate community working together to better the lives of the most vulnerable amongst us."

Donna is just one of the many dedicated staff who through their efforts has made Options Bytown the remarkable organization that it is.

March 9, 2017 Options Bytown and Ottawa Little Theatre presented **An Afternoon at the Theatre for a Good Cause**  
**Marion Bridge**

Marion Bridge is the humorous and touching story by award winning Canadian playwright Daniel MacIvor. This play demonstrates the power of love and loss in a family facing a Mother's death.

Options Bytown would like to thank Ottawa Little Theatre and all of those that supported us by attending the performance. Thanks also to the caterers Culinary Conspiracy, 3 Tarts Catering, Goodies Fine Catering and Krackers Catering for their generous donations as well as our sponsors: Emond Harnden, Capital Benefits, AHA Technical Services Inc., Collins Barrow, Rhodes and Williams Insurance Brokers and Planet Coffee.



**Options Bytown would like to say a special thank you to Realtors Care Foundation for their generous grant for the purchase and installation of a accessible door operator.**



Out-going president of the board of directors, Natasha Poushinsky and soon-to-be new president Shanley Matthews



We would like to thank the federal Homelessness Partnering Strategy, and the City of Ottawa that administers this funding, for providing Options Bytown with the funding for this beautiful new kitchen at 380 Cumberland Street.



Newly retired Executive Director of Options Bytown Lorraine Bentley



Student volunteers serving at our Ottawa Little Theatre's production of Marion Bridge Fundraising Event





12 years ago, looking for a fresh start in a new city, Patti moved to Ottawa from Toronto. She had recently survived a violent attack, and needed to feel safe and not look back. Patti's sister was living in Ottawa, and offered her a place to stay while she looked for work and got back on her feet. With the help of her sister, Patti was able to settle into an apartment within an Ottawa Community Housing building where she could feel safe and begin healing. After some time, Patti was introduced to the Options Bytown staff in the Resource Centre within the apartment building where they offered her support and friendship. Patti felt relaxed and was glad no one was pushing themselves on her.

Still unable to find work Patti knew that paying her rent was impossible and she soon received an eviction notice to pay as soon as possible or be evicted. Patti panicked. She had no idea what to do and decided to speak with the staff of Options Bytown to see if they could help her. The first thing she recalls hearing from the staff is "This is OK. I will help you." The Options Bytown staff member negotiated with the Eviction's Office to have a time extension and then advocated on behalf of Patti because of her circumstances to secure a one-time fund for the prevention of her eviction.

Options Bytown also found a way to get Patti a pension to cover her expenses until she got on her feet again. By now Patti had developed a comfortable relationship with the staff member of Options Bytown and would visit daily to speak to her about good news and challenges she was facing in her life.

Patti was much more comfortable with her living conditions and reached out to connect more with her community. She decided to start a breakfast program for those in the building and members of the community. She approached the food bank and other donors to get whatever she could. Soon she was preparing breakfast for 30-50 people three times a week. Patti rallied others in her building to help her and the Breakfast Program was fully launched. That all began 11 years ago and today the volunteers from the building are a vital, vibrant team willing to pitch in and make a community better.

Patti says, "Instead of beating down each other's weaknesses we are all pulling from each other's strengths."

It doesn't stop here. With Patti's encouragement this volunteer team also runs a fruit and vegetable market in the building 3-4 days a week. Three of the days are for tenants of the building with 8-15 people in attendance. However one day is for the entire community and it is common to see 75 people or more choosing from the seasonal favourites. All food is free and is being provided by an anonymous and generous donor. Options Bytown staff help with the organization and managing the crowd but set up, display and tear down are done by Patti's volunteer team.

"No one judges who comes for food or how often they come. We just encourage people to eat." said Patti.

One day when Patti was socializing with the others in the building over a cup of tea she noticed that her circulation seemed poor and spoke to Options Bytown staff about it. Being trained in First Aid, staff immediately recognized that Patti was in distress and called 911. Patti was rushed to the heart institute where she was immediately operated upon to open a blocked valve. Patti credits the staff for saving her life.

Today Patti is well again and is a model tenant leader. She is modest about her involvement with the team saying that the volunteer team should really be front and centre but I am sure if you asked anyone of the team members who is the catalyst for making all of this good happen they would undeniably say Patti.