

Since 1989, Options Bytown has provided permanent homes and support services for people who need help to live independently. It operates three apartment complexes in central Ottawa that house 128 people.

Options Bytown also supports hundreds of tenants living in buildings owned by the two largest social housing providers, Ottawa Community Housing and Centretown Citizens Ottawa.

Some of the services Options Bytown offers include housing case management, prevention of evictions, crisis intervention, referrals to various community resources, lifeskills training, social and recreational activities, computer training and health and nutritional counselling.

Options Bytown is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors. The board manages a number of policy committees including finance, fundraising, new development, and human resources.

Options Bytown is funded by the City of Ottawa, the Province of Ontario, the Government of Canada, the Ottawa United Way and receives individual donations from generous supporters.



OPTIONS
BYTOWN

Building community
Développer la communauté

2013 ANNUAL REPORT

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President's Message

Over the past year we have seen some significant changes to the funding landscape that will no doubt have an impact on our organization. The Provincial Government announced that it would be integrating five streams of homelessness funding into the Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative. In addition, the Federal Homelessness Partnership Strategy was renewed for five years, albeit at a lower overall amount.

Both of these programs represent major funding streams for our organization and, while we have received very encouraging signs that they will be focusing on more long term housing solutions, including “housing first”, there remains a great deal of work to be done before we will know exactly what this means for us.

We have taken steps to address these changes. We have been actively involved in the City’s consultation process and we have launched a small working group composed of Board and staff members to examine organizational sustainability as well as new opportunities for capacity building and growth. The outcome of this work is leading to some potential new partnership opportunities that are currently in the early stages of development. Finally, we are in the process of exploring options to develop a longer-term strategy to guide the fundraising activities of the organization.

While these developments have been taking shape below the surface, we have also taken steps to improve the safety and accessibility of our buildings and to renew our long-standing and important partnership with Ottawa Community Housing. Our Resource Centre Program remains one of the City’s most innovative and effective solutions to help people maintain their housing.

As your out-going President I want to thank the staff and our Executive Director for their patience, hard work and dedication to our cause over the years. On behalf of the Board, we are very proud of the work that you do and the positive impact that it has on the community that we are all a part of.

Brodie Berrigan

Thank You to Our Funders and Donors

Options Bytown receives on-going, core funding from the City of Ottawa, the Province of Ontario and the federal government for ensuring that the homeless have access to permanent, affordable supportive housing. In addition, for the first time in our 23 years, we are the recipients of United Way multi-year funding in recognition of our housing first approach.

Our local community has also demonstrated their generous support in the past year with personal donations as well as through community-based events. We would like to thank the James St. Pub for hosting a fundraiser organized by Carleton University students as well as the Gladstone Theatre and Bear and Co. for raising funds in conjunction with their production of Taming of the Shrew. Just a few days ago, the Ottawa Insurance Brokers

Association held a golf tournament as a fundraiser for Options Bytown. We welcome the efforts of community members to find ways to support our cause of ending homelessness and look forward to future collaborations.



In February 2013 we were especially honoured to be selected by Enbridge to receive a gift of \$10,000 to mark the event of reaching their 2 millionth customer in Ottawa. We are very grateful for this gift and for their on-going support helping our tenants to “go green” with training and programming materials.

In the past year we have benefited from a number of special grants that target supportive housing and other services for vulnerable people. We are grateful to the Brighter Tomorrows Fund, a joint project by Hydro Ottawa and the United Way, The Home Depot Foundation of Canada and Project Clear Skies, supported by the Ottawa Airport. With the help of the funds we received, we were able to improve our tenants’ quality of life and make their homes healthier and safer places to live.

In Appreciation

The Options Bytown community is made up of staff, board members, tenants and, volunteers. We all depend on each other to fulfill our vital roles and help to sustain the organization.

The Front Line

The staff of Options Bytown includes 29 individuals who support each other as well as the people who need our help to avoid being homeless. Together we keep the buildings operating; balance the budget; support tenants in maintaining successful tenancies; help overcome tenants' issues relating to addictions and health problems; create and sustain community partnerships; and continue to tell the incredible stories of hardship and success experienced by our tenants every day.

The Board of Directors

Our board members include both community members and tenants. This kind of partnership is unique in the supportive housing sector. Tenants play a full voting role in the deliberations of the Board and offer the "insider's" perspective. Our dedicated and knowledgeable board members help sustain the organization as well as build capacity so we can meet the growing needs of the vulnerable population that we serve.

Volunteers

Each year, close to 50 volunteers have an opportunity to join the Options Bytown community for holiday celebrations at Christmas and Thanksgiving as well as through-out the year to support some of our lifeskills activities for tenants and to raise funds for the organization. Community members are welcome to contact Options Bytown to learn more.



Executive Director's Message

In 2012 we were able to increase the number of people we can support, thanks to our first multi-year grant from the Ottawa United Way. The funds cover housing case management services to our clients in Ottawa Community Housing apartment communities. By combining case management with the housing supports provided in our resource centres, we help the most vulnerable residents to stabilize their lives and get help to improve their health, increase their lifeskills, and reach realistic goals including successful, long-term housing. Each case is different and each case tells a story of overcoming personal challenges in the areas of mental health, addictions, physical health, poverty, lack of employment skills and social isolation.

Options Bytown's strength lies in our client-centred focus. We work with each tenant to match the supports that best meet their needs. In the past year, we have observed a number of growing challenges amongst our tenants and clients, and we are working on delivering services to respond to these needs. Together with partners at CMHA, Ottawa Salus and Housing Help, we are establishing a hoarding response working group to address this growing health and safety concern. We have also launched a series of lifeskills training sessions with tenants in response to the need to improve skills in such areas as coping with stress, managing a household and a budget, getting along with neighbours, manoeuvring in the health care system and much more. The Lifeskills Training Program was developed with the help of a grant from the Community Foundation of Ottawa two years ago. We continue to seek additional funding to sustain this program.

Supportive housing builds a strong and healthy community. The services we provide are in line with the Province of Ontario's policy shift from short term shelter to long term housing and supports to address homelessness. This approach is a key component in the 10-year Local Housing and Homelessness Plan that the City of Ottawa will be submitting to the Province very soon. Options Bytown is poised to play an active role in implementing this plan that will improve the plight of the homeless to find a home and a community where they can live and enrich their lives.

Lorraine Bentley

Options Bytown Non-Profit Housing Corporation Statement of Operations

Our Tenants and Clients

For the year ending December 31	2012	2011
REVENUE		
Consolidated Homelessness Prevention Program	695,727	684,007
Ottawa Community Housing Corporation (OCHC)	344,928	336,516
Support in Social Housing (SSH)	214,650	204,000
Homelessness Partnership Strategy (HPS)	371,998	400,308
Steward Street (CCOC)	75,911	54,750
United Way	36,324	-
Tenants' Rent Received	226,426	226,138
Donations	13,560	28,138
Interest and other revenues	25,507	12,890
Small Projects	15,098	-
Amortization of deferred contributions	104,739	98,098
	2,124,868	2,044,917
EXPENSES		
Administrative fees and services	41,340	27,319
Amortization of capital assets	109,569	108,904
Bad debts	1,534	2,148
Board expenses and volunteer services	10,000	11,251
Insurance	8,748	9,142
Office	44,049	70,407
Other Rent	5,935	3,430
Repairs, maintenance & security	91,140	72,683
Salaries and benefits	1,484,962	1,467,642
Staff training and travel	25,763	21,040
Tenants' rent disbursed	226,426	226,138
Tenant Services	29,844	32,128
	2,079,300	2,052,232
Excess (deficiency) of revenue over expenses for the year	45,568	(7,315)

Before moving to OB, I would worry about having a place where my dog and I could have a place to live together in a safe place. I started my journey at Options Bytown's Stewart St. building where I had a chance to be with my dog after 2 months of being separated. My dog is my best friend and he keeps me happy and healthy. I then had the opportunity to have a bachelor unit at the Options Bytown apartment building on Cumberland St. Here my dog and I are grateful for having privacy in a safe, clean, affordable place to live with more room to move and play.



Sarah's logic and Juli's rational, no non-sense approach to life as well as everyone's kind ear to listen to my ramblings and giving me a sounding board for my ideas and thoughts keep me somewhat sane :)

My dog, who I rescued, loves Belinda and Joyce's calming ear rubs – and if he could talk would say he never wants to leave the office. I really appreciated having a personal visit in May from the Community Veterinary Outreach for the annual checkups, shots and a huge bag of premium dog food – it was a cost I could not afford on my own. The collective kitchen allows me to try new recipes and having the new gardening group will get me access to fresh fruit and vegetables.

Living at Options Bytown also helps me socialize and not isolate. It is in a great location where we can access many services such as discount stores, food banks and parks for my dog.

The help that we get not only include the Housing Support Workers but the maintenance staff as well. Simple things like being able to have an air conditioner installed may seem trivial but it makes a big difference. Knowing that there are kind and compassionate staff cleaning and maintaining the building makes a big difference and helps us feel at home.

Written by an Options Bytown tenant