

CENTRETOWN CHURCHES SOCIAL ACTION COMMITTEE (CCSAC)
507 Bank Street, Ottawa, ON K2P 1Z5
www.centretownchurches.org



NEWSLETTER
Spring/Summer 2016

CCSAC'S AGM

CCSAC's Annual General Meeting was well attended on April 20 at First Baptist Church. Reverend Scott Kindred-Barnes of First Baptist gave the opening prayer.

This year's guest speaker was Rachel Robinson, Executive Director of The Well/La Source, a drop-in centre for women and their children. Since 1984 the Well has offered support to marginalized and vulnerable women who live in either shelters or boarding houses with little or no access to some of the basic amenities of life. Rachel emphasized the sense of community that the Well provides by giving women who live lives of loneliness a sense of belonging. Looking forward, Rachel wants The Well to evolve from a charity model to a social justice one, in which the focus would be on helping people develop work-related skills thereby enabling them to find employment to help ensure a more secure access to food and housing.

CCSAC Chairperson, Kristine Burr prefaced her annual report by expressing the sadness that CCSAC had felt at the loss of the strong leadership of former Chairperson, Paul Dole, who passed away in November, 2015.

In her report Kristine mentioned that one of the highlights of 2015 was a retreat in February for CCSAC and Food Centre board members. Joe Gunn of Citizens for Public Justice facilitated the full-day event. The day's discussion focused on how CCSAC could better help support the Food Centre, and how to actively advocate for food security, adequate housing and the general sustainability of life for many who live in the downtown area.

The retreat gave impetus for further actions during 2016: a new member's information package, and a much improved website were developed. CCSAC

also made strides during the past year in strengthening the links between our member churches and in finding ways to highlight the many initiatives these congregations are undertaking to help those in need.

CCSAC's main priority remains the Centretown Emergency Food Centre, which unfortunately continues to face serious challenges from growing demand and rising food prices. These challenges were further highlighted in the reports of both Treasurer, Joe Courtright, and Food Centre Coordinator, Kerry Kaiser. In spite of the generous donations from member churches and individuals, and grants from both municipal and federal governments, CCSAC ended 2015 with a deficit. At the same time, the number of people accessing the Food Centre has increased because of the added emergency shelters in our catchment area, partly due to temporary housing for government - supported refugees.

Reverend Beth Bretzlaff of St. John the Evangelist Anglican Church offered a prayer at the installation of new officers for 2016, and Reverend David Illman-White of Centretown United Church gave the closing prayer and benediction.

**NEWS FROM CENTRETOWN EMERGENCY
FOOD CENTRE (CEFC)**

In reporting on the Centretown Food Centre, the most obvious item to note is the unfortunate drop in food and monetary donations that the Food Centre has experienced for the past few months. That, combined with a further increase in the numbers of people we are serving, including recent immigrant families living in the Y and in nearby City-sponsored housing, means further economic stress and extra workload for our volunteers. It is also noteworthy that since late December 2015, we have registered 52 immigrant families, many with over 9 people.

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