

CENTRETOWN CHURCHES SOCIAL ACTION COMMITTEE (CCSAC)

507 Bank Street, Ottawa, ON K2P 1Z5

www.centretownchurches.org



NEWSLETTER

Summer/Fall 2017

WALK-A-THON – WALK FOR THE FOOD CENTRE RETURNS

CCSAC is once again running the “Walk for the Centre” to raise much-needed funds for the Centretown Emergency Food Centre. Last year’s walk was a great success. As well as funds, it raised awareness about the need for food security for many people living in Central Ottawa.

This year’s walk takes place Sunday, October 15 from 1:30 to 4:00pm, and once again begins and ends at City Hall. A scenic 3.5 km route along the Rideau Canal will offer an opportunity to enjoy the autumn leaves during our most colourful season. A shorter walk up to Parliament Hill is also available for those preferring a shorter jaunt. Or sponsor a walker, if you don’t feel inclined to walk yourself!

Popular a cappella choir, the Glebelles, will perform during registration from 1:30 pm. At 2 pm, the walk will be officially launched by Ottawa Centre Councillor Catherine McKenney. CCSAC welcomes walkers and supporters of all ages to come, join the fun. Circle the calendar for “Walk for the Centre” on Sunday afternoon October 15th.

CCSAC’S BRIEF TO POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGY CONSULTATIONS

In response to Employment and Social Development Canada’s (ESDC) initiative to consult with Canadians to develop a Canadian Poverty Reduction Strategy, CCSAC submitted a brief, on June 18, 2017, outlining its proposals on what it thought should be included in such a strategy. CCSAC’s brief focused on the need for affordable housing and an income security system: the two aspects of poverty that have the greatest impact on the lives of the clients of the Centretown Emergency Food Centre.

CCSAC commended the federal government’s intention to set aside \$11.2 billion over the next 11 years to build, renew and repair Canada’s stock of affordable housing. CCSAC is however concerned that this allocation of funds will be delayed until 2018 or well into the future. We also recommended an additional \$2 billion be made available to make up for the deficit in programs for affordable housing during the last couple of decades.

With regards to income security, CCSAC supported the federal government’s recent and planned initiatives to provide support for low-income workers and the unemployed as outlined in the ESDC Discussion Paper on Poverty Reduction. As a longer-term goal CCSAC supports Citizens for Public Justice’s calls for an income security system where “everyone has access to the basic necessities of life.”

Representatives from CCSAC and CEFC met with staff of Ottawa-Centre MP Catherine McKenna on June 28 to deliver a copy of CCSAC’s brief to the Canadian Poverty Reduction Strategy and to discuss its recommendations.

NEWS FROM CENTRETOWN EMERGENCY FOOD CENTRE (CEFC)

This summer the Centretown Emergency Food Centre faced a shortage of donations, a high volume of clients with children in tow, and volunteers on holidays. But with air conditioning in the client room, purchased with a special grant from the City of Ottawa, the Centre was cool, even in the hottest weather.

Due to low food donations in July and August, the Centre purchased 95% of the food for clients, but some unexpected donations from loyal donors helped us purchase what we needed.

Summer student, Briana DeJonge, finished her contract in August. Earlier in the year, she completed her social work placement for Carleton University at the Centre. Briana was a great asset at the Centre. This fall, we will welcome a new Carleton placement student, Rebecca Anderson.

On a sad note my assistant, Gladys McClement, resigned in August due to health reasons. She will be greatly missed. My new part-time helper is Aidan Grapes.

To date this year, our client numbers have declined slightly, compared to last year. This probably reflects the resettlement of large refugee families from Centretown to more permanent housing in other areas of the City, but their rooms at the YMCA will fill up again quickly.

Looking ahead to the fall, we are grateful to the Bytown Ottawa Rotary Club for organizing a food drive for us at Loblaws on Isabella Street on Sept. 16. I look forward to participating in CCSAC's Walk for the Centre, an important fundraising event. As well, I will be speaking at various churches this fall. Meeting the congregation of our member churches is always a highlight for me. In closing, I want to thank all our member churches and donors for continuing to support our work.

Kerry Kaiser, Coordinator

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - AGM

CCSAC held its Annual General Meeting on April 24 hosted by the Church of the Ascension. The opening prayer was given by Rev. Rhonda Waters, priest of their church.

Guest speaker Angela Keller-Herzog from Ottawa Centre Refugee Action (OCRA) spoke about refugee sponsorship and shared lessons learned from their experience. She noted that the social fabric of community is strengthened when many people are involved in sponsorship and concluded that, as people get to know their neighbours, help and encourage each other and take on community projects, it is more likely they will reject political agendas of fear, discrimination and racism.

Reports for 2016 were presented. In her report, CCSAC Chair Kristine Burr announced the 50th anniversary of CCSAC this year and gave some history of its formative years. Joe Courtright, CCSAC Treasurer, highlighted a 24% increase in revenue over 2015 with the greatest increases in Contributions from Member Churches and Special Events Fundraising. At the same time expenses declined by 2% due to careful control by the management of the Food Centre. Kerry Kaiser, Centretown Emergency Food Centre (CEFC) Coordinator, reported a higher number of clients because many refugees are living in shelters served by the CEFC.

Father Jim Fiori offered words and prayers to install CCSAC officers: Kristine Burr, Chair; Joe Courtright,

Treasurer; Mary Mussell and Anne Whitehurst, Co-Secretaries.

Rev. Canon Jim Beall gave the closing prayer and benediction.

VOLUNTEER DINNER

On May 31, CCSAC held its Annual Volunteer Appreciation Dinner at Centretown United Church. It is an occasion for CCSAC to host a dinner to recognize and thank the many volunteers for their hard work and dedication to serving the clients of the Centretown Food Centre (CEF). A small reception allowed CCSAC members and volunteers to mix and mingle before enjoying a delicious buffet dinner prepared by the Centretown Church Women's Committee (UCW). Reverend Cheryl Hanna of Fourth Avenue Baptist church offered the grace. In a short speech, the CEFC's Coordinator, Kerry Kaiser, praised the important role played by the volunteers in enabling the food Centre to help those in our community who are in need.

Father Murray of St. Barnabas Anglican Church gave the closing prayer and benediction at the end of a wonderful evening of fellowship and thanks.

FOOD CENTRE HOURS

Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays & Fridays: 12 pm to 2:00 pm

UPCOMING EVENTS

Sunday, October 15, 1:30 pm at Ottawa City Hall: CCSAC Walk-a-thon for the Centretown Emergency Food Centre.

Saturday, October 21, 7:00 pm: Reformation Concert at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Kent and Wellington. Free-will offering for the Centretown Emergency Food Centre.

Friday, November 3 at 9:30 am: CCSAC Ecumenical Service for Social Justice at Holy Canadian Martyrs Church, 100 Main Street.