



CCSAC NEWSLETTER

CENTRETOWN CHURCHES SOCIAL
ACTION COMMITTEE

July 2020

Executive:

Chair: Kristine Burr
Vice-chair: Elizabeth Kent
Secretary: Mary Mussell
Treasurer: Janet Rivers
Communications & Newsletter
Editor: John Pedersen
Facebook Coordinator: Anisha
Eipe

Member Churches:

Blessed Sacrament
Canadian Martyrs
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Christ Church Cathedral
Church of the Ascension
Dominion-Chalmers United
Eglise unie St-Marc
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Fourth Avenue Baptist
Glebe-St. James United
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St. Andrew's Presbyterian
St. Barnabas Anglican
St. Giles Presbyterian
St. John the Evangelist Anglican
St. Matthew's Anglican
St. Patrick's Basilica
St. Peter's Lutheran
St. Peter & St. Paul's Anglican
St. Theresa's Roman Catholic
Southminster United
Trinity Anglican

Our mission:

To unite Christians of all denominations through joint participation in social projects and prayer.

Get in Touch!

We would love to hear from you!:

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CCSAC's Annual General Meeting

On May 28, CCSAC held its Annual General Meeting. As with many other organizations during these unsettling times of COVID-19, 35 CCSAC members and guests, including several clergy from our member churches, met virtually via zoom.com. Rev. Rhonda Waters of Ascension Anglican church led us in the opening prayer.

Chair, Kristine Burr, in her Annual Report, highlighted several items from 2019. Among them was CCSAC's very successful 4th annual "Walk for the Centre", which attracted nearly 200 people, and raised over \$20,000 for the Centretown Emergency Food Centre (CEFC). She also duly noted that CCSAC promotes its work and reaches out to member churches and the community at large through its website (www.centretownchurches.org), its revamped newsletter, and thanks to Anisha Eipe, a much improved Facebook page.

Treasurer, Joe Courtright, in his Financial Report, was happy to report that thanks to generous contributions from member churches and individuals, and funds raised by the Walkathon, CCSAC is in a good financial situation going into 2020.

Everyone was pleased to see Kerry Kaiser, CEFC Coordinator, at the AGM after being away on sick leave for several weeks, and who is now working from home. In her report, Kerry, noted that during 2019, the Food Centre served a total of 9,052 clients with a per-person food cost of \$9.51. She also noted the essential role that its volunteers played, through their contribution of 10,500 hours, in the Centre's ability to respond effectively to the needs of its clients.

Kristine said she would be remiss if she failed to talk a bit about 2020 and the uncertainty that lies ahead because of COVID-19. While some of our traditional activities may not be possible, CCSAC is hoping to do another walkathon on October 4 and is looking at how best that can be accomplished to ensure a safe and healthy walk for all.

Martha Musgrove, the Chair of our new Outreach Committee, gave an update on talks she and the Committee had last summer and fall with faith and non-faith groups about social justice and poverty issues. She said the same issues of affordable housing and income insecurity kept coming up at these talks. The Committee was also instrumental in bringing to the Mayor's attention the lack of cooling centres for the city's disadvantaged in centretown during the early heat wave in May.

In her invitation to Allison Dingle, Chair CEFC Management Committee, to give an update on the Food Centre, Kristine thanked her for her time and dedication, as well as that of a small team of staff and volunteers, for helping to ensure the efficient running of the Food Centre during the COVID crisis. See the following article for further details about the CEFC update.

Kristine thanked both Joseph Cartwright and Anne Whitehurst, outgoing Treasurer and co-Secretary respectively, for their excellent service to CCSAC during their time as members of the executive. Rev. Karen Dimock of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church offered words and prayers to install the new officers for CCSAC and CEFC. Rev. Jim Pot of Knox Presbyterian Church gave the closing prayer and benediction.

Food Centre Update

With the outbreak of COVID-19 in Ottawa, CEFC's Management Committee quickly enacted changes to its operations to ensure that the Centre could continue to serve those in need. Starting on March 16, Coordinator Kerry Kaiser switched operations from volunteers serving clients at individual stations to clients receiving prepackaged bags of food from behind a counter, followed a week later by a move out of the basement to the former chapel of Centretown United Church. To further ensure the safety and health of staff, volunteers and clients, the Food Centre started operating with a small core of morning volunteers, only two per shift, and our honorariums.

The work of the Ottawa Food Bank and its dedicated staff have been indispensable in helping to ensure that the Food Centre has enough food supplies to distribute to its clients. The Centre has been able to purchase any additional items it needs thanks to the financial generosity of



Summer student Kevin Chatter and Acting Coordinator Billy El-Cheihk in PPE prepare to serve Food Centre clients.

both individuals and businesses. For example, in April Floral Hall Brewery's founder David Longbottom presented a cheque for \$2,500 to help with immediate needs, and promised to donate 5% of its takeout food sales to the Centre.

The number of clients the Food Centre serves has declined somewhat since March mainly due to the fact that some of the clients are receiving extra support, such as CERB, from the federal government. However, while the Food Centre served a total of 714 people during four days of operation in April 2019, the Centre was still able to serve 573 people in April of this year when it was open for only two days a week. Clearly, the Centre remains an essential service for many during the COVID-19 crisis, including a significant number of families. In spite of the decline in numbers, the CEFC has seen an increase in the number of new clients each month.

CEFC thanks Acting Coordinator Billy El-Cheihk and custodian Keith McNamara for their extraordinary dedication and practical ideas during these challenging times for those who depend on our support for life's essentials, especially those who are currently experiencing isolation, anxiety and stress.

The Haven Youth Centre

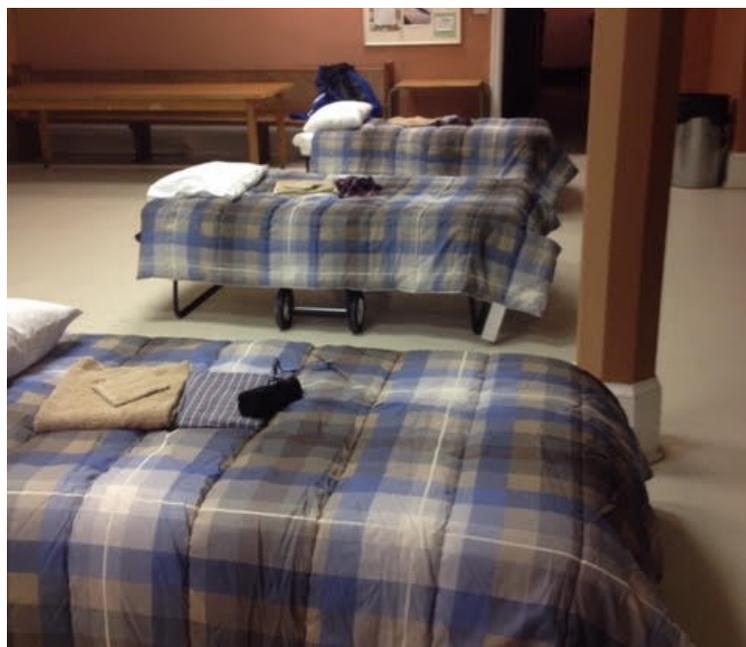
In this our 2nd article in a series on outreach programs run by or out of CCSAC member churches, we would like to highlight The Haven Youth Care Shelter of Restoring Hope Ministries, Ottawa, which operates out of First Baptist Church, at the corner of Elgin and Laurier.

Since 2008, The Haven Youth Care Centre has provided a safe emergency refuge from nightfall to morning for 15-18 homeless youth, both young men and women between the ages of 16-24. The youth are also connected to resources within the city which will help them with finding housing, finishing school or obtaining help for addictions and mental health problems. With the outbreak of COVID-19 in Ottawa, the youth were nervous that the centre would close its doors. However, thanks to the generosity of many in our community, the Haven has been able to remain open, but with reduced services from five nights to four (Fridays to Mondays). The Haven is also taking extra steps to assure good hygiene at the centre when it is open.

In response to the many needs of youth at this time, the Centre has set up a temporary daytime drop-in for youth at First Baptist on Tuesdays, Wednesday and Thursday from 12-3 pm.

For further information about The Haven Youth Care Centre, including further details about the Centre's response to COVID-19, visit the website restoringhope.ca.

Restoring Hope asks us to keep them in their prayers as they navigate this historic time, and do their best to operate with both compassion and wisdom.



Haven Centre ready to welcome our homeless youth.