

## Chair's report

On behalf of the members of the Board of Directors and myself, it is a privilege to welcome you to the 36th Annual General Meeting of the Lowertown Community Resource Centre (LCRC). It is also an honour to present to you the statement of activities of the LCRC for the year 2012-2013.

If I had to give the last year a name, it would be *The year of two birds with one stone*. All the players: workers, managers, volunteers, and administrators gave the best of themselves to maintain the spirit, the quality of services and the resources offered to the residents of Lowertown, this despite a context of perpetual change.

The year was off to a great start. As its first task, the Board of Directors (BOD) began the selection process for the Executive Director position in April 2012. By the end of the competition, Sonia Pouliot won the permanent position of Executive Director.

Upon taking the reigns of the organisation, Sonia conquered challenges, especially by providing the LCRC with a strong financial management to buffer the impact of unexpected funding cuts. She was able to make a place for herself by providing continuity in both the philosophy and values that have always defined the Centre. The LCRC team has spirit and strives for the best, whatever the circumstances.

To prove the point, the team finds innovative solutions to reach their goals successfully by re-evaluating the way things are done, by consolidating partnerships, and by increasing the gamut of funding options.

This year, the Centre increased its visibility thanks to articles on its activities in the Ottawa East EMC, as well as by collaborating with partners in different fields (Lowertown Community Association and ByWard Market BIA). Sonia also participated to the *Entre-Nous* show on community television to promote the Centre to the general public. As well, the Centre's activities can now be followed on *Twitter*.

The BOD, while composed of a majority of new members this year, has been most active in supporting the ED. For example, the directors studied many community issues, especially those regarding harm reduction, or by taking position against the proposed casino in Ottawa.

In human resources matters, the BOD is continuing their review of the LCRC's policies and procedures. In order to take extra care of our employees, we initiated an analysis process regarding insurance coverage which would be compatible with our budget.

The BOD has also supported the Centre with the creation of an evaluation committee. This year, the study focused on the relevance of the emergency fund.

As a member of the BOD, it is satisfying to see the impact of the services offered to residents again this year. Thanks to the support of our funders, we were able to offer quality programs and services to the community.

With this in mind, we are grateful to the City of Ottawa, our main funder, for increasing the financial support they grant us. I would also like to thank United Way for their continued financial commitment to our Early Years program, *Lowertown, Our Home*, and our Youth Program, as well to their many financial contributions to community activities. Thank you, as well, to the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport who provide the bulk of the funding for after school program offered at York Street School. I would like to thank the Trillium Foundation of Ontario for its financial contribution which complements the Ministry's funding of the after school program. Our thanks to *On the Move* program of the Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women, Sports and Physical Activity for funding our girls program, as well as Starbucks for the Leadership Program. Thank you also to the ByWard Market BIA for choosing us, again this year, as the beneficiaries of their Stew Cook-off Contest. I would also like to express our gratitude to the many partners who, not only, help develop certain projects, but also help fund them: Ottawa Community Housing, the John Howard Society, the Lowertown Good Neighbours Community House and le Patro d'Ottawa.

I would also like to mention the support of the Vanier Community Services Centre for the purchasing of programs for our Early Years team.

I also wish to thank all the people who contributed to our funding campaigns, which, this year, allowed us to raise funds for our summer camps and emergency fund.

Finally, I would also like to thank the staff, the members of the Board of Directors and the volunteers of LCRC whose unstinting efforts allowed us to continue our work serving the Lowertown community.

## **A Word from the Interim Executive Director**

It is my pleasure to represent our Executive Director (ED), Sonia Pouliot, at tonight's event. It is also a privilege to be able to speak of her successes and to describe to you the way that she has lead and nurtured the team in the last year.

This year, Sonia made the position her own and really infused it with her own colours. She had just completed one fiscal year before a fall forced her on medical leave. The baton has been passed to me until her return.

Before proceeding, it is important to emphasize Sonia's contributions to our various projects.

Like an artist, Sonia transposed her vision onto the canvas: with our funding as first priority. What was originally shaping up to be a deficit became an opportunity for the Centre. In order to reach that goal, Sonia made difficult, but necessary decisions with graciousness, tact, and accountability.

Sonia armed herself with a well-stocked palette of colours. Following a successful fundraising campaign and a new member selection process, our Board of Directors assembled more members and expertise around the table. For the first time in many years, we have had the pleasure of working with a full Board.

In the face of ever increasing workloads and limited financial resources, Sonia maintains her role as guardian of the spirit and well-being of the team. Sonia believes in maintaining a healthy workplace. To this end, we regularly review and assess our commitments.

In 2012-2013, our workers have strategically combined their activities. New initiatives have emerged from this process: *Lowertown, Our Home* (LOH), our community garden and our Youth Counselling Program joined forces to garden; we advertised our tax clinics to clients from other programs and the results are impressive and promising in terms of better coordination of service.

Sonia's unexpected leave, in addition to the usual daily challenges, has created a lot of upheaval for our team. This said, the team remains competent, creative, and reliable. The quality of our programs and services is undiminished. We are also still very present for residents in their daily life and remain deeply committed to improving their quality of life.

The future looks optimistic with so many colours to craft and work with: a strategic plan, the consolidation of our health and safety committee, the updating of our staff policies, the creation and nurturing of new partnerships, the

streamlining and pairing of staff work plans and evaluation, a study on harm reduction, an evaluation with the residents on the impact of bus tickets and food vouchers, the development of new work methods and the list goes on. Stabilizing our funding, of course, remains a priority.

I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to the members of the Board of Directors for the support they give us each month, with a special mention to the members of the Executive Committee and working sub-committees. Your steadfast commitment to Lowertown is felt on a daily basis.

Finally, I would like to thank the team (staff and agency personnel) for their trust and for all the amazing work accomplished in the last year. Your time and dedication are greatly appreciated. Thanks to you, we are in a position to offer quality programs and services.

Chantal Pomerleau  
Interim Executive Director

## ACTIVITY REPORT

### Funding

#### City of Ottawa

We are pleased to have been granted a 2 % increase in our funding from the City of Ottawa. This money represents LCRC's core funding and the budget that covers the positions of the intake staff, the community developer, the ethno cultural counsellor, the receptionist, the managers and the youth coordinator. Essentially, it's what keeps the Centre running. The City of Ottawa also funds the Youth Centre.

#### United Way:

In the spring of 2012, United Way announced a reduction in our funding by 2.67 %. We adapted our activity planning accordingly for the three programs targeted: our Youth Program, the *Lowertown, Our Home* project, and the Early Years program.

Among the measures taken to mitigate these cuts were the altering of certain positions in the Youth program and the drafting of several funding applications for the *Community Action Grant*. This partnership between the City of Ottawa and United Way grants a maximum of \$ 2000.00 to applications from grassroots community groups. We supported the efforts of the Residents Committee (\$2000.00), the members of the Community Gardening Project (\$ 2000.00), and

the organizing committee of the Community Cleanup (\$ 1200.00) by helping to draft the applications, all of which were successful.

We also participated in the *Ottawa Neighbourhood Social Capital Forum* (ONSCF), a working group funded by United Way, to lobby for long term funding of the *Lowertown, Our Home* project. The group will be presenting a feasibility analysis to donors selected by United Way to explore the possibility of long term funding for LOH.

### **Funding of the Child and Youth Program:**

In a determined effort, we submitted several funding application concurrently for our Child and Youth Program. The following applications were successful : the Trillium Foundation of Ottawa for the amount of \$ 32 900.00 the first year and \$ 36 800.00 the second year; the Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women and Sport and Physical Activity for the *On the Move* program for the Girls Program; as well as Starbucks. The \$ 12 000 received from Starbucks will allow us to provide a Leadership project similar to one offered two years ago, which had to be cut due to budget constraints. Ottawa Community Housing, a key partner in this project, has also invested \$ 3 000.00 to support this project.

The Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport confirmed their funding of \$ 72 000.00 a year, for a period of three years. The funding is confirmed for a total of three years, but the exact amount will be reviewed each year. This money will fund Club 310, an after-school recreation program.

For a third year in a row, with the financial support of United Way and several donations, Muhammad Zaman and Fahd Alhattab organized, on a voluntary basis, the *York Street Ultimate March Break Camp*. Thanks to their initiative, 46 children enjoyed an action-packed March Break. Our thanks to all the volunteers who contributed to the success of that week.

After some serious reflection, we accepted a fundraising activity put forward and organized by one of our Youth Worker's, in partnership with The Standard Luxury Pub on Elgin Street. The night was a huge success, netting almost \$ 4 000.00, which will help fund our summer camps. It was also an opportunity to highlight the Centre and its Youth Programs in the greater community.

We were also very happy to be selected, for the second time, by the ByWard Market BIA as the recipients of the funds collected during their Winterlude Stew Cook-off Contest. This year, the proceeds were shared between the LCRC and another agency. Our share of the profits was \$ 3 160.00. This money will help us fund summer camps for children in Lowertown.

## **Annual Fundraising Campaign**

Our annual fundraising campaign succeeded beyond our hopes and our goal of \$ 12 000.00. Thanks to the generosity of our donors, we collected over \$ 13 000.00. This money will be redistributed to the community through our emergency fund.

## **Funding proposals for other programs**

We submitted many new funding proposals in order to make up the shortfall in our budget. Some of them were successful. Among them, we received \$ 22 000.00 from Desjardins - Caisse populaire Rideau-Vision d'Ottawa for our collective kitchen project. This project continues to be one of the most challenging to fund and to stabilize despite its popularity with residents, who faithfully participate in the sessions.

We also received \$ 6 700.00 from the Community Development Framework (CDF) for a project aimed at increasing community engagement in the ethnocultural community.

The Groupe d'action communautaire francophone (GACF) received \$ 10 000.00 from Community Foundation of Ottawa to fund a community photojournalism project on francophone's and poverty.

Please note that only the successful proposals were mentioned. We are still waiting for confirmation on several others.

## **Services for Adult Clients**

The intake team partially renewed itself this year. We hired a new intake worker to replace Nancy Darisse who won the Program Manager position after serving in an acting capacity for several months. During the transition, the remaining intake worker, as well as the multicultural worker, ensured the stability of the program.

The intake team adapted easily to these changes and provided continuity of service to more than 552 intake clients. The Centre also helped to meet the needs of residents through its Christmas and Back to School Community Store.

As many of our residents live well below the poverty line, the team sets aside funds (the Emergency Fund) to help out in emergency situations by providing bus tickets and food vouchers. This year, for the first time, the funds ran out before the end of the fiscal year. Thanks to the generosity and the expertise of our

Board members, we have created a committee to review the intake service through a study and analysis of our Emergency Fund. Data confirms that most of our residents use this emergency service as a last resort. The fact that we have run out of funds is mainly due to the increasing needs in the community. The workers noticed a significant increase in the number of residents in need, due to recent cuts to Ontario Works and the Ontario Disability Supports Program.

In the fall of 2012, the residents of MacDonald Manor lived through some very difficult situations. Thanks to a partnership with Ottawa Community Housing and Options Bytown, the affected residents were able to participate in debrief sessions. The intake workers also provided a follow-up with residents distressed by the events.

Programs primarily aimed at the ethnocultural community were also very popular: 200 people celebrated Eid al-Adha this fall thanks to the efforts of our multicultural worker and our collective kitchen coordinator, and the contributions of families in the neighbourhood. We also continue to offer a weekly timeslot for women-only free swim at the Lowertown Pool, as well as aerobics classes for female seniors of the ethnocultural community.

The ethnocultural parents group hosted guests, whose presentations were well-received by the participants : a constable from the Ottawa Police Service spoke about youth crime prevention and racial issues ; an education specialist presented a model on communicating with youth ; and a worker from the Ontario Centre for assault prevention demystified the issue of bullying.

As well, Collective kitchens continue to be an excellent means to reach our community, while helping increase food security.

### Services for Children and Youth

The Youth Counselling Program allows us to offer individual support to children and youth living in the neighbourhood and to develop group workshops that are offered to children attending school in Lowertown.

In the spring and fall of 2012, we were able to reach out to the Lowertown youth attending Grade 7 at École secondaire publique De La Salle. In accordance with the provincial Safe at School campaign, the LCRC Youth Counsellor partnered with school staff to train them in intervention skills following the model from the *Centre ontarien de prévention des agressions*.

Thanks to the collaboration of the Orleans-Cumberland Community Resource Centre, École élémentaire catholique Ste-Anne and York Street Public School,

children identified as at-risk by teachers or their parents participated in two specialized summer camps (with our counsellor) : one on managing anxiety and the other on social skills.

The introduction to gardening workshops have been well enjoyed by the students of Ste-Anne and York primary schools in Lowertown. These workshops provide them with an opportunity to participate in the life of their community and to taste their own harvest.

In addition to counselling programs, we offer, in English, recreation oriented programming to children and youth of the area. This includes Club 310, an after school program offered to 60 children at York Street Public School; a homework club; a drop-in for youth; a program just for girls; and a summer camp.

The Homework Club collaborated with a new partner this year: Sage Youth, a literacy, academic support, and mentoring program. This specialized program, offered once a week, helped enrich our usual programming.

Thanks to its long standing partnership with York Street Public School, the Youth Program helped 13 youth acquire their babysitting certificate. Many thanks to our Funder *General Mills* and their *Healthy Kids* program for their support.

In the fall, the young women from the Youth Centre participated in the *On the Move* program and took part in such activities as indoor climbing and gymnastics.

For the fifth year in a row, we had the pleasure of working with One World Arts, an organization that provides global issue awareness through the arts. The youth had the opportunity to express themselves through a variety of mediums (drama, slam poetry, dance and computer animation) and, for the third consecutive year, to showcase their talents and creations for family and friends in the 2012 Awesome Arts Festival presented on May 24th.

The Youth program also collaborated with the University of Ottawa in a research practicum for the masters of social science program. A placement student with the LCRC used the girls' only drop-in as an opportunity to discuss structural violence faced by girls and young women in today's world. Within the scope of a workshop facilitated by One World Arts, the girls worked together on various art mediums (radio-blogging, creation piece, etc.). They created an art piece (shield) that represented their inner-self and also reflected elements from the group discussions. The participants had the pleasure of presenting their shields at this year's Awesome Art Festival.

During the year, Sonia organized a gathering to meet providers of services for children and youth in Lowertown. The goal of the meeting was to get a better picture of the services offered for that demographic in the neighbourhood, to get to know each other better, to work together, and potentially establish new partnerships. In this era of budget cuts, it is essential to maintain quality services that respond appropriately to the needs of Lowertown youth. The insufficient number of services and the challenges experienced by our youth (ages 13 to 17) in accessing them testify to the importance of continuing to offer our leadership project.

### Services for children under 6

For the second year, we have partnered with our colleagues at Rideau-Rockcliffe Community Resource Centre to offer *School is Cool*, a school readiness program. This time the program was offered in the Overbrook-Forbes neighbourhood. The program was a success, serving the maximum number of children (16), half of them from ethnocultural families.

In the fall, the Early Years program participated in the 10th Anniversary celebrations for the Early Years Centres of Ontario. 2 800 Ottawa residents participated in a day of activities and free information at the Nature Museum. The Ottawa-Vanier Early Years kiosk was very busy and enjoyed by many children and parents.

For the first time, Lowertown played host to the *Growing Healthy Screening Clinic*, sponsored by Ottawa Public Health. Families from Lowertown were able to access professional evaluations in the fields of dental health, immunization, nutritional health, speech therapy, and behaviour.

This year, our five-year partnership with Katimavik, a 30-year-old federal program, came to an abrupt end when their funding was terminated. This represents a serious loss of volunteer hours for the Early Years program. A new partnership with Algonquin College enabled us to host a work placement student.

This winter, we were informed that the Early Years program will fall under the Ministry of Education as of January 2014. Our funding will be maintained until March 2014. We don't have more information at this time, but we are working to stabilize our funding for this project.

### Various Community Projects

The stork paid our community programs a visit this year: both our community developer and Lowertown, our Home (LOH) coordinator left on maternity leave during this period.

Community activities occupy an important place in the Centre calendar. Whether it be organizing the community garden, the Good Food Box program, the income tax clinics or our community celebrations, our goal is always the same : to improve the quality of life of community members and encourage their participation in the community life of Lowertown.

In May 2012, Lowertown Celebration, our annual neighbourhood fair, was once again a hit, with 450 participants. 75 women from the neighbourhood celebrated International Women's day with enthusiasm. In July 2012, Jules Morin Park turned into an outdoor movie theatre. Approximately 175 attended each of the movie nights. The families also enjoyed the popcorn and the play presented before the movies by students from Ste-Anne school.

A lot of energy was also put into an advertising blitz for the Good Food Box Program with great results: the number of orders went from 5 in March 2012 to 23 in March 2013.

Our income tax team also reviewed our volunteer tax clinic for strategies on how to better serve the community: 309 returns were completed, 105 of them from new clients. The average income of our clients was \$ 11 660.00. With this information in mind, the tax team is considering implementing a new format next year which would enable us to complete more returns and cut down on waiting time for clients.

In the scope of the *Safe Place to Live* project, 15 residents from MacDonald Manor attended monthly gatherings and participated in a variety of safety related workshops like first aid training, personal safety and wellness.

In a partnership with students from the University of Ottawa, the GACF project (Groupe d'action communautaire francophone) participated in an evaluation process. The goal was to provide the group with ways to improve their operating style. The evaluation was revealing. Despite the many strong points of the committee, several interesting recommendations were made, among them suggestions on how to better recruit and retain members and internal operation strategies.

*Lowertown, Our Home (LOH)*

Always hard at work, the *Lowertown, Our Home* project (LOH) is a gathering of a residents committee and 14 partner agencies. Following our strategic visioning retreat in November 2011, we were able to put in place a new operating model focused on the importance of a positive approach and the creation of small working groups (of residents and partners). This new approach allows the residents to be engaged in the projects on a short term basis, in a concrete and validating way. This strategy has proven to be successful.

The Community Cleanup of 2012 was a great example of this new strategy. The organizing committee, composed of six residents and four community partners, were able to engage 200 people to participate in this activity. Representatives of all government levels provided a helping hand. The residents really appreciated their elected officials' participation, which was seen as a sign that they have Lowertown to heart.

Since 2011, we continued to collaborate with the *Ottawa Neighbourhood Social Capital Forum* (ONSCF). In the last year, we contributed to a common approach on the creation of evaluation tools for community projects. We have started using these evaluation tools for data recording, which will help us to understand what works, what is relevant and what changes need to happen in the community.

In November 2012, LOH was invited to present at the Ottawa Community Housing Partners Forum. The coordinator presented the project's successes, learnings, and the way it does business to more than 115 people, from 56 community organizations. This generated a lot of interest and visibility for the LOH project.

In December 2012, the residents and community partners of the LOH project gathered to celebrate a successful year and great collaborations. On Appreciation Night, the assembled group celebrated the end of the year and recognized everyone's commitment and contributions to the project.

Following a long term collaboration with Crime Prevention Ottawa (CPO) and the success of our project, LOH was featured in a report entitled *Why Community-Based Crime Prevention Works: Case Studies from Three Ottawa Communities*. This document sums up the conclusion of their evaluations and highlights the impressive results achieved in Lowertown. In May 2012, we had the pleasure of presenting these results to the City councillors and the CPO Board of Directors. We were also sought out by the media.

In February 2013, the City of Ottawa's Civic Events Funding Program awarded us \$ 2 300.00 to organize Winterfest, which took place on Family Day in February. Once again, this event, organized in partnership with the residents

and the Lowertown Community Association from the west side of the neighbourhood, was a huge success. Over 200 people had a great time on a beautiful winter's day.

Lowertown, our Home's community partners are:

- Action Housing
- Centre des services Guigues
- Crime Prevention Ottawa
- John Howard Society of Ottawa
- Lowertown Community Resource Centre
- Lowertown East Residents
- Lowertown Good Neighbours Community House
- Mathieu Fleury, Rideau-Vanier Ward Councillor
- Options Bytown
- Ottawa Community Housing
- Ottawa Police Service
- Patro d'Ottawa
- Shepherds of Good Hope
- United Way

### Community collaborations, liaisons and partnerships

Again this year, the LCRC staff participated in a variety of committees, groups or community activities. Here are some of them:

- Catholic Immigration Centre of Ottawa
- Chico - Chikonzero G. Chazunguza (Professional drummer)
- Collaboration with *Entraide budgétaire* in regards to the Income Tax Clinics and GACF project
- *Conseil des écoles catholiques du Centre-Est*
- Financial management for City for All Women Initiative (CAWI)
- I luv 2 groove Dance Education
- Member of Just Food
- Member of the African and Caribbean Health Initiative, Somerset West Community Health Centre
- Member of the ByWard Market Safety and Security Meeting
- Member of the Coalition of Community Health and Resource Centres (CHCRC)
- Member of the *Coalition pour Prévenir l'itinérance chez les Francophones d'Ottawa* (CPIFO)
- Member of the Community Developers Network (CHCRC)
- Member of the *Groupe d'Action communautaire francophone* (GACF)
- Member of the Healthy Smiles Ontario working group, Ottawa Public Health

- Member of the Intake Workers Network (CHCRC)
- Member of the Multicultural Health Coalition Group
- Member of the Ottawa Neighbourhood Social Capital Forum (ONSCF)
- Member of the Ottawa-Vanier Early Years Centre
- Member of the Youth Community Developers Network (CHCRC)
- Member Ottawa-Vanier Best Start planning table
- Participation at the Community Development Framework Learning Forum (CDF)
- Participation at the Ottawa Police Services public consultation on the Traffic Stop Race Data Collection Project
- Participation at the Ottawa Police Services public consultation ; Let's Chat About Priorities: "A Plan Where Everyone Matters"
- Representation on the Board of Directors of the Lowertown Good Neighbours Community House
- Site Needle and Syringe Program
- Support to City for All Women Initiative (CAWI)
- Support to the Beausoleil and Beauséjour Tenants Associations
- Support to the Ottawa Community Development Framework (CDF)

## Acknowledgements

Thank you to our funders:

- Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women and Sport and Physical Activity and its *On the Move* program
- City of Ottawa
- City of Ottawa- Civic Events Funding Program
- Community Development Framework (CDF)
- Desjardins - Caisse populaire Rideau-Vision d'Ottawa
- General Mills and its *Healthy Kids* program
- Grey Sisters of the Immaculate Conception (CAWI)
- Just Food (Ottawa Community Garden Network)
- Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport of Ontario
- Ottawa Community Foundation
- Service Canada – Canada Summer Jobs
- Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (CAWI)
- Starbucks
- Status of Women (CAWI – City for All Women Initiative)
- Telus
- Trillium Foundation of Ontario

- United Way Ottawa
- Vanier Community Service Centre

Thank you to all our community partners:

- Action Housing
- Algonquin College (new partnership)
- ALSO
- ByWard Market Business Improvement Area (BIA)
- Caring and Sharing Exchange
- Catholic Family Service Ottawa
- *Centre de services Guigues – Aging at Home*
- *Centre ontarien de prévention des agressions (COPA)*
- *Cité collégiale*
- Coalition of Community Health and Resource Centres of Ottawa
- *Conseil des écoles catholiques du Centre-Est*
- *Conseil des écoles publiques de l'Est de l'Ontario*
- Councillor Mathieu Fleury's office – Ward 12 Rideau-Vanier
- Crime Prevention Ottawa
- Eastern Ottawa Resource Centre
- *École primaire catholique Ste-Anne*
- *École secondaire publique De La Salle*
- Frontier College
- Good Food in Schools
- Healthy Babies, Healthy Children, City of Ottawa
- Home Support Services, City of Ottawa
- John Howard Society of Ottawa
- Just Food (Ottawa Community Garden Network)
- Katimavik
- Laundry Coop
- Lowertown Community Association
- Lowertown Good Neighbours Community House
- Lowertown Pool, City of Ottawa
- Notre-Dame Cathedral
- OC Transpo
- One World Arts
- Options Bytown
- Orléans-Cumberland Community Resource Centre
- Ottawa Community Housing

- Ottawa Folklore Centre
- Ottawa Food Bank
- Ottawa Police Service
- Ottawa Public Health, City of Ottawa
- Ottawa Public Library -Rideau
- Ottawa-Carleton District School Board
- Ottawa-Vanier Early Years Centre
- *Patro d'Ottawa*
- RBC Royal Bank Bluesfest Ottawa
- Rideau Street Metro
- Sage Youth (new partnership)
- Shepherds of Good Hope
- Social Planning Council of Ottawa
- Somerset West Community Health Centre
- *Université du Québec en Outaouais*
- University of Ottawa
- Vanier Community Service Centre
- York Street Public School