



CCSAC NEWSLETTER

CENTRETOWN CHURCHES SOCIAL ACTION COMMITTEE

February 2024

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Vice-Chair: Emmy Verdun
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Church of the Ascension
Dominion-Chalmers United
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Quaker Ottawa Meeting
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St. John the Evangelist Anglican
St. Matthew's Anglican
St. Patrick's Basilica
St. Peter's Lutheran
St. Peter & St. Paul's Anglican
St. Teresa'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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The Message Is “Shop Thrift”

Dan Therrien, President of the St. Vincent de Paul Stores (Ottawa), was a guest speaker at the December 4 meeting of CCSAC. The St. Vincent de Paul Society is a lay Catholic organization. Founded in France, it was started by a group of friends in response to the needs of the poor after the 1832 cholera epidemic. The Society began in Ottawa in 1880. The founding activity is a Home Visit to establish a relationship with persons in need. If furniture, household items or clothing is needed, a requisition is given for a St. Vincent de Paul store.

The St. Vincent de Paul stores are not-for-profit corporations with a dual mandate to help needy people as well as make a profit to help people further. The original St. Vincent de Paul store is located on Wellington Street. Other stores are on Merivale Road and in Blossom Park in Gloucester.

When you purchase items from the store, you are helping not only the environment but also the underprivileged in society. Mr. Therrien encouraged us to “shop thrift.”



He pointed out that the profit from St. Vincent de Paul stores stays in the community. To date in 2023, the stores helped 66 individuals and 159 families (including 375 children) with household goods.

Dan was pleased to report that the Ottawa Central Council of St. Vincent de Paul has formed a partnership with Multifaith Housing Initiative to build a housing complex for needy Indigenous and Inuit families. Called “The Anchor”, it will be located on the Julian of Norwich Anglican Church property in Nepean. The Council is also working with North of 60, a project which aims to help food insecurity in Nunuvut.

Over A Year of Successful Operations

By: Susan Palmai

We believe that Ottawa Public Foods (OPF) is the only 24/7 Outdoor Fridge and Pantry in the city! About 8 or 9 months ago, we heard that the Parkdale Food Centre had moved their fridge and pantry, from outdoors to indoors. Then came the news that they had closed the fridge and pantry completely. However, the Parkdale Food Centre remains open with limited hours.

Why does Ottawa Public Foods work so well when others have not? Here are some reasons. We have a dedicated corps of volunteers who visit the site at 415 MacLaren Street twice a day. We call these our Fridge Checkers/Caretakers. They provide a quick service to check on the temperature of the fridge, place any garbage in the can provided, place any spare food stored in the shed out on the shelves plus other duties as needed. We have occasional drivers who, when a business calls, will pick and deliver donated groceries. We have shoppers who will shop for dairy products with any funds or grocery cards donated through churches. One of our volunteers has offered cooking classes with food donated to OPF and followed the class by posting instructional notices for client.



In our first year of operation, we overcame several obstacles that may well have forced us to consider closing. However, all we could think about were our friends/clients who depended on us staying open. It is not a perfect environment with some folks taking more than their share and others doing without as a result. Hopefully, the next time they visit OPF there will be something left there for them. In order to make food sharing more equitable we do our best to educate the clients/friends/neighbours during the time we are on site.

As was hoped, the community has stepped up to stock the fridge and pantry on a regular basis. Because our volunteers are not present 24/7, we really do not know the extent to which this happens so we have requested photos of the activity put on our Facebook pages and see the evidence. We could not be more pleased!

Landscaping and re-finishing of shelves are planned for the spring in collaboration with OCH and CCHC. We also feel the love and support of CCSAC for our OPF adventure.

Now here's the pitch:

Do you have an hour once or twice a month? A car? A friend/spouse to go with? Become an occasional driver with us.

Do you attend a church which could do a dairy drive (milk, eggs, yogurt cups) once every two or three months? Call us and we will deliver.

Help us to continue to have a small but noticeable impact on our community.