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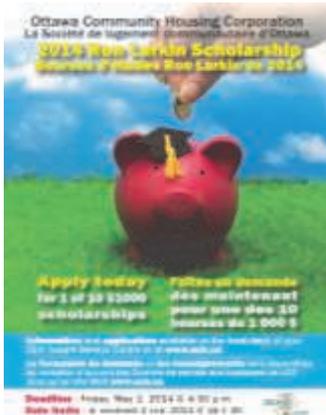
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Ottawa Community Housing Corporation

THE Quarterly OCH Tenant Newsletter

2014 Ron Larkin Scholarship Program Ten \$1000 Awards



Are you entering or enrolled in the first year of a post-secondary program? Have you contributed to your community or city by volunteering your services? If yes, you might be interested in applying for this scholarship.

Ten OCH tenants will be awarded \$1,000 each to help with the costs associated with the achievement of educational goals. A total of \$55,000 will have been awarded to 55 OCH students since the start of the Ron Larkin Scholarship Program in 2008.

To qualify you have to:

- be a registered household member in an OCH community before submitting your application
- be pursuing a post-secondary education (college, trade school or university) leading to a diploma, degree, apprenticeship or other program certification, at an accredited

Canadian institution

- be entering or enrolled in the first year of your program between January 2014 - December 2014 as a full or part-time student
- complete all sections of the application (incomplete applications will not be considered)

Application forms are available on the **home page** of the OCH website at www.och.ca and at the **front counters of all OCH offices**.

For more information contact **Matilda Selormey** at **731-7223 ext. 2309** or info@och.ca

All applications must be received in an OCH office by 4:30 p.m. on Friday, May 2, 2014.

Service Excellence Week

Help celebrate OCH's annual Service Excellence Week and visit your Tenant Service Centre during the week of **June 16 - 20**. There will be surveys, draws for prizes and other activities that highlight OCH's ongoing commitment to providing excellent customer service.



ISSUE 5.2
SPRING
2014



OCH properties are becoming smoke-free as of May 31, 2014

The serious health hazards of second-hand smoke are well-known today.

The majority of OCH tenants choose not to smoke.

OCH adopted a no-smoking policy to create safe and healthy communities for tenants, staff and visitors.

What does this mean to you?

When you sign a lease with OCH, you will agree not to smoke in your unit or anywhere on OCH property as of May 31, 2014.

What if you are waiting for housing with OCH?

If you or a member of your household smokes, OCH will still offer you a home but you must agree not to smoke in your unit or anywhere on OCH property.

What about current tenants who smoke?

Since current tenants' leases do not ban smoking, they will be able to continue to smoke in their home, balconies and private yards until they move or sign a new lease or they can choose to "opt-in" to the no-smoking policy.

This means OCH communities are not smoke-free yet. Over time, as tenants move out, every OCH community will become smoke-free.



For more information, contact one of our Tenant Service Centres or visit our web site at www.och.ca

Tenant Service Centres

Central

731, crois. Chapel Cres.
K1N 1E1
T: 613-564-1235
F: 613-564-8383

East - Est

380, rue Murray St.
K1N 8W1
T: 613-789-4305
F: 613-789-3571

South - Sud

1365, rue Bank St.
K1H 8K8
T: 613-249-0458
F: 613-249-0472

West - Ouest

1485, ave Caldwell Ave.
K1Z 8M1
T: 613-729-3136
F: 613-729-5623

Help with Program Fees



The City of Ottawa Hand in Hand program offers help to low income Ottawa adults and children who want to take part in recreation and culture activities offered at City-run facilities. Up to \$165 a year in fee support is available. Eligible parents or guardians can transfer all, or a part of their Hand in Hand fee support, to a child or children in their household.

You can pick up an application form at any City-run recreation or cultural facility or at a Client Service Centre. The completed application forms are accepted at all City-run recreation or cultural facilities.

Tim Hortons Cleaning the Capital

In 2013, over 80,000 volunteers cleaned the capital during the spring and fall campaigns in more than 1,400 cleanup projects across the city. This spring join the cleanup wave and register your OCH community. You must be registered to be eligible for graffiti and litter cleanup starter kits, which are available upon request. You can register online at www.ottawa.ca or call 3-1-1.



It is a great opportunity for you and your neighbours to come together and help make the public spaces in our city clean and green. If you register during the early bird registration period or submit an online cleanup report you can win prizes!

Tim Hortons Cleaning the Capital spring 2014 dates

March 15 to April 15: Early Bird Registration

April 15 to May 15: Registration

April 25-27: Capital Cleanup Weekend (includes Friday, Saturday and Sunday)

May 15: Registration closes

May 31: Deadline to submit online Cleanup Report

Meet Your Tenant Representatives

Elections were held at the September District Based Committee (DBC) meetings to elect four DBC Chairs and Vice-Chairs for a two year mandate. The four DBC Chairs form 50% of the Tenant Advisory Group (TAG).

The eight newly elected DBC Chairs /Vice-Chairs are:

Position	Central DBC	East DBC	South DBC	West DBC
Chair	Cathryn Munroe	Sandra Pilote	Carole Ladouceur	Ron McCooye
Vice-Chair	Patrick Miller	Jason Tierney	Confidential	Carissa Davis

TAG is made up of eight OCH tenants (four DBC Chairs and four tenants) who are appointed for a two year mandate by the OCH Board of Directors. The TAG members elected Carole Ladouceur as their Chair at the November 12th TAG meeting. Carole will serve as a Director on the OCH Board. The 2013 - 2015 TAG members are:



Patrick Cassidy	Ron McCooye
Shukri D'Jama	Cathryn Munroe
Penny Knox	Juana Peralta
Carole Ladouceur, Chair & Board Director	Sandra Pilote

Congratulations to all our Tenant Representatives!



green corner

Going Green With OCH Community Gardens

Community gardens are growing across the OCH portfolio! Last year there were 22 "official" community gardens, including balcony gardens, raised beds and giving gardens (help yourself to the vegetables and herbs).

The vast majority (82%) of the gardens are vegetable gardens spread throughout OCH in apartment and townhouse communities, providing healthy, nutritious and fresh food for residents.

In 2013, the Senior Organic Gardeners supported gardening for seniors at two locations, Brooke Towers (McLeod Street) and 1041 Wellington. In 2014, they will be expanding to four new OCH locations, Russell Manor, Viewmount, Regina Towers and 800 St. Laurent - more community gardens for OCH!

Hidden Harvest Ottawa has donated fruit trees to several OCH communities and is currently running a campaign to raise funds to purchase 100 fruit bearing trees for OCH communities. For more information, please visit their website at:

<http://ottawa.hiddenharvest.ca/stories/100-trees-for-community-housing/>

Are you interested in developing a community garden? OCH has recently produced a Community Garden Guide that can help you organize a successful food producing community garden. Talk to your Community Development Manager if you would like a copy or would like to know more about community garden initiatives.

Tenant Insurance

Every year, there are OCH tenants who experience a fire or flood where their home and belongings are damaged or destroyed. Ottawa Community Housing's property insurance does not provide coverage for personal belongings unless OCH was negligent in the cause of the disaster. Available statistics from the past couple of years show that only 18% of tenants carried insurance at the time that they experienced a fire. Current OCH tenants are strongly encouraged to purchase insurance.

Beginning in **March 2014**, all **new tenants and tenants who are transferring within OCH** will be required to show proof of insurance prior to signing the lease and moving in. The lease also requires yearly confirmation of insurance coverage.

A tenant insurance package is available through SoHo, an affordable insurance package specifically tailored to social housing tenants. Talk to your Tenant Service Centre if you would like more information about SoHo. You can also go online and check out all the insurance companies that offer tenant insurance. If you are an Ontario Works client or receive Ontario Disability Support benefits, your shelter allowance may cover the cost of tenant insurance. You could speak to your worker about your eligibility.

Tenant Retreat

Would you like to:

- meet other OCH tenants
- share information
- learn about other community initiatives
- learn how to recruit and keep volunteers
- share your ideas about the 2014 Tenant Forum and upcoming District Based Committee agenda items?

If yes, plan on attending this year's Tenant Retreat!

Sponsored by the Tenant Advisory Group (TAG), the Tenant Retreat will begin at 10:00 am on **Saturday, April 26** in the **Walkley Manor community room** located between 1660-1680 Walkley Road. A luncheon will be provided. For more information or to register, contact **Carole Ladouceur**, TAG Chair, at clado@rogers.com or 613-736-0128.



Message from the Interim CEO



On March 17th, OCH goes "live" with new computer software and hardware technology that will significantly enhance how we do business. A lot of planning and training of OCH staff has taken place over the last year to make sure that the transition is as smooth as possible. This new technology will enable us to continue on the journey to provide better services to you and to better manage our housing

portfolio.

After March 17th, one of the first things you will notice when you call in a maintenance request is that you will be offered an appointment for service during your call. The new system will eliminate many of the steps that were previously required to set up a service time. This is just one example of how the new systems are transforming our organization and how we deliver services.

The new technology is part of our ongoing commitment to have the best tools available to enable staff to provide the highest quality of service to you. As is typical with new tools, there will be a learning curve as we adapt to the new technology. I would like to encourage you to be patient with staff as we all adjust to a new way of doing things with new tools.

I also want to reassure you that we are moving forward in the search for a new CEO. You will be informed as soon as possible when the decision is reached.

Laurene Wagner



Summer Student Jobs at OCH

Students looking for work this summer have the opportunity to be employed by OCH. Check out the summer jobs being offered in the Working with OCH section of www.och.ca or email your resume and cover letter to studentjobs@och.ca

The deadline for applications is **March 31, 2014.**

You must be:

- legally entitled to work in Canada and a resident of Ontario
- 15 to 30 years of age
- a returning full-time student in the Fall semester of 2014

For other student work opportunities within the Ottawa area, you can contact the Summer Jobs Service at Employment Ontario by email at sjs@ysb.on.ca



Coming Up

All tenants are invited to attend

OCH Board Meetings

March 20, 2014 - 6:30 p.m.
731A Chapel Street, Strathcona Heights

April- No meeting

May 8, 2014 - 7:00 p.m.
39 Auriga Drive

June 12, 2014 - 7:00 p.m.
39 Auriga Drive

All Districts' Based Committee (DBC) Meetings

East DBC - March 18, 2014
Noon - 2:00 p.m.
Donald Street Community Room
255 Donald Street

South DBC - March 20, 2014
6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.
Lexington Community Room
507 Riverdale Avenue

West DBC - March 25, 2014
11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
Foster Farm Community Centre
1065 Ramsey Crescent

Central DBC - March 27, 2014
5:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.
Brooke Towers
125 McLeod Street

Joint DBC Meeting – June 17, 2014
5:00 p.m. – 8:15 p.m.
Queen Mary Community Room
725 Bernard Street

Service Excellence Week
Lots of activities at your
Tenant Service Centre,
June 16 – 20, 2014

OCH Office Hours

Monday to Friday
OCH Tenant Service Centre offices
8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Closed from noon - 1:00 p.m.
Head Office - 39 Auriga Drive
8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Holiday Hours

OCH offices will be **closed** Friday, April 18, 2014, Monday, April 21, 2014 and Monday, May 19, 2014.

Firefighter Jeff



*By Jeff Herlihey
Fire Prevention
Officer
Ottawa Fire
Services*

The use of candles is one of the major causes of home fires. The most common reasons for fire accidents with candles are:

- ➔ leaving candles unattended
- ➔ falling asleep when a candle is lit
- ➔ using candles for light
- ➔ candles located too close to burnable objects
- ➔ candles knocked over by children, pets or sudden drafts

Here are some safety tips about using candles:

- ➔ extinguish candles when leaving the room or going to sleep
- ➔ keep lit candles away from things that can catch fire, such as toys, clothing, books, curtains, Christmas trees and paper decorations
- ➔ place candles in sturdy, burn-resistant containers that won't tip over and are big enough to collect dripping wax
- ➔ keep candles away from windows, where blinds or curtains can close or blow over them
- ➔ don't use candles in high traffic areas where children or pets could knock them over
- ➔ never leave children or pets alone in a room with lit candles
- ➔ don't allow children to light candles in their bedrooms
- ➔ avoid buying candles surrounded by flammable paint, paper, dried flowers, or in containers that can melt or break

Do You Need Help with your Heating or Electricity Bill?

The Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LEAP) sponsored by the Ontario Energy Board offers emergency one time financial help of up to \$500 for electricity bills (\$600 if your home is heated electrically) and up to \$500 for gas bills for low income customers who are behind in their bills or in arrears.

The Salvation Army Ottawa Booth Centre delivers LEAP for Enbridge Gas and Hydro Ottawa customers. For more information call 613-241-1573 ext. 325.

Free Income Tax Clinics

Filing an income tax return means that you can qualify for programs like the GST credit and the child tax credit. If you are low income and you need help to prepare your tax return, there are a number of organizations that will prepare your return at no cost to you!



Call 211 for information about the free income tax clinics.



We have a TV Celebrity OCH tenant Sparkle Clarke!



Congratulations to Ms. Clarke who lives in an OCH Central District community. She was one of the 18 finalists chosen from an initial pool of 3,500 contestants and the only representative from Ottawa on Master Chef Canada. What an amazing experience and accomplishment for her!

Tenant Volunteer - Tammy Power



Inspired by a movie that has had a lasting impact on her life, Tammy truly believes that "If we build it they will come and they will love living in this community." She and the members of the Revell Court Tenant Association have worked hard to help create a sense of pride and

ownership in their south-end townhouse community.

The Tenant Association is new, but the list of accomplishments is quite long. Members have organized spring and fall clean-ups, bake sales, BBQ's and holiday celebrations. Tammy speaks fondly about last year's Halloween event - for the first time since she has lived in the community, neighbours opened their doors to give out treats and got into the spirit of Halloween by decorating

their homes.

Last year, the Tenant Association successfully applied for an OCH Community Capital grant, solicited donations from local businesses and held bake sale fundraisers to build a community garden. Three raised beds were created in a common space and a "help yourself" vegetable garden was born. Carefully nurtured by community volunteers over the summer months, it provided fresh, healthy food for many families. Plans for the future include the creation of an accessible play area, the sanding and painting of community benches and a winter carnival.

Tammy is quite clear that although she is President of the Tenant Association, "I couldn't make it on my own without the support of the members of the Tenant Association and the community. If I had to do it on my own, I couldn't."



Community Noticeboard



Councillor David Chernushenko, former OCH CEO Jo-Anne Poirier & OCH staff and tenants, celebrate the official opening of the new community room, funded by an OCH Community Capital Grant, at Lexington.



L to R: Tenant Advisory Group (TAG) member Sandra Pilote, OCH Board Directors Linda Hoard & Sarah Kambites, TAG Chair and OCH Board Director, Carole Ladouceur, OCH Board Chair Marianne Wilkinson, former OCH CEO Jo-Anne Poirier, OCH Board Director Anthony Pizarro and Councillor Mathieu Fleury at the unveiling ceremony for the new OCH housing on Old St. Patrick Street held at City Hall on December 17, 2013.



L to R: Former OCH CEO, Jo-Anne Poirier, OCH Board Chair Marianne Wilkinson, Mayor Jim Watson, Councillor Mark Taylor, Councillor Peter Clark & Councillor Tim Tierney cut the ribbon at the official opening of the new housing at Carson's Road.

letters to the editor

Letters to the Editor can be emailed, faxed or mailed and must include the writer's contact information. Regrettably, not all letters will be published and letters may be edited to accommodate space. **Send to:** 

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Ottawa ON K2E 7Y8
(Fax) 613-731-4463
(Email)
Editor@och.ca



Try to solve the puzzle below. Circle where the differences are and bring your answer to your Tenant Service Centre.

Circle the 12 differences between these 2 pictures 

Name:

Address:

Telephone:

