



Unitarian House – We call it home
Maison unitarienne - C'est notre chez-nous

About Us

A Newsletter for Friends of Unitarian House



Fall/Winter 2016

Our Past

The First Unitarian Congregation moved from its Elgin Street location to 4 ½ acres overlooking the Ottawa River in the early 1960s and in 2017 they will be celebrating 50 years of Excellence. The church purchased plenty of land because their ultimate goal once the church was built was to use the excess land to fulfill social needs like the River Parkway Child Development Center and Unitarian House of Ottawa.

When I think of the First Unitarian Congregation I am reminded of the definition of “pioneer”. “To have a pioneering spirit means you take chances and try new and different things, whether they be related to work, leisure, home, or just life in general. A pioneering spirit lives by a different set of ideas and questions/challenges what appears to be impossible.”

Unitarian House is blessed to have such a strong foundation and we thank the First Unitarian Congregation for building walls that are strong, for their courage and for not giving up during the 10 years it took to give us our beginning.

Thank you,

Christina O’Neil
Executive Director

In Loving Memory of Lexie
June 10 2004 - Nov 7 2016
Loyal Friend
Forever in our hearts



Vyvian Ward’s Legacy



In Memory of Vyvian Ward
July 19th 1910 – August 7th 2016

Vyvian Ward and her husband, Don, moved into Unitarian House as “founding residents” on the very day it opened in 1984. Her widowed sister, Edwina, moved in a day beforehand. The sisters lived in side-by-side apartments on the third floor. When Don died five years later, Vyvian and Edwina moved into a suite on the Retirement Floor, where they stayed until Edwina passed away in 2006. Vyvian then moved to a single room which was her home for the next ten years, until she passed away in the early afternoon of August 7th this year. Her nieces Laurenda, from Ohio, and Vivian, from Barrie, were with her, as were Christina and other friends from Unitarian House.

Apart from being the longest resident at Unitarian House, Vyvian was also the oldest for many years. She lived into her 107th year. Born in Winnipeg in 1910 she lived through two World Wars and the Great Depression. When I would visit her, Vyvian would share memories of her long life, stories of the two occasions she lived in England, her work-life in Montreal, anecdotes from her life on the farm and her memories of the early days at Unitarian House. On every visit Vyvian would tell me how much she loved living at Unitarian House – the care and love she received from the staff, especially Christina – despite the fact that, with

decreased sight and hearing, her life was becoming more and more difficult.

After Don died, Vyvian told me she “dug into everything!” “The garden at the front of the house was mine,” she said, “and my sister had the back.” Always thinking of ways to improve the lives of residents, Vyvian was also responsible for the advent of the raised flower boxes that enabled residents to continue with this hobby without having to bend over while relying on their walkers for safety. Apart from her gardening, Vyvian ran the Tuck Shop, volunteered in the Library and the Front Desk, and was the Convenor for the very first Fall Fair held at Unitarian House. She also started the “50-50 Club” which has been a regular source of funds for Unitarian House ever since. “I had my hands into everything,” Vyvian once told me, with a twinkle in her eye, “and I really, really loved it all!”

In her later years, Vyvian kept much to herself. An occasional assisted walk along her corridor and her regular visit to Lynn’s hair salon were her only excursions from her room. However, the legacy of Unitarian House’s “Grand Dame” continues. Thank you, dear Vyvian. You are remembered. You are missed. Rest in Peace.

- Alex Campbell

Kristy’s Restaurant Fundraiser

A huge Thank you goes out to Kristy’s Restaurant Ottawa/Westboro owner Walter Boyce, manager Steve Blake and all of the staff at Kristy’s for their generosity in hosting a fundraiser April 25th 2016 that raised \$5608.84 for Unitarian House!!! 250 people were served at the two sittings. It’s people like Kristy’s who make a difference!



Our Annual Spring Fundraising Dinner

On May 3rd, 2016, we held our Annual Spring Fundraising Dinner. Our guest speaker was Mary Cook, distinguished author and story teller. Born and raised in the Ottawa Valley, Mary was a broadcast journalist with the CBC for more than 48 years. Her wonderful stories of growing up on an Ottawa Valley farm in the Renfrew County during the Depression years, have turned into twelve Canadian Best Sellers. Mary shared some of these stories with us.

We are happy to report that the Fundraising Dinner raised \$10,986.00, the Silent Auction raised \$911.00, Medical Arts Pharmacy donated \$500.00 and the Quilt Raffle raised \$450.00.

Thank you to all the residents, staff and friends of Unitarian House for your support in making this event so successful. We look forward to seeing you this spring.

- Kathy Yach
Chair, Fundraising Support Committee

Brian Castledine Voted Most Outstanding Volunteer of 2016

Brian began volunteering as our van driver in 2010. Before moving into Unitarian House he travelled from his home in Wakefield, Quebec every Tuesday to drive residents on shopping trips. Regardless of winter weather conditions, if the roads were safe enough to take the van out we could always count on Brian to make the trip to Ottawa to drive our residents to shop. The comfort and safety of his van passengers are of utmost importance to Brian who always treats residents with respect, a little TLC and a friendly smile.

As the residents say “he has a way of making everyone riding with him feel that they are

precious cargo and they feel safe and secure with him behind the wheel”

Brian also manages the Happy Hour which involves coordinating bartenders, buying the liquor and soft drinks, purchasing munchies and tending the bar himself when needed. All in all Brian keeps the Happy Hour Gang very...Happy.

With the best interests of Unitarian House and its future at heart Brian has become a Board of Governor, Chair of the Board of Governors Property Committee and Chair of the Board of Governors Western Light Rail Sub Committee. As if that isn't enough he also finds the time to lend his lovely baritone voice to our Unitarian House Choir.

Unitarian House residents and staff appreciate the way Brian offers a helping hand without expecting anything in return and for giving countless volunteer hours in many ways to Unitarian House.



We are pleased to honour Brian as Most Outstanding Volunteer of 2016

- Lynda Gauthier
Activities Coordinator

Our Fall Fair 2016

The weather gods shone upon us as our bee hive of residents, staff and volunteers kicked into high gear for our annual fundraising event.

We are blessed to have experienced team leaders and new resident energies. The combo played out in what I would assess as a

very successful event supported by residents, their families, friends, and beyond.

A new Fall Fair poster was created with a fun theme and was distributed by residents and volunteers. Our new sandwich board was placed at the intersection of Cleary Avenue and Richmond Road for the week prior to the Fair and drew many new locals. To top it off the Fair was also featured on Kristy's big sign!!

Clothes were in abundance this year as was the plentiful baking, especially the lovely preserves from the East Coast. The silent auction was anything but silent. Books, games, knitting, jewellery and attic treasures always create anticipation, and everyone seemed to enjoy the bottles game and lively music.

The final tally of \$8,400.00 (our highest total yet) and the photos taken, prove once again that the residents of Unitarian House contribute to the ongoing enhancement of life in "our home". Kudos to everyone who helped make this another very successful Fall Fair.

- Beryl Allport

Welcome Alison Jones

We are pleased to introduce our new Nurse Leader Alison Jones! Alison was born in Scotland and arrived in Canada at the age of 3. She was brought up in Nova Scotia until her teenage years when her family moved to British Columbia. Both Alison's father and her husband were in the Navy which brought her to each coast before settling in Ottawa.

Alison has two grown children and admits she is still waiting on grandchildren! She shares two Bernese Mountain Dog crosses named Macy and Kayla with her husband. Her favourite pastimes include walking, swimming and reading.

Alison has a background in many different health fields including medical secretary, health

records clerk, clinic assistant and graduated from Nursing school at 43. Her nursing background includes 5 years of acute nursing in Oncology, Palliative Care and dialysis, 6 years in homecare and recent experience in primary care during a term at a family physician's office.

If you are a night owl, you may have already met Alison as she been with Unitarian House since November 2015 on a part time basis working weekend night shifts.



Alison will now be working full time Monday – Friday as our Nurse Leader. Please drop by the nursing office and say hi!

The Retirement Floor Waiting List is Open!

Unitarian House offers an affordable homelike environment in Kitchissippi overlooking the Ottawa River. Services include 24-hour registered nursing care and in-house exercise program, nutritious meals, housekeeping, laundry services and much more!



For more information or to book a tour please call Jessica at 613-722-6690
Recognizing one of our own

Stars of the City are volunteers nominated throughout the City of Ottawa for excellent customer service. These individuals go out of their way to serve guests and make them feel special. Earlier this year one of our residents, Frieda van Duffelen, was recognized as a “Star of the City” for her volunteer work at the Ottawa International Airport. Frieda has volunteered at the Airport as an Information Guide for almost 25 years! Congratulations Frieda from your Unitarian House Family!

-Jessica Veysey

Unitarian House of Ottawa “We call it home”

Thank you to the following contributors of this issue: Alex Campbell, Kathy Yach, Lynda Gauthier, Nadene Keon, Beryl Allport, Christina O’Neil and Jessica Veysey.

About Us is published twice each year with a Spring/Summer issue and a Fall/Winter edition. These two newsletters keep friends of Unitarian House informed of the ongoing activities and needs of our home.

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