

WHAT IS OWECC ALL ABOUT??

The following is a brief synopsis of the history of the Ottawa West End Community Chaplaincy and our activities.

Background: OWECC has been invited by the Tenant's Associations of four low-income neighbourhoods in the west end of Ottawa to provide a safe, spiritual presence within their communities. Each of the low-income neighbourhoods is unique and has its own particular activities and furnishes us with cost-free space. We have become a part of these neighbourhoods by offering programmes designed to enhance the life of individuals, families, youth and children living in poverty and by offering spiritual and emotional support, advocacy, counseling and a friendly listening ear. We work on behalf of the area churches to provide support and to be a bridge between the neighbourhoods and the churches.

Neighbourhood Demographics: Foster Farm has 425 households in a high-rise apartment and townhouses; Morrison Gardens has 130 households in townhouses; Pinecrest Terrace has 130 households in a couple of low-rise apartments and townhouses; Regina Towers has 225 households in one small high-rise apartment. Ottawa Community Housing serves individuals and families from various cultural, religious and national backgrounds and includes Muslims, Christians, Buddhists, amongst others.

Activities and Programmes: In each of the neighbourhoods OWECC offers drop-ins, oversees local food banks and holds weekly Core Group meetings (a time of scriptural reflection). Other OWECC-wide activities include such things as a Spiritual and Pastoral Care course to help those who volunteer in the neighbourhoods, ongoing Pastoral Care, an acrylic painting group, Poverty and Spirituality Luncheons, sewing and craft groups, Christian Faith celebrations, Family Camp, Youth at Risk Canoe Trip, times of reflection on 'The Quest for the Historical' Jesus DVD's, Christian Meditation Group, weekly lunches, furniture distribution, eTools for Schools computer re-cycling, Annual Spiritual Retreats, the "Walk With Me" one-on-one Mentoring Programme and our newest programme is an adult camp which will be held at Camp Bitobi from August 29th to September 1st with workshops of interest to our adult population such as non-violent communication and building self-esteem. Recently the Core Group at Regina Towers was pleased to have The Rt. Rev'd John Chapman, Anglican Bishop of the Diocese of Ottawa, share in their Core Group experience.

Staff: Ideally OWECC would like to have a full-time male/female chaplain team but finances do not allow that at this point. The Rev'd Robert Campbell is the current Chaplain and is helped by Alayne Crossman who is the Chaplain's Assistant and works 10 hours per week. Elizabeth Wiggins works in the office and spends time in one of the neighbourhoods for a total of 16 hours per week.

Contact: You can reach the Chaplaincy office by telephone, 613 726-1418; email office@owecc.org; or peruse the website at www.owecc.org.