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*Options Bytown is a non-profit supportive housing organization in Ottawa that provides not only affordable, rent-geared to income permanent housing, but also a variety of on-site support services to individuals at risk of homelessness who suffer from mental illness and other chronic health conditions, substance abuse, multiple barriers to employment and multiple barriers to housing stability.*

### Options Bytown to Provide Support Services to Tenants of Centretown Citizens Ottawa Corporation (CCOC)

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If you have any comments on this newsletter or would like to contribute to Options Bytown, please contact us at:

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Options Bytown and CCOC, a large social housing provider, are about to embark on a new program that will benefit the tenants of CCOC. At the beginning of May, 2009 the City of Ottawa granted Options Bytown \$200,000 annually to provide a range of assessment and support services to 20 households living in CCOC's centrally located apartment buildings.

This new service will expand on the successful Options Bytown model of providing housing supports and case management, both in our directly managed apartment buildings and in social housing apartment buildings across Ottawa, owned by Ottawa Community Housing Corporation (OCHC).

This new housing support service will include one-on-one support using a case management model for people who have experienced

chronic homelessness and have associated needs relating to mental health and addictions. Our plan also includes working in partnership with Rideauwood Addictions and Family Services, an agency that specializes in addictions treatment, concurrent disorders and homelessness.

To achieve the best outcomes for CCOC tenants, we will be working closely with partner agencies and tenant groups to assist in maximizing people's potential in their community. Together we will develop a plan of action for each client that will ensure that they understand their rights and responsibilities as tenants; assist clients to explore their challenges to living independently; and help them to acquire knowledge and skills that empower them to take action. In this way, people will be helped to get out of chronic homelessness and into stable housing.

### Our Sugar Rush

By Kathleen Lambton

It all began on a lovely mild day in March. It was finally time for our much anticipated annual outing to the sugar bush! We all boarded the yellow bus and had an enjoyable, bumpy and exhilarating ride to the sugar bush. Once we arrived at Wheelers Farm, we anxiously headed to the restaurant with our stomachs growling. There we were greeted with warm and friendly faces. The tantalizing aroma of pancakes and sausages made our mouths water!!

Once we had consumed our meals, some of us lined up for a delicious treat of taffy in the snow. Others headed to the lovely historical museum filled with interesting facts and artefacts. Afterwards some of us meandered around the property taking photographs of the play structures, the lazy oxen, the coy

sheep, Henry's garage and of course, comical photos of staff and each other!! Some of us were even photographed by a professional photographer sent to get our pictures in honour of Urbana 2009.

Then it was time for my personal highlight of the day - a horse-drawn sleigh ride. The Clydesdale horses were absolutely magnificent. Along the trail we observed the syrup lines, lovely trees, animal tracks and other beautiful sights in nature. Afterwards the Clydesdale horses willingly posed for photos with their owner. What cards!

All too soon it was time to say good-bye for another year. We'd like to extend our thanks and appreciation to everyone who made this outing possible. See you again next year!

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## 5th Annual URBANA benefits Options Bytown

An unlikely venue for a cocktail evening, at first glance, with its historical limestone exterior and imposing towers - the 5th annual URBANA event was held this year at St. Brigid's Centre for the Arts and Humanities (formerly St. Brigid's Catholic Church) in Lower-town.

URBANA is an annual fundraiser hosted by Akash and Katy Sinha of Dharma Developments aimed at supporting groups that prevent homelessness by providing suitable and affordable housing in Ottawa - this year \$17,500 was raised for Options Bytown.

Money was raised through ticket sales and raffle tickets for prizes that included Ottawa Senators tickets, dinner at the residence of the Dutch ambassador, a tutored wine tasting by Groovy Grapes, and a trip for two courtesy of WestJet and Uniglobe Premier Travel.

The evening, which played host to over 200 guests and included City Councilors, community members, staff, board members and tenants, featured cocktails and hors d'oeuvres, a live DJ, video by media artist Ryan Stec of Artengine and photo art by world-renowned photographer Tony Fohuse and Dharma Arts photographer Ben Welland, as well as a video message from television personality Rick Mercer. Taken together, the atmosphere was light and cordial, but attentive to this year's theme: strength in community starts with decent housing.

As guests mingled, Options Bytown Executive Director, Lorraine Bentley, reminded everyone that "just behind the building, there were no appetizers and fancy drinks being served," but rather "people in this city who need decent housing and can't afford it.

Who need a helping hand but don't know where to find one."

Messages like this one, coupled with streaming videos and pictures of real people affected by the struggle to attain decent housing, hit home with the guests who walked away that evening with more than the satisfaction of contributing to a good cause, but a greater sense of understanding of the nature of the challenges that lie ahead in addressing affordable housing and homelessness in this city.

On behalf of Options Bytown a heartfelt thanks goes out to all of the volunteers who helped to make this event a success. In particular, Options Bytown would like to thank Akash and Katy for their commitment to building a strong community and their support of Options Bytown.



*Options Bytown is supported by the City of Ottawa Housing Branch, the Ontario Provincial Homelessness Initiative Fund and the Federal Homelessness Partnership Strategy. We're also very grateful to our supporters throughout the Ottawa community.*

*As a charitable organization, we welcome donations that will provide an enhanced quality of life for the tenants of Options Bytown. Donations help pay for communal dinners at Christmas and Thanksgiving, summer and winter outings for tenants, and lifeskills training to support tenants in their efforts to set goals and work towards stable, independent living.*

## You Are Needed!

YES! I am interested in volunteering my time at Options Bytown.

YES! I would like to become a Friend of Options Bytown, enclosed is my donation.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_ FAX \_\_\_\_\_

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Charitable Registration #0795831-01

Options Bytown