



## UPDATE Special Edition

35 Waller Street  
Ottawa, Ontario K1N 7G4  
t. 613-234-1155  
f. 613-234-2813

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Canada is celebrating 150 years, and The Ottawa Mission is marking 111 years of service in our community.

We would like to share some of our history, and thank everyone - staff, volunteers and donors - who has made our work possible.



## Al and Andrew - A Special Friendship

Al Arsenault is 65 years old and a former client of The Ottawa Mission. Andrew Wright is 51 and has been working in Housekeeping at The Mission for an amazing 34 years. That means that Andrew began his life of dedication to helping people who are homeless and hurting when he was just 17 years old.

Al and Andrew met back in 1995 when Al came to The Mission looking for help with mental health and addiction issues. He came to us because, as he says now, "No one else would take me in." What he found - along with receiving the counselling he so badly needed - was a sense of caring and compassion that literally changed his life. And, he says, this came from everyone at The Mission - Andrew included. Al describes those he met as "Christian people who had strong values and demonstrated them on a daily basis." They gave him the strength he needed to tackle his problems, and Al has now been sober for 22 years.

From Andrew's perspective, what began all those years ago as a job to tide him over until he went on to a different career, turned into a ministry - a true labour of love. As Andrew says,



"When I go home at night, I feel good about what I've done. And people like Al - who work so hard to improve their lives - are a constant source of inspiration."

Over the years, Al and Andrew have kept in touch, and to see how their special friendship has endured for all this time is a joyful experience. We are blessed to know them both.

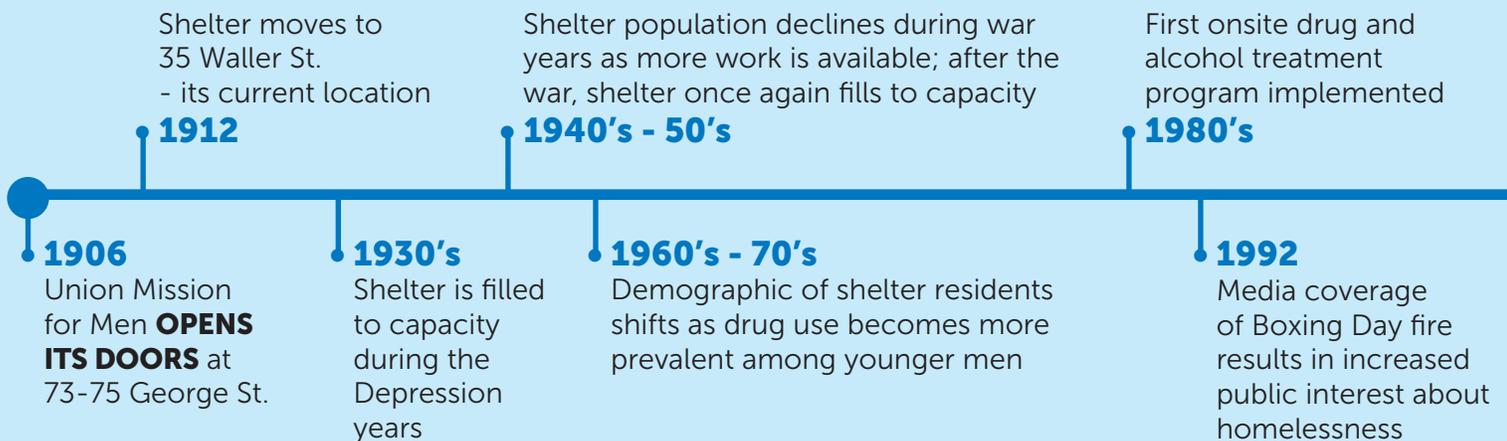
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*"One of the most important things you can do on this earth is to let people know they are not alone."*

-Shannon L. Alder

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## The Ottawa Mission – A Timeline



## A Salute to Volunteers

At The Ottawa Mission 250 people volunteer every week, and each one of them is vital to our work. Quite simply, we couldn't do what we do without them.

In 2014 we were honoured to welcome Their Excellencies the Right Honourable David Johnston, Governor General of Canada, and Mrs. Sharon Johnston to the shelter as volunteers. They came during a visit by a volunteer group from TELUS, and helped cook and serve a special meal.

The Governor General believes strongly in the tremendous impact of volunteerism on Canadian culture. "Canadians have a strong history of coming together and helping one another, and I applaud the contribution made by thousands of volunteers every day across Canada. Because of them we can truly call ourselves a caring nation." At The Mission, we couldn't agree more. Thank you, volunteers!

Photo credit: MCpl Vincent Carbonneau, Rideau Hall (2014).



## Sharing the Blessings of Life

Joan McRae is an extraordinary woman who has lived a very interesting life. As a survivor of the London Blitz and a War Bride, she has dozens of stories to tell. And, at the age of 100, she continues to be active and involved in life. For us at The Ottawa Mission, this includes translating her strong compassion for the plight of homeless people into action. As a faithful supporter of The Mission over the years, she has helped change many lives. Most recently, Joan made a contribution to our new offsite residential addiction treatment facility called LifeHouse.

Joan feels very blessed in her life, and she is an enduring symbol of the power of "paying it forward".

As a token of our gratitude, on Joan's 100th birthday 100 staff, clients and volunteers at The Mission signed a birthday card for her (see photo) and she really treasures this special gesture. Thank you and God bless you Joan.



Small building next to shelter opens offering support services for education, job training and housing

**2005**

Medical and dental clinics open

**2007**

Hospice expands, mental health services become available onsite, and residential addiction treatment expands and moves off-site, housing outreach service expands

**2015 - 2017**

**2001**

Buildings next to shelter purchased to house the new hospice and residential addiction treatment program

**2006**

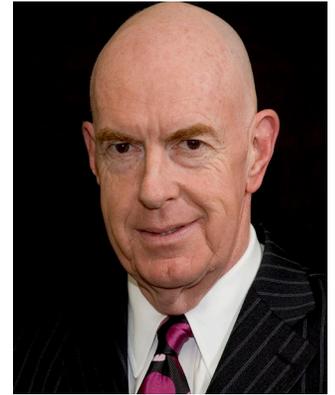
100th Anniversary – name change to The Ottawa Mission

**2008**

Mission's aftercare services expand to two homes in the community for men to reside for a year after completing addiction treatment

## A Legacy of Caring & Compassion

I was 9 years old when I paid my first visit to The Ottawa Mission. I went with my father, Donald McKechnie, who was a board member, and I played my trumpet at the chapel service. I admit to being somewhat intimidated by the audience. In talking to some of the clients after the service, I developed a new perspective about them - these were real people struggling with very difficult challenges. And, not only did they freely share their stories with me, but they were so grateful for my small gesture of playing some music for them. Thus began my long term connection with The Mission.



Much has changed since then. I recall colours that were predominantly “battleship grey”, and the strong smell of disinfectant. Today, the place is bright, cheerful and immaculately clean. And the range of services provided to people in need has grown beyond food, shelter and clothing to include education, job training, housing support services, residential trauma and addiction treatment, medical and dental clinics, onsite mental health support, and a hospice.

Over the years, I have had the privilege of serving The Mission in many capacities, and my respect for their staff, volunteers and donors continues unabated. Much of what has been accomplished would never have happened without the sacrifice of love offered by these people.

The Mission is a different place today, yet at its core our efforts must continue to reflect the love of God to those in need.

As we go forward, may we be reminded of Christ’s words - “In serving the least of these, you have served me.”

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Paul McKechnie". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Paul McKechnie  
Former Board Chair and current Board Member  
The Ottawa Mission

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*“I was hungry, and you gave me something to eat. I was thirsty, and you gave me something to drink. I was a stranger, and you took me into your home.”*

-Matthew 25:35



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**The Ottawa Mission provides food, clothing, shelter and life-changing programs to people in need 24/7, 365 days a year.**

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

about how you can help change lives, please visit **ottawamission.com** or call 613-234-1155

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