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**WE'VE GRADUATED TO A NEW LIFE.
THANK YOU!**

**Alumni Edition
June 2018**

At this time of year, many of us are celebrating the success of family members who are graduating from schools, colleges and universities.

At The Ottawa Mission, we often hear back from former clients – members of our extended family - who have “graduated to a new life”. We’d like to share some stories and testimonials with you - because it’s your generosity that makes their success possible.

Your support changes lives.

“The Mission gave me the support I needed to tackle my addictions and health issues. As of May 15, 2018, I have been sober for 23 years.” Al

“The Mission helped me with my mental health issues, and I have now been well and living a productive life for almost 10 years. I am so grateful.” Brian

“Getting my high school diploma after all these years gave me the confidence I needed to build a better life.” Mark

“I wouldn’t be here today without the wonderful staff at The Mission and the people who support their work.” George

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

SAMMY'S AMAZING JOURNEY

Twelve years ago, 28 year-old Sammy was a newcomer to Canada seeking political asylum and a better life. He spoke very little English, and was struggling to find work.

Sammy was visiting an employment office one day and saw a poster advertising The Ottawa Mission's Food Services Training Program (FSTP). He had experience as a cook, so he called us right away. He wound up speaking directly to Chef Ric Watson, The Mission's Manager of Food Services, and his amazing journey began.

In Sammy, Chef Ric saw a young man who was sincere in his desire to work hard and succeed in life. For this reason, even though the current FSTP class was already full and underway, Chef made an exception for Sammy and admitted him to the program. True to form, Sammy excelled.

During his 5 months in FSTP Sammy also managed to spend a lot of his spare time at our Stepping Stones Learning Centre improving his English – with the ultimate goals of achieving his Grade 12 equivalency – which he did, and then



completing the 2-year Culinary Management course at Algonquin College – which he also did! The Mission stood by Sammy, offering encouragement and support, for every step of his journey – even assisting with paperwork to allow his wife to join him in Canada.

Sammy has been working with the same local food services company since completing FSTP – and he, his wife, and their two Canadian-born children enjoy a very good life in Ottawa. As Sammy says, "Twelve years ago, people at The Mission opened their hearts to me. They inspired me every day to keep going and achieve my dream. They will always be a part of my life."

ABOUT THE FOOD SERVICES TRAINING PROGRAM



- 2 five-month sessions per year (winter and summer)
- 18 people graduated last year
- 125 graduates since 2004
- 95% of graduates were employed in the food services industry at graduation

CHAD COMES "FULL CIRCLE"

When Chad first came through the doors of The Ottawa Mission over 6 years ago, he was, in his own words, "that guy on that street wearing the same clothes for thirty days."

Chad was born in Arnprior and has spent all his life in the Ottawa area. He had a rough childhood and struggled with addiction for many years. He arrived at The Mission in the middle of winter with only the clothes on his back. The way Chad has transformed his life since then is nothing short of remarkable.

He spent a month in the shelter, and then moved on to our Stabilization program where people receive counselling and support to get their lives and their health in order before entering addiction treatment. For Chad, his time with us was life-changing. "After years of suffering, I finally felt secure in sharing my pain. The Mission showed me that there's nothing wrong with me as a human being and they gave me the strength to commit to long term treatment and move on to a better life." And he has succeeded!



After volunteering and working in the community, and with a deep desire to give back, Chad enrolled in Algonquin College's social worker program. He's now one year in, and earning top marks! He got married three years ago, and has bought a house. Chad has moved on to a whole new future.

Recently, Chad came to the shelter for a "full circle" moment – a moment that was very special to Chad and The Mission. He came to donate several boxes of his own clothing so that others will benefit from the care and compassion he received when all he had were "the clothes on his back".

ENGAGE & CONNECT WITH THE OTTAWA MISSION



- **HOPE Volleyball SummerFest – Saturday, July 14, 2018.** Visit hopehelps.com for more information and to register. The Ottawa Mission is a charity recipient this year.
- **The Ottawa Mission's Blue Door Gala – November 2018** Stay tuned for more information about our 2nd annual signature event.
- **Fundraise for The Ottawa Mission** Visit www.ottawamission.com/events for all the details on how to organize a fundraiser.



PRIDE AND JOY

“I can do all this through Him who gives me strength.”

Philippians 4:13

In my five years as a board member with The Ottawa Mission, I have attended a number of graduation ceremonies celebrating the accomplishments of our clients who have reached key milestones in their journeys to a better life.

These milestones might include achieving 30 days of sobriety in our Day Program, or completing our 5-month LifeHouse residential addiction treatment program. It may mean receiving a high school graduation diploma well into middle-age, or graduating from the Food Services Training Program and gaining full-time employment.

Whatever the achievement, what has stood out for me are the smiles on the faces of our clients, their deep sense of pride and joy in their accomplishments and their gratitude for the help they've received along the way. In this way, they are no different from our own family and friends who may be graduating at this time of year.

In Sammy and Chad's stories – and in their photos – I think you will see what I mean. Their pride and joy stems from the fact that they have worked hard, sometimes faced incredible

obstacles, and moved on to become the people they have always wanted to be. What a powerful opportunity this gives us to pause and reflect on God's goodness in giving them the strength and determination to move on with their lives.

As donors, we hope you are also filled with pride and joy for the role you play in supporting vital programs at The Mission. Your kindness and compassion are changing lives every day.

God bless,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Garth Steele".

Garth Steele

PRESIDENT, BOARD OF DIRECTORS

THE OTTAWA MISSION



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