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THIS EASTER

**...AND CHANGES
LIVES EVERY DAY**



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to someone who is
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Please give today.

“Consider the lilies,
how they grow:
they toil not, neither
do they spin; yet I
say unto you, Even
Solomon in all his
glory was not arrayed
like one of these.”

Luke 12:27

CHAMPIONS OF
H  **PE**

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FROM WINTER'S DARKNESS COMES EASTER'S SUNSHINE

I have recently been given the honour of serving as the Board President of the Ottawa Mission Foundation. I am an Ottawa boy and my wife Carolyn and I have 3 adult children and 3 grandchildren. Like all parents, we hope and pray for our family to live a future filled with hope and good health in a loving and safe home. Sadly, this has not been the case for many of our neighbours here in the Ottawa region.



Anyone who has lived the experience of the Canadian winter knows that it is a season rife with dangers. Sometimes a simple walk around a treacherous block can result in a life-changing injury. Frostbite warnings tell us to stay home, and we all know the feeling of relief when stepping inside off streets whipped up by blinding snow and wind chill. But what about those whose homes are long lost? For them, our guests, winter is truly the cruelest season.

Behind our blue doors, our guests find warmth, fellowship, and empathetic hearts. There are fresh warm clothes and boots, a hot meal and a spotless place to bed down for the night. There is medical care, treatment for trauma and addiction, and a plan to help them find a home.

The Easter newsletter features stories about the expansion of The Mission's remarkable Food Services Training Program, and about how The Mission's Housing Support program has helped our guest Michel transition into his own apartment (thanks to you!). You may look forward to joining this year's Coldest Night of the Year fundraiser, and will certainly delight in meeting the Mahava family and Ottawa Mission volunteers one and all!

Winter reminds us of the essential importance of food and shelter to our very survival. But Easter is on the horizon and with it the renewal and abundance of Spring. Rest assured that you are helping many see beyond the darkness.

Thank you, and God bless you for your donations and helping us keep the blue doors of compassion open on Waller Street. It means the world to our guests and our city.



Tony Bennett

PRESIDENT, BOARD OF DIRECTORS
THE OTTAWA MISSION FOUNDATION



Charity Runs In the Family

Volunteers are the heartbeat of The Ottawa Mission. In fact, more than 250 volunteers come by The Mission each week to help with everything from meal preparation and serving to providing tutoring services for the Stepping Stones Learning Centre. Individual, group, and corporate volunteers are all invited to come and share their love and time. But there is one group, a family of five in fact, who regularly devote their time and effort to support the ongoing work of The Ottawa Mission.

Irene and Viraf Mahava came to Canada from Mumbai, India where they met and eventually had a family; namely, Hufarish, Ferzin, and Anita. Mum and Dad instilled in their children's hearts a life-long family belief in sharing what they could with the community. As so often happens, busy lives grew busier. Irene worked as a financial advisor and Viraf spent long days managing the dry-cleaning business he started when he first settled in Canada. The kids were off at school. Schedules and demands meant that volunteering for the Mahavas, individually and as a family, slipped by the wayside for a few years.

But, sometimes it takes a shock in life to remind us of what is important. For the Mahavas, that shock struck in 2014 as a serious illness that turned their world upside-down. But adversity touched their hearts, and they once again gathered together in a commitment to give of their time and energy for a greater cause. That was when, as Anita tells it, the Mahavas found The Ottawa Mission.

"The welcoming atmosphere, the thankful and kind clients, and the incredible staff is what keeps us coming back," Anita shares. "We don't think we would be able to call it a holiday if we didn't get to come and spend time at The Ottawa Mission. It has become our family's favourite tradition, and as our family continues to grow, the part we look forward to most is bringing them to The Mission and showing them what an incredible community we have the honour of being a part of." This kind-hearted family is already looking forward to returning to The Mission to serve up a delicious Easter meal to our guests.

Sincere gratitude to the Mahavas and all of our wonderful volunteers and donors who make all the difference!



INTERESTED IN VOLUNTEERING?

At The Mission, we also have many volunteer opportunities beyond those for corporate or community teams. If you are an interested in volunteering as an individual or family, visit www.ottawamission.com/volunteer, or join us at one of our upcoming volunteer orientation sessions to get started.



Focusing On A Home of One's Own

The Ottawa Mission has come a long way since it began as a humble shelter for homeless men back in 1906. What started as a haven of warmth and food has become an array of support services whose goal is to change lives for the better. A home of one's own is perhaps the greatest symbol of a healthy and productive life in our society. The Mission's Manager of Housing Services, Marc Gallant, recognizes that "shelters will always be necessary, but they have a critical role to play in ending homelessness."

The strategy is powerful. Being Housing-Focused is a collaborative effort across The Mission's various departments to help guests from the moment they arrive to prepare and transition to live independently. "Our Housing Department was created from our most recent strategic planning phase," says Marc, "because we identified that our housing services had been growing." Guests may arrive at The Mission for only a short stay and may never need any staff involvement. Others may require a lot more staff and program support. Client Services was the umbrella department for many programs, but a plan was needed to reflect the growth and variety of housing services, and so, in May 2019, the new Housing Services Department was created. It currently has 7 staff members.

Two additional staff positions have had a huge impact. A Shelter-Based Case Manager is on site to meet new guests and support the intake process, which is done through a guided script and questions. At that point, other options for safe, alternative housing are explored. If none are available, guests are given a list of resources, both internal and external, and that gets the housing conversation started.

The other responsibility of our Housing Department is to engage and meet with our guests to identify and work towards a housing plan. The Housing Department oversees two buildings, and the two 2nd stage homes located in the Ottawa Community. "We want to try and make someone's stay with us as brief as possible," shares Marc, "but to become housing-focused entails much more than just a dedicated housing department. It means a change in the culture of how we think about shelters and the delivery of services." A housing-focused shelter recognizes that housing is a human right because it provides wellness, dignity, and the ability to live a wholesome life. Its aim is to make the experience of homelessness as brief as possible. Housing-Focused is compassionate and low-barrier, recognizing that a shelter is not a home, and that guests deserve more.

One such guest is Michel, who has recently set up his own apartment at one of The Mission's community housing locations. "It's lovely," beams Michel. "Hardwood floors. Large one bedroom. My kitchen's super big!" A bonus for this recent graduate of the



Food Services Training Program (FSTP) who is about to start a job with a booming Ottawa coffee and food company.

Michel is not shy about his past. A young man living with the stress and anxiety that comes with growing up in a violent home where dealing drugs seemed to be the only way to make money and cope. He shared his history with the audience of the FSTP graduation ceremony. “I ended up at The Mission, court ordered six months. It was either go to jail or come here. When the cops came, it ruined all the trust I had built up with my family,” he shared earnestly. “Luckily there was the trauma services and the addiction program.” Michel eventually met Chef Ric and learned about the FSTP. Today Michel is clean, trained, employed, housed, and loves going to the gym.

Michel was a lost soul for most of his troubled life. His own home was not a place of security, but rather one of fear. For Michel, family meant uncertainty and loss rather than roots and wings. It took a court order for him to learn about a set of supportive programs at The Mission that helped him truly find his way home. The Mission has taken on the feeling of a family for Michel, and he looks forward to returning as a volunteer “because the place has done so much for me. It’s time to give back.”

Your kind support of a number of essential Ottawa Mission programs has helped Michel and many others along their journey home. At this time when days grow brighter and Easter approaches, please remember that your donations bring light into many troubled lives. Thank you!



HOUSING STATS 2018-2019

2,121 individuals
provided with shelter

193 people
successfully housed

122 Households
diverted to alternative
accommodation

827 Housing-related
supports provided to clients

NAV CANADA walks in the Coldest Night of the Year



NAV CANADA is a company that works quietly behind the scenes to ensure the safe movement of aircraft at airports and in Canadian skies. It manages 3.3 million flights a year for 40,000 customers! That quiet dedication and concern for safety makes NAV CANADA a natural ally in our community's efforts to get the homeless off the streets of Ottawa. Coldest Night of the Year (CNOY) is a family-friendly walking event that raises money for Ottawa's homeless community, and NAV CANADA has been a devoted partner for several years.

Andrew Norgaard is a VP at NAV CANADA, and began volunteering with his family in The Mission's kitchen about 6 years ago. "My motivation to volunteer was my son," Andrew shares. "My spouse, who works in social services, and I wanted our son to appreciate his lot in life and have a comprehension of what the full picture of society looks like." NAV CANADA Cares is a program that tailors charitable support to grassroots initiatives with which employees are involved. Andrew was able to tap into a matching fund and rally colleagues to the aid of The Mission. "The effort here in Ottawa is based on employees getting together, really recognizing the value The Mission brings to the community. We've banded together to raise some funds, and our awesome company steps in and matches what we raise!" Last year, Andrew rallied a team of 20 CNOY walkers whose donations, matched by NAV CANADA, totaled more than \$16,000. The Mission's guests were deeply appreciative!

Individuals, teams, and companies can help raise funds by participating in this year's CNOY. You may also experience a bit of what it feels like to wander the icy winter streets wondering if and where warmth and shelter can be found. And remember, your generous support and participation makes all the difference in the world.



IT'S COLD OUT THERE – ARE YOU READY TO WALK AND RAISE FUNDS FOR THE HOMELESS?

Coldest Night of the Year is a family-friendly walking fundraiser for the homeless. As a participant, you or your team (family, work, church or school) will experience a hint of the challenges faced by people who are homeless in the winter while raising money for people in need in our community.

JOIN US ON

Saturday, February 22, 2020
and walk 2k, 5k or 10k to support
The Ottawa Mission.
Individuals and teams are welcome.

For more information, visit cnoy.org/
ottawamission or contact Jennifer Graves
at jgraves@ottawamission.com,
or 613-234-1155.

A Legacy of Love and Devotion



Reg and Shirley

Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great.

Matthew 5:12

Shirley is the type of person you just want to wrap your arms around and hug. A conversation with her is a cheery, delightful event, and her voice echoes a life that has known a lot of love. But Shirley has recently lost her husband Reg, the love of that life, at the early age of 75. Reg worked for the international division of the Royal Bank and the couple enjoyed exciting postings in Beirut, Amsterdam and Paris.

Upon returning to Canada, Reg and Shirley felt so blessed by the lives they were given that they looked for ways to share their good fortune. "We have no family," Shirley reflects, "and we never exchanged gifts, so we'd spend Christmas at The Mission. Our gift was to help others. We always did." Reg and Shirley had been kindly volunteering at, and donating to The Ottawa Mission since 1999. When it came time for estate planning, they both remembered The Mission and all it does, as a deeply meaningful way to honour a wonderful life together.

Easter is a time when we reflect upon the temporal nature of life and the passing of the years as days grow brighter and warmer. There are many ways you can include The Mission in your estate planning to help those served by its many outreach programs and services. Your gift will continue to help change lives for the better. If you would like more information, please contact Angie Kelly, Director, Major and Planned Giving at 613.234.1155 x 426 or by email at akelly@ottawamission.com.

Peace of Mind

"Peace of Mind" is often the number one benefit of completing a Will and Estate Plan. Knowing that your goals, values and faith are reflected in your Will can ease your mind and heart.

That is why we have partnered with Advisors with Purpose. Their trained estate specialists will meet with you by phone, listen to your wishes and then provide you with information and a plan to help you make the best decisions for you and your family. This is a free and confidential service to supporters of The Ottawa Mission.

You can get started today by contacting them to speak with an estate specialist.
1.866.336.3315
plan@advisorswithpurpose.ca





The Food Services Training Program is about to expand

The Ottawa Mission's Food Services Training Program (FSTP) held a graduation event on December 19th in the dining room. It was a celebration of hard work, fortitude, and the determination by graduates to build lives filled with opportunity. A class of 12 individuals completed the FSTP's rigorous 5-month program and are ready for work in the food services sector. In fact, they have all found jobs! Pride radiated from the faces of everyone who received their certificate from Chef Ric. The occasion was also marked by a big announcement about the FSTP's upcoming expansion.

Sessions typically receive dozens of applications for 14 spots, so Chef Ric recognizes that "obviously there is a need to expand the program, and when we do we are hoping to train 75 students over the course of a year." The FSTP has offered fall and winter sessions, but that is expected to grow by an additional one, maybe two sessions per year once things are rolling. This puts a new level of demand on the existing physical resources, so "we're looking for an off-site kitchen where we would house the students and do all of the catering that is part of the program," say Chef. "The kitchen here at The Mission already serves 1,450 meals a day to guests, plus the catering service plus 28 students, so the kitchen is just bursting at the seams." Chef Ric is confident that the team of supporters searching for the right location close by will have good news very soon.

Hyacinth is a graduate with big hopes for the future. "Cooking has always been my passion," she shares, "and it has always been my dream. I feel like one day I will look back on this graduation as the day when I started, and I am so proud!" Hyacinth was offered a job in her first interview because of the wide variety of food skills she learned in the FSTP. "I'm working long hours, but it's my passion and I know I'll be on top."

Your generosity helps all the graduates feel like they are on top of the world. By the time Easter arrives, your support will be helping make the expansion of this program possible for many more individuals seeking a life-changing experience.



For only \$3.47 you can provide a special meal at our Easter dinner on April 13th and help bring hope to someone in need.

Please give today.

To make a donation visit ottawamission.com

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LIFE CHANGING