



# BULLETIN

## SECTION DE L'EST: L'ASSOCIATION DES TRAVAILLEUSES ET TRAVAILLEURS SOCIAUX DE L'ONTARIO

---

Summer/Été  
2009 (Vol. 35 No. 2)

### Social Assistance

<b>Eastern Branch News</b> .....	1
<b>President's Report</b> .....	1
<b>Branch Representative to OASW</b> .....	3
<b>New Members</b> .....	5
<b>Awards: Bessie Touzel Recipient</b> .....	5
<b>Scholarships and Bursaries</b> .....	6
<b>Guest Speaker: <i>Hard Times Tough Choices</i></b> .....	6
<b>Committee Reports</b> .....	7
<b>Editorial: "What's wrong with Social Work"</b> .....	8
<b>Articles:</b>	
• Le groupe d'action communautaire francophone (GACF) - défis et perspectives .....	9
• Ontario Social Assistance .....	10
• Canadian Mental Health Association/Ontario Works (CMHA/OW) Case Conference Group, Ottawa .....	11
• On Becoming a Retired Professional .....	12
<b>Presentation : <i>The Evolving Role of Grandparents</i></b> ..	13
<b>Contact Us!</b> .....	15
<b>Marketplace</b> .....	15

### EASTERN BRANCH NEWS

#### PRESIDENT'S REPORT

There are two issues which I would like to share with you. The first is the outcome of the Annual General Meeting held on April 29. The second is related to the restructuring of the OASW.

#### ***Special Thanks to Martha Wiebe***

Before doing either, however, I would like to extend a very hearty thank you to Martha Wiebe who acted as interim President while I was in Europe. Martha chaired the Board meetings and was active in the planning of the spring Gala as well as assisting with the Gullen award. As a Carleton University faculty member, she continued to maintain a linkage between the school and the professional association. For her support and leadership, I owe a special debt.

#### ***Outcome of the 74<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting***

The Gala and Annual General Meeting went well. There was good attendance, an enticing meal and a great auction. Martha Mary Hale, Executive Director of Centre 454, reported on the plight of homelessness in Ottawa as well as the initiatives of the Alliance to End Homelessness. Roland Lecomte, a long-time colleague and friend as well as a talented educator and social worker, deservedly received the Bessie Touzel award.

At the AGM, two new members were elected to the Board of Directors of Eastern Branch – Julie Stevenson and Valerie Morinville. Julie works for Health Canada (Human Resources). She has

## *Bulletin*

The Official Publication of the Branch

**Le Bulletin** est publié trois fois par année : Fall/Automne, Spring/Printemps, et Summer/Été. The Publication Committee welcomes submissions that examine public health and social issues, discuss local, regional or provincial issues in social work/social welfare, or which share social work information of interest to social workers or the social service public.

Toutes contributions seront considérées pour publication; les articles sur des questions relatives au travail social/ bien-être social, tant sur le plan local, régional ou provincial ainsi que des renseignements d'intérêt public ou professionnel. Preferred length is **500 words** (600 words maximum). **All articles require a précis!**

Submissions may be e-mailed to the address below. They must be in an IBM-compatible word processing format.

**Subscription Price:** Members and Non-members \$12. Single issues: \$4.

**Classified ads/Annonces :** Cost/coût : Full page \$90. Half page \$60. Quarter page \$30. Deadline /date limite : le 17 octobre, le 17 février et le 17 mai.

Contact Graeme Roderick at (613) 226-7081, or request an ad circular from the Branch Office at (613) 238-8406.

**Tirage/Circulation :** 417

**Editorial Committee/Comité de rédaction :**

M. Dubois, J. Ireland, M. Wiebe, K.A. Blakely, G. Roderick (Chair).

Translator: H. Balthazar

Editor: D.A. Davidson

Send submissions and ads by e-mail to/faire parvenir soumissions et annonces par courriel à :

oasw-eb@magma.ca

been practicing social work for 25 years in the fields of corrections, community health care, employee assistance, social policy and program development. Valerie brings another dimension of the profession to the Board. She currently is a private practitioner but previously worked with the Children's Aid Society of Ottawa.

We are fortunate also to have the continued involvement of the following 'old' members of the Board: Laurie Alphonse, Bill Dare, Barbara Merriam, Ann-Marie O'Brien, Kathryn Stiell and Martha Wiebe. I am also delighted to announce that Barbara Merriam was elected as the new President of the Board at the first meeting after the AGM. Previously, she was Vice President of Operations and Secretary. Barbara is employed at Justice Canada.

She will be joined on the Board by the following officers: Kathryn Stiell, Vice-President, Bill Dare and Julie Stevenson, Secretaries, Ann-Marie O'Brien, Branch Representative. I will be taking over the role of Treasurer. Laurie Alphonse will continue as Chair of Membership, Bill Dare, Electronic Communications and Valerie Morinville, Program.

One other special person who was recognized at the AGM, and at the May meeting of the Board, was Margaret Nelson, Past President, Treasurer, and current Chair of the Social Justice Committee. Margaret has been a major contributor to all aspects of Branch life for many years. The Board is not sure whether we can do without her unfailing leadership. Therefore, we are encouraging her to continue to participate in Board meetings and related committees as long as she can.

### **Restructuring of OASW**

As to the restructuring of OASW, Ann Marie's report which follows provides you with the background. I hope that we can devote a significant part of the next issue of the *Bulletin* to bring you up to date on what is happening provincially and what it means for the Branch in the future. In the meantime, I would like to share with you some of our response to the provincial association regarding the funding of Branch activities in relation to administration, board and committee work, communication with members,

THE *BULLETIN* FOR FALL 2009

### "Professional Identity"

Deadline for submissions: October 17, 2009.

Your news, articles and ideas for this issue are welcomed.

National Social Work Week, membership development and other expenses.

#### **Administration**

With respect to Eastern Branch, I would say that there are three key elements in which we take independent action: local programs and fund raising for scholarships, communication with members about local interests, and regional social justice issues. At the moment, regional social action and social justice issues do not lead to significant direct expenditures, but they do require extensive volunteer involvement and administrative support.

What, therefore, are reasonable expenditures related to office occupancy, salaries and telephone costs? The reality is that these costs are, in fact, tied to other functions of the Branch. In our case, the administration (a mini-affair) serves to assist program and membership communication as well as social action. There are also administrative costs associated with bilingualism.

#### **Board and Committee Work**

There are very few real costs associated with board or committee meetings. If we were more successful in attracting board representatives from the counties around Ottawa, there would be travel or communication costs but that has not been the case to date since current county reps have not charged us.

#### **Communication with members**

In our case, costs for printing the *Bulletin* are significant. Communication by print is important for members who do not read information electronically. Can electronic communication, including e-mail, assure reasonable communication with members instead of print? Yes and no. It depends upon what one wants to achieve. Electronic communication will leave some behind but not all. Moreover, electronic communication, if it is done well, is not necessarily cheaper than print. E-mail by itself is a very passive form of communication and serves best for notices, announcements and brief information. For interactive communication, it is necessary to use other electronic resources. Eastern Branch, through Bill Dare, is experimenting with these options now.

#### **National Social Work Week**

The celebration of National Social Work Week is, in Eastern Branch, in constant evolution. In the past, we tried independent events. In recent years, we have joined with events held in community centres and hospitals. We are also trying to promote activities in the region by offering small amounts of money for different counties to celebrate the week in some fashion. We generally have spent little in this area, preferring instead to focus on the Gala for scholarships, Program, the *Bulletin* and social justice issues.

#### **Membership Development and Retention**

Membership development and retention is an area where we have expended considerable volunteer effort but so far with limited return. Personally, I would like to see more money put into this area. For us, that means costs associated with bilingualism as well as outreach to outlying counties outside Ottawa.

#### **Other Expenses**

Under other expenses, I would put costs associated with social action. At the moment, our reputation in this area depends heavily on individual members who have credibility and visibility in the policy/political arena. Without their volunteer time, OASW probably would fall under the radar on the local scene. With more money, it would be possible to gain additional visibility, improve presentations and network more effectively.

Glenn Drover, Past President

### **BRANCH REPRESENTATIVE TO OASW**

#### **OASW PROVINCIAL BOARD MEETING JUNE 12-13 2009**

A considerable amount of time at our provincial board meeting was devoted to discussing the organizational review. OASW's Organizational Review Task Group, whose Terms of Reference were approved in February 2008, was mandated to make recommendations to OASW's Board of Directors regarding:

- The optimal size and composition of the Provincial Board in order to address changing

---

organizational and membership needs, and

- The future role and function of the Branches.

While the impetus for reviewing OASW's organizational structure and the role and function of Branches was initially precipitated by fiscal concerns (the deficit associated with our successful, but unbudgeted campaign to seek the inclusion of social workers in the *Psychotherapy Act, 2007*), other factors also contributed to this decision. These factors included:

- the size of OASW's Provincial Board which was out-of-step with current governance models;
- the frequent turn-over of Branch representatives and the resources required to maintain such a large Board;
- the lack of any formal review of Board structure since the Association was incorporated in 1964; and
- anecdotal reports from Branches related to changing membership needs and patterns of engagement with Branches.

At the direction of the Board, an OASW Membership Survey was conducted in the fall of 2007 to better understand the interests and needs of members. The findings of the survey indicated that while members continued to support the Association's strategic goals, changing work and personal commitments had led to decreased involvement at the Branch level.

In January 2008, a Task Group was struck to examine the issues related to the Association's Board structure and role and function of the Branches in collaboration with the Branches and Provincial Board. Over the past year and a half, OASW's Organizational Review Task Group has undertaken the following activities to meet its mandate:

- February 2008 - Discussion paper was prepared which provided an historical context for the current Board and Branch structure and posed questions to guide input at the Friday evening Branch Affairs meeting, as well as the Board meeting the next day, related to the perceived effectiveness of the current structure

to meet organizational and membership needs.

- March-April 2008 - Outreach to Branches to explore interest in participating in regional pilots which would gather information about possible Branch structural options. A telephone consultation with northern Branches and limited uptake by other Branches resulted in the abandonment of proposed pilots.
  - May 2008 – An Interim Report to the Board provided an update on work to date. Feedback provided direction for the next phase of information gathering.
  - August-October 2008 – Consultations were held with Branch Boards, which received findings from six questions on the membership survey (broken out according to postal codes which aligned with Branch boundaries) and which were asked to provide feedback on a number of questions related to the role and value of Branches. Information was also gathered and synthesized from sister associations across the country and from allied professions provincially, related to their size and composition, and articles reviewed from the research literature on association governance.
  - October 2008 – Input from consultation with the Branch Boards and information gathered regarding Board governance structures was presented to the Board in the form of a report. Recommendations in the report led to passage of the following Board motions:
    - *To approve, in principle, the recommendation of the Organizational Review Task Group to retain the current Branch Structure where leadership exists and to implement mechanisms to increase accountability for use of Branch allocations and demonstrate the value of financial resources and deliverables.*
    - *To approve in principle the governance model proposed by the Organizational Review Task Group, which includes reducing the Board size to a 15-member Elected Representational Board Model and establishing a Council of Branches.*
-

- October 2008-February 2009 – Activities focused on refining the proposed Board governance model and on developing alternative Branch funding options. The latter entailed reviewing Branch financial statements for 2007 and 2008 and identifying common core Branch functions.
- February 2009 – Interim Report to the Board recommended that the current formula for funding Branches, i.e. a set amount paid per individual member, be replaced by a formula to fund common core functions. The Organizational Review Task Group received direction to continue to develop a new Branch funding formula and the following motion was approved:  
*To implement an elected Board of Regional Representatives for the spring of 2010, based on the recommendation of the Organizational Review Task Group.*
- February-June 2009 – Consultations with Branches, development of a mechanism to fund core functions and special projects, and preparation of report for presentation and discussion by the Provincial Board in June 2009.

In Eastern Ontario our regional representative will be our Branch representative. Our presence on the Provincial Board will be unchanged. This is in contrast to other parts of the province where Branches will remain intact, but several Branches will share a regional representative to the Provincial Board. The funding of our Branch will change. The Board passed a motion to change from funding Branches on a per member basis, to funding based on 'core functions' and 'special projects'. 15% of our funding will be available for special projects, such as our Gala.

Ann-Marie O'Brien  
Branch Representative to OASW

## NEW MEMBERS

### Eastern Branch welcomes new members

Jennifer Gullen, Yaa Serwah Awuah Nyamekye, Jolene Arseneault, Sacha Leduc, Melissa Love,

Laura Neil, Natalie O'Brien, Patricia Alisch, Mara Calvert, Melissa Hilchey, and Kim Lawrence.

**Welcome back to** Hilary Robinson.

## AWARDS

### ROLAND LECOMTE – RÉCIPIENDAIRE DU PRIX BESSIE TOUZEL 2009 par Madeleine Dubois

Tenter de résumer en quelques lignes les contributions à notre profession d'un travailleur social, professeur et chercheur de la trempe de Roland Lecomte offre tout un défi. Cela constitue néanmoins une tâche agréable. Depuis qu'il a entrepris sa carrière de travailleur social à la Société de l'aide à l'enfance d'Ottawa en 1959, avec Mary Sinclair, sa première surveillante, Roland n'a pas cessé de baliser des pistes pour la profession du service social et de relever une variété de défis, en y appliquant l'art et le raffinement d'un grand diplomate.

As a scholar, professor and leader, Roland has influenced the way many of the social workers in this community and beyond view and practice their profession. Professor at Carleton University School of Social Work for fifteen years, he also assumed the role of Director of the School for six years. In 1990, the University of Ottawa was fortunate to benefit from the knowledge, skills and wisdom he brought from his tenure at Carleton when he became the founding director of the École de service social, the first full time francophone MSW program in Ontario. Following his retirement after 6 years as Director of the School, he took on the task of creating another unique program at the University of Ottawa, an interdisciplinary program in gerontology.

Perusing a list of Roland's numerous publications gives an indication of the breadth of his reflections and vision. From the enunciation of theoretical foundations for social work to reflections on issues related to professional identity, his scholarly work covers a range of topics touching on the core of our profession.

Over the years, he has often been invited to give conferences on a variety of topics. He continues to be solicited to talk to various groups of social workers, and the historical perspective and many anecdotes with which he enriches his talks are always much appreciated. He was the guest speaker at the activity organized by the CHEO social workers to celebrate social work week this past March, where he talked about the role of grandparents<sup>1</sup>, a role which he and his wife have recently embraced.

Over the years, Roland has also been involved in a number of social and professional organizations, in this city as well as at the provincial and national levels. His involvement with the Canadian Association of Schools of Social Work led to his designation as a life member of that association. In recent years, he has chosen to direct his volunteer work and community involvement to the extremely important question of aging and its related social issues and policies. He has been an active member of the Council on Aging of Ottawa, over which he has been presiding for the last year. He is also presently representing seniors on the City of Ottawa Task Force on Inclusion and Equity.

Lorsqu'on lui demande quelles ont été les contributions, au cours de sa carrière, dont il est particulièrement fier, Roland souligne le lien étroit qu'il a toujours privilégié entre l'université et la communauté. Il ajoute : « Mes contributions tant universitaires que professionnelles sont partagées presque également dans les deux langues officielles du Canada. J'ai côtoyé Shakespeare et Molière, et j'en suis sorti grand comme tout bon Franco-Ontarien! »

Mais ce qui, à mon avis est le plus remarquable dans toutes ces réalisations de Roland, relève davantage de son savoir être. Ceux et celles qui comme moi, ont eu l'occasion de travailler de près avec lui peuvent témoigner de la façon dont il a su intégrer les valeurs qui lui tiennent à cœur et qui sont celles du service social, dans l'accomplissement de ses tâches comme professeur, leader et directeur. Roland est un rassembleur, il sait reconnaître les forces de

chacun et les mobiliser au service d'objectifs partagés. C'est un vrai leader dont nous pouvons tous être fiers.

Our social work community congratulates you and thanks you for your involvement and your vision!

*Madeleine Dubois a occupé le poste de chef de la formation pratique à l'École de service social de l'Université d'Ottawa pendant seize ans. Elle est retraitée depuis quelques mois. Elle était le récipiendaire du prix Bessie Touzel en 2008.*

## SCHOLARSHIPS AND BURSARIES

### **Carleton University**

This year's Swithun Bowers Memorial Scholarship (MSW) was awarded to Yaffa Elling.

The Edith Moore Bursary (BSW) was shared by two students, Emily McLean and Elizabeth Desjardins.

The recipients of the *Brian Macintosh Memorial Bursaries* are Michelle Ratcliffe (BSW) and Amardeep Singh (MSW).

### **Université d'Ottawa**

The Branch partners with the University's School of Social Work in the awarding of the Roland Lecomte Scholarship. This year's winner is Caroline Veilleux.

Congratulations to all this year's recipients. Branch members continue to be the sustaining donors to these endowments cumulatively valued over \$100,000. To all members who over the past 23 years have financially supported student education, thank you.

## GALA GUEST SPEAKER

### **HARD TIMES TOUGH CHOICES: HOMELESSNESS IN CANADA**

This year's Gala guest speaker Mary Martha Hale was introduced by Alan Moscovitch. Mary Martha is the Executive Director of Centre 454. She is also a member of the *Alliance to End Homelessness*. She is a champion of the poor

<sup>1</sup> See page 13 for an excerpt from this presentation

and homeless and has been referred to in the media as the “Mother Theresa of Canada”.

In her presentation entitled, *Hard Times Tough Choices*, she stated that “Homelessness” is a recent phenomenon and has only been coined as a term for the last 25 years. She pointed out that the systems that are put in place to help the homeless population often do not work. For example, the Ottawa Food Bank was started as a short term solution. It has now been in service for 25 years and they serve 40,000 people yearly – 40% of whom are children.

Centre 454 served 100 people in 1998. In 2008, they helped 300 people. The numbers of people using shelters has increased, as has the length of their stay and the number of times they return to shelters.

In 2008, 7,045 different people used shelter beds, which was a 7.2% increase from the year before. The use of shelter beds increased by 13.3% in 2008, with 386,000 beds used. There are currently 11,370 households on wait lists for shelter.

Ottawa as a community has had an action plan since 1999 to build 500 new housing units each year. In 2008, only 134 units were built.

***What we need to do now:***

We require “*made in Ottawa*” solutions to fit the needs of the homeless here. New housing needs to be created, along with supports. We need to advocate for social policy changes at all levels of government and to advocate to prevent families from becoming homeless. We, as a society, need to build bridges between the business and development community to access more resources.

*“Ottawa as a community has had an action plan since 1999 to build 500 new housing units each year. In 2008, only 134 units were built.”*

Mary Martha stated that it requires political will to take action on the solutions that we know already exist. Last year, the government “found” \$35

billion to help the business sector across Canada during the economic recession. That would be equal to one year of social service requirements. The Ontario government’s budget has decreased monies to social services over the years – it is down 25% since 2006.

One percent of the Canadian population – representing 300,000 people experience homelessness each year. In future, one of three things will happen: get better; stay the same; or get worse. Mary Martha closed by encouraging her listeners to advocate to governments to end homelessness.

*Mary Martha Hale holds a BSW and MSW from Carleton University and has worked in the social service field across Canada.*

Valerie Morinville

## COMMITTEE REPORTS

### SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE

Recent meetings of the Social Justice Committee have focused on several issues:

Concern about standards for care of residents in domiciliary hostels and current practice in monitoring the care provided has led to an exploration of these questions.

Following up on some initial research by our Committee, social workers at the Ottawa Hospital plan to present a proposal in the fall for a social work student to conduct further study on the topic.

Our Committee is working on a proposal for a study by Ottawa City Council on the effects of implementing *municipal income tax* as a means of improving the City’s capability to fulfill its responsibilities to its citizens. A small sub-committee has made contact with several experts on the topic, examined relevant publications, and gained the support and advice of two Ottawa City councillors for the project. The next step will be to take our idea to a number of influential Ottawa organizations, such as People for a Better Ottawa, the Chamber of Commerce, the Ottawa Labour Congress, and the Federation of Citizens

Associations. Our goal is to bring together a group of such civic leaders to present the proposal to Council within the next year.

The Committee has prepared a response to the draft regulations for the *Long Term Care Homes Act, 2007*. The submission from Eastern Branch supports the very thorough response of the Ontario Healthcare Coalition. Our submission also highlights several important issues, including an amendment to Regulations 28 and 29 to ensure that social workers and other hospital discharge planners do not lose the legislative right to complete the process of placement planning as delegates for CCAC. A link to the text of the submission will be available on the Branch website shortly.

In response to a request from the *Alliance to End Homelessness*, of which our Branch is a member, a letter has been sent to the Ottawa mayor and councillors in support of a positive recommendation regarding social housing and homelessness services that came before Ottawa City Council at their mid-June meeting.

The Social Justice Committee invites comments from members on any of the issues referred to above.

Margaret Nelson, Chair

## PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE

We again invited a guest member to join us to discuss the development of this issue. Reuel Amdur is a Touzel recipient and long time member of the Association. He brought to our discussion his considerable experience and expertise in social assistance matters. He is the author of the Editorial for this edition. Thank you Reuel, for your participation in this issue of the *Bulletin*.

The Publications Committee invites all members to submit articles and ideas on subjects of interest to the social work community to the *Bulletin*. The theme of the next issue can be found on page 2.

**If you would like to join the Committee**, please contact Graeme Roderick (613 226-7081) for details.

## EDITORIAL AND ARTICLES

### WHAT'S WRONG WITH SOCIAL ASSISTANCE IN ONTARIO

The most fundamental problem with social assistance in Ontario is the miserly level of benefits, especially for Ontario Works (OW). In constant dollars, the current \$572 a month is less than the rate in 1996, back when Mike Harris cut benefits for OW by 21.6%. At the time, Dalton McGuinty, then leader of the Opposition, opposed the cut, but his treatment of recipients in this most important category—money—is worse than that imposed by Harris. And his Minister of Community and Social Services Madeleine Meilleur is concerned that raising rates substantially would discourage people from trying to get off OW.

Then there is the ever-widening gap between rates for OW and the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP). Until 1970, rates for the earlier programs were almost the same. Then, the William Davis Conservatives decided to increase disability benefits but not those for the others. The worthy poor versus the unworthy. The gap has continued to widen, to the point now that ODSP rates for a single person come close to doubling those for OW. To make this situation even more absurd, the system is very deficient in determining who is disabled. OW is supposedly a program of short-term assistance, but there are people on OW in Ottawa with histories going back 20 years and more. The Disability Adjudication Unit seems, for example, to ignore depression unless there has been hospital involvement. Social Workers know how difficult it is to get someone into hospital on the basis of depression.

An additional problem with the system is the matter of complexity. Even the workers and supervisors administering the program have problems knowing all the ins and outs. Back in 1988, the Social Assistance Review Committee's **Transitions** report called for a reduction in the complexity of the system. Subsequently, the Bob Rae NDP government proceeded to increase complexity exponentially, followed by the Harris Conservative government which increased it astronomically.

Let's take an example of the complexity and accompanying confusion. Before the NDP government, a welfare recipient (now OW) could have a car of any value. Then, the NDP put a limit on the value based on the Red Book. In her book **Hope & Despair**, Monia Mazigh tells in passing about her experiences in applying for OW. The first time, she was told by the worker that she had to sell her car, use up the money, and then reapply. The second time, a different worker did not even ask about the car. Neither response was in accord with the policy.

The current Liberal government eliminated a couple complexities, such as the Harris provision of placing a lien on property for long-time OW recipients and the NDP provision of a \$50 a month deduction for immigrants whose sponsors fail in their commitments, but they left the car policy and an appallingly complicated Harris policy on adults living with parents, for example.

It should be noted that the Activities of Daily Living Index, a document required to be completed in application for ODSP, is confusing, leading those completing it to understate the severity of the applicant's problem.

In short, the system harkens back to the old worthy versus unworthy distinction. It pays too little to meet needs. It is complex and convoluted. And it pretends to be able to differentiate between the disabled and those not, something that it does poorly.

Reuel S. Amdur

---

### LE GROUPE D'ACTION COMMUNAUTAIRE FRANCOPHONE (GACF) - DÉFIS ET PERSPECTIVES

par Armand L. Kayolo

**Précis :** *The Francophone Community Action Group, established in 2001, strives to inform and mobilize francophone persons living on low incomes. The participants work together to create tools and identify means to alleviate some of the effects of poverty. In spite of its successes, namely that of a recent publication of participants' literary creations, the group also has many challenges, one of which is the scarcity of funding for the continued support of a group such as theirs.*

Créé en 2001, le Groupe d'Action Communautaire Francophone (GACF) a pour vision d'informer et mobiliser les francophones à faible revenu d'Ottawa, pour créer des outils et identifier des solutions susceptibles de soulager les effets de la pauvreté. En d'autres termes, le mandat du groupe est de s'impliquer activement dans la lutte contre la pauvreté afin d'améliorer la qualité de vie des personnes vivant avec des moyens très limités. En poursuivant les objectifs qu'il s'est assigné, le GACF s'appuie sur la collaboration de plusieurs organismes communautaires dont le Centre des ressources communautaires Overbrook-Forbes, avec comme personne ressource son agent de développement communautaire.

*« ...il est important de noter que le GACF est le seul groupe exclusivement francophone dans l'est d'Ottawa. À ce titre, il représente les intérêts des francophones au sein du Comité consultatif de la ville d'Ottawa sur les questions de pauvreté. »*

Depuis la tenue du premier forum communautaire qui a vu naître le GACF au Patro d'Ottawa en mars 2001, et ce, en tant qu'unique groupe francophone en son genre, ses membres ont été confrontés à plusieurs défis. Le premier de ceux-ci consistait à faire accepter leur présence parmi les nombreuses associations anglophones dont le mandat était identique. Bien que ce défi semble avoir été surmonté avec le temps, le groupe fait encore face à différents défis de taille :

- L'absence d'un projet permanent est une question prioritaire du moment. Certes, le GACF vient de produire un recueil d'œuvres sur la francophonie et la pauvreté à Ottawa intitulé *Sans le sous...Mais si riches*, dans le cadre d'un projet subventionné en 2008.
  - Cependant, il faut que les membres réussissent à concevoir les bases d'un autre projet afin de maintenir le momentum créé par cette dernière publication.
  - Le recrutement des membres est lent et leur maintien n'est pas encore garanti. Ainsi, le
-

GACF est actuellement en quête d'un nouveau souffle afin de mobiliser des membres de la communauté francophone vivant dans la pauvreté. Pour ce faire, les membres travaillent à l'élaboration d'un plan d'action susceptible de pallier à la situation.

- Le sous-financement, ou le manque de financement adéquat, reste un problème majeur et constant. La survie financière du groupe dépend encore de minces dons recueillis auprès des organismes communautaires participants. De nouvelles sources de financement devront être explorées.
- Les membres comprennent, d'une part, des agents d'organismes communautaires participants, et de l'autre, des personnes de la communauté vivant dans la pauvreté. Il se fait que, pour diverses raisons, la charge des tâches est parfois inégalement répartie au sein du groupe; cela pourrait, à la longue, constituer un handicap à l'empowerment des certains membres.

La liste des défis n'est pas exhaustive. Cependant, il est important de noter que le GACF est le seul groupe exclusivement francophone dans l'est d'Ottawa. À ce titre, il représente les intérêts des francophones au sein du Comité consultatif de la ville d'Ottawa sur les questions de pauvreté. Afin de mieux effectuer son travail, il serait utile qu'il se dote de direction et d'une meilleure coordination d'activités dans un avenir rapproché. Les membres du GACF peuvent trouver un créneau au sein de ce qui se fait déjà dans le domaine de la pauvreté et se démarquer davantage. Il n'est pas non plus exclu d'envisager la création future d'autres groupes d'action communautaire pour maximiser la visibilité, la participation francophone et l'échange constructif d'idées. De cette manière, le groupe pourrait éliminer certains défis et éventuellement donner une voix davantage importante aux débats/enjeux concernant la pauvreté.

*Armand Kayolo détient une maîtrise en service social et il est agent de développement communautaire au Centre de ressources communautaires Overbrook-Forbes.*

## ONTARIO SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

by Reuel S. Amdur

**Précis :** *Il y a deux programmes d'aide sociale en Ontario: Ontario au travail et programme ontarien de soutien aux personnes handicapées.*

*L'éligibilité pour prestations de l'Ontario au travail est établie en considération du revenu, des biens, du coût de logement, et du nombre de personnes dans le ménage. Pour les personnes handicapées, non seulement faut-il que les limitations soient importantes mais encore doivent-elles se poursuivre pour au moins un an dans un ou plus de ces domaines: actes de la vie quotidienne, habilité à fonctionner dans la communauté, habilité à fonctionner au travail. L'éligibilité à cause de l'abus d'alcool ou de drogue est couramment devant les cours.*

There are two programs for social assistance in Ontario: Ontario Works (OW) and the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP). These programs existed previously under different names, but the current formulation is essentially that imposed by the Mike Harris Conservatives.

Ontario Works is an income support program for Ontario residents. Eligibility is determined on the basis of income, assets, family size, and housing costs. As an example, a single person living in private housing is entitled to a normal maximum of \$572 monthly, of which \$356 is for housing. In reality many recipients pay more than \$356 for rent. A person may have no more than one month's worth of assets in order to be eligible, though some assets are not taken into consideration.

For those deemed able to work or potentially able to become employable, there are obligations to engage in employment search, volunteer activities, or job placement.

Recipients of OW are entitled to prescription drugs at a cost of \$2 each. Children are covered for dental treatment and adults for limited dental care. Glasses are covered, as are diabetic and surgical supplies. As well, assistive devices are available, with co-payment through the Ministry of Health Assistive Devices Program. If a person

has many medical and social service appointments, there is eligibility for transportation coverage in Ottawa.

In order to be eligible for benefits under the Ontario Disability Support Program, a person must have one or more of the following restrictions, expected to last a year or more: substantial limitations in self care, in ability to function in the community, in ability to function in the workplace. Such limitations must be verified by a health professional with the specified qualifications, most often a physician. Registered social workers are among those who can complete what is called, misleadingly, the Activities of Daily Living Index: For this task, a social worker receives a fee of \$20. Eligibility for ODSP purely on the basis of substance abuse is currently an issue going through the courts.

ODSP recipients are entitled to all the extras to which OW clients have access. The normal maximum for a single person living in private housing is \$1020 a month. This person may have \$5,000 in assets, in addition to other assets in specified categories.

*Reuel Amdur is a former welfare supervisor. He has worked in a variety of areas, including community centres, social planning councils, and shelters. Currently he assists people applying for Criminal Injuries Compensation and appealing denial of ODSP. He is also a freelance writer.*

---

**CANADIAN MENTAL HEALTH  
ASSOCIATION/ONTARIO WORKS  
(CMHA/OW) CASE CONFERENCE GROUP,  
OTTAWA**

by Shelley VanBuskirk

**Précis :** *Nous sommes conscients du fait qu'il existe des services pour les personnes dans le besoin. Mais la grande question est de savoir quels services seront appropriés pour venir en aide à une personne en état de crise et qui est en mesure de mieux les fournir. Le tout est fort complexe. Le « Ottawa Case Conference Group » est un réseau qui est constitué de 20 agences communautaires dont le but est de*

*collaborer pour arriver à coordonner les services appropriés pour des cas spécifiques.*

The Ottawa Case Conference Group is a joint initiative of the City's Social Services department and the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA). It held its first meeting in September of 2004. It consists of a network of 20 + community agencies chaired by a representative from Ontario Works. The group is committed to working collaboratively within a case conference model in order to provide a coordinated service delivery. The group meets to discuss high priority cases involving persistent mental health and/or addiction issues where the individual is in crisis or facing an imminent crisis. The model allows agency representatives the opportunity to tap into the expertise of other professionals in the community and to present and share resources.

The Case Conference Group meets the first Thursday of every month in space provided by the CMHA. Cases are presented anonymously and recommendations are put forward to assist in developing a service plan to aid service providers in supporting the individual. Recommendations are geared towards the following: how to assist individuals in following through with an application for the Ontario Disability Support Program; how to access supports around housing, medical/counselling referrals, life skills programs and treatment programs; how to connect individuals to longer term supports in order to help manage their addiction/mental health issues; and how to achieve/increase stability in day to day life.

*Shelley VanBuskirk has been employed with the City of Ottawa since February 1994. She currently works as a Social Services Supervisor for the City's Community and Social Services Department carrying the Mental Health and Addiction Services Initiative (OW) portfolios in one of the local Social Service Centres.*

**OTTAWA CASE CONFERENCE GROUP**

Community and Social Services Department -  
City of Ottawa  
Canadian Mental Health Association  
Ontario Disability Support Program

---

Royal Ottawa Hospital  
 Youth Services Bureau  
 Housing Help  
 Ottawa Rape Crisis Centre  
 Somerset West Community Health Centre  
 Salvation Army  
 Jewish Family Services  
 Centretown Community Health Centre  
 Residential School of Healing  
 Public Health - City of Ottawa  
 Community Legal Services  
 Daybreak  
 Salus  
 Causeway  
 Centre 507  
 Ottawa Inner City Ministries  
 Sandy Hill Community Health Centre  
 The Well  
 Wabano Centre for Aboriginal Health  
 Elizabeth Fry  
 House of Hope  
 Operation Go Home  
 Centre 454  
 Ottawa Mission

---

### ON BECOMING A RETIRED PROFESSIONAL

*by Annabelle Twilley- Richardson*

**Précis :** *La première vague de la génération "Baby Boom" s'approche graduellement des années de retraite. Parmi ce groupe les membres de notre profession les plus âgés commencent à planifier dans le but de réduire le nombre d'heures de service ou de se retirer complètement pour poursuivre d'autres intérêts ou de considérer à entreprendre une seconde carrière ou tout simplement de choisir de passer plus de temps avec leur famille. Que peuvent-ils s'attendre de leur profession? Annabelle Twilley-Richardson partage son expérience de ce qu'elle a vécu lorsqu'elle a décidé de se retirer complètement du travail social.*

---

After over fifteen years in autonomous practice, I moved from semi to full retirement in January 2008. No party, but it was nice to hear back from contractors that they were sorry to see me go. I decided to pay for an additional year of Liability Insurance coverage in the event of any last minute client "wrap-up". When the next

enrolment date rolled around again, I considered the option to pay a certain amount for seven years coverage after retirement. It could be reasonable...I have nothing to compare it with. I couldn't afford it. For a little while, I can still continue membership in OASW, getting news of various issues and initiatives. This included one e-mail notice recently telling me of an opportunity to exercise my resting skills and experience, to hopefully further a deeply-felt personal cause.

Some issues are the same for all practitioners, even before retirement. When I replaced my computer this year, I had my old one's hard disk wiped, with a paper record from the company ensuring that they had done so. I will also be doing the same with my ancient lap-top. Preparing for personal incapacity or death, requires some thought as to how to deal with one's practice. In previous wills, I have made provisions as to how to deal with existing clients, and confidential files, designating a colleague, giving detailed directions. My will requires updating to reflect new realities. Coinciding with my retirement, were major renovations on my house. The large accumulations of books and files which previously time would only permit storing, now were in the way. Better than leaving this horrendous task for others, I am doing a major clean-up of what can be done now.

Recently I found an institution with a clear and respectful policy published on their web-site, for donations of books, periodicals, and teaching videos. I am doing up skeleton catalogue (author, title, year of publication, grouping them in broad category lists). I have also removed the pocket/card from each text, to ensure the confidentiality of those who had borrowed them in the past. On accepting, the institution will keep and disperse these materials as they consider best, and possibly be able to issue a receipt I can use for a modest tax deduction.

For rurally based practitioners, burning case records in a wood stove or outside trash barrel is no longer an acceptable environmental, or permissible practice. There are shredding services which will come to my home, where I can witness the procedure to ensure that it has been done with appropriate care. Not cheap. Once I have dealt with the bulk, I can handle the

---

rest as disposal time comes due, using my personal shredder. My municipality can mulch this shredded paper.

A few years back, I consulted with a certification body, requesting some advice as to how to efficiently and effectively dispose of computer disk, audio and video case records. I got back a letter citing, word for word, the organization's Code of Practice on protecting and ensuring "proper" disposal of confidential records. No advice as to how.

The shredding company can also deal with floppy discs containing confidential records, as can some personal shredding systems. Although I would think that what is intended are the more modern CD's. A hammer treatment seems like a way with the older types. With the audio/visuals, it looks like disposal could require the tedious job of opening each plastic cover (using protective gloves), un-spooling the tape, destroying any labels on the covers, and disposing of it all in the garbage. Before doing that I will ask the shredding company if they can handle the task.

When I touted up all that I needed to pay in annual fees to the various certification and registration groups, it was clear I could no longer afford this. The Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers, requires a letter of *request* to resign from membership in the College. I sent that "request", along with a statement of regret that there was no category for retired members.

In return, their letter stated there was no "Retired" category as it wasn't in the legislation. It went on to detail all things I could no longer do and the penalties attached if I should, quoting in length, from policy. Appreciating where they would need to make it clear about my new status, I found the language used officious and disrespectful. That letter came across as pre-emptively punitive. As if once free from membership constraint, I would run professionally amok!

In addition, upon consultation, it was pointed out that there would be no way the public could learn why I was no longer a College member....it could just as easily be because I had been sanctioned for some malfeasance. I wrote back to the College expressing my concerns. That was

February 20, 2008. To date, there has been no reply.

Can I really consider myself free of any obligation now? For example, to just dispose of all my case records, rather than hold them for the ten years required of College members? Put them all in the recycle bin? It would be so much easier! Even though I no longer belong to the College, I am still a professional. *Choosing* to abide by the ethical and practice standards espoused by the College, for which I advocated so many long years. It would be nice to have the College formally, and respectfully, acknowledge my intent to continue to act in a responsible, accountable manner, abiding by the professionally ethical obligations that the College espouses. The public deserves this. So do retirees from our profession.

*Before retiring, Ms. Twilley- Richardson had been an autonomous practitioner in the rural areas of Lanark County for over 15 years. For a number of years she was the Branch representative to OASW Provincial Professional Development initiatives.*

---

**THE EVOLVING ROLE OF GRANDPARENTS:  
ISSUES AND PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS**  
Conference given at CHEO  
by Roland Lecomte PhD  
On the occasion of Social Work Week  
March 5<sup>th</sup> 2009

*(Note: The following is an excerpt from the above presentation. To read the full text, please visit our web page at <http://www.oasw.org/en/communitysite/branches/eastern.asp> . Roland Lecomte is this year's recipient of the Bessie Touzel award. See page 5 for details of his career.)*

**GRANDPARENTS ACTING AS PARENTS**

There is a saying that we should have our children while our parents are still young enough to take care of them...

In 2001, Statistic Canada reported that over 60,000 grandparents were raising their grandchildren on their own. Two-thirds of these grandparents were women, and half the children they were raising were 14 or younger. The 2000 US Census found that 2.4 million grandparents

---

are the primary caregivers in their families. 46 % percent of these families are maintained exclusively by grandmothers with 6% by grandfathers. Grandparents parenting their grandchildren transcend all socioeconomic groups, geographic areas and ethnicities. However, these families are more likely to be poor and located in or near cities. These skipped generation families constitute a steadily increasing phenomenon which require urgent attention by legislators, service providers and society at large. Four questions come to mind:

### **1) Why are grandparents acting as parents?**

An increasing number of grandparents are providing permanent care to their grandchildren as a result of divorce, substance abuse, child abuse and/or neglect, teenage pregnancy, death, HIV/AIDS, incarceration and mental health problems. They may act as the custodial grandparents, the providers of daily care or act as daycare grandparents.

### **2) What are the implications of grandparenting their grandchildren?**

Much of the research of grandparent caregivers focuses upon the difficulties surrounding their role. For some, health is the issue. Irrespective of their health is the issue of stamina. Many grandparents report feeling both emotionally and physically drained. They may fear that as a result of their tiredness and possible health problems they may be unable to meet the demands of parenting and that their grandchildren may have to move out to other forms of care.

Most grandparenting is not paid. It is not surprising that grandparents suffer from economic difficulties. Although there is an increasing number of support groups and informative organizations, there still exists a lack of government support. Many grandparents are denied benefits provided to foster parents based on the blood relation to the child, even though they may be in just as much need. In a sense they are penalized for their willingness to care for their grandchildren.

### **3) How do the children fare when in the care of their grandparents?**

Custodial grandchildren –under the legal custody of their grandparents - are believed to be a greater risk of emotional and behavioral problems than children in general. But there is scant research on this issue. While some studies report the benefits of kinshipcare, most focus on the more troubling outcomes for children raised by their grandparents. Many custodial grandparents, compared to traditional grandparents (day care parenting), report increased rates of behavioral problems mostly with boys. However, it is unknown whether behavioral problems are the result of stress in the child's family of origin, or their present living situation with their grandparents. It should be noted that overall there has been little research specifically conducted on how children fare emotionally, socially or academically while in the care of their grandparents.

### **4) What are some of the unanswered questions?**

Grandparents as parents is an area of research that only emerged in recent years. As such, a large collection of literature has not yet been established, while the research that is available tends to focus on the negative aspects of caring for grandchildren.

An area of future research that is needed is an exploration of how the age of both the grandparent and the grandchild may affect their relationship. We know very little about the differences between younger and older grandparent caregivers and the effects of differences in the ages of the children when they come to live with their grandparents. These differences may have implications for both the caregiver and the children.

Gender is also an issue likely to be related to outcomes for both the child and the adult. Research has demonstrated developmental and behavioral differences between boys and girls, yet we know little about what this means for the grandparent caring for the child. The gender of the grandparent is also likely to have an important influence on the grandchild. We know that maternal grandmothers are known to be very involved with their grandchildren, but recent

research is beginning to assess the impact and benefit from the presence of the grandfather.

In terms of the children, research is only beginning to establish how children living with their grandparents fare in both the short and long term. In addition, more research is needed to examine the behavioral difficulties of grandchildren in grandparent care as compared to children in parental care.

Finally, while there is outstanding evidence that grandparents raising grandchildren is a complex and growing phenomenon, very little attention has been given to the **needs** of grandparents caregivers. One study identified a "wish list" based on interviews with grandparents:

- we want more knowledge on child development and parenting;
- give us short-term respite services-- one-on-one or group intergenerational counseling for grandparents and grandchildren, programs on stress reduction;
- we need financial and legal assistance: (advocacy on accessing public and private assistance and programs; expert advice on legal, financial, medical, housing, and education questions.)

There is the need for an activist organization through which grandparent caregivers can educate the public and lobby for increased services.

### CONTACT US!

Your Branch now has a **NEW** mailing address, and a **NEW e-mail address!**

To contact us by phone, call us as usual at:

☎ (613) 238-8406

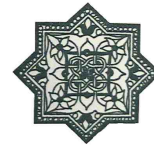
Write to us at our **NEW** address at:

153 Chapel Street,  
Ottawa, Ontario K1N 1H5

**E-mail us at our NEW e-mail address:**

oasw-eb@magma.ca

### MARKETPLACE



**Office Space Available  
full or part time**

***The Catherine Street House*  
317 Catherine St. (corner of Lyon)**

**Location:**

Offices with waiting room are situated in an older heritage style building located in downtown Ottawa, at the corner of Catherine and Lyon Street. Two second storey offices, attractively decorated with period furniture, suitable for counselling and consulting.

On site parking is available for tenants and on street parking for clients.

**Group Room Rental:**

A large 285 square foot (12.3 x 23.3) furnished space with hard wood floors and attractive architectural detailing is available for rent.

☎ **Call Kathy Al-Zand at  
(613) 730 3549  
for details.**

**POSTMAN/AU FACTEUR:**  
**If undelivered, please returned to/**  
**Si non livré, prière de retourner à:**  
**153 Chapel Street,**  
**Ottawa, Ontario K1N 1H5**  
 Date of Mailing: June 30, 2009  
 (PM 40005379)

Distribution  
 Rideau Mailing Services  
 155 Colonnade Road S.  
 Nepean, Ontario  
 (613) 727-1122

Impression/Printing  
 Kwik Kopy  
 1529 Merivale Road  
 Nepean, Ontario  
 (613) 225-7634

Publishing/Publication  
[deborah013@sympatico.ca](mailto:deborah013@sympatico.ca)

OASW AND EASTERN BRANCH  
 present  
 a one-day workshop on  
 “**STRENGTH-BASED PRACTICE**”  
 with Dennis Seeleby

**The workshop will take place on**  
**October 30, 2009**  
**Marconi Centre**  
**1026 Baseline Road**

**Registration** is \$125 **before** August 31, and  
 \$150 **after** September 1. (Register early!)

**Your Registration fee includes** all refreshments,  
 lunch, as well as a pre-workshop Reception on  
 the evening of October 29, 2009.

**For more information please contact**  
 Christian Hackbusch  
 (613) 747-7800 ext. 2830  
 at the Children’s Aid Society.

#### GULLEN AWARD ENDOWMENT FUND

**Help support this worthwhile award**  
 for Excellence in the Print Media in social  
 work issues by making a tax-deductible  
 contribution to the Endowment Fund.

This year the Award was given in two  
 categories: large and small print media.

#### **Contributions can be mailed to:**

The Gullen Award for Media Excellence  
 c/o The Community Foundation of Ottawa  
 75 rue Albert Street, Suite 301  
 Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5E7

#### OPPORTUNITY

**Office Help Required:** The OASW-EB is  
 seeking a part-time administrative assistant (2-3  
 hours per week) with basic computer skills and  
 good communication skills. Apply to:

[oasw-eb@magma.ca](mailto:oasw-eb@magma.ca)

#### NEXT ISSUE OF THE BULLETIN

“Professional Identity”

You are invited to submit your articles and ideas  
 for the **Fall 2009** issue of  
 the **Bulletin**.

**Deadline: October 17, 2009**