



About Us

A Newsletter for Friends of Unitarian House

Unitarian House of Ottawa

Ottawa's not-for-profit Retirement Residence and Senior Apartments



Fall/Winter 2020

The Place we Call Home

When I look back on this year, I remind myself of all we have accomplished in the past 8 months just by staying safe.

Unitarian House has always been known as a place you can call Home, so when we had to lock the place down in March, I knew that the community supported this decision, no matter how difficult it was. We all had, and still have, the same goal; staying safe.

The residents and the staff are responsible for creating a feeling of home, of caring, of laughter, of sharing, of crying, and honesty.

We have learned to be a family during this time sharing our stories, talking politics, reading poetry, laughing, arguing and supporting each other.

I have learned so much about myself and even though I stayed out of reach to my own family I have not felt alone.

I feel honored to belong to this Home.



Christina O'Neil
Executive Director

Christmas Spirit is Alive & Well through Handmade Cards!

2nd floor Residents of Unitarian House have been busy making beautiful & creative drawings, that have been turned into a collection of one-of-a-kind holiday cards.



all 12 designs.

These cards will go on sale late November. 12 cards for \$15.00 or 24 Cards for \$25.00. Each pack will feature a mix of

All funds raised from the sale of these Holiday cards will be invested in the Retirement Living Assistance Fund.

The Retirement Living Assistance Fund is used to help members of our community, stay in their home at Unitarian House, even if they have outlived their savings, or fall on other financial hardships.



To order your cards call 613-722-6690 or email retire@unitarianhouse.ca.

Merry Christmas

Andrea Loukuv Promoted to Nurse Lead!

Andrea Loukuv, joined us in Fall of 2019 in a part-time/on-call capacity and has recently been promoted to the position of Charge Nurse.

Andrea, moved to Ottawa from the GTA, planning to be an electrical engineer, but soon realized her real passion was healthcare.

She headed back to school, and is now a registered practical nurse, after graduating from Mohawk College in Hamilton.

Andrea is happy to now call Ottawa home, and spends her free time exploring the great-outdoors with her partner, and dog Buddy – a year old Portuguese Water Dog.

Welcome Home Andrea! We're luck to have you!

A Note from Board President, Merle Bolick



The Annual Meeting of the Unitarian House Association took place in September in the Courtyard, masked and distanced, and punctuated by an attempt by our large computer monitor to sail

away in the high wind, taking with it the Board Members who were attending virtually. Luckily, we got it propped up and were able to vote in the new Board members, present the financial documents, and get approval for holding on-line meetings in future.

Winter is coming and the good thing is: There Won't Be Dragons. What will happen is that we will stop waiting to know if there is an end to this tunnel. We will begin to see a light. I expect news of a successful vaccine this winter, followed by a wait for its roll-out to seniors and their supports. Just knowing it is coming will make the wait more bearable. No more

Waiting for Godot. (How's that for a mishmash of cultural references?) All our resources of humour, kindness and Irish coffee will be required, but we will get through.

I wish I could be with you during the holiday season and the February blues. Keep safe!

- Merle Bolick
President of the Board

Finding the Silver Lining Residents Contribute to Covid-19 Memoir

"Here, in Unitarian House of Ottawa, this 'Place We Call Home', we have now lived through many months of the pandemic which has come to this world in the year 2020. So far, no-one has become ill or tested positive with the virus. We so much hope to be able to maintain this situation!"



The above are the opening words of a new book which is in preparation at our House. About six months after the pandemic arrived in Ottawa, Ria Heynen was volunteering at the reception desk and had a conversation with 2nd Floor resident Christine MacDonald. Between them, they came up with the idea of a Unitarian House memoir of living through these harrowing times.

Residents were asked what were their thoughts and feelings about living through the pandemic, what was their first reaction and, now, after more than half a year of restrictions? We requested articles, quotations, photos, jokes, poetry... whatever has touched our hearts! Later, we decided to include the words of our dedicated staff. Articles range from comments on coping with the really difficult issues of life to a light-hearted look at our pets and their people. Laughter and tears are intertwined. A picture emerges of the varied

and interesting people we are and of how we live our lives in this warm-hearted seniors' residence during a time of world crisis. It is truly a historical record!

The idea has grown from an in-house project to becoming a full-sized book which we hope to sell as a fundraiser. We will keep you posted about when it is published and how you may obtain a copy.

Our informal editorial group are Ria Heynen, Sandy Castledine, Mo Gabe, and Jan Glyde with Activities Director Jennifer Brierley as staff liaison.

- Mo Gabe
[Photo by Christel Paulun]

Big Thanks to our Volunteers

As a not-for-profit organization, our volunteers play a major role in helping us thrive. This has been especially true in the past 10 months.

Our wonderful front-desk volunteers, help keep our residents safe during their evening and weekend shifts. They screen anyone coming into the building for Covid symptoms

Unitarian House – Who We Are



Unitarian House was originally conceived in 1973 as an outreach program to provide seniors with affordable accommodation, support, services and a continuum of care.

Over the years, we have gained an outstanding reputation as a caring, vibrant and diversified community of residents, staff and volunteers. Our residents enjoy, and contribute to, many stimulating activities in a comfortable, relaxed atmosphere that feels like “Home”.

We have two levels of accommodation: 67 one and two-bedroom apartments (senior apartments), 40 bed-sitting units and 5 two-room suites (retirement living) for a total capacity of 130 seniors.

As a not-for-profit organization, our rents are at the low end of the market scale (never to exceed 80% of comparable market value) and we budget each year to break even. However, as with any home, maintenance, renovations and upgrades are continually required. Therefore, we rely on our cherished donors and volunteers to help us raise the required funds, so that our residents can continue to enjoy all the comforts and security of Home.

Unitarian House is unique in that we adjust the support offered to each resident as their needs change, without increasing their monthly fees. If we aren't able to provide the level of additional care and support, they need, we help our residents and families source the right add-ons through affordable outside care providers. This allows our residents to stay here, at home, longer while still maintaining their health & independence, while aging in place.

How You Can Help!

Through the early years, Unitarian House developed a donor program and an investment fund which have served us well. These are designed to ensure we are able to continue to maintain the building in both a safe and attractive condition and also to cover the cost of the financial assistance programs.

Unfortunately, the recent economic downturn caused by COVID-19, has wreaked havoc with investments, donations and fundraising. Unitarian House has had to cancel the annual May Fundraising Dinner, while the August Beer Garden and September Fall Fair's futures are uncertain.

Your gift, no matter the size, is greatly appreciated and is needed more now than ever before.

There are many ways to contribute:

- a one-time gift, a monthly donation, donations as birthday gifts, to mark anniversaries
- bequest / planned giving/transfer of investments, securities
- in memoriam - list Unitarian House as the recipient for donations

Contributions can be made:

- By cheque send your donation to: Unitarian House, 20 Cleary Avenue, Ottawa, Ontario K2A 3Z9.
- By credit card – just call or drop in during the work hours Monday to Friday 8:30-4:30
- By going to CanadaHelps.org. Canada Helps deducts up to 4% from all donations made.

All charitable contributions over \$10.00 are provided with a tax receipt.

With your help we have:

- Purchased a generator to keep critical
- Upgraded & replace the pistons in both of our very busy elevators
- Purchased a new accessible van
- Installed electric door openers on all of our retirement living units
- Installed a PA system for the whole building
- Upgraded our courtyard, main entrances, & Offices
- Upgraded 2nd Floor Lounges including a custom-built Entertainment Wall with 55" Smart TV

- Upgraded all apartment windows
- Replaced Heating and Cooling Systems
- Replaced & Maintained the Roof
- Upgraded the Plumbing Distribution System
- Installed a Sprinkler System on 1st & 2nd floors.
- Upgraded our Laundry Room
- Upgraded the flooring on 1st & 2nd floors.

Ongoing & Future Projects:

- Financial Assistance Programs
- 2nd Floor Renovations – Updating the Reception Desk & the Nursing Station.
- Elevator cab refurbishing, and new buttons – 2020
- Building Envelope repairs

Should you wish to discuss the best way to give, the work we do or how the funds are spent, our Executive Director, Christina O'Neil, is available at 613-722-6690 extension 228 or at coneil@unitarianhouse.ca.

For more information on current projects or to enquire about other types of donations, contact our Administration and Marketing Manager, Susan Faith, at 613-722-6690 extension 234 or email retire@unitarianhouse.ca.

For your convenience, a donation form has been enclosed with this Newsletter.

Unitarian House of Ottawa
"We call it home"

Thank you to the following contributors of this issue: Christina O'Neil, Paula Theetge, Jackie Holzman, Sandy Castledine, Merle Bolick, Jennifer Brierley and Susan Faith.

About Us is published twice each year with a Spring/Summer issue and a Fall/Winter edition. These two newsletters keep friends of Unitarian House informed of the ongoing activities and needs of our home.

New for 2020 – Sign up to receive your ‘About Us’ Newsletter electronically. Send an email with your name and email address to retire@unitarianhouse.ca

Interim President of the Board:

Merle Bolick

Executive Director:

Christina O’Neil

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