



About Us

A Newsletter for Friends of Unitarian House

Unitarian House of Ottawa

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



Spring/Summer 2019

35 Years of Excellence

In the world of senior living, **Unitarian House of Ottawa** is, and has been, a role model for not-for-profit housing with an active community of residents supported by staff, families, the community and volunteers. We represent the success of the principle of "social responsibility" originally articulated by members of the First Unitarian Congregation of Ottawa and the need for affordable housing with supports for seniors. With the help and support from the federal government (CMHC), local politicians, and individuals, a dedicated group of volunteers worked for over 10 years to see our doors open on March 31st 1984. This year we celebrate 35 years of excellence!

Unitarian House of Ottawa has created a successful model that translates into lives of involvement and dynamic living for seniors. We look forward to continuing our legacy.

On this 35th year we would like to extend a special thank you to the First Unitarian Congregation and the River Parkway Children's Centre for their continued support and collaboration with Unitarian House.

Christina O'Neil
Executive Director



Welcome Debra Hall

We would like to welcome the newest member of our management team, Debra Hall! Debra, who also goes by Debbie or Deb, was born and raised in the Deep River/Chalk River area. She has five brothers and one sister. Her father was a fireman and she followed in her mother's footsteps by becoming a nurse.



Debra has four daughters and believe it or not, nine grandchildren! She was a single mother of three daughters when she completed her nursing degree at Algonquin College in Pembroke.

Debra has extensive experience working for 14 years as a home visiting nurse. She worked in British Columbia and Labrador before moving to Ottawa to pursue her career as Director of Care. Debra has also spent many years working in the Long-Term Care sector.

"I am very excited and happy to be a part of the Unitarian House family. I look forward to being part of this Retirement Community for many years to come!"

Feel free to stop by the Nursing Department to meet Debra if you haven't done so already. Welcome to the team!

- Jessica Veysey

Calendar Girl

What is this story about? Why the title? Think *Calendar Girls*, the 2003 movie starring Helen Mirren, about a Women's Institute fundraising for a local hospital by posing nude for a calendar, which went viral. Now think Unitarian House going one better, with calendar girls, and boys, ages 70-plus, 80-plus and up to 99 posing for our own fundraising calendar - much to the shock and horror of some of their offspring. But. They. Just. Don't. Care.



Our calendar story begins with Alice Bushe, Unitarian House resident and go-getter, sitting at Happy Hour

one day in 2012 wondering how to shake things up around here. There were two things on her mind: how to help our most long-lived residents facing financial hardship remain here; and what to do for some fun. Putting the two together, the idea for a “naked truth” calendar took shape. After getting buy-in from management and residents willing to pose, Alice set about getting the calendar produced – on a shoestring, within seven months. For all that, the 2014 calendar was a roaring success, raising \$15,000 for the Financial Assistance Program. Despite the many laughs involved in the production, as well as a few unforeseen challenges, Alice vowed never again and said the experience was “like herding cats.”

However, ensuring that no-one has to leave Unitarian House at the end of their life because of money is of constant concern, and Alice, along with many others are always on the lookout for ways to fund the Program. So, in 2018, Christina O’Neil, Executive Director, asked Alice what she thought about doing another calendar. With plenty of lead time and a very supportive staff at Unitarian House

lending expertise in communications, publicity and technical skills, Alice decided to do it all again.

When “The Naked Truth 2020 Calendar-Sports Revealed” proposal was put to the Residents’ Association, the response was overwhelmingly in favour; before the meeting’s



end, Alice had all the photo models she needed. Here’s what resident Lynn Collins had to say: “The minute I heard, I knew I wanted to be in the calendar because it sounded like so much fun.” With an accomplished volunteer photographer, Diane Russon, already on

board, a designated space on the 4th floor blocked off, and a workable schedule, the photo shoots began. As well as in-house space, four off-site venues were sourced: a boxing gym, a swimming pool, a climbing wall, and the YMCA/YWCA. Everyone who was approached, whether to use their facilities or to borrow sports equipment, was very enthusiastic and



supportive of the project. All went according to plan, the photo shoots are all done, and it only remains to choose the best for the calendar. The photos in this article are just a glimpse of what is to come.

With phase one completed and the calendar due to be printed in August 2019, the next hurdles are the printing/production costs, which is where the rest of us come in. You will have the option to pre-order a calendar at a reduced price, which is one very effective way to help

achieve our goal. Or, if you prefer, you can make a contribution to help fund the production costs.

To pre-order and to help fund the production of our 2020 calendar, go to our **Kickstarter page at www.kickstarter.com/profile/unitarianhouse**

Be one the first to pre-order and receive a discount!

Let's make a difference in the lives of some of our beloved, most senior residents, as well as add to the fun-loving culture that is a hallmark of life at Unitarian House. Heartfelt thanks for your support of this most worthwhile venture.

- Jan Glyde

Annual Fundraising Dinner

You are cordially invited to our Annual Fundraising Dinner with guest speaker Ryan Hreljac from the "Ryan's Well Foundation"

Founder, Ryan Hreljac, began a school project to fund raise for clean water initiatives at the



Photo from www.ryanswell.ca

young age of six. Now at twenty-seven years old, his organization has helped raise millions of dollars to bring clean water to more than 900,000 people in sixteen developing countries around the world.

Ryan has received numerous awards

including the Order of Ontario, the Canadian Meritorious Service Medal, the Top 20 under 20 Youth Award, and World of Children's Founder Award. Ryan's work has also been featured in dozens of textbooks and hundreds of books and magazines including Time, People Magazine, and Reader's Digest, as well as in television such as the Oprah Winfrey Show and CNN.

The work of the Ryan's Well Foundation has become the story of countless people, young and old, from around the world who ignore apathy and realize that anyone, even kids in grade one, can make a difference.

**Please join us Tuesday May 21st 2019
Price \$130.00 (Tax Receipt for \$100)
RSVP by May 7th 2019
reception@unitarianhouse.ca**

Celebrating Danny's 30th Anniversary at Unitarian House



On May 26th Unitarian House will be celebrating one of our longest standing staff members, Daniel Brisebois! Danny was originally hired in 1989 as the overnight security guard. His duties included doing

rounds of the house and parking lot along with light housekeeping duties, cleaning the laundry room and waxing floors. After his first year his role transitioned into the housekeeping and maintenance assistant. In 1994 Danny became the maintenance supervisor. If you'd like to know about the history of our building, Danny's your guy! He remembers going through many major renovations including a significant project where a wall in the dining room was removed, the building of the Founders Room and three additional units on the 2nd floor, two new roofs, a new nursing office and front entrance.

When asked what his favourite memories are, Danny recalls the holiday Santa parties where residents and staff brought in their children and

grandchildren, enjoyed lunch and shared gifts. He has fond memories of roast beef BBQs in the courtyard and a few wild happy hours where residents enjoyed one too many drinks!





Danny grew up in Quebec and moved into Unitarian House in 1994. Unitarian House truly has been his “Home” for 25 years. When asked what he likes most about working here he says that working alongside the residents and staff “feels like family”. He would like to give special thanks to all of the staff he has worked with over the years, especially in housekeeping and maintenance, Roger, Claire, Barbara, Dennis, Cam, Janine, Nelia, Divina, Kevin and Jerome to name a few. He appreciates their hard work, dedication and teamwork.

Congratulations Danny on your 30 years at UH!

- Jessica Veysey

Save the Dates!

Friday, May 31st 2019
Burn the Mortgage BBQ

Thursday, August 29th 2019
Beer Garden

Saturday, September 14th 2019
Unitarian House Fall Fair

Call Unitarian House for Details!

Spring Quilt Raffle

This year’s quilt was donated by our former Nurse Leader, Alison Jones. Alison says this quilt was made by a friend of hers

(anonymous) who was a “super quilter”! Purchase your tickets at the front desk. One ticket for \$2 or three tickets for \$5.



The winning ticket will be drawn at the Fundraising Dinner on May 21st!

Unitarian House of Ottawa
“We call it home”

Thank you to the following contributors of this issue: Christina O’Neil, Jan Glyde, Alice Bushe, Jennifer Brierley, Sandra McRitchie and Jessica Veysey.

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.

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Executive Director: Christina O’Neil

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