

The Council on Aging of Ottawa

34 Years of Service 1975-2009

The Council on Aging of Ottawa is celebrating thirty-four years of work dedicated to enhancing the quality of life for all seniors in Ottawa. In April 1975, the Council came into being as a result of the wise foresight of leading community agencies. We recognize the valuable legacy we have been given by former Presidents, senior volunteers, Executive Directors and staff.

In the early years we focused on establishing the COA with our first Board of twenty-five members. We began as an arm of the Social Planning Council and we hired our first staff person on April 1, 1975 (the only paid staff until 1980). In 1978, we were provided funding for the first time from the United Way/Centraide Ottawa in the amount of \$2500. In 1981, we received provincial funding for the first time from the Ministry of Community and Social Services. A year later, we received the Elderly Persons Centre grant and hired a Francophone Coordinator.

Early committees at The Council on Aging were focused on Education, Health, Housing, Recreation, Social Services, Transportation and Francophone Concerns. From the mid-1980's to the early 1990's our work centred on conducting community needs assessments followed by advocacy activities and service development projects. Working groups and committees wrote documents and reports on Mental Health, Community Support Services, Long Term Care, Housing, Francophone Services, Economics and Demographics. The Council also created consumer guides and consumer information on Medication Awareness and Elder Abuse.

From the mid-1990's to the present, we have experienced a turbulent time, reminiscent perhaps of the earliest days of the COA when funding and survival needs were paramount. We have had to develop new avenues for survival such as fundraising, the sale of memberships and the Friends of The Council on Aging of Ottawa Foundation. Despite staff cuts and relocation, we have been able to complete many projects and much advocacy work on Elder Abuse, Healthy Lifestyles, Seniors Benefits, Hospital Discharge Planning, Day Care and Community Services Inventories, Friendly Visiting, Self- Advocacy, Vieillir chez soi, and Peer Counselling. In addition, we have held many community forums.

The work accomplished by The Council on Aging has always been intense, constant and demanding. We have met each challenge because members of the Board, committees, task groups and the Comité directeur des affaires francophones have freely given their time, knowledge, and experience.

Demographics tell us that organizations like The Council on Aging will be needed more than ever as we face an ever increasing number and proportion of seniors. Seniors need a strong voice to speak to governments at all levels. Hence, we continue to need devoted, enthusiastic volunteers and members who will give time, financial help, and expertise.

For more information please call:

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