



## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### President:

Robert Dekker

### Treasurer:

Cory Michalyszyn

### Secretary:

Margaret Singleton

### Directors:

Diana Bond

Karinny Cezar

Claudette Chabot

Chelsea Clogg

Debbie Davies

Rocco Disipio

Angela Hopper

Linda Hunter

Alice Kubicek

Jennifer Leddy

Diane O'Neill

### Executive Director:

Monica Siegenthaler

### Newsletter Editor:

Irene Hilkes

[editor@daybreakhousing.com](mailto:editor@daybreakhousing.com)

## Daybreak Housing

393 Piccadilly Ave.  
Ottawa, ON  
K1Y 0H3

[www.daybreakhousing.com](http://www.daybreakhousing.com)

## Concrete Hope

by Irene Hilkes, volunteer

Next April, Daybreak will be celebrating the 30-year anniversary of the opening of its first home. To acknowledge the upcoming milestone in this newsletter edition, I interviewed Father Faucher who was actively involved in Daybreak's establishment. Our history is effectively captured on our website, <http://www.daybreakhousing.com/Archives.php>. What I want to share here is the message that came through in Father Faucher's words.

Daybreak's original name was Daybreak Ecumenical Shelter Corporation. Although the name has since been shortened to Daybreak Housing, the word "ecumenical" is unquestionably an important part of the story of Daybreak's beginning.

Father Faucher and eight to ten leaders from neighbouring churches had, at the time, formed a ministerial group of clergy in Centretown. As a leader of a congregation or parish, each member of this group had witnessed the dire needs of those living in the area. They came together representing various backgrounds of faith, and met regularly to discuss social issues of concern in the neighbourhood: the increased number of rooming houses in the area, which posed health and safety risks for those living there, and the number of women panhandling on the streets, to name only two.

Father Faucher describes the 1970's as "years of social conscience building" with support from churches, media, and the various levels of government. At that time, the federal and provincial governments were more generous in funding initiatives such as social housing, co-ops and non-profit groups, and in providing assistance for first-time home buyers. Daybreak benefited from the ten years during which these programs were not altered.

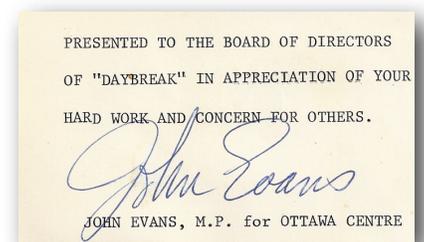
This group of clergy met in Christian fellowship for a year to explore the needs and determine how to go about setting up such an agency of support. They learned about the legalities, the applicable legislation, and the subsidies available to take on this venture. Volunteers came on board offering their experience in areas such as social housing. They were met with opposition

from neighbours when the first home was opened, but they fought tirelessly to educate.

As a result, there are now five safe, affordable, supportive homes for 46 people who would otherwise be on the street or living in very unsafe, compromised situations.

Let us look ahead and come together as a similar, albeit different, fellowship of people looking after one another.

As Father Faucher puts it, this is "good intent taking concrete form".



Mayor Marion Dewar in 1983 with the opening of Daybreak's first home.

# Thirty Years Later

by Betty Neelin, former president of the Board

Daybreak continues to provide safe, affordable housing for individuals living under disadvantaged circumstances such as leaving an abusive relationship, recovering from addiction or living with mental health issues. The difficult social problems that motivated the founders of Daybreak thirty years ago are sadly still very serious issues today, making the need for such housing greater than ever.

In 2011, 4310 people stayed in shelters for an average of 57 days. Over the years, the centralized waiting list for people applying for rent geared to income has increased to 11,000, and it may take five to nine years for them to get housing. Conversely, according to Alliance to End Homelessness, only 203 new affordable units were built in 2011 using funding from three levels of government, with the city providing some assistance with rent. When housing with affordable units is torn down or destroyed by fire, the city planning department does not insist that the new building contain affordable units. As well, many rental units have been lost through gentrification, with the conversion of inexpensive apartment buildings to condominiums.

A recent *Globe and Mail* article noted that, according to a study by the Mental Health Commission, a “housing first” approach—that is, the availability of a safe and comfortable place to live—is an essential first step in coping with mental illness. We too have found that once our residents have a safe, affordable home, they are able to manage their situation and over time make the transition from minimum support to independent living.

To be able to offer rent geared to income, Daybreak needs to raise \$2,500 per room annually (or a total of \$115,000 a year) for the operation and maintenance of its five homes. We rely on foundations, community groups, churches, and individual donors for support. So we thank our donors and volunteers for helping us to continue our important work. 

# Kathryn's Story

by Christie Halpenny, volunteer

Throughout Daybreak's history the stories of our residents have remained constant. Kathryn's story is unique to her, but parts of that story are shared by all who have walked through our doors. Residents arrive with emotional baggage that is far heavier than the weight of the personal belongings they carry with them. Kathryn's story is fraught with loss and addiction, but also brightened by perseverance, hope and success.

Kathryn's formative years included abuse and instability, which continue to haunt her as an adult. Although she had a loving home, her adult life started prematurely, with her pregnancy as a teen, and the death of both her parents by the time she was 22.

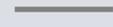
In the ensuing years Kathryn showed strength, creating a life that included a husband, two children, a home, and a 24-year career with the government. Things started to unravel for her when she began to suffer from depression, anxiety and alcohol dependency. She tried to get help, but faced too many hurdles, and her life fell apart. Kathryn lost her home, her marriage and her support network.

After four months at the Royal Ottawa Mental Health Centre, Kathryn was introduced to Daybreak. She quickly recognized the benefits of living in a Daybreak home, where she received the support she needed from both the staff and her housemates. Living with others allowed Kathryn to reduce her anxiety and remain sober. In time, as Kathryn healed, she started to enjoy all that Daybreak has to offer. Now she writes poetry about her past and present, continues to seek out positive experiences, and offers support to other residents.

Kathryn is not free from the memories of her past, but she has a dream that someday she will be able to get a place of her own to share with her children and grandchildren. With the support of Daybreak, she knows this dream can become a reality. 



Thank you to Frank D'Aoust and Crystal Williams for the outstanding after hours on-call support they help provide our residents.



Check out the Oct 4 edition of Kitchissippi Times for an article on Daybreak entitled "Neighbours helping Neighbours."



Our mission is to provide minimum-support homes emphasizing community living for single people with limited income. Daybreak Housing believes that residents can better achieve their goals and potential when provided with support for their well-being in a safe, caring environment, designed to foster personal growth.



Donate through Canada Helps by following the link on our web site [www.daybreakhousing.com](http://www.daybreakhousing.com)