



**The Ottawa Coalition of Community Houses:
A Community Report, 2004**



The Ottawa Coalition of Community Houses: A Community Report, 2004

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We would also like to thank all of the House Coordinators and Directors for their participation, advice and assistance, the communities in which we serve, Ottawa Community Housing Corporation and Tiffaney Zapotochny for her administrative assistance

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Ottawa Coalition of Community Houses, through a partnership grant provided by the United Way of Ottawa, undertook a study to determine the impact of Community Houses on the communities that they serve; a survey of programming and services provided by the Community Houses; identify gaps in service; define the model, governance structure, mission and mandate; identify patterns of usage by members of the community; and identify the demographics of the communities served by the Community Houses and to make recommendations to the Coalition, funding agencies, existing partners, the City of Ottawa, and provincial and federal levels of government.

The Coalition of Community Houses performed 390 surveys in 13 communities, executed interviews with all House Coordinators/Directors, held focus groups with five House Boards, gathered information from House Coordinators/Directors with regards to programs, statistics, partners and budgets, and drew from existing literature and demographical data.

The mission of the Community Houses within the Ottawa Coalition of Community Houses is to build strong communities, improve the quality of life of multiculturally diverse individuals, children, youth and families living in poverty in low-income social housing neighbourhoods across the City of Ottawa.

There are fourteen Community Houses within the Coalition of Community Houses. They are Banff Ave., Blair Court, Britannia Woods, Caldwell, Confederation Court, Debra Dynes, Foster Farm, Leetia and Issac, Lowertown, Michele Heights, Morrison Gardens, Pinecrest Terrace, Russell Heights and Winthrop Court. All of which are classified by the City of Ottawa as Community Houses except for the Caldwell Family House which is under the Day Program funding stream. The first Community House opened in 1964 in Confederation Court and the last one that opened was the Michele Heights Community House in 2002.¹

Community Houses are located in Ottawa Community Housing Corporation communities which are under the jurisdiction of the City of Ottawa. The space allotted to the communities is mandated in the Amenity Space protocol with an expectation that

25 hours of programs and services per week be delivered by the Community Houses. Community Houses, on average, provide 45 hours of programs and services per week. Community House Directors are funded by the City of Ottawa, on average, \$40 000 per year. There are no sustainable programs, operational and administrative dollars assisting with the operation of these organizations apart from the space allocated by Ottawa Community Housing Corporation. The Community House Coordinators/Directors must, through partnerships, access these necessities. Due to the time involved in this, many Community Houses go without. Much of the House Coordinator/Directors' time is spent ensuring that the House remains operational, relying on short term funding and donations from unsustainable resources rather than being able to focus their efforts on providing effective programming, maintaining partnerships and community and strategic development.

These communities are densely populated. 66%² of families support their families through government transfer payments compared to 7.4%³ of residents in the City of Ottawa. 68%⁴ are led by single parent households with an average of 4.2 members per household. 66% of the population are under the age of 25⁵, 52% being under the age of 17 compared to 25%⁶ of the residents of the City of Ottawa under the age of 20. 36.1%⁷ speak a language other than French or English as their first language compared to 19.7%⁸ in the City of Ottawa. The high levels of families living under the poverty line affects the development of healthy individuals, families and communities.

As the United Way states, “ the link between affordable housing, hunger and development, especially in our children, is connected to the level of income of individuals and families. In order for a community as a whole to prosper, it is necessary to break down the barriers that contribute to the increasing disparity of life situations within our society.”¹

Community Houses fall under three models of governance with one common goal: providing programs and services in participation with the community members themselves. The three models are autonomous boards, affiliations to larger non-profit organizations and under the umbrella of local Community Health and Resource Centres. The autonomous model is most closely related to the model in which these organizations were conceived. Building on social development models, it is the most

inclusive of the three models, allowing for the communities to have the most decision making power over the programs and services, which lends to the success of the model.

Programs are developed on a needs basis responding to the emerging needs identified by the community. Therefore there is no cookie cutter construct for program development although the development of the programs to meet these needs are based on existing evaluated models to get at the root causes of the problem. The programs are barrier free, which is a crucial benchmark of the success of social development programs. The deficit in the programming lies in the lack of sustaining funding dollars to ensure continuity of service and extended relationship building. The lack of appropriate funding for Community House Coordinators/Directors leads to high levels of staff turnover. This is detrimental to these small and complicated organizations, creating an environment where proper evaluation of the impacts of services is unachievable.

At the turn of the 21st century, the City of Ottawa undertook a public participation process which led to the development of the strategic plan for the City of Ottawa over the next 20 years. *Ottawa 20/20* became the template for service delivery and urban planning within the City of Ottawa. The Ottawa 20/20 Human Services Plan's strategic directions included the need for diversity and inclusion, access to basics, a safe and healthy community, a focus on prevention and a "working" city. The City of Ottawa accepted three key considerations for their service delivery model: innovation and creativity, collaboration and sustainability.⁹ Community Houses represent the service delivery model directed in the Human Services plan.

As in Abraham Maslow's "Hierarchy of Needs" in order to achieve self-actualization, one must be able to meet basic needs such as food, shelter, safety and security, cognitive functioning, love and belongingness, and self-esteem and meaning.¹⁰ The programs and services found at the Community Houses attempt to assist individuals in meeting their needs to becoming successful individuals, effective families and in building healthy communities ultimately benefiting the lives of everyone in the City of Ottawa.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Immediate:

1. Community Houses are distinct and essential services.
2. Community House Coordinators/Directors must have salaries that recognize their responsibilities and the scope of their position.
3. Community Houses must have operational funding which recognizes the basic needs of operating a non-profit organization. (office supplies, phone, internet, office equipment, financial audits etc.)
4. Community Houses must have administrative funding to assist with administrative duties and book keeping so that House Coordinators/Directors can focus on direct service delivery and strategic development.
5. Community Houses must have full-time child and youth workers to provide long-term, consistent programming to high risk children and youth.
6. The Coalition of Community House must have sustained funding to support the administrative needs of the Coalition, to continue to address funding needs and to build on the research that has been accumulated in order to ensure proper evaluation of Community Houses to understand fully the impacts and outcomes.

Long-term Strategic Directions:

1. Approach provincial and federal government to create sustainable partnerships.
2. Continue to develop a model of community houses which be replicated by other social housing communities, aging populations and private low-income communities.
3. Community Houses should continually move towards the autonomous governance model as it is the most inclusive social development process which allows for decision making to come from the communities themselves.

METHODOLOGY

The Ottawa Coalition of Community Houses applied for funding in 2003 for a partnership grant with the United Way of Ottawa to create a strategic partnership development plan for the Ottawa Coalition of Community Houses. Part of this process was to undertake a study of Community Houses; their impact on the communities that

they serve; a survey of programming and services provided by the Community Houses; identify gaps in service; define the model, governance structure, mission and mandate; identify patterns of usage by members of the Community; and identify the demographics of the Communities served by the Community Houses.

PROCESS

In gathering the data needed for this report, we executed community surveys in 13 communities, performed interviews with 14 House Coordinators/Directors, held 5 focus groups with House Committees, collected demographical data from Ottawa Community Housing Corporation and we performed a literature review.

- **Surveys:** we performed 390 surveys randomly door to door in 13 communities. (See Appendix 1). We asked household members to respond to the questionnaire regarding the household usage of the Community House in their community. The questionnaire asked: age, gender, number and age of household members, language used in the home, frequency of usage, programs used by the household, impact on household's quality of life and gaps in programs and services.
- **House Coordinator/Director Interviews/Data collection:** we interviewed the House Coordinators/Directors in the 14 Community Houses within the Coalition and gathered data regarding programs, partners, governance models, inception, mission, mandates, roles, gaps in service delivery, statistics and budgets. (See Appendix 3)
- **House Committee Focus Groups:** we performed focus groups in five communities with members of the House Committees/Boards. (See Appendix 4)
- **Ottawa Community Housing Demographics:** we collected demographical information from Ottawa Community Housing Corporation which included age, family make-up and sources of income of the residents living in the communities serviced by Community Houses.
- **Literature Review:** we looked at relevant literature regarding social development, crime prevention models and census data.

DEFINITIONS

- **Community House:** amenity space allocated by Ottawa Community Housing Corporation to provide needed recreational and social programs to members of its' community. One or two housing units within the community are used to provide these services.
- **Community House Director/Coordinator/Executive Director:** the individual hired to coordinate and supervise all programs and services that are offered by the Community House.
- **Community House Board of Directors:** an elected group of volunteer community members who provide strategic direction of the activities that take place in the Community House. It is often, but not exclusively, made up of a majority of tenant members.
- **Tenant:** an individual living within an Ottawa Community Housing community.
- **Quality of Life:** a concept, in essence, which speaks to the level of satisfaction felt by individuals and/or groups. Quality of Life is about the gap between the hopes/expectations of people and the lived reality of their daily experiences...Quality of life examines not only the objective, but also the subjective lived experience of people. Typical quality of life measures include: community affordability, quality of employment, quality of housing, community health, community safety, community stress, community participation, and population resources.

Federation of Municipalities, Quality of Life report card, Ottawa 2020 Human Services Plan
- **Ottawa Community Housing Corporation (OCHC):** the newly amalgamated Ottawa Housing Corporation and City Living which provides low income social housing to residents in need of housing assistance. It has been under the jurisdiction of the City of Ottawa since 1999, previously under the jurisdiction of the Province of Ontario.
- **Amenity Space Protocol:** Introduced at the Provincial level to provide a process whereby space would be given over to social housing residents providing that they could show that the space would be used for a minimum of 25 hours per week to provide services, programs and referrals that met the needs of the residents. Based on a commitment from them to undertake any necessary renovations to bring the building(s) up to code for use as a public facility.

THE OTTAWA COALITION OF COMMUNITY HOUSES

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Community Houses within the Ottawa Coalition of Community Houses is to build strong communities, improve the quality of life of multiculturally diverse individuals, children, youth and families living in poverty in low-income social housing neighbourhoods across the City of Ottawa.

The **GOALS** of the Ottawa Coalition of Community Houses:

1. To secure sustainable funding for Community Houses;
2. To address issues of poverty, social and cultural isolation, literacy and healthy communities;
3. To provide a range of innovative and creative programs and services that meet the ever changing needs of the individuals, children, youth and families living in their communities;
4. To facilitate a network to exchange information and provide mutual support

The Ottawa Coalition of Community Houses began in 1998 to facilitate a network to exchange information and provide mutual support. It was initiated by OCHC who believed that Community House Coordinators/Directors would derive benefits through this exchange. The Community House Coordinators/Directors also use the Coalition as a way to mobilize themselves and to approach funders and create new partnerships as a Coalition allowing them more leverage.

Examples of this are:

- Challenge Fund grant which was funded for three years by the Ontario Government, sponsoring Early Learning Preschool Programs
- Collective Kitchen grant which has been funded by Ace Bakeries
- An After Four grant which has been funded for three years by the United Way of Ottawa
- A partnership grant from the United Way to assist in the organization and mobilization of the Coalition; and to approach the City of Ottawa for sustained funding dollars to assist in the operations of the Community Houses

The Community House Directors initially received funding from the City of Ottawa as a project grant in the amount of \$15 000 and the following year was deemed sustaining funding. In 1997, this was raised to \$25 000 per year, \$31 000 in 2001 and to \$40 000 in 2002. (Caldwell Family House, although part of the Coalition, is not included in the Community House funding stream.) The Leetia and Isaac Community House is funded at \$31856 as of 2002.¹¹ The City of Ottawa only assisted the Community Houses with the provision of salary dollars for the Coordinators/Directors. It did not support the Community Houses in terms of operating costs, administration costs, staff expenses or support staff.

In 2004, the Health, Recreation and Social Services Committee put forth a motion that was approved:

*That staff review in consultation with the Ottawa Coalition of Community Houses the appropriate funding level to support the activities of community houses and report to the committee in time for the 2005 budget process.*¹²

The ability to work together as a group has provided the individual Community Houses with a stronger voice.

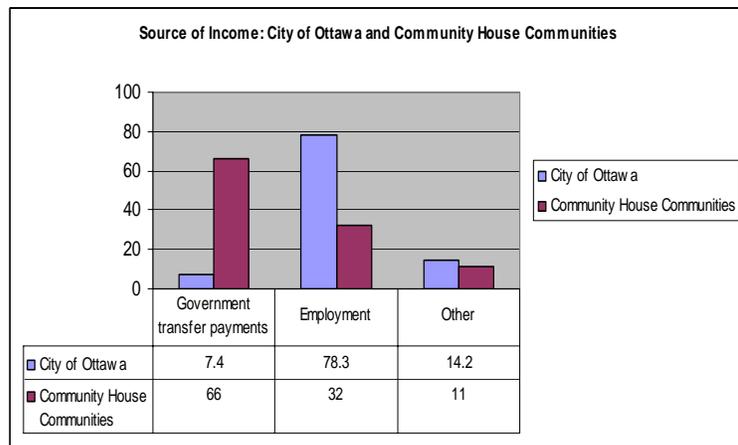
DEMOGRAPHICS OF THE CATCHEMENT AREAS SERVICED BY COMMUNITY HOUSES

The Community Houses are located in Ottawa Community Housing Corporation communities, occupying one to two housing units within the community. These densely populated communities are made up households that have high levels of children and youth, high numbers of new and recent immigrants and single parent families all living below the poverty line. The communities were built on cheap tracts of land that have often left them isolated from services which are taken for granted in many other neighborhoods. This in turn has compounded issues of accessibility and mobility. The United Way of Ottawa, in a recent publication, Growing Challenges, Key Demographical and Social Trends, 2003 discussed the significance of Ottawa's changing demographics and the impact on the City and its social service organizations.¹³

HOUSEHOLD DEMOGRAPHICS

1. **Income:** In the City of Ottawa (2001 Census data) 78.3% of the population derive their income through employment.¹⁴ In the communities served in Community House catchment areas (based on statistics obtained from Ottawa Community Housing Corporation, December 2003)¹⁵ only 32% obtain their income through employment. 66% of households in the communities support their families with some form of government assistance whereas only 7.4% of City of Ottawa residents obtain their income through government transfer payments. 11% support their families through another source of income (self-employment, pension etc.) compared to 14.2% in the City of Ottawa. The significance of this is deeply felt in the Community House communities. The high levels of unemployment impact the communities negatively. As the United Way states, “the link between affordable housing, hunger and development, especially in our children, is connected to the level of income of

individuals and families. In order for a community as a whole to prosper, it is necessary to break down the barriers that contribute to the increasing disparity of life situations within our society.”¹⁶



In the Progress on Canada’s Children 2002, the study states the impact of poverty in a family on Canada’s children. It affects their health, educational achievements, relationships and abilities to succeed:

“After tracking child outcomes for several years, Progress can now paint a picture of the toll that persistent poverty and deteriorating services are having on the health and well-being of our children.

The growing divide: CCSD’s analysis of family assets between 1984 and 1999 has revealed some startling statistics. The average net worth of the country’s poorest families dropped by 51% while it rose by 42.7% for the country’s wealthiest. Even

more startling is the virtual stagnation of the growth in wealth for the median couple with children who saw an increase of only 3.4%.

Impact on school performance: *In terms of reading/grammar skills, 27% of children in poverty for two years were doing well as compared to 44% of children who had never been poor, and there was a gap between poor children (70%) and non-poor children (90%) in terms of school-readiness.*

Impact of recreation: *Results from the National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth (NLSCY) for 1994, 1996 and 1998 showed a sizeable gap in terms of how well children aged 10 to 15 are performing academically and their participation levels in recreation. There was a much greater percentage of children doing very well at school among those who had participated regularly in recreation than among children who had not participated (48% compared to 32%).*

Parental depression: *Progress stats show that in 1998, approximately 20% of children in families with household incomes less than \$20K lived with a depressed parent compared to just over 5% of children in households with incomes over 40K.*

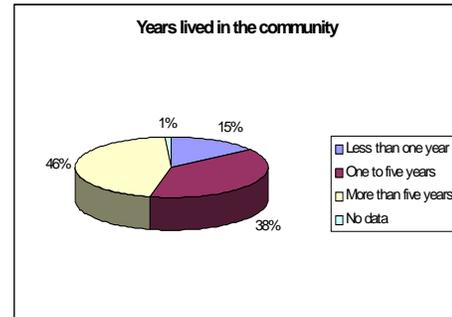
Family dysfunction: *In 1998, 23% of children under 16 in families with income less than \$20,000 lived in so-called "dysfunctional" families, compared to 9% of children in families with incomes over \$40,000. Family functioning refers to how well family members communicate with each other, work together and treat each other.*

Housing: *The housing crisis continues for Canadian children and families. The number of households that paid more than 50% of their pre-tax income on rent rose by 43% between 1990 and 1995. As a result, children and families are the fastest growing group requiring emergency shelter.*

Impact of Community Support: *A 1999 initiative found that children living in neighbourhoods with plentiful community resources such as parks, recreational areas, libraries, preschool programs and parenting classes scored higher on five important areas of development: their physical health and well-being, social knowledge and competence, emotional maturity, language richness, and general knowledge and cognitive skills. They demonstrated behaviours much more consistent with being ready for school than did children from neighbourhoods with scarce community resources."¹⁷*

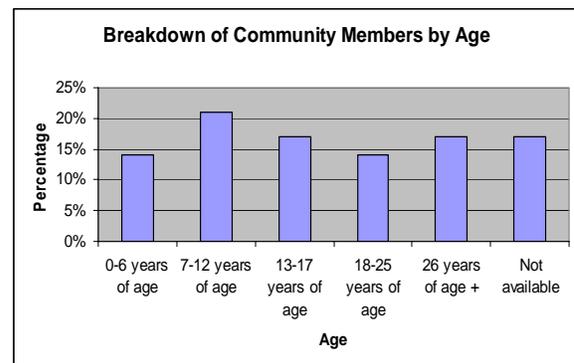
As the Ottawa Human Services Plan recognizes, "a number of programs and services are in place to serve families and children in Ottawa...however, a number of service gaps continue, particularly with respect to meeting the needs of children aged 6-12."¹⁸

2. **Family Composition:** 68% of our families are headed by a single-parent. The average family consists of 4.2 members. 46% of households have lived in the community for more than five years, 38% have lived in the community for one to five years and 15 % have lived in the community for less than one year.¹⁹ The transient nature of these communities indicates that a continuous need for programs and services be delivered in the community.



Source: Community Housing Corporation, December, 2003

3. **The Age of our Population:** 52% of community members are between the ages of 0 and 17,²⁰ compared with 25% under the age of 20 in the City of Ottawa.²¹ The impact of this is clearly felt in our communities. The high number of children and youth, 66% being under the age of 25, located in communities which are densely populated, takes its toll on the families and the community. This is evidenced in the work done by the communities themselves to address the issue of children and youth needing programs and services. The Community Houses were developed to create programs for this population. Due to the high number of children and youth in these communities in such a small area allows for more opportunity for antisocial behaviour. The Carling Avenue Safety Solutions Committee identified that the lack of social, recreational and employment programs, which look at root causes of crime, for older youth was a solution to youth loitering in their communities. This loitering created a negative perception in the community towards youth.²²



Source: Community Housing Corporation, December, 2003

There are many different types of root causes that impact an individual. Individual's reactions to these root causes differ, but the National Strategy on Community Safety and Crime Prevention has addressed some common "root causes" experienced by youth who are involved in crime.

Some of the factors that increase a youth's risk to crime addressed by the National Crime Prevention Strategy are: low self-esteem, child abuse, inadequate education, inadequate housing, unemployment, health problems, exposure to domestic violence, poor parental role modeling, unstable lifestyle and few emotional/social supports.²³ The Community Houses are in a position to deliver holistic family programs and services to address these needs. They are often a first point of contact for families, children and youth in crisis and have the ability to provide ongoing support of an extended period of time. As the John Howard Society writes that there is a need for "(a) long-term, proactive approach directed at removing personal, social and economic factors that lead some individuals to engage in criminal acts or to become victims of crime." (John Howard Society, 1995)²⁴

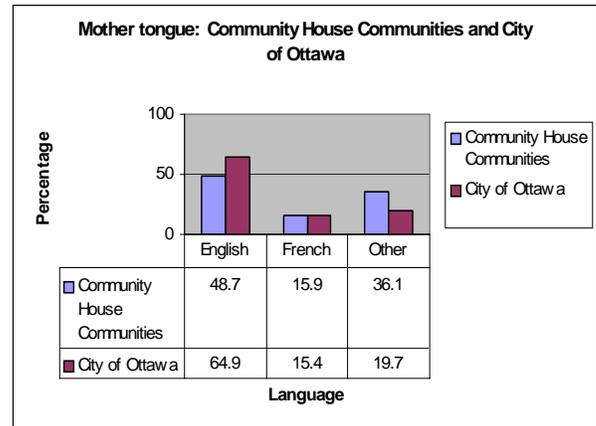
The Canadian Department of Justice (2003) recognizes that preventing youth crime before it happens is the first and best way to protect a society. A key objective in the youth strategy is prevention. The youth justice strategy notes that the law is only one part of a larger approach and that some of the most effective responses to crime lie outside of the criminal justice system.²⁵

In *Clear Limits and Real Opportunities: The Keys to Preventing Youth Crimes*, 1995, National Crime Prevention members identified that men and women who have worked with youth know what works and that it is "political will" that is needed, not more research. Here are some examples of what was identified as factors that work in preventing youth crime:

- *Approaches that work get at the root causes*
- *Approaches that "work" emphasize early intervention*
- *Community ownership and responsibility is essential*
- *Effective preventive approaches must be created by and for the community*
- *Approaches that work must involve multidisciplinary efforts*
- *Effective approaches must have political as well as community support behind them*
- *Effective programs must have long-term stable funding*

- *Effective programs focus on the unique needs and situations of the individuals they help*
- *Programs that work emphasize the positive not the negative*
- *Continuity works²⁶*

4. **Language:** In the communities served by Community Houses, 48.7% of households speak English as their first language, 15.9% speak French and 36.1% speak another language. 17.7% speak Somali, 8.7% speak Arabic and 9.7% speak another language. The Foster Farm and Britannia Woods communities have large Somali speaking communities, with 33% of their residents identifying it as their first language. The Confederation Court



Source: City of Ottawa: Census 2001; Community House Communities: Community Survey, 2004 (based on results from 390 surveys in 13 communities)

community has a large Arabic speaking population at 33.3%. Other languages include but are not limited to: Creole, Bengali, Spanish, Dutch, Urdu, Ethiopian, Filipino, Uver, Sudanese, Farsi, Amarec, Tigrynia, Dinka, Jamil, Russian, Cantonese, Portuguese, Italian, Kurdish, Mandarin and Laos.²⁷ The Social Planning Council of Ottawa identified that the poverty rate for new immigrants is 64%, 53% for visible minorities and 19% for Ottawa residents.²⁸ The impact felt by the diversity of these communities is essential in understanding the pressures it implies. A wide range of culturally sensitive specialized services need to be provided. The need for community development to ensure a harmonious community, the need for specialized youth employment programs to address “employment culture” and outreach to isolated adults, such as new immigrant seniors, are examples of needs for programming which place great strains on Community Houses.

COMMUNITY HOUSES: A BRIEF HISTORY

The Community Houses in the City of Ottawa are all examples of community development/social development and advocacy. Community development is based on the principles that:

“Community members are the experts with respect to their needs, hopes and dreams of their community; it can be beneficial to act together to achieve results; and all community members have skills, knowledge and abilities to contribute.”²⁹

The needs were identified by the tenants themselves and either self advocated and/or assisted by community developers from local Community Resource Centres, OCHC community workers, Church groups and local municipal representatives. The evolution of Community Houses in the City of Ottawa dates back to 1964 when the first Community House opened in the Confederation Court community in the South end of Ottawa. It was the first space occupied by what is now the South East Ottawa for a Healthy Community. The basement of the house was used by the maintenance department of OCHC. It has been a charitable organization since 1974.³⁰

The next Community House to open was the Britannia Woods Community House in 1978 in the West end of Ottawa. The amenity space agreement was announced in the June, 1976 edition of the Britannia Woods News. The mandate and intent of the house is outlined in the clipping below:

Good news at last! And this is why I have kept this item until the end of this issue. It has now been approved by the necessary authorities that we can have a vacant unit to use as a community centre for all the children and adults of Britannia Woods. The unit will become available approximately the middle of July. Before it can be used, it must be inspected and alterations made.

I would like to add at this point, many volunteers will be required to help supervise the various activities we will be having. As stated in earlier issues of this paper, if we do not use this unit to its' fullest, we will lose it, so we must make sure it is a success. If it is successful, the chances are that Ottawa Housing Corporation will build us a proper community centre.³¹

The Britannia Woods Community House housed City of Ottawa programs and summer camps prior to the Michele Heights Community Centre being built.

The Banff Ave. Community House was started by the Banff Ave. Tenants Association with the assistance of South East Ottawa for a Healthy Community who approached OCHC in 1980 and opened their Community House in 1982. Their community is located off of Bank St. at Walkley in the South end of Ottawa.³²

The Pinecrest Terrace Community House which is located in the west end of Ottawa just south of the Queensway off of Greenbank Rd. also began as a community initiative assisted by the local West End Chaplaincy who approached OCHC to allocate amenity space to the community for the purposes of providing barrier free programs and services.³³

The Caldwell Family House was initiated by the members of the Bellevue Manor Tenants Association in the Carlington Community located in the River Ward of the City of Ottawa. The Tenants Association approached Sister Thelma Marion who was providing cooking classes in the community in 1984. They identified several needs in the community. Due to the proximity of the Royal Ottawa Hospital, there was a need for a day program to provide support for members of the community who were Mental Health survivors. They also identified a need for ESL classes and child care for members of their growing multicultural population. They saw the Community House as a way of dealing with the increasing divide they saw in their community, by raising more understanding of the diverse groups of disenfranchised individuals. Sister Thelma approached Ottawa Housing Corporation, which was under the jurisdiction of the Province of Ontario at the time, and went to Toronto to guarantee amenity space for the community, setting a precedent for future communities to obtain amenity space for their communities. Sister Thelma held out for the best funding possible and was accepted as the last Day Program in the City of Ottawa before they closed the funding stream. She created a lasting partnership with Immigration Canada to be a part of their LINC program, which provided ESL classes, childcare and citizenship classes to new and recent immigrants.³⁴

The Foster Farm Tenants Association is demographically similar to the Caldwell community. There is an apartment building which houses many single adults who are Mental Health survivors as well as family housing. The community saw the need to provide space for them to meet. Although they received a Family House under the amenity space protocol, they were unable to get into the Day program funding stream. The Foster Farm Tenants Association opened their Community House in 1989.³⁵

The Morrison Gardens Family House was formed through a partnership between the Morrison Gardens Tenants Association and the West End Chaplaincy. The Community House was initiated to provide free social and recreational programs to members of their community. It opened in 1990. It is located in the Ottawa's west end on Morrison Dr., south of the Queensway.³⁶

The Russell Heights Community House also opened in 1990. It was initiated by the Tenants Association to provide health, social, physical, recreational and educational programs to residents of the Russell Heights Community and the surrounding area.³⁷

In June, 1995, the Debra Dynes Family House opened its' doors. A group of residents, using the amenity space protocol, secured a unit to be used to improve the quality of life for the residents through a range of programs that are responsive to the needs of the community. Three years later due to the high use and demand for services by residents the community independently raised \$25,000 to renovate a second unit. It is presently the most used Community House in the City of Ottawa.³⁸

The Lowertown Community House was opened in 1995, following the many requests and needs for an increasing and changing multicultural community. One tenant, the local municipal representative, Madeleine Meilleur, and OCHC initiated the creation of the Lowertown Community House.

The purpose of the (Lowertown) Community House is to provide residents with information on methods to improve their quality of life, to promote social and educational activities and offer community services to the residents of Lowertown East, to offer a physical space for the residents to facilitate the identification of community needs and

*finally, to encourage social integration of the members of the multicultural community in order to promote harmony and greater community participation.*³⁹

The Blair Court Community House opened in 1997 to provide essential recreational, social and educational programs to those living in the Blair Court community and surrounding area.⁴⁰

In 2001, two Community Houses were opened in City Living communities. Prior to the amalgamation of the City of Ottawa, Ottawa Housing Corporation and City Living were two separate entities. City Living was operated by the City of Ottawa and preceding the provincial downloading of services to the municipalities in 1999, Ottawa Housing Corporation had been under the jurisdiction of the Province of Ontario. Previously, all of the Community Houses had been opened in Ottawa Housing communities.⁴¹

Winthrop Court Community House was an initiative of the Tenants Association. It garnered the support of the local Community Resource Centre, Pinecrest-Queensway Health and Community Services, who hired a Community Developer to assist the Community in the successful bid for a Community House. They formed an Advisory Committee that included representatives from City Living, Pinecrest-Queensway Health and Community Services, the City of Ottawa, Councillor Alex Cullen's office and the Tenants Association. The Community House opened in this west end community in 2001. City Living paid for the renovations as well as supporting a House Coordinator's salary.⁴²

The Leetia and Isaac Community House in Carson Grove was also incepted in a similar fashion. It was opened in 2001 as a community initiative with the assistance of the Overbrook Forbes Community Resource Centre and Councillor Jacques Legendre. It is the only Community House in the East end of Ottawa. "The Leetia and Isaac Community House is a safe, friendly space which belongs to the Carson's community. The Community House is a place where community members can participate in community building activities and programs."⁴³

In the case of the Michele Heights Community House, the idea arose while the Tenant Association was meeting under a tree. The tenant association realized that they could

do more for their community if they had space to meet and to have activities that would benefit their community.

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“You see there are more programs going on and this has opened the doors for immigrants. Mothers are letting their children come to the community house. For those who attend these programs they will have an advantage and this may save our children.”

The Michele Heights Tenants Association approached Pinecrest-Queensway Health and Community Services who applied, on their behalf, for a Community Developer to create a Steering Committee to advise the Tenants on how to achieve their goal. The Steering Committee was made up of members from the community, Councillor Alex Cullen, the United Way, the Social Planning Council, the City of Ottawa, OCHC and Pinecrest-Queensway Health and Community Services. Through this collaboration the community was able to satisfy OCHC’s requirement of fundraising the needed dollars to pay for the renovation. Individuals, families, children and youth, through bake sales, raffles, grants and donations raised over \$30 000. The Community House was officially opened in June, 2002.⁴⁵

GOVERNANCE

The Community Houses are governed by three models of governance: autonomous boards, affiliations to larger non-profit organizations and under the umbrella of local Community Health and Resource Centres. Although they fall under three different categories, there is a common underlying principle that the community must have a significant role in the decision-making process. Effective community development should be:

“ a long-term endeavour, well-planned, inclusive and equitable, holistic and integrated into the bigger picture, initiated and sponsored by the community, and grounded in experience that leads to best practice.”⁴⁶

➤ **Autonomous model:** The Debra Dynes Family House, the Banff Ave. Community House, the Caldwell Family Centre*, the Confederation Court Community House, the

Foster Farm Family House, the Blair Court Community House, the Russell Heights Community House, and the Lowertown Community House are all governed by this model. The house is presided over by a House Board made up of tenants. Some boards also have other community members and stakeholders sitting on their boards but the majority of the Board members must come from the community itself. Debra Dynes, Confederation Court and Caldwell all have charitable status.⁴⁷

*The Caldwell Family Centre, funded as a Day program, does not adhere to the Tenant Governance model.

- **Affiliated to a larger non-profit organization:** The Britannia Woods Community House has been affiliated with the Ottawa Regional YMCA-YWCA for approximately 10 years. The YMCA-YWCA has assisted in the administration of their funding and in accessing sustainable funding from the United Way. The Community House is presided over by a House Committee, which has decision-making powers and supervises the staff.⁴⁸
- **Under the umbrella of local Community Health and Resource Centres:** Winthrop Court Community House, Pinecrest Terrace Community House, Morrison Gardens Community House, Michele Heights Community House and Leetia and Isaac Community House are all administered by their local Community Health Centre. The Leetia and Isaac Community House is administered by the Overbrook Forbes Community Resource Centre and the others are administered by Pinecrest Queensway Health and Community Services. The tenant associations have input into the decision-making process, although human resources and programs are ultimately decided upon by the community managers of the community health and resource centres.⁴⁹

FUNCTIONS OF THE COMMUNITY HOUSE COORDINATOR/DIRECTOR

The Community House Coordinator/Director, depending on the governance model, is ultimately responsible for overseeing all functions of the Community House. As one house coordinator put it:

"We are negotiating funding, managing staff, writing grant proposals, running program, lobbying government and cleaning toilets all in the same day."⁵⁰

The House Coordinator/Director is responsible for community development, administrative duties, accounting, human resources/volunteer coordination, crisis management, referrals, community capacity development, designing, implementing and evaluating programs, strategic development and forward planning, intake counseling, creating partnerships, policy development and maintaining the facility.

1. Community Development:

Due to the model of governance, all programs and services are developed in accordance to the community needs and wants. The Community House Coordinator/Director responds to the emerging needs of the community. In collaboration with the community, the Coordinator/Director, through outreach, will identify gaps in services and develop programs.

Examples:

- In 2001, the Britannia Woods Community identified that there was a growing concern around safety in the community. After organizing a safety audit with the assistance of Women's Initiatives for a Safer Environment (WISE), a safety audit was done to identify the "problems". The House Director, with the assistance of the local City Councillor, organized the Carling Ave. Safety Solutions Committee to address these issues. It was determined that the Michele Heights Community had similar concerns. The Carling Ave. Safety Solutions Committee met monthly to address the local concerns. This was made up of community representatives, the local City Councillor, Alex Cullen, the Ottawa Police, Pinecrest Queensway Health and Community Services (PQHCS), the Youth Services Bureau, Ottawa Community Housing Corporation and the House Directors. They identified a need for better communication between the Police and the community and a need for social and recreational programs for older youth. The Britannia Woods Community House Director put forth a program grant to the City of Ottawa with the assistance of PQHCS for a youth outreach worker. The youth outreach worker through discussions with the community youth attained that there was a gap in recreational programs for this age group and a need for

employment programs. This developed into the Michele Heights Youth Drop-in.⁵¹

- The Debra Dynes Family House was facing similar problems. The House Director applied for funding with the National Crime Prevention Centre for a Youth/Community Development worker. They developed several youth programs and a safety committee made up of tenants living in the community. They did a safety audit of the community with the assistance of WISE and were able to lobby Ottawa Community Housing as a strong community voice for changes that needed to be made in the community.⁵²
- The Michele Heights House Coordinator has been assisting the community in trying to obtain speed bumps to address the speeding issues in the Michele Heights Community. Through a series of community meetings and documenting of data, she has been assisting the community in lobbying the local government.

2. **Administrative Duties/Accounting:** The House Coordinators/Directors oversee all administrative duties in accordance with the Community Houses. They are responsible for submitting statistics, overseeing budgets, accounts payable and receivable, payroll, reception, office management, technology, management of supplies and equipment.

3. **Human Resources:** The House Coordinators/Directors are responsible for the hiring, supervision, retention, evaluation and mediation for all staff and volunteers. Often times, the Coordinator/ Director must supervise staff persons that are hired through other organizations to provide programs at the Community Houses.

Community House	Staff (#)	Volunteer (#)
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Banff Ave.	21	9
Blair Court	6	12
Britannia Woods	14	83
Caldwell	15	130
Confederation Court	9	6
Debra Dynes	17	25
Foster Farm	7	20
Leetia and Issac	3	14
Lowertown	1	20
Michele Heights	15	25
Morrison Gardens	7	50
Pinecrest Terrace	5	53
Russell Heights	12	40
Winthrop Court	4	27

4. **Designing, Implementing and Evaluating Programs:** The House Coordinator/Director is responsible for identifying and applying for funding, designing new programs, implementing and evaluating programs. Ensuring that standards are adhered to and that program supplies are available. They are responsible for advertising programs and services and ensuring that the communities' emerging and evolving needs are addressed.
5. **Strategic Development:** The House Coordinator/Director is responsible for working with their Board of Directors in the strategic development of the organization, to achieve the goals outlined in the strategic plan and to be accountable to the Board of Directors.

6. **Intake Counseling:** Much of the House Coordinator/Director's time is spent assisting tenants in the community by doing referrals to other programs; advocacy; assisting with faxes, letters and forms; listening; and providing assistance as member agencies with the Toy Mountain and Snowsuit Fund.

7. **Creating partnerships:** The House Coordinator/Director is also responsible for creating and maintaining partnerships with other social service organizations, churches, schools, Police, funding groups, Community Resource Centres, City of Ottawa and other local community associations.

Partnerships include (but are not limited to): City of Ottawa, Ottawa Coalition of Community Houses, Ottawa Community Housing Corporation, United Way, Ottawa Food Bank, Southeast Ottawa Centre for a Healthy Community, Carlington Community Health Centre, Overbrook Forbes Community Resource Centre, Pinecrest-Queensway Health and Community Services, Sandy Hill Community Health Centre, Ottawa Police/ Youth Centre, Boys and Girls Club, Ottawa Regional YMCA-YWCA, Youth Services Bureau, Community Computer Network, Better Beginnings, Better Futures, Trillium, Mothercraft, Network of Community Kitchens, Ace Bakery, Children's Village of Ottawa, Ward Foundation, Success by 6, Human Resources Development Canada, Industry Canada, Ottawa Citizen Literacy Foundation, Max Keeping Foundation, Bear's Children Foundation, Chapters, Ottawa Carleton District School Board, Ottawa Carleton Catholic School Board, Millennium Learning Centre, Career Station, Catholic Immigration Centre, Immigration Canada, West End Interfaith, La Patro, SmartSite, Ontario Ministry of Tourism and Recreation, Rotary Club, Kiwanis Club, Les Suites Hotel, Horn of Africa Women's Association, Christie Lake Kids S.T.A.R. Program, Child and Youth Friendly Ottawa, Nepean Hot Spurs, Ottawa Senators, Frank Ryan Little League, Bell Town Dome, Britannia United Soccer, West End Chaplaincy, Dr. F.J. MacDonald School, Alex Cullen's Office, Marlene Catterall M.P.P., Snowsuit Fund, Christmas Exchange, Salvation Army, Ontario Works, LINC, Refugee and Cultural Association, Somali Centre for Family Services, Community Foundation, University of Ottawa, St. Thomas D'Aquin Church, Carlington Community Chaplaincy, St. Vincent de Paul, Algonquin

College, Anti-Poverty Project, South Ottawa Legal Clinic, Rideau Park United Church, Charles H. Skulce School, Our Lady of Fatima Church, Woodroffe United Church, Michele Heights Community Centre, Foster Farm Community Centre, Tim Horton's Foundation, Famous Players Colliseum, Walmart, Clifford Bowey School, Carleton Heights Community Association, Eva Taylor Community Association, Justice Canada, Urbandale Corporation, Bridgehead, Gowling, Thyme and Again, St. Mark's Church, Holy Cross Church, OCRI, St. Remi's Church, Regina Street Public School, St. Augustine, Notre Dame High School, Carleton Church, United Memorial, Merivale High School.

8. **Policy Development:** The House Coordinator/Director in cooperation with the Board of Directors is responsible for the implementation and design of all policy and procedures within the Community House.

9. **Maintenance:** Due to the lack of operating funding, the House Coordinators/Directors are responsible for the maintenance of the Community House. They accomplish this through supervision of volunteers, donations from churches to hire individuals to provide cleaning services, ensuring program staff be responsible for keeping the House clean or by cleaning the House themselves.⁵³

OPERATIONS

Each Community House operates on its own schedule. The amenity space protocol mandates that the Community House is open for a minimum of 25 hours per week. House Coordinators/Directors are paid through sustained funding from the City of Ottawa. This funding is in the amount of \$40 000 for most houses (see table below) which includes the cost of mandatory employment costs. (employment insurance, Canadian Pension Plan) The number of hours paid to each Coordinator/Director depends on the policies of the governing body. The average salary for House Coordinators/ Directors is based on a 26 hour work week. The Community Houses are open an average of 45 hours per week. One of the strengths of the Community Houses

is the ability to create partnerships and to use the base sustaining dollars that fund House Coordinator/Director salaries to amortize the funding of the Community House. For example, with a base funding of \$40 000, most Houses are functioning with a budget of at least \$59 000 up to \$344 000. This ability to obtain more funding is key to the success of the Community Houses.

Community House	Operating Hours	House Coordinator (Contracted hours)	House Coordinator (self-estimated time spent in the c.h.)	NOTES
Banff Ave.	Monday: 9am-7:30pm, Tuesday: 9am-7pm, Wednesday: 9am-8pm, Thursday: 9am-8pm, Friday: 1pm-2:30pm, Saturday: 9am-10am Total hours of operation: 45	30	20	8-12 hours spent in meetings outside of Community House
Blair Court	Monday-Thursday: 9am-6pm, Friday: 9am-4pm Total hours of operation: 44	32	32	
Britannia Woods	Monday: 9am-9pm, Tuesday: 7:30am-12am, Wednesday: 9am-9pm, Thursday: 9am-9pm, Friday: 7:30am-9pm, Weekends: Special Events Total hours of operation: 66	32	30	Estimated that House Coordinator works approximately 40 hours per week to attend meetings and satisfy workload.*
Caldwell	Monday, Wednesday, Friday: 8am-4pm, Tuesday, Thursday: 8am-8:30pm Total hours of operation: 48.5	35	35	
Confederation Court	Monday-Friday: 9am-6pm Total hours of operation: 45	40	40	
Debra Dynes	Monday-Friday: 9am-9pm, Saturday: 12pm-5pm, Sunday: 1pm-4pm Total hours of operation: 68	35	45	Estimated that House Coordinator works approximately 45 hours per week to attend meetings and satisfy workload.*
Foster Farm	Monday, Tuesday: 8am-3pm, Wednesday, Thursday: 8am-11:30am; 6pm-8pm, Friday: 7:30am- 11:30pm, Sunday: 5pm-9pm Total hours of operation: 27.5	32	28-35	
Leetia and Issac	Monday: 12pm-4pm, Tuesday: 9am-8pm, Wednesday: 9am-9pm, Thursday: 1pm-6:30pm, Friday: 12pm-4pm Total hours of operation: 36.5	25		
Lowertown	Monday, Tuesday: 9am-6pm, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday: 9am-8pm, Saturday: 8am-6pm	n/a	15	

	Total hours of operation: 61			
Michele Heights	Monday: 9am-9pm, Tuesday: 9am-12pm; 6pm-12am, Wednesday: 9am-4pm, Thursday: 9am-12pm; 6pm-9pm, Friday: 9am-4pm, Weekends: Special Events Total hours of operation: 41	25	6-20	
Morrison Gardens	Monday-Thursday 8:30am-8pm, Friday: 8:30am-12pm, Weekends: Special Events Total hours of operation: 45.5	25	20	
Pinecrest Terrace	Monday-Thursday:9am-6pm, Weekends: Special Events Total hours of operation: 36	25	15	Meetings account for approximately 10 hours a week.
Russell Heights	Monday: 9am-7pm, Tuesday: 9am-7pm, Wednesday: 9am-7pm, Thursday: 9am-7pm, Friday: 9am-12pm, Weekends: Special Events Total hours of operation: 39	23	37	Estimated that House Coordinator works approximately 37 hours per week to attend meetings and satisfy workload.*
Winthrop Court	Monday: 9am-12pm; 4:30pm-5:30pm, Tuesday: 9am-12pm; 12:30pm-3:30pm, Wednesday: 9am-12pm; 4:30pm-5:30pm, Thursday: 9am-7pm, Friday: 9am-12pm; Weekends: Special Events Total hours of operation: 27	25	12-15	

Community House	City of Ottawa Funding	Total budget 2003	Total Contacts 2003
Banff Ave.	40 000	85 739.09	21 625
Blair Court	40 000	79 864.51	9 776
Britannia Woods	40 000	91 940	32 180
Caldwell	40 000	254 623*	n/a
Confederation Court	40 000	344 766	30 680
Debra Dynes	40 000	167,000	49 147
Foster Farm	40 000	59 548	3020 (<i>Food Bank only</i>)
Leetia and Issac	31 856	55 898	4 597
Lowertown	40 000	n/a	n/a
Michele Heights	40 000	n/a	8 112
Morrison Gardens	40 000	n/a	n/a
Pinecrest Terrace	40 000	64 526	10 848
Russell Heights	40 000	91 940	36 010
Winthrop Court	30 000	58 960	11 167

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Although there are many similarities in programs and services, due to the diversity of the communities and the community development approach to program development, programs and services offered by the Community Houses differ in number, funding, type and focus. In addition, programs might run for short periods of time due to short term, non-sustainable funding.

Programs include Early Literacy Preschool Programs, Kindergarten Readiness Programs, Playgroups, Lunch and Chat, Grab and Go Lunch Bag, After School Programs, Homework Clubs, Youth Leadership, Kids in the Kitchen, Toy Lending Library, Growing up Downtown, Reading Clubs, Smart Site Computer Training, Survivor Teen and Pre-teen Programs, Skating Program, Tennis Program, Kids Clubs, Girls Clubs, Boys Clubs, Hip Hop Lessons, Youth Drop-ins, Basket ball Programs, Soccer Programs, Art Club, 3 on 3 Basketball Tournaments, Youth Advisory Committees, Bundle of Joy, ESL Classes, ESL/ Sewing Classes, LINC, Women's Aerobics, Yoga, Collective Kitchens, Coffee Hour Drop-in, Sunday Fun, Somali Youth Heritage Group, Connecting Threads, March Break Camps, Chaplaincy Core Group, Craft Program, Summer Camps.

Services include (but are not limited to): Food Banks, Snowsuit Fund Referrals, Christmas Exchange Referrals, Flu Shot Clinics, Income Tax Clinics, Clothing Cupboards, Baby Cupboards, Information and Referral, Fax/ Photocopier Services, Computer/ Internet Access, Milk Program, Bread Drop-in, Visiting Community Health Nurse, Personal Support, House Coordinator Drop-in, Flower Distribution, Grass Seed Distribution, Laundry Services and Parent Education Workshops.

The Community Houses are also responsible for organizing special events within the communities. The majority of events are community driven and powered by volunteers. Events have included Community Clean-ups, Spaghetti Dinners, Bar-B-Ques, Street Parties, Basketball Tournaments, Eid Parties, Christmas Parties, Halloween Haunted Houses, Bingos and End of School Celebrations.

GAPS IN PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

The top five most common gaps in delivering services to the communities identified by the Community House Coordinators/ Directors are:

- Full time child/youth workers working in the Community Houses
- Full time coordination of Community Houses
- Operating costs
- Administrative assistance
- Support for the Coalition

lvi

According to the surveys performed in the communities, the five most identified gaps in service were:

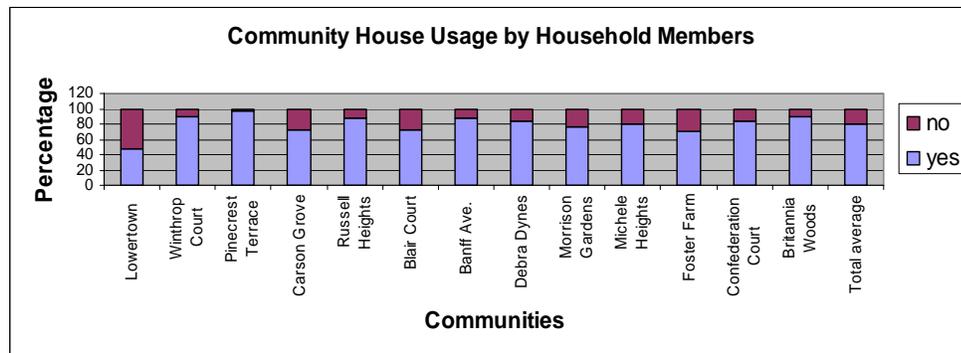
- Lack of children's recreational programming
- Lack of youth recreational/social/employment programming
- Extended hours of the Community House
- Adult programs
- Employment programs

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Notably, the gaps in service identified by both sources are very similar. The need for children and youth programming is an essential service as identified in the research done by the National Crime Prevention Strategy (1995)^{lviii}. Children and youth connectedness builds resilient adults. As aforementioned, there is a need for Community House Coordinators/Directors to be employed full-time. The community identified the need for extended hours to accommodate the schedules of all members of the community. In order to provide barrier free, accessible services, Community Houses are open an average of 45 hours per week. This demands that Community House Coordinators/Directors work unpaid overtime which contributes to high staff turnover. Having administrative assistance and operating costs, will allow the Community House Coordinators/Directors more time to do strategic planning and community development. For example, more time to create partnerships with other organizations to deliver adult programming and services (employment services, etc).

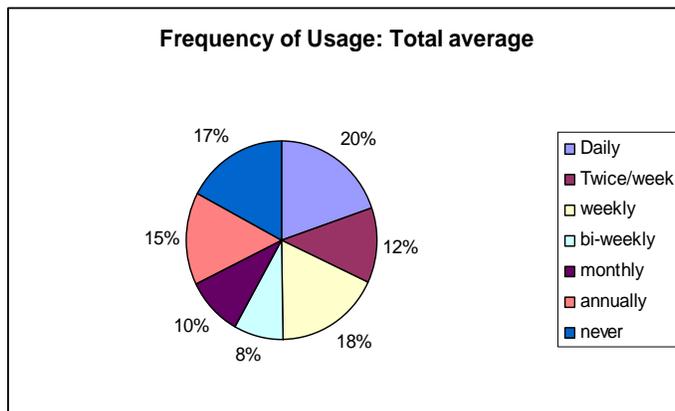
COMMUNITY HOUSE USAGE

The survey of community residents indicates that the average number of households accessing Community Houses is 80%.^{lix}



Source: Ottawa Coalition of Community Houses, Survey, 2004

The total average frequency of usage by community households is outlined in the following graph:



Source: Ottawa Coalition of Community Houses, Survey, 2004

80% of community member households are accessing the Community House. On average, 50% of families are accessing the Community Houses on a weekly basis. 20% of households are using the House daily. This puts the Community House in a unique position to deal with emerging

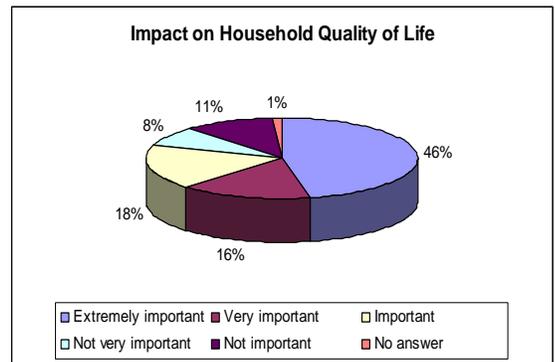
needs identified by the community members themselves and to get the community involved in finding solutions. The children, youth and adults have a safe place where they can meet and solve problems together.^{lix} 50% of Community Houses have youth representation on their House Committees. When addressing the particular needs of a child, Community Houses can look at the whole family, due to the fact that multiple members are accessing the house. This allows the House Coordinator/Director to make appropriate referrals to employment programs, resources, parenting classes, counseling and other support services based on the needs of the whole family.

The impact of Community Houses on communities can be seen in the response to the question on the survey which asks what impact the Community House has on a households' quality of life.

- Quality of life can be defined as a concept which, in essence, speaks to the level of satisfaction felt by individuals and/or groups. Quality of Life is about the gap between the hopes/expectations of people and the lived reality of their daily experiences... Quality of life examines not only the objective, but also the subjective lived experience of people.

Typical quality of life measures include: community affordability, quality of employment, quality of housing, community health, community safety, community stress, community participation, and population resources.

Federation of Municipalities, Quality of Life report card, Ottawa 2020 Human Services Plan^{lxii}



Source: Ottawa Coalition of Community Houses, Survey, 2004

78% of households believe that the Community House is important to extremely important to the quality of life in their communities.

Ottawa Coalition of Community Houses: Ottawa 20/20

The Ottawa 20/20 Human Services Plan's strategic directions included the need for diversity and inclusion, access to basics, a safe and healthy community, a focus on prevention and a "working" city.^{lxiii}

Community Houses concentrate on addressing these strategic directions. For example many of the programs and services focus on the new immigrant community. ESL programs, early learning programs and employment programs which address the needs of multicultural youth are just some of the services which focus on this area. Community Houses are also inclusive in their approach to governance. Tenants in the community are involved in the decision making process. Food banks, lunch, breakfast and snack programs, Baby Cupboards, Clothing Cupboards, Christmas Hampers, Community Kitchens and Good Food Box programs assist community members in ensuring that their families have access to

basic needs. Safety committees, Spring Clean-ups, safety audits, referrals to Community Health and Resource Centres, intake counseling and access to barrier free recreational programming assist community members in attaining a safe and healthy community. Youth programs, early years programs, homework clubs, access to computers, summer camps, leadership programs, mediation, parent workshops and volunteering focus on prevention. All of these programs assist members of the community in their development in achieving their goals and contribute to a “working” city.

The City of Ottawa accepted three key considerations for their service delivery model: innovation and creativity, collaboration and sustainability.

Community Houses are very creative and innovative in their service delivery model. For example, the Britannia Woods Community House received funding for programs from 19 different sources last year and were able to amortize their \$40 000 from the City into over \$92 000.^{lxiii}

The Community Houses are also innovative in their approach to community development. For example, several programs are run with community youth as staff which allows for on the job training, community inclusion and community development. By having the youth participating as “junior” staff in children’s programs, leadership and role modeling is developed as well as connecting to the older youth in the community. Also, Community Houses use community volunteers to assist in running programs. From running food banks to participating in community celebrations to performing safety audits, getting the community involved allows for the development of the individual who is volunteering and building community connectedness, encouraging a healthy community. (See table on page 22)

As previously mentioned, Community Houses are very creative in making partnerships. On pages 23-24 of this report, 93 partnerships are listed as collaborating with Community Houses in delivering service to these communities.

The Community Houses have proved to be sustainable models of service delivery. The oldest one in the City of Ottawa, Confederation Court, opened its’ doors in 1964. Yet, they fall short in delivering sustainable programming. The reliance on non sustaining funding streams inhibits the Community Houses in delivering long-term sustainable programs.

Funding periods are often for one year and without modifying the grant proposal, funding is not likely to be obtained for a second time. Programs that are working must be reworked to fit into the framework devised by funders.

The Canadian Council on Social Development (CCSD) now in the dissemination phase for *Funding Matters*, a report on the impact of current funding arrangements on nonprofit and voluntary sector organizations in Canada, released in 2003, found that:

“organizations surveyed generally supported the funders’ new priorities – such as a desire for greater accountability – and they agreed with the merits of financial diversification. But they expressed growing alarm over the unintended negative consequences of the new funding regime:

- *Competition has become fiercer for all sources of funding, with smaller organizations often squeezed out by larger groups.*
- *The unstable new funding environment has undermined the capacity of many organizations to provide consistent programs and services.*
- *A majority of respondents – 56% – experienced volatile swings in revenues between 1997 and 2001, with 70% reporting a shift away from core/organizational sources of support to more contingent forms of funding.*
- *95% reported that funding reliability and certainty was an issue for their organization, with six out of 10 organizations reporting that their current sources of income were neither stable nor reliable.*
- *For six of 10 organizations, more than 75% of their funding was for one year or less.*
- *The shift to short-term funding from multiple sources makes the new and heightened reporting obligations from funders an increasingly onerous task, especially for smaller organizations with few resources.”^{lxiv}*

The Ottawa 20/20 Growth Management Survey recognizes that it “is always easier, cheaper, and more compassionate to prevent problems before they occur than to develop solutions after the fact” (Human Services Plan, p.44).

CONCLUSION

The Community House “model” is one that has proven successful in our communities. Although only anecdotal evidence can be provided due to the fact that the Community House Coordinators/Directors are already overburdened by the broad range of duties that they have leaving them unable to provide conclusive research of the impacts of the work done by the Community Houses. Researching these impacts would be instrumental in understanding the success of the Community Houses.

An example of anecdotal evidence:

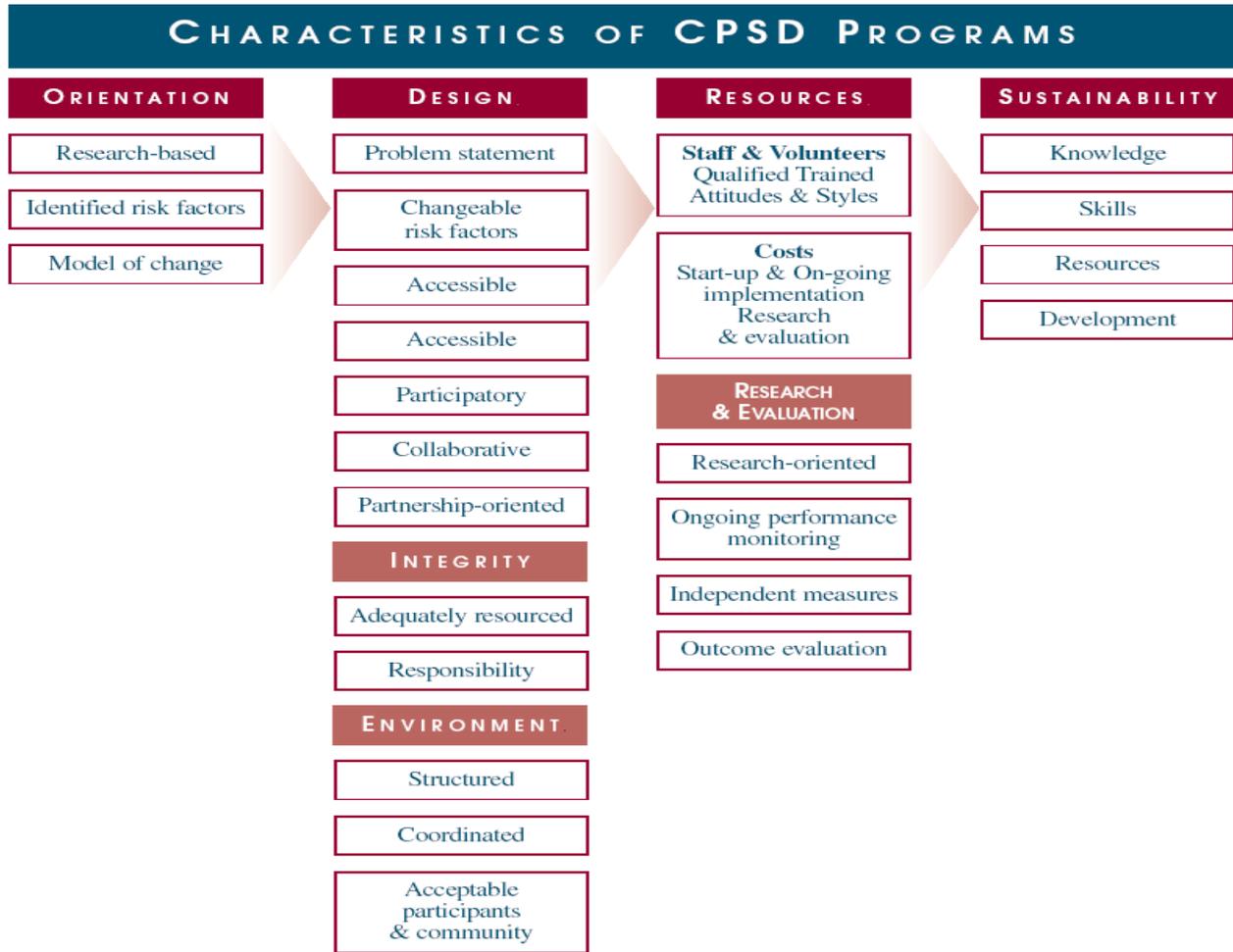
One House Director who had worked as a youth outreach worker in the Community in 1995/1996, returned as a House Director in 2001. She had worked with a group of youth, providing leadership training to them over two years. Upon her return, she was pleased to see that several of these youth were working at the Community House, using the skills developed in the leadership program and that by 2003, all of these youth that remained in the community were in college or university.

lxv

The model of social development has been used in Canada for many years. In the 1980’s it was defined and linked to crime prevention.

Within Canada, it can be said that CPSD has been practiced—but not named as such—for many years. Inspired by the work and ideas of people such as Irvin Waller and Dick Weiler, the concept came to the fore of criminal justice policy in the early 1980s. In 1993, the Twelfth Report of the Standing Committee on Justice and the Solicitor General (the Horner report) was issued and the Department of Justice Canada organized a national symposium on community safety. These events laid the foundation for a crime prevention policy in Canada that explicitly included a social development component. In the 1990s, the work of the National Crime Prevention Council, which was established by the Department of Justice Canada and the Solicitor General of Canada (in concert with the work of provincial and territorial governments, municipalities, and community groups) built CPSD models and strategies for intervention.^{lxvi}.

Without sustainable funding, Community Houses will not be able to execute CPSP programs to ensure that proper evaluation is done. Although many of the programs that have been identified as successful by the CPSP model are executed by Community Houses, proper evaluation is essential in understanding the real impact being made on these communities.



lxvii

It has been noted by the National Crime Prevention Council that programs, which are successful, must be consistent and continuous.^{lxviii} Relying on one time, short-term funding streams, which start and stop will not provide the impact needed to make real changes in the communities that are served by Community Houses.

Community House Coordinator/Directors that are funded on a part-time basis, without administrative assistance, operating costs and trained staff are impotent in ensuring that programs are evaluated and that scarce resources are being used in the most effective way possible.

Community Houses are distinct and essential services in the City of Ottawa. As a first point of entry, the Community Houses are in a unique position to deliver holistic, long-term, barrier-free assistance to members of the community. From early years programs: baby cupboards and school readiness; to school-age programs: after school homework clubs, breakfast, lunch and after school snack programs, and recreational/sports programs; to youth programs: leadership, homework clubs, youth recreational and employment programs; to family services: food banks, community kitchens, clothing cupboards, referrals to parenting programs; to adult programs: ESL classes and healthy lifestyle classes; Community Houses can follow the individual and family in accessing long-term programs and services which assist them in leading healthy lifestyles, thus creating healthy communities. In communities like these, where 66% of the community is relying on government transfer payments, even with subsidized housing, these families are living below the poverty line. The high density of these communities leads to real and perceived threats to safety and security. As stated in the Progress of Canada's Children 2002 this poverty affects our children's health, educational achievements, relationships and abilities to succeed.^{lxix} The fact that 80% of families are accessing Community Houses provides evidence that these families need and want assistance. As in Abraham Maslow's "Hierarchy of Needs" in order to achieve self-actualization, one must be able to meet basic needs like food, shelter, safety and security, cognitive functioning, love and belongingness, and self-esteem and meaning.

Maslow described people's needs when he developed his "Basic Hierarchy of Human Needs." His description of human needs (with minor modifications) include the following:

- **Survival:** *People need food, water, oxygen, shelter, clothing and sometimes medical care. They also need to want to survive (the will to live).*
- **Safety and Security:** *People need to live in a place that is as physically safe as possible, and to feel secure in their environment. They need to know that there is some order in the world and that the world "makes sense."*
- **Cognitive Functioning:** *People need to be able to think clearly enough to do what they need to do to get through their day (get dressed, go to school, go to work, do problem-solving). If that is not possible, they need to know that someone will help them do these things.*

- **Love and Belongingness:** *People need to feel connected to other people, and to know that they are loved and cared for.*
- **Self-Esteem and Meaning:** *People need to feel good about themselves, keep learning as much as possible and know that their lives have meaning.*
- **Self-actualization:** *Ultimately, people want to feel as though they are the best people they can possibly be, given their unique attributes.^{lxx}*

The programs found at the Community Houses, attempt to assist individuals in meeting their needs to becoming successful individuals, effective families and healthy communities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Immediate:

1. Community Houses are distinct and essential services.
2. Community House Directors/Coordinators must have salaries that recognize their responsibilities and the scope of their position.
3. Community Houses must have operational funding which recognizes the basic needs of running a non-profit organization. (office supplies, phone, internet, office equipment, financial audits etc.)
4. Community Houses must have administrative funding to assist with administrative duties and book keeping so that House Coordinators/ Directors can focus on direct service delivery and strategic development.
5. Community Houses must have full-time child and youth workers to provide long-term, consistent programming to high-risk children and youth.
6. The Coalition of Community House must have sustained funding to support the administrative needs of the Coalition, to continue to address funding needs and to build on the research that has been completed in order to ensure proper evaluation of Community Houses to understand fully the impacts and outcomes.

Long-term Strategic Directions:

1. Approach provincial and federal government to create sustainable partnerships.
2. Continue to develop a model of Community Houses which be replicated by other social housing communities, aging populations and private low-income communities.
3. Community Houses should continually move towards following the autonomous governance model as it is the most inclusive social development process, which allows for decision making to come from the communities themselves.

Ottawa Coalition of Community Houses

Community House: _____ Community Survey

We would like you to help us serve your community. Please give us a few minutes of your time so we can learn about your community house. This information is optional and confidential.

PART A: Demographic Information

1. Are you: Male Female
2. What is your age?
Under 6 6-11 years 12-17 years
18-25 years 26-40 years 41-60 years
Over 61
3. What languages are spoken in your home? _____
4. How long have you lived in the Community?
Less than one year One to five years More than five years
5. How many adults live in your house? _____
How many children:
Under 6 years _____ 6-12 years _____ 13-17 years _____

PART B: Community House Awareness

1. Have you or a member of your house/family visited the Community House?
Yes No
2. How often do you or a member of your house/family access the Community House?
Daily Twice a week Weekly
Bi-weekly Monthly Annually/ Special Event
3. How often do you receive flyers/ program information from the Community House?
Often Sometimes Never

PART C: Programs and Services

1. Please check off the programs/ services you have used and those you were unaware of:

	Have used/ Use	Not aware of	If yes; which
Children's Programs			
Youth Programs			
Adult Programs			
Food Bank			
Computer/ Internet Use			
Special Event			
Other			

2. What services, programs and supports would you like to see at the Community House?

3. How important is the Community House to your quality of life?

Very important 5 4 3 2 1 Not important

Would you be able to participate in a focus group?

Yes No

Would you like a copy of the results? Yes No

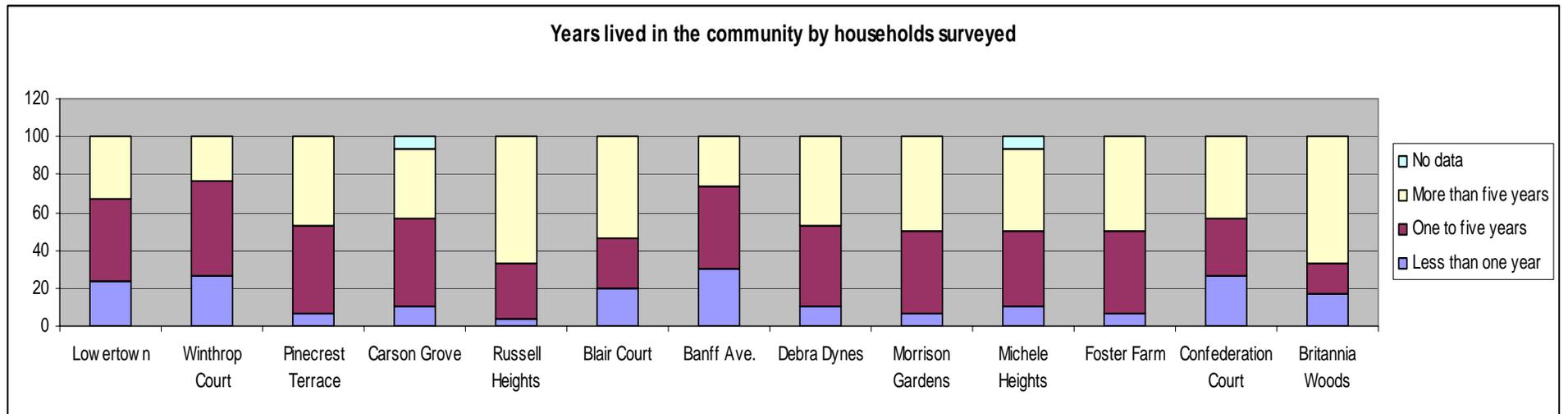
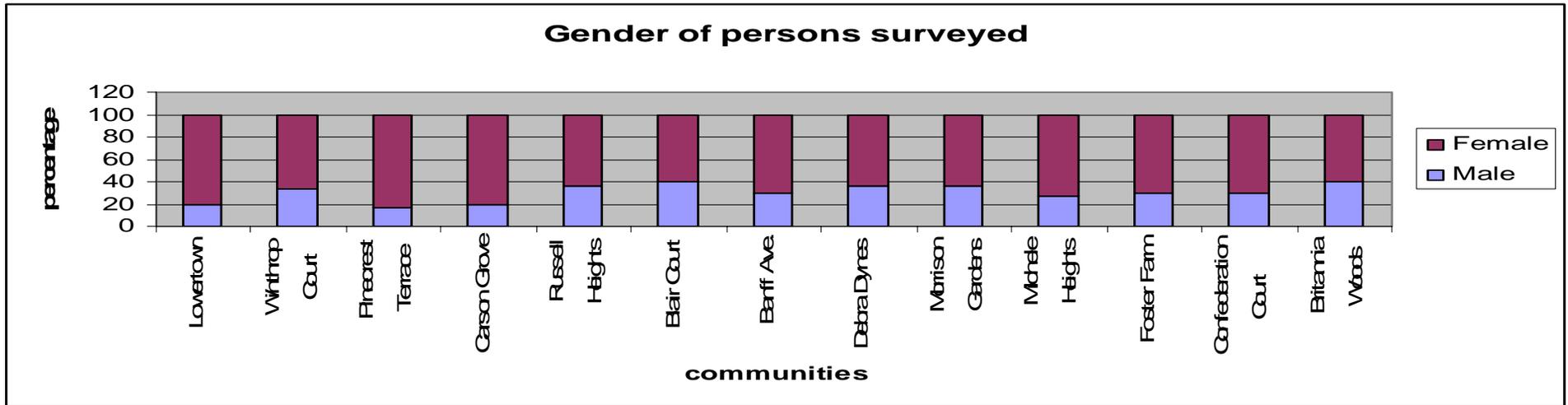
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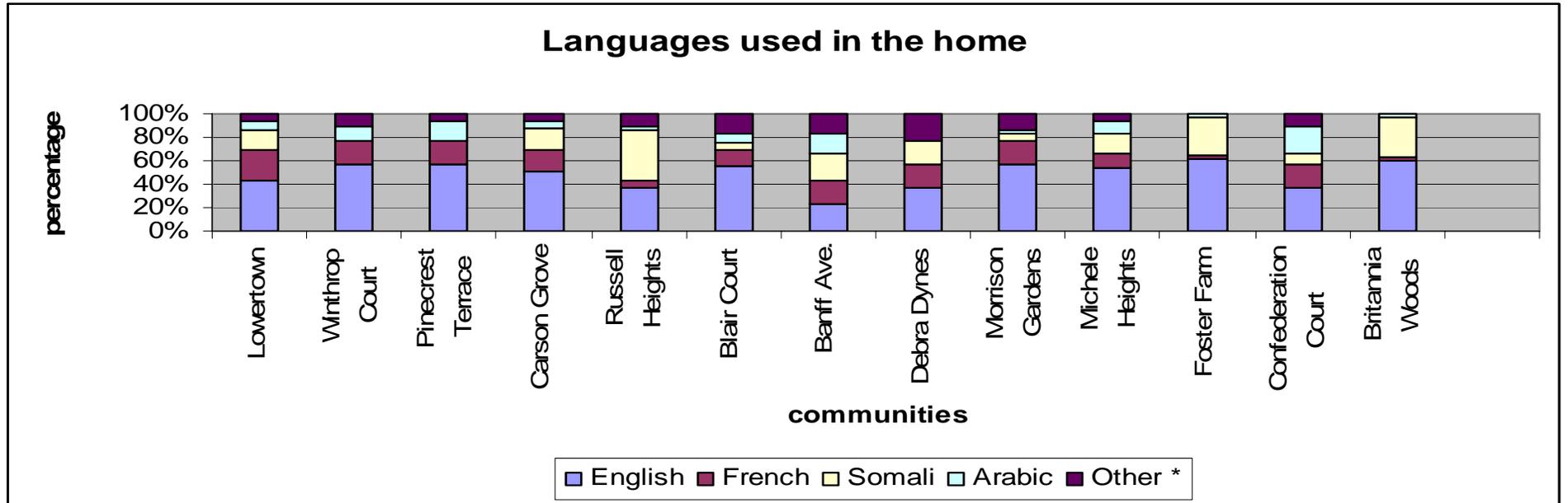
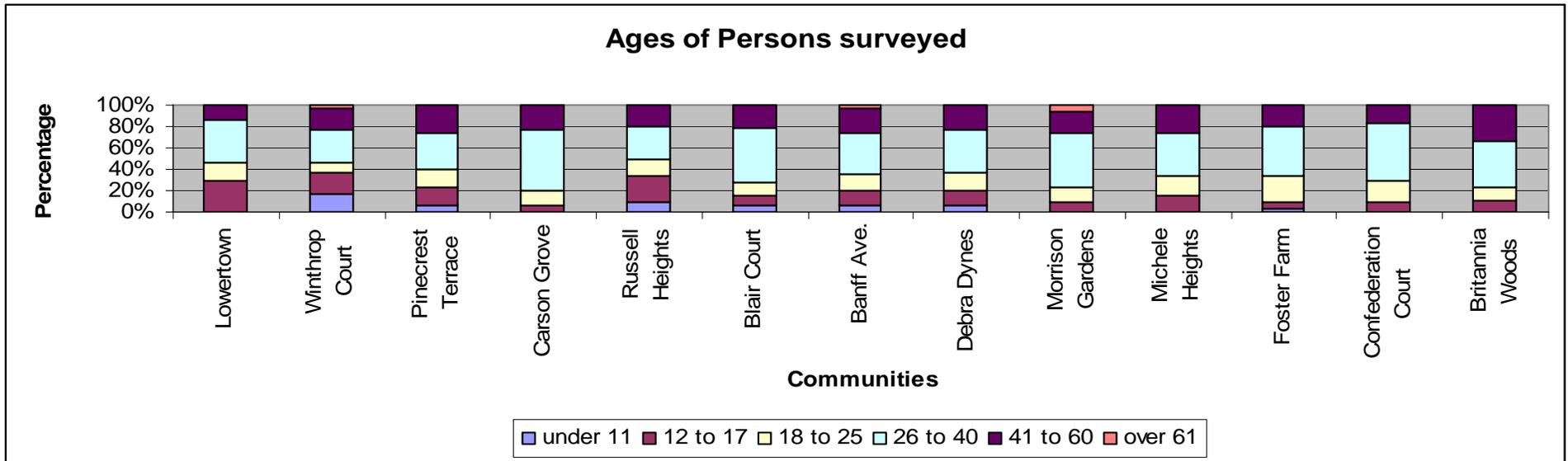
Phone number: _____

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME!

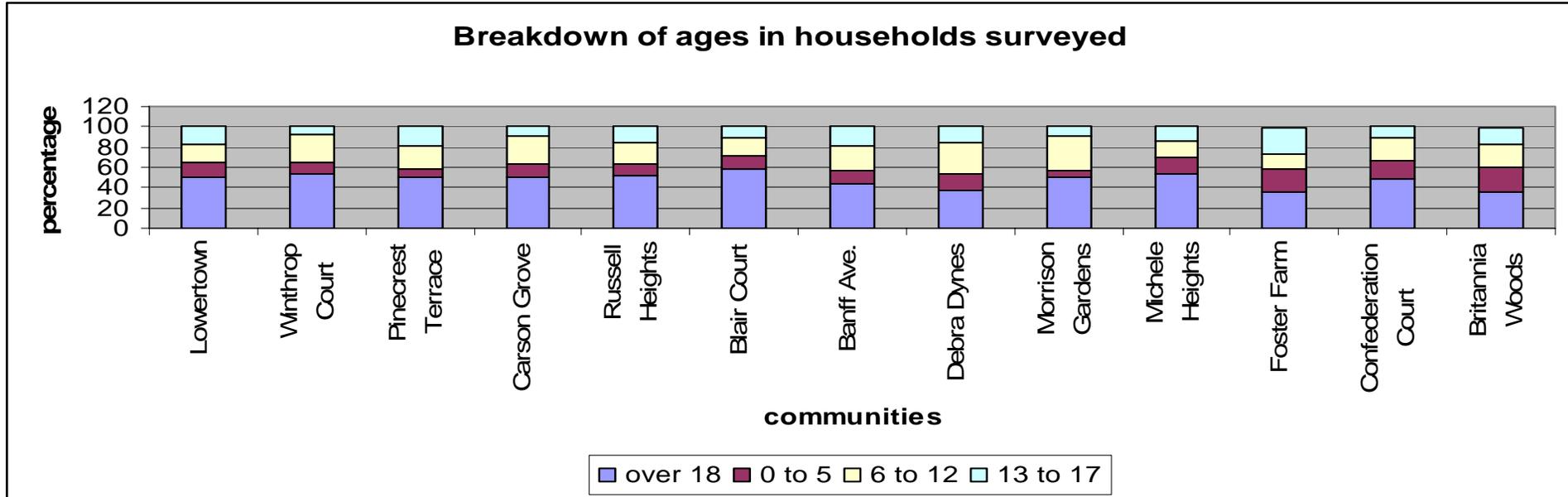
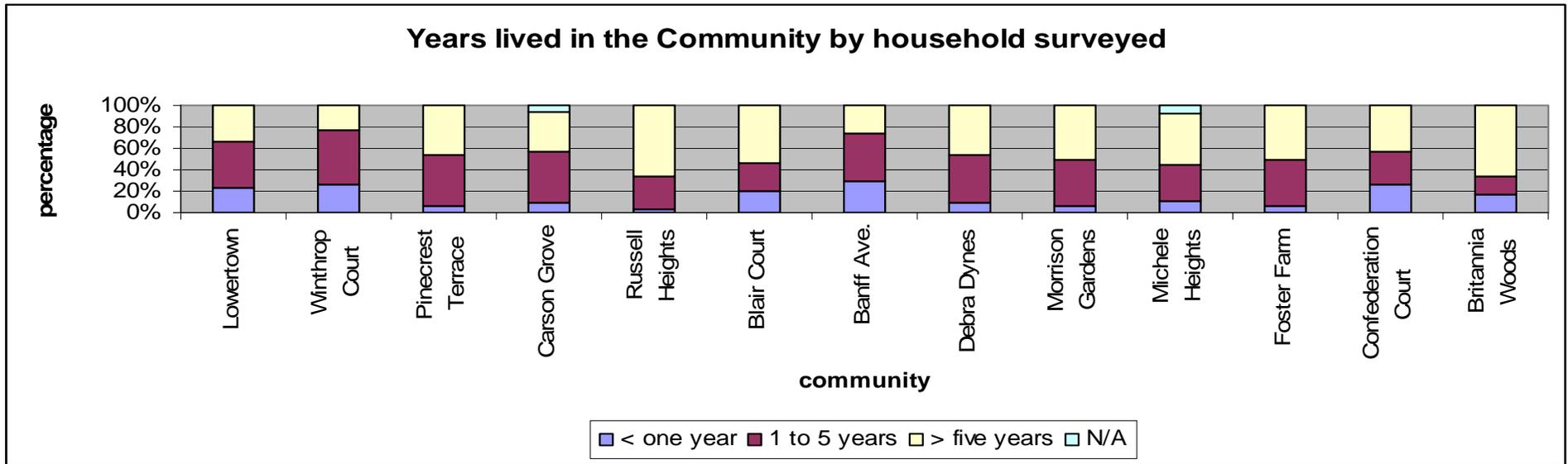
Ottawa Coalition of Community Houses (2004): Survey results by community



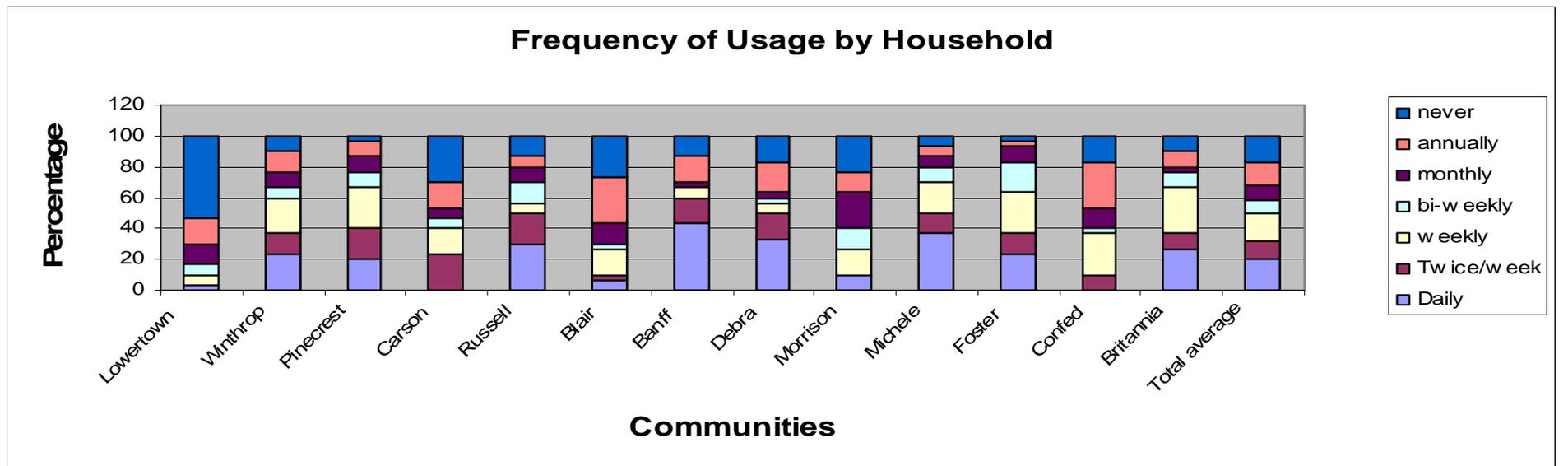
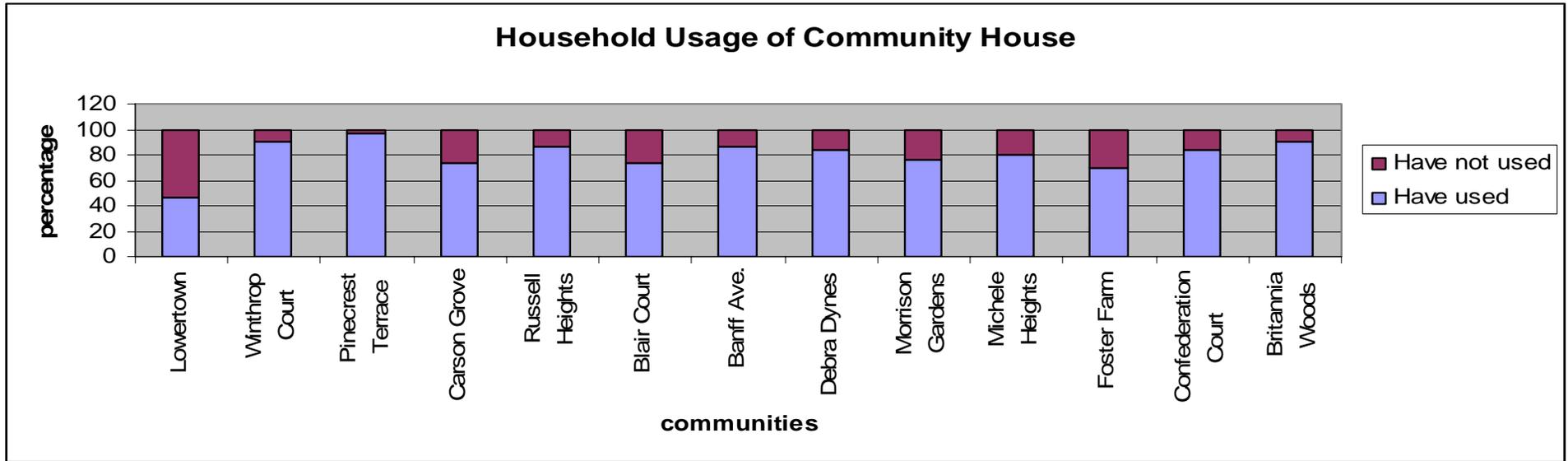
Ottawa Coalition of Community Houses (2004): Survey results by community



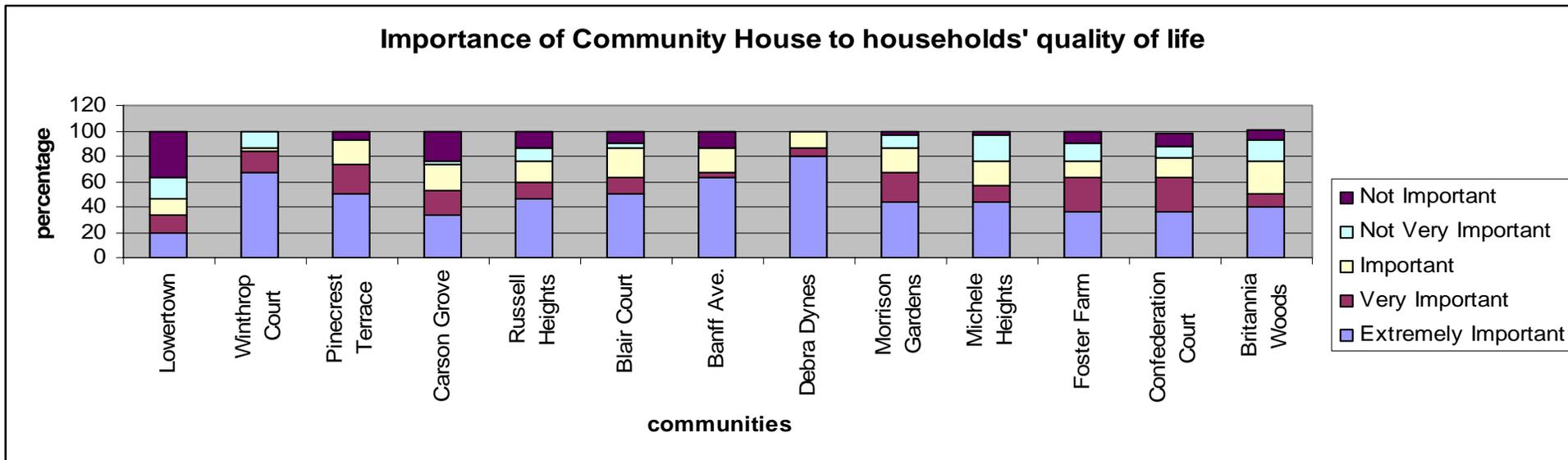
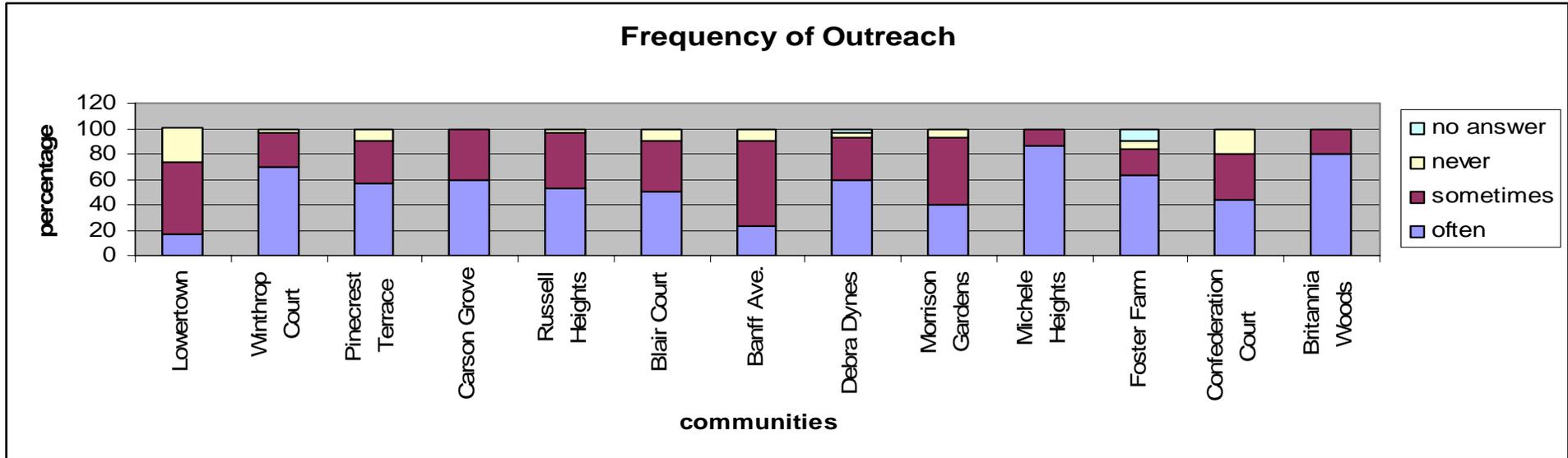
Ottawa Coalition of Community Houses (2004): Survey results by community



Ottawa Coalition of Community Houses (2004): Survey results by community



Ottawa Coalition of Community Houses (2004): Survey results by community



Ottawa Coalition of Community Houses

Community House _____ House Director Interview

Purpose: *The purpose of meeting today is for the Community House and the Ottawa Coalition of Community Houses to gain a clearer understanding of the _____ Community House. How it was started, with whom it partners and is funded by, how it is governed, who it serves and what direction the community would like to see it take in order to better serve the community.*

PART A: History, Mission, Mandate and Values

1. How long has the _____ Community House been open?
2. How did the Community House begin? Who assisted in the inception?
3. What is the mission/mandate of the _____ Community House? Do you have a formal mission statement? Mandate?
4. What are the values/ priorities of the Community House?

PART B: Governance and Organizational Structure

1. Who makes up your Association/ Board?
2. How often does the committee meet?
3. Has your Association/ Board completed a strategic plan for your organization? If yes, could we receive a copy of the plan?
4. How often do you hold Association/ Board elections?
5. Who organizes the elections?
6. What kinds of outreach/ notice is done prior to an election?
7. What direction/ changes would you like to see in the governing structure of the Community House? Why?
8. Who directly supervises/ supports/ evaluates you?
9. What are your duties as House Director? Do you have a contract? Do you have a job description?
10. What other supports would you like to have as Director/ Coordinator?

11. Who supervises the programs in the Community House?

12. How many staff are currently employed at the _____ Community House?

13. How many volunteers currently volunteer their time?

PART C: Partnerships and Funders

1. Provide list of partnerships. Define these partnerships.
2. How do your partnerships positively affect the Community House?
3. What barriers/ limitations are caused by your partnerships?
4. What organizations would you like to collaborate/ partner with in the future?

PART D: Programs and Services

1. Provide list of programs.
2. What are the hours that the _____ Community House is open?
3. As the Director/ Coordinator how many hours are you in the Community House a week?
4. What are the identified gaps in service?
5. What are the barriers to providing the mentioned gaps in service?
6. What challenges does the Community House face in providing services? (Operating costs, maintenance?)
7. What social issues affect the operation of your Community House?
8. How do you generate volunteers to help in the _____ Community House?

PART E: Community Houses

1. How does the Coalition benefit the director and the _____ Community House?

2. What direction would you like to see the Coalition take in the future?
3. What should stipulate membership in the Coalition?

PART F: Conclusion

1. Is there anything else you can tell us to help us gain a better understanding of the _____Community House?

Thank you for participating in this interview. It has been very helpful to us. We will be distributing the final report to all groups that have participated in our evaluation.

Ottawa Coalition of Community Houses

Focus Group

Community Association/House Committee

***Purpose:** The purpose of meeting today is for the Ottawa Coalition of Community Houses to gain a clearer understanding of the your Community House: how it was started, with whom it partners and is funded, how it is governed, who it serves and what direction the community would like to see it take in order to better serve the community.*

Please feel free to share information openly. Although this information will be shared with the Ottawa Coalition of Community Houses, the identity of individuals will remain confidential.

PART A: History, Mission, Mandate and Values

1. How long has the Community House been open?
2. What is the mission/mandate of the Community House?
3. What are the values/priorities of the Community House?

PART B: Governance

1. How many members sit on your association/Board?
2. Who makes up the committee(community members, service providers)
3. How often do you meet?
4. How often do you hold association/Board elections?
5. Who organizes the elections?
6. What kinds of outreach / notice is done prior to an election?
7. Who directly supervises/supports/evaluates the House Director?

PART C: Partnerships and Funders

1. Who are the main partners of the Community House? How do these relationships affect the Community House positively?
2. What barriers/limitations are caused by these partnerships?
3. What organizations would you like to collaborate/partner with in the future? What partnerships would you like to strengthen?
4. What barriers, if any, have you experienced in creating these new or strengthened partnerships?

PART D: Programs and Services

1. When is the Community House open?
2. What programs/services are provided by the Community House?
3. What are the identified gaps in service? What are the barriers to providing the aforementioned gaps?
4. What would you like to see more of at the Community House?
5. What would you like to less of at the Community House?
6. What challenges does the Community House face in providing services? (Operating costs, maintenance)
7. How do you generate volunteers to help in the Community House?

PART E: Strategic Planning

- Has your Board/Association completed a strategic plan for your organization?
If yes, could we receive a copy of the plan?
- What organizational changes would you like to see, if any?

PART F: Conclusion

- Is there anything else that you could tell us to help us gain a better understanding of the Community House?

Thank you for participating in this focus group. It has been very helpful to us. We will be distributing the final report to all groups that have participated in our evaluation.

Would anyone like to participate in an informational video for the Ottawa Coalition of Community Houses?

The Carling Ave. Safety Solutions Committee

Synopsis of Activities

The Carling Ave. Safety Solutions Committee was formed out of the safety concerns of two communities in the Bay Ward of Ottawa, Britannia Woods and Michelle Heights. The community members were very concerned about some anti-social behaviour by youth in their communities, particularly older youth.

The Britannia Woods and Michelle Heights communities are located along Carling Ave., between Pinecrest Rd. and Bayshore Dr. and the Ottawa River and Richmond Rd.. They are Ottawa Community Housing communities.

The safety concerns of the communities focused on the youth in the communities. The issues surrounding these youth ranged from alcohol and drug abuse, drug trafficking, swarmings, robberies, vandalism, breaking and entering, loitering, intimidation. The community members were feeling violated and disempowered.

The Coliseum had identified similar problems occurring in their facility and the surrounding area. They reported that there were a couple of muggings in the building. Presently they have security in the building seven days a week. There is interior and exterior patrol once a week by paid-duty officers. There is a list of 80 people who are prohibited from the building. 70% of which are youth from the Britannia Woods, Michelle Heights, Bayshore and Foster Farm Communities.

It was concluded that there are two issues that must be addressed:

- There are some high-risk youth in the community between the ages of 16-21 whose needs should be addressed through social and recreational programs.
- There are issues in the community that need to be addressed by the police. The first being that the communities need to feel empowered to assist the police in dealing with the criminal activity within the community. Secondly, that the police more visibly respond to criminal activity in the community.

It was decided that the follow-up meetings be separated into two groups: one to address the social and recreational needs of youth in the area, and one to address the safety/security concerns.

Also, it was agreed that Pinecrest-Queensway, on behalf of the Britannia Woods Community House and the Michelle Heights Community House, would apply to the City of Ottawa People Services Department and United Way Community Project Grant Program for a Youth Outreach Worker for the area.

The Social and Recreational Component

At the follow-up meetings to discuss the social and recreational components it was determined that although there were no recreational programs in the area for youth between the ages of 16-21 which ran after 10:00 p.m., there were some social programs (counselling, employment programs) available to these youth. Some barriers existed to the high-risk population accessing these programs. It was difficult to get the information to these youth as they were out of school, out of work and not attending already existing recreational programs. It was decided that this committee would focus on two issues: obtaining funds for an outreach worker to reach the youth “where they’re at” and to secure space for program after 9:00 p.m. on the evenings that had been identified as having high levels of criminal activity.

In March 2002, funding was secured for a Youth Outreach Worker to be employed in the Britannia Woods and Michelle Heights Communities for 16 weeks, 30 hours per week. The Youth Outreach Worker began his employment in May 2002 and ended in mid-September 2002

In August 2002, the People Services Department agreed to fund a pilot project to be held at the Michelle Heights Community Centre on Friday and Saturday evenings between the hours of 9:00 p.m. to 1:00 a.m. for 16-23 year old youths. This will be administered by the Youth Services Bureau with the cooperation of the National Capital Region YMCA-YWCA, the Ottawa Boys and Girls Club and the Pinecrest-Queensway Health and Community Services.

The Police Component

The Britannia Woods and Michelle Heights communities were feeling very disempowered and had lost faith in the police and the Ottawa Housing Security. They felt that the police and the Security were not responding to their calls for assistance and that they were not receiving feedback. The communities had stopped reporting any incidents in their respective communities. Also, they felt that the police were not being proactive in their communities. There was not enough patrolling in the neighbourhoods and the communities felt that the police being more visible would act as a deterrent to the youths' anti-social behaviour.

The Community Police Officer, Constable Maria Amber, suggested that the Neighbourhood Watch program be initiated in the two communities. She agreed to outreach to the communities, hold public meetings and help facilitate the process. She explained the benefits to belonging to the Neighbourhood Watch program and that this program would help coordinate the efforts of the communities and assist the police in collecting information that could lead to arrests. Cst. Amber also committed to visiting the communities on a bi-weekly basis in the summer to patrol the area. She would also advise the Neighbourhood police officers for the area that they should do the same. The Britannia Woods and Michelle Heights communities held public meetings wherein several community members attended and showed interest in participating in the Neighbourhood Watch program. Both communities now have begun outreaching to their communities. A Britannia Woods Neighbourhood Watch program has been instituted. The process was successful in that the community members in Britannia Woods feel more empowered and feel that they are facing this issue together. Michelle Heights is still in the process of instituting their Neighbourhood Watch.

ENDNOTES

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- ² Ottawa Community Housing Corporation, Technical Services Department, December 2003)
- ³ Government of Canada, Statistics Canada, Ottawa Census Data. (2001)
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- ⁶ Government of Canada, Statistics Canada, Ottawa Census Data. (2001)
- ⁷ Ottawa Coalition of Community Houses. (2004) Community Survey of 420 households in 13 communities. (See Appendix 4)
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- ¹⁰ Online at: http://www.trynova.org/n/rebuilding_balance.html
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- ¹² City of Ottawa, Health, Recreation and Social Services Committee. As adopted by City Council, March 2004
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- ¹⁵ Ottawa Community Housing Corporation, Technical Services Department, December 2003
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- ¹⁷ Progress on Canada's Children, 2002: Online at <http://www.ccsd.ca/pubs/2002/pcc02/bg.htm>
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- ²⁷ Ottawa Coalition of Community Houses. (2004) Community Survey of 420 households in 13 communities. (See Appendix 4)
- ²⁸ The Social Planning Council of Ottawa.
- ²⁹ Human Resources and Development Canada. The Community Development Handbook. Online at: www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/community
- ³⁰ Ottawa Coalition of Community Houses. (2004); Community House Director Interview, Confederation Court
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- ³² Ottawa Coalition of Community Houses. (2004); Community House Director Interview, Banff Ave
- ³³ Ottawa Coalition of Community Houses. (2004); Community House Director Interview, Pinecrest Terrace
- ³⁴ Ottawa Coalition of Community Houses. (2004); Community House Director Interview, Caldwell
- ³⁵ Ottawa Coalition of Community Houses. (2004); Community House Director Interview, Foster Farm
- ³⁶ Ottawa Coalition of Community Houses. (2004); Community House Director Interview, Morrison Gardens
- ³⁷ Ottawa Coalition of Community Houses. (2004); Community House Director Interview, Russell Heights
- ³⁸ Ottawa Coalition of Community Houses. (2004); Community House Director Interview, Debra Dynes
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- ⁴² Ottawa Coalition of Community Houses. (2004); Community House Director Interview, Leetia and Isaac
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