

# The Ottawa Rotary Home

Early Spring 2010 issue

# Chronicles

## Message from the Executive Director

*The year 2009 will forever be in our hearts...*

The year 2009 will forever be in our hearts as our first year in our new home at 4637 Bank Street. There were adjustments for all but the year culminated with the organization winning the Gold level BAA Non-Profit category from the Ottawa Chamber of Commerce. As 2009 transitioned to 2010, plans were in the works for improvements to children services, a regular schedule of adult respite services and a commitment to the human resources needs of our organization. The focus of 2010 is to assess and improve the quality of services we offer through all our programs and to focus on the staff members who provide those essential supports and services.

In January 2010, a timeshare model of support combined with weekend respite was offered to 8 families with young adults referred to us by Service Coordination. Internally, we were able to re-align some funding and were granted approval from MCSS to provide a total of 6 weeks of supports between January and March. Even though this is a temporary solution, we nonetheless are pleased to be able to offer planned adult respite services in our new facility and fulfill the "Building on the Dream" focus.

We have also been successful in our application to participate in a provincial pilot project focusing on the development of internal structures and processes relating to the core competencies of our team. The guiding principles underlying the core competencies model include an integrated human resource approach that will inspire and recognize skilled, professional direct support employees and raise the dreams and aspirations of the people we support. Sixteen agencies across the province were chosen to pilot these new standards over a 9 month period and to champion the new process within the Eastern region following the pilot. Thanks to Lauri Cox, Chantelle Lalonde and Sarah Picard who will be leading the organization through this pilot.

The year 2010 hasn't been without its challenges however. In February, we had the unfortunate experience of a burst pipe in the ceiling of our administration area. Despite the quick response of staff and fire department, water damage has been done to



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*A letter from the heart.* The perspective from one of our Professional Front Line Staff members.

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Former Board member, Brian Hartley, is writing the history of Rotary Home and is looking for stories from families.

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Families and staff reflect on the events surrounding last year's flood disaster.

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our admin area and our adult side. Given the need for a clean-up period and city and ministry inspections, children's services

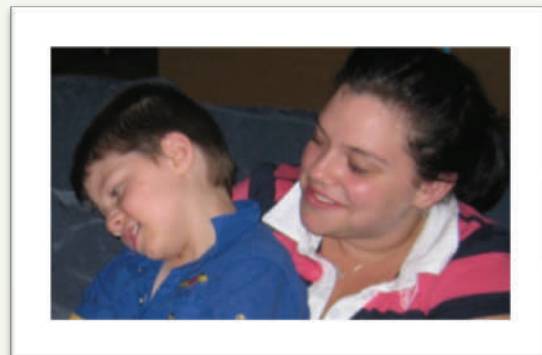
were halted for 19 days but were up and running again on March 1, 2010. Adult respite services for our timeshare families have continued at our 30 Rochester location until renovations are completed. Due to these events, the board and management are happy to report that our emergency procedures are solid and that the staff involved executed our emergency procedures with utmost confidence and complete focus on the health and safety of the children, young adults and staff alike. Two board members arrived within an hour of the incident and were pleased to note that despite the scene in front of them, the staff had everything under control and plans were well underway to ensure the continued safety of everyone involved. A warm and proud thanks to the Feb 9<sup>th</sup> team as well as to the Gloucester Fire Department who supported each other until the last child went home safely.

Enjoy the newsletter – you will find articles from a variety of sources including staff, a family, and a past board member to name a few!

## A Letter from the Heart

*By Chantal Ladouceur, Respite Care Counsellor*

The staff members at Rotary Home were recently asked to write an article, something from the heart. It took some serious thought on my part to come up with something to write, not because of the lack of moments or memories, it was



deciding which one was the most precious and which one was something I would look back at years from now and still vividly remember. To be honest, I couldn't pick. I was never totally confident which career path to choose. I wasn't one of those lucky people who just knew. The only thing I was ever confident in was that I had a passion for helping others. Unaware where my passion would lead me, I enrolled in the PSW program at Algonquin College. Looking back it was the best decision I have ever made. You see, I found my passion. I found where I was supposed to be. Not many people can say they love their job, but I can, I love every moment. I work with an amazing staff and management team. Rotary prides itself on being a family and that is one thing that I guarantee you they have achieved. The children and young adults we are privileged to take care of are some of the most amazing and gifted individuals I have ever met and they have the ability of brightening up a day. Whether it's a smile or a contagious laugh...whether it is a phrase that sticks with you... "Do you want to play rock band", I leave work every day with a new memory, a new moment. So to pick just one, I couldn't. Every single moment is unique and all are worth remembering.

## We need your input!

For seven years I was a member of the Board of Directors of The Ottawa Rotary Home. On stepping down from the Board last June, I volunteered to research and write the history of the Home over the past 30 years and the Board accepted. I am now interviewing members of past and present staff, the many Rotarians involved in the planning and realization of the Home's facilities, and the beneficiaries of the Home's services. **My emphasis will be upon you**, members of the latter group, because the Home would fail to achieve its mandate unless it serves your needs.

The Home has provided respite services to residents of eastern Ontario since 1982. What have those services meant

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# A Message from our Nursing Team

*“Our Families are Heroes” by Emily Bilz, RN, BScN*

The longer I have the privilege of working at the Ottawa Rotary Home, the more deeply I am convinced that the clients and families that we support are heroes. The amount of love and care that are poured into often unbelievably busy schedules is amazing and beautiful. Obstacles are faced with grace and optimism. Parents become experts in the art and science of the care of their children and young adults, and bring a wealth of knowledge to us. What a testament to the human spirit.



*Rotary Home Nursing Team*

As a Nurse at the Ottawa Rotary Home I feel blessed to have found such a unique work setting where I have the honour to build relationships with our clients and their families. Over the years I have accumulated more memories than I could recount in many articles. Trips to the mall and to the movies, spa days, parties, and guests such as Ray’s Reptiles all come to mind, amongst many things. But I equally treasure the simpler moments we have shared, such as spending time together around the dinner table, smiles, laughter and conversations, and getting to know each client’s personal language and favourite things. To be involved in the care of our clients in such a holistic manner as a Nurse is rewarding and inspiring.

Since our origins as part of the team at Rotary, Nurses have always been in this unique position of participating in all aspects of all of our clients’ care. Our roles are also constantly growing and evolving. We work with medically fragile clients, some of whom need one to one support, we are called upon in emergency situations, we act as resources, teachers, mentors and supervisors, and we even go out into the community to care for clients with special needs at other facilities, to name but a few of the tasks we undertake.

For a long while we have wished for a full complement of Nurses so that we can continue to expand our roles and serve more clients. That dream was realized this year. It is our hope that we will now be able to help more families with medically fragile children and reach more clients in the community. In any way that we can, we desire to continue fulfilling our mission to improve the quality of life of caregivers and individuals with disabilities by coming alongside these heroes and giving them a little bit of the love and compassion they are so generous with back.

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to the parents and other care-givers of the children and, more recently, the children and adults who have stayed at the Home? That is the key question I will be asking at a meeting to which you are invited and which will be held at the Home’s new Leitrim facility at 6:00 on **April 7**. Please try and attend as I really need your feedback in order to be able to write this incredible story! Please call Kimbra at 613 236-3200 to RSVP or e-mail her at kimbraf@rotaryhome.on.ca. I invite you to contact me directly if you are not able to attend the April 7<sup>th</sup> meeting, or if you would prefer to give me your response in confidence. I will be available to conduct individual interviews at your convenience. I can be reached by phone at 613-820-5941 or by e-mail sent to brian.hartley@sympatico.ca .

# Family Corner

## Reflection on the Flood—February 9, 2010

February 9th seemed like a normal day for Parya & Parastou. They woke up that morning, had breakfast, drank their tea, socialized with staff and then off to school. Nothing was out of the ordinary and they were expected to arrive back at their normal time of 16:15. However when the two sisters arrived back at ORH they were faced with flashing lights, fire trucks, confusing loud noises and water coming down from the ceiling as if it was raining inside. It felt like a dream to them. They had never seen anything like this before. The initial thoughts of the girls were fear. Was there a fire? Where will we go? They knew their parents were on a trip and wondered if their Dad was home yet to take them home.

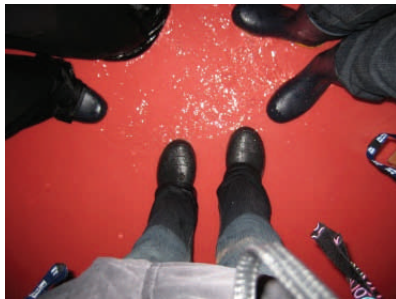
Mr. Soleimanian, Parya & Parastou's father, received a message from the staff at the Rotary Home that evening explaining there had been a flood and we would have to be sending the girls home with him. When picking up his two girls he was anxious about how he would manage to take care of them since he would be alone until his wife returned in 3 weeks. He wondered if he could ask his brother to be there with the girls while he was at work and take care of them. The management team worked with Mr. Soleimanian to organize alternate support services. *"I don't know how to thank the management and all the staff who helped us in this difficult situation. It was a great experience for me and my brother while my wife was not here. Thank you very very much. All of you guys did a great job". ~ Mr. Soleimanian*

## Here's the scoop ... Staff News

### Flood waters damaged our beautiful home but we are stronger than ever now.

by Amy McKay, Respite Care Counsellor

February 9, 2010 will be a day we remember for a long time. Water was falling from the ceilings all around us. We were in the dark, no electricity, and the buckets were doing little in the form of damage control. After making sure all clients were home safe with their families I walked into the children's wing to assess the damage for myself. There were no words for what I saw. All I could hear was the splashing of people's footsteps and drips coming from the ceiling. However, the one thing on my mind was the amazing team work we had been witness to. We came through this experience a little bit wetter and more tired than a usual shift, but I feel that this made us grow closer and stronger as a family.



### New Arrivals...

Congratulations to our staff members who gave birth this past September:

Laurie Racine welcomed a new baby boy, Riley  
Patricia Bradshaw welcomed a new baby boy, Jayden

### Welcome to our newest Staff Members

Marsha Cannon ~ Nursing Team (Full Time)	Lauren McKennitt ~ Respite Team (Casual)
Amy McKay ~ Respite Team (Part Time)	Donald Guindon ~ Respite Team (Casual)
Farah Mohamed ~ Respite Team (Casual)	Krista Cheshire ~ Respite Team (Casual)
Kim MacDonell ~ Respite Team (Casual)	Shannon Kirton ~ Respite Team (Casual)
Menelik Tibebu ~ Respite Team (Casual)	Katelyn Stinson ~ Residential Team (Contract)
Michelle Crook ~ Respite Team (Casual)	Wendy May ~ Foundation and Office Assistant
Olivia Thomas ~ Respite Team (Casual)	Chantelle Lalonde ~ Human Resources Office Manager