



FIVE-O-SEVEN NEWS

Centre 507 • Safe haven • Stepping stone • Serving Ottawa's disadvantaged since 1983
507 Bank St., Ottawa K2P 1Z5 • (613) 233-5626 • Housed in McLeod-Stewarton United Church

A TYPICAL DAY IN THE LIFE OF CENTRE 507

9 a.m.: Workday begins

Staff, paid participant cleaner and, sometimes, volunteers arrive.

Cleaner sweeps and mops floors and stairs, cleans bathroom and, depending on the time of year, waters flowers or shovels snow.

Paid participant cook arrives at 9:30. Assesses what he has to work with and prepares snacks for the day, usually starting with a soup. The table is also set up with basic items, such as bread, spoons, sugar, cups, coffee and peanut butter.

Staff members make calls on behalf of participants to follow-up on a late social assistance cheque, make a referral for help in applying for a health card, and get a letter for a landlord that confirms that social assistance will cover the rent for a room.

Participants may not have phones, answering machines and people at home to take messages, let alone the knowledge of community resources or the patience it takes to handle these tasks alone.

The Ottawa Food Bank truck arrives with the weekly order. A staff member heads down Bank Street for the grocery store. He shops for items that the Food Bank does not supply, such as coffee, sugar, whitener and sandwich supplies.

Off and on all day long, the manager moves from "the floor," where she interacts with participants and staff, to her office, where she deals with schedules, payroll, funding applications, e-mails, phone calls and more.

12 noon: Doors open

There is a line-up of participants, as usual.

Participants hurry to the snack tables. The period after opening is usually the busiest time of day.

Games of chess, cribbage or backgammon spring up around the room. Amidst the banter and small talk, connections are made, and important information is shared. One of the staff members is losing at chess to a superior opponent. Another participant interrupts to ask where he can go to take a shower.

A mental health worker from the Royal Ottawa Hospital and a psychiatrist chat quietly with a participant. Although it is very unusual for a doctor to be present, support workers from various health, housing and social agencies drop in regularly.

A volunteer sits at a sewing machine in one corner of the room. While she mends a pair of pants for a participant, her husband

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chats with others and passes around a bucket of candies.

An angry shout startles everyone as an agitated participant throws a soup bowl across the room. Turns out he has been drinking. He is escorted from the premises. Although such incidents are rare, staff is well-trained to deal with any conflict. (When the participant is allowed to return, a staff member meets with him one-on-one to discuss the incident.)

Soon things are back to normal, and the room hums with conversation. Participants talk to each other, staff or the chaplain. Most of it is small talk. But in one quiet spot, a participant shares feelings with a staff member about the end of a long-term relationship.

A participant who works on and off spots a message on the board, returns a call and finds out he has landed a job as a tow truck driver.

A small group of participants meets with a staff member for life skills training. They are discussing landlord-tenant problems and sources of help to deal with them.

A participant meets with the manager in her office because he has just cashed his monthly cheque and wants to avoid blowing it right away. They work out a budget, and he leaves some

of his money for safekeeping. They agree that he will collect a certain amount each week. Although he can change his mind, he cannot collect the money if he has been drinking.

3:30 p.m.: Closing time

Staff members, the manager and outreach staff hold a debrief session, as they do after every shift. They discuss how they feel, how the day is unfolding, how participants are doing and what they might need.



They discuss the incident with the angry participant — what they saw, what might have led up to it, how it was handled and how long the participant should be barred.

Staff and the paid participant cleaner clean up, restock and set up for the evening.

5:30 p.m.: Centre re-opens

Another line-up and more snacks. A staff member sorts through tooth-

paste, razors, shaving cream and deodorant with a participant, who asks where he can go to do laundry. He then goes to the washroom to wash up and shave.

A woman who is a newcomer to the centre chats with a staff member. Before too long, she confides that she is working as a prostitute and has nowhere to stay. While she naps on the couch, the staff member arranges for her to stay at a shelter. She is also allowed to make a long distance call to a family friend in her hometown.

A participant signs up for a free haircut from a volunteer who drops in on Sunday afternoons.

A participant sits with the manager at the computer. He has applied for social housing in a city where he plans to move, but he wants to revise his application to encompass more apartment buildings. Since he is not comfortable using a computer, the manager walks him through the process.

Alone or in small groups, participants are chatting, sipping coffee and reading the newspaper. It's movie night, so some are gathered around the TV. At times like this the Centre really is, as one participant said in a survey, a living room.

9 p.m.: End of workday

Denis Grignon



STAND-UP FOR CENTRE 507

Enjoy a belly laugh while helping to support Centre 507 at a fundraising comedy night featuring comedian Denis Grignon on Friday, October 28, at 7 p.m.

With over 20 years experience of making audiences laugh, Denis calls his brand of stand-up "comedy that works above the neck...not below the belt." He performs clever, hilarious comedy that's minus the naughty words, cheap put-downs and low-brow humour. Denis regularly appears on the Comedy Network and has worked as head writer for several national awards shows. An award-winning journalist and former radio reporter, Denis now does freelance work for CBC Radio and the National Post.

The benefit comedy night will also feature two other local comedians: farmer Paul Mussell and Dan Hayward, the student supply minister at McLeod-Stewarton United Church.

The show will be held at the Bronson Centre Theatre at 211 Bronson Ave. at Lisgar (the old Immaculata High School). Tickets are \$15, and all proceeds go to support the work of Centre 507. For tickets, call the Centre at 233-5626.

FUN SHINES THROUGH PICNIC DOWNPOUR



One picnicker said, "I have been in Ottawa for 2½ years, and this is my first time out of the city."



A group of 29 participants from Centre 507, along with 5 staff and 2 volunteers, enjoyed the annual outing to Lac Philippe one hot, muggy day this past August.

The group set up at Breton Beach, which has a great swimming area and lovely overarching mature pine trees. Some hardy souls swam before lunch, while others played badminton.

After enjoying barbecued wieners and hamburgers, as well as potato and macaroni salad, picnickers heard what they thought (hoped?) was heavy trucks. Pretty soon, it became clear that a thunderstorm was likely.

When asked whether he wanted to risk the weather and stay, one picnicker said: "Let's stay as long as we can. I have been in Ottawa for 2 and a half years, and this is my first time out of the city."

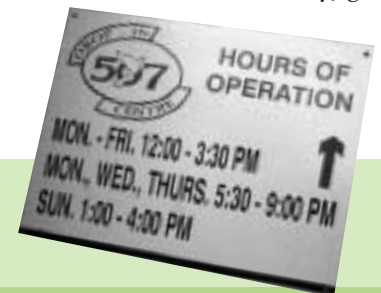
Thunder, lightning and heavy rain ended the trip at 2:30 p.m. Despite the weather, though, this year's short trip was still a huge success — a chance for community, good food and fresh air.

CENTRE 507: SAFE HAVEN, STEPPING STONE

Centre 507 is a drop-in centre that is open to all who seek a safe, friendly and supportive environment. Centre 507 participants are members of our community who may be disadvantaged either economically or socially. Homelessness, mental illness, addictions, health concerns, poverty, unstable housing, unemployment or loneliness are examples of issues faced by our participants.

Free services offered at Centre 507:

Supportive listening/counselling • Advocacy & referrals • Crisis intervention • Information on community resources • Community outreach workers from other agencies • Life management skills program • In-Centre chaplain • Hot food, snacks, coffee • Clothing & toiletries • Access to telephones, computers, fax & Internet • Needle exchange • Foot care clinic, barber, sewing/clothing repair • Recreational events and special outings • Thanksgiving & Christmas luncheons



CENTRE 507'S WISH LIST

In addition to financial contributions, Centre 507's wish list includes the following items:

- Hats, gloves, warm socks and long underwear
- Hygiene supplies (disposable razors, shampoo, toothbrushes, toothpaste, deodorant, etc.)
- Meal supplements such as Ensure or Boost
- Socks, men's pants, shirts and sweaters

THANK YOU TO OUR FUNDERS AND DONORS...

Centre 507 would like to thank the numerous individuals who have made financial contributions to the work of Centre 507. Without these donations, much of the work of Centre 507 would not be possible. Out of respect for privacy, we have not listed names of individual donors – but please know that individual donations are very much appreciated and needed.

Centre 507 gratefully receives ongoing funding from the City of Ottawa, the United Church of Canada, and the Ottawa Presbytery of the United Church of Canada for the Day and Evening Program. Provincial Homelessness Initiatives Funding (PHIF) supports the Street Outreach, and the Supporting Community Partnerships Initiatives (SCPI) funds the Life Management Skills Program.

We would also like to acknowledge and thank the following congregations and organizations for their generous donations and contributions to the work of Centre 507 since our last newsletter in spring 2005:

Ashton United Church
Barrhaven United Church
Centretown Emergency Food Centre
City View United Church
Community of Christ Church
First Avenue Public School Book Sale
First United Church
Hawthorne United Church Women (UCW)
Institute of Internal Auditors
Kingsway United Church
Loblaws Isabella
Leob Glebe
McLeod Stewarton United Church
Orleans Bakery
Orleans United Church
Ottawa Presbytery, United Church of Canada
Queenswood United Church
Riverside United Church
St. Andrew's United Church
St. Peter's Lutheran Church
The Ottawa Food Bank
United States Embassy
United Way Campaign Pledges
Westminster Presbyterian Church

...and to anyone who has slipped in with donations of hygiene supplies, food, clothing or household items. To anyone we have missed – a heartfelt thank you!

HOW TO SUPPORT CENTRE 507

Make a financial contribution

Any contributions are gratefully accepted. Cheques should be made payable to Centre 507. Income tax receipts are provided for donations over \$10. Donors to Centre 507 now have the option of making monthly donations as an automatic transaction from their bank accounts. If you would like to donate using this convenient method, please call 233-5626 to ask that a Pre-Authorized Remittance form be sent to you.

Donate practical items

Centre 507 accepts donations of practical items including men's clothing and hygiene supplies.

Volunteer

From our board of directors to individuals who volunteer to serve holiday luncheons, Centre 507 relies on volunteer time and energy to offer many of our services.

This newsletter is written, edited and designed by volunteers. Grateful acknowledgement is offered to Chisholm Communications for layout and design work and to Konica Minolta for printing. For more information, contact Centre 507.



CENTRE 507 STAFF AT SEPTEMBER 1, 2005

Steve Chenier, Street Outreach Worker
Tracy Davidson, Centre Manager
Michèle Ferland, Support Worker
Daniel Lalonde, Support Worker
Jonathan Lorch, Street Outreach Worker
Sonja Prakash, Life Mgmt. Skills Worker
Dennis Wiginton, Chaplain

Many dedicated relief staff and enthusiastic placement students

Board of Directors as of April 6, 2005

Anu Bose, Chair
Bill Giggie, Vice Chair
Allan Porter, Treasurer
George Teather, Secretary

Matthew Bonsall, Malcolm Brooks, Tracy Davidson (ex officio), Betty Gross, Dan Hayward (ex officio), Ken Love, Roy Madocks, Joe McKendry, William Miner, Phil Normand, John O'Brien, Ted Pert, Ron Scharfe, Richard Slocombe, Mike Tyo



YES!

I would like to contribute to the work of Centre 507.
Please find enclosed my donation of :

\$25 \$50 \$100 Other amount: \$ _____

Income tax receipts are provided for donations over \$10. Please fill out the following to receive a tax receipt:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/town: _____ Postal Code: _____

Telephone number: _____

(This information will not be sold or shared in any way.)

Please make your cheque payable to Centre 507.

Mailing address: Centre 507, 507 Bank Street, Ottawa, Ontario K2P 1Z5

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