

# Friends of



Spring 2005 No. 8

## Harmony House Staff

Dawn Blakley  
Executive Director  
Ubah Hersi  
Women's Advocate  
Melanie Colbert  
Children's Advocate and  
Family Support Worker  
Nicole Lafond  
Transitional Support  
Worker  
Trish Elliott  
Financial Administrator  
Christine Irvine  
Fund Development  
Manager  
Cheryl Heney  
Safety, Environmental  
and Health Worker  
Gyna Eisenhaur  
HOPE Worker  
Jaden Winfree  
Volunteer Co-ordinator

## Board Members

Nicole Deschesne  
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Dawn Morewood  
Vice-President  
Clementine VanVeen  
Treasurer  
Patty Angus  
Secretary  
Linda Gustav  
Amy Heron  
Cynthia Sanoy  
Susan Thomson  
Toni Todd

## Thanks

Joy Asbil-Lee, Robyn Deering,  
Cynthia Dwyer, Cheryl Heney,  
Eric Kalbfleisch, Francoise  
Lagroix, Sylvie Malboeuf,  
Dr. Gordon Swartz, Erin  
Williams

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## Plan to attend these upcoming Harmony House events!

### And they're off!

Join the Quota Club of Ottawa for A Night at the Races, Sunday, June 26, at the Rideau Carleton Raceway and Slots. All proceeds from this fun-filled evening go to Harmony House

Tickets are \$55 per person, which includes a buffet dinner, valet parking, a \$2 betting voucher, a race program and a charitable receipt for \$25. You can purchase tickets from Dru Blackler (521-5322), Linda Whyte (722-8168; after 5 p.m.) or Christine Irvine (822-2986).

Quota Club is a non-profit, non-sectarian and non-political worldwide service organization that links people of all ages, occupations and nationalities in a network of service and friendship.

### Run for Canada... and Harmony House

Harmony House will once again be one of the recipients of proceeds from the Hudson's Bay Company's Run for Canada on July 1. For more information, see the enclosed card and letter or go to [www.hbcrunforcanada.ca](http://www.hbcrunforcanada.ca). (Runners, please note that the Run for Shelter will not be happening this year. We hope to relaunch a bigger and better event in 2006!)

### Tee off at our inaugural golf tournament

Come celebrate the last day of summer at our first ever golf tournament, Tuesday, September 20, at the Chateau Cartier Golf Resort in Alymer.

The day will begin at 11 a.m., with a putting contest and golf clinics, followed by a barbecue lunch. Play will begin with a shotgun start at noon and follow a best ball format. Following the tournament, there will be a cocktail reception and sit-down dinner.

Foursomes and individuals may register to play. Not a golfer? Join us for cocktails and dinner later in the day. For more information and to register, go to [www.harmonyhousews.com](http://www.harmonyhousews.com) (after May 23).

### Annual General Meeting

Harmony House will hold its Annual General Meeting on Thursday, June 16 at St. Matthew's Anglican Church, 217 First Avenue. All members are welcome to attend. Among other items of business, we will be discussing and voting on our revised by-laws. These are available for viewing at [www.harmonyhousews.com](http://www.harmonyhousews.com).

## President's message

As Harmony House launches into a new year (we run our affairs from April to March), we have many things to be thankful for. We have been able to provide ongoing support and services for 30 residents and a number of ex-residents as well. And, although full core funding still eludes us, we have received partial funding from the provincial government to pay for one staff member. This transitional support worker allows us to more effectively help women and their children re-integrate themselves in the community.

Another of our blessings is our strong fundraising committee. This dedicated group has seemingly inexhaustible energy and is constantly finding new ways to bring much-needed funds into the shelter. Of particular note this year is the committee's work to establish sustainable annual fundraising events. Our first annual golf tournament (see page 1) is a great example of this.

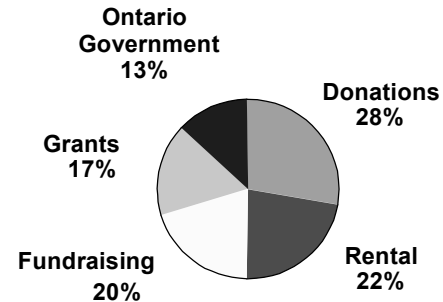
Harmony House is very fortunate to be located in a caring community such as Ottawa. We have benefited from many community partnerships over the years, and the list of partners keeps on growing (see page 5). Thank you to these generous organizations.

I would like to extend a special thanks to Janice Kennedy of the *Ottawa Citizen*, who did an excellent feature article on Harmony House, just when we needed it most. Due to the overwhelming response to that article in the form of donations, we have been able to implement some new programs and services for our families. Much of the new work is being done by our volunteers, who work very hard on behalf of Harmony House.

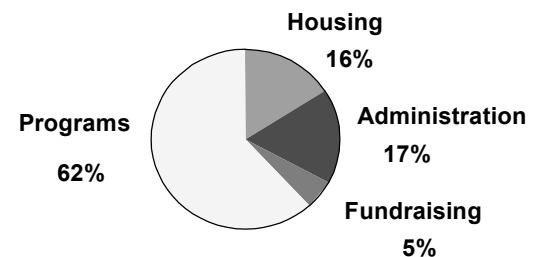
Over the past two years, the work of the volunteers has been managed by our volunteer coordinator Erin Williams. Erin is leaving Harmony House to study social work. Thank you, Erin, for all your hard work. We wish you all the best in your studies.

Nicole Deschesne  
President, Board of Directors

### Where our money comes from



### Where our money goes



### What is Harmony House?

Harmony House is a second-stage shelter for women and their children who are fleeing abuse. A second-stage shelter offers housing and programming to women and children after their stay in an emergency shelter. Families can stay with us for up to a year, as they make the transition from the shelter system back into the community.

Harmony House opened in 1987 and is the only second-stage shelter in eastern Ontario.

We have 16 units of affordable, safe housing, along with individual and group support programs, accompaniment, advocacy and referral services, as well as children's support programs, and a food bank.

Running without core government funding since 1996, Harmony House relies on grants, donations and fundraising to keep its doors open.

## Letters from former residents

When I arrived at Harmony House I was given the reason for its name. It wasn't that everything was in order, but this gentle woman took my hand, looked me in the eyes and said; "we are here to help". My heart was racing, overwhelmed with the awakening of my situation. I had a brief moment of Harmony.

You would be surprised at how many stereotypes, glances and just plain ignorance I received from people in different agencies related to this field. For the above reasons I was terrified to go to Harmony House, but to my surprise I was treated as an equal, no judgement was cast down — just pure kindness and compassion. I mean this when I say that they have taught me so much in regards to what it feels like to be cared about. Harmony House became my parent. Not only did they give me shelter and food but also love, counselling, courage and most of all hope. After all, without hope all is lost.

I was able to breathe and I was in the end given the independence needed to live on my own. They also found permanent housing for my two children and me. I have not one complaint about Harmony House because they are doing all they can with what they have. It is up to others to do their part as well to see that hope in humanity does prevail over the darkness. Harmony House has been my light through an ever-winding tunnel of darkness.

Clarity is now in my vision going forth — brave and armed with virtues that the staff at Harmony House have instilled in me, never again allowing anyone to break me. I would not be the person who I am today without them. I would just like to take this moment to say thank you for giving me my life back. I was at peace with myself for making the life-altering decision to come to Harmony House because of the comfort given by the staff.

Our journey began approximately 10 years ago, when I moved into an emergency shelter with my three children. I was quite certain that this would be just a temporary setback, and that very shortly we would be back living happily in our middle-class home in the suburbs. Surely, this crisis would be a realization for my husband that would change his abusive behaviour.

After approximately six weeks, I received an offer for affordable housing. If I accepted it, I also had to agree that our home would be put up for sale. To me, that meant my marriage was over, something I was not yet ready to accept. However, neither did I feel safe to return home with my children.

Harmony House was suggested to me, and thankfully there was space for the four of us to move in. I began marriage counselling with my partner, and it soon was evident that a reconciliation would never happen.

### "Harmony House"

Give me a place where I  
Can see my mother's face  
Free of tears  
Free of fears  
Give me a place where love is real  
All the wounds of the past heal  
God gave me a new start  
This place will always be in my heart  
Harmony House is a safe place to live

Written by the son of a former resident

Harmony House provided a safe environment for my children and me to begin our new lives. I was able to access services for my children, including counselling, recreation and worship services. The community we lived in provided wonderful "learning moments" about different cultures, and we made lifelong friendships.

I am currently employed as a counsellor for women who have experienced abuse. My children are all very successful in their own lives: one, pursuing a university education, another, exploring a relationship with Dad, and the youngest approaching high school.

If Harmony House had not been available to us at such a critical time in our lives, I would have returned to my abuser, and our futures would have been very different. The successes in my life and my children's lives are in no small part due to the support we received, and the time it allowed us to find our path and explore our freedom. We are eternally grateful.

## Volunteers make Harmony House go round

At Harmony House, we want to honor and recognize our volunteers as much as we can. On behalf of all the staff and students, I would like to thank all the volunteers who have taken time throughout the years to make Harmony House a better place. As a volunteer myself, I appreciate the incredible amount of energy put forth by our volunteers every day. Working within a charitable organization, with no core funding and very limited resources, does make the role of volunteers absolutely imperative.

I would like to say goodbye to all the wonderful women I have worked with at Harmony House. For almost two years, I have been involved at some level within the organization, but now I am returning to school at McGill to study social work. I would like to welcome a fellow volunteer and wonderful colleague, Jaden Winfree, as the new Volunteer and Legal Advocacy Program Coordinator. She has a wealth of knowledge and will make a wonderful addition to the team! Welcome Jaden! Have a wonderful summer and I hope to visit Harmony House as much as I can.

Erin Williams

## Provincial funding brightens up Harmony House

This spring, Harmony House was the beneficiary of some funds from the Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services to purchase much needed household goods and furniture. Cheryl Heney, our Safety, Environmental and Health Worker, took on the extra responsibility of scouring Ottawa for the best deals on everything from mattresses, shower curtains, dressers, lighting, garbage cans, sheets, towels and much, much more. Cheryl proved her worth as a super shopper and now knows all the secrets to getting through IKEA in record time! Many thanks to Cheryl and the Ministry. Harmony House has put on a bright new face this spring.

## Couldn't do it without you...

Harmony House would like to thank the following for their generosity and kindness shown towards the staff and residents:

- The Brick
- Richard Salter Electric
- Sleepers
- Living Lighting
- Sleep Country Canada

## ... or you either!

I would like to thank all of the people involved with Harmony House's Holiday Sponsorship Program, as well as those who donated goods and their time to Harmony House over the 2004 holiday season. It is people in our community like you who gave the women and children at Harmony House the happy holiday they might not otherwise have had. Once again ... thank you!

Melanie Colbert  
Family Support Worker and Children's Advocate

## Successful spin-a-thon raises funds for Harmony House

A cold and rainy April Saturday afternoon — what better way for 10 cyclists to spend it than by spinning indoors on fixed-wheel bicycles to raise funds for Harmony House? This spin-a-thon was organized by Shelley McKay in conjunction with TJ Fit's Tracey Beardsley. Shelley's inspirational leadership and personal story of survival ensured that the cyclists pressed on to achieve their goals. With over \$3,000 pledged and \$2,611 collected to date, the event is a wonderful success story.

Thank you to TJ Fit for providing the equipment, fitness studio and treats for the riders. Most of all, thank you to the participating cyclists for their fundraising and energy needed to make this event so successful.

## Make a planned gift to Harmony House

There are a number of ways to leave a legacy to Harmony House, providing your estate with considerable tax credits. Simply designate Harmony House a beneficiary of one of the following: a bequest in your will, a life insurance policy, or an RRSP or RRIF.

The following gifts will provide you with immediate tax relief, while guaranteeing vital resources to Harmony House: appreciated securities, transferring ownership of a life insurance policy, or charitable annuity or trust.

For more information, please send an e-mail to [christineirvine@aol.com](mailto:christineirvine@aol.com).

## Thank you to our wonderful community partners

Because Harmony House is funded almost exclusively through donations, we rely on the generosity of the community to keep our doors open. We depend on a network of partnerships with other community organizations and on the generous sponsors who donate significant resources. Our partnership opportunities continue to grow in 2005. Thank you to all of the following organizations, which continue to show their support for Harmony House:

- Algonquin College
- Bon Appetit Ottawa
- Brobus Team
- Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation
- Carleton University
- D. Edwards Consultants
- Eastern Ottawa Community Resource Centre
- Gas TOPS Ltd.
- Great Canadian Theatre Company
- Hill Charity Golf Classic
- Independent Order of Foresters
- Ottawa Citizen
- Ottawa Community Foundation
- Ottawa Community Housing Corporation
- Ottawa Food Bank
- Ottawa Kiwanis Club
- Patrick and Susan Morris (Morris Home Team)
- Pharma Plus
- RBC Financial Group
- Rotary Club of Ottawa South
- Seabrook Associates
- St Basil's Church
- St. Bartholomew's Anglican Church
- St. Matthew's Anglican Church
- Success by Six
- Sunlife Assurance Co.
- Union of Taxation Employees
- Valorie Preston Art Studio

## Harmony House statistics, 2004

Number of residents	30	Number of women who did not receive housing at Harmony House	75
Number of women without children	11	Number of women on Ontario Works	27
Number of women with children in their custody	19	Number of women on ODSP	1
Number of children with mother in shelter	31	Number of women employed	0
Ages 0–6	12	Number of women with other sources of income	1
Ages 7–13	14	Number of women with no income	1
Ages 14–18	2	Average length of stay (months)	5
Ages 18+	3		
Number of applicants	105		

## Help us update our mailing list

We are in the process of updating our donor information and would appreciate some help from you! We are also hoping to reduce our mailing fees in the future with the addition of e-mail information for our donors.

If you would like to remain in our database, please either mail back the form below or update your information by sending an e-mail to [donors@harmonyhousews.com](mailto:donors@harmonyhousews.com).

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing address: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_ Tel. (h): \_\_\_\_\_ Tel. (w): \_\_\_\_\_

**Please remove my name from your mailing list:** Yes  No

**Comments:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Become a Friend of Harmony House

**I would like to make a donation of:** \$30  \$50  \$75  \$100  \$200  Other  \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Please print**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing address: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

I will make my donation by cheque. (Please enclose your cheque with this form and mail it to Harmony House; see address below.)

I will make my donation by credit card. (Please complete the information below.)

**Credit card information**

Card type: \_\_\_\_\_ Card no.: \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please send your tax-deductible donation to Harmony House Women's Shelter, PO Box 57082, Somerset Postal Office, Ottawa ON K1R 1A1**

## Privacy policy

Harmony House respects your privacy. We protect your personal information and adhere to all legislative requirements with respect to privacy. We do not rent, sell or trade our mailing lists. We use personal information to provide services and to keep you informed and up-to-date on the activities of Harmony House. This includes programs, services, special events, volunteer opportunities, funding needs and other ways to donate, through periodic contact from Harmony House. If at any time you wish to be removed from our mailing list, simply contact us by e-mail ([donors@harmonyhousews.com](mailto:donors@harmonyhousews.com)) and we will gladly accommodate your request.