

Circles of Support and Accountability

CoSA-Ottawa

No More Victims

No One is Disposable

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A Word of Thanks

From the early days in 1994 when a church group was formed by St. John's parishioners for a man looking for a place to worship and a new chance at life, to the official beginnings of CoSA-Ottawa in 2002 with a small grant from CSC-Chaplaincy, CoSA-Ottawa is now, finally, reaping the rewards of its hard work & persistence.

With recent funding from the federal government (see page 2), we are proud to announce some exciting new changes! After seven years with one very part time employee, CoSA-Ottawa is now a staff of 5!! Susan Love, the Coordinator, would like to welcome: **Karen Langford** Executive Assistant, **Susan Haines**, Community Engagement, **Adina Ilea**, Data Coordinator and, **Allyson Chisnall**, our Bookkeeper.

Now that we are finally on our way, we must pause to



thank a few folks who have stood by us through thick and thin (ice!). First, were it not for the compassion and forward-thinking of Rev. Garth Bulmer who opened the church's doors in 1994, there may not even be a CoSA program in Ottawa. Along with Garth, Pat Love had the vision of moving the initiative from a single support network to a broader scope and the need for financial backing.

Hugh Kirkegaard, our contact at CSC for the first seven years, was undying in his belief in and support of our fledgling program.

Our gratitude must also go out to Bob Cormier, recently retired from the National Crime Prevention Centre, who, through his belief in CoSA, jumped through hoops to help it grow and prosper.

A final thank you must go to all 20 men who we have worked with in the eight years of operation and to the volunteers who have stood by them - often in the face of great adversity. Without their courage and dedication to do this difficult work, CoSA wouldn't be possible.

Susan Love,
Program Coordinator

Update from the Program Coordinator

I invite everyone to drop into our new office where we share space with the The Church Council on Justice & Corrections (CCJC). After working out of my home office for seven years, a downtown

office is a luxury to behold!

The staff and I are in the process of organizing an Office Warming party tentatively scheduled for the week of April 12th – we hope you'll join us!!

CoSA members are encouraged to drop in and make use of the books, research papers and DVDs in our resource library.

We are grateful for any donations to the library.

Susan



*"Thou shalt not be a victim.
Thou shalt not be a perpetrator.
Above all, thou shalt not be a bystander."*

*~ Holocaust Museum,
Washington, DC*

A Warm Welcome

The Steering Committee (SC) and Staff at CoSA-Ottawa are simply delighted to welcome these dedicated community members to its volunteer Steering Committee in February 2010:

Andrejs Berzins
Nathan Hoedeman
Sharon Humber
Sara Johnson
René Luijkenaar
Ana Paquete
Sharon Rosenfeldt and
Emmy Verdun

Sincere thanks are also owing to retired SC members **Eric Bays, Garth Bulmer, Jo Cassie, Stacey Hannem, Pat Love, Leta Pedersen, Michael Petrunik** and **Tara McWhinney** for their invaluable contribution to CoSA.

News & Events

In December 2009, Susan Love and Susan Haines attended the second annual national CoSA gathering aptly entitled "**We made it!!**"

The Church Council on Justice & Corrections (CCJC) hosted CoSA sites from across Canada at l'Ermitage Sainte-Croix in Montréal to discuss the contribution agreement it recently signed with Public Safety Canada's National Crime Prevention Centre (NCPC).

The agreement allows CCJC to operate a multi-site demonstration project of the 16 participating CoSA sites, representing about 150-200 Circles, in order to evaluate the effectiveness of CoSA. It will consider, at minimum:

- Accountability structures and processes;
- Volunteer recruitment, screening, training, supervision, and interventions;
- Core Member referrals,

screening, risk management and safety;

- Volunteer and public safety;
- Management of crisis situations; and
- The degree to which CoSA is assisting in the integration of Core Members.

Thank you NCPC!

Please feel free to contact CoSA-Ottawa for more information about this exciting new project.

"Name this Newsletter" Contest

Send your suggestions to:

Karen Langford

klangford@cosa-ottawa.ca

Prize goes to the winner!!

Core Member Perspectives

Ode to COSA

Once held in a world of fences
Using our knowledge and vast defences
Staying clear of all temptations and needs
Planting new ideas and planting new seeds
With freedom on the horizon so clear
Our dreams and wishes so near
The day arrives and the journey long
We revisit what we did wrong.
No more fences, checks or lights out
No more tears or a need to shout
Facing challenges of a renewed life
Free of strict schedules, free of strife
We walk down the street in open air
Things are appearing a little more fair
We find support from many people
One in particular, has a steeple
COSA is one group of support we find

One full of commitment of a positive kind

With volunteers who are open to us
Without demands, without the fuss
The talk is true, the talk is straight
And in most cases, it forms our fate
They help to connect us with a new place

To help us fit into the human race
Out to dinner or to a live show
Without stress and without the woe
We know we need to focus our thoughts

We need to reconnect the dots
Our time with time gives us the space
To share our dreams, to set our pace
They are so vital to keeping our goal
'Cause this new freedom can take its toll
So we thank God for these dedicate cores

That opens for us so many doors
Without this caring, without this strength they give
Allows us to restart the way we live
Deep in our heart, deep in our soul
Helps to achieve, goal after goal
Any problems we have, the sharing of success
Brings new life to all we possess
Thank you for the support you give
And the chance to determine how we live
So to you all, we thank you from our hearts
For bringing together all the parts
Our lives are better, with COSA we see
For all of you and, of course, for me.

Volunteer Self Care

Volunteers and community members may benefit from this reminder of the workshop, facilitated by Rita Myers, Lynn Crossan and Terry Dyer-Adams, CoSA-Ottawa hosted on March 14, 2009, thanks to the Ontario Trillium Foundation.

Three Rules to Permanently Conquer Stress:

① **Learn to Read Your Body Signs:** Learn to check your body frequently for signs of overstress. Watch for the tell-tale disturbances in your sleep pattern, as this is usually the earliest sign of overstress. You can learn to read your body signs in much the same way as a

diabetic learns the early warning signs of abnormal blood sugar. If you are prone to overstress, be on the lookout for its earliest signs.

② **Exchange your Stresses:** Keep your stress level below your individual overstress point by a system of "exchanging" stresses. If a new stress comes into your life, make room for it by eliminating or postponing another stress. This way, your total stress level remains low or at least manageable. The natural tendency is for people to let their stresses pile up, rather than exchanging them; this is how overstress occurs.

With the development of overstress, the person starts taking off on the wild roller coaster of ill health. In order to stay healthy, it will help if you learn to evaluate and exchange your stresses from time to time.

③ **Use Relaxation Techniques:** If you are feeling ill from overstress, remember that troubled sleep, fatigue, aches, lack of enjoyment of life, and panic attacks are caused by chemical changes in your brain. Effective treatment is available.



"One generation plants the trees, and another gets the shade"

~ Chinese Proverb

Acknowledgments

CoSA-Ottawa is grateful to:

Community **Volunteers**

The staff and congregation of the **Church of St John the Evangelist**, Ottawa

The **Correctional Service of Canada, Chaplaincy Services**

The Ontario **Trillium Foundation**

and the

National Crime Prevention Centre, Public Safety Canada

THE ONTARIO
TRILLIUM
FOUNDATION



LA FONDATION
TRILLIUM
DE L'ONTARIO



Public Safety
Canada

Sécurité publique
Canada



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We're on the Web!

www.stjohnsottawa.ca/pages/cosa.html

Circles of Support and Accountability (CoSA) is a community-based reintegration program designed to support people newly released from prison who have been convicted of, and admit to committing, sex offenses, and request CoSA's help to prevent further offending. CoSA-Ottawa is one of 18 Canadian cities operating CoSA programs, representing approximately 150-200 Circles that aim to:

- Prevent further victimization through accountability; and
- Assist former offenders become increasingly responsible and productive individuals through support.

CoSA works with former offenders, who we refer to as "Core Members", who have been held in prison to the end of their sentence and typically have little or no community support and are considered a high-risk to re-offend. Core members participate **voluntarily**, and must therefore commit to leading a positive, crime-free life. The Core Member and three to five community volunteers comprise the Circle. They meet individually and as a group on a regular basis to:

- Challenge the Core Member's behaviours and attitudes that may be associated with his offending cycle;
- Support the Core Member's community reintegration by facilitating his practical needs and by providing a consistent network of support; and
- Develop constructive and pro-social strategies and solutions to everyday problems and concerns and, importantly, to celebrate successes.

We are always looking for volunteers. Please contact Karen Langford for information on our training program.

Support CoSA-Ottawa

Since its inception, CoSA-Ottawa has relied upon the support of one-time community grants and individuals like you. The stigma associated with sex offending - especially against children - brings financial challenges with it, which we hope will both improve through education and engagement.

I support CoSA-Ottawa and am enclosing a tax-creditable donation of:

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

Please specify CoSA in the memo or message with your donation payable to:

The Church of St John the Evangelist
154 Somerset Street West, Ottawa ON K2P 0H8

Please sign me up for CoSA-Ottawa's quarterly bulletin:

- By E-Mail: _____
- By Regular Mail:
Name: _____
Address: _____



Thank you for your support!