



At the heart of Ottawa for 25 years

CENTRETOWN BUZZ

AUGUST 2020, NEWS

Blue Roses Bloom in Centretown

August 14, 2020



A poster for *Blue Roses Bloom in Centretown* [Kublacom Pictures]

Patricia Marsden-Dole

A blue rose is for a woman who chooses her own way in life no matter the consequences. Such was one woman's choice of flower for her memorial, as presented in a local park by a worker from the Somerset West Community Health Centre. The lady had lived her last years in a downtown rooming house.

This local story inspired *Blue Roses Bloom in Centretown*, a documentary film by Danielle Rolfe, a director/producer at Kublacom Pictures, about the lives of some of our neighbours living in rooming houses in the city core. (To learn more about this film: Kublacom Pictures at www.kublacom.ca.)

There are many forms of housing in our community: high-priced single houses; hotels and Airbnbs; apartments in large old homes; apartment and condo buildings; seniors' residences; rooming and halfway houses; shelters; homeless spots under trees, on benches, under porches and stairways; and the city jail. The last five possibilities make us wonder about the health and security of the inhabitants for those who lay their heads to rest in these locations. Perhaps the homeless and those in jail have the healthiest options.

In a 2016 team report created by master of social work students at Carleton University, there were 1,328 rooming house units in Ottawa, of which 441 were in the catchment area of Somerset West Community Health Centre and 259 in that of the Centretown Community Health Centre. This accounts for over half of such housing.

These inhabitants are our neighbours. So who are they? What are their living conditions like in this time of a pandemic? The Carleton U team reported in their research that eight of 10 respondents spoke about their experiences of homelessness, criminal convictions, physical and mental illness, broken relationships, and addictions.

Overcrowding is the rule, as hallways, kitchens and bathrooms are shared by any number of tenants. The combination of these facts—as reported by the Alliance for Canadian Homelessness, Housing and Health: Toronto—results in men having a 2.01 higher mortality rate and women a 1.79 higher rate than the average Canadian.

So what can we do? One way is to support the Centretown Emergency Food Centre with donations of packaged food or money. Another is to acknowledge the existence of these neighbours, and look into volunteer opportunities through the advice of the local community health centres.

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NEXT BUZZ

The next issue of *The Centretown BUZZ* will be published on Friday, December 11, 2020. The deadline for advertising bookings and editorial submissions for the following issue is Monday, November 30. We welcome articles on anything affecting the residents of Centretown! For more information, [email the editor](#) or call 613-565-6012. For information on advertising rates, go to [our advertising page](#).

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Nov 21, 2020

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FEATURED ARTICLE

NEWS, NOVEMBER 2020

re-Cycles needs a new home to make old bikes new

November 13, 2020



Alayne McGregor re-Cycles, Ottawa's not-for-profit volunteer-run bike recycling shop, needs a new home. The building in which the shop operates, at 473 Bronson at

Gladstone, has been sold, said re-Cycles President John Gibson. The shop's lease expires December 31, although...

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January 15, 2021
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