

## ***In The Tillsonburg News, February, 2008***

As mentioned last month, in celebration of the Multi-Service Centre's (MSC) 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary, we will be reviewing stories about the agency as featured in the pages of **The Tillsonburg News**. In so doing, we will try to link the stories to developments in our agency and community over the years.

Thirty years ago this month, headlines in **The Tillsonburg News** declared, "Multi-Service Centre Fund Drive Planned" (February 3, 1978). Given our agency has just successfully completed the annual Food & Farce fundraiser for Adult Basic Literacy (February 9, 2008), it is a fitting reminder that the need to raise funds for necessary community programming is a constant! We remain tremendously grateful to the donors and fundraising volunteers (including people like Hector Verhoeve, Fergie Jenkins – and so many others) who have assisted with this important charitable work. This legacy of support is featured on the MSC's donor wall in room D of The Livingston Centre.

While not operational until July, 1978, the February 3 article stated: "The Multi-Service Centre is moving rapidly towards the operational stage. A home base has been obtained, charter received, officers elected and a fundraising committee named to bring the long-planned centre into being. At a meeting Tuesday night, John Armstrong was named president of the group, with Frank Welsh as vice-president, Norma Jones as secretary and Ron Labelle as treasurer". Sadly, Norma passed away a few years ago but we still appreciate the support provided us by Ron, Frank (who remains on our Board of Directors) and John (who attended the most recent Food & Farce).

The article continued by naming the other inaugural Board members: Ian Linton, Muriel Casey, Father John Costello (of Flying Fathers fame!), Oscar Legein (who served on our Board for many years), Bill Pratt (who also attended the most recent Food & Farce) and Sharon Watkins. Besides Ron Labelle, members of the fundraising committee included: Andy Balazs, Ewart Ostrander, Red Anderson, Tom Logan, John McKenna, Grant Brown and Walter Burton – familiar names to many in Tillsonburg

At that February 1978 meeting an announcement was made regarding the first funding the Centre received: "a cheque for \$1,120.00 from the Secretary of State to assist in establishing Information Tillsonburg, which will operate from the Centre". It was noted that Chuck Lyons, Executive Director of Catholic Social Services London, would be assuming professional and administrative responsibility for the Centre during the start-up phase (it would be another year and a half before the MSC could hire an Executive Director). Chuck passed away many years ago but we were pleased to have his widow Kay, and other family members, attend our 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary party in 1998.

While the "3 years of organizing" for the Centre was also mentioned in the article, it was noted that the "big breakthrough" materialized in the Fall of 1977 when "Gerry Livingston offered the Livingston Holdings offices on Rolph St. at a nominal rental of \$1 per year." Gerry passed away in the late 80's but his widow Violet has remained a valued supporter over the years – celebrating her 92<sup>nd</sup> birthday this February. She remains in contact with us and conveyed that she and other family members attended the induction of Gerry into the University of Windsor's Sports Hall of Fame in the Autumn of 2007, something she wanted their many friends to know.

Once again, to everyone who has donated to or supported any of the fundraising initiatives of the MSC over the years, as a volunteer or donor, WE THANK YOU.

Maureen Vandenberghe MSC Communications & Development Coordinator

