

## Saving the Lady:

### Lady Evelyn among Schools Rallying to Save Alternative Program

The Ottawa-Carleton District School Board (OCDSB) is conducting a review of its elementary alternative program, an option currently available to Ottawa families alongside English/Core French and French Immersion programs. Alternative schools follow the Ontario curriculum while emphasizing values such as student-directed learning, multi-age groupings, anecdotal reporting and parental involvement. While a 2006 survey found that parents wanted to see progressive changes in the alternative program, students, parents, and alumni from schools such as Lady Evelyn, (Ottawa's first alternative school), are dismayed to discover that a focus of the current review seems to be on program closure. The very short time line (draft recommendations from OCDSB staff are due in busy mid-December just before the holiday break) and a telling absence of school visits as part of the review are most worrisome. Ironically, the threat of closure comes at a time when families are demanding more choice in primary education. There is also clear evidence that parents are dedicated to the program and students leave the alternative stream well-equipped to tackle high school. Proponents of the elementary alternative program can rally against the threat of closure with submissions of video testimonial at <http://pages.overlay.tv/asac/> and e-mails to [elementary\\_alternative\\_review@ocdsb.ca](mailto:elementary_alternative_review@ocdsb.ca). ■



## The In Community: Inclusion, Integration, and Independence



A lot has changed over the last fifty years around the Disabled Persons Community Resources (DPCR). To reflect its contemporary role and character, in June, 2009, DPCR changed its name to *The In Community*, inspired by its 50th anniversary theme: "Inclusion, Integration, and Independence." *The In Community* provides a strong, inclusive community where clients with disabilities can develop their independence, become fully integrated into society and reach their true potential. "Our former name did not reflect our organization's culture of inclusiveness or the way people with disabilities live and work in the community," said *The In Community* Executive Director Teena Tomlinson. "*The In Community* to us is more holistic; it is not just one building where we are delivering services. It is not simply a resource centre. *The In Community* is an organization that provides services in people's homes and in the community." For starters, *The In Community* offers comprehensive services to individual adults with complex physical challenges or barriers to participation and inclusion. Clients receive life skills training to help them on the road to independence. The organization has grown to be the largest supportive housing provider in Eastern Ontario, with 6 housing locations. "Seventy-two of those clients live in apartments, just as you or I would. They sign the lease with the property owner; they make their own lifestyle decisions," Tomlinson explains. "Our staff are their hands and feet... they go in and do what (our clients) can't physically do for themselves." *In* also offers innovative community programs. For example, with Support Groups/Community Education, clients and/or caregivers can share experiences and coping tips. *In Community's* Special Needs Equipment Exchange Service recycles equipment. And individuals or organizations looking to identify and eliminate barriers of existing or proposed facilities can seek advice from *In's* Barrier-Free Environment Services. Learn more at [www.theincommunity.ca](http://www.theincommunity.ca) ■

## Ottawa Rolls out the Pink Carpet for An Evening with Abigail

*An Evening with Abigail*, a fundraiser to support the fight against women's cancers, returned to Ottawa on October 7 and brought out an A-list crowd that included Laureen Harper, Amanda Forsyth (former *Abigail* honorary patron) and her husband Pinchas Zukerman. Three hundred guests joined *Abigail* honorary chair Janet Yale and *Abigail* honorary Patron Elizabeth Manley-Theobald for the fifth Evening with *Abigail*. The event raised \$150,000 for the Ottawa Regional Cancer Foundation, with a portion of the proceeds benefiting the Great Canadian Theatre Company. *Abigail*, the teddy bear mascot of the evening, was designed and created by David Greenberg as a symbol of hope for all women battling cancer. David and his wife Rochelle (a cancer survivor) founded *An Evening with Abigail* nine years ago. ■

