

# O-YA 2015 City of Ottawa Budget Pressures Request

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## The Osgoode Youth Association (O-YA) is doing amazing things in Osgoode Ward!

- O-YA is more popular than ever and enjoying lots of success. Our programs are innovative, full and enriching the communities of Osgoode Ward.
- O-YA has seen a 370% increase in participation over the last 5 years.
- Programs we're excited about include a FULL After School program and day camps, a busy teen drop in, Cooking 101, art workshops, Ski Bus, mental health and addictions programs for youth and a Social Enterprise called the Gallery b. youth café.
- O-YA is a youth centre that got it right. We are a nationally recognized organization that other communities look to as a model for how to run a successful youth centre.
- O-YA provides a unique and critical service for rural south Ottawa. NO OTHER ORGANIZATION DOES WHAT WE DO. O-YA is not only unique in rural Ottawa, but in the entire City of Ottawa. In fact, research demonstrates that O-YA is one of the standout youth centres in all of Canada. We have not only stood the test of time, but are thriving and growing at a rapid rate.

## Despite our success, O-YA is facing budget pressures

- The funding landscape for O-YA has changed
- Historically, O-YA has done a fantastic job of community fundraising. But, we are feeling a sense of 'donor fatigue' within Osgoode Ward. The level we once fundraised at is not sustainable.
- Funding O-YA has received in the past from the City of Ottawa (ie: one year Renewable Funding), the Provincial Government and United Way has been scaled back.
- In 2013, O-YA had a budget shortfall of \$15,381.91. Thankfully, O-YA had cash reserves in the form of a \$20,000 GIC which we were able to use to cover the shortfall.
- In 2014, O-YA anticipated a budget shortfall of almost \$30,000. However, due to staffing cutbacks, program trimming, planned increases in our own revenue streams and a Rural Community Building Grant O-YA was able to sustain operations.
- The increasing costs of operation have been challenging with not only stagnant, but decreasing revenues.
- **At current funding levels, O-YA is not sustainable.**

## O-YA is taking steps to become financially stable

- With the assistance of past Osgoode Ward Councillor Doug Thompson, and current Councillor George Darouze, O-YA is approaching several local businesses for corporate donations.
- O-YA has made staffing cutbacks, program cuts and added increases in our own revenue streams to balance our budget.
- O-YA has begun a grass-roots Community Cares donation program to solicit monthly donations from community members.

## **O-YA is making an official request to the City of Ottawa to have our Renewable Recreation Funding amount increased**

- O-YA is requesting an increase in the amount of Renewable Recreation Funding we receive from the City of Ottawa from our current level of \$10,824 annually (an amount that has only increased by \$824 since 2007) to \$80,000 annually.
- This increased funding will go towards both youth programs and the operational costs required to keep O-YA sustainable.

## **Why Should the City of Ottawa Increase O-YA's Funding?**

- If O-YA has to close, it will be a significant loss to Osgoode Ward – creating more work and costs for the City of Ottawa. O-YA is providing services for youth in rural south Ottawa that the City of Ottawa is not. City of Ottawa Osgoode Ward Program Manager Pat Daly has stated that he specifically does not program youth recreation in Osgoode because, “O-YA has that covered.” If O-YA were to close, the City would have to run at least some programs (such as After School and Summer Camps) at a much higher cost than O-YA can provide them for (even with the requested increase in our funding).
- O-YA is critically important to the community fabric and low youth crime rate in Osgoode Ward.
- If O-YA did not exist, there would be very few opportunities for positive and enriching ‘out of school’ social recreation for our youth
- In 2013, a Youth Summit Action Plan was developed by the City with data gathered at Mayor Watson’s Youth Summit. One of the Actions described in the Plan was to, “Create a youth-led committee to inform and sponsor the Youth Summit Action Plan.” One of O-YA’s Youth Workers was a member of this committee and reported back to O-YA that one of their recommendations was to increase RURAL youth engagement within the City of Ottawa. O-YA is a prime example of how this recommendation can be realized and expanded.
- Research supports our programming model. Research shows that, “students who consistently spend more than 3 consecutive hours on their own outside school hours have a higher risk of drug, alcohol use, stress, anger, depression and problem behaviours. O-YA eliminates that risk for many vulnerable rural youth.
- O-YA increases the collective impact of other Ottawa based community service agencies. Through strong partnerships with Rideauwood Addiction & Family Services, CHEO’s Youth Net, NROCRC, Pinecrest-Queensway Community Health Centre, CMHA and YSB to name a few, O-YA is changing lives in rural south Ottawa and providing a vehicle to provide crucial mental health and addiction services to youth.