**Giant quilt to circle City Hall on Sept. 29**

**“Stitching Our Social Safety Net” brings poverty issues to municipal election**

Anti-poverty activists will bring their concerns to candidates in the upcoming municipal election at a media conference and unveiling of a giant quilt at City Hall at noon on Sept. 29.

“So often, poverty issues are missed, ignored or minimized by our elected officials,” said spokesperson Christine Gagné.

“We want to give candidates an opportunity to listen to our concerns and let us know how they plan to approach issues related to poverty and mental health.”

The group says it is bringing “the voices of the unheard, unknown or dismissed” to City Hall.

“Stitching our Social Safety Net” is comprised of Ottawa residents and community groups, assisted by the Canadian Mental Health Association Ottawa (CMHA) and Poverty Elimination Mental Health Advocates (PEMHA).

Members worked all summer to create quilt pieces to be added to a quilt that Houselink/The Dream Team in Toronto used in the lead-up to the last provincial election.

“The people involved in the project are using the quilt to make a statement on the eroding safety net,” said Gagne. Things of concern include the delayed increase in the Ontario Child Benefit, reduced spending on subsidized housing, the end of the Community Start-up and Maintenance Benefit for social benefits recipients, and the loss of federal funding of the Community Access Program that helps support Community Access that provides free or low-cost internet access to the public through libraries. Unemployment is also on the rise in Ottawa-Gatineau.

The media conference will include remarks by Mayor Jim Watson, Councillor Diane Holmes, a long-time supporter of the project, and representatives from Dream Team and Houselink. A number of candidates have indicated that they plan to attend.

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What: Giant quilt unveiling, presentation on poverty issues in upcoming election

Where: Jean Piggot Hall, Ottawa City Hall, 110 Laurier Avenue West, Ottawa, ON K1P 1J1

When: Monday, Sept. 29, 2014 at 12:00 noon.

For further information or to request an interview, contact:

Christine Gagne

Community Mental Health Consultant

Canadian Mental Health Association Ottawa

613-737-7791 ext. 279

[cgagne@cmhaottawa.ca](mailto:cgagne@cmhaottawa.ca)