

# 10.1

**Report to / Rapport au:**

**Ottawa Public Library Board  
Conseil d'administration de la Bibliothèque publique d'Ottawa**

**May 2, 2024 / 2 mai 2024**

**Submitted by / Soumis par:**

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**File Number/Numéro du dossier: OPLB-2024-0502-10.1**

**SUBJECT: Order of Friendship Nomination – Centre 507**

**OBJET: Nomination de l'Ordre de l'amitié – Centre 507**

## **REPORT RECOMMENDATION**

**That the Ottawa Public Library (OPL) Board approve Centre 507 for the Order of Friendship, in recognition of the measurable impact of their outreach worker pilot program with OPL in 2023-2024.**

## **RECOMMANDATION DU RAPPORT**

**Que le Conseil d'administration de la Bibliothèque publique d'Ottawa (BPO) approuve la nomination de Centre 507 pour le prix de l'Ordre de l'amitié, en reconnaissance de l'impact mesurable du programme pilote avec la BPO et les travailleurs de proximité en 2023-2024.**

## **BACKGROUND**

As per Board policy 019 OPLB – Order of Friendship, the Ottawa Public Library (OPL) Board recognizes exceptional contributions made to OPL by individuals, groups, and / or institutions. The Order of Friendship recognizes contributions that further OPL's

mission and help to improve its ability to deliver services to the community and considers the impact and the public benefit of the contribution.

The OPL Board Order of Friendship is awarded in the second and fourth years of the term, upon nomination by trustees. This nomination is supported by the Governance Ad hoc Committee, consisting of Trustees Bradley and Slack, and Chair Luloff (ex-officio), who review nominations and provide recommendations to the Board. The purpose of this report is to nominate Centre 507 for consideration for the Order of Friendship in 2024.

## **DISCUSSION**

Centre 507, led by Richard Leblanc, Executive Director, is an adult drop-in centre operating in Centretown for more than 40 years, providing support to clients every day of the year. Centre 507 is Ottawa's only overnight drop-in centre, operating 21 hours a day, providing healthy meals, a welcoming atmosphere, and access to resources in collaboration with neighbourhood partners and almost 100 volunteers. Most Centre 507 clients live in Centretown, and approximately 60 percent rely on the disability program. Centre 507 receives 70,000 visits a year and is an active participant in many community events.

Centre 507 is nominated for the OPL Board Order of Friendship for the pilot project developed with OPL and operating at Main and Sunnyside branches to aid members of vulnerable communities. This project included:

- a) Offering OPL clients assistance with accessing community services for food, housing, health, identification, and information regarding Ontario Works and the Ontario Support Program;
- b) Additional collaborative volunteer services, including assistance with tax matters, assistance completing forms, and connections to recreational activities.

The pilot project ran from October 2023 to January 2024, and included two Centre 507 employees operating out of the Main and Sunnyside branches. These employees welcomed clients near the entrances to the branches, conducted walk-throughs to engage with clients within, and offered assistance and referrals to OPL clients as needed based on informal conversations. Some examples of successful interactions include: Centre 507 staff assisting a client complete several years' worth of income tax forms, assisting a client to complete their application for a pardon, assisting a client with accessing urgent mental health resources. Their presence at both branches made a

difference and provided welcome support for both clients and OPL staff. Centre 507 is hoping to secure funding to resume this project at OPL in the future.

Aligned with OPL's commitment to providing a safe working environment for employees, and to strengthening community relationships, the partnership with Centre 507 further enriches the Library's connection with a valued social service agency. Considering the June 2023 report to the Board regarding safety and security (OPLB-2023-0613-10.1), this collaboration between OPL and Centre 507 helps provide client supports in a welcoming space and contributes to a positive environment for all clients and visitors.

### **CONSULTATION**

Four nominations were received, including from trustees and based on staff suggestions. The members of the Governance Ad hoc Committee discussed the nominations and support the recommendation outlined in this report.

### **ACCESSIBILITY IMPACTS**

Ottawa Public Library complies with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, (2005)* in its operations. There are no accessibility impacts associated with the recommendations in this report.

### **BOARD PRIORITIES**

This aligns with the OPL Board Strategic Directions and Priorities, notably the values of community, inclusion, and literacy, and the priority to strengthen community relationships and advocacy.

### **BUSINESS ANALYSIS IMPLICATIONS**

There are no direct business analysis impacts associated with approving the recommendations in this report.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Costs associated with Order of Friendship recognition are included in the annual operating budget.

### **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no legal impediments to approving the recommendations in this report.

## **INDIGENOUS AND GENDER EQUITY IMPLICATIONS**

Services provided by Centre 507 are open to all regardless of ethnicity, disability, economic status, gender, nationality, race, sexual orientation, or transgender status.

## **RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

There are no risk management implications associated with approving the recommendations in this report.

## **TECHNOLOGY IMPLICATIONS**

There are no technology implications associated with approving the recommendations in this report.

## **DISPOSITION**

Upon approval of this report, staff will:

1. Notify Centre 507 of the Board's decision;
2. Arrange for the presentation of the Order of Friendship to the recipient(s); and,
3. Update the Order of Friendship page on the OPL website.