



Community Safety Awards 2011

Winner profile: Sylvie Manser, Director of the Community House

Community Safety Leader Award

We all know that children learn what they live. That's especially true for Sylvie Manser. Growing up in the social housing neighbourhood of Banff-Ledbury, Sylvie felt the influence of friends, neighbours and strangers who made her community a better place by getting involved.

At age 15, she too wanted to give back. She started volunteering for the Banff Avenue Community House. She learned that community-based programs and services can be a powerful tool for change. Watching her neighbourhood transform—and being a part of it—transformed Sylvie.

Twenty years later, Sylvie is a driving force for change and leadership in her community. As Director of the Community House, she works closely with local residents, Ottawa Community Housing, the Ottawa Police Service, the City and other partners on crime prevention and community safety initiatives. She says these important partnerships help empower residents. By working together, they share their ideas, opinions and concerns. More importantly, they focus on doing something about the community's problems, not just talking about them.

Sylvie's passionate belief that “nobody should live with fear” has shaped her life's work. She believes in offering hope and creating a greater sense of security through community support—giving people the opportunity to aspire to reach their goals and become successful.

With the help of community partners, Sylvie has implemented homework clubs, youth groups, recreational programs, community dinners, cooking lessons, and information sessions. The Banff Avenue Community House also offers a preschool program, clothing cupboard and post-secondary scholarships to promising students.

Today, Banff-Ledbury is a changed place. Residents are engaged. They're proud. And they're helping to drive positive change. As for Sylvie? She has no intention of slowing down. “It's who I am, who I aspire to be. When you give children, youth, adults and victims hope and opportunity, then change happens.”

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