Rotary Club of West Ottawa

Family and Community Services Award

Conferred upon Storybook Ottawa on June 17, 2025

In 2011, Shaun and Susan Hopkins decided to buy a book for every child at St. Anthony Catholic School in Ottawa because of their close family connection to the institution, which spans over 100 years. St. Anthony is located in the Little Italy neighbourhood of Ottawa. The majority of students at the school are from families that have immigrated to Canada and cannot afford to buy books for their children.

Building on their success at St. Anthony School, Shaun and Susan created StoryBook Ottawa to expand their book-giving efforts to other elementary schools in need in Ottawa's four English and French school boards.

Established in March of 2021, StoryBook Ottawa / Livre de Contes Ottawa Inc., is a not-for-profit corporation with the stated purpose, "To advance education by providing books to students attending publicly-funded English and French elementary schools in low-income Ottawa neighbourhoods."

In the few years since it was founded, StoryBook Ottawa has delivered thousands of books to Ottawa children. In their first year, they partnered with 5 elementary schools. The program has steadily grown and by the 2023-24 school year, they delivered books to 2,281 students in 11 elementary schools. Most of the children in their partner schools receive their very first book from StoryBook Ottawa. For the StoryBook organization, their reward is witnessing the excitement and joy experienced by the children when they receive their very own book.

By giving children from low-income neighbourhoods a book of their choice, StoryBook Ottawa has helped schools to:

- improve reading skills,
- foster a love of reading,
- increase the frequency of reading at home,
- enable children to share books and stories with their family and friends,
- improve literacy skills of their family members,
- create a school culture of reading,
- improve education quality and accountability scores.

StoryBook Ottawa is operated entirely by skilled volunteers, many of whom serve on it's Board of Directors. They welcome contributions and donations and partner with a growing group of local businesses and community service organizations including our own Rotary Club of West Ottawa.

StoryBook Ottawa provides a wonderful contribution to literacy in our community. We recognize their efforts and overwhelming success. We want to express our appreciation to the organization, to founders Shaun and Susan Hopkins, and to all the dedicated volunteers for their generosity, outstanding service and for sharing their love of books and reading with so many.

On behalf of StoryBook Ottawa, we ask Shaun Hopkins to come forward to accept the Family and Community Service Award.

Family and Community Service Award

Upon approval of the Club's Board of Directors the awardee is presented with a certificate from Rotary International and the award citation.

For organizations or individuals not related to a Club member:

- The nominee must have provided outstanding service to families, neighbourhoods or local communities in the National Capital Region.

For members of a West Ottawa Rotarian's family the nominee must have:

- Provided outstanding service to families, neighbourhoods or local communities in the National Capital Region; or
- Made a significant contribution to the work of the Rotary Club of West Ottawa.