



Walker House is an Adult Recreation Centre that has been in operation since the late 1980's.

# A HOUSE FULL OF ACTIVITIES

By: Joan Rupert-Barkley

If you find you have a lot of time on your hands and you are looking for something fun to do, with good company and good food, you do not have to look any further than Walker House, the Adult Recreation Centre in Prescott.

This two-storey house was once the home of James Cowan Walker. He was the Founder and President of Hathaway of Canada, President of Warnaco of Canada Limited, and Chairman and CEO of the parent company, Warnaco Inc. Mr. Walker lived in Prescott for many years and passed away in 1983.

According to Susan Vallom, Program Director at Walker House, some of the members that grew up in Prescott remember playing with Mr. Walker's daughter at the house.

In a conversation with Sandra Lawn before his death, Mr. Walker decided he wanted to gift the house to the town.

On September 25, 1986, Walker House was gifted to the town by Warnaco of Canada

Limited. The one stipulation stated, that the house was to be used as a centre for the education, entertainment and betterment of Prescott's senior citizens. The Adult Recreation Centre was then named in honour of James Walker.

A framed picture of Walker, along with a brief history of his achievements, hangs in the entrance of the house.

In the early years, several senior citizens groups took on the task of running the Centre. At this time, several items, such as the piano and pool table were donated.

Susan Vallom has been the Program Director at Walker House for eight years. She has indicated that currently there are approximately 210 – 220 members, 90% of them are females.

"There is a great cross-section of people who are members. People from all walks of life and from all throughout the town," commented Vallom.

The cost to join Walker House is \$15.00 a

year. If you live out of town, you pay the \$15.00 membership fee to Walker House and an additional \$25.00 user fee that is remitted to the town.

There are many activities to enjoy, from crafts, to cards, to sports. There is always something going on at Walker House, practically every day of the week. Vallom remarked, "there are four activity rooms in the house. Upstairs there is the library and activity room, with rows and rows of books and games that line the beautiful bookshelves, which someone donated to our library and a volunteer comes in every week to shelve the books." It is this quiet volunteer participation that makes Walker House such a success.

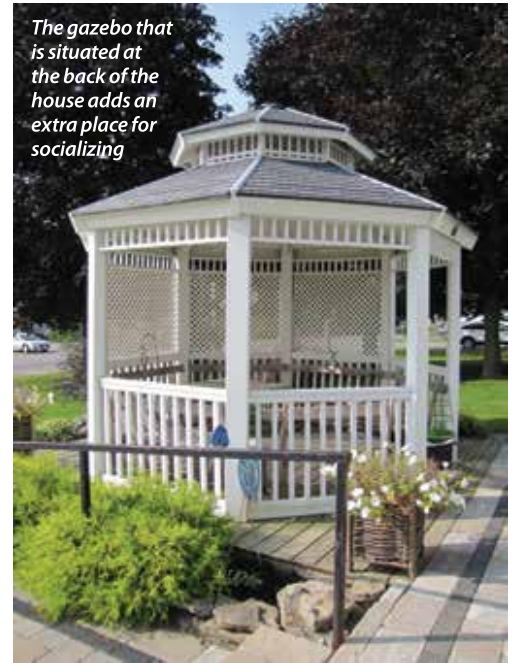
There is also a small sitting area upstairs with comfy chairs. This area is used for one on one consultations or just a place to relax, read a book or enjoy some quiet time.

The main room downstairs is where most of the crafts are done. Members gather to work on their latest projects of bunka, Swedish weaving, knitting or crocheting. Games of bridge, scrabble, euchre and cribbage take place in this room as well. This is also where the monthly membership Luncheons, and the Dinner and a Movie are held.

Vallom commented that Dinner and a Movie night is always a popular event. However, they have been unable to have them for about six months, due to the closure of



*The Saturday morning crafters get together to share friendships, tips on crafts and coffee.*



*The gazebo that is situated at the back of the house adds an extra place for socializing*

most video stores in the area, making it impossible to rent current releases. Vallom was happy to report that she can now rent current releases digitally, for 48 hours, so Dinner and a Movie night is back on the schedule.

Downstairs is the man cave complete with a pool table, dart boards, shuffle board and poker table. A nearby town storage building has recently been transformed into a workshop for the Walker House members. Recently, both men and women, created Adirondack chairs. Vallom has many more ideas for future projects.

For people who want to get some exercise, Walker House also offers weekly yoga classes and walking groups.

Although Walker House has received many donations for their activities, the members are no strangers to donating to worthwhile causes themselves. Over the years, the group has made lap quilts for Chernobyl, cotton hats for Cancer Centres, dishcloths for Haiti after the earthquake, and Pneumonia vests for patients, which have been sent all over the world. This group was busy creating 150 warm items (hats, toques, socks and mittens) in celebration of Canada's 150th in 2017. These items will be donated to churches, schools and food banks in the area.

With such a variety of activities at the Adult Recreation Centre, you might wonder where all the ideas come from. One idea came from a member who was interested in being part of a drumming circle. She mentioned the idea to Vallom, who found a grant to fund a whole summer series of native crafts.



*The library shelves are loaded with books and puzzles that are available to all members to sign out.*

During this series, the group made raw hide drums, moccasins, and baskets out of pine needles. At the end of the series, Vallom brought someone in to lead a drumming circle. Members formed a circle, sang and enjoyed an afternoon of sharing.

Not all activities occur at Walker House. Bus trips to shop, visit museums, or attend special performances or sporting events, is a popular and regular outing for members as well.

Volunteers help keep the flower and vegetable gardens around the house flourishing. Vallom indicated that a watering

calendar helps keep this task on schedule and everyone reaps in the rewards from the vegetable garden. The white octagon gazebo adds the final touch of class to the beautifully landscaped backyard, where members can enjoy sunshine as well as friendship.

For more information about Walker House call 613-925-5300, check out their website @ [www.walkerhouseprescott.com](http://www.walkerhouseprescott.com) email: [walkerhouse@prescott.ca](mailto:walkerhouse@prescott.ca) or visit at 623 King Street West in Prescott, ON.