

# NEWS RELEASE

Wilfrid Laurier  
University



## **Laurier faculty of social work formally opens new Kitchener facility and celebrates faculty's 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary**

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WATERLOO – Laurier's Lyle S. Hallman Faculty of Social Work (FSW) formally opened its new Kitchener facility and commemorated the FSW's 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary at celebration events held on Thursday, September 28.

The public open house and anniversary reception for FSW alumni marked the end of events held throughout the month to celebrate the faculty's new home in the former St. Jerome's high school in downtown Kitchener. Other events included student orientations, a donor/dignitary reception to celebrate the collaborative partnerships that made the facility possible, and a reception to honour former dean Luke Fusco.

Fusco, who was instrumental in the birth of the new facility, joined new FSW dean Lesley Cooper and Sue Horton, Laurier's vice-president: academic, on Thursday to cut the ceremonial ribbon that symbolically opened the doors of the FSW to its new community.

"The city and the university both had a vision for this facility," explained Cooper. "So did our donors. They were committed to doing what social work does best: working with people and working within a community."

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“This event signifies the beginning of a new chapter for the faculty of social work, and allows us to celebrate the 40 years of success that brought us to where we are today,” continued Cooper.

More than 3,200 FSW alumni have contributed to that success in the past four decades. Many maintain ties to the school through their positions at local agencies. Thursday’s anniversary reception gave alumni a unique chance to look both to the past and the future of the faculty; a view that will be captured by placing a time capsule in the new facility in the coming months.

Alumni and the public alike enjoyed the performance of Jean Becker, elder-in-residence, and the Mino Oday N’gamowak Kwewak (good-hearted women singers), who opened the celebrations. The performance highlighted the FSW’s new master of social work (MSW) aboriginal program, which incorporates a unique circle room at the new facility.

On September 25, Laurier received a City of Kitchener Mike Wagner heritage award for outstanding achievement in refurbishing the original 1907 building that was home to St. Jerome’s high school. The award recognizes local organizations that have made an important contribution to the conservation and importance of the city’s cultural heritage resources.

The refurbished building houses seven classrooms, two computer labs, a 2,000 square foot library, an interview-viewing room, a large conference/lecture hall, community meeting space, student lounges, a spiritual room and a café.

Since 1966, Laurier’s faculty of social work has been considered one of Canada’s best graduate schools for social work professionals. The Lyle S. Hallman Faculty of Social Work offers full- and part-time MSW programs, as well as a PhD program. The school welcomed 128 new MSW students this year, including its first intake of 18 students from across Canada into its new aboriginal program.