

Ottawa South EMC

Eyes on Vanier takes new track

Posted May 31, 2012 By [Michelle Nash](#)

EMC community - After years of picking up garbage or tackling crime, a community-led initiative in Vanier will spend this summer promoting the neighbourhood.

The Eyes on Vanier walking tours began five years ago as an anti-drug and prostitute and cleanup initiative organized by Crime Prevention Ottawa and run by residents. The walks focused on cleaning up the streets, but were also about making new friends, catching up with old ones and making new connections in the neighbourhood.

Marguerite Beaulieu, co-chairwoman of Vanier Beautification, said these social aspects will become the number one priority of the walks as a way to get to know the neighbourhood better.

"These walks will be very interesting," Beaulieu said. "It will be social, all about getting to know your neighbours and getting to know your community."

The announcement was made at a meeting of the Vanier Beautification group on May 15.

"What happened was when we started off, it was really dirty and there were about 25 residents at the begging, armed to clean up the streets," Beaulieu said. "Now, there are about five or so who come out and there just isn't the same amount of garbage to clean any more."

The new goal will to organize special event walks or themed walks. The garbage battle is not entirely over, she said, but more walks will be about highlighting Vanier's history and architectural or organizing evenings out for various residents in the neighbourhood.

"Maybe there will be a toddler and tot walk or a lets go for a beer walk but the main thing is it is not always going to be about picking up garbage," Beaulieu said.

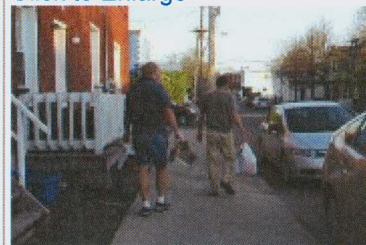
A Jane's Walk event held in Vanier over the May 5 weekend was credited for shifting the group's thoughts on the summer walks.

With a focus on historical homes, the sugar bush in Richelieu Park, the cenotaph on Hannah Street and briefings on the city's 311 and 911 services and graffiti, the committee was pleased with the success of the weekend.

"It was very informative," Beaulieu said. "We even had people from Rockcliffe and Orleans came out to hear about Vanier."

Beaulieu said more information on how and when these new walks will start is still under discussion, but interested participants or organizers in Vanier can contact the committee at vanierbeautification@gmail.com.

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Over the years, Vanier residents participated in walking tours focused on cleaning up the streets. Now in their fifth year, the group has less garbage to clean and more time to dedicate to promoting the neighbourhood.