

## Grassroots Festival moves to Old Ottawa South

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The Ottawa Grassroots Festival is moving to Old Ottawa South.

The festival has spent the past four years at the Montgomery branch of the Royal Canadian Legion on Kent Street, but will be heading south in 2016. The event, which has attracted increasingly larger crowds each year, has outgrown its original venue and will take place at the Southminster United Church, at 15 Aylmer Ave. as of next year.

"We were just on the verge of having to turn people away at several concerts this year," said festival producer Bob Nesbitt.

"We had to stop selling tickets about three days before the Connie Kaldor concert."

The old location's maximum capacity is 200 people, compared to 550 at the festival's new home.

The Grassroots Festival, which is volunteer run, was first held in 2012 and has since attracted folk, bluegrass and roots musicians from across Canada. Originally just a one-day event, the festival has added an extra day of concerts and activities every year since then.

Nesbitt said the Old Ottawa South church has more available rooms so that the festival can have separate spaces for musicians, volunteers and instrument lock up. The festival had to try to squeeze multiple functions into one small room at the Legion.

In addition to the increased capacity, Nesbitt said there is a large group of residents in Old Ottawa South and the Glebe who are interested in folk music.

Part of the reasoning behind the move to Old Ottawa South was that the festival would be just down the street from the now defunct Ottawa Folklore Centre, which recently closed after 38 years in business.

Many organizers, volunteers and patrons of the festival had either purchased instruments or taken lessons at the centre, and Nesbitt said it would only be fitting for the event to be nearby.

"It's a blow and it's very sad," Nesbitt said.

"It would have been a benefit to the festival and folklore centre, but just because it folded, it doesn't change the concept of the move at all."

Nesbitt said he is sad to leave the Legion behind, but is looking forward to forging a new relationship with the Southminster United Church.

"We will miss our friends at the OFC and the Montgomery Legion," he said. "The Centre and the Legion have been strong supporters of the Ottawa Grassroots Festival, from the very beginning. We hope that they will continue to be involved. They will always be welcome at the festival."



*Kristine St. Pierre is one of many musicians who have performed at the Ottawa Grassroots Festival over the years. The festival is set to ditch its old location at the Montgomery branch of the Royal Canadian Legion and move to the Southminster United Church in Old Ottawa South.*