

## Centraide does it again

It has been another record-breaking campaign for Centraide of Greater Montreal. Donations this year have soared to \$54,004,552. That is \$2.5 million more than the record set in 2006 and well above the 2007 campaign goal of \$53 million.

“Thank you to the 175,000 donors who placed their confidence in us and the 22,000 volunteers for their colossal support,” says **Michèle Thibodeau-Deguire**, president and executive director. “Thanks to the thousands of companies and their generous employees, the trade unions and the general public, the 360 community agencies that we support will be able to continue helping 500,000 vulnerable people in Greater Montreal.”

## Committee to monitor access efforts

After going through a laborious process of revision and approval, Quebec’s access programs for English-language services are set to be decreed by Cabinet. The next big challenge is their implementation. That is where the provincial committee for the delivery of English-language health and social services intends to play a very important role.

“We’ll be following up on their implementation in a very structured way,” explains **Ron McNeil**, committee secretary. “Healthcare reforms call for a link between the access programs and the clinical projects that all the local CSSSs are developing. As those projects evolve, the access programs will be progressively plugged into regular healthcare planning. This is a major shift from past practice.

“The object of the current reform is to ensure that the client doesn’t have to navigate the system,” says McNeil. “The system must be structured to help navigate the client. Because this change will affect delivery of services to anglophones, we’ll be monitoring how well they are being accommodated. And we’d especially like to see an evaluation of their satisfaction for the services they receive.”

## Participating in public health planning

The Community Health and Social Services Network (CHSSN) has launched a new program designed to involve English-speaking Quebecers in formulating public health strategy. Nine regional community networks have been selected to work with their public institutions to see that the anglophone communities’ priorities are incorporated into future healthcare planning and programs. With a grant of \$380,000 from the Public Health Agency of Canada, the CHSSN is managing the resources and providing backup support. The local community groups established their own objectives.

“Through previous CHSSN projects,” explains **Jim Carter**, program and policy consultant, “these local organizations already have crucial data on the state of their communities and first hand knowledge of what priorities need to be addressed. Meeting with public health authorities, and sharing that knowledge with them, provides a vital entrée into the real planning process.”

It is a timely move. Quebec is working on a new 10-year public health plan as part of its ongoing reform. At the same time, the federal government is developing a new public health orientation for Canada. “We’ve seized this opportunity to connect anglophone communities into that process,” Carter affirms. For further information: [www.chssn.org](http://www.chssn.org).

## Healthcare hotlines on hand for anglos

English-speaking Quebecers will soon have two health information call-in networks at their disposal. Info-Santé has undergone a major overhaul to improve its efficiency, especially to anglophones, long under-users of the system. The Community Health and Social Services Network (CHSSN), having contributed to translation of material and English training of responders, is supporting a major publicity campaign to promote Info-Santé among anglophones. The CHSSN is also funding English materials for Info-Social, a new network that will respond to queries on social services issues.

## Foster expanding services

Foster Pavilion has signed an agreement with the Sir Wilfred Laurier School Board to provide addiction treatment services onsite to anglophone youth in the Chomedey-Laval area. They previously had to travel to Foster's N.D.G. facility, often a hindrance to their compliance. Foster staff also now has access to office space in the local CSSS to meet with teens and their families. Discussions are also under way to expand services to include adults.

Foster has also been mandated to oversee anglophone youth under the Montreal Health and Social Services Agency's new youth access mechanism. "This is a new procedure to make sure that kids don't fall between the cracks," says **John Topp**, executive director. "We do the evaluation, orient them to the appropriate level of care, and follow them through the system."

There is, however, an important need as yet unmet. "We provide the outpatient rehabilitation services for anglophone youth," says Topp, "and Portage provides long-term residential care. But there is no short-term residential service for them. We're lobbying very hard to make that happen."

## St. Margaret's launches palliative care

A new palliative care program was inaugurated at St. Margaret's Home on December 11. Care will be provided by a specially trained multi-disciplinary team encompassing physicians, nurses, nurses' aides, social workers, therapists, dieticians, recreational staff and volunteers. In addition to specialized physical care, the program is designed to respond to residents' cultural and spiritual needs.

A number of rooms have been specially furnished and equipped – with amenities ranging from sofa beds to plasma televisions – to provide a pleasant and homey environment for residents and family members. The new program was made possible by a multi-year funding commitment from the R. Howard Webster Foundation.

## Batshaw kids show kindness

Sixty-five youngsters having to enter foster homes are enjoying a kind gesture from another group of youth in care. Boys and girls at the Prévost and Dorval campuses of Batshaw Youth and Family Centres have filled pillowcases with toys, teddy bears, toothbrushes, books and soap to be given to children on their first night in a foster home. Called Sleep Tight, it is a project that stems from Batshaw's Character Education program.

"An important aim of that program is to stimulate sensitivity towards others," says **Robert Calame**, coordinator, Anger Replacement Training services. "When we asked our kids' permission to organize the pillowcase project, they responded positively. In the end, they were even more enthusiastic and very, very proud of what they'd done."

Batshaw staff solicited the items for stuffing, while the young people decorated the pillowcases with tie-dyed designs and personal messages. "Their creativity was fabulous," says Calame. "And we let them know it. So they saw that we care for them and could recognize them for their generosity. That we're not there just to correct them."

## Dawson gets a facelift

Dawson Community Centre in Verdun was given a beauty treatment in October when some 300 volunteers descended on the facility to paint and renovate the main floor, and to build workstations for 40 donated computers. They were all employees of several Montreal firms who are members of the Corporate Council of Volunteer Canada.

"It was such a wonderful gesture," says **Line St-Amour**, executive director, "and it's one that will have lasting effects. It provided much needed improvements to our facility – our members and staff are really happy about that. It also offered these volunteers a chance to see that they could make a difference. We hope that it nudges more of them to volunteer in their own communities."

## Positive news from Camp Positive

Camp Positive, Quebec's only summer holiday program dedicated to people with HIV/AIDS, is celebrating its 15th anniversary this year. Sponsored by CCS, the outing takes place at the agency's Camp Kinkora at St.-Adolphe-de-Howard in the Laurentians. This year over 100 participants from across the province enjoyed a week of respite and recreation at the camp.

"Many of these people live a very challenging existence," says **Louise Sansregret**, CCS director of development and government relations. "We see the camp helping to break their isolation and to restore their self-esteem. They can join an active support network, they have access to the most up-to-date information on their affliction, and they can participate in a variety of activities or just relax in the natural environment."

One measure of the camp's success is that the planning and organizing of the week-long program is now being done by the participants themselves. "A committee has already started preparing for next season," says Sansregret. "They're so motivated and generous with their time. There's actually a new community evolving from the camp, and I find this really fabulous."

CCS has partnered with other community groups working with HIV/AIDS sufferers to maintain Camp Positive. Centraide of Greater Montreal tops the list of donors. For further information: 514 937 5351.

## St. Mary's reaches out to the hood

A new family medicine group, to be set up at St. Mary's Hospital Centre, will also have two satellite facilities in the community. One will be on Côte-des-Neiges Road, the other on Notre Dame St. in St-Henri. The public will have access to a complete range of services, with or without appointment, as well as home visits when necessary. The centres will have extended opening hours and provide continuing care to people with specific health problems.

## New direction for volunteer groups

**Rosemary Byrne**, head of volunteer services at St. Mary's Hospital Centre, has recently been named president of the Réseau de l'action bénévole du Québec (RABQ). This network is an association of 16 provincial organizations representing a number of different sectors, including volunteer bureaus, health and social services, sports, seniors, and the anglophone community. Created in 2001, it was linked to the Canada Volunteerism Initiative (CVI) designed by Volunteer Canada.

"Unfortunately, CVI is a thing of the past," says Byrne. "Since the Harper government cut off all funding last year, Volunteer Canada has had to undergo a massive restructuring and directional change. It also had to stop providing \$200,000 to the RABQ for its operations. But I'm very pleased to say that the provincial government has stepped in to replace that grant, and has added an equal one of its own, to help us support capacity-building projects."

There is obviously a need for that support. This year, the RABQ has received over 153 applications for grants from its member-organizations and community groups. "They asking for over a million dollars," says Byrne. "We only have \$200,000 to distribute, so it was rather overwhelming."

Byrne sees the RABQ at a crossroad. "We have a new president and a new executive director, and we'll be developing a new strategy for the network," Byrne affirms. "At the same time, we're going to redefine our membership. That's a huge undertaking, but it will really benefit the volunteer sector in the long term." For further information: 514 734 2643.

## Quebec volunteer numbers not good

A national poll conducted in November reveals that only 38 percent of Quebecers donate their time to volunteerism compared with 51 percent in the rest of Canada. It also reports that half of Quebecers over the age of 15 have never been involved with charitable work.

## QCGN wants more services for seniors

The Quebec Community Groups Network (QCGN) has called upon the government to develop a public policy to protect health and social services for English-speaking seniors. In a brief presented to the province's consultative commission on seniors in November, the QCGN asked for commitments in four basic areas: targeted funding for English-speaking seniors; better access to healthcare information in English; creation of a province-wide coalition for English-language groups representing seniors; and an independent commissioner of seniors' welfare, much like an auditor-general.

## Homeless shelters hoping for more

Montreal's three largest homeless shelters are still seriously lacking sufficient funding despite a recent million-dollar grant from the Quebec government. The shelters had been asking for three times that amount. While the new money does raise the per-bed, per-night allotment from \$5 to \$24, it pales beside the \$60 available to Toronto shelters.

"Minister Couillard has promised more funding in the next budget," says **James Hughes**, executive director of the Old Brewery Mission. "And we're pleased that he's set up a working group on the issue headed by his parliamentary assistant **Russell Copeman**. So we're still hopeful."

## Encyclopedic help for child care a first

A new, virtual, encyclopedia on early child development is now available free of charge on the Internet. Nearly 300 authors from 11 countries have contributed articles covering 30 topics related to the psychosocial development of the child, from conception to the age of five.

The encyclopedia is designed for easy access by parents, educators, public policy makers and service planners. It was funded by the Public Health Agency of Canada and Fondation André et Lucie Chagnon. It is available at [www.childencyclopedia.com](http://www.childencyclopedia.com).

## In brief

Members of the new Montreal regional committee for access programs to English-language health and social services are: **Sara Saber-Freedman**, president; **Line Bertrand**; **Zenny Bryniawsky**; **Dora Cesta**; **Estelle Hoppmeyer**; **Diane Sasson**; **Rosemary Steinberg**; **Jim Tremain**; **Germain Tullio**; **Michael Udy**; and **Heather Clarke**, secretary.

**Rosemary Byrne** was named Quebec representative on the board of Volunteer Canada.

**Russell Copeman** MNA has been appointed parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health and Social Services.

**Kim Parker**, of Batshaw Youth and Family Services, received the 2007 Ruth and Manny Batshaw Award of Excellence.

**Donna Riley** has been appointed executive director of The Miriam Homes.

**Diane Tessier** is president of the Women's Centre of Montreal.

NOVA Montreal (previously V.O.N.) has moved to 310 Victoria Avenue, Suite 304, Westmount H3Z 2M9. Telephone: 514 866 6801.

The Salvation Army has moved its offices to 1655 Richardson Street, Montreal H3K 3J7. Telephone: 514 288 2848.

The Good Shepherd Community Centre has been re-named the St. Antoine Community Centre.

Almage Community Centre is celebrating its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year.

The editor welcomes story ideas: 514 937 4309

Legal deposit:

National Library of Canada ISSN 1709 092X

Bibliothèque nationale du Québec