

Grace Dart relocation rebuffed

Plans by the Grace Dart Extended Care Centre (GDECC) to move its services to the West Island have suffered a setback. The venerable long-term care facility has been planning for several years to relocate its residents from two century-old buildings in the East End to more modern and efficient quarters. In December 2009, the Ministry of Health and Social Services authorized the GDECC to negotiate purchase of the Vivalis Centre, and adjacent land on which to build a second building, in Pointe-Claire. After months of complicated discussion, the owner rejected the Grace Dart purchase offer and withdrew from negotiations.

There is, however, a possible alternative. Quebec has long been interested in the federally-owned St. Anne's Veterans Hospital in Ste-Anne-de-Bellevue. Because of its ever-diminishing number of potential patients, that facility has a sizeable amount of unused capacity. Integrating it into the provincial health system would provide an additional source of much needed beds. That is an option to be considered for the GDECC, dependent upon a federal/provincial agreement to transfer ownership.

Government giving for caregivers

The Ministry for Seniors has begun its \$200 million, 10-year program of providing financial support to organizations assisting caregivers of the elderly. The new subsidies, which cover six months of operating costs, are based on the number of seniors in each region. Organizations selected from Montreal will be announced in September.

Access plans readied

Montreal's healthcare establishments presented their programs for access to English-language services to the regional board of the Health and Social Services Agency on June 14. The approved plans, after review by the provincial access committee, and approval by the Ministry, will be submitted for Cabinet decree.

Black program gets major boost

In light of its strong previous success, the African Canadian Development and Prevention Network (ACDPN) has received a \$1.1 million grant from the National Crime Prevention Centre to expand its crime prevention program for high-risk Black youth. The focus of this program is on strengthening Black families through specific training sessions for both parents and children. Communication skills and interpersonal relationships are bolstered and progress monitored by professional social workers.

The first of its kind in Canada, the program was introduced in four Black communities among over 350 families in Montreal six years ago. Evaluation by McGill University specialists was so positive that a broader program has now been approved. This second version, involving two communities, Little Burgundy and NDG, will see significant improvements to the original model.

"Zeroing in on two vulnerable communities and having these new resources means that we can fine-tune the elements of the program so much more," says **Leith Hamilton**, project coordinator. "We'll be able to develop best practices that can be applied on a broader scale not only in English-speaking communities, but also in the Asian and French-speaking Black communities."

For the long term, the ACDPN aims to establish a community-based infrastructure and process that will translate into a best practices model applicable to the specific needs of each Black community. "There are cultural differences that must be addressed," says Hamilton. "Each community needs its own capacity."

In the new, streamlined program, there will be more coordination of referrals and assessments of youth in protection with the local CSSSs and Batshaw Youth and Family Services. "A major preoccupation of ours is the sustainability of this program," says Hamilton. "Our goal is to eventually provide it as a contracted service to the CSSSs."

Anglophones' access under study

Whether or not English-speaking Quebecers are receiving equitable access to health and social services has come under increasing scrutiny. A recent CROP survey sponsored by the Community Health and Social Services Network (CHSSN) confirmed that serious disparities exist between anglophones and their francophone counterparts. The Institut national de santé publique du Québec (INSPQ) has just launched a major new project in partnership with the CHSSN to track the health status of anglophones in the public system. Both efforts will significantly increase knowledge and understanding of anglophones' health care needs.

Results now in from the 2010 CHSSN/CROP survey on anglophone community vitality reveal that half the responders are dissatisfied with their level of access to health and social services. Over the past five years, English services at CLSCs have been declining, from 66 percent to 58 percent in the Montreal/Laval region. While use of Info-Santé is up by 30 percent, only two-thirds of Montreal responders report receiving service in English. Survey results are available at www.chssn.org.

INSPQ, a major research arm of the government, is responsible for providing the Ministry of Health and Social Services with data it uses to set policies and priorities. For the first time, INSPQ is now going to identify the health status of anglophones separately within Quebec's official health model. With a \$2 million grant from Health Canada, the Institute is carrying out studies and analyses on the health and well-being of English-speaking communities and will be suggesting the most effective intervention methods for improving their present situation.

INSPQ has introduced a new element – epidemiological studies – into how anglophones are faring within the healthcare system. Its researchers are breaking out statistics on anglophone mortality rates and frequency of hospitalization. Higher readings could reflect lacks in access to primary care. Its findings will be submitted in 2015.

Seniors network under way

More than 100 seniors and representatives from institutions and community groups from across Quebec met in March to take the first important steps toward the creation of a provincial network for English-speaking seniors.

Hosted by the Quebec Community Groups Network (QCGN), forum attendees decided on what they need to do over the next three years: advocate for access to all services and programs necessary to maintain seniors' health and vitality; improve access to information and resources; promote visibility of the Seniors Network as the voice of English-speaking seniors in Quebec; and develop an ongoing forum to address specific issues.

How to recruit young volunteers

The Réseau de l'action bénévole du Québec (RABQ) has just published a new guide for community organizations on recruiting and retaining young volunteers. This latest effort – RABQ had introduced its first guide in 2007 – responds to the growing need for more volunteers as the traditional volunteer pool diminishes. Its [Cap sur les jeunes bénévoles](#) introduces different strategies and tools that can be integrated into operational planning.

While 58 percent of young Quebecers between 15- and 24-years old do volunteer, compared to 36 percent of those 65 and older, their volunteer hours are much fewer – 148 to 218. And their participation is more sporadic and short term. RABQ points out that organizations must adapt a new flexibility to accommodate and motivate more young people to become more long-term volunteers.

RABQ suggests that many organizations – and their goals – will have to change. So strategies to face possible resistance need to be developed. It also encourages creation of an action plan that implicates youth according to their age levels and interests, and provides them with more responsibility. The new guide is available at www.rabq.ca.

At 35, Chinese services swamped

When Chinese Family Services of Greater Montreal was first set up by a group of students 35 years ago, it was a small storefront operation, involved primarily with dispensing advice to the elderly and organizing children's activities. Today it is a full-fledged social services agency with so many clients and services it is bursting at the seams.

"During the last 10 years, the Chinese population here has tripled," says **Xi Xi Lee**, executive director. "There are about 60,000 on the island and 15,000 in the Brossard area, where we have a satellite office. Each year brings us 3500 more, filling Quebec's immigration quota."

Most of the Chinese newcomers are young professionals, who have minimal French for entry but who require additional language skills to operate in the business world. Many are entrepreneurs; there are very few Chinese on the welfare rolls. But they and their families also need assistance to integrate into Quebec society. "We offer a broad range of workshops on culture, the legal and school systems, and health and social services," Lee says. "We are also very strong on family support programs."

The Chinese indeed form a distinct community. "About 86 percent of us are first generation," Lee explains, "because for so many years our people were excluded from entering Canada. While mainstream organizations can focus on specific audiences, such as seniors or youth, we have to deal with all aspects of social services because of language and cultural differences. As well as first line services, we provide the follow up with other agencies and health providers who call us for help."

The Centre is looking for new quarters. "There just isn't enough space for our staff, our volunteers and our clients now," says Lee. "We're renting space in other buildings to deliver our programs. And it would also be too costly to renovate the old building we're in. We're fortunate to have some very generous patrons in our community, but we must rely on government funding for such a venture."

Batshaw initiates new approach

Batshaw Youth and Family Service Centres has just introduced an interesting new approach to relating with adolescents in its care. One of Batshaw's alumna, **Jennifer Dupuis**, has been hired to act as a Youth Empowerment Liaison. Having completed her Bachelor in Social Work degree at McGill, she is going on to graduate studies focusing on the factors that contribute to successful outcomes for youth who have been in care.

"Jennifer will be a role model and a motivator," says **Marie-Josée Roy**, program manager for Services to Older Adolescents. "She's had all the negative experiences of youth in care, and she's someone whose resilience has made her successful afterward. We're counting on the power of peer influence to aid and encourage the young people with whom she'll be dealing."

The basic aim of this empowerment initiative is to draw Batshaw adolescents into participating in the improvement and development of services that impact on them. Dupuis will be setting up groups and developing activities that will reinforce their positive attributes. She will also be dealing with past and current Batshaw clients interested in post-secondary academic or training programs.

Camp turns 60

Handicapped children from Montreal can enjoy a special sojourn in the country, thanks to a generous donor whose lakeside property in Ayer's Cliff in the Eastern Townships was turned over to the Mackay Rehabilitation Centre in 1951. Catering to children with motor, language and hearing impairments, Camp Massawippi provides a highly supervised, but exhilarating experience.

"Many children have more than one impairment," says **Philip Aspinall**, chair of the Camp board. "But even the most handicapped get a chance to sail and water-ski. It's a very exciting time for them; the Camp has become part of their life."

St. Mary's expanding

St. Mary's Hospital Centre is adding two new floors to its eight-storey Pavilion D, and expanding its emergency facility. This \$113 million project will not involve adding more beds, which remain at 271, but is designed to minimize the spread of infections by eliminating 3- and 4-bed rooms. A second phase will involve construction of underground parking, which will provide eight percent more green space on the site.

Grieving parents find support

A self-help support group for parents who have lost a child in death is providing an important service in Quebec. The Compassionate Friends (TCF) was established in England 68 years ago by a couple who had lost their child and has subsequently spread around the world. There are now chapters in eight Canadian provinces, 12 of which are in Quebec. TCF operates on an informal basis, providing books and mailings and regular two-hour monthly meetings. The organization relies on corporate and individual donations; there is no membership fee. It does not publicize its work or give out its address to the general public. English-speakers who want more information, or to attend a meeting, should call Jane at 450 458 3164.

Y welcomes Inuit

The Westmount YMCA has solved the problem of accommodating ailing Inuit flown to Montreal for specialized medical care. Its Y Residence, formerly the Reddy Memorial Hospital, can house up to 150 patients. The Northern housing program had been scattered across five locations in NDG, when an attempt was made last year to consolidate the operation in the old Chinese Hospital on St. Denis Street. Opposition from locals quashed that move.

"The Y is a very good, but temporary, solution," says **Céline Laforest**, program director. "We're looking for a permanent site. And with telehealth coming to the North, we'll need less space here."

In brief

Heather Munroe-Bloom, principal and vice-chancellor of McGill University, and **Pierre Beaudoin**, president and CEO of Bombardier, are chairs of the 2011 fund-raising campaign of Centraide of Greater Montreal.

Dr. **Victor Goldbloom** has been re-named by acclamation as chair of the Montreal Health and Social Services Agency board.

Chad Lubelsky is the new director of Santropol Roulant.

Gabrielle Richard was elected chair of the board of the Volunteer Bureau of Montreal.

Pauline Wong, board chair of the Chinese Family Services Centre, was named to the National Order of Quebec.

The occupational therapy team of the Constance Lethbridge Rehabilitation Centre has received the 2010 Ginette-Théoret Prize for its driving evaluation and adaptation program. The prize is awarded by the Ordre des ergothérapeutes du Québec.

Centraide of Greater Montreal presented its annual community awards in April. The Agnes C. Higgins Award was won by the Good Food Box program, a fresh fruit and vegetable club that supports people lacking fresh food. The Gilles Cousineau Award went to **Veronica Lopez**, executive director of Cloverdale Multi-Resources, for her work with immigrant families.

Volunteer Canada has a new digital tool that classifies Canadians according to volunteer types and suggests suitable volunteer opportunities. For information: www.volunteer.ca.

The editor welcomes story ideas: 514 937 4309

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