

Volunteer Bureau to turn 75

While the Volunteer Bureau of Montreal (VBM) will be marking its 75th anniversary in 2012, celebrations are to begin this year on December 5, International Volunteer Day. The opening festivities will take place at Montreal City Hall, the mayor and other dignitaries in attendance.

The VBM traces its roots to Canada's first volunteer centre, founded in 1937 by the Montreal Junior League. It was one of the 100 social service agencies funded by United Red Feather Services. In 1974, the VBM was one of the original agencies of the newly-formed Centraide of Greater Montreal.

First elderly abused shelter opens

Quebec's first (and Canada's second) shelter for abused seniors has opened in west central Montreal. Two single apartments in a seniors' residence are available to abuse victims for up to three months. Since March, five women in their 70s have used the shelter and the accompaniment services provided by a new organization, SAVA Centre-Ouest.

"SAVA, Shelter and Assistance for Victims of Elder Abuse, was set up in January under the auspices of the NDG Community Committee on Elder Abuse (NDGCCEA)," explains **Thurza Dufresne**, coordinator. "As well as providing emergency shelter, we offer a range of assistance to abused seniors in the community at large. We have a professional team of volunteers who provide expertise on legal, social and medical matters. We provide intensive training to our volunteers who guide abuse victims through the procedures that will help improve their new circumstances."

Increased awareness of services available has led to more and more abused seniors coming forward for help. Creation of more emergency shelters is planned. "We want to incite change," affirms Dufresne. "Ideally, we would like to stop this abuse; in reality, we're hoping to reduce it." For further information: 514 903 3550.

Goldbloom Awards announced

The Quebec Community Groups Network has selected three outstanding members of the province's English-speaking community to receive the 2011 Sheila and Victor Golbloom Distinguished Community Service Award.

Joan Ivory was cited for her long-time volunteer service with the Montreal community's healthcare institutions and for her financial and volunteer support of major cultural endeavours. **Gemma Raeburn-Baynes**, best known as the founder of "A Taste of the Caribbean" food festival, has been a prominent voice in promoting culture and identity among the city's anglophone Black youth. **Aline Visser** is a lifelong volunteer in the fields of education, health and community development in her local community of Thetford Mines.

Centraide campaign under way

Over 15,000 umbrella-toting supporters took to the street on September 23 to launch the 2011 fund-raising campaign of Centraide of Greater Montreal. Up to 23,000 volunteers will be involved in making this 12-week campaign a success.

Campaign co-chairs are **Pierre Beaudoin**, president and CEO of Bombardier, and **Heather Munroe-Blum**, principal and vice-chancellor of McGill University. They are backed by a campaign cabinet composed of 27 senior executives from every industry sector, each with a volunteer team to visit and solicit the support of other business leaders. An additional 50 corporate executives will mentor the organization of some 1,700 workplace campaigns. The bulk of funds raised (over 85 percent in 2010) come from corporations and their employees.

Last year, Centraide raised a record-breaking \$55 million, \$43.7 million of which was directed to 360 community agencies and projects helping individuals and families to overcome the problems of poverty. The goal this year is \$59 million.

New look for Nazareth House

The new director of Nazareth House in downtown Montreal is literally sweeping with a new broom. **Sheila Woodhouse** has been renovating the premises and recharging its programs to better serve the 20 homeless men who call the House their home. The heart of Nazareth House, however, is not changing: Woodhouse intends to carry on the tradition of compassion established by its founder Dennis Hadley, over 35 years ago.

“The legacy here is unbelievable,” affirms Woodhouse. “Dennis and his wife tended to the destitute and abandoned for over 50 years. He opened the city’s first AIDS hospice in 1989.”

At its present site on Seymour Street since 1983, Nazareth House accommodates eight men in the house itself, while 12 others live in apartments nearby. “Most are in their 50s”, says Woodhouse. “All would be homeless without Nazareth.”

Sprucing up the house is a work in progress. Student volunteers have been painting the rooms and the kitchen is being renovated. Woodhouse plans to hold open house “fish Fridays” so that people from the community can visit. “We want to connect more with the community,” she affirms.

“The big challenge now,” says Woodhouse, “is that there aren’t enough places to meet the need. We’re constantly getting calls for help. So we’re seriously discussing expansion, but because we get no government subsidies, we have to rely on individual and corporate donations to operate.

“We provide the basic necessities of life,” Woodhouse continues, “but we also give our residents the warmth and dignity they deserve. We’ve just introduced yoga and are setting up gym equipment. We’re starting the ‘therapeutic paws’ program, whereby animals will be brought in to visit the residents. That’s another family aspect we’re going for, because the real caché of Nazareth House is that it is not just a residence, it’s a home.” For further information: 514 933 6916.

Changes won’t change Centre

The MAB-Mackay Rehabilitation Centre will be undergoing some organizational changes in the next couple of years. Plans are under way to close the specialized schools for visually and hearing impaired children operating on the centre’s two sites to establish a new adapted facility on a single site within the English Montreal School Board territory. The Centre itself will consolidate all rehabilitation services onto one site.

“It’s a complex undertaking,” says **Christine Boyle**, executive director. “But it’s time that we streamlined our operations to accommodate the growing number of clients who require services at both sites. And it will be much better for the 160 children involved to be educated in a school rather than a rehab centre. They require intensive rehabilitation, and are not yet ready to integrate into regular classrooms, so our clinical staff will move to the new school to provide them with all their necessary rehabilitation services.”

The Centre serves some 2500 clients a year. These include 768 children with motor impairment, 584 with language disorders, 239 with visual impairment, and 455 deaf or hearing impaired. Visually impaired clients also include 526 adults and 1251 seniors. Deaf and hearing impaired clients include 336 adults and 725 seniors. The fastest growing client segment is seniors who are both visually and hearing impaired.

Success at CCS

The CCS’ LaSalle 50+ Community Centre that started running in January this year has met with such success that a second centre is being planned. “We’ve barely scratched the surface of what’s needed in this territory,” affirms **Diane Doonan**, project coordinator. “We have 230 members, with 50 more seniors on the waiting list. There are over 8000 anglophone seniors in LaSalle, with no similar social outlet. So we have a long way to go.” For further information: 514 937 5351, ext. 237.

Kids program gets boost

The Tyndale St-Georges Community Centre has received a grant from the Foundation of Greater Montreal that will help improve academic knowledge, particularly of French, among its younger clientele. The Centre, which provides services and programs for low income families in Little Burgundy, is using the grant to boost its after school program.

“We have around 2000 clients,” says **Jen de Combe**, executive director. “Adding to our traditional base of Caribbean Black families, we’ve had a surge in new immigrants from a variety of other cultures. We’re becoming quite international.”

But there are common problems. “Over a third of students in this community don’t graduate from high school,” says de Combe, “and our schools are among the most underprivileged in the city. We know that kids can succeed if we get to them early on. So our after school program, in particular, is a critical intervention for the youth that we serve.”

Over 80 children between 6 and 12 are enrolled in that program. They receive homework support and specialized tutoring in literacy and math. A socio-recreational program is designed to improve their social and inter-personal skills.

Key to the success of this program is that parents have to volunteer at the Centre for their children to be enrolled. “We in turn provide them with a variety of workshops for their own personal development,” says de Combe. “Parenting is a popular, and important, one.”

The after school program has proven to be very successful. “We consistently get strongly positive feedback from teachers and parents about the improved behaviour and learning ability of these kids,” says de Combe. “They’re then ready to move on to our older youth program to expand their skills. We see that these kids all have dreams; they just don’t know the steps to take. We’re there to help.” For further information: 514 931 6265.

New websites for MoWs

Meals on Wheels (MoW) are in the spotlight. The Ministry for Seniors has provided nearly half a million dollars for development of an interactive website featuring all the province’s MoW programs. The Volunteer Bureau of Montreal will support a new website being developed by its MoW division, Volunteer Food Services (VFS). The goal of both projects is to facilitate access to MoW services for both service providers and potential users.

“We receive calls frequently from CLSCs who have no idea where, or whether, there are MoWs in their territory,” says **Clarisse Bonnefon**, VFS liaison agent. “Too often there are not, because lack of volunteers is a serious problem: four of our groups had to close down this year. We hope that our new site will help our MoWs (we have 49) to attract volunteers. And we’ve received a grant from the Cardinal Leger Foundation to develop new ways of recruiting.” For more information: 514 842 3351.

Eyeing East End anglos

The Institut national de santé publique du Québec (INSPQ) is targeting an English-speaking territory in East End Montreal as one of six anglophone communities across the province for a community development program. INSPQ is one of the province’s major research facilities, whose findings are used by the government to set healthcare policies and priorities. With \$2 million of funding from Health Canada, the Institute has undertaken a four-year project to analyze the health and wellbeing of anglophone communities and to determine the most effective methods for their accessing health and social services.

A key element of this project is community development. INSPQ is working with REISA, the East End anglophone network, which has selected Saint-Léonard as the community slated for a development program. The overall project stems from a partnership established with INSPQ by the Community Health and Social Services Network.

MUHC seeks board nominations

The McGill University Health Centre (MUHC) has called for nominations from the community to fill two positions on its board of directors. These are seats reserved for representatives of the population. Deadline for entries is 5:00 p.m., October 3. If there are more than two nominations, an election will be held on November 1. Information is available from **Harris Poulis**, 514 934 1934, ext. 71559.

Montreal to consult seniors

The City of Montreal will be holding public consultations during the summer of 2012 to develop policies that promote and improve seniors' wellbeing. Themes to be covered include housing, transportation, health and safety, active living and communication. Based on its findings, the City will develop an action plan to be launched on International Seniors Day, October 1.

Ottawa supports mental health

Health Canada has provided significant funding to two local projects designed to support and promote mental health. The Lady Davis Institute for Medical Research at McGill is receiving \$2.9 million for a family-centred program directly related to suicide prevention. The Université du Québec à Montréal is receiving \$2.7 million to develop a new program for seven- to 11-year olds that teaches coping skills to younger children.

Money for more information

Quebec's Seniors Ministry has announced a program of funding for community and volunteer organizations that provide services and activities for the vulnerable elderly. Successful applicants will receive \$24,000 annually over three years to act as "clearing houses" for information on government services and programs for seniors. For information, consult the [Guide d'information 2011-2012](#) at: www.mfa.gouv.qc.ca.

In brief

Noel Burke is interim president of the Quebec Community Groups Network.

Jen de Combe has been appointed executive director of Tyndale-St. Georges Community Centre.

Ron DeLeskie has been named chair of the CCS board of directors.

Richard Pound has been named chair of the board of the Foundation of Greater Montreal. Other new board appointments are Tim Brodhead, Norman E. Hébert Jr., Peter McAuslan and Michael Novak.

Marjorie Northrup has been named president of the board of directors of PRASAB, the provincial association of volunteer food services.

Valerie Shannon has been re-named board chair of the MAB-Mackay Rehabilitation Centre.

Peter M. Wayland has been named president of the board of the Grace Dart Extended Care Centre foundation.

The Information and Referral Centre of Greater Montreal has introduced a new and confidential [Referral Helpline for Seniors](#). The number is 514 527 0007.

The 2011-2012 edition of the [Directory of Community Services of Greater Montreal](#) is now available, for \$65. For information: 514 527 1375.

AMI-Quebec's annual Low-Ber lecture takes place on October 29 at 7:00 p.m. at the Oscar Peterson Hall, 7141 Sherbrooke Street West. Award-winning author Robert Whitaker will address the issue of the use of psychiatric drugs.

The editor welcomes story ideas: 514 937 4309

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