

Change at the Children's

When the new Montreal Children's Hospital opens at the MUHC Glen campus – in 2015 – its present home could be blessed with a dynamic new vocation. The CSSS de la Montagne is spearheading a plan to turn the site into a hub of first-line health and social services, bolstered by community involvement and educational support. Preliminary plans for the Village santé des Grands-Jardins will be formally presented to the Montreal Health and Social Services Agency in June.

“This is a public health venture par excellence,” affirms **Marc Sougavinski**, CSSS executive director. “All its many elements will be interactive, providing the community with a continuum of support. It's designed to improve the well-being of the local citizens and their neighbourhood.”

Core of the proposed complex is the first-line health services centre that would include the CLSC Métro, a birthing centre, and information and referral services. These would be backed up with access to specialists, diagnostic services and ambulatory surgical teams. There would be beds for the non-autonomous elderly and day care as well as “night care” for marginalized seniors. Specialized services would be available for the mentally ill and for aboriginal people. There would be a palliative care unit as well.

Special attention is to be paid to community well-being through social housing, a community centre, adult education and family and child services. Space will be provided to local community organizations. Quality green spaces are a priority.

“This project is doubly exciting,” claims Sougavinski. “We're looking at an area of the city that is quite deprived. The Children's move is a wonderful opportunity to bring new life to this downtown community. And amalgamating so many inter-related public health services under one roof would ensure that citizens receive the utmost in care. As far as I know, nothing like what we're proposing exists anywhere else in the world.”

Quebec to boost Black project

Quebec's Ministry of Immigration and Cultural Communities has indicated interest in supporting a crime prevention program initiated by the Montreal-based African Canadian Development and Prevention Network (ACDPN). The first of its kind in Canada, the ACDPN's Strengthening Black Families has met with singular success in English-speaking Black communities and is now being expanded into the francophone Black milieu. The Ministry is to convene a meeting between the ACDPN and representatives of other provincial government departments and agencies that might participate in funding the program's expansion.

Foster status changed

Foster Pavilion, for 48 years a private residence for English-speaking Quebecers with addiction problems, has become a public institution. Now called the Centre de réadaptation Foster, it has been officially integrated into the CSSS Montérégie.

“This move makes us a full-fledged member of the health and social services network,” says **John Topp**, executive director. “Being fully funded through government services contracts for some years, we functioned as a public institution. But administratively, our governance was private. That situation hampered our growth possibilities and kept us out of the regional decision-making process.”

Foster maintains a 22-bed residence for adults in St-Phillipe on the South Shore and three outpatient sites in the Greater Montreal area that serve adults and youth suffering from drug, alcohol or gambling addictions. It serves 2500 outpatient clients a year.

There is always a waiting list. “Addiction is a major social issue,” says Topp, “but it's not a government priority. And it's not easy to get public support: it's often seen as a self-afflicted problem. One of our major concerns is that there are no short-term beds for young addicts. So when we think of future growth, it's in residential service for youth.”

Booth joins Cavendish

The Salvation Army Catherine Booth Hospital in N.D.G. has been integrated into the CSSS Cavendish. The 84-bed rehabilitation centre provides short-term care and psychological support for patients convalescing from orthopedic, neurological and cardiac problems.

The first Catherine Booth Hospital was founded by the Army as a rescue home for women in 1890 in the Plateau Montreal. It was established on its present site in 1925 as a maternity hospital. In 1978, the facility was reorganized and renovated to become a rehabilitation centre. In 2011, a new cardiac clinic was added to its operations.

The Hospital's former nurses' residence was converted into a private seniors' home in 1977. This Montclair Residence is not included in the integration agreement.

Volunteer auction a success

Over 6500 volunteer hours were donated to community organizations on April 12 at a unique art auction in Old Montreal. Hosted by the Volunteer Bureau of Montreal, the city's first Timeraiser event attracted over 300 people willing to bid on works by local artists in exchange for their volunteer time. The artists themselves had been previously paid for their work in dollars, thanks to corporate sponsors.

"We took a risk, we were ambitious, and we succeeded," exclaims **Alison Stevens**, executive director. "We've already started planning for another auction next year."

Immigrants are good givers

According to a recent study published in Canadian Social Trends, immigrants are just as likely to donate to charities as native-born Canadians (84%), but they are likely to contribute more. In 2010, they gave an average of \$554, compared with \$409 for the Canadian-born donors.

Batshaw awaits decision

Batshaw Youth and Family Services will learn in the fall if plans to expand its residential facility in Dorval can go ahead. The agency had taken the city to court for refusing permits for the expansion and won its case. However, the city appealed that decision at a hearing on May 10.

At issue is Batshaw's plan to add two closed-custody units to the Dorval facility it has operated for the past 25 years. The project has roused strong opposition – some 2,000 local citizens have signed a petition against it.

"The irony of it all is that a closed unit by its nature is so very secure," says **Nick Paré**, director of Residential Services. "These kids are very closely supervised and will certainly not be circulating in the community. People have complained about installation of a 12-foot high fence, but that would be at the back of the building, and scarcely visible to passers-by."

Batshaw's aim is to consolidate its residential operations to two sites, in Dorval and on another property in Beaconsfield. "We're scattered across five sites now," says Paré. "That complicates our provision of many services and adds to the workload of our professionals. We're obviously hoping for a favourable judgment."

Seniors love CCS centre

English-speaking seniors in the LaSalle region have so strongly endorsed the community centre set up for them by CCS last year that a second day of activities has been added to the schedule. "We could run it for five days if we had the space," says **Diane Doonan**, project coordinator. "We thought we might get 50 members the first year, but now we have 312, representing 16 different cultural communities. These are people who previously had no common community or purpose. Now they're such movers and shakers; they 'own' this centre. It's really exciting to be part of the process."

Moving ahead on mental health

Canada now has a national mental health strategy. After two years of consultations with thousands of Canadians across the country, the Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC) released its groundbreaking report in May. Changing Directions, Changing Lives, The Mental Health Strategy for Canada focuses on improving the mental health of Canadians and on creating a mental health system that can meet the needs of people suffering from mental illness.

According to the MHCC, some seven million Canadians will experience some form of mental illness this year. Only one-third are likely to seek and receive the services they need. This situation has a significant and far-reaching impact on the health and economy of the country. "Mental health problems cost Canada more than \$50 billion every year," asserts MHCC chair Dr. **David Goldbloom**. "We have made some progress, but more needs to be done to improve how we deal with mental illness in this country. And everyone has a role to play"

Stopping the stigma

A continuing obstacle to further progress is the pervasive stigma attached to mental illness that prevents people from getting the care and support they need. That issue was addressed at an international conference co-sponsored by the MHCC and the World Psychiatric Association in early June. Over 600 of the world's top professionals, policy makers and people living with mental health experiences came together to discuss effective means to eliminate the stigma of mental illness.

Adding to the impetus for change is a new national organization launched by the MHCC called Partners for Mental Health. Now an independent charitable body, Partners is dedicated to creating a social movement that will transform the way Canadians think about mental illness. They will be organizing several national campaigns annually to enable Canadians to take action to support the mental health cause. For further information: www.partnersformh.ca.

Boomers no longer neglected

They are 50+, unemployed, unappreciated and unhappy. A growing number of English-speaking young seniors are grappling with having lost their jobs and being unable to find another. The crisis is taking its toll, so the N.D.G. Senior Citizens Council is trying to bring some relief to their situation.

"Over 30 percent of N.D.G. residents are between 50 and 64," says **Sheri McLeod**, executive director. "We're really seeing what being downsized and reduced to poverty can do to people – marriage breakup, physical and mental health problems, a deep sense of isolation. When we looked at what the system was offering them, we discovered not much."

The Council has set up a variety of programs and projects to help. The "Boomer Café" provides an opportunity to become socially involved, with workshops and educational discussions, computer and French lessons. A business cooperative has been set up for people interested in self-employment. There is an action committee advocating for the rights of people on social assistance. A new workshop concerning the legal implications of discrimination against mature workers will begin in the fall.

"We're not acting alone on this issue," says McLeod. "We're connected to a chain of local organizations that help with such practical needs as food and furniture. And we're part of the CEDEC Mature Workers Initiative that is studying ways of assisting unemployed English-speakers." For further information: 514 487 1311.

Lethbridge helps online

The Constance Lethbridge Rehabilitation Centre has introduced a new website for young adults with juvenile arthritis, cerebral palsy and spina bifida. Offering information on services available for youth afflicted with these illnesses, the aim is to help them be as independent as possible in their daily lives. It can be accessed at TAVIE20.com and on Facebook.

Volunteer code of conduct

Volunteer Canada has issued a code of practice for organizations dealing with volunteer workers. The Canada Code for Volunteer Involvement sets out values, guiding principles and standards of practice for relations between the two parties.

For example, organizations are to treat volunteers as valued and integral members of the human resources team and provide them with a safe and supportive environment. They, in turn, must act with respect for the organization and behave responsibly and with integrity. The Code is available at www.volunteer.ca.

More research on the elderly

The Institut universitaire de gériatrie de Montréal has opened a new \$10.7 million facility and information centre dedicated to promoting the health of the elderly. The state-of-the-art amphitheatre will host international conferences of researchers in the field and provide a venue for local presentation of research results to the public.

One of the new studies to be undertaken by the Institute is the effect of computer exercises for strengthening the brain, as yet not considered to be scientifically proven.

More help for the disabled

The Montreal Health and Social Services Agency is developing an action plan for delivery of services to adults afflicted with a motor deficiency. A professional committee has been evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of the current regime, and is drafting recommendations for what needs to be reorganized to meet new criteria of efficiency. Following its report, to be tabled in September, consultations will be held throughout the region. A final plan is scheduled for year-end.

There are some 200,000 Montrealers currently suffering from physical disability.

In brief

Margaret Douek, executive director of Batshaw Youth and Family Centres, has been named to the board of the Child Welfare League of Canada.

Dr. **Victor Goldbloom** has been honoured by the Vatican for his work in inter-faith relations. He will receive the Pontifical Equestrian Order of St. Sylvester, Pope and Martyr on September 4.

Kevin Leonard is executive director of the EJLB Foundation.

Danielle McCann has been appointed new director general of the Montreal Health and Social Services Agency, replacing **David Levine**.

Lynne McVae is new executive director of the Douglas Hospital.

Lino A. Saputo Jr., CEO and vice-chair of Saputo, and **Louis Vachon**, president and CEO of National Bank, have been named co-chairs of the Centraide of Greater Montreal's 2012 fund-raising campaign.

Gisèle Malgat was re-named president of Chez Doris.

The Salvation Army of Canada is celebrating its 130th anniversary.

The NDG-based Contactivity Centre is 40 years old.

AMI-Quebec is 35 years old.

The CSSS de la Montagne has moved its administrative offices to 1980 Sherbrooke Street, West. The telephone number remains 514 731 8531.

A new online registry has been established to help needy seniors at www.seniorsinneed.ca.

The editor welcomes story ideas: 514 937 4309

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