

## 150 years of history

One of the Montreal anglophone community's most venerable institutions will be celebrating its 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary next year. The Grace Dart Extended Care Centre (GDEEC) in East End Montreal will honour one of its partner institutions, the former Montreal Extended Care facility. It was founded in 1863 as the Protestant House of Industry and Refuge, and built on land donated by Thomas Molson. It was one of the first members of the Red Feather family of social services establishments. Grace Dart and Extended Care merged in 1999.

The GDEEC provides long-term care to some 400 elderly people who have lost their autonomy. The Centre has been investigating possibilities for relocating its residents from century-old buildings to more modern, efficient quarters. A pending federal/provincial agreement to transfer Ste. Anne's Veterans' Hospital to Quebec jurisdiction might provide the answer.

## Canada chastised

Once again, Canada has been cited for its poor record – even worse than 10 years ago – on alleviating child poverty. The latest UNICEF report reveals that one in seven Canadian children live in poverty; for aboriginal children the ratio rises to one in four. Among 35 industrialized nations, Canada ranks 24<sup>th</sup>.

The international agency points to problems of child obesity and mental illness and the lack of efficient surveillance programs to improve the well-being of children. “Canada has the means to do better,” says one high-ranking official.

## Committee choice coming up

In January, the Montreal Health and Social Services Agency will be calling for nominations to the provincial advisory committee for English health and social services. Anglophone organizations and establishments will be consulted.

## Ste. Anne's as a provincial asset

The governments of Canada and Quebec have signed an agreement in principle to transfer Ste. Anne's (Veterans') Hospital over to the province. Details of the new arrangement are being finalized; the parties are aiming for the actual transfer to take place in March 2013.

Among the key elements to which both parties must agree are: maintenance of priority access for eligible veterans; guarantee of the levels of care; and delivery of care and services in the veteran's choice of English or French. The interests of hospital employees are also to be respected. The 446-bed institution, established 93 years ago, is Canada's last federally-controlled veterans' hospital.

## L'Abri wins award

L'Abri en ville was honoured in October with the Mental Health Commission of Canada's National Mental Health Award in the Community Capacity category. The 21-year old program was cited for its initiatives that “strengthen the capacity of community-based mental health services to meet community needs and to foster the recovery and well-being of clients and their support networks”.

Founded in 1991 in NDG, L'Abri is based on the concept of providing people suffering from mental illness with safe and stable housing bolstered by an intensive program of community support. The key to its success is the small army of volunteers who help residents in their recovery by nurturing their well side. As well as providing friendship, they help build bridges to the wider community. In NDG, the 30 residents and 70 volunteers form an “authentic community of 100 people”.

For management efficiency, the original L'Abri has limited its operation to 10 three-person apartments. But its model has been replicated elsewhere. There are now three other similar programs: Les toits d'Émile in Châteauguay, Our Harbour in Saint Lambert and Ancoura in Ottawa.

## More moves at MAB-Mackay

Montreal's MAB-Mackay Rehabilitation Centre is slowly but steadily bringing all its services together under one roof. The Centre currently serves over 4000 clients with vision, hearing, motor and language disabilities. Rehabilitation services had been provided at two sites, but in October new facilities were opened at the MAB location to accommodate deaf and hard of hearing clients from the former Mackay Centre.

"This means that we have all our sensorial rehabilitation on one site," says **Christine Boyle**, executive director. "It's a major improvement, particularly for seniors with both visual and hearing loss, and for our professional staff who no longer have to constantly travel between two sites. And since we can have separate wings for adults and for children, the new arrangement is much better adapted to client needs. We've also begun to develop plans to regroup all rehabilitation services to include our 1000 clients with language and motor disabilities on a single site."

The Centre has also just opened a new dysphasia clinic for children with swallowing disorders. "Services for this affliction had been fragmented, all over the system," says Boyle. "Now there is an interdisciplinary team of specialists working with the family to provide focused, more effective, care."

## St. Matthias' church turns 100

St. Matthias' Anglican parish celebrates the 100<sup>th</sup> birthday of its church this year. The parish was actually founded in 1873 by the Young Men's Christian Association of St George's Church of Montreal when it began holding services in a house in Westmount. Earlier gatherings were held in wooden structures; the present stone building was erected in 1912. In a missionary role, St Matthias' built churches in the north and western Canada. It also broke new ground in its outreach activities at home: it was at St Matthias' that Canada's first Meals-on-Wheels group was formed, in 1966.

## Seniors getting it together

Quebec's English-speaking seniors are on a roll. Following a forum last year attended by over 100 seniors from across the province, work began on creating a provincial network to address issues affecting anglophone seniors and to advocate with policy makers on their behalf. In November, the new Seniors Action Quebec received its letters patent, and is now a legal nonprofit organization.

"We'd already started moving on a few fronts," says **David Cassidy**, network president. "We began meeting with our francophone counterparts on issues where we might collaborate. In October, we made a joint presentation to the federal inter-departmental committee on seniors. And we're going to partner with the francophones to promote reintegration of mature workers into the Quebec labour market."

In January, the network is also tackling the issue of "age-friendly" cities. "It's a pilot project," Cassidy explains, "in which we'll examine the situation in three specific geographic areas. We're hoping to develop local leadership to carry through in the long term. At the same time, we'll be soliciting memberships from individuals and nonprofit community organizations." For more information: [seniorsactionquebec@gmail.com](mailto:seniorsactionquebec@gmail.com).

## Montreal now senior-friendly

On October 1, Montreal was officially recognized as a senior-friendly city under the provincial government's MADA program. With \$5 million of provincial funding, the City has drafted a five-year, 100-point program to implement measures that would improve the well-being of older Montrealers.

Provisions of the program include prompt deicing of sidewalks, improved street lighting and signage, better access to public places and information, improved housing, and more opportunities to become active in the community. Also on the agenda is a new seniors' golf course in the East End. For information: <http://ville.montreal.qc.ca/mada>.

## McGill research on children

How protected are aboriginal children when they come in contact with Quebec's youth protection system? That is the thrust of a new research project designed by Dr. **Nico Trocmé** of McGill's School of Social Work. With a seven-year, \$1.5 million grant from the federal Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, the Trocmé team will be examining to what extent the experience of aboriginal children in the child welfare system is different from that of non-aboriginal children.

"We know so little generally about what's happening in Quebec's child welfare system," says Trocmé. "Social workers collect data on a regular basis: they spend a lot of time keeping up with paper work. But so much of it is either not used or poorly used from a planning perspective. Social services have generally done a poor job in tracking information. So a main goal of this project is to help professionals and agencies in the field develop the capacity to make better use of their data."

There will be follow through. "We'll be leading three groups of Social Work students in a two-year training program to do this kind of research and analysis," Trocmé explains. "And we'll be highlighting issues that are beyond the purview of the child protection system and ultimately come up with recommendations on the larger issues that these children face."

## Help for finding funding

The Centre for Community Organizations (COCO) has completed a study on Quebec nonprofit groups and their relationship with the government of Quebec. Close to 800 English-speaking, ethno-cultural or bicultural groups were catalogued in 14 regions of the province. Half the participating groups receive funding from the provincial government, but many have difficulty crossing bureaucratic barriers. COCO is offering to provide information on funding sources to its network members. The report is available at [www.coco-net.org](http://www.coco-net.org).

## Food for thought

The Cummings Jewish Centre for Seniors has introduced a novel way of helping mentally-ill clients to improve their lives. "We get them interested in food," says **Noga Yudelevitch**, designer of a new therapeutic cooking program at the Centre. "It's very effective: we see how learning simple cooking skills gives these people a sense of control over one aspect of their lives."

The program is designed for people with mental illness who are cognitively functional but not equipped to look after themselves efficiently. A professional chef teaches basic recipes, budgeting and shopping. A professional therapist is always present to guide discussion.

"We sit and eat as a family," says Yudelevitch. "It's a new kind of social occasion for them, and they're picking up on that. Some have started entertaining guests for the first time in their lives."

## AGAPE chosen for pilot

The Youth and Parents AGAPE Association in Laval has been selected to do a trial run of an internationally-known psychotherapy program for children suffering abnormal reactions to separation. Results will determine if the program will then be introduced in French in Quebec.

"It's a treatment procedure that re-enforces the parent/child bond," says **Ian Williams**, coordinator. "Called Circles of Security, it's an amazing program that's being used with very successful results around the world. AGAPE became involved in this pilot project because the Université de Sherbrooke was interested in evaluating the program in a Quebec context, but all the material is in English. So the Laval CSSS suggested that AGAPE, an anglophone organization, could recruit English-speaking families to participate. It's a very worthy program, and we were very pleased to do it. If the pilot proves successful, we'll broaden the program to add more anglophone families."

## Giving goes up

According to the recently-issued BMO Harris Private Banking Study, average charitable donations in Canada have risen by more than 10 percent over last year. Not only were more people giving, they were giving more. The average donation rose from \$487 to \$557.

Ontario was the philanthropic leader, with the highest number of donors, at 85 percent, and the highest amount given, at \$778. The Prairies were close behind, with 84 percent and \$751. Quebec, at 72 percent and \$129, ranked last.

## Dealing with depression

A new publication out of British Columbia is designed to help people deal with depression. The Anti-Depression Skills Workbook provides an overview of the illness, tips on how it can be effectively managed, and a guide to changing behavior patterns that might trigger it.

There are four ways to obtain the publication: read it on screen; download a copy; listen online or download a “talking book” version; or order a print copy at [www.comh.ca/antidepressant-skills/adult/](http://www.comh.ca/antidepressant-skills/adult/).

## Honouring volunteers

GIV3, an innovative nonprofit organization that encourages Canadians to donate to charities, has just launched a program to honour volunteers. Each week a special volunteer nominated by one of its charity partners will be featured on the GIV3 website, Facebook page and Twitter feed.

GIV3, launched three years ago, aims to convince Canadians to donate at least three percent of their income to charity, and to do volunteer work for at least three hours a month. It provides an Internet stage for charitable organizations to publicize and promote their work. The idea has caught on: over 100 community organizations have signed on as charity partners. For information: [www.GIV3.ca](http://www.GIV3.ca).

## In brief

**David Cassidy** has been named president of the board of Seniors Action Quebec.

Dr. **Victor Goldbloom** has been re-named president of the board of the Montreal Health and Social Services Agency.

**Fred Jensen** has been appointed director general of CCS (Catholic Community Services).

**Lili-Anna Peresa** has been named new president and executive director of Centraide of Greater Montreal.

St. Columba House turns 95 this year.

CCS (Catholic Community Services) is 80 years old.

The Constance Lethbridge Rehabilitation Centre has just celebrated its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

The NDG Community Council has turned 70.

The Donald Berman UP House was awarded the Douglas Utting Award for “significant contribution to the field of mental health”.

AMI-Quebec is offering teleworkshops covering obsessions, medications, dealing with court orders, and elder abuse. For information: 1 866 396 2433.

The Volunteer Bureau of Montreal is offering training workshops in 2013 on volunteer recruitment; selection and training; integration and supervision; handling difficult situations; and volunteer management. To register: 514 842 3351.

An Information and support guide for caregivers of mentally-ill persons is available from AMI-Quebec at 514 486 1448.

The editor welcomes story ideas: 514 937 4309

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