



NETWORK NEWS

GROWING OUR COMMUNITY THROUGH SHARED LEARNING •
FAIRE CROÎTRE LA COMMUNAUTÉ EN PARTAGEANT NOS CONNAISSANCES
Issue 2, Spring 2007

We are pleased to bring you a second edition of Network News. At our 2nd Annual Networking Workshop last November, the value of coming together to share ideas and experiences was felt by all participants. Quoique les occasions de nous rassembler en groupe soient rares, nous pourrions utiliser ce forum afin qu'une communication fluide et permanente lie tous les groupes.

For this issue of Network News, residents, staff and volunteers from each of the network groups volunteered to record the news from their communities. Merci à tous ceux qui ont contribué.

If you have any ideas or suggestions for our next issue of Network News, please contact Bridget at (514) 932-2199; ensemble@labrienville.org

• NEWS FROM NETWORK MEMBERS •

OUR HARBOUR...

By Gayle, Liane, Kathryn, and Sabina

The fall and winter season was eventful for all the Our Harbour residents. Here are some highlights:

On a fall day in October, five residents and three volunteers hiked to the summit of Mont St Hilaire. We enjoyed a perfect day with friendly camaraderie and the packed lunches were a pleasant reward for our endurance. Closer to Christmas, our wonderful volunteers treated us to the following excursions: The imaginatively decorated Christmas tree exhibit at the Museum of fine arts; displays of over 290 Nativity Crèches at St Joseph's Oratory; the joyful holiday celebrations at the Coptic Orthodox church and St Francis church Christmas Bazaar.

Celebrating Our Harbour's Christmas party, with all of the volunteers, board of directors, residents and family members, was the highlight of good times. There was a very tasty dinner, sumptuous desserts, carol singing, brain games and a hilarious gift exchange game. Kathryn, one of the residents, has this to say: "I have been living at Our Harbour since December 2005. I have had

my share of ups and downs and I would like to thank Our Harbour and the volunteers for all the support they have shown me. It has made a real difference”.

Sabina, another resident, says “God has been very good to me by giving me Our Harbour and I have been improving ever since I came here. It is just unbelievable, I am able to take better care of myself, and I feel very healthy. God bless everyone at Our Harbour, and everyone who donates their time so generously. I have honestly never felt better.”

All of us residents certainly agree with Kathryn and Sabina and wholly support all the volunteers and staff of Our Harbour.

Our Harbour’s Coordinator, Perveen Khokhar, can be reached at (450) 671-9160; ourharbour@ourharbour.rocler.qc.ca

LES TOITS D’EMILE...

Par Kateri Cree

En décembre dernier, nous avons eu le plaisir d’accueillir une nouvelle locataire aux Toits d’Émile. Nous sommes toujours heureux de voir une personne s’intégrer graduellement à notre communauté et s’y épanouir. Nous avons aussi dû dire au revoir à une personne qui nous est chère afin qu’elle puisse prendre son envol, chose pas facile à faire après une si belle aventure à ses côtés. Nous souhaitons donc beaucoup de bonheur et de succès à notre nouvelle venue ainsi qu’à notre ancien colocataire.

Heureusement, la fête de Noël nous a permis de nous retrouver tout ensemble, anciens et nouveaux, et de célébrer aux cotés de nos bénévoles si dévoués. Nous avons passé une soirée d’animation remplie de rires et de joie qui nous a ramené à des souvenirs de notre petite enfance! De plus, nous avons dégusté un délicieux festin préparé par tous les gens présents.

Cette année, nous espérons faire une activité spéciale par mois afin de rendre la vie de tous les jours plus vivante et agréable. Ainsi, nous avons partagé un délicieux dîner spaghetti en janvier, une formidable fondue au chocolat de Saint-Valentin le 14 février, et nous nous sommes sucrer le bec à la cabane à sucre en mars.

Les toits d’Émile est encore une jeune communauté, mais elle est pleine d’espoir et d’entrain, et nous nous réjouissons à l’idée de réaliser des rêves en commun avec L’Abri en Ville, Our Harbour de Saint-Lambert et Sequences de Toronto. En fait, l’atelier annuel d’apprentissage de réseau de novembre 2006 fut une merveilleuse opportunité de rencontrer plusieurs participants actifs au sein des ces organismes et de raviver notre désir de travailler main dans la main avec eux afin d’accomplir de grands exploits ! Au plaisir de vous revoir, et à bientôt !

Vous pouvez rejoindre Kateri Cree, coordinatrice de Les toits d’Émile au (450) 699-9292; emileorganisme@yahoo.ca

TORONTO...

By Jack Kugelmass

Over the course of the past year, our planning group has learned a great deal about the model that is in place in Montréal, Châteauguay and St. Lambert. We have also had the opportunity to meet with staff, volunteers and residents from the existing projects, who, thanks to the support of the J.W. McConnell Foundation, have been able to travel to Toronto to join us on several

occasions. We have also taken the time to learn about the existing community sector support system for people living with major psychiatric illness in the GTA (Greater Toronto Area).

We have to date elicited representation from a variety of local churches, synagogues, people living with mental illness, as well as family members. We have a fairly large list of interested individuals who might wish to volunteer, supportive faith communities, who would be willing to help us recruit volunteers and build support for the project, and from important mental-health professionals and institutions who recognize the value of creating such communities of support for people who otherwise are marginalized in our community.

We are now at the point of incorporating ourselves, and are applying for our own charitable number. We have a working planning committee, and as soon as our incorporation papers are completed, we will move forward in many areas, to make our project real. As I write this report, we are calling ourselves "Friendship Places GTA." If the government agrees that this name is one that we can use, we will go forward with it and announce the name officially on a website that we will launch as part of our planning, promotion, and networking activities.

Interested people can contact Jack Kugelmass, Interim Chairperson at (416) 787-3384; jkugelmass@gmail.com

L'ABRI EN VILLE ...

By Jerome Kierans

The annual hamburger supper of L'Abri residents was very successful this year. We ate well and voted on a number of activities for 2007, based on the amount earned through the sale of our 2006 Christmas cards and hasty notes. We will once again attend summer camp and organize parties and get-togethers. Our organization for the design, judging, packaging and selling of cards for 2007 started as well.

In February several of us travelled to Ottawa. Our day began with a visit to Centre 454. The walk from Centre 454 to the restaurant was a very cold one! Diana, Rick, Bridget and I learned a great deal about this oasis for Ottawa's needy from director Mary Martha Hale. The Anglican Diocese had beautifully graced these people in Ottawa with its mission.

Our mission in Ottawa was also to speak at St. Joseph's Parish and to a group of people interested in L'Abri en Ville. Approximately 40 people came and the evening was hosted by Richard Haughian of St. Joseph's. Eleanor and Audrey talked about how L'Abri en Ville got started and Diana spoke about volunteering. Maureen explained the role of the coordinator and Rick and I spoke about our life experiences at L'Abri en Ville and belonging to community, which is paramount.

Richard Haughian invited everyone to leave their email addresses and phone numbers; we were pleased that the audience seemed inspired by the meeting.

More recently, twenty residents, four volunteers and a coordinator attended winter camp at Oka National Park. We skied, snow-shoed and walked on trails in the woods. We ate like kings and queens and we played Scrabble and Chinese checkers. Our beds were very comfortable and the rooms very warm.

L'Abri en Ville coordinators Beverly Kerr, Marianne Metrakos, and Loraine Jacmain can be reached at (514) 932-2199; info@labrienville.org.

You may also want to check out L'Abri en Ville's revamped website. Guidebook material is now easy to access electronically and photo galleries are up. Many thanks to volunteer web designer Yael Barak. www.labrienville.org

• NEW NETWORK HORIZONS •

OTTAWA...

By Bridget Glassco

On February 12th, the AD committee held its first information meeting at St. Joseph's Parish in Ottawa. Jerome Kierans, Rick Ottoni, Audrey Bean, Diana Bennett, Maureen Ramsay, Eleanor Beattie and Bridget Glassco all travelled to Ottawa to help impart the spirit of the L'Abri model to interested individuals in the Ottawa area. There was a fantastic turnout of 43 people and clearly a great deal of interest.

Eleanor and Bridget returned to Ottawa on March 6, this time accompanied by Sandra Tucker, to attend the first meeting convened by the Ottawa group itself. The group, consisting of twenty-seven people, had many questions for the L'Abri representatives about the model and identified several short-term objectives. These included continuing to familiarize themselves with the model, identifying existing housing resources for people with a mental illness in the Ottawa area, and mapping the current capacities, time and talent of group members. They will be working on these objectives in preparation for their next meeting, scheduled for **April 10 at First Unitarian Church, 30 Cleary Ave K2A 3Z9, 7pm.**

Thanks to everyone who provided contacts and ideas for reaching people in Ottawa.

If you would like more information about the Ottawa group, please contact Bridget at the L'Abri en Ville office: (514) 932-2199; ensemble@labrienville.org

• NEWS FOR THE NETWORK •

March was an exciting month for **Planned Lifetime Advocacy Network (PLAN)**, a Vancouver organization that, like L'Abri en Ville, is part of the McConnell Foundation's Applied Dissemination initiative. PLAN's mission is to "**help families secure the future for their relative with a disability**" and they have developed three policy initiatives to this end. These include a disability savings plan, a disability savings grant and a Canada disability savings bond. These policies were adopted by the federal government and announced in the federal budget on March 16. For more information, visit www.plan.ca/homepage.php.

Another encouraging development is the commitment of the federal government to create a **Canadian Mental Health Commission** headed by the Honourable Michael J.L. Kirby, who became passionate about the issue of Canada's mental health system when he chaired The Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science & Technology. Last May, the committee released their report ***Out of the Shadows at Last*** on mental health, mental illness and addiction in Canada. The Canadian Mental Health Commission will work on implementing a national strategy for mental health based on the recommendations in this report. For more information, visit http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ahc-asc/media/nr-cp/2005/2005_130_e.html

Good news in Quebec: On January 1st, The Employment Assistance Program was replaced by two new initiatives with the aim to help facilitate greater community participation by recipients. The Social Assistance Program has been created for those temporarily unable to work, and **The Social Solidarity Program**, for people with a **severely limited capacity for employment**. Recipients of the Social Solidarity Program are granted a monthly social solidarity benefit. The financial assets allowances are greater and more flexible than under the Employment Assistance Program and will, among other things, allow for money to be set aside for retirement. For more information, visit http://www.mess.gouv.qc.ca/securite-du-revenu/ln dex_en.asp

Upcoming Events in the Community

Montreal

Ami Quebec Speaker Evening: **Employment Opportunities for Consumers** with Diane Vinet, Executive Director, Collections Innara & Nicole Lahaie, Coordinator of Clinical Services, Wellington Centre. **Monday, May 14, 7:30 pm, 4333 Côte-Ste-Catherine Rd.**

Ami-Quebec 30th anniversary celebration: **"Inspired by Depression: Tchaikovsky's Dark Genius"** performed by Dr. Richard Kogan. **Wednesday, June 6, Oscar Peterson Concert Hall, Concordia University, 7141 Sherbrooke St. W.** General Admission \$40, Sponsor tickets \$100, Patron category \$150. (514) 486-1448.

St. Lambert

Social Justice Fair. Sunday, April 22, 12-3pm. Saint Francis of Assisi Church, **844 Notre-Dame, St. Lambert.** Our Harbour will be selling baked goods to raise money for resident activities.

Centennial School Garage Sale. Saturday, May 12, 10am – 3pm, 800 Hudson St. Greenfield Park. Our Harbour will be selling used goods. If you would like to donate clothing or household items to be sold, please contact Perveen at (450) 671-9171.

Toronto

"Face to Face: Understanding Mental Illness" CMHA Toronto Branch **Wednesday, April 11 9am – 4pm, 700 Lawrence Ave. W. suite 480,** cost: \$85. Contact Celine Bart, Public Education Coordinator, (416) 789-7957 ext. 295.

Ottawa

Mental Health Symposium 2007. A collaborative effort of CMHA Ottawa, The Department of Psychiatry at the University of Ottawa, the Royal Ottawa Health Care Group, and the University of Ottawa Institute of Mental Health Research. **Saturday April 19 – Sunday April 20, 9am – 5pm, 3090 Carling Ave.** Contact Julie Arsenault at CMHA (613) 737-7791 ext. 217.