

CELEBRATING OUR QUARTER CENTURY!



A treasure trove of warm, everyday experiences

By CECILY LAWSON

AT L'ABRI'S first volunteer training session in 1991, founder **Eleanor Beattie** referred to ordinary people doing extraordinary things. Twenty-five years later, we're a vibrant—indeed extraordinary—organization, but very much focused on the ordinary, on everyday life and experiences.

L'Abri grew out of the conviction that social isolation was a major problem for people with serious mental illness, and that inclusion was at the heart of recovery. So, over the years, L'Abri people have aspired to create the ordinary: a roof over the head, food on the table and a sense of belonging to a community of friends.

We can all relate to the cherished memories of L'Abri's first 25 years. A favourite for many is of campfires on the beach at Camp Kinkora. For years, a resident named **Tony** was in charge of building and tending the fires, and board member **Sharyn Scott**

would rally everyone to join the circle to chat, sing and tell stories.

For years, Hallowe'en parties were held at the Bahama apartment in NDG. Bahama resident **Beverley Hartley** recalls one such party where she dyed the tub water red, floated plastic eyeballs in the water, and dangled a lone arm over the side of the tub. All night long, the party was punctuated with yelps as people entered the bathroom.

Relationships can be a minefield for people with mental illness, so establishing a community in which relationships can grow has been a key value for L'Abri.

A COMMUNITY IN WHICH RELATIONSHIPS CAN GROW

Benny resident **Rick Ottoni** remembers his reaction in his early days at L'Abri. "Why do the volunteers care [about us]?" he asked. "So many people had dismissed us, ignored us, ridiculed us. Here we're actually valued;

PRESIDENTS' REPORT

Our evolving real estate search

By GAELE EAKIN and DALE MacDONALD

OUR RENTED OFFICE in the Queen Elizabeth Health Complex is a pleasant but limited space. Our executive director and two coordinators share it with an administrative assistant and a student doing a social work placement.

We have let go of the small office we rented next door to accommodate Applied Dissemination, a program to support groups working to start residential programs based on our model. When that wound down last year, we rearranged the main office to house the archives and filing cabinets previously in the small room. But now it has become apparent to the board that we need more space.

A couple of years ago we began to discuss the possibility of buying a property. After almost a quarter century of operation, wonderful support from the community, and excellent stewardship, L'Abri was in a position to permanently fix its place in the community and guarantee

those living with mental illness a resource for housing.

The original idea was a home for three residents—possibly combined with a floor for tenants—but this evolved into a plan for a building housing our office below and three residents above.

In November 2014, a real estate committee was formed, and guided by a **HAVE SO FAR MADE 23 VISITS TO PROPERTIES** trusted agent, we began our search in Ville-Émard in south-west Montreal. The challenge was to find an adequate building in a location convenient to residents and volunteers. Complicating our search were zoning restrictions making it difficult to find a property suitable for both residential and professional use.

By spring of 2015 we returned to the idea of simply housing three residents, possibly in a condo. We began looking in NDG, and made offers to purchase one and later another condo, both of which seemed ideal. But there was something

wrong with each: either structural problems found in inspection, or condo committee complications.

As purchase of a condo seemed imminent, we canvassed our residents and were surprised to learn all were reluctant to move, even to a nicer space. So after discussing the situation in detail we decided to look for an office space alone, big enough to allow for residents to get together for activities.

Recently we thought we had finally found our perfect office, ideally located in the heart of Westmount. However, after the conditions of sale became too complex to pursue, we decided to abandon our offer to purchase.

We have so far made 23 visits to properties. We will keep looking, optimistic we will find what we are searching for: a bigger and better space for our wonderful staff, with a place for the board to meet and for residents and committees to conduct meetings and activities. 

GOVERNANCE 2016-17

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

CO-PRESIDENTS

Gael Eakin
Dale MacDonald

VICE-PRESIDENT

Eric Widdicombe*

TREASURER

Sharyn Scott

SECRETARY

Susan Purcell

IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT

Campbell Stuart

BOARD MEMBERS

Sandra Baines
Afric Eustace
Carolyn Harrison
Suzanne Herscovitch
Jerome Kierans
Cecily Lawson
Christian Nielsen
Heidi Paul
Kosta Theofanos
Sheila Woodhouse*

*NEW MEMBER

ADVISORY COUNCIL

Robert Bassett
Eleanor Beattie, PhD
Susan Grundy
Marc Laporta, MD
Marjorie Sharp, BCL, LL.M.



SAM BEITEL

L'Abri en Ville's board of directors was introduced at our Annual General Meeting in March 2016. (LEFT TO RIGHT) Cecily Lawson, Jerome Kierans, Beverley Hartley, an observer, Sandra Baines, Carolyn Harrison, Suzanne Herscovitch, Susan Purcell, Christian Nielsen, Gael Eakin, Campbell Stuart and Eric Widdicombe. Obtain your copy of the **2015 Annual Report** through L'Abri en Ville. (Turn to p. 8 for contact details.)

VOLUNTEER PROFILE

Cecily Lawson

Always sunny and ready to help out

By SUSAN PURCELL



CHRISTIAN ROHDE

A LOVELY SMILE, a ready laugh, and a willingness to pitch in. Such are the traits that make **Cecily Lawson** a much-loved volunteer. Since joining L'Abri eight years ago, Cecily has enriched us with her people skills and her talent in communications. Most recently she has found time in her busy life to steer our committee on individual fundraising.

A native Montrealer, Cecily worked for 16 years until 1997 at the Royal Victoria Hospital, where she was a public information officer and eventually director of communications. Years later, when working as a consultant, she was approached about volunteering at L'Abri by her friend **Gael Eakin**, now our co-president. She sat down with Gael and **Nancy Grayson**—who she'd known at the Royal Vic when Nancy was director of social work—and they "presented such an interesting picture of the organization that I said yes."

In 2008 Cecily joined the volunteer team at the Bahama apartment, housing three women. Over the years Cecily has graciously hosted potluck suppers and Scrabble nights at her downtown apartment, and joined

other volunteers for visits to Atwater Market and walks on the mountain with residents.

Before long, Cecily was helping write and edit our bi-annual newsletter, and pitching in to write personal thank-you notes to our donors. She was soon named to our board of directors. And about five years ago, she accepted a request by **Audrey Bean** to work on individual fundraising, including composing letters to donors.

"Of course, L'Abri needs financial support to carry out its mission", she says. "But we're lucky in that we have so many loyal supporters, people who are friends of our founders and board members and residents. They've known about us for years and have donated to us year in, year out. And we have new supporters too."

Finding the time for all this cannot have been easy for Cecily, a world traveller and enthusiastic golfer with a place in the Eastern Townships. Four and a half years ago she married Bob Carswell, who she often accompanies on birdwatching trips. She is on the board and edits the newsletter for a school run by a friend in rural Uganda, and has recently joined the board of Friends of McGill Library, a group organizing lectures and special events.

In spite of all this, Cecily stepped up in the past year to head individual fundraising, filling a huge gap left by the sudden death of Audrey Bean and withdrawal from active involvement by **Eleanor Beattie**. At the same time she joined our executive. We are so grateful for her involvement. **A**

(ABOVE) CECILY LAWSON ANIMATES A NETWORK WORKSHOP DISCUSSION.

CELEBRATING CONT'D FROM PAGE 1

before we were treated as worthless." Volunteers in turn will tell you that they joined L'Abri in order to help, but found that they were as often on the receiving end as the giving end. When former

BELIEF IN THE POWER OF THE ORDINARY

lead coordinator **Marianne Metrakos** suffered a bout of sciatica, residents came to her house to walk her dog and help with the housecleaning.

Perhaps most heartening to witness are the kinds of friendships that have grown up among residents. Longtime Benny residents **George Harris**, **David Seymour** and **Rick Ottoni** consider themselves a band of brothers. They tease and support each other, and even collude to compose jokes. "I've never been as understood by anyone," comments David about his friendship with Rick. At Bahama apartment, Beverley calls former resident Elise one of her best friends. Though Elise no longer needs the support of L'Abri and has moved on, she and Beverley see each other on a regular basis.

THE ESSENCE OF L'ABRI IS HEART

Things evolve in the course of 25 years. L'Abri has grown from one apartment to ten, and from a desk and phone in loaned space to a very busy office with a staff of four. What has stayed the same is the character of the organization. As a longtime volunteer remarked, "The essence of L'Abri is heart." Heart, and a belief in the power of the ordinary. **A**

FAMILY ALBUM



L'ABRI'S VOLUNTEERS, RESIDENTS AND STAFF SAT DOWN TOGETHER IN DECEMBER FOR A FESTIVE POTLUCK SUPPER TO CELEBRATE THE SEASON. WE HAD A GREAT TURNOUT FOR THE GATHERING HELD AT KENSINGTON PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

Holiday PARTY

L'ABRI EN VILLE

Douce neige, bons amis

Par MARIE-JOSÉE PICHÉ

EN MARS dernier une vingtaine d'entre nous sommes arrivés à Oka par autocar, le cœur à la fête. L'air frais nous a réveillés, et la vue de l'horizon gelé du Lac des Deux-Montagnes était magnifique. Le chalet était bondé d'enfants, et le feu de la cheminée nous rassemblait comme dans un cocon de paix. À midi la lasagne bouillait de saveur— grosse portion suivie de biscuits aux pépites de chocolat. Après le copieux dîner, nous avons rejoint les sentiers de marche où tout était pur; le paysage, la douce neige dans le silence. Les amis de L'Abri en ont bien profité pour refaire le plein. Quelques-uns cependant ont préféré rester à l'intérieur jouer au Scrabble. Le retour légèrement inquiétant à cause de l'embouteillage de la circulation s'est quand même déroulé dans la bonne humeur. Que nous réservait la température en ville ? Un climat de grêle à la fin de notre expédition. Certains ont pris un taxi et les autres sont entrés dans les autobus par l'arrière. La journée a vraiment fini par nous faire rire. 🍷

MARIE-JOSÉE PICHÉ EST RÉSIDENTE DE L'APPARTEMENT BRASILIA.

Oka DAY TRIP

DENISE HUDON



IN A DISPLAY OF TRUE CANADIAN SPIRIT, PARTICIPANTS SET OUT ON A SNOWY AFTERNOON TO EXPLORE OKA PARK'S BEAUTIFUL HIKING TRAILS. FORTUNATELY, WE ALL CAME PREPARED FOR THE WEATHER. (LEFT) MAPPING OUT THE DAY'S ROUTE WITH ONE OF THE PARK GUIDES. (BELOW) BARBORA MACIKOVA LEARNS CHESS FROM A MASTER—PIERRE JODOIN (AT CENTRE).



SAM BEITEL



DENISE HUDON

FAMILY ALBUM

GAMES NIGHT



SAM BEITEL

EVERYONE WAS A WINNER AT GAMES NIGHT. HERE WE ARE (ABOVE) ENJOYING OUR POTLUCK DINNER BEFORE SETTLING DOWN TO THE BOARD GAMES.

Good mix of fun and competition

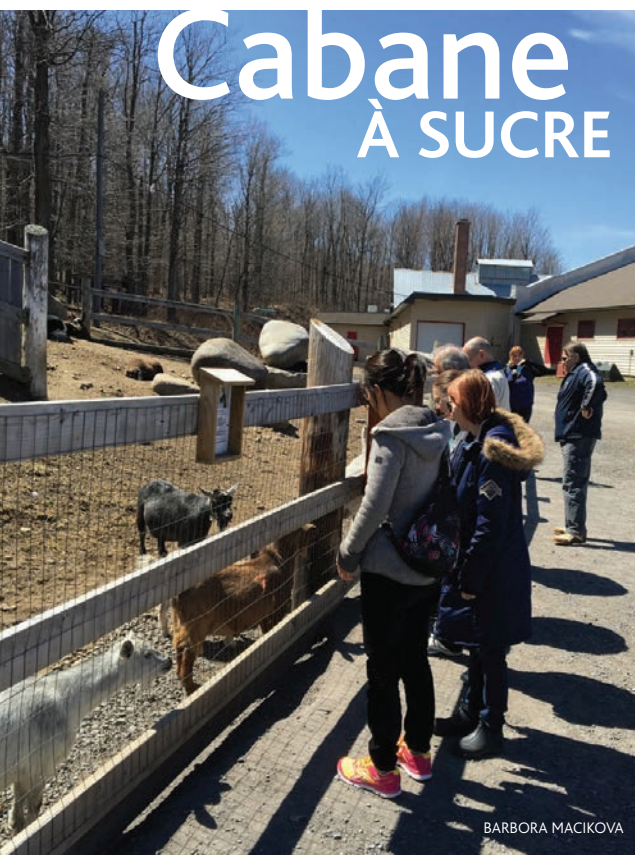
By JADE SE

I'D BEEN TRYING to make it to Games Night for months, and this past February, I finally got there. Neither the weather, nor the fact that I almost approached the wrong house looking for Gael Eakin's place, affected the great time I had. I didn't quite know what to expect but I had a pleasant surprise. The evening felt relaxed and comfortable and I really liked sharing a meal with everyone in the spacious comfort of Gael's lovely dining room. Scrabble seems to be the game of choice, and I was more than happy to take part, since I finally got to learn how to play properly. I've always thought board games bring out people's true nature—and it was a pleasure to see people getting into a game and having fun. I hope to attend the next Games Night, and I think I'll make a cheesecake. 🍰

JADE SE IS A MCGILL STUDENT AND SPECIAL VOLUNTEER.



(TOP) FOR THIS QUINTET OF PLAYERS, THE MORE, THE MERRIER. (BOTTOM) JADE SE (AT CENTRE) PICKS UP SOME OF THE FINER POINTS OF SCRABBLE.



BARBORA MACIKOVA

WE HAD PERFECT SPRING WEATHER ON APRIL 21ST FOR THIS YEAR'S TRIP TO LA GOUDRELLE IN MONT-SAINT-GRÉGOIRE. (AT LEFT) THESE GENTLE GOATS WERE QUITE CURIOUS ABOUT US. (RIGHT) WORKING OFF THE CALORIES AFTER FEASTING ON THE MAPLES' SWEET OUTPUT. (BELOW) FRESH AIR AND SUNSHINE ON THE TRACTOR TRAIN.



STAR GALE



STAR GALE

A TRIBUTE

Judy Stevens

A volunteer at heart

By SUSAN PURCELL



RESIDENTS of the Bessborough apartment and many whose lives she touched at L'Abri en Ville were shocked and saddened at the passing of volunteer **Judy Stevens** on February 7 at the age of 76. Judy will be especially missed for her unique warmth and intensity in connecting with others. "She really listened", says former coordinator **Marianne Metrakos**, a close friend. "She was a very curious person who loved people." Best known for co-founding the community organization

Share the Warmth in 1989 to provide food and clothing to the needy, Judy learned about L'Abri from her NDG neighbour **Richard Tobin**, a volunteer at the Jolicoeur apartment. In spite of her demanding job, in the 90s she joined the volunteer team at the Madison apartment (later renamed

UNIQUE WARMTH AND INTENSITY IN CONNECTING WITH OTHERS

Bessborough). She remained involved until recently, a sterling example of patience and respect in her dealings with residents.

Judy joined our board—in part to gain knowledge, Marianne explains, "to inform her work at Share the Warmth". Over

the years she generously shared own her valuable knowledge, especially of fundraising.

At her 2013 induction into the Pointe-Saint-Charles Hall of Recognition, she said, "I'm a volunteer at heart. Community work is my soul."

Born in Brooklyn, New York, Judy moved to Montreal in 1959. She worked in cosmetics until her late forties, when she was struck by the plight of the homeless outside her office building and decided to tackle it head on. Hundreds of people who benefited from her work turned out for her funeral, highlighted by a First Nations woman's chant to accompany Judy's soul on its journey. 🌱

**"SHE REALLY
LISTENED"**

REMEMBERING & HONOURING

Gifts to L'Abri en Ville IN RECOGNITION OF LOVED ONES

IN MEMORY OF
JACQUIE ANGUS

Margot Adair

IN MEMORY OF
AUDREY BEAN

Marianne Metrakos
Grant Munro

IN HONOUR OF
ELEANOR BEATTIE

Nancy Hovey
Jean Claude Klein

IN HONOUR OF
DIANA BENNETT

Janet Casey

IN MEMORY OF
LAURETTE GARGANO

Nicolas Chiacchiarello

IN HONOUR OF
MARY MARTHA GUY

Rhoda & Maier Blostein
Cynthia Fish

IN HONOUR OF
MRS I. HABEL OF UTAH

Sylvia E. Heuckendorff

IN MEMORY OF
RAYMONDE HACHEY

Anna Benko
Johanne Patry,
*Music Director of
the Loyola Chapel
Community*
*Les amis et amies de
la chapelle Loyola*

IN HONOUR OF
GEORGE HARRIS

Gwen Harris
John MacLennan

IN HONOUR OF
DAVID HOGARTH

Mary & Donald Hogarth

IN MEMORY OF
LINDA

Florence Dobson

IN MEMORY OF
GERRY MacDONALD

Reda MacDonald

IN MEMORY OF
JACK O'HALLERON

Margaret McMullan

IN HONOUR OF
RICK OTTONI

Sandra M. Morais

IN MEMORY OF
JUDY STEVENS

Patricia Kearney

IN MEMORY OF
KIKI TREMAIN

Frances Sault
James Tremain

IN MEMORY OF
KEVIN D. WALSH

Kathleen B.
& Richard C. Harris

SAVE THE DATE

**Montreal
WALKS**

for Mental Health

Sunday, 16 October 2016

PHILLIPS SQUARE

www.mtlwalks.com

NOTES FROM THE OFFICE

By CATHY DeCHAMBEAU



An empty apartment springs back to life



L'ABRI EN VILLE

NORMALLY, we furnish each of our apartments with donations and second-hand buys, but when we opened our LaSalle apartment, we let one of the new residents move in furniture from his previous home. Unfortunately, about a year and a half later, he decided to move in with his son. This

(ABOVE) VOLUNTEERS **NORMA SINGERMAN** (LEFT) AND **SANDRA HENDLISZ** PUT THE FINISHING TOUCHES ON OUR BRIGHT LASALLE APARTMENT.

might have been a much bigger problem, if the other two roommates had not by then gone on to other situations.

The apartment sat empty from December 2015 until this April. During the winter we had been hoping to purchase a condo for three residents, so we thought about closing LaSalle.

When the condo plan fell through, we decided to return LaSalle to service, and the work began. We put out word of our vacancies to social workers at

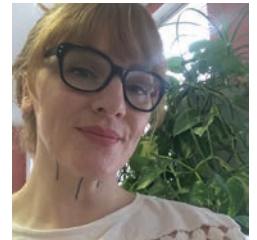
A BIG THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO HELPED OUT

English-language hospitals. Before long we found a brother and sister who were thrilled at the chance to live together again after years apart. Moving day was set for April 1. Suddenly we were in desperate need of furniture.

Email requests for help went out to the L'Abri community. The father of one volunteer was moving, and gave us a beautiful dining room table. Another volunteer had just sold her house, and donated a living room couch and lots of household items. Volunteer **Norma Singerman**, an interior decorator, advised us on where to place the couch and framed art. Another volunteer offered his handyman skills to hang pictures, and schlep around many bags of items from the Dollar Store. A big thank you to everyone who helped out.

Coming & going

YEAR-END saw the departure of our longtime coordinator, **Loraine Jacmain**, who wished to pursue new experiences. Loraine was thanked for her many years of devotion with a gift presented at our Holiday Party. We are pleased to welcome former student **Star Gale** (RIGHT) as a new coordinator. 🌟



STAR GALE

ANSWERS TO Quarter-century Quiz (p. 8): 1: A, B and C 2: A 3: C 4: C 5: A 6: C 7: B 8: B 9: A 10: C



"I would like to support L'Abri."

NAME

ADDRESS

APARTMENT

CITY

PROVINCE

POSTAL CODE

TELEPHONE

EMAIL

MY GIFT OF \$

IS IN ☐ HONOUR OF ☐ MEMORY OF:

CREDIT CARD

☐ VISA

☐ MASTERCARD

TELEPHONE 514 932-2199 to donate by credit card

CARD NUMBER

EXPIRY

NAME ON CREDIT CARD

CHEQUE

Payable to: "L'Abri en Ville" 2100 Marlowe Ave., Suite 650, Montreal QC H4A 3L5

We thank you sincerely for your generosity.

CHARITABLE REGISTRATION
89150 9572 RR0001

QUARTER-CENTURY QUIZ

Test your current knowledge of L'Abri en Ville, then turn to page 7 for the answers.

- 1 HOW DO OUR RESIDENTS COMBAT STIGMA AGAINST MENTAL ILLNESS?**
 - A Take part in *Montreal Walks for Mental Health*
 - B Address students at universities
 - C Sit on our board of directors
- 2 WHERE'S OUR NEW SUMMER GETAWAY LOCATED?**
 - A Île Saint-Bernard
 - B Oka
 - C Camp Kinkora
- 3 WHAT'S THE AVERAGE AGE OF THE L'ABRI RESIDENTS?**
 - A Thirties
 - B Forties
 - C Fifties
- 4 WHAT DID RESIDENTS RECENTLY CREATE TO RAISE FUNDS?**
 - A Illustrated hasty notes
 - B Homemade cookies
 - C Painted Christmas tree bulbs
- 5 WHAT'S THE NAME OF L'ABRI'S OTTAWA COUNTERPART?**
 - A Ancoura
 - B Our Harbour
 - C Project PAL
- 6 WHAT'S THE MOST POPULAR GAME AT GAMES NIGHT?**
 - A Crazy 8s
 - B Backgammon
 - C Scrabble
- 7 WHAT'S OUR L'ABRI LOGO?**
 - A A heart
 - B A tree
 - C A house
- 8 HOW MANY REGULAR VOLUNTEERS DO WE HAVE AT L'ABRI?**
 - A 48
 - B 75
 - C 105



GAEL EAKIN AND MARY MARTHA GUY
COLLABORATED TO CREATE THIS
COLOURFUL PASTEL DRAWING WHICH
SYMBOLIZES L'ABRI EN VILLE AND
OUR THIRTY RESIDENTS.

- 9 WHAT KIND OF PROFESSIONAL TRAINING DO OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND MOST OF OUR STAFF MEMBERS HAVE?**
 - A Social worker
 - B Psychologist
 - C Community organizer
- 10 WHICH APARTMENT IS IN A COMPLEX WITH FIVE OF OUR OTHER APARTMENTS?**
 - A LaSalle
 - B Jolicoeur
 - C Lafayette

UNSEEN HANDS

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