

Residents can't wait to get back to their routines

By SUSAN PURCELL

More than two years of lockdown have been hard on our residents...

"I would get anxious and a bit depressed, with too much time on my hands", says **Eileen**. "I missed going to art classes and the community kitchen." She's been grateful for her long-time roommates **Terryann** and **Karen**. The three women go on walks together, and even shop for groceries and clothes together. Eileen welcomes a gradual, cautious return to outings like a recent visit to the Biodôme (*at right*).

In the first year, **Shmoal** found it stressful to lose his many activities and adapt to staying home.

"It's made me less outgoing"

"The worst was before vaccines, when we didn't know much about the virus — what we could do, where we could go." Eventually, **Zoom** helped break the isolation, and his gym and UpHouse activities reopened, "but then they'd close again. It was like a yoyo."

Jerome says after decades of getting up for work, two years spent mostly at home made him less outgoing. "What's really hard is hauling myself out of my [NDG] neighborhood. I used to go to the Jewish General [Hospital] every day. Now I go to stores or take walks near here, but hate going further." One improvement COVID-19 brought is that **Jerome** and roommate **Gulam** talk more, and eat together most evenings after **Gulam** comes home from work.

"The worst was before vaccines, when we didn't know much about the virus —

"Anxious & depressed with too much time on my hands"



MICHELLE MILLS

AFTER A COUPLE OF YEARS WITHOUT VISITORS, THE FISH AT THE BIODÔME (ABOVE) MUST HAVE BEEN AS GLAD TO SEE OUR RESIDENTS AS THEY WERE TO SEE THE FISH

Eileen saw one of her sisters last Christmas, and the other at Easter, but she misses the big get-togethers her Irish family used to have. **Shmoal** has seen his

father and half-sister once each in two years. When he visited an unvaccinated family member, he was "very uncomfortable and

worried. I wore two masks." He's looking forward to meeting several babies, including a pair of twins, born recently on his stepmother's side.

Jerome sums up the feeling for many of L'Abri's residents, saying that, "L'Abri's my family. I've missed them and I can't wait to get back into things."

2021 Annual Report



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Montreal's rising cost of living a concern

By STAR GALE

STAFF SCHEDULES in the L'Abri office have continued to change and shift in response to the needs of our community and our efforts to keep one another safe. We've also adjusted schedules to accommodate exciting changes in our staff membership; welcoming **Lori Goodhand** (see p. 3) to our team in May!

AS WE APPROACH JULY – or the moving season, as many Montrealers know it – L'Abri's board and staff have been monitoring local discourse about the rising rental and living costs in our city. This is of particular interest to our community, as many of our members make do on modest incomes, and all of the L'Abri apartments are rented. While residents have always benefited from the L'Abri model of splitting living expenses three

ways, we remain **concerned about the limited opportunities residents have to move on to total independence** in their communities. Over the summer months we will continue to monitor and engage in this discourse, eager to advocate and support those most in need.

STAR IS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF L'ABRI EN VILLE

Everyone loves these mugs!

THE SEED OF THIS GREAT GIFT IDEA came from **Gael Eakin** and her partner **Charles Colby**, who last summer sat down and created a selection of colourful "30"s intertwined with our tree logo, to mark our 30th anniversary. Star was delighted, and came up with the idea of using her favourite from the bunch to decorate an anniversary mug. Our wonderful graphic designer **Jennifer Morrison** transformed the original into a series of brightly coloured squares to create nine unique configurations. This spring, when the mugs were ready, L'Abri staff packaged them in beautiful gift bags and began distributing them to our whole community. In May, president **Cecily Lawson**, at right, stopped by the office to pick hers up. If one of those packages beside Cecily is marked for you, be sure to get it soon! | SP



STAR GALE



ANATOMIE D'UN SCANDALE

(ANATOMY OF A SCANDAL)

par Sarah Vaughan

Éditions Préludes, 2019, 444 pp., traduit de l'anglais par Alice Delarbre, maintenant adapté en six épisodes (en anglais) sur Netflix

CRITIQUE DE LIVRE

Un drame légal qui cache un secret

Par MARIE-JOSÉE PICHÉE

CE ROMAN À SUSPENSE m'a été fortement recommandé par la bénévoles **Petronella Beran**. C'est un véritable « page-turner » m'a-t-elle déclaré lors d'un de ses « book club » qu'elle organisait pour nous. Hé bien oui le livre est un suspense psychologique qui nous entraîne du début à la fin dans les méandres des souvenirs de Kate, l'avocate qui reçoit l'affaire de sa vie : va-t-elle réussir à condamner James Whitehouse, cet homme politique hautement placé et marié à Sophie ? Sa relation extra-conjugale avec Olivia, qui une fois son aventure terminée l'accuse de viol, plonge Kate dans sa propre jeunesse. Mais quel secret se cache derrière ses hésitations dans ce dossier ? Une intrigue menée avec brio et qui nous condamne à ne pas la lâcher avant la fin. L'ouvrage aussi bien que la série raconte tout en nuance l'affirmation de soi.

MARIE-JOSÉE PICHÉE EST UNE RÉSIDENTE DE L'APPARTEMENT BRASILIA DEPUIS 2013

Hallelujah!

New coordinator sees mental health as part of physical health

By CECILY LAWSON

L'ABRI WELCOMED a new part-time coordinator in mid-May. **Lori Goodhand** (*at right*) is a Montrealer with 25 years experience supporting people living with mental illness in the community.

"We are very lucky to have Lori join us," notes executive director

Star Gale. "She is a skilled community organizer devoted

to mental health and wellness, and to reducing social stigma about mental illness."

On graduating with a BA in Applied Human Sciences from Concordia University, Lori worked at the Douglas Hospital in community housing and at AMI-Québec as a public health educator. "One of my objectives was to normalize the experience of mental health as part of physical health," explains Lori. "I see mental health as a spectrum. Many of us can move along the spectrum from health to

illness, and we can learn to increase our resilience and recovery so we can build meaningful lives."

Since 2008, Lori has worked in the Quebec health network to address social inequality as it

relates to mental health.

Her focus has been on helping improve the living conditions and health outcomes of residents.

"One of the things I like about L'Abri," says Lori, "is that it is not illness-centred. The residents are managing a chronic illness but it is not their main focus. They are able to do this because L'Abri offers safe, affordable, permanent housing. And it is built not only around residents but also volunteers and staff, and all of these people are engaged in a collective commitment to community."

WE CAN LEARN TO INCREASE OUR RESILIENCE & RECOVERY

I LIKE THAT L'ABRI IS NOT ILLNESS-CENTRED

CECILY IS PRESIDENT OF L'ABRI EN VILLE'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS, AND A VOLUNTEER AT THE LAFAYETTE APARTMENT

A GIANT PORTRAIT OF SINGER-POET LEONARD COHEN DOMINATES A WALL SOUTH OF THE MONTREAL MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, DRAWING THE ATTENTION OF L'ABRI RESIDENTS VISITING THE KARSH PHOTO EXHIBIT IN DECEMBER 2021.

SAM BETTEL

PHOTO COURTESY LORI GOODHAND

Tips for volunteering in an age of anxiety

By MICHELLE MILLS



TAKE CARE OF YOUR OWN HEALTH & REMAIN OPEN TO NEW APPROACHES

L'ABRI STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS attended a virtual volunteer workshop on April 7, 2022 with guest speaker Dr **Allen Fielding** (*at left*), a McGill professor and psychiatrist at the Allan Memorial Institute. Facilitated by McGill social work student Catalina Gonzalez, the workshop focussed on questions from L'Abri volunteers about how to maintain their connections with residents during the pandemic.

During the first portion, Dr Fielding spoke of the pandemic's emotional consequences. As a society, we have been bombarded with information on the pandemic, climate change and the war in Ukraine, causing worry and anxiety. To reduce this strain, he suggested participants limit their exposure to media and get their news from reliable sources to minimize false information.

When deciding their comfort level with in-person activities, Dr Fielding proposed volunteers create a personalized COVID-19 plan by considering their vaccination status, medical vulnerability, age, and responsibilities as a caregiver. Outdoor activities which allow natural social distancing such as badminton or walks would qualify as safe.

Dr Fielding recommended that in approaching residents, volunteers prioritize flexibility, adaptation, resilience, and a healthy lifestyle. This means being open to new approaches, and accepting we might not be as productive as before the pandemic.

He also recommended volunteers stay healthy by getting out of the house once a day, practicing relaxation techniques, following a regular sleep schedule and eating sensibly.

The L'Abri community thanks Dr Fielding for his informative webinar, and looks forward to another workshop in the future!

MICHELLE IS A L'ABRI EN VILLE COORDINATOR

PHOTO COURTESY ALLEN FIELDING

