

## Our offspring have grown up!

CECILY LAWSON

It's hard to believe it's been two decades since the L'Abri network was first launched. On November 2<sup>ND</sup>, **Les toits d'Émile** held a gala dinner at the Manoir D'Youville on Île-Saint-Bernard to mark the 20<sup>TH</sup> anniversary of its founding in Châteauguay in 2002.

L'Abri en Ville then was housing 30 residents and decided that, rather than expand further, it would help other communities do what it had done. Word of this initiative spread and received an enthusiastic response on the South Shore. With our help, Les toits came together in Châteauguay; and a second organization, called **Our Harbour**, was founded in Saint-Lambert.

Named after beloved Quebec poet **Émile Nelligan**, who suffered from schizophrenia, Les toits opened its first apartment two years after its founding, and

now has four apartments with eight residents. **Our Harbour** will celebrate its 20<sup>TH</sup> anniversary next year. It opened its first apartment in 2003 and now has eight apartments with 24 residents. A third member of the network located in Ottawa, **Ancoura**, was founded in 2007. It has seven townhouses, each housing three residents. The homes of all groups are scattered throughout the community, and all are supported with volunteer teams.

Over the years, the network has gathered for day-long meetings to share challenges, ideas and solutions. Professional staff use their sister organizations as sources of advice and as sounding boards. This has been particularly true during the pandemic when a number of **Zoom** get-togethers have been held. The network is vibrant and continues to thrive. Here's to the next 20 years!



COURTESY LES TOITS D'EMILE

EIGHTY PEOPLE attended the 20<sup>TH</sup> anniversary celebration for Les toits d'Émile, including founders, volunteers, residents, community organizers and members of the health network, as well as representatives of sister organization, **Our Harbour**. *Above*, **Corina Pal**, coordinator of Les toits until last May, was thanked by resident **Hamza**.

CECILY IS PRESIDENT OF L'ABRI AND AN APARTMENT VOLUNTEER

### NOTES FROM THE OFFICE

## Responding to needs in tough times

STAR GALE

**The L'Abri office** has been busy this fall. We continue to adjust schedules to accommodate social distancing, but welcome the socializing that comes when we are all together in the office. A pleasant addition to our team this fall has been intern **Kevin Hummel** from McGill School of Social Work, currently in the second year of his Bachelor's degree.

**In our spring newsletter**, I acknowledged the rising costs of living and some of the impacts we see in the residents' lives because of these changes. These last few months, our board, volunteers and staff have also had to strategize how we can best help residents when our overburdened healthcare system is not able to provide the clinical supports they have in the past. We will continue to navigate these issues with care and compassion. I am proud of how our community has rallied to face these challenges.

**Our dedicated staff** took a much-deserved staff development break in the first week of November. The three apartment coordinators and I participated in virtual conflict resolution training offered by Achieve Centre for Leadership. The day-long course offered practical tools to apply in diverse contexts. We look forward to more staff learning in the future!

STAR IS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF L'ABRI

## A sunny getaway



SAM BEITEL

**T**HE WEATHER could not have been finer for our overnight stay in August at Manoir D'Youville on Île-Saint-Bernard in Châteauguay. Pictured above are Marie-Josée, Luke, coordinator Michelle Mills, Glenn, Sean and Anne-Marie.

## Tripping down memory lane



**M**Y CHILDHOOD FRIEND and neighbour, Beth, now lives in Ontario. In late October, she and her mother, Sheila – who lives in Île-Perrot – picked me up for a drive.

We headed to our old neighbourhood in LaSalle, on 68<sup>TH</sup> Avenue and Centrale Street.

Our houses were still there, in the middle of a block with one house in between. The little tree at the end of our property is now a very large tree, and the rectangular living room window is now a bay window. But it was reassuring to see the half-wood, half-brick cottage my father built so many years ago was not much different now.

The park across the street had changed a bit, but still evoked pleasant memories. Beth's mom, who has some dementia, became very animated, telling us stories about neighbours and things they did together. Seeing that she remembered put us in good spirits, which continued as we took the scenic route back to Sheila's home for a late lunch.

It had started out raining, but became a sunny day. We all *oohed* and *aahed* at the lovely fall foliage.

TERRYANN HAS LIVED AT THE PARK APARTMENT IN VILLE-ÉMARD SINCE OUR FIRST DECADE

## Une découverte délicieuse

FLORENCE KASTNER avec MARIE-JOSÉE PICHÉ



**J**E ME PROMENAI sur l'avenue Laurier en juin pour redécouvrir le Mile End, un quartier animé de Montréal que je fréquentais il y a 30 ans. A l'ouest du boulevard St-Laurent, j'ai aperçu le charmant café « Toi, Moi & Café ». J'ai facilement convaincu ma colocataire Marie-Josée de m'accompagner tester le menu, ce qu'on a fait en août et en septembre.

La première fois, on a commandé des burgers au saumon et des cappucino délicieux. La deuxième fois, on a essayé le brunch. J'ai dévoré une gigantesque assiette d'œufs, de saucisses, de jambon, de bacon, de pain grillé et de fruits. Marie-Josée s'est rassasiée avec un énorme croque-monsieur sur pain de campagne. Ensuite, croyez-le, on a toutes les deux avalées une part de shortcake aux fraises !

Une fois que Marie-Josée avait choisi sa livre de café parmi la douzaine de sortes offertes, nous sommes allées chercher des bagels chauds à Fairmount Bagel. Une petite marche de digestion jusqu'au métro Laurier, et nous sommes rentrées à NDG.

FLORENCE ET MARIE-JOSÉE SONT COLOCATAIRES INTRÉPIDES DE L'APPARTEMENT BRASILIA



SAM BEITEL

# “Party” time!

## Back in the swing...

JEROME KIERANS

NOW THAT I AM GETTING OUT of the neighbourhood more, there are places to go and people to meet...

I took in the Nicolas Party exhibit at the Montreal Museum of Fine Art (*see above*) and attended the residents’ annual hamburger supper at our old haunt, the QE Health Complex — our first such dinner in years.

At our annual getaway at Île-Saint-Bernard (*see p. 2*), I spent time with **Gary, Grant** and **Glenn**.

I also had chats with **George** and **Luke**, and enjoyed an art exhibit by one of volunteer **Joan Esar**’s former students.

**Jim Cullen**, a volunteer at my apartment, hosted a summer BBQ in his backyard. Jim is extremely well-read and we had a good discussion.

In addition, I recently joined a social club for older English-speakers at a nearby church hall, where I am making new friends.

WITH L’ABRI SINCE THE 90s, JEROME LIVES AT THE BESSBOROUGH APARTMENT

Above, our outing to “Nicolas Party: L’heure mauve” at The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts in July drew many residents and volunteers, along with coordinators **Vishaka Ratnayake** (*second from left*) and **Lori Goodhand** (*third from left*).

## Warm comfort for chilly fingers



SAM BEITEL

THERE WAS A CHILL in the air when we gathered at Parc Angrignon on September 29 for our annual hot dog barbecue. Hot chocolate served by social work intern **Kevin Hummel** was a welcome warmer-upper for cold attendees, including board vice-president **Pepita Capriolo**, (*above, in purple jacket*) seen filling up.

