

Stressful apartment search ends in success

By STAR GALE

WHEN WE FOUND OUT our *Jolicoeur* apartment in Ville-Émard would be repossessed this summer, we weathered the stress of trying to find a new apartment in today's volatile rental market. Our work began in January, when our good standing with the property owner allowed us to negotiate a later departure date (August 1) to avoid the usual frenzy of a July 1 moving day.

François had three years' experience with Équipe Tardif at Royal LePage – primarily in the southwest, where we'd hoped to rent. "I hadn't heard of L' Abri," admitted François, "but I immediately recognized the importance of its mission and wanted to help."

Both men discovered the current demand for housing exposed lingering stigma about mental illness. François found he had to engage in a lot of advocacy and reassurance with brokers representing available rentals. Richard noted that, "even when we thought someone would be

Stigma about mental illness lingers...

sympathetic, we were easily ousted by a multitude of other applicants and offers." Meanwhile, coordinator **Leah Daghman** worked diligently to offset the stress of uncertainty the residents were experiencing, by supporting them and keeping them busy with preparations.

Finally all the hard work paid off, and by May we had signed a new lease. The residents moved into a beautiful three-bedroom flat in LaSalle, newly named the *Maurice* apartment. Members of the volunteer team joined the residents for a housewarming lunch and tour. **Maxene Rodrigues** described the new home as "big and airy" in comparison to their previous apartment. **Angus**, pictured at left, one of the *Maurice* residents, agreed the move is an upgrade. "I like it here. My room is bigger and there's a lot more light."



RESIDENT ANGUS IS HAPPY WITH THE MOVE INTO HIS NEW APARTMENT.

Next came the hard part: securing an affordable three-bedroom apartment during a national housing crisis. After discouraging attempts on our own, L' Abri board member and apartment volunteer **Richard Dufour** enlisted the services of **François De Beaumont**, a real estate broker he'd worked with in the past.



STAR IS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF L'ABRI.

A helping hand for the hungry

WITH WINTER closing in, providing food and clothing for people living on the street is more important than ever. Resident **Marie-Josée Piché**, pictured, has been working with volunteer **Nora Burnier** to prepare sandwiches for Resilience Montreal, a non-profit wellness centre and safe oasis for unhoused people around downtown Cabot Square. Nora and her friend **Alba Guzman** each make 100 sandwiches every week. Nora says M-J has been a terrific help! | SP



NORA BURNIER

A gentle talent

By CECILY LAWSON

Aldyth Irvine-Harrison, an apartment volunteer since the early '90s, recently published her third book of poetry, *Kindness, Capers and Conundrums*. Born in Kingston, Jamaica, Aldyth taught for 35 years in Montreal high schools. The themes of her poetry range from nurturing our humanity to respecting and preserving the Earth's environment. Her poem *Zest* is from her 2020 collection *From a Strident World of Soft Prevailing Things*.

Residents learn life-saving techniques

By MICHELLE MILLS



MICHELLE MILLS

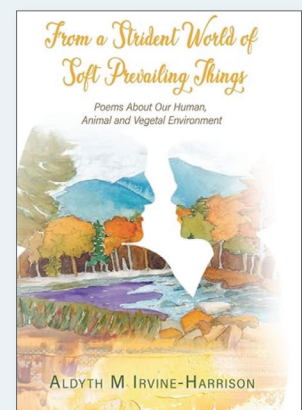
SHMOAL PRACTICES CPR ON A MINIATURE SUBJECT.

ON NOVEMBER 5TH, L'Abri staff and residents gathered at the Unitarian Church to take part in a course taught by *Impact Santé* emergency training school. Six residents, along with myself and coordinator **Lori Goodhand**, learned how to do the Heimlich Manoeuvre, how to use a defibrillator, basic wound care, and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR)—all on adults, children and babies. The idea came from L'Abri resident **Shmoal Loterman** during his tenure as a resident board member. Shmoal recommended that staff as well as residents receive the training. "You can get into a situation where someone needs first aid," he said, "and if CPR is needed, a trained person can proceed to administer it right away." We all found the training, originally delayed due to the pandemic, most useful. And the residents really enjoyed it!

MICHELLE IS A FULL-TIME L'ABRI COORDINATOR.

ZEST

Infuse a zest for learning
Pack in curiosity
stuff my bowl with painted
thoughts kind words with stories
that zoom right through to
the heart
Spirit of learning never depart



CECILY IS A PAST PRESIDENT OF L'ABRI, AND AN APARTMENT VOLUNTEER.



Suzanne Herscovitch

Montreal Walks creator was cheerful, ready to help

By CHERYL LAFFERTY

The passing of Suzanne Herscovitch on September 17, 2024, was a sad loss for the L'Abri community. Former executive director Cheryl Lafferty (2013-19) recalls Suzanne's impact on our organization.

DURING MY TIME working at L'Abri, watching how Suzanne generously gave of herself in each and every role she undertook was inspiring. The L'Abri community members I contacted recently described her as kind, confident, available, pleasant, funny, tireless, dedicated, special, humble... and photogenic!



SUZANNE, SECOND FROM RIGHT, WITH THE L'ABRI EN VILLE TEAM AT MONTREAL WALKS FOR MENTAL HEALTH IN 2012.

Kind
Dedicated
Humble

their families and supporters, into the streets of downtown Montreal. Traffic halted as participants holding placards and banners drew media attention and shone a spotlight on mental health. We went on to "Walk" together for a further eight years, raising thousands of dollars for community mental health agencies.

Star Gale, L'Abri's current executive director, remembers Suzanne as "bright and confident, with a measure of kindness and humility. She was always gifting her brilliance to the benefit of those in need. How lucky were we, that we were the recipients of that brilliance for so many years?" We were lucky, indeed, to have known Suzanne.

In 2001 Suzanne retired from Jewish Family Services, where she was volunteer coordinator. She joined L'Abri that same year in response to our appeal at the Reconstructionist Synagogue, and she soon became an active apartment volunteer.

Suzanne also served on our board of directors for many years. During that time she graciously made her Westmount condo available for occasional board meetings (as well as for my retirement party – a memory I hold dear).

Past president Sandra Baines recalls Suzanne's tenacity in presenting ideas to L'Abri's directors for getting people involved and raising funds. One idea that met with great success led to the creation in 2009 of *Montreal Walks for Mental Health*, an annual fundraising event that drew hundreds of people living with mental illness, along with

Tea party takes the cake

BESSBOROUGH RESIDENT Jerome has been taking full advantage of his apartment's lovely new deck by inviting friends over to share it. In June he hosted a large tea party, doubling as a fête for his roommate Gulam's birthday.

Clockwise from lower left, former executive director Cheryl Lafferty, L'Abri president Pepita Capriolo and husband David Morris, host Jerome, apartment coordinator Michelle Mills, roommmate Gulam with apartment volunteer Bruce Misirikirwa, and Maureen and husband Jim Cullen, also a volunteer.

Also present, but not pictured, were executive director Star Gale, and volunteer Sam Beitel.

Gulam, *inset*, was delighted with the beautiful cake made by Pepita, happily consumed just before rain chased the group indoors.



Fun al fresco

JULY BROUGHT RESIDENTS, staff and volunteers out in force for our annual Westmount Park picnic. The ducks ducked up and down in the lagoon and the sun beamed down through the willows, as a good time was had by all. Seen here (*L to R*) are summer staffer Iva Avramov, coordinator Leah Dagman, resident Glen and volunteer Sandra Baines.

Later in the summer, a hot-dog barbecue at Angrignon Park provided another chance to mingle and catch up.



Game playing, stone painting



SAM BETTEL

RAIN AND CLOUDS didn't dampen the spirits of L'Abri residents, staff or volunteers on a brief August holiday at Manoir D'Youville in Chateaugay. Everyone loved the Manoir's self-serve home-cooked food, and fun evening films such as *Barbie*. Residents from our sister organization, Our Harbour, joined our gang for a stone-painting workshop, where we decorated smooth pebbles with colourful and imaginative designs. Several residents remembered **Alyss**, a former L'Abri resident now with Our Harbour, here on the left, with summer employee **Iva Avramov** and residents **Gulam** and **Irene**.

Above, (L to R) residents **Karen** and **Eileen**, along with volunteer **Susan Purcell**, enjoying some of the many board and card games that staff had packed.



Thankful for friends

ON THANKSGIVING, Glen and Grant at the *LaSalle* apartment hosted a full-course dinner for their roommate **Gary** and some residents of the *Bessborough* and *Maurice* apartments. Instead of turkey, they prepared bean soup and penne with tomato meat sauce. At the table, from left, are Glen and Grant, with guests **Gary**, **Gulam** and **Jerome**. Grant would like to hold more such dinners, so residents can get to know one another better — and make good use of the set of lovely dishes he recently bought! | SP

SOUP'S ON!



MCGILL STUDENT MORGANNE CARROLL STANDS LOOKING ON AS RESIDENTS RICHARD AND EILEEN, AND COORDINATOR LEAH DAGHAM (RIGHT) PREPARE INGREDIENTS FOR THIS DELICIOUS SOUP AT A RECENT GATHERING OF OUR COMMUNITY KITCHEN.

Creamy Apple Parsnip Soup

- 1 tablespoon **Cooking oil, olive or vegetable**
- 1 **Onion, yellow or white ~ peeled, diced**
- 3 cloves **Garlic, minced**
- 1 pounds **Parsnips, peeled, cut in 1/4" pieces**
- 3 **Tart apples, peeled, cored, cut in bite-sized pieces**
- 1 tablespoon **Chopped fresh thyme leaves, or 1 tsp dried thyme**
- 3/4 teaspoon **Salt**
- 1/2 teaspoon **Ground pepper, white or black**
- 4 cups **Vegetable broth, low sodium if possible**
- 1/2 cup **Cream, 35% or 15% fat**

Fresh herbs, chopped (chives, parsley or cilantro), optional

Heat oil in large pot over medium heat. Add onion, cook, stirring often, until softened ~5 minutes. Stir in garlic, cook 1 minute. Add parsnips, apples, thyme, salt, pepper. Stir to combine. Add broth, stir again.

Increase heat to high, bring to boil. Reduce heat (medium-low), simmer. Cover pot, leaving lid ajar. Cook 15 minutes, or until parsnips and apples are tender.

Turn off heat. Blend soup with immersion blender until smooth. Stir in cream. If you reheat soup after cream is added, be careful not to boil it, or it will curdle.

Serve garnished with fresh herbs, and enjoy!



PREP TIME: 10 mins
COOKING TIME: 25 mins
SERVES: 6

From Girl Heart Food

Chat à adopter, chats à admirer

Par MARIE-JOSÉE PICHÉ

« Le temps passé avec un chat n'est jamais perdu. »

~ Colette

Adoption...

Je dirais même plus : on ne s'ennuie jamais avec un chat. Devinez quoi, je suis complètement gaga des chats. Malheureusement ma coloc est allergique. Mais peut-être avez-vous le goût de devenir propriétaire d'un chat? En voici l'occasion, car je vous présente **Amsel**,



AMSEL CERCHE UNE NOUVELLE FAMILLE.

un mot allemand qui veut dire « blackbird », le nom d'un brillant chat adulte à poil court de **Petronella Beran**, une de nos bénévoles. C'est son fils **Laurens** qui lui a donné lorsqu'il a déménagé de Princeton vers Vancouver où il n'avait pas le droit de le garder. Petronella et son

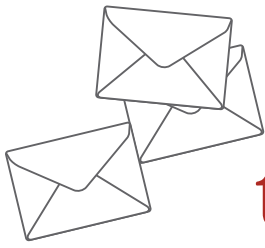
mari **Frits** sont trop vieux pour s'occuper de ce chat, et cherchent une perle rare comme famille d'accueil pour l'adopter.

Pour plus d'information à propos d'Amsel vous pouvez contacter Petronella ou Frits au 514-486-6840.

...et admiration

Si vous souhaitez connaître les mystères du cerveau des chats, Netflix propose un documentaire divertissant d'une heure « Inside the mind of a cat ». On y apprend notamment qu'il est possible de dresser les chats comme des chiens et on y aperçoit **Lily** et **Dash**, félines stars qui l'une déambule autour des barreaux d'une échelle et l'autre saute à travers un cerceau. De plus, le film nous entretient avec des chercheurs. Ils prouvent que les chats connaissent leurs noms et préfèrent leurs maîtres à leurs jouets ou à la nourriture. Les chats sautent en hauteur pour surveiller leur environnement mais est-ce qu'ils retombent toujours sur leurs pattes? À vous de voir le film pour le découvrir, ainsi que maints autres aspects de la personnalité des chats.

RÉSIDENTE MARIE-JOSÉE EST AUSSI TRÈS HABILE À DESSINER LES CHATS!



The mystery of the empty mailboxes

By CHARLES PEARO

L'Abri shares a community mailbox in Little Burgundy with 50 other residential and commercial condos, including the home of **Charles Pearo**, who is on our board. Below, he relates the strange story of the missing mail.

IN EARLY AUGUST, I began noticing that I wasn't getting mail and, as I spoke to other residents of our complex, realized that nobody was receiving any.

After several complaint calls and emails to Canada Post, we finally learned that they had lost the master key to the community mailbox—and the supervisor was on leave. Nobody had thought to put a message on the boxes and we were already four weeks without mail. Our mailman, horribly embarrassed, was sneaking around alternative routes to avoid confronting angry residents.

Finally, a message from Canada Post was taped up, stating rhetorically that mail delivery was suspended, but offering no recourse. By then we had learned that "Ottawa" had to approve a new key.

In early September, we learned that all the undelivered mail was at a distribution centre across the canal on Bridge Street. A number of residents trekked there by car through congested bridge traffic, skirting construction obstacles, only to be told they had no mail. A few who persisted were allowed to rummage through a large bin in a back room filled with residents' mail, including invoices, cheques and government documents.

As we were approaching the eight-week anniversary of this bureaucratic comedy of errors, there were signs of progress. One day an unmarked truck pulled up at the mailboxes and locksmiths were seen at



AFTER TWO MONTHS, L'ABRI OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR SALLY COOPER WAS HAPPY TO FINALLY RECEIVE SOME MAIL.

work. For some reason, they didn't finish the job, and left without shutting the mailbox door properly. When a curious resident nudged the door further open, a stash of unposted mail fell to the ground! He was able to return some of it sent from a nearby notary's office, including undelivered cheques for sellers, buyers and agents. No big deal!

All the mail in the bin at the distribution center was eventually delivered to residents' individual boxes, although other mail and packages are still missing. In recent weeks, the lock was replaced yet again.

This had been a great bonding experience for all of us — albeit a stressful one!

CHARLES IS THE REAL ESTATE AGENT WHO FOUND US OUR NEW OFFICE IN THE DUVERNAY COMPLEX. HE SUBSEQUENTLY BECAME A VALUED MEMBER OF L'ABRI'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS.

Gifts to L'Abri en Ville in recognition of loved ones

Remembering

John Hadley Griffin

Margaret Griffin

Suzanne Herscovitch

Sandra Baines	Rebecca Kahn
Andrea Beaubien	Cheryl Lafferty
Rona Brenner	Hugues LaForce
Pepita Capriolo	Howard Levine
Sally Cooper	Brian & Susan Panoff
Carol De Koven	
Afric Eustace	Rothenberg Wealth Management
Feige Gasco	SDC 4410 Sainte-Catherine Ouest
Shirley Goldfarb	Norma Singerman
Elaine Greenberg	Josie Stern
Donna Haltrecht	Robyn Toban
The Haltrecht Family	Sondra Wener
Susan Joiner & William Gilsdorf	

Honouring

Eleanor Beattie

Susan Joiner & William Gilsdorf

George Harris & David Seymour

Lynda Porter

Maureen Ramsay

Carol Greenough
Paul Thomas Moreau

Interviewing, coordinating, hosting

By STAR GALE

WE ARE BUSY! At L'Abri, most days of the week our office space is humming with the work of interviewing applicants for vacancies, coordinating administrative support for the apartments and facilitating a learning environment for students in social work or social services.

Last year, we were fortunate to have **Iva Avramov** join us as a placement student from McGill's School of Social Work. Iva returned this summer as part of the Canada Summer Jobs Program. In September we welcomed **Morganne Carroll** as this year's student from McGill.

Over the summer months we balanced strategic updates, transitioning to online banking and upgrading our email servers.

We've returned to holding in-person volunteer meetings at the office, also hosting other group meetings such as our condo association, and of course our monthly Community Kitchen. *(Turn to p. 6 for more about this activity.)* The winter months will surely bring some in-house holiday get-togethers. We hope to see you there!



STAR IS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF L'ABRI.

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We'd love to hear from you!

Please send your
comments or
suggestions to:

suepurcell@videotron.ca

If you're interested in volunteering:

Please get in touch
with us at:

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GRAPHICS PEXEL.COM



"I would like
to support
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We thank you
sincerely for your
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NAME	
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EMAIL	
MY GIFT OF \$ <input type="checkbox"/> IN MEMORY OF <input type="checkbox"/> IN HONOUR OF	
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ONLINE	Secure donations may be made on our website through "Canada Helps" at labrienville.org