



News en Ville

Spring 2013

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A newsletter published for and by the residents,
staff, volunteers and supporters of L'Abri en Ville.
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Shelagh Coinner Fund: enriching lives

Cecily Lawson



Shelagh Coinner

Shelagh Coinner was a very important person in the history of L'Abri en Ville. It was her work creating supportive community for people with mental illness in the West Island that inspired the L'Abri model.

Shelagh was involved in L'Abri over many years. She participated in early workshops, sat on the board, was a vital part of our move to disseminate our model, and lived to see the birth of three more projects: *Our Harbour*, *Les toits d'Émile*, and *Ancoura*.

When Shelagh died of cancer in 2007, dozens of people made donations in her memory. It was decided to combine the monies into a new Shelagh Coinner

Travel and Education Fund, which would make grants to L'Abri residents to a maximum of \$200.

"When through no fault of your own, you develop a mental illness which makes it impossible for you to work and your financial resources are limited, it's wonderful to be able to do something that brings joy into your life," comments Marianne Metrakos.



Terryann sure looks relaxed!

Over the years the fund has responded to the requests of dozens of L'Abri residents. In 2011 Crescent apartment resident Andy Ng combined his grant money with funds he had carefully saved, to travel to his homeland, China. Bahama apartment resident Beverley Hartley visited family in Ontario she had not seen in decades, her room-mate Élise Parenteau made a trip to Baie-St-Paul, and Park apartment resident Terryann O'Neil travelled to Cuba.

Other grants have gone to Janet Stewart, a former Brasilia resident, who put the funds towards training to become a peer support worker counselling others with mental illness. And Eileen Kelly of Park apartment used her grant to help purchase an iPad.

The Shelagh Coinner Fund reached the bottom of its piggy bank recently and awarded its last grant. But its benefits endure. Elise surely speaks for all recipients when she says, "During the trip, I forgot my problems. It increased my confidence that even with mental illness, we can travel and feel better."

President's Message

This past year has continued to see changes at L'Abri. Marlo Turner Ritchie stepped down as Lead Coordinator and Beverley Kerr also retired after ten years as a Coordinator. Cheryl Lafferty is our new Lead Coordinator and Cathy DeChambeau has joined us as a Coordinator.

L'Abri en Ville is most fortunate to have benefited from the enthusiasm and skill of both Marlo and Beverley. We wish them all the very best for the future -- and look forward to staying in touch with them as part of the L'Abri en Ville community.

We are thrilled to have Cheryl and Cathy joining us. They are both social workers with many years experience and plenty of enthusiasm for the L'Abri model. They are already hard at work, thanks in large part to the efforts of Marlo, Marianne Metrakos and Loraine Jacmain, who helped mightily to ease the transition.

We elected three new directors at



Cheryl Lafferty

our recent annual general meeting: Marianne Metrakos, Chad Lubelsky and Jerome Kierans. We are very fortunate that Marianne brings to the board her many years of experience as coordinator. Chad is the current executive director (and past president) of the outstanding community program Santropol Roulant. He brings us a wealth of skills, and enthusiasm for our work. Jerome knows L'Abri from the inside out, and we will benefit greatly from his knowledge and dedication.

Campbell Stuart

At the same time, Nancy Grayson, Mary Martha Guy and Dennis Vossos stepped down from the board. Nancy has been a director for over 18 years, during which time she also served as president and as chair of various committees, including most recently Personnel. Mary Martha joined the board in 2004 and among her other contributions, has worked on numerous art projects, notably the beautiful cover painting done with Gael Eakin for our twentieth anniversary issue. We are very lucky that both Nancy and Mary Martha will continue as volunteers.



Cathy DeChambeau

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Coordinators' Corner Cheryl Lafferty, Cathy DeChambeau, Loraine Jacmain

Over winter and spring L'Abri en Ville was a hive of activity. We hosted a Networking Day in late fall with a focus on fundraising skills. About sixty residents and volunteers participated, including several people from our sister organizations. Sales were up this year from our annual citrus fundraiser. Over the holidays, residents enjoyed visits with volunteers, our annual Holiday Party featuring the L'Abri choir, and a Christmas Day feast at one of the apartments.

The cold weather brought us some welcome media attention. We were highlighted in a major photo spread in *The Gazette* in late November. Writer Andrea Grimaud spent hours with residents and volunteers preparing this piece and as a result, we had a wave of calls from potential volunteers and residents. CTV gave prime-time coverage to the Concordia Stingers football team's spirited and muscular contribution to our citrus sale. Finally, early in the new year, CTV ran a feature that focused on the home and lives of three residents.

In the midst of this excitement, we said goodbye to Beverley Kerr, a skilled, enthusiastic Coordinator for ten years at L'Abri, and to Marlo Turner Ritchie, our energetic Lead Coordinator for the past year. Star Gale, a former McGill placement student, and Marianne Metrakos graciously returned on contract during the transition period.

Coordinators organized many activities for residents in the spring – Stingers games, a day-trip to Oka Park, a visit to the Musée des Beaux Arts, a play at the Centaur Theatre, and a games night at the home of a volunteer. Lauren, our McGill placement student, hosted a small workshop on identifying and coping with anxiety. Residents held their annual Hamburger Dinner, where they discussed how to spend proceeds from sales of the note cards they designed, and brain-stormed new ways to raise funds for resident activities.



Dale MacDonald, board Vice-President, and Sandra Baines, Immediate Past President, with front-page article on L'Abri

*In good company
indoors and out*



Residents and volunteers enjoy the feast at our Holiday Party



Ah spring! Bahama potluck



Dinner organizer Sue sampling the fare



Bronko, Eileen and Elise ready to walk at Oka

Wish List

A handyman to help with minor repairs

Computer help for beginners

Apartment volunteers

Someone who can upload and make changes to a website designed in WordPress

Volunteer to join residents two hours per week in NDG community garden (spring to fall)

Just wondering

Susan Purcell

Can anything be done to help, if a resident isn't getting the medical help he needs?

The relationship between a person and his or her doctor is a private one and must be respected. This being said, sometimes a resident with a health problem hesitates to speak up to their general practitioner or psychiatrist. They may say very little, leaving the impression everything is fine, or may try to explain their problem but give up if the doctor doesn't pick up on it. Doctors are often in a hurry, and as we all know, the patient can feel it.

This can be a real problem, if a change of medication is causing side effects, or if as they age, residents are having new cardiac, digestive or other problems, and need accurate diagnoses and treatment.

If they go to a CLSC or clinic, residents may see more than one doctor – not conducive to good communication and follow-up. Another problem in recent years: some psychiatric patients considered stable have been transferred from a hospital

psychiatrist to a CLSC GP, who may or may not recognize signs that their mental health is worsening.

Fortunately, help is available.



Residents who receive their medication by injection every few weeks, are known well by the psychiatric nurse who administers the dose. The nurse is trained to listen and observe patients, and will tip off the doctor if a patient is anxious, seems more depressed, or shows signs of psychosis or other symptoms indicating a need to adjust medication. Another

hospital professional who can speak up for residents in need of help is the social worker, accustomed to noticing changes in clients' behavior or affect.

Back home at L'Abri, an early warning system plays a crucial role in maintaining residents' health. Coordinators visit apartments weekly and are alert to signs a resident's mental or physical health is worsening. At monthly meetings with the apartment team, observant volunteers sometimes pass on concerns. Coordinators know which residents will speak up to their health-care team. If they detect problem signs they will suggest the resident see his doctor. If needed, they will offer to accompany them into the consultation, or have a volunteer go. Often residents are grateful for such an offer. This is one of the wonderful protective features of life at L'Abri.

Editor: Sue Purcell

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Sue Purcell

Cecily Lawson

Marlo Turner Ritchie

Help & advice: Audrey Bean

Loraine Jacmain

Susan Charlebois

Terryann O'Neil

Beverley Hartley

Marianne Metrakos

Save the Date!

Walk for Mental Health

**Walk towards a world without stigma!
Join us on Sunday October 20, 2013 at
11 am. We will meet at Phillips Square
(McGill metro).**

Pierre Jodoin: from milk bottles to chess pieces

Ann Reid

Pierre Jodoin has lived in the Wellington apartment in Verdun since 1999. Now 59, he is known for his ready smile and his skill at games.



The son of a milkman, Pierre grew up in Rosemount in north-central Montreal. He recalls waking in the dark as a small boy to go with his dad on deliveries, using his bare hands to collect glass bottles from doorsteps in 25 below zero weather. He worked without gloves, out of fear he'd drop the bottles.

As a teen at Georges Vanier high school, where he says he was known as a rascal, he became quite skilled at chess. At age 17, he won his first chess tournament. He went on to play on championship teams at CEGEP (junior college) and at UQAM, where he studied geology until his mental health challenges began.

After the tournaments players from the various teams would go to a restaurant to "shoot the breeze,"

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many of them from English CEGEPs and McGill.

"That's how I learned my English," says Pierre.

Pierre remains a whiz at games of logic like bridge and chess. Nowadays he mostly plays these games on his computer, but he enjoys playing bridge with volunteers at our games nights. If there isn't a foursome he joins a game of Scrabble.

The only L'Abri resident who drives his own car, he has access to a family cottage near Ste. Adele where he spends a lot of time in summer. His sister and her family live in Montreal, and he is close to his niece.

A few months after Pierre arrived at Wellington, Bronco moved in – but they'd been room-mates for several years before that in an NDG group home. They're used to being teased that they're like an old married couple! Charles joined them early last year.

Pierre loves it when volunteer Richard Tobin visits every couple of weeks to cook the guys a meal, and when Campbell Stuart invites them to his place nearby to sample his cuisine. He's not sure which he likes better, the camaraderie or the delicious tastes!



He's a whiz at games of logic

Every weekday Pierre makes himself and his car available to a community group to deliver their mail. He also offers lifts to residents and volunteers for trips, parties and other activities. The cheerful generosity of people like Pierre helps keep all of us happily on the go!

In Memoriam

Only days before we went to press, the sad news came of the passing at age 90 of Ann Reid, a true L'Abri en Ville pioneer. Ann served for many years on our board, including as president, and was a tireless volunteer at the Hélène (formerly Monk) apartment. Ann suffered a heart attack on May 6, only weeks after writing the profile of Pierre Jodoin on this page. Ann's wit and sharp mind will be missed.

Venez chanter -- C'est bon pour la santé!

Il est 9h45 et je les attends tous avec impatience. Barbara la pianiste arrive, suivie de Charlie le guitariste puis les chanteurs : Pierre, Carolyn, Anna, Nancy, George et Ian.

Nous commençons par des exercices pour les épaules, le cou et les muscles faciaux, ce qui provoque des rires car nous grimaçons beaucoup.

Nous respirons profondément et vocalisons, puis on fait la lecture des chants choisis. Chacun se concentre sur sa partition. Au début c'est un peu ardu, mais avec le temps cela devient plus mélodieux.

Pour ce faire, l'attention doit être portée au rythme et au sens des mots. Les participants s'entraident afin d'arriver au but fixé. Alors on répète, répète, répète...; tous exercent leur patience et leur bon vouloir et ce, pendant plusieurs



Raymonde dirige notre chœur depuis des années

semaines.

À la dernière répétition, David au violon, Fernando au tambour et Sandra pour la voix se joignent au groupe et l'équipe est au complet. Tout prend forme et l'on voit apparaître des sourires de satisfaction sur les visages.

Il va sans dire que se lever tôt le samedi matin n'est pas facile. Cela demande un effort, mais une fois rendu à destination, l'effort est récompensé par le plaisir de

Raymonde Hachey

chanter et d'être ensemble. Voici quelques témoignages des participants.

Anna: "A choir is a nice way for improving my singing, and it brought us all together to create a happy atmosphere."

Carolyn: "The stable and positive environment promoted my willingness to be part of the choir. It was also nice to get to know the other choir members and learn new songs."

Charlie: "La musique me passionne. J'aime faire partie d'un ensemble."

George: "This was fun!"

Ian: "Singing gave me great pleasure this year."

Comme on peut le constater, chanter est bon pour la santé car les aspects corporels, cognitifs, émotifs et sociaux sont impliqués. Si vous voulez vous faire plaisir, venez vous joindre à nous. Vous êtes les bienvenus.

Off to Philly: We'll miss you, Linda!

This will be the last issue of News en Ville to be laid out by our wonderful young volunteer Linda Yu. Previously on the volunteer team at the Brasilia apartment, Linda has taken time out in the past two years from studies for her Bachelor of Arts in Psychology at McGill, to create the crisp



and efficient newsletter we have today.

But it was too good to last. Linda, whose family lives in Victoria, B.C., has been accepted at several prestigious institutions for doctoral (PhD) studies starting in the fall, and has decided to attend University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia.

We will miss the way

Sue Purcell

Linda listens carefully, speaks infrequently, and when she does speak, is always right on the point. Our loss is the world of psychology's gain, as before long it will be enriched by the thoughtful contributions of Dr. Yu.

Bravo Linda! We wish you all the very best.

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