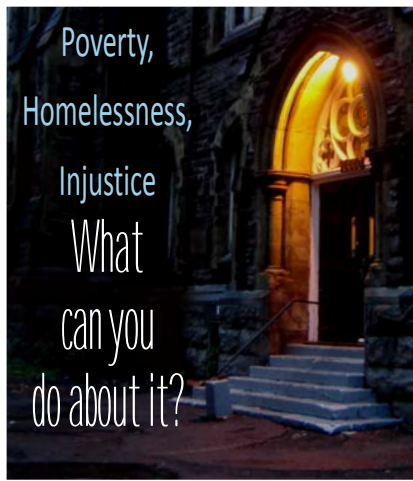


Juste  
pour  
servir

Poverty,  
Homelessness,  
Injustice  
What  
can you  
do about it?



**FOR WHO:**

Anyone who is interested in getting close to injustices in Montreal's inner city (must be 18+)

**WHEN:**

English July 15-19 / French: July 22-26

**WHERE:**

Maison de L'Amitié  
120 avenue Duluth E Montreal

**COST: 250\$**

**INFO: 514-288-0039**  
info@stjamescentre.ca



**A BEAUTIFUL DAY**

This is what I remember from my visit at the St-James Drop-In. My name is Carina and I am turning 50 this upcoming summer and a grandmother of 2. The reason I am in Canada is due to my addiction to alcohol and other drugs. I have been at the Donovan rehabilitation centre for almost 4 months now and I was fortunate to have been chosen to spend a day at St-James.

Our dear friend Kevin made this project come to life through hard work and a big heart. The staff members at Dianova thought this project was a good idea and approved it.

Upon our arrival, we were greeted by a handmade sign. What a welcoming! As the day went by, we talked, did some drawings and made food with the members. The power in helping or getting helped is far bigger than one can imagine. It left us all with a warm, calm feeling of happiness. I experienced the impact people can leave you with if you are openhearted and let people in.

From me and my friends behalf's, I would like to thank everyone at St-James for letting us share the day with them.

With love  
*Carina Dolk* from Sweden



Carina with Harry from St-James Drop-In

**CELEBRATIONS ARE FOR EVERYONE**

(suite from page 1)

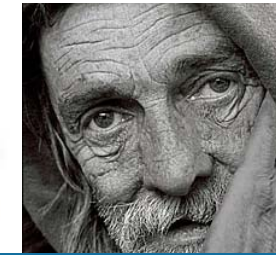
We choose to celebrate the lives of those who seem to have little to offer within the confines of our power hungry society. Let us be reminded on a daily basis, that celebrations are for everyone, and if we make the commitment to care for each other, we can shift the tide that is tearing our communities apart.

Thank you for your support, that makes all of this possible.



Canada Post Foundation grant 2010-2011

centre de jour  
**St-James**  
drop-in centre



SPRING 2011 no. 10

**CELEBRATIONS ARE FOR EVERYONE**

*Alain Spitzer — Executive Director*

In November 2010, the Drop-In celebrated its 25th anniversary in the reception hall of St-James United Church. It was good to have so many employees & board members past and present together to celebrate 25 amazing years that saw a wonderful idea grow into what we are today: An organization that supports in excess of 200 different people in helping them access housing, medical or psychological treatment, employment, or more importantly community. We have also committed significant time and resources in advocating on behalf of, and sharing the stories of the members of our community with people across Montreal.

During the winter, I had the privilege of speaking at McGill University, Dawson College, and Concordia University. It was great connecting with the students

and getting their slant on what is going on in our cities. We all have opinions and ideas on the state of our society, but one thing that we all were able to agree on, is that it is completely unacceptable for a country as wealthy as Canada to have nearly one third of its population living in poverty (and that number is growing). Yet in recognizing this affliction, how do we address it? One student asked me how I was getting to the root source of the problem to address it? My answer to that is: I am Not. I don't have a sliced idea how to change the way our societies glorify the powerful while disregarding the weakest members of our communities. The only thing that I am certain of is that we need to use our power and privilege to bring dignity to the weaker members of our society, not use it to repress them. To me that is the greatest gift that St-James has brought to the lives of our members. We choose to say: You matter to me! You have importance in my eyes; and regardless of what happens I will stick around!

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**STREETSUDDS UPDATE:**

*by Danica Strailh.*

At St-James, the Streetsuds team has been working hard for grant money realize our vision of a transitional employment program for folks living on the streets and dealing with issues related to mental illness.

Over the past few months, we have worked closely with the Société de développement économique Ville-Marie and Accenture, thoroughly assessing, tweaking and re-working the details of our business plan to be a success both socially and economically. Further involvement in various competitions such as McGill's Dobson's Cup and the Québec Entrepreneurial Competition as well as start-up workshops aided in strengthening our plan as well as shared our dream with the greater Montréal Community.

At present our biggest hurdle remains to be funding. The unfortunate reality is that the stigmas related to homelessness and mental illness keep projects like Streetsuds on the back burner within our communities interests, leaving the most critical cases of poverty unaddressed. Thus, our next step is to look into a loan that can be paired with the generosity that we have already gratefully received from our supporters.

With the help of a loan and the support of our friends, we will continue to work for those most in need of life-changing services and desperate for an opportunity to lift themselves out of the cycles of poverty. If we are able to reach our financial goals by late spring, Streetsuds will be sure to open September 2011 with great excitement to the organizers and beneficiaries alike. With the combined efforts of our community, we are sure that the Streetsud's vision of employment for the homeless will thrive.

www.stjamescentre.ca



## An outsider's perspective

Maurice van der Spek

Even though the room is packed, my entrance seems to go unnoticed. People criss-cross the space in an unstoppable fashion, evidently occupied with tasks of managerial importance. Others eat and talk and laugh at one of the tables filling the room, or near the counter. As I proceed hesitantly, the amount of unfamiliar faces creates a superficial feeling of displacement. Today is my fourth time volunteering at St. James, an unusually supportive community I decided to be part of for a couple of hours every Thursday afternoon. In my inability to come up with a better conversation-starter, I end up asking John how his week was.

Coming from an average, fairly rich and relatively easy background, I have never had to come in contact with people rejected by society. They just weren't there. Through upbringing, education and society I have formed false conceptions that I now see will have to be adjusted. So yes; I am socially challenged being around members that struggle with mental illnesses. I don't feel at ease, not knowing what to talk about because the ways we live our lives seem so insurmountably distant from one another.

And yet, I have learned so much already. The St. James community helps me to see beyond my misconceptions. Misconceptions that, if they remain, will only contribute to the marginalization of members that are no more and no less people than I am. I volunteer at St. James. And I am learning how to see people for who they really are.



## ONE DAY AT THE SUGAR SHACK

by Arturo Quittanilla

In April, the members at St James had the chance to discover and rediscover a treasure that is well adapted to Quebec culture : la cabane a sucre. This was made possible with the help of intervention workers from St James and the organization FOHM. Kenny Proute invited me with pleasure and this was my first experience at a sugar shack. Upon our arrival, the group was quick to go and take a seat at the table to enjoy the wonderful meal. The enthusiasm was palpable and the group enjoyed every bite of this folk Quebecois dish. Amused by the atmosphere and by all those who profit from the maple syrup and

other delicious foods, it was in a family spirit that we filled our stomachs. We then went to eat the maple sugar toffee while discovering the process of transformation. We had time to visit the surrounding area while enjoying April's beautiful weather. The return was very quiet as we left on a full stomach and a few escaped with a good nap on the bus. The entire group was pleased to enjoy the fresh air and the countryside.



# Art to end indifference

Extract from an article in the Mount-Royal Journal by Joachim Tremblay

For a second time in a row, St-Peters Anglican Church in Town of Mount Royal hosted an art show on behalf of the St-James drop-In centre. This exhibit allows the members of the centre who suffer from a combination of problems related to mental health, substance abuse and homelessness to exhibit the art that they create in the context of therapeutic workshops. Although there is quite a distance between the streets of downtown Montreal, and the comfortable suburb of TMR, both came together on one night last Friday to promote and celebrate the paintings created by a dozen of 'street' artists. The show that is titled 'L'Art et ses gens' will be running until the end of the month.

Bernard Racicot who is an artist who works at the drop-in along with Chris Barrigar the pastor of St-Peter's Church are the catalysts of this event. 'I met Chris two years ago while he was organizing a collective exhibit, and it was at that time that the idea for a 'homeless art show' took root.

St-James is a place where people can find true community, and access help finding housing for example. People can also take showers, eat, rest, and consult with community workers regarding the different challenges that they may be facing. We also have an art studio, which allows the participants to create beautiful art. All the programming is voluntary, and our members can take part in the activities whenever they choose. The success of the art program depends entirely on the members of the drop-in who on a daily basis attend



André Prévost

workshops in the art studio, and create art. In doing this they leave behind the hard reality of the street where most of them make their home. These artistic opportunities allow them to break down the solitude and isolation that they live in daily. 'It's a great opportunity for them to leave the city behind, and the habits that accompany these type of lifestyles'.

Chris Barrigar explains that his community hosts these events for three main reasons : The first is to bring art to the forefront of his community. This is the second time that we organize this exhibit, but we also host other art shows throughout the year. The second reason is to connect our neighborhood with the downtown core. This is something that would normally not happen. We are therefore very happy to encourage the artists of the St-James Drop-In Centre, and to have them among us. Finally, these type of events also allow us to connect in a more relevant way with the residents of Town of Mount Royal.

Dan Leclerc started painting at St-James three years ago : 'I had never touched a paint brush in my life; but I did have some experience drawing with lead pencils'. It is at St-James that Dan Leclerc ' fell in love' with the idea of painting sail boats. I grew up in LaSalle, and almost every day I would go by the shore ' remembers Dan.

St-James is unique in its way to encourage people to discover hidden talents. Many

people come to the centre thinking that they have no talents whatsoever; but within a few weeks we develop new skills that allow us to rebuild our self-esteem. On the long run, it is this that allows us to alleviate the isolation and solitude that surrounds us. 'I have a lot of trouble integrating mainstream society. When I was younger, I had a great deal of difficulty at school, and this prevented me from graduating. Painting allows me to express myself , and to raise my self-esteem'.

André Prévost started drawing at a young age. Years later he reconnected with his artistic side after spending some time on the street. Despite these difficult years, he always kept that keen interest for drawing, and would spend time drawing on bits of paper he would find on park tables. 'Drawing allowed me to temporarily forget my problems and to relax' says André. One day a few months ago, he came to St-James, discovered the art studio, and has not stopped painting since. 'With Bernard I am learning new techniques all the time, and I can now paint more complex things'.

'I am a person who is almost always alone, so being at the centre helps me to connect with & trust other people. Human contact is extremely important, and I have learned that when things are not going well, and that I need support, the folks at St-James are there for me. This touches me enormously. One must never lose hope, because good things await all of us whether we are rich or poor' says André.

One must never lose hope, because good things await all of us whether we are rich or poor