

St James Drop-in Centre  
**Gala Dinner**  
 soirée Gala  
 du Centre de jour St-James

December 9 2011  
 Fullford Hall 1444 Union Street  
 7 pm \$75

For reservation Pour réserver : (514) 288.0039  
 Info@stjamescentre.ca

Le 9 décembre 2011  
 Fullford Hall 1444 Union  
 19h 75\$



a silent auction will be held to benefit the St-James Drop-In

## STREETSUDDS suite

rewarded \$5,000 and was able to make some important McGill affiliated contacts.

Current efforts towards StreetSuds have, however, stagnated. Cutbacks at the St-James Centre have meant that we have needed to slightly restructure our efforts and the fundraising progress has been slow. This process has been a great learning experience and it is particularly important to reflect on the reality of realizing our larger aspirations. Building a community of support takes time. Progress does not always happen as quickly as we would sometimes like it to. However, the StreetSuds' team has patience and dedication, and with both we are confident we will realize our goals by the end of 2011.

## Thank you Mr. Bull suite

enthusiasm for social justice and the Centre that I will take over as Chairperson of the Board of Directors on November 23<sup>rd</sup>. Mr. Bull will continue to play an important and irreplaceable role in the life of the Centre, and on the Board. As he shifts gears, however, I want to extend a very hearty, Rob-Bull-style "THANK YOU!" on behalf of the Board of Directors and the Drop-In Centre for all of the work that he has done, and continues to do, for the St-James Drop-In Centre. I asked Rob to reflect on his experiences over the past many years he has spent at St-James.

Here's what Mr. Bull had to say:

**Rob, how were you first introduced to the St-James Drop-In Centre, and when did you first get involved?**

It was at a meeting of the Session of St. James United Church more than 10 years ago. The Drop-In had been founded by the church in 1985 and its executive director had to report regularly to the appropriate St. James body. Isabelle Leduc and Lucia Kowalak appeared before the elders of the church, including me. After listening to their report, I observed to my colleagues that if there was anything in which the church should be involved it was and is the Drop-In. Shortly afterwards I was asked to join the board.

**How has the Drop-In Centre changed over the several past decades, since it first opened its doors?**

It has a much larger membership than when it first opened in 1985. The nature of specific challenges faced by members may have changed. It has more staff. It is open longer — five days a week now from nine to five. It has an art program, a poetry program, Bible studies, a web page, a facebook page and a newsletter. And it no longer is a direct outreach program of the church. About five or six years ago, we began the process to

become an independent agency (we had been advised by the City of Montreal that government funding might be more forthcoming if we had no legal ties to the church). While individuals in both church and drop-in still strongly support both organizations, the formal ties no longer exist. But is still is a very special community and a unique kind of family.

**What is your most cherished memory of the Drop-In Centre?**

That's a tough one. There are so many cherished memories. But I would say that two things at the Centre have touched me deeply — the feeling of community and true spirituality that I experience in the Drop-In memorial services in the St. James chapel and the intellectual challenge and emotional support that I found in the Bible study discussion group. And I cherish my good friends among the members, volunteers, staff and board of the Centre. It is an amazing place with amazing people.

**What do you hope for the St-James Drop-In Centre in the future?**

I know that the Centre will continue to respond to the huge challenges that will continue to be placed in its way with its own special kind of grace, innovation and respect for all. I am impatient to see StreetSuds underway. And I hope and pray for everyone connected with the organization. My life so far has been grand. As a newsman I have met, spent time with and talked to many great individuals, seen many wonderful or shocking things and observed many significant or terrible events. But when you see things, talk with people and observe events, you sometimes lose touch with those who actually do things and live them. The Drop-In has given me a chance to find what I was missing.

I am deeply grateful.

# centre de jour St-James drop-in centre



SPRING 2011 no. 10

## moving FORWARD

Alain Spitzer – Executive Director

Often when I speak in schools and universities I am asked by the students that I am lecturing how I manage the setbacks that my street friends go through. Sometimes those setbacks bring our friends back into patterns of addiction and - or homelessness. Other times, the setbacks are much worse, and we find ourselves gathering to say farewell to another member of our community at a memorial in the Church chapel.

During these difficult times, we often reflect on the good and difficult times that we have spent together. Days of laughter are often forgotten in the days of sadness and regret.

Some time ago I wrote an article for a local newsletter about the journey that one of my friends had been on as he transitioned from a life of crime and homelessness to an alcohol free life that saw him access housing, address legal issues, and reconnect with his family. He was during that time a key example of what can be achieved when one is supported and encouraged in addressing difficult circumstances. Month's later, guilt ridden by the life that he had lived and the people that he had hurt, he slipped back into alcoholism and returned to the streets. I have not seen him much lately, but often think of him, and the setbacks that he has had to face in the past year.

During that same period, another friend of mine transitioned from life on the street, graduated from rehabilitation treatment, and started an internship with an international rehabilitation organization. Our hope is that in the next few months, he will be able to integrate our team here at St-James to become the floor manager of our employment program, and to mentor other men and women who are attempting to improve their lives. We must always remember that homelessness, addiction, and other such obstacles do not identify our street friends. These are simply the circumstances in which they are at the moment. We must continue to be optimistic solution oriented advocates who are willing to accept the setbacks and continue to be of encouragement and support to those who are the most in need in our communities.

As we walk alongside our street friends, we must remember that they deserve as many chances as they may need to break away from the difficult circumstances that they are facing.

St-James chooses to do this every day. Thank you for your support that makes all of this possible.

## StreetSuds BUANDERUE

by Kelsey White

The StreetSuds team has faced a number of challenges during the past few months in getting the transitional employment program up and running. Not, however, without a few successes.

After working with a business consultant from Coop Interface, we were able to develop a sophisticated business plan to use for further fundraising efforts. The experience was greatly beneficial as we were able to obtain important business advice to solidify the sustainability of our social project. Since then, we have been working with CDEC Notre-Dame-Des-Grace and ACEM community loan fund to obtain the remaining funding we are seeking, and which we need in order to move forward.

In June, we also received some exciting recognition as StreetSuds came in first place in the non-profit category in the McGill Dobson Cup (Desautels Faculty of Management), an entrepreneurial competition sponsored by the Development Bank of Canada. StreetSuds was

Page 4

**Thank you** The Canadian Mental Health Association, St-James Board of directors, Beaver Lodge No.6, Mazon Canada, Dianova Canada, Mr. K. Shea, EULB Foundation, The Jackman Foundation, Regional Health and Social Services Board, Ville de Montréal, The Harold E. Ballard Foundation, Québec Support Program for Community Organizations, Salvation Army gateway, The Henry and Berenice Kaufmann Foundation, Hockey For The Homeless, The Hyican Foundation Shaika Cafe, The Homeless Partnership Initiative of Canada, The Church of Saint Andrew and Saint Paul, The Toronto Dominion Bank, Zeller Family Foundation, PA Supermarket, Youth Unlimited, Direction Chrétienne, Centre Chrétien des Mille-iles, Ride for Refuge, Kenton & Sheldina Brunner, Le Garde Manger pour Tous, Government of Canada-SPLI Program Régie régionale de la Santé et des Services Sociaux, PSOC Program, Dianova Canada, St-James United Church, Nancy Keays, CLSC des Faubourgs, Paula Klein, Montreal City Mission, Compagnie North West Clothing, Isabelle Leduc, Chambréclerc, Li Stock, François Hoang / Airo Studio Concordia University : Art Education, Dawson College, Cégep du Vieux-Montreal, CEGEP Vanier, Everest College, Pax Street Ministry, Program Dialogue, Mark Beaudet, Montreal Gospel Choir, Merrell Canada, River's Edge Community Church, The Mustard Seed Calgary, Siloam Mission, Erin Hogg, Joe Donohue, Mountain Equipment Coop, Comedy Nest



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## An outsider's perspective

-Sivan Havusha  
Social work student, volunteer

I can't go a week without feeling the urge to go to the St. James drop in centre.

After having worked at the First united church, a unique homeless shelter on Vancouver's downtown east-side this summer, I have made a conscious decision to always be involved with those who are placed on the outskirts of society in one way or another.

I was welcomed with open arms the minute I stepped in to the church's drop-in centre. The friendly members and dedicated staff make St. James a great space to be in. You can tell that the members really enjoy being there. The environment of the drop-in in centre is warm and comforting. The art space that's been created is very impressive. It provides the members with an opportunity to express themselves through different art mediums. The art work that is produced by members is both admirable and inspiring. St. James is a place of expression where interactions are real, and to me, a true sense of community!



## RIDE FOR REFUGE

by Ron Melanson

Despite the cold October morning and the uncertainty of our ability to ride the distance. The collective team spirit prevailed. It's not often that I get excited about a fundraiser but when it combines the fun of a good bike ride with friends and addresses the financial needs of St James it becomes a win-win situation.

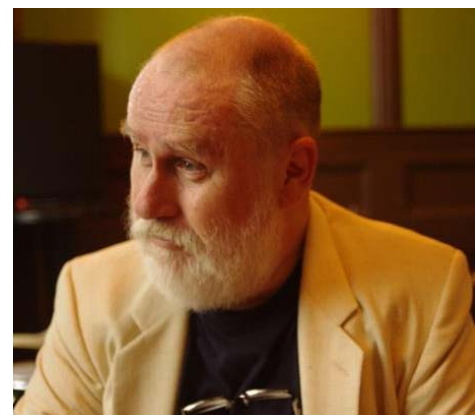
This year has been difficult financially for the centre. Cutbacks and the redis-

tribution of some regular donations have left us short. So, to participate in a fundraising event that didn't require a lot of our resources and yet raised more money than we had initially planned, was a real encouragement to the team.

The results of this type of creative and fun event motivate us to continue on when we are confronted with the reality of economic hard times that squeeze both our social system and our donors. It is these same economic factors that continue to bring more needy people to our door and burdens our resources and our services. Our work is not finished.

## Thank you Mr. Bull

Since the St-James Drop-In Centre started in 1985, many generous and creative souls have walked through its doors, many hungry bodies and minds have been nourished, and countless bonds have developed between members, staff, volunteers, board members, and the surrounding community. Among the most generous and steadfast of these individuals is Rob Bull, a long-term member of the St-James United Church, dedicated member and chairperson of the Board of Directors, and a loyal friend to many at the St-James Drop-In Centre. "Mr. Bull" - as he is often affectionately referred to - has shared much of his time, his seemingly boundless energy and enthusiasm, his many colourful stories and hearty laughter, and his much-treasured faith, with countless individuals at the Centre. I am privileged to have been the recipient of, and witness to, a good share of Rob's generosity, laughter, and stories over the past 4



years. In fact, I am currently working with the Drop-In Centre thanks to Mr. Bull, who introduced me to it several years ago. Rob is a remarkable example of perseverance, dedication, and integrity in the face of life's trials, including serious health issues; his gusto and optimism are inspiring and infectious! Rob and I share a passion for social justice and for the St-James Drop-In Centre. It is with the intention of carrying forward Rob's gusto and

# Community in the Art Room

by Lysanne Picard

Septemehr 1 2011 was my first day working in the art room at the St—James drop-in center. To my surprise, this day was very busy. All of the members stopped by to introduce themselves. I soon realised that I was being welcomed that day in the St-James family-like community. After a couple days, I felt very much at home relating with the members especially the ones who visit the art room frequently. It is amazing the sense of community that subsists and develops between the four walls and the many painted canvases of the art room. If art is a language and if language is at the heart of a community, then the art room is an amazing place for people to connect and to feel at home, regardless of their situation. I feel very fortunate to be able to be a part of this. I am looking forward to bring this sense of community and connection between people into the art itself. I will be organising a weekly art collective workshop during which members will be working together on one same art piece. The *St-James Art Collective* is held every Monday afternoon. All are welcome to participate!

## People Behind the Art

People Behind the Art, an exhibit at the Placard Bistro featuring the work of a dozen of our artists was held on Friday October 21st. Vox Montreal, a group of people that organise cultural events for charity organisations, partnered with us and put together a concert featuring three francophone singer songwriters who played during the evening. It was a fun night with lots of good music, art and conversation. Most importantly, the artists who showed up had a good time as they met people interested in their work. Chris Garraway, one of our members,



Lysanne Picard

showed one of his drawings for the first time and was really excited about this opportunity. He even got to show some work he had brought in a portfolio to some of the guests at the event. The positive feedback he received is the main reason for this kind of event which celebrates the people behind the art.

## Martial Art Mornings

Since the beginning of September, every Monday and Friday mornings in the art room, members and staff participate in a Ki-Taiso session lead by one of our members Normand Duval. Ki-taiso is a series of respiratory and stretching exercises based on natural elements. Normand has been studying this Japanese martial art for years now and is very pleased to be able to share his passion at the center. This kind of activity allows both Normand to express himself and members to begin their day with a little bit of exercise.



Ki-Taiso



Chris Garraway, one of our members, showed one of his drawings for the first time.