

A GREAT TIME TO BE AT THE ST-JAMES DROP-IN CENTRE

Alain Spitzer

Since our last newsletter, in the winter of 2006, new developments have transpired at the *St-James Drop-In Centre*. One of these was the centre's recent acquisition of its very own charity number. Over the last few years, the centre has been unable to organize any kind of fundraising scheme, as it was not a registered charity, and therefore could not issue receipts for donations that it may have received. After nearly a year and a half of very hard work, we were approved by the charities directorate and given official recognition as a charitable organization. It is a big thrill to have achieved this status, as it will allow us to develop more meaningful ties with foundations and

other groups that are interested in helping us in our objectives.

Another noteworthy progression is the increased *visibility* of our centre in the local community. It has always meant a great deal to me that people in all walks of life know how important the centre is to so many people. I consider it to be a beautiful place where the atmosphere is positively

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LEAN ON ME

Erin Carney

*Sometimes in our lives
we all have pain
We all have sorrow
But if we are wise
We know that there's
always tomorrow*

Though "Lean on Me" made it to the top of the pop charts way back in 1972, one would do well to contemplate Bill Withers' lyrics when envisioning the atmosphere and philosophy present at the St-James Drop-In Center today. As the singer/songwriter recalls, "You know, most songs are about romantic love, perhaps the most inconsistent kind there is. Well, there's another kind of love where

people say, 'Hey, if there's anything I can do for you, let me know.' At the same time, they're smart enough to say, 'And if there's any way you can help me out, I'd sure appreciate it.'"

*Lean on me,
when you're not strong
And I'll be your friend
I'll help you carry on
For it won't be long
'Til I'm gonna need
Somebody to lean on...*

As a newcomer to SJDIC, my first months of employment here have further impressed upon me the sense of responsibility and dedication to the type of environment from which Bill's song grew. We all need things from each other,

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Alain Spitzer

UCLA coach John Wooden once claimed that no one could give more than 100%. His reasoning was that one is not capable of giving more than the maximum. Throughout the 80's, athletes and non-athletes across North America swore by this wisdom that was published in his book, *My Personal Best*. Like many, I believed his perception to be wise and logical. Indeed, how can one give more than 100%?

Throughout my years of involvement with the social services sector, it has been a pleasurable experience to observe those people that really give it their all. I am happy to say that when I come into the *St-James Drop-In Centre*, I witness our team of employees and volunteers upholding this same spirit. I am continually touched by the selfless care and generosity of the people who make our centre what it is today: a collective of individuals committed to the particular task of helping - emotionally and physically - their fellow human beings, to the best of their abilities. I am proud to feel that they are genuine walking contradictions to the aforementioned theory of John Wooden. They go the extra mile, and sometimes it involves giving more than 100%.

Lack of support from government, from the media, and from society in general has led to a turnover in the community setting that is not sustainable for the long term. It seems there is a small and shrinking group of people working together against an increasingly burdensome mountain of challenges. As that group gets fragmented and deprioritized, those who are left behind fighting the struggle are left with a heavier load.

In a counter effort, larger societal participation can entail educating oneself and others about the oppressive issues relating to unemployment, poverty, mental illness, addiction. We can also be discriminating and responsible policy advocates; support and get involved in noncommercial and community incentives; and pressure politicians to support such all-encompassing public and community incentives. Let us regulate our economic system so that financial gain is not always the bottom line.

When profit and excess usurp all other interests, we must carefully consider the implications of this motive on those left behind in our system of runaway capitalism. In the end, unless some type of social conscience is rediscovered by mainstream society, we will all have to travel the loneliest journey. Let's choose to give it more than 100% instead. ✓

charged by members, volunteers, and staff all working together for the betterment of life's sometimes oppressive and taxing situations and circumstances.

Additionally, I am pleased to say that we are increasingly being helped and encouraged by the local community. Recently, some local businesses have jumped on our band wagon, and raised welcome funding for the centre. We held a fund-raising concert at downtown *Brutopia* with help of Mohamed Abdulai, *Pivotal Payments*, and singer Shane Phillips. The evening was a lot of fun, and the centre raised a large donation from friends and employees of *Pivotal Payments*.

The art program is an amazing and unique program that we are very pleased and fortunate to be able to offer to our members. It is a place of serenity and an outlet for creative expression, talent abound. If you have never dropped by the art studio, I highly recommend a visit; you will leave the place stirred and impressed (and perhaps with a painting tucked under one arm!). The members benefit from any masterpieces sold, in spirit and self-esteem; the proceeds are split 50/50 between the artists and the fund necessary for material used by the art program. We have approximately 10 exhibitions per year, come check us out!

We are always grateful for your interest and any support.

COMINGS AND GOINGS

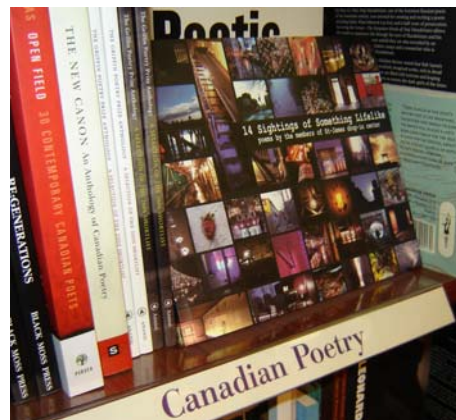
The last few months at the *St-James Drop-In Centre* have seen a significant turnover in staff - be prepared to see new faces when you stop in! While they are greatly missed, we wish all the best to long-term employees Stan Kupferschmidt, Maggie Kupferschmidt, Erica Legman, Virginie Buteau, Keith Scott, Lisa Bendxen, and Wanda Gabriel as they venture into other exciting adventures and callings.

Our remaining staff, Anne-Marie Beaulieu, Nathalie Sheppard, Bernard Racicot, and Alain Spitzer are now joined by a new group of individuals with a broad variety of related experience and backgrounds. Please welcome, as we do, the arrival of Ron Melanson, Kathryn Suchostawski, Marie-Eve Dionne, and Erin Carney as they join our team efforts at *St-James Drop-In Centre*. We believe that they will all bring something to the centre and leave their mark on those we help in the

2 years to come.

MORE NEWS FROM THE CENTRE

Over the last few months, the centre has had the opportunity to take part in various activities / events, all of which were of relative success. In November, the centre officially launched its first book. It is a very interesting collection, including poems and art by different users of the centre, and is beautifully illustrated with photos by Charles MacIntyre. The book was launched at the Shaika Café in NDG, and was a resounding success. Poets who participated in the project read from the book, and were available for autographs throughout the evening. Since the release of the book in



Chapters / Indigo, the *Word bookstore*, and *10,000 Villages*, we have sold in excess of 350 copies. It has all been a great thrill for those involved, and a special thanks goes out to Marika Nelson, Bernard Racicot,

Caroline Cronk, and Greg Rickhaus, who all made this project possible. In correlation, the poetry workshop was maintained under the guidance of Brad Boss and Pamela Cantarini of *Dawson College*.

During the winter we also had the opportunity to participate in private yoga classes at *Moksha Yoga Montreal* (thanks to Bryde MacLean), and take part in swimming activities at the *downtown YMCA*. These are just some of the activities that I hope we can offer to our members in the years to come in an effort to diversify their daily lives.

We also organized (as we do each year) a day out at the Sugar shack with the assistance of the *F.O.H.M.* As usual there was a great deal of member-interest in the outing. The day spent in the countryside was a lot of fun, and was enjoyed by members and staff alike.

In March, the fundraising concert offered by *Pivotal Payments* and *Brutopia* on Crescent Street. *Brutopia* hosted singer Shane Phillips and was entertaining for all who attended. The generosity of those who donated to the centre will allow us to organize another camping trip this summer. I would again like to especially thank all those involved, for the time and effort put into this successful project. I hope that in the future we may be able to take part in another similar event with *Pivotal Payments*, or any other business that is interested in encouraging this very worthwhile cause. ✓



The team at *St-James Drop-In Center*: Kathryn Suchostawski, Bernard Racicot, Alain Spitzer, Nathalie Sheppard, Ron Melanson, Erin Carney, Anne-Marie Beaulieu et Marie-Eve Dionne.

SECTORIZATION OF HEALTH SERVICES PROVES TO BE A PROBLEM FOR MANY IN MONTREAL

Nathalie Sheppard

Originally implemented over 30 years ago, the sectorization of health services has proven to be detrimental to many individuals in Montreal living with mental health disabilities. The sectorization of the health care system was meant to provide equal health care to all individuals regardless of the neighbourhood they resided in or their socioeconomic status. Since the late 90's however, there has been an increasing amount of complaints lodged with the Quebec Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms regarding various hospitals' refusal, based on the individual's postal code, to treat psychiatric patients who have shown up in their emergency rooms. There have also been numerous cases of patients who had been seeing the same psychiatrist for many years and when they made the decision to move to another area of Montreal, they were made to transfer hospitals, and therefore psychiatrists. Meanwhile, individuals with no psychiatric issues who are followed at a specific hospital may move at will, and will probably never need worry about going to a new hospital or finding a new doctor in their new neighbourhood.



Nathalie Sheppard

Since 2005, the major problem with this large push since on the sectorization is that the majority of people who it seems to be affecting negatively are those with psychiatric disabilities. For many individuals experiencing psychiatric difficulties, it can take anywhere from months to years to form a bond of trust with their psychiatrist. Breaking this bond and forcing patients to find a new psychiatrist can be extremely stressful to the individual and in some cases can cause a relapse of symptoms. It has also been shown that although people with physical ailments can easily obtain a second opinion. However, due to the current confines of sectorization, it is nearly impossible for those with a psychiatric ailment to obtain a second opinion on their course of treatment.

When one looks at the Quebec government's action plan on social and health services for 2005-2010 it states that people always have the right to choose the hospital of their preference. Even with this in writing, it does not have much impact on society at large if it is not respected. Often those who are experiencing psychiatric disabilities find it difficult to fight for themselves and their rights. Although the law may appear pleasant on paper, it is not worth much more if so many have experienced the exact opposite. In the end, people experiencing psychiatric problems - as opposed to physical ones - should receive the same treatment and services. Being transferred to another hospital for a psychiatric emergency if there is no psychiatrist on staff in the ward is completely understandable. Being transferred due to one's postal code however, is not. If we truly have universal health care then the laws should apply to all equally, and exclude none. ✓



WELCOME TO THE ST-JAMES DROP-IN CENTRE.

You can feel the energy emerging from these pages.

The Drop-In is one of those places where low-key miracles occur every day, where the isolated connect, where the very desperate find some solace, where the most powerless find a creative voice and where the abandoned find respect.

And all of this occurs in the most practical way.

While it remains a mission partner of St. James United Church, the Drop-In now stands on its own two feet.

The dynamic team of devoted young people who work there demonstrate the fundamental and spiritual values of a civilized society that so often seem forgotten in the world around us today.

They and the Centre's volunteers and members have created a community based on ideals that are so often preached but too frequently forgotten. They deserve our admiration and support.

I find my personal association with the Drop-In both humbling and joyful.

I urge everyone who reads these pages to help the Centre and its people to accomplish their mission and to speak out against the popular attitudes and political decisions that make its job so much more difficult and the pressures on its staff so hard to bear.

Our people deserve the best that we have to give.

Yours in Christ's service

Rob Bull

Chairman of the Board of Directors of the St. James Drop-In Centre, and Elder of St. James United Church



Rob Bull



LEAN ON ME *continued...*

and it's a relief when there's somebody there to help you. When these things are as basic as a hot meal; clean socks; help regulating medication; or assistance in applying for governmental and other financial entitlements, it's encouragingly easy for us all to have a hand.

Please swallow your pride

If I have things you need to borrow

For no one can fill those of your needs

That you don't let show

The St. James Drop-In Centre caters to people experiencing crisis and/or who are socially excluded. We act as guides and we aim to provide support to enable service users to help themselves. Typical tasks I have witnessed so far during my introduction to the center's undertakings have included offering support and counseling to members; liaising and making referrals to other agencies; seeking low-income accommodation on behalf of members; administering medication and finances; providing hot showers, hygiene products, and clean clothing; accompaniment to medical and governmental appointments; and addictions intervention. Some of the more special services have included assisting with pet care; painting someone's bedroom; co-signing a lease; taxi service for incapacitated individuals; reuniting estranged members with their families; and the amazing art program. I am also looking forward to the much-anticipated summer camping trip, and witnessing the effect of stars, crickets, and quiet on city street-dwellers.

If there is a load you have to bear

That you can't carry

I'm right up the road

I'll share your load

If you just call me

The services offered at our Drop-In are exciting in that they insist on the typically nontraditional and unconventional ideas of a type of socialism involving genuine acceptance; individually-tailored programs seeking to enhance quality of life; and dedicated, unwavering advocacy and representation. Within such premises, projects like St. James Drop-In Centre have the potential of engaging diverse groups of citizenry and ultimately forming a broader, all-encompassing, inclusive population. This can only enhance the notion of distributive justice in our realities, culture, and identity.

So just call on me brother, when you need a hand

We all need somebody to lean on

I just might have a problem that you'd understand

We all need somebody to lean on

Lean on me...

L'ART DE S'EXPRIMER

intitulé *Buzz me up*, cliché spontané au gré d'une balade montréalaise prise par C.J.MacIntyre. Vous aurez donc la chance de la voir en couverture des brochures, des calepins et des affiches du Programme d'été 2007 en question.

Dans le cadre de la Semaine de la Santé



Amis des Artistes, merci de prendre ce moment afin que je puisse vous donner des nouvelles des activités et des membres-artistes qui fréquentent assiduellement l'atelier d'art du centre *St-James*.

Mais tout d'abord des nouvelles des employés. Virginia Buteau nous a quitté, elle fût remplacée par notre bénévole # 1 et artiste professionnel Bernard Racicot.

Nous sommes heureux de partager avec vous la bonne nouvelle que le programme d'*Initiative en Partenariat en Action Communautaire* (IPAC), qui subventionne la totalité des achats de matériels d'art pour l'atelier, a été modifié en avril pour un tout nouveau programme appelé maintenant Initiative des Partenariats de la Lutte contre l'Itinérance (IPLI) et qui se voit reconduit pour 8 autres mois... vous aurez donc, de nouveau rendez-vous pour nos futures expositions qu'il ne faut pas manquer!

Sur ce, n'hésitez pas à nous laisser vos coordonnées soit par téléphone 514-288-0039 ou par internet à info@stjamescentre.ca

Nos dernières expériences, furent enrichissantes et réussies. De passage au centre *St-Pierre* en février, avec notre exposition intitulée *Briser l'Indifférence*, nous avons présenté plus d'une trentaine d'oeuvres dont les plus récentes qui ont été fort appréciées... près de 40 % d'entre elles ont été vendues.

Nous avons également participé, dans le cadre des récentes rénovations à la *Mission Old Brewery*, à la création de panneaux en tissus qui séparent les lits du 5^{ème} étage du *Pavillon Webster* et du 2^{ème} étage du *Pavillon Patricia Mackenzie*. Cette participation, nous la devons aux stagiaires de l'*Université Concordia*, Frédérique et Judith, qui ont réalisé avec nous *Les toiles de rêves* qui améliorent la qualité de vie des itinérants tout en leur offrant un environnement plus intime et plus humain. Frédérique et Judith ont apporté à *St-James*, tout au long de leur stage, le partage de leur savoir accompagné de leur plus beaux sourires. Merci à vous deux de tout cœur !

Nous avons aussi soumis des oeuvres pour la couverture de la brochure du *Programme d'été 2007 de l'Université Concordia*. Plus d'une quarantaine d'artistes y ont participé et nous avons eu la chance, non seulement d'être parmi les semi-finalistes(3), mais de remporter ce concours avec une photographie

Mentale, nous avons été accueillis au *Centre Communautaire de Loisir de la Côte-des-Neiges* pour une exposition qui dura deux semaines. Nous y avons non seulement exposé des toiles mais également des sacs de coton, des calepins, des boîtes en métal tous peints à la main, et plus encore.

De plus, vous aurez la chance d'apercevoir des toiles de nos artistes dans *Borderline* un film de Lyne Charlebois et produit par *Max Film Inc.*

La grande nouvelle est la possibilité que vous puissiez présentement aller admirer des masques fait de papier mâché et quelques peintures créées dans le cadre du programme *Le musée en Partage*, au *Musée des Beaux Arts de Montréal*. Cette exposition a pour titre *Face appart* et sera présenté au Passage culturel (Niveau S1) de celui-ci au 2200 rue Crescent coin Sherbrooke et cela, jusqu'au 1^{er} juillet prochain.

Le projet important en vu, une exposition collective avec différents organismes communautaires oeuvrants en santé mentale. Le regroupement a pour but d'avoir un impact médiatique digne du talent des artistes, trop souvent invisibles. Nous espérons que ce projet de longue haleine voit le jour en 2008-2009.

Si l'intérêt d'une rencontre avec les artistes se présente, soit pour un échange professionnel ou par curiosité, je vous le redit, ne soyez pas timide! Nous sommes ouvert du lundi au vendredi de 10h. à 16h30. Vous êtes les bienvenus.✓

Anne-Marie Beaulieu
Coordonnatrice de l'atelier d'art



PRENDRE LE TEMPS....

Bernard Racicot

Combien de fois marche t-on dans la rue, surtout au centre ville et voit-on des pauvres gens nous suppliant pour quelques sous. Les sentiments se succèdent et selon le bon vouloir, nous donnons et on se déculpabilise face à notre conscience ou face à Dieu. Combien de fois me suis-je retrouvé dans une telle situation au centre-ville. Plusieurs fois, ça ne se compte même plus. Avoir ce sentiment qu'on a fait notre bonne action parce qu'on a donné 25¢ et qu'on a continué notre chemin. Cette main tendue demandait peut-être quelque chose de plus que de l'argent.

Depuis que je suis au *Centre de jour St-James* je suis confronté à la réalité de la rue. La souffrance, la solitude, la maladie mentale et l'incompréhension sont plusieurs situations qui font partie du quotidien. Arracher un sourire ou une conversation vient avec les heures accumulées à gagner cette confiance fragile qui se donne au compte goutte.

Ça fait presque 5 ans que je viens au *Centre de jour St-James*, à raison d'une à trois journées par semaine. Avec les années, mon rôle a changé. Mes relations aussi.

Prendre le temps d'écouter. Essayer de comprendre, tout en acceptant qu'on ne comprends pas tout. Aller au delà des apparences trompeuses pour découvrir quelques trésors enfouis sous des blessures profondes. Combattre les préjugés de cette société superficielle à plusieurs égards.

Travailler à *St-James* m'ouvre une fenêtre vers quelques chose de plus grand et plus profond. Aller chercher la compassion en moi pour voir ces âmes qui flânent. Quelqu'un m'a dit un jour que ce ne sont pas des âmes mais bien des personnes qui vivent autour de nous. L'idée est que l'âme nous témoigne de cette parcelle de vie qui est enfouie sous la carapace forgée par les années de souffrance. Chaque jour au *Centre St-James*, on tente de découvrir ce trésor caché. Si on ouvre nos yeux, si on prends le temps de sortir de notre zone de confort, on peut le voir. ✓



Thank you, Thank you, Thank you!

Mohamed Abdulai & Pivotal Payments, 10 000 Villages West Island, EJLB Foundation, Jackman Foundation, Mazon Canada, Kenneth Shea, Shaika Café, Garde Manger pour tous, Government of Canada: IPLI program, Régie Regionale de la santé et des services sociaux: Programme PSOC, F.O.H.M, St-James United Church, Beaver Lodge N.6, Centre Communautaire de la Cote-des-Neiges, Indigo / Chapters Bookstores, Lisa Bendxén, Direction Chrétienne, Nancy Keays et le CLSC des Faubourgs, Pasteur Sama et la communauté Kimbanguiste, Paula Klein and the Montreal City Mission, North West clothing company, Mr. & Mrs Ricard, Centre St-Pierre, Isabelle Leduc & Chambreclerc, Mrs. Suzanne Beaucher, Mr. René Denis, Church of St-Andrews and St-Paul, Price Waterhouse Cooper, Mrs. Jennifer Maduro, Mr. & Mrs. Proctor, and the whole gang at St-James: Pablo, Scott, Pierre, Margaret, Anne, Arlen.



MEMBRES INSO



L'équipe et les membres de St-James tiennent à remercier de bon cœur son équipe en Insertion Sociale (INSO) Mark, Kenny, France, Danny et Paul. Ponctuels, assidus et dévoués en cuisine ou dans l'atelier, ils forment un quintet sans fausse note - BRAVO LES GARS!

N'oublions pas notre soliste, Dawn à la buanderie. Nous ne pouvons passer outre de remercier également Helen, notre bénévole permanent - UN GROS MERCI!

centre de jour
St-James
drop-in centre

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