

## The road less traveled

Alain Spitzer — Executive Director

Over the past six years, I have made many friends at St-James; one of the people I have gotten to know really well in the past few years (and whom I will call Patrick) grew up just around the corner from my parent's house. Although he is a few years older than I am, we grew up in the same neighborhood, played in the same parks, went to the same Church, and went through the same ups and downs that all teenagers go through on their journey to adulthood. The difference between Patrick and I is that every night I get to go home to a warm home and a loving family, while he has to make due with a bed in a shelter, or worse yet sleep on the street.

When I first got to know Patrick, I always assumed that he was in this predicament because of some harsh childhood that he may have gone through.

Although we had some tough times growing up, my brother and I always had the undivided support of our parents and friends, and I always assumed that this was the difference between me and many men and women that make their homes on the street.

Of course this is far from the truth, and as I got to know Patrick's

family. I soon realized that the line between having a fulfilled and generous lifestyle, and sleeping on the street is a very thin one.

In the past year, Patrick has gone through many highs and lows, and has attempted to do his best to steady his life.

On some days I am so encouraged by his determination to right the ship, while on others he just seems completely discouraged. I honestly worry for him on a daily basis, and pray that he can find peace in his life, and discover the many gifts that he has to offer those around him.

Until then, St-James will make him (and many other men and women) the centre of our community, and make sure that he knows that we care for him.

We all need to know that we are cared for and loved, and this I believe is the greatest gift that St-James has to offer our community.

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



## OVERCOMING THE HURDLES

by Danica Strailh

"Sometimes I feel so useless, I want to give and I want to work but I don't know where to go."

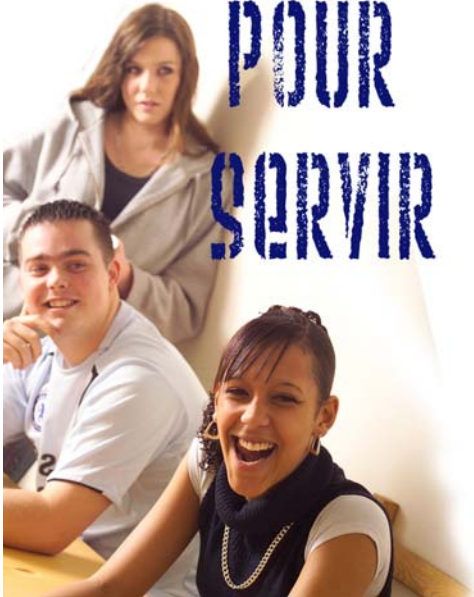
This is one of many statements that I have heard during my time at St. James while chatting with the diverse collection of individuals who visit the centre. Over the years, our members have faced countless problems entering the workforce due to hurdles that obstruct the transition, such as mental and physical health problems, substance abuse, low functional literacy and domestic violence.

This is why I am so excited to be involved in developing the plans for StreetSuds to provide a solution for those who feel such sentiments. The project is to use *StreetSuds* as the transitional vehicle into the workplace for those at our centre who are eager to learn vital skills that are needed to make this switch possible. It will accept and address physical and mental health challenges of our workers in compassionate manner and in chorus with developing their own capacity.

Not only have we received considerable enthusiasm from our friends in Montreal, but also nationwide, cementing the importance and value this project carries for our community. I envision *StreetSuds* to be a place where our clientele and workers will be able to build the relationships necessary to integrate those on the fringe with those in mainstream society and illuminate how much more we have in common than not.



# Camp d'été JUSTE POUR SERVIR



By Ron Melanson

In July, The St James drop in centre in partnership with Youth Unlimited hosted a group of 7 young people for a social justice camp called 'Juste pour Servir'. This camp was an opportunity for the participants to come and learn about social justice issues and serve the needy in our area of the city. The camp had three basic components. The first part was for the participants to learn how to read the city. I was able to recruit some of my colleagues who work in downtown ministries to come and share their experiences and understanding of this often misunderstood area.

The second was to put into practice what they had learned and then to take this sensitivity back to their homes to see how they could address issues of need in their own communities. One of the highlights was when we spent a night volunteering on 'Pops' van which has been feeding, helping and bringing dignity to the homeless and poor of Montreal for over 25 years. We served hundreds of people and by the early morning, the team was so filled with the joy of serving others that they didn't want this beautiful experience to end.

The challenge now is to support these young people as they start or continue to express their faith in areas of service.



by Ron Melanson

At the St James drop-in, we hear the many challenges of our marginalized friends while they are at the centre making use of the services we are able to provide for them. This inspires us to be constantly thinking about how to expand our services in order to respond to their increasing needs. We have been exploring some ideas and developing new project plans that will help to bridge the gap between our society and those who live on the fringe, never quite fitting in.

One such project, which some of you may have heard of, is the laundry program. The goal of this project is to offer people from the street the opportunity to engage in meaningful work and to provide a living wage in order to allow them to make real changes in their situation. However, the reality is, that for this or any idea to happen, we require significant new investments and fundraising opportunities. As a result, we are exploring new fundraising techniques that we will be sharing with you over the next few months. One such opportunity was a fundraising bike-ride in October. The St James team raised \$1400.00 at this event. Not only were we able to raise a bit of money for our dream projects, but the five of us who participated thoroughly enjoyed the experience and the company. We hope that you will respond enthusiastically to our fundraising efforts.



Alain, Anne-Marie, Isabelle, Ron & Bernard



# For the marginalized artists

Anne-Marie Beaulieu

It has already been 5 years since I became the art coordinator here at St-James, taking charge of the art room, ensuring the artists have the materials needed and researching galleries to expose our pieces of art. There was no doubt in my mind that the last task would be the most challenging. Working alongside these artists every day, I've had the chance to get to know and even recognize their various art works and I must say they are beautiful people.

For artists that are considered marginalized, the conventional exhibit halls are not open to them. It's frustrating for artists to have to be creative in the dark but especially if they have to remain in it. It's hard to imagine that the eyes of someone who would recognize it may never view their art. They want to be able to sell and be appreciated; to draw and paint for someone other than himself or herself. Luckily there are lovely boutiques and galleries that exist like Georges Laoun on the corner of Crescent and Sherbrooke in the heart of the Museum of Fine Arts. We've used this hall to expose our pieces during this past October and November. The staff as well as the clients received the canvases created by the

artists with joy. While surrounded by artists and friends during the grand opening, the warm welcome was well appreciated.

Sadly, even though numerous emails were sent out to interested art amateurs, we were few celebrating the opening that night. It is true that we are a unique concept and sought after therefore it



Chadi Alhelou

makes it hard to understand the lack of interest from amateur artists for our openings. So I decided to call upon a stage student in Production from UQAM named Chad Alhelou for assistance. We are currently working on organizing an event for the artists and the centre that we will solicit to the general public and medias. To

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aid in doing this, I am very excited and proud to announce that the artist and jazz singer Susie Arioli will be the official spokesperson for the St-James Centre. There are still some minor details to be worked out but be sure to note the date in your agendas for the Special St-James event that will

take place on December 18th. After all, we only turn 25 once!

We are participating in a migrating exhibit through The Conseil des arts de Montreal, thought up and put into action by ATSA (Terrorist Action Socially Acceptable) This exhibit will tour 8 various cultural locations and others around Montreal in 2010-2011. We are also displaying our art once again at 1 Etat d Urgence as collective artists. Everyone is welcome to come and admire the works of art on location, meaning Emilie-Gamelin Park as of November 25th.



A little reminder to all that our art room is open to the public to visit our magnificent area of art exploration and display with music, a little canary who sings a lovely melody and most important, our artists creating beautiful pieces in front of our eyes.

We look forward to your visit



Susie Arioli

## A film on St-James

by Bernard Racicot

With respect to the 25th anniversary of the St-James Drop-In Centre, we took the opportunity to create a unique way to share stories and images of the work we do with Montreal's homeless in a personalized documentary.

With the help of a government grant for publicity purposes, we have chosen this way in hopes that through our website and YouTube, this documentary could sensitize people to St-James and the growing issue of poverty in downtown Montreal.

Mark Andrew Job, a movie producer, has worked on this project from September to the end of November. More than 10 hours of footage was used to create a 12-minute film.



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### Thank you

The Canadian Mental Health Association, St-James Board of directors, Beaver Lodge No.6, Mazon Canada, Dianova Canada, Mr. K. Shea, EJLB 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 Hylan 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-Îles, 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 / Aoiro Studio Concordia University : Art Education, Dawson College, Cegep du Vieux-Montreal, CÉGEP 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

## STREET LEVEL QUÉBEC

by Bernard Racicot

A Street Level Quebec conference was held in the various halls of the St-James Church and Drop-In Centre on October 15th and 16th. The goal of this conference was to connect and equip the individuals and churches who cater or who are

interested in catering to those in need and show interest in issues involving social justice.

The conference spoke about learning and acting with diligence and integrity to develop healthy and enriching relationships with those in need, as well as speaking up for those whose voices go unheard and support those who do it themselves so the churches, governments and social medias get involved in fighting poverty.

Collaborating with individuals who are engaged in the basic objectives all the while respecting the different approaches and philosophies is a strong belief of Street Level Quebec.



## SOUPER BÉNÉFICE 25 ANS / YEARS BENEFIT DINNER

WE WOULD LIKE TO THANK ALL OF THOSE WHO HAVE IN ONE WAY OR ANOTHER ENCOURAGED THE DROP-IN CENTRE BY ATTENDING AND / OR VOLUNTEERING AT OUR 25TH ANNIVERSARY GALA DINNER. IT IS THROUGH YOUR KIND SUPPORT THAT WE HAVE BEEN ABLE TO SERVE OUR COMMUNITY FOR THE PAST 25 YEARS.