



Food for thought

Newsletter of the Volunteer Food Services Central Office

SUMMER
FALL
2010



**CENTRE
D'ACTION
BÉNÉVOLE DE
MONTREAL
VOLUNTEER
BUREAU OF
MONTREAL**

**CABM.NET
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The Volunteer Food Services Central Office is a program of the Volunteer Bureau of Montreal

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Something to Celebrate!

Forty years is nothing to sneeze at! Founding volunteer members and long-time volunteers of Meals on Wheels Chapter 12 in St-Laurent celebrated this milestone on April 12th, 2010.

Talk about a great story and a greater example. May they meet the challenges of the next forty years with the same enthusiasm and success! Well-wishers included St-Laurent Mayor Alan

DeSousa, borough councilors, and Marjorie Northrup and Clarisse Bonnefon, representatives of the Volunteer Bureau of Montreal. ■



From left to right: Councilor Aref Salem, Nora Alford (recognized for 40 years of service), Eva Kennedy (Honorable Mention), Olga Lavallée (recognized for 40 years of service), Mayor Alan DeSousa, Thora Carroll (recognized for 25 years of service), Audrey Dixon (Honorable Mention), Mary Neill (recognized for 40 years of service) Dorothy Moore (recognized for 40 years of service), and Carole Vézina (President).

Cover page:

Volunteer Bureau of Montreal volunteers and staff enjoyed a guided tour by l'Autre Montréal as part of our 2010 Volunteer Week Celebrations.

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* Volunteers



The VBM is proud to print *Food for Thought* on 100% recycled paper.



Marjorie's News

By Marjorie Northrup

Coordinator of Volunteer
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Our engaging cover photo was taken during a Volunteer Week outing with our AMAZING in-house volunteers! The receptionists who answer the VBM phones so cheerfully when you call our office are all volunteers, as are the placement counselors who interview potential volunteers here in our office. Several people also help us by doing clerical work. We are truly fortunate to have such a terrific crew to count on, and we all had great fun together learning about immigration in Montreal during our bus tour with *L'Autre Montréal*.

As I write these words, Montreal is basking in the pleasures of an early spring - the lilacs, fruit trees, and magnolias are in full bloom and people seem to be smiling more! Here's hoping summer brings more joy!

Our visit to the Museum of Fine Arts to see the marvels of the Tiffany exhibit was a great success (*see photo*), however many groups did not respond to the invitation. I have been told by volunteers from

several groups that they would have liked to come but had not been told about it. Should we provide each group with more invitations to distribute to your volunteers? Please give me your feedback!

I was pleased to see that many of you took the Kitchen Sanitation course offered by the L'Institut de l'hôtellerie. I found it to be very informative and a good reminder of the importance of food safety when dealing with a vulnerable clientele. For those who were unable to attend, one of the teachers and I are working to put together some reference material.

We are already busy planning next fall's Annual Meeting. We have several surprises and a great giveaway for everyone who attends! Thank you to those who offered suggestions this year, so that we can make next year's event even better. More info to follow

Do you enjoy reading this newsletter? Any ideas for how we can make it more interesting? Let me know by phone (514-842-3351) or e-mail. Have a **SPLENDID** summer! ■



A Different Kind of Kitchen Help

By Suzane Langlois

VBM Administrative Assistant
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Since I began last November as the VBM's administrative assistant, I've learned to juggle a variety of tasks: answering emails, taking and placing orders for promotional materials, registering and confirming participants for workshops and volunteer fairs Topping it all off is managing the distribution of the infamous Meals on Wheels

Central Office Questionnaire and updating our database with the necessary changes as the replies come in.

My first Meals on Wheels hands-on experience was last February, when winter was in full swing. I helped Denis Durocher, a volunteer with l'Échange de Services de LaSalle, deliver meals on his route. I was impressed by his dedication and the warm welcome I received from Maria Montejo, the group's director, even as she supervised a Lunch Club meal for about twenty senior citizens.

When Marjorie had a MOW-related idea which she thought would put my experience as a freelance illustrator in the publishing field to good use, I was happy to accept her "commission." I won't say any more on this or it will ruin the surprise we have in store for you at our Annual Meeting in October. I'll just say that it was a pleasure to facilitate a creative workshop during the Central Committee meeting in Knowlton recently.

I look forward to seeing you all in the near future! ■



2010

Suzane Langlois, Adjointe administrative

Meal on Wheels Gets Things Rolling!

Par Mélanie Ferreira

Coordinator, Group
Volunteering

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My name is Mélanie, and I joined the Volunteer Bureau's team as the group volunteering coordinator in February. During the same month, Marjorie visited a Meals on Wheels group in Ottawa and came back with a story about how they benefit by having GROUPS of volunteers deliver meals on a regular basis. Just hearing this made me want to work on setting up these kinds of partnerships here in Montreal.

At about the same time, Elliott Cohen, a chef, caterer, and cooking instructor, not to mention former restaurateur, wholesaler, and graduate of the New England Culinary Institute, got in touch with Marjorie. He was interested in volunteering his time and talents to the Meals-on-Wheels program.

Seeking a better understanding of the Meals on Wheels day-to-day experience, Elliott and I accompanied Marjorie on a visit to the New Hope Senior Citizens Centre. Not only did we check out the kitchen and get to know the team members, we also shared lunch with their clients. And, I



Clarisse, Elliott and Mélanie at work!

discovered bingo! It was truly a new experience.

Then, one afternoon few weeks later, along with a volunteer driver, I delivered meals to about twenty clients for Santropol Roulant. The logistics involved brought home just how much organization and efficiency the whole process requires, on the part of an organization like Santropol Roulant, as well as on the part of the volunteer drivers and runners.

Shortly thereafter, Elliott invited Marjorie, Clarisse, and I to take part in one of his cooking classes. While we were busy concocting and savouring some delicious dishes, Elliott outlined his ideas. He felt he could offer Meals on Wheels teams guidance in developing recipes, cooking methods and meal service, that he could help bring their already

extraordinary work to another level, tickling taste buds all the way. Talk about a *fait accompli* – today Elliott is part of New Hope's team of volunteers.

For my part, I would like to pair up Meals on Wheels groups with local businesses, so that employees could volunteer to deliver meals once a week, on a regular basis. In 2010, the Rendez-vous Community Centre for the 50+ in St-Michel will undertake just such a pilot project with the company from which they rent their premises.

For more information about Elliott Cohen and his services, visit ecca.ca.

For information about group volunteering, please see the VBM's website (cabm.net) or contact Mélanie Ferreira at 514-842-3351, extension 230.514.842.3351, poste 230. ■



Le Centre d'entraide le rameau d'Olivier

By Natacha Dion

In 1982, a few people met up for soup and coffee, hoping to offset a feeling of loneliness, if only for a little while. Twenty-eight years later the Centre d'Entraide le Rameau d'Olivier (The Olive Branch Support Centre), still works to counter social isolation and loneliness amongst seniors.

We offer the following services:

- Volunteer drivers **transport and accompany** clients to the doctor/hospital, on errands, etc. Over 2000 such arrangements occurred from 2009-2010.

- Every Thursday, a mini-bus brings clients to our centre for a **friendly lunch** and a few games with friends. A little snack prepared by our volunteers (who also took care of the lunch), and everyone is then driven home.

- **Meals on Wheels** delivered three days a week, to the tune of 3650 hot meals last year.

- Trained volunteers to make **friendly phone calls** to clients every morning. For many lonely seniors, a non-judgmental ear is reassuring and meaningful. Last year, we made over 8 700 such calls.

Each year, in partnership with the local CLSC, we organize a well-attended flu vaccine clinic.

Special events such as Valentine's Day, St. Catherine's Day, Mother's Day, Father's Day, and Halloween are marked with appropriate decorations and fancy meals.

Christmas, what a great holiday! Religious celebrations, a traditional Christmas meal, music, dancing, and gifts are all on the menu. Another chock-full year for our busy centre! ■

Happy retirement, André!



André Godin seems to have volunteering in his blood. After fifteen years at the Popote Cosmique, health issues require that he "retire" from volunteering. We wish to thank André for his many contributions and wish him a happy, well-deserved retirement. From everyone whose lives you have touched, André, THANK YOU! ■

Your colleagues at the Popote Cosmique.

Sharing the wealth ... of experience

Do you have exciting news, events or tips to share?

Contact Clarisse at 514.842.3351.

For your reading pleasure and to serve as a source of inspiration, here's the latest from a few volunteers, Meals on Wheels groups, and lunch clubs. If something sounds interesting or you'd like more information, just get in touch with the organization in question! They'll be happy to provide you with some answers.



The Centre d'action bénévole de Bordeaux-Cartierville offers **friendly phone calls** to the people receiving Meals on Wheels. These calls are done every two weeks and strengthen the missions of the Meals on Wheels to counter loneliness and isolation and ensure the health of the clients.

Contact : (514) 856-3553 or cabbc@cabbc.org



On March 26th, Résolidaire, in the Hochelaga-Maisonneuve district, held an open house. Family and friends of their Meals on Wheels clients were invited to meet with cooks and volunteers to learn more

about both the organization and the service.

Contact : 514-598-9670



Monique Guiyom, a volunteer with Sésame, in the Hochelaga-Maisonneuve district, explains what lead her to volunteering: "When you've got an empty nest, it's all too easy to spend the day in front of the television. My sister-in-law suggested I volunteer and here I am, twenty years later." As well as keeping her busy, volunteering provided Monique with the opportunity to spend time in pleasant surroundings with people who have become a second family, and has given her the satisfaction of knowing that she has useful contributions to make.



Talk about a gem. For the last month or so, **Gilles Pinsonneault** has been volunteering in our offices every Friday, inputting and printing files for new Meals on Wheels clients into our database. After health

set-backs forced him to leave his former profession, a counsellor at a career transition service suggested volunteering as a means of acquiring new work experiences. Gilles finds that data entry work suits him just fine, adding that he is taken aback by how much demand there is for a service that he hadn't even heard about until a VBM placement counsellor mentioned it to him as a suitable volunteer opportunity.



Le Petit Bedon (literally, "The Little Belly"), in the South-Central district, and Santropol Roulant, on the Plateau, regularly make **preserves** out of surplus food donations. By offering the preserves for sale to the public, they've also turned this into a fund-raising technique! Now why not take it up another notch by offering paid workshops to anyone interested in learning how to make preserves?

Contact : 514-525-5212 (*Petit Bedon*), 514-284-9335 (*Santropol*) ■

MultiCaf Knows How to Party!

By **Marjorie Northrup**

Coordinator of Volunteer
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MultiCaf, a well-known and dynamic Côte-des-Neiges community group, celebrated its twentieth anniversary last March. As emcee for the evening, I admit to being biased, but it was nothing less than magnificent! From poetry and “war” stories, to music and a gourmet meal, this was an event I won’t soon forget. ■



Clarisse presents MultiCaf Coordinator Fred Mehrabi and Norman Foy, President of their Board of Directors, with a commemorative plaque.



The “MultiCaf Big Chinese Family,” in full music mode!.



Poor Gerry Lafferty! Our intrepid Central Committee president, with VBM staff and other committee members during a “Weekend of Creativity” in Knowlton. **FRONT ROW:** Marjorie, Kateri Décary from Santropol Roulant, Natacha Dion from the Centre du Rameau d’Olivier, Diane Tardif from l’Entre-Gens, the VBM’s Suzanne Langlois, and Gerry from the New Hope Center. **BACK ROW:** Clarisse, Michelle De Lagrave from the Centre des aînés 50+, Brunilda Reyes from Les Fourchettes de l’Espoir, Marilena Huluban from the CAB Bordeaux-Cartierville, and Maria Montejo from the Échange de Services de LaSalle.