



# Food for thought

Newsletter of the Volunteer  
Food Services Central Office

FALL  
2015



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

*A comic strip  
about Meals on  
Wheels created  
by Anne Bédard,  
6 years old!*



# A New Challenge at the Volunteer Food Services Central Office

**By Nancy Dumais**

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Although there's no shortage of work at the Central Office, we're always looking for new challenges! Our latest, resulting from one of Marjorie's many ideas, is to manage a Meals on Wheels service from the VBM. After careful consideration, we've decided to give it a try!

Just like you, our main goal is always to improve the services we offer to seniors. Similar to many Montreal neighbourhoods, Rosemont, located in the eastern part of the city, is an area where an increase in the need for services

has been felt for many years. Our goal is to set up a recognized Meals on Wheels service that is solidly entrenched in the neighbourhood, but run by the VBM.

To help us in our incredible adventure, we've teamed up with Buffets Insère-Jeunes, a local organization specializing in integrating people into the labour market, which has graciously accepted to welcome volunteers and to provide the meals. The VBM will be in charge of recruiting, training and managing volunteers, liaising between clients and the CLSC and maintaining contact with both, collecting payments and managing finances.

To start, we'll offer two deliveries per week on Wednesdays and Fridays. As I write this, we're less than



*Danny Belley, Executive Director of Buffets Insère-Jeunes, Marjorie, Stéphanie and Nancy.*

two months away from our first delivery, which will take place on September 16! We'll be sure to give you news in our monthly message that Stéphanie will send you as well as in our next edition of Food for Thought. On that note, I wish you all have a wonderful fall. ■

**Cover:** A comic strip about Meals on Wheels created by Anne Bédard, 6 years old!

**Photo credits:**

Ziad Bitar: p. 6  
Mariama Dione: p. 5 and 7  
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Regroupement des popotes roulantes: p. 5  
Jean-Eudes Schürr: p. 6

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**\* Volunteers**



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# A Word from Marjorie

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## By Marjorie Northrup

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“Joy is the holy fire that keeps our purpose warm and our intelligence aglow.”

Helen Keller

As I write these words, I'm getting ready to leave the office for three glorious weeks of vacation, and I can't wait! That being said, I told my colleagues that I was already looking forward to coming back, because we have some great projects coming up and also because we keep striving to work in joy and harmony.

Yes, joy takes work! In our own way, everyone on our small team tries to encourage each other, share good times and remind ourselves how lucky we are to have a job that allows us to contribute to society. Nancy specializes in calm, serene joy and even moods; Stéphanie is the queen of small gestures and delicate attentions and yours truly is very diligent in her work in the “craziness” department.

We strongly believe that we can get through big challenges and tough times when our surroundings foster good relationships and when we search for solutions instead of pointing fingers. But YOU too, by being who you are, make it easier for us to stay the course in our beautiful mission. Every time we visit you or whenever you grace us with your



*Speaking of craziness, here are our mascots Bob and Bobette cleaning their yard.*

presence, you inspire us. Sometimes I get fed up with politics and the endless battles for adequate financing. The antidote? Visiting you to see volunteers and professionals at work, bringing food and comfort to their clients.

Here's to a pleasant return to work and maybe even a less snowy winter. ■

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## A very special anniversary in 2016!

It is with great pride and joy that we look forward to the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Meals on Wheels in Quebec. The first Meals on Wheels delivery took place in the spring of 1966, thanks to the partnership between the Volunteer Bureau of Montreal, the Victorian Order of Nurses, and St Matthias church in Westmount. The cost to

clients was 25¢, with which shoppers were able to cover the cost of the food! But above all, it is thanks to THOUSANDS of volunteers that this magnificent service keeps growing in size and quality. We will keep you posted on the events celebrating this important milestone. ■



*Photo January 1966, with Mrs H.S. Norton, President Volunteer Bureau of Montreal, Mr. John Doidge, Archdeacon and Mrs Kathleen Stavert, rector of St. Matthias and chairman of the pilot project.*

# 24<sup>th</sup> Annual PRASAB Conference

## By Natacha Dion

Director, Centre d'entraide le Rameau d'Olivier inc.

On June 4 and 5, the 24<sup>th</sup> annual PRASAB conference took place in Sherbrooke at the Sercovie offices. It was my second time participating in this great conference and, once again, I spent two wonderful days in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere.

I was very enthusiastic about attending the various workshops and somewhat disappointed that I could only attend two of the three

that were offered. Every year, the topics are always very interesting, since they're a part of our daily lives. I particularly enjoyed Dr. Réjean Hébert's conference on the essential role that Meals on Wheels programs play in keeping people who are losing their autonomy at home.

Of course, I have to mention the warm welcome that the Sercovie organization prepared for us. And the city of Sherbrooke is so beautiful that I stayed an extra day to enjoy it even more.

I'd like to thank everyone involved in organizing this very rewarding conference. I invite you



*Dr Réjean Hébert, as elegant as he is interesting*

to attend the 25<sup>th</sup> conference in 2016. Hope to see you there! ■

## Well-Deserved Recognition!

On June 10 during its Annual General Meeting, the Mount Royal Municipal Association honoured volunteers of the Town

of Mount Royal Meals on Wheels. In fact, all volunteers past and present were named citizens of the year! Each volunteer received

a certificate and a beautiful rose. Congratulations to everyone! ■



*People came to the event in droves.*



*Ms. Joan Clark, Volunteer Coordinator, receives her certificate.*



# A New Executive Director at PRASAB

**By Annie-Michèle Carrière**

Executive Director, PRASAB

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For close to a year, I've had the privilege of working at PRASAB as an Administrative Assistant under Claudette Coulombe.

I've been fortunate enough to participate in several projects, including distributing Yule logs offered by IGA grocery stores in 2014. As part of this project, I was able to chat with members,

generous and passionate people who work hard to offer Meals on Wheels services. I felt spoiled to be part of this wonderful team!

On June 15, I took over the helm from Claudette Coulombe as Executive Director.

Taking on these responsibilities on behalf of the network coincides with my desire to make a positive difference in people's lives. I'm touched and inspired to know that over 1,350,000 meals are delivered every year to more than 27,000 homes, reaching 33,000 people—most of whom are

seniors—thanks to over 7,000 volunteers involved in more than 150 organizations that offer Meals on Wheels services throughout Quebec.

For now, the team will continue its efforts in a similar direction while making a particular effort to ensure that this essential service is offered as widely as possible throughout the province!

I'm sure we'll have the pleasure of meeting each other, and together we'll help Meals on Wheels go even further! ■

## Chef for a Day: Diversity on the Menu!

**By Pina Baldassarre and Nadia Hébert**

Head cook and administrative assistant, Action Centre-Ville

Action Centre-Ville, a community organization for people aged 50 years and older and located in downtown Montreal, offers different activities centred on cooking. One of the most successful activities has brought with it some delicious diversity. It is called "Chef for a Day". Members and volunteers are invited on a monthly basis (and sometimes more often) to prepare a favourite

recipe, one for which they have a particular fondness and for which they have become well known.

In addition to cooking the meal, becoming chef for a day also involves making the list of ingredients and sometimes helping to purchase them. Right from the start of the project, we've had the pleasure of tasting meals from very diverse culinary traditions: Japanese, Chinese, Creole, Moroccan, Picard (northern France), French, Quebecois, Indian, etc. This highly popular activity, which attracts at least 60 people every time, strengthens the members' sense of belonging and allows them to



*A chef and his creation!*

share their knowledge in a friendly atmosphere! ■

# Success Stories

## By Stéphanie Carrasco

Project Coordinator, Volunteer Food Services, VBM

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I'd like to talk about you as we get back to work this fall: you inspire us and keep us going every day. Here's a small sample of what we see as your success stories:

- Delivering the paper 24H with the meal. (*Petit Bedon*)
- Offering clients surplus food received by Moisson Montréal. (*Petit Bedon*)
- Offering a souvenir book as a thank-you to volunteers. (*St-Joseph*)
- Allowing members or volunteers to take the reins of the kitchen and prepare a themed community meal to seniors. (*Action Centre-Ville*)
- Offering volunteer drivers the chance to become runners if they so wish. A happy volunteer is a faithful volunteer. (*Club des bons mangeurs*)
- Handing out personalized pens with the name of the Meals on Wheels service to clients and volunteers during Meals on Wheels Week from March 15 to 21. (*Club des bons mangeurs*)
- Asking Meals on Wheels volunteers who are not drivers if they would agree to be on-call



Engraved pen offered by the St-Laurent #12 Meals on Wheels for their 45<sup>th</sup> anniversary.



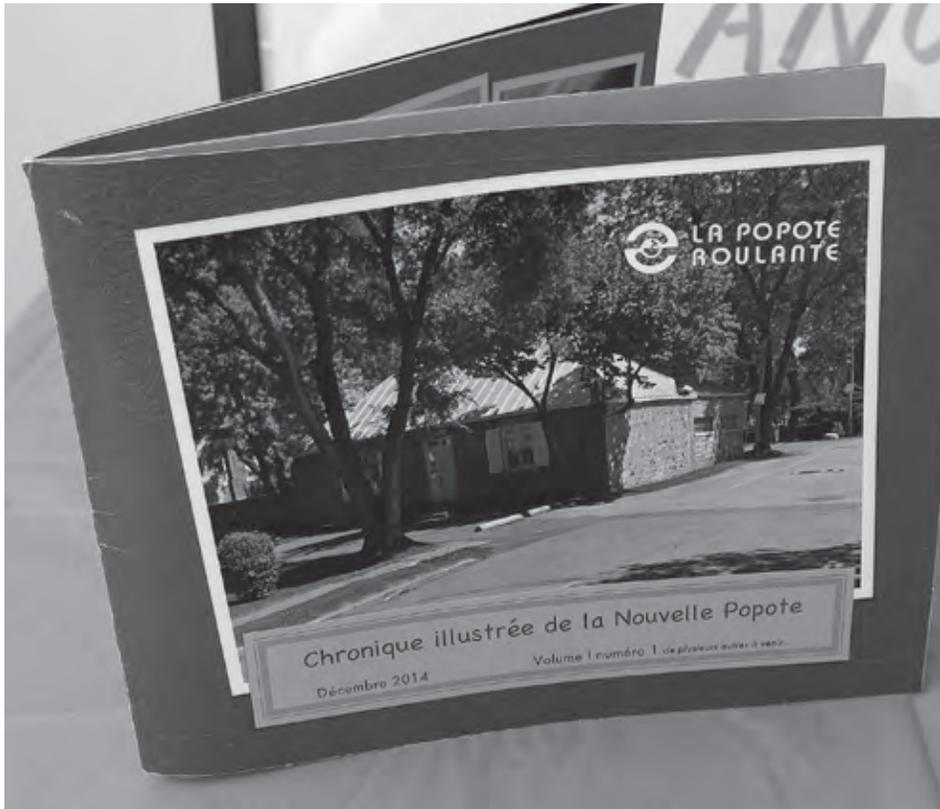
Recipe for Montreal-West Meals on Wheels:  
A smile + a warm meal = a satisfied client.

drivers, checking first that they have a driver's license. It is essential to ensure that this request remains only temporary if that is the volunteer's choice. (*Résolidaire*)



Bravo to Alette and her team for keeping their meals at \$2 apiece!

- Delivering \$2 meals by applying donations, subsidies and funds raised directly to meal costs. (*Brossard*)
- Offering all volunteers a gift from the Meals on Wheels service



*Souvenir book from St-Joseph Meals on Wheels.*

- on important anniversaries (a wooden pen with “Meals on Wheels Chapter 12 1970-2015” engraved on it). (*St-Laurent #12*)
- Placing a piggy bank on the table during community meals to give people the option of making a donation. (*Résolidaire*)
- Using a coupon system to limit cash transactions for volunteers and clients. (*Rivière-des-Prairies*)

Aside from your success stories, your kind gestures and thoughts touch us every time, and constitute

some of the many reasons why we are so fond of you. For example, take Denis, a super skilled and devoted volunteer who agreed to provide medical transportation for a client from another Meals on Wheels service, even though he was asked at the last minute, early on a Monday morning. And what more can we say about the generosity of Audrey, a Meals on Wheels manager, who offered meals free of charge to a client who had cancelled because he was unable to pay?



*Élaine, chef for a day at Action Centre-Ville, mixes love into a favourite dish.*

If you have other success stories, anecdotes, ideas, recipes, photos, etc. that you want to share, don't hesitate to send them to us. ■

# Highly Rewarding Meetings and Productive Exchanges

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**By Stéphanie Carrasco**

Project Coordinator, Volunteer Food Services, VBM

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I came to visit some of you last fall. For everyone else, don't think that we've forgotten you: Marjorie, Nancy or I will drop by for a visit sometime during the year.

These meetings were an opportunity for me to find out more about you or to reacquaint myself with you. I say reacquaint because after my two-year absence, a lot of things are different. In spite of some changes, you are still ensuring that your service is offered and you still work with the same generous spirit and wonderful ideas.

The goal of these visits was to obtain your evaluation and expectations regarding the services we offer you so that we can make improvements and better meet your needs.

Recruiting volunteers is an essential question for you since continuing to offer your services depends largely on volunteer involvement. Volunteering is evolving, and more and more people are getting engaged for shorter periods of time. You must also face unexpected, last-minute situations such as replacing volunteers who cancel. You would

like us to support you even more in recruiting volunteers, so we're thinking up new recruitment strategies, particularly for drivers (the most difficult position to fill, especially in winter). We don't have a bank of volunteers, but the Central Office of Volunteer Food Services, which is a VBM service, often receives calls from people who wish to volunteer for Meals on Wheels and/or in kitchens and/or with seniors. So if you're looking for volunteers, don't hesitate to let us know what you need. We can't promise to meet all of your needs, but when these opportunities present themselves, we'll have the information we need to direct volunteers to the right place while keeping their expectations and place of residence in mind.

Offering increased visibility to Meals on Wheels and community meal services will allow us to promote volunteer recruitment. In this way, the VFS and PRASAB are working together. One example is the Yule log campaign last December, in partnership with Sobeys and La Table des Chefs.

Moreover, the VFS tries its hardest to guarantee that all groups are represented when it comes to defending the rights of seniors, fundraising and managing political files. Our latest victory, thanks to PRASAB—of which Marjorie is the president of the Board of

Directors—was to obtain authorization for Meals on Wheels services to apply for funding from the New Horizons for Seniors Program, which was categorically refused to them at first.

Regarding office space, much work remains to be done on that front, especially when you consider that, out of the 26 groups we asked, eight have problems with their space, three of which can no longer prepare meals and one of which had no choice but to close their doors last April after they were unable to relocate.

The service offered by the Liaison Officer, our dear Nancy, is not only appreciated by the groups that benefit from it directly, but also beneficial to the other groups. She refers clients, families and health professionals to your services. And, as you might already know, Nancy has started her whirlwind tour of CLSCs to spread general information about VFS services and more specific information to each sector. Again, if you have important information to share with CLSCs or if you have any questions you'd like to ask, please contact Nancy. Judging from her first few presentations, she's been warmly received and, despite the short time that she's given, her audiences listen very closely. We're also thinking of creating a new VFS flyer.

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We've asked ourselves several times about how important it is for us to continue publishing Food for Thought, and we were pleasantly surprised to hear that you are avid and faithful readers. You enjoy reading news from other groups, testimonials, and success stories in articles written by your peers. Also, if you have any information that you'd like to share, don't hesitate to contact Nancy. Your tips, experiences, questions and more will no doubt help other groups.

During my visits, you all clearly expressed your wish and need to network and communicate with your peers. Thus, we would like to organize days, possibly according to geographic location, where you'll have a chance to talk and think together.

In closing, one thing is certain: your comments have been very helpful for us to plan future objectives. Once again, thank you for your welcome. ■



*A volunteer driver, ready to go regardless of the weather.*

# Meals On Wheels #12, 45 Years, 1970- 2015

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*Adrien Michaud, Meals on Wheels #12 president and Heather and Wendell Leitner, coordinators.*

## **By Heather Leitner**

Coordinator, Meals on Wheels #12

**Meals on Wheels originated in England during the blitz of WW2 in order to help bombing victims. A visiting nursing service who saw how helpful these wartime meals proved to be founded the first Meals on Wheels in Montreal in 1966 under the auspices of the Volunteer Bureau of Montreal. The first Meals on Wheels**

served 18 clients. The kitchens of each group were usually set up in Parish Halls, Community Centres or Hospitals. There are now Meals on Wheels groups in nearly every neighbourhood of Montreal.

Group #1 began operations at St. Matthias' Church kitchens, delivering meals to citizens in the Westmount area. Ten more groups were organized and began deliveries from 1966 to 1970. Then came group #12, our group in Saint-Laurent. In late

1969, Reverend Crawford from the Saint-Laurent Presbyterian Church called a meeting in Saint-Laurent so all interested persons could meet the personnel of the VBM and learn the details of what constituted running of a "Meals on Wheels" project. We decided we could do this with the cooperation of a good number of concerned people.

The Lions Club provided us with our first delivery box, an essential part of our equipment. Various other groups such as the Brownies,

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Guides, etc., also came to our help by donating what we needed to get started. Our first meals were prepared on February 17<sup>th</sup>, 1970 at the Saint-Laurent Neighbourhood Association, 1745 Decarie Blvd, now known as the YMCA. We stayed there from 1970 to 1982. In 1982 we moved to the Saint-Laurent Presbyterian Church kitchens at 1345 Lapointe St and we are still there. When we first started we would bring the meals on dishes to our clients and bring the dishes back to be washed. Today we use containers with covers and do not reuse them.

Our clients are referred from the VBM who receives the names from the CLSC.

Volunteers are divided into three groups: cooks, drivers and servers. We are always looking for volunteers. We have an Executive Committee to make decisions but, because we are a very small group, we usually discuss any changes with everyone through a meeting. This way no one feels left out.

Mr. Harry Young, our 3<sup>rd</sup> past President, received the Governor General's Caring Canadian Award

at the age of 83. There has never been a person more deserving of this award than Mr. Young. For over 20 years he devoted his time to caring for others which he enjoyed. Mr. Kevin Cohalan, Director of the VBM, was thrilled to learn that Mr. Young had received the award and he went on to say that Mr. Young had been involved for a long time and he was an active president. It is nice when one of our fellow volunteers is acknowledged like this.

In 2010, when we celebrated our 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary we also celebrated Mrs Nora Alford, our dietitian, for her 40 years as a volunteer with Meals on Wheels #12. It was a very special day for everyone.

Our Presidents over the years have been:

- Mrs Mary Forsyth 1970-1973 R.I.P
- Mrs Cecile Boire 1973-1993 R.I.P
- Mr. Harry Young 1993-2007 R.I.P
- Ms Carole Vezina 2007-2012
- Mr. Adrien Michaud 2012-

I would like to end with something that was written about volunteers in our 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary edition of *Bits and Pieces* in 1995.

### **Volunteers, God Bless Them!**

Many will be shocked to find,  
When the day of judgement nears,  
That there's a special place in heaven  
Set aside for volunteers

Furnished with big recliners,  
Satin couches and footstools;  
Where there's no committee chairmen  
No group leaders or car pools,

No eager team that needs a coach,  
No bazaar and no bake sale.  
There will be nothing to staple,  
Not one thing to fold or mail.

Telephone lists will be outlawed,  
But a finger snap will bring  
Cool drinks and gourmet dinners  
And treats fit for a king.

You ask, "Who'll serve these privileged  
few  
And work for all they're worth?"  
"Why, all those who reaped the benefits  
And not once volunteered on earth."

I hope you enjoyed this bit of information on Meals on Wheels. ■