



Our Harbour – Le Havre à nous
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Annual Report of Activities 2014-2015

Our Harbour Highlights – 2014-2015

- **OH hosted a very successful 10th anniversary party**
- **OH Board of Directors benefitted from a facilitated planning session allowing determination of current strengths and weaknesses as well as best use of monetary resources**
- **OH President and one of our residents were featured in a video about OH on CTV 6 o'clock news.**
- **Fundraising activities (letter campaign and fundraising events) raised significant funds**

1. Our Harbour activities conform to our charter.

All the activities of the organization conform to the Charter, as explained below.

1.1 To provide stable accommodation to people living with mental illness

The organization provides supportive housing for up to 15 people living with mental illness, who share five apartments. Our goal is to maintain fully occupied apartments with residents who can fit into Our Harbour. Occupancy rate for past year was 90%, comparable with the preceding year.

- A volunteer property manager oversees the apartments and along with the Coordinator, assures cleanliness of the premises and monitors the need for redecorating the apartments.
- Volunteers worked in the summer months to houseclean 3 of the apartments
- A new stove was purchased for one of the apartments using a grant from Fondation Jacques Francoeur
- A new policy has been implemented to encourage residents to better clean their apartments or pay for professional cleaning.
- Apartment volunteers are implementing a new system of log keeping to better assure even and regular coordination of the 5 apartments
- We are looking to offer a more inclusive approach to bilingual francophone residents through more bilingual staff. We will be looking for a temporary replacement of our assistant coordinator, who is leaving on maternity leave in May, 2015.
- We have applied for a grant from Employment and Social Development Canada to hire a new coordinator and open 3 new apartments.
- The board of directors attended a facilitated planning session in November, 2014, to update our strengths and weaknesses as an organization and determine best use of our reserve funds
- We operated within our budget for the current year.

1.2 To provide community for the residents by means of volunteers

- An average of three volunteer visitors per apartment visited with the residents and helped them with their daily living activities. They also accompanied the residents to community activities, hospital, shopping, restaurants, and courses
- During the year, volunteers and residents organized birthday celebrations at local restaurants, trips to the movies and museums, and outings such as sugaring off and skating.

- A summer BBQ was held for residents, staff and volunteers in one of the volunteer's garden
- A most enjoyable Christmas party was organized for residents and volunteers and proved a great success.
- An OH Stagiaire offered cooking lessons to a number of enthusiastic residents
- OH residents participated in a summer canoe trip at the invitation of Brian Peddar (Richelieu Valley Community Learning Center (RVCLC))
- With the help of the coordinators, residents hosted a volunteer appreciation party in April 2014
- Residents and volunteers participated in the DEFEAT DEPRESS WALK IN May, 2014 and Montreal Walk for Mental Health in October, 2014.

1.3 To help the residents in their dealings with health professionals and other government organizations

- Coordinators frequently accompany residents for doctors' visits, appointments with social workers, etc.
- Coordinators help residents in getting disability payments and in contacting other community services. Staff worked with project Genesis to advocate successfully for disability pension for a resident
- The SSCPN (South Shore Community Partners Network) helped residents complete their income tax reports.
- Staff worked with SEMO Montérégie, an organization that helps find jobs for challenged workers
- Staff worked with Centre Bénévole de la Rive Sud, who offer help with organizational issues
- Staff helped a resident with a court case and accompanied him to court, offering a character reference
- A talk on Mental Health organized by OH and given by professional Dr. Fielding of McGill Psychiatry Department was attended by most residents.

1.4 To work with local hospitals, CSSS and community organizations to assure constant care for people living with mental illness

- Our latest contract with residents allows for access to all of their medical background to help deal with drug issues and better maintain stable community of clients
- OH residents participated in December 2014 in an exchange with the residents of centre NUHab
- A community organizer for CSSS Champlain Charles-Lemoyne visited OH in winter 2015
- A member of the Board of Directors and the Assistant Coordinator were well received for their presentation of OH to a meeting of Pierre Boucher Hospital's social workers
- Coordinators contact a few dozen organizations on a regular basis to find new residents and to try to ascertain the need for more apartments for Anglophones living with mental illness in the Montérégie.
- Coordinator and a board member attend meetings of the Table de concertation de l'agglomération de Longueuil and Table itinérance Rive Sud Rencontres de l'interaction. As well they work in partnership with other organizations that provide services for persons living with mental illness.

1.5 To inform the public of the problems and needs of people living with mental illness

- We organized and hosted a public talk on Mental Illness by an expert from McGill Outpatient department of Psychiatry, Dr. Fielding. The talk was attended by residents, volunteers, board members and some members of the general public.
- OH issues biannual newsletters to inform donors and interested members of the public of mental health issues and the specific work and activities of the organization
- OH media expert is in the process of preparing a documentary on our clients for public awareness
- OH has increased its online social media presence by designating a volunteer to set up and manage Twitter and a Facebook page
- We have compiled a current list of donors and their emails on Excel so that we can easily send information regarding OH activities.
- OH President and one of our residents were featured in a video about OH on CTV 6 o'clock news.

- We participated in awareness-raising projects like the Montreal and South Shore Walks for Mental Health, thereby helping to inform the general population about the needs of people living with mental illness and about community-based groups who are working in the mental-health field.

2. The Community contributes to the activities of Our Harbour

- Our Harbour regularly applies for and receives Grants from the government and corporations for which it deems itself eligible
- Local businesses contributed generously of their products and services for a silent auction at our spaghetti supper fundraiser
- Our 10th anniversary celebration prior to the AGM in June 2014 was well attended by many volunteers and donors including public dignitaries such as the Mayor of St Lambert and a rep of our MPP.
- OH individual fundraising campaign contacted 435 previous donors by surface and email. Response was excellent.
- A local photocopy shop (Photo-René) offers colour printing of our newsletter for the price of black and white.
- Our accountant offers his auditing services pro bono
- An OH donor gave \$500 for the development of a Business Plan, carried out with a final report in spring 2014
- Nursing Student Stagiaires from Champlain organized an appreciation party for residents with games and favours.
- Together 2000 holds concerts and donates proceeds to OH
- St. Barnabas Anglican Church provides office and meeting space for a nominal rent
- St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church allows us to hold meetings and our annual Christmas party in the church hall, free of charge
- Riverside Ecumenical Ministerial ensures that notices are placed in all church bulletins so that our events are publicized and we receive gifts of furniture, appliances as we need them so there is not need to pay for storage. These goods and services allow Our Harbour to set up an apartment which is comfortable for a new resident who often has few personal items of his/her own
- South Shore Community Partners Network provides publicity for our events on the Internet. This means that our events reach 800 plus contacts
- The local churches provide a food basket at Christmas for each apartment. HOPE gives residents a food basket, on request, if they need help because they are experiencing difficulty managing their pensions.
- All volunteers come from the local community and give freely and generously of their time and talents. We estimate that the value of the work they do exceeds \$100,000 a year.

3. Our Harbour contributes to the community

- We hosted the Lundbeck Montreal Walk to Defeat Depression in May, 2014. The walk attracted about 50 participants from Montreal and the South Shore
- Some OH residents and a volunteer assisted in delivering Christmas baskets for the local ecumenical organization.
- OH sponsored a public performance of the play Kafka's Ape and used the occasion to promote the organization's objectives and to fundraise. (\$400)
- Our Harbour held its 2nd annual spaghetti supper fundraising in March, 2015. The event was attended by over 100 people from the community and raised about \$3000.
- OH explored with the local CEGEP how OH fits with their stagiaires' needs for placement.
- Champlain Nursing Programme stagiaires, as part of their programme, explored with residents issues such as life after hospitalization and challenges faced by those living with mental illness.
- OH attended the Health Promotion Fair in November 2014, promoting our services even to the Minister of Health!
- Student stagiaires from Dawson College, Champlain CEGEP and McGill benefitted over the course of the year through service at OH
- OH residents assisted in church fund-raising bazaars, rummage sales and other community-organized events. They served soup and did the clean-up for the Lenten lunches in local churches.

- Copies of the Our Harbour newsletter promoting mental-health issues are distributed at community events and provided to churches and libraries on the South Shore
- Our Harbour is a member of the Québec Health and Social Network (CHSSN) which helps promote health and social services needs and contact among the English-speaking community across Québec.
- Our coordinators and a board member attended six meetings of the Table de concertation de l'agglomération de Longueuil on mental health.
- OH staff are regularly invited to attend grand rounds at Douglas Hospital to hear pertinent and informative presentations. They attend relevant sessions
- Staff, volunteers and residents attend relevant talks organized by l'Ami Québec

4. Our Harbour meets the needs of the community

- We held a 10th anniversary reception to thank members of the community who have contributed regularly to OH during the past 10 years
- We operate five apartments, two for women and three for men, in the Montérégie. We service 15 individuals. The apartments operate in English and are the only place in the Montérégie that Anglophones living with mental illness can live in their own language in an assisted environment
- We receive referrals from many South Shore organizations as well as from both of the two hospitals and the CSSS. We also receive referrals from the hospitals in Montreal, private individuals, churches, etc.
- OH Staff provide referrals, assessments, and contacts to the general public who request this information
- Our Harbour website posts information about events and programs of interest to persons and families who are dealing with mental illness.
- Our brochures are available at the South Shore churches and copies of our biannual newsletter are sent to over 400 members by mail and to the 800 members of the SSCPN by e-mail. Brochures are also placed in CLSC offices, social work offices, and clinics.

5. Our Harbour operates in a democratic manner

- The Board members are elected at our annual meeting and their names are made public.
- We meet monthly and meeting agendas are posted a week in advance; Board members are invited to bring forward issues
- The By-Laws concerning Board management are fully respected.
- We have a resident representative on the Board.
- Our Annual Meeting is advertised in the newsletter, in the media and other publications in both English and French general public is welcome
- The Residents' Activities Committee operates in a democratic way, with a vote by residents on which activities they wish to have organized
- Problems with residents are approached in a democratic way whenever possible
- House rules are written down for benefit of residents.

Response to Our Harbour Priorities for 2014-2015

Visibility:

- **Complete French web site implementation: install up-to-date translations of the English site.**

Still in progress. Volunteers are working on translation but it is proving very time consuming. We will try to find more efficient means to establish the French site.

- **Use the newsletter and website to highlight Board activity, the rewards of being a Board Member and the annual need for new board members and volunteers**

The newsletter and web site regularly report on special board activities as well as publish testimonials from regular donors and student stagiaires who have worked with OH

- **Support the Defeat Depression Walk, 10th Anniversary Party/AGM and Spaghetti Supper on the website and through our new Facebook page**
These events were well publicized and supported by OH members, donors and some members of the general public
- **Assemble an easily accessible battery of materials for any member of the board or staff to use for recruitment purposes**
In progress. We have a promotional video, up-to-date brochure, financial graphic, mission statement and current list of all donors with most of their emails
- **Move to a larger format for the Newsletter.**
Both recent newsletters were published in larger 8.5" x 11" format and in colour on quality paper
- **Encourage use of, and contributions to, the website and the Dropbox archive.**
The webmaster regularly updates the website with current items and promotes use of Dropbox

Fundraising:

Corporate fundraising

- **Attract a skilled person to handle corporate fund raising**
Initiative has not been successful; still in progress

Individual Fundraising

- **Complete work on fundraising video**
Completed, and used successfully
- **Serve as local host for Lundbeck's Defeat Depression Walk**
Walk was very successful thanks to OH volunteers
- **Identify and recognize "loyal donors" in last 10 years and invite them personally to attend the 10th anniversary celebration**
More than 50 "loyal donors" received invitations and attended the anniversary celebration
- **Continue to widen our list of donors and to carry out our letter writing campaign in the fall to potential individual donors**
List of donors has been expanded, letter-writing campaign was once again successful, and email list has been up-dated and is easily manipulated in Excel
- **Hold our second fundraising spaghetti supper in fall 2014**
Event was postponed to spring, 2015, and was reasonably successful although we did not raise as much funds as the preceding year
- **Continue to send out personal thank you cards to all donors**
Every OH donor receives a timely handwritten thank you note along with a tax receipt.

Residents

- **Continue to promote stability among residents in their individual lives**
Residents are requiring fewer hospitalizations and participating more in activities, evidence of good stability
- **Aim for continual zero vacancy rate**
Despite a number of departures and changes in residents, we managed to maintain a 90% occupancy rate.
- **Enhance internal community through more activities that residents can organize themselves**
Residents organized on their own, with help from the coordinator, dinners at Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year's and Easter for other residents.
- **Extend cooking classes to take place every week – shared by 2 volunteers**
Classes continued, offered by stagiaires
- **Continue Lunch n' Learn workshops for residents on pertinent topics**
Workshops were continued as time permitted
- **Arrange exchange visits with l'Abri en ville (continuation of last year's proposal)**
Planned again for next year

Administration

- **Attract additional board members**
One potential board member joined us unofficially during the year
- **Improve internal communication**
Renewed effort to be made in the upcoming year
- **Attract coordinator of volunteers**
We have not been successful in attracting a volunteer coordinator but have delegated this responsibility to the coordinators
- **Operate within a balanced budget**
Once again we have succeeded in keeping within our budget

June 15th, 2015