

Our Harbour/Havre à Nous News

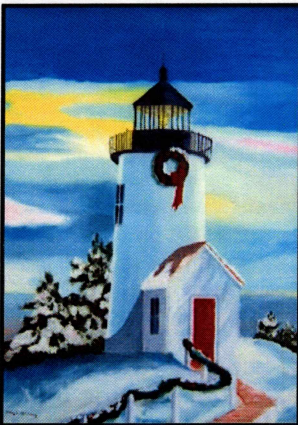
Newsletter Fall / Winter 2007

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Networking with our Greater Community

Our Harbour was founded four years ago as the result of a replication initiative from **L'Abri en ville**. This organization, based in Montreal, decided that to expand beyond ten apartments would risk losing the warmth and intimacy which had been a large part of **L'Abri's** vibrancy and success. At this time, two new organizations were established; **Our Harbour** and in Chateauguay, **Les toits d'Émile**.

A group of people from **Ami Quebec** had been trying to set up apartments for Anglophones living with mental illness from the South Shore for many years and this became possible with the help and guidance of the members of **L'Abri**. **L'Abri** is now in the process of setting up two more replication projects, one in Toronto and the other in Ottawa.

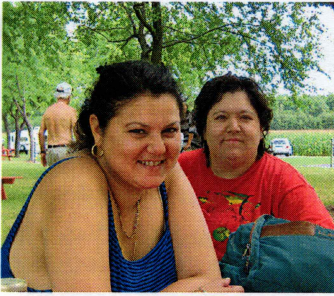
Throughout the past four years, we have worked closely with members of **L'Abri**; our board members have attended workshops and annual meetings, volunteers have participated in training sessions organized by **L'Abri**, we have received client referrals and our coordinator, Perveen, has been able to ask advise of the coordinators at **L'Abri** on many occasions. We hope we have also assisted other groups by preparing a volunteer training manual and providing help and advice whenever called upon.

With three organizations well established and two more in their infancy it was time to put the unstructured networking that had taken place between the groups on a more formal basis. The process is still in its infancy. A coordinator has been hired thanks to a grant from the **J. C. McConnell Foundation** and a networking day was held on November 17, 2007, which was attended by about 12 **Our Harbour** members – residents, volunteers and board members. The goal of the day was to determine areas of common concern. And then to decide which issues could be worked on as a group and which were best worked on alone. It is also important to determine ways in which the more established groups help the newer groups in a more structured way. The proceedings of the day will be studied and a networking strategy will be developed. **Our Harbour** is looking forward to participating fully in the ongoing process.

Catherine Gillbert, President

*Wishing you a very Happy Holiday Season
with Peace and Joy for the New Year ...
From all your friends at Our Harbour*





**"Our Harbour has helped
me to have more self
confidence in myself"**

Liana



**Outreach Committee
members are available to
visit your church,
community group, or
social event to provide
you with more
information about Our
Harbour.**

Our Harbour is Making Life Interesting ...

The past few months have been a busy time for residents at **Our Harbour** and I have to say my life is now so interesting. Thanks to Liane's leadership in organizing events, and the help of volunteers making it all possible, we have really been able to take full advantage of the lovely weather.

In August, we took a day trip with volunteers to the park *Le Domaine de Rêve* in Sainte-Angèle-de-Monnoir. Together, we swam and sunbathed and had a picnic lunch; it was a beautiful day. Later in the month, six residents traveled to the Iles - de - Boucherville to bike and hike. Again it was a lovely day, while hiking we even spotted several deer and a beaver. We rounded out the month with a BBQ at Debbie's home.

In September, a few of us helped set up the *St. Lambert United Church Bazaar* and we also attended the church's book sale later in the month. I even joined a book club that started up at the sale. Also in September five residents went apple picking at a farm called The Orchard of Three Apples. We filled bags of apples and had a great minestrone soup lunch at Jim and Diane's home. We attended the *Together 2000*, performance at St. Andrews Church which raised funds for African children in need.

In October, on Halloween night, we had an amazing time visiting the Botanical Gardens in Montréal. We toured the greenhouses and when it was dark we saw the lantern exhibit. The many beautiful lanterns were breathtaking, and the exhibit also included lovely traditional Chinese music. So it has been a busy time at **Our Harbour** with many thanks going to the volunteers for making it all happen

Gayle Fitkin, (Resident representative)

Coordinator's Corner

I am surrounded by heroes, people who I admire and cherish. Allow me to elaborate: Diane and Mary Ann, volunteers who selflessly give their time to help in every way, from outings to Granby Zoo to friendly home visits, cleaning and shopping in between ... Jim helps in so many ways, drives to outings, installing air conditioners and removing them, picking up items, repairs, shopping and on and on... Elise and Michael our new volunteers, it is great to have you on board. Stephane's faithfulness in nurturing the male residents by providing friendship, outings for coffee and dinner is priceless.

Lesley, Martha, Pam, Debbie, Joan, and now Judy make up a dynamic team in apartment three. No need is too minor to be looked after. Intense work with each resident is done so selflessly... One female could not have survived at OH without Judy's help with cooking, drives to hospital, grocery shopping. Pat and Catherine look after each detail of the finances. Others help in so many ways filling in the gaps. No wonder I salute each one of you volunteers and cannot express in words how much of a difference you make.

Thank you one and all.

Perveen Khokhar

Life at Our Harbour...PLACE RICHELIEU

*The new Residents' Page encourages our apartment residents to express their experiences with their involvement with **Our Harbour***

"When there is absolutely no hope, there is hope again in the words "**Our Harbour.**" Since I have arrived here, slowly but surely, I have discovered a treasure box. Upon opening it, I have seen so many treasures; for basic needs, for moral and emotional support. The biggest treasure is hope for my life in the future. It is a great privilege to live in **Our Harbour.**"

Jennifer Muria

"**Our Harbour** is what made it possible for me to smoke less and lose some weight. It has helped to make me psychiatrically more well. A self-realization of my character is that I'm a little too childish and that's a hard obstacle to overcome yet I have improved. I'm socializing a lot more and I have a lot more friends. Our Harbour is the reason I want to live. God Bless everyone in **Our Harbour**"

Sabina Henein

"As my first year passes, I've seen such confidence and enrichment in my life. I've joined a Seniors Center; taking acrylic painting lessons, playing scrabble, joined a book club and a music appreciation club, helping out at bazaars and book sales, Plus more. My life is now so interesting."

Gayle Fitkin

"I have been at **Our Harbour** for over 2 years now and it has been a wonderful experience. The volunteers are great and they have helped me to have more self confidence in myself.

I have enjoyed all the activities especially going to Granby Zoo and horseback riding. Also I'm very happy with the use of a computer that was donated to **Our Harbour**. I feel very blessed for all that Our Harbour has done for me. Thank you and God bless you all "

Liane

"I would like to thank all the volunteers for offering their valuable time to take me to all the various places that I could not have gone on my own. This includes the various field trips, at which I had a great time"

Almut Treder

"I feel another year of living at **Our Harbour** has been great. I do hope we will open apartment 4 next year"

Daniel

"Being at **Our Harbour** has made things come together much better. I socialize more, and I am relaxed to the point where I no longer have trouble sleeping and so much more"...

Allan

And the final word goes to **Robert....**

"I am very pleased with the new roommate (Allan); he really is the first who has fitted in with us."



**The Residents of Our Harbour
Wish Everyone a
Merry Christmas and Happy New Year**



Mental Health Action Plan 2005-2010

A new model of mental health care has been proposed by the Quebec government: *Mental Health Action Plan 2005-2010*. The plan is intended to provide more efficient mental health services to the entire population – youth, adults, communities and special groups – through an integrated system. The means of doing this is to have general practitioners as the front line in the delivery of mental health care. Psychiatrists, psychiatric hospital services and clinics would be used as resources for general practitioners to refer their clients to when necessary. Some 70% of hospital psychiatric teams would be transferred to community clinics. Treating individuals closer to their homes, community and family resources should provide quicker service and allow the person to maintain their support system.

There have been some concerns raised by health professionals. One of these concerns is the shortage of general practitioners and their lack of specialty in the field. There is also a shortage of psychiatrists. However, the major concern is whether or not additional monetary resources will be allotted to implement the community clinics.

For **Our Harbour** having improved mental health services for our clientele locally on the South Shore would be a very positive change. Currently, most Anglophones are treated at the MUHC or at the Jewish General. Because of the lack of medical services locally it is difficult for **Our Harbour** to recruit: it is also an added burden for the clients to travel to their medical appointments on the island of Montreal even though they may have family to support them locally. One of our former residents has been referred to a local general practitioner and she has been delighted with this more accessible service.

It is our hope that the government will provide sufficient funding and assure adequate expertise for their new plan to insure continued care for individuals living with mental illness.

Mary Ann Bresba

Eleanor Beattie ...A good friend of Our Harbour

Our Harbour extends to **Eleanor Beattie**, co-founder of **L'Abri en Ville** our congratulations on being awarded the **Governor General's Caring Canadian Award**. Since 1991, Eleanor has worked tirelessly on behalf of people afflicted by mental illness. She is the co-founder and first president of **L'Abri en Ville** and continues to serve as a regular volunteer for this organization, which provides permanent housing and social support to adults suffering from mental disabilities. She has helped create similar programs in other Montreal communities and has assisted in the publication of a bilingual guide to establishing similar residences across Canada. Since 2000, she has been a board member of *AMI-Québec* (Action on Mental Illness), helping families to manage the effects of mental illness through education and advocacy. Eleanor is a good friend of **Our Harbour** and we also acknowledge her great work on behalf of the mentally ill.

Volunteers Needed

Our Harbour needs volunteers for a variety of tasks including friendly visits with residents, community liaison, computer and clerical skills, inventory of furniture, or fund raising are among the skills needed.

Contact Perveen Khokhar at (450) 671-9160

Our Harbour...would like to thank all our friends who have kindly donated various household items and furniture for our apartments. We would also thank all those who baked or provided items for our residents' fundraisers...Special thank you to Pat Hamilton, who donated a large box of kitchen utensils for our resident's garage sales

"I feel another year of living at Our Harbour has been great." Daniel

AMI QUEBEC South Shore Support Group...

The group meets every other Wednesday of the month at 6:30 pm at
CSSS Champlain,
5811 Taschereau Blvd.,
Greenfield Park

Ami Quebec also host a series of community information sessions on various topics dealing with mental illness – to be placed on their contact list, please call
(514) 486-1448
or visit their website at
www.amiquebec.org

Our Harbour Annual General Meeting...Another Good Year

The Annual General Meeting was held September 17th 2007 in St. Barnabas Church Hall in which 25 persons were in attendance. Catherine Gillbert, president of **Our Harbour**, opened proceedings on a cautiously optimistic note: We're doing well but we could do better. All three of our apartments have full residency, but we need more funds and volunteers if we want to have a fourth apartment. That is our central commitment. We need a strong fund-raising committee to ensure a financially secure future. We need innovative ways to reach interested people to volunteer for work in the apartments and on the various committees that run the organization.

Judy Cruchet, our treasurer, handed out copies of the Financial Statements and her proposed budget for the next operating year each showing our probity with our monies. Judy informed the meeting of the generous support from key financial donors of which we are most grateful.

Several new people came on the Board: Priyamvada Sankar, Lesley Regnier and Debbie Arsenault, Gayle Fitikin, decided to stay as the resident rep. Catherine concluded the meeting with a reiteration of our mission statement: To advocate for people with mental illness on the South Shore; to provide some of them with adequate housing; to connect to the wider network of like organizations such as *L'Abri en Ville*. Finally, the assembly voted to spend \$200 on advertising in local newspapers for volunteers.

Jim Moran



Judy Cruchet, Catherine Gillbert and Jim Moran kept Our Harbours supporters well informed at the AGM

Our Harbour gratefully acknowledges the generous financial gifts from:

*The Jacques Francoeur Foundation
The Gustav Levinschi Foundation
The EJLB Foundation
The Anglican Church Montreal Diocese
André Gauthier Foundation*

Our Harbour thanks all of our supporters...

"You've helped us see the brighter side of life."

The Residents of Our Harbour

Because of your kindness, we are making a difference in peoples lives.

Our Harbour Board 2007-2008

Catherine Gillbert (President)
Jim Moran (Secretary)
Judy Cruchet (Treasurer)
Pat Bassilios
Kevin Erskine Henry
Linda Magher
Priyamvada Sankar
Lesley Regnier
Debbie Arsenault
Gayle Fitikin (Resident Representative)

Our Harbour says thanks

To all those who provided input and support in the production and delivery of our biannual Newsletter –

**The South Shore CEDEC
(Community Economic Development
& Employability Committee)**

for their help with the final editing, formatting and production of this newsletter.



The Outreach committee welcomes any input and comments you as a reader may have about our Newsletter. Please forward them to our office.

Kevin Erskine-Henry, Editor