

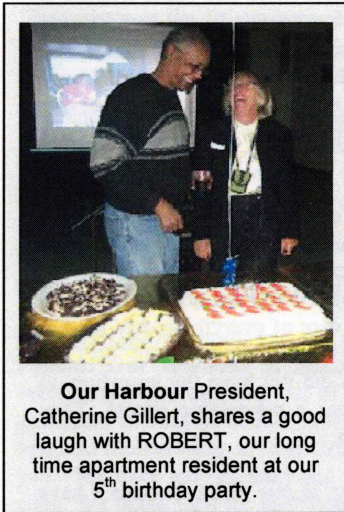
Providing Support & Housing for persons
With mental health problems

Our Harbour/Havre à Nous News

Newsletter Fall / Winter 2008

95 Lorne Avenue, Saint-Lambert, Québec, J4P 2G7, Tel. (450) 671-9160

Five Years on ...



Our Harbour President, Catherine Gillert, shares a good laugh with ROBERT, our long time apartment resident at our 5th birthday party.

As I look back over our first five years some events will be forever carved in my memory. All our General Meetings have been fun and the atmosphere has been positive but the two best were undoubtedly our founding meeting when we passed our bylaws and elected our first board. It was clear that we already had a team in place and enough well wishers to keep us going through difficult times and party with us at our celebrations. The fifth birthday party this past September was our crowning achievement. Some seventy people turned up to celebrate with us, and it was like being with a group of special friends

Opening our first apartment was a great adventure, but more important was the realization six months later that our model really works*. Seeing men, who were down on their luck become, with a little help from us, social, happy, helping adults was, for me, a miracle.

I have one other memory I would like to share. I was invited to a Christmas Party in one of our apartments and had a wonderful evening- great food followed by carol singing. It was without a doubt the warmest most enjoyable party I went to that Christmas. I can honestly say that for the energy I have put into this project I have been paid back many times over.

Catherine Gillbert, President

* Currently, we operate four apartments with ten residents and we are supported by a great team of volunteers. If you would like join our volunteers, contact our office.

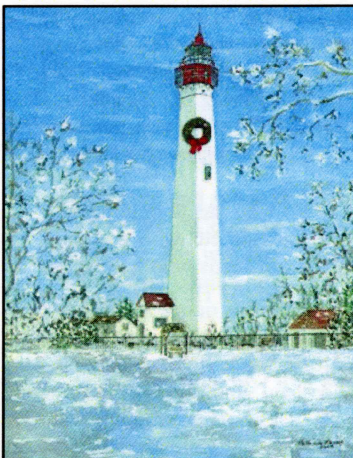
IN THIS ISSUE LEARN MORE
ABOUT OUR FIVE YEARS OF
CARING & GROWTH...

Our Harbour Board of Directors for 2008-2009

Catherine Gillbert (President)
Judy Cruchet (Treasurer)
Priyamvada Sankar
Edna Ouellette
Lesley Regnier

Jim Moran (Secretary)
Kevin Erskine Henry
Debbie Arsenault
Jocelyn Saulnier
Gayle Fitikin (Resident Representative)

*The Our Harbour family extends to you
our warmest wishes for a
Happy Holiday Season & Healthy New Year*



Our Harbour is Changing Stigmas and Building New Bridges



Hello, I go by the moniker, Bruce Winslow. I moved to the apartment of Our Harbour on August 28, 2008. I am very happy living at Our Harbour. The shared living with one or more room-mates I find challenging, as I am used to solitude. I have lived in crisis centers for 2 months and in a group home for 3 months before I moved to Our Harbour. The improvement of moving to OH is so great it cannot be quantified. I am very grateful.

Thank you
Sincerely Bruce Winslow

How Our Harbour saved my life

By Sabina Henein

Our Harbour has made me feel like I can live with a psychiatric illness. It has made me feel that I can talk more and make friends. It was very hard for me in the beginning but I know I have come a long way. The support and resources with the volunteers is excellent. I take my medications everyday and my hygiene is vastly improved. I have friends who are psychiatric patients like me and with them I feel less vulnerable from being insulted. I am happier because they have patience and are sensitive like me.

I feel much more in control of my life compared to when I was living with my parents. Now I cook and clean for myself. I am working on doing things that I enjoy, such as reading, knitting and going for walks. At my parent's home, I felt isolated and did not talk much. It was somewhat crazy there. They took care of everything. My mother did the cleaning and cooking and even cleaned my bedroom. So I did nothing but eat and sleep. My parents did not have the knowhow to take care of a person like me who has a psychiatric illness. They thought that just to love me was enough.

Mrs. Perveen Khokhar, the coordinator, is one of the reasons I have progressed so much. She pushes when I am scared to try something new and when I have achieved it I actually feel better. In my life I met a lot of people who made me feel very bad about myself, so I used to think of myself as damaged goods. Now I feel like I am a human being who deserves to be respected.

When I first came to OH I used to stay in bed almost all day and would cry a lot. Now I am up and about much more. I socialize more and even go to a drop-in center called Centregens to play Bingo. I did not answer the phone but now I do it automatically. To conclude, I would like to say something about the human triumph over psychiatric illness.

A lot of people can help but ultimately it is I who has to help myself. If I don't do my upkeep, like laundry and cooking etc. who will do it for me. I know it is God Himself and the Lord Jesus who helped me realize this with prayer. He showed me that the life He gave me even with a psychiatric illness is worth living.

"Thank you God and thank you Our Harbour"



Thank you for your faithful support

Our Harbour's housing model is to establish with the help from our many friends and supporters, three-bedroom, fully furnished apartments with the residents covering the rent and utilities of the apartments. The funds we have from our generous donors are directed to hiring qualified people to fulfill our goal of providing a home where people with mental illness have a safe, enriched environment to improve their lives and reach their potential.

With the opening of our fourth apartment, we have recently hired a second part-time coordinator. The coordinators combined salaries make up 85% of our operating budget. They serve as the liaison between the residents, the CLSCs and the hospitals. They work with the residents, one-on-one and in groups, as well as train our many volunteers. Without them our program wouldn't exist or have such positive results.

Thanks to the fine work of **Linda Magher**, her fundraising committee and our generous donors, **Our Harbour** has achieved its goal of having sufficient financing in place for the next two years. Foundations, churches, community organizations, individuals and a provincial government grant have all combined to secure the operating funds needed for a more long-term approach.

Judy Cruchet, Treasurer

Coordinator's Corner

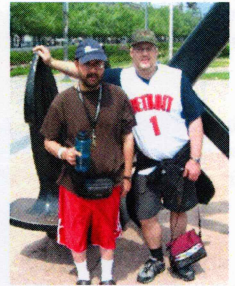
Here we GROW again and it is so exciting. Look at the things that have happened since I joined **Our Harbour** in January 05... OH had one apartment with 2 residents and everything felt fresh and full of potential to grow and expand. We opened the fourth apartment in August of this year! We could not have set up this apartment without the help and tireless work of Judy Cruchet and her team of volunteers, many thanks to each of you. We have ten residents and I have seen growth in each resident who has stayed or gone. We thank God for each one. The team of coordinators is growing as well. A warm welcome to Sylvie Albert, now we are a team of two! She comes with hands-on experience from AMI Quebec.

Growth and expansion take on many forms. I was reflecting on the great wreckage and devastation that Hurricane Ike caused on the Texas coast. It's hard to imagine that people had a place to call home and a thing called life and the next moment it's all gone. However, have you ever watched what happens in the aftermath of a storm and clean-up that takes forever and so often lives never get back to how they were? But while storms happen so do **opportunities**. Good people step in and start helping out. Aid comes from all over and lives get built back up again, not the same, but definitely cleaned up and moving forward. Who are the unsung heroes that step in and help to build back the devastated lives of the mentally ill?

We pay tribute and salute the **Our Harbour** family. This is why we are celebrating five years of saying, "Count us in, we will help clean-up the mess left by the storm called mental illness. We will provide a place for you to live and help you rebuild your life and we will be your community, by giving you friendship and you will belong." OH does all this through a group of highly dedicated volunteers who give sacrificially of their time and resources. These range from people working on the Board, the Outreach Committee, and volunteers doing direct one-on-one work with the residents. Many kind and generous people in the community give of their finances and material things."How?", "Who?", and "Where?" are being answered. So our residents live well, they grow and blossom with the sunshine of community, Need I say more!

Perveen Khokhor, Coordinator

*Our Harbour sure makes
life interesting*



**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 Annual General Meeting...We're Getting Taller

David Everett in 1791 wrote "... *Tall oaks from little acorns grow*" for a boy of seven years old.

Our Harbour is barely five years old but we think it's getting taller and stronger. This was seen at our latest Annual General Meeting (September 22, 2008) when over sixty people attended our pre-meeting party in celebration of our fifth birthday and some forty of them stayed on to take in the meeting itself. At the end of the party Catherine Gillbert praised the volunteers in all their capacities and applauded the residents for their improvements in their relationships with each other. Two residents rose to speak about their experiences during their stays at the **Our Harbour** apartments. During the meeting part of the evening we learned that our finances are well, our residencies have increased to four, going on five, and that our reason for being – the advocacy for people with mental illness on the South Shore—is still strong. Edna Ouellette and Jocelyn Saulnier joined the Board. We still need volunteers and funds but we are gaining altitude

Jim Moran, Secretary



Welcome Sylvie and many thanks Perveen

We're growing again...

Our Harbour is delighted to announce that we have hired a part-time co-ordinator Sylvie Albert to work alongside our full time co-ordinator Perveen. Sylvie comes with much hands-on experience as well as academic qualifications. She has been a volunteer at AMI Quebec and she works full-time for a pharmaceutical company but has the time to give to us. Sylvie has started doing home visits and then going on to working with the residents as well as with the volunteers.

We will keep you all posted.

Our Harbour's great success in providing a home and extended family to people in our community living with mental illness is due to the generosity of our financial supporters:

Anthony Hayden
Fondation Embarque
Diocese de St. Jean Longueuil
Lion's Club St. Lambert
Fondation Jacques Francoeur
EJLB Foundation
Nicole Ménard Députée de Laporte
SOC (Agence de santé et service social Montérégie)

Our Harbour thanks all of its supporters and volunteers. Because of your kindness; we are making a difference in peoples lives.

Our Harbour says added 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 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