



## Le Havre Our Harbour

Providing a haven for people  
living with mental illness

### Our Harbour Resident: Darko Panic

Lesley Régnier

On my way over to meet Darko, I was wondering what his name could mean. I imagined, as an interviewer does, confronted with such an intriguing name as this, a dark-haired man reluctant to speak to me, withdrawn, even a little hostile, pushing me to turn tail and run away in panic. What a revelation! Darko is so open easy to talk to, so informative. You need help with buying your next laptop or want to know how to get free movies on your iPhone? Just ask Darko! As for the Panic, I learned that it is a Serbian surname pronounced 'Panich' and by then I wanted to spend the afternoon chatting with this charming man.



At CEGEP, he was studying pure science and hoped to go on to university but, realizing that was a little too ambitious, he took a training course in computer engineering and worked for several years in Toronto. But home is always home and he returned to Montreal and worked in various places before he "retired" and came to join Our Harbour. Although he did not express the word himself, he always felt exploited, working overtime without necessarily being paid for it, never able to trust his co-workers.

"Here at Our Harbour," he says, "I have found stability. I feel safe. No more conflicts. No more fighting." He has found real friends for the first time in his life and loves the feeling of community that reigns among the five apartments.

Watch the recent CTV News feature showing how Co-founder and Chair Catherine Gilbert and resident Teresa highlighted our efforts to normalize the lives of people living with mental illness.

<http://montreal.ctvnews.ca/video?clipId=541015>



### Move for Mental Health

#### DEFEAT DEPRESSION WALK MONTREAL / ST. LAMBERT

May 23 2015 at 9 AM  
Seaway Park - St. Lambert

Please join us, as Our Harbour hosts the Montreal Defeat Depression Walk for its second year, this time in St. Lambert!

Together we'll help destigmatize mental health issues and raise funds to support our programs and services. Everyone is welcome at this family friendly event!

REGISTER | DONATE | INFO

<http://mdsc.akaraisin.com/Montreal2015>  
[defeatdepressionmontreal@gmail.com](mailto:defeatdepressionmontreal@gmail.com)  
(450) 671-5296



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Visit [ourharbour.org](http://ourharbour.org)

## Dr. Fielding on mental illness

Catherine Gillbert

*Schizophrenia cannot be understood without understanding despair.* R.D.Laing

We were fortunate to have Dr. Fielding, an Assistant Professor in the McGill Department of Psychiatry & Associate Director of the Psychiatry Outpatient Department of the MUHC, give a public lecture on mental illness. He spoke to about 40 people, including most of our residents, some board members and volunteers and some members of the general public.

His introduction stressed that mental illness can strike anyone, regardless of age, gender, race, income or educational level. It is not the result of personal weakness, lack of character or poor upbringing. Although the causes are still unclear, contributing factors include genetics, environment and street drugs.

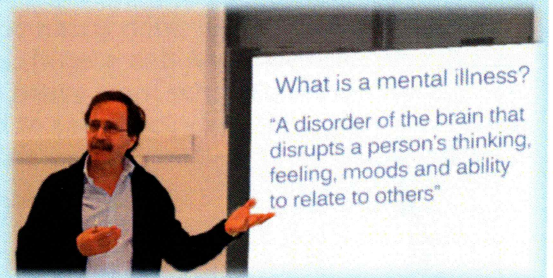
Dr. Fielding took us through the 3 forms of mental illness faced by our residents: schizophrenia, bi-polar disorder and major depression. He gave us the symptoms of the disorders and the pitfalls for the caregiver.

It is not always easy working with people suffering with schizophrenia, as they can make one feel uncomfortable because medication can have a flattening effect. The sufferer can miss social cues, often has poor self-care and lacks motivation. Managing medications and their side effects and assuring adequate sleep and exercise are keys to recovery. According to Dr. Fielding, "Half to three-fourths of those with schizophrenia recover. This does not mean that they are cured or that the illness goes into complete remission, although this has happened in some instances. It means that over time, through an often long, difficult process, individuals come to terms with their illnesses."

Major depression is also difficult for the caregiver since the negative skew that depressed people put on all events can be frustrating. They see themselves as a burden and their limited capacity to enjoy life may make one feel one is not doing enough to lift their spirits. One also has to be prepared for the tension-inducing topic of suicide.

People suffering from bi-polar disorder can be stressful too, as the cycle of euphoria

and irritability is difficult to tolerate for long periods and "pressured" speech and ideas may make conversation difficult; one never knows quite what to expect.



However, it seems that at Our Harbour we are doing the right thing as we walk with our residents on the road to recovery. We provide a secure home where all are accepted for who they are. Our volunteers offer supportive relationships and a feeling of inclusion and support in our community. Our goal is to provide coping strategies and mechanisms so they can move on from feeling safe in our community to being able to operate in the outside world with a sense of purpose and confidence.

## We appreciate all of our volunteers

OH Staff and Residents organized a delightful Volunteer Appreciation Party in April. The tables were decorated in bright spring colours and volunteers were assigned places so that they had the opportunity to chat with other volunteers and some of the residents. Dinner began with fruit punch and bruschetta, followed by spinach salad with croutons. The main course of piping hot shepherd's pie with choice of vegetables was a secret recipe by chief chef, Jacqueline, one of the OH residents. It was delicious! Dessert included a choice of strawberry or chocolate layer cake and tea or coffee. Serving was done very elegantly by some of the residents and staff, including *stagiaires*. Following this excellent dinner, each volunteer was presented with a small gift and a certificate of appreciation which highlighted their specific contributions to the OH family. The volunteers in turn all expressed their satisfaction at being part of this caring family.

Darko thanking Anna



## Spaghetti fundraiser another success

Our second annual spaghetti-dinner fundraiser was a big success once again this year, with about \$3000 raised for Our Harbour. There was standing room only at Scotyz Bar for the event on March 21st. We dined on Scotyz excellent spaghetti and pushed through the crowds to put



our auction tickets in the appropriate bags. A variety of valuable prizes was donated by generous merchants and Our Harbour supporters so there were many lucky winners. The event was once again organized by Colette Plouffe and her willing helpers. Thanks to all those who supported Our Harbour by attending the event, to those who made donations because they could not come, especially to Brian Peddar and the Greenfield Park Knights of Columbus, to all those who contributed prizes, and to Scotyz Bar management and staff.

Colette reminds us to stay tuned for next year's event!

## Residents savour the sweetness of Spring!

Catherine Gillbert



On a bright sunny Thursday in April a group of residents joined two board members on a bus trip to a *Cabane à sucre* organized by *Alternative Centregens*. We all had a great time. We started the visit with fresh, warm doughnuts which were a big hit with everyone and then we visited the petting farm. These small animals gave comfort to some of our residents and the country-like surroundings were therapeutic to some of the others. We had a wonderful dinner includ-

ing pea soup, ham, beans, pork crackling and sugar pie which everyone enjoyed. The highlight of the afternoon was a wagon ride through a maple stand where all the trees were tapped using the old-fashioned bucket method. For some of our residents, this was the first time they had seen sap being collected, so it became an educational opportunity to learn about *Québécois* culture. Thanks to our volunteers for driving us to the home of *Centregens* and being there when we arrived back.

### LE HAVRE À NOUS

ASSEMBLÉE GÉNÉRALE ANNUELLE  
Lundi le 15 juin 2015, à 19h30

à la salle de l'église  
Saint-François d'Assise  
844, rue Notre-Dame, Saint-Lambert

La réunion sera précédée par une période de questions et un léger goûter à 19h00  
Pour des renseignements, appelez au 450-671-9160

### OUR HARBOUR

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING  
Monday, June 15, 2015 at 7:30 pm

St. Francis of Assisi Church Hall  
844 Notre-Dame, Saint-Lambert

The meeting will be preceded by a question period and refreshments starting at 7.00 p.m.

For information call  
450-671-9160

Color printing courtesy:

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# COORDINATOR'S CORNER

by Perveen Khokhar



My deep and heartfelt gratitude to all at OH for standing by me during my recent illness, recovery and bereavement. You are the best!! A truly great family to me. Thank you everyone.

So now what's happening!! It's been a really busy and eventful winter despite the

brutal cold. The year started off with three vacancies to fill and the search for new residents proved fruitful. By the end of March, we welcomed Anne into Apartment 3. Robert in Apartment 1 was relieved to know his lonesome days were over as we welcome Nadem and AJ there in April. So we have a full house now with 15 residents.

Not only did we welcome new residents, but 2 new volunteers as well. Lucy Bartuccio and Nicole Roy joined our team of apartment visitors. They are a great help.

On a not so happy note, we did part with two volunteers, Natalie and Ange Michelle, who due to their very heavy work schedules (they started new jobs), had to say goodbye. John Donahue is taking a year off as well for the same reason. We wish all 3 well as we thank them for all their help.

The bitter cold did not deter some residents from enjoying skating in Parc Jean Drapeau, snow-shoeing in Mount St Hillaire, trekking in Mt Royal and later going sugaring off. Trips to Museum expositions, movies, going bowling, playing pool and cooking together "has made life fun and exciting," to quote a few residents. A majority of the residents' birthdays happen in winter, and so we all enjoyed frequent visits to delicious buffets at Vichy's and Le Mantra, an Indian restaurant.

The residents and staff hosted a dinner to honour and show appreciation to all our volunteers. It was very well attended and a grand success. The spirit of camaraderie with which everyone worked to make this event a success was remarkable. Residents jumped up to help literally wherever they could even if that was not their designated job. Thank you all volunteers and residents for making this so enjoyable. Life truly has been busy but delightful at OH this winter/spring.



Jenn Gilkes

Assistant  
Coordinator

Spring is such a beautiful time of year. A time when many of us are anxiously waiting to enjoy the outdoors and seek more leisurely activities.

This year, what particularly stands out for me are the friendships that have blossomed among the Our Harbour folks. One resident recently spoke about helping disassemble a volunteer's winter temple. Another discussed her plans to spring clean and plant a garden outside her dwelling to spruce

up the street. Some simply look forward to going for a walk and sitting in the park and hearing children play. Sharing in these moments with others is what truly makes it so special too.

Time and time again, Our Harbour demonstrates what a grassroots organization is and how beneficial it is to the lives of all those involved. As an employee, I feel fortunate to have work I love and that also makes a difference.



Bianca David, *stagiaire*

I was fortunate enough to spend my final field placement at Our Harbour. Everybody I've encountered throughout my journey here has been exceptionally kind and helpful, from the residents and staff to the volunteers. It doesn't take long to realize that this organization has a family-like sense of community.

I have been exposed to the challenges and barriers those living in the community with mental illness face. However, I have also witnessed the perseverance the beloved residents have. Our Harbour enables its residents to live a full and joyful life, by offering stability and support. It has been a privilege to have been welcomed into this family. I have learned so much about working with people with mental illness. I also feel as though I have grown through the interactions I have shared at Our Harbour.

I would like to thank everyone that has helped me throughout my *stage* placement, from the hard-working staff to the residents who welcomed me into their homes. It has been an experience I won't forget, and I have established relationships that will be difficult to part with.