

Our Harbourviews

Winter Newsletter 2024 Bulletin d'hiver

Your support makes a real difference | Votre appui fait toute une différence

A Special Edition of *OurHarbourviews*, dedicated to our extraordinary volunteers
Une édition spéciale de *OurHarbourviews*, dédiée à nos extraordinaires bénévoles

A letter to Peter with love & thanks
Page 2

Alice in Wonderland. A magical evening of FUNdraising with the American women's Club of Montreal
Page 5

20th Anniversary RoundUp!
Page 7

Head-to-Toe Pilot Project up and running
Page 11

Make a monthly donation now!





A letter to Peter with love and thanks

Dolly Shinhat, Director General

Farewell Peter,

Our Harbour's Webmaster, Board member since 2011, Chair of our Communications Committee, and friend. You leave a legacy of warmth, wit, kindness, a spirit of exploration and an example of service to the community.

You were the gentleman and scholar, who took Our Harbour's newsletter from black printing on coloured paper to the beautifully designed, richly illustrated publication that ***OurHarbourviews*** is today. The June 2024

You put Our Harbour on the World Wide Web in 2011. You reviewed and approved the current website before it was deployed in August 2024. You designed the brochure that is our principal, print communications piece.

Our Harbour's logos evolved under your care, including the 20th Anniversary logo. You ensured that the Individual Fundraising Committee had the materials needed to raise the money that supports our mission. You realized the art cards that showcase residents' talent and creativity. The branding for our special events and activities, most recently the 20th Anniversary Roaring Twenties Gala, was imagined and designed by you.

Equally talented as the point man for roasting and carving a turkey or two for Our Harbour's Christmas and Thanksgiving dinners, you have also been the official photographer at barbecues, dinners, events, activities and AGMs galore for more than 13 years!

You had the driest wit, wasted no words, and were infinitely kind and generous with your time and encouragement. **You believed in our mission.**

The impact of your hard work and dedication will be felt for years to come. You are deeply missed and fondly remembered.

With your family connections to China, I believe you would appreciate that in Chinese the words for goodbye mean see you again.

Zàijiàn, Peter.

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Our Harbour President Looks to the Future

Marie Muldowney, President

I joined Our Harbour's Board in 2018, recruited at a church meeting by Dolly, and welcomed warmly by the Board members. I had heard about the work that Our Harbour was doing and I appreciated the opportunity to help support those facing mental health issues.

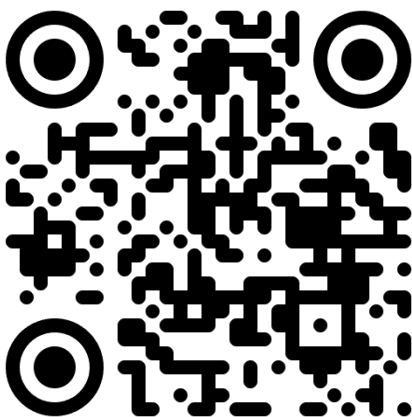
In October 2021, the Board invited me to take on the role of President, a position that had been filled selflessly and passionately by **Catherine Gilbert** since our founding in 2003, with a one-year respite when **Kevin Erskine-Henry** stepped in allowing Catherine to travel. I have stood for reelection every year since, still trying to fill Catherine's shoes.

In October, I retired from Moody's as Managing Director at the Canadian Securities Institute after a 35-year career in financial services education. Since then, **I have begun to immerse myself more fully in the Our Harbour community, meeting and talking with residents and staff. I plan to meet with volunteers and funders to understand, more deeply, the mission, philosophy and practices at Our Harbour.**

My goal for the future of Our Harbour is to solidify our structure and practices to accomplish our mission and work more closely with residents, staff and volunteers. **I am fully committed to ensuring that we build a community for our residents where they will find the support they need.**

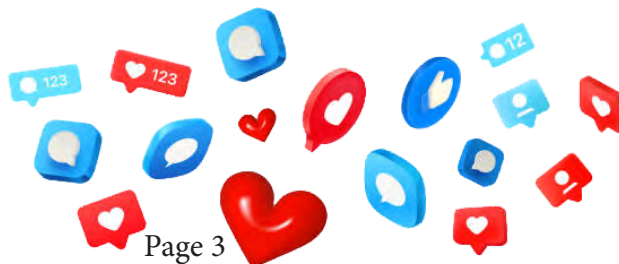
In addition, I am able to spend more time on another passion of mine, Dragon-boat racing. Being on the water and challenging myself is one of the best ways I know to channel my energy and stay fit. The club to which I belong, (22Dragons) brings together people with differing ability and motivation, pulling together an organization that is greater than the sum of its parts. **I believe that's what Our Harbour is: a community that is greater than the sum of its parts.**

I look forward to meeting many more members of the Our Harbour community, in the coming weeks and months. You can contact me through the office at 450-671-9160. Let's have coffee!



Connect with us on social media! One QR code for all ...

Follow us on Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram and YouTube to stay up-to-date and help spread the word about our mission. For the most impact, like our posts and follow our pages.





Introducing Dale Perks, BScN, RN

Nurse Clinician and Our Harbour volunteer

I was born in Montreal and raised in Longueuil, along with my five brothers and sister. Our home was always open to everyone, and I grew up loving to be around people, and enjoying being involved with our community. As a teenager, while volunteering to help children with learning disabilities, I realized that I wanted to work in the health domain.

Eventually this led me to attend McGill University and obtain a Bachelor's Degree of Science, in Nursing, as well as a Diploma in Wound Care from the University of Toronto. During my studies, I worked in various psychiatric wards as a "companion" for patients with mental health illnesses. An experience that shaped my future.

My nursing career started at the Montreal General Hospital, and over the course of 37 years I worked in various departments, including the Surgery Clinic, where I was in-charge for the last 20 years before I retired. I can honestly say that being a caregiver of so many people has been the most fulfilling experience of my life!

In 2014, I took a sabbatical from my work to teach Nursing at Champlain College. During that time, **I had my first encounter with Our Harbour when I accompanied my nursing students for their community *stage* with the residents.** It was truly a great experience for myself and all my students. That summer, I applied to a volunteer program at Bishops University, called "**Praxis Malawi**", and was chosen as one of the volunteers to spend six weeks in a remote village in Malawi, Africa, working on an educational and first aid project. Despite the lack of running water and electricity, it was one of the most enriching experiences of my life!

Currently, I am the chairperson for Social Justice with the Catholic Women's League (CWL) Counsel, in Candiatic. I proudly co-wrote an important Resolution (2024:01); "Increased Supported Housing for Individuals Experiencing Homelessness with Mental Health and Mental Illness Issues." This fall, the National CWL Executive will meet Ministers of Parliament to inform them of this resolution and to advocate for increased government support.

I am part of a band, called "**The Intonations**", which performed for Our Harbour's 20th Anniversary **RoundUp!** and continue to volunteer with the seniors at the Greenfield Park Chartwell Residence, where I give art and painting classes twice a week.

I am a relatively new volunteer at Our Harbour and have been involved in the **Head-to-Toe Pilot Project** assessing the healthcare needs of residents and assisting them in obtaining necessary health care.

When not volunteering, I enjoy spending time with my husband, two daughters and our four beautiful grandchildren (all under the age of five years!).

American Women's Club of Montreal Supports Our Harbour Through the Whimsical World of Alice in Wonderland

Francine Weston, Our Harbour Volunteer, AWCM Member and Mosaic/que quilter

On September 7, 2024, we entered through the looking glass into a world of whimsy at the Alice in Wonderland fundraiser, hosted by the **American Women's Club of Montreal (AWCM)** in support of Our Harbour. It was a beautiful event that came together through the collaborative efforts of many members of the AWCM and **the Our Harbour Individual Fundraising Committee (IFC)**. A huge thank you to everyone who supported the event.

AWCM, **the Mosaic/que Quilter's Guild** members and Our Harbour met for a fun-filled, fundraising adventure of silent auctions including paintings, a variety of themed baskets, jewelry, scotch, original artwork, hockey tickets and more. We enjoyed the dinner and dance in a gorgeously decorated Alice in Wonderland world: top hats, stacked teapots, Alice-themed cookies, and a heart-shaped photo backdrop that set the stage for fun photos and memories.

Francine Weston at the photo booth.



Amanda Hunsaker and Susan Kerwin-Boudreau welcome guests.

AWCM and Our Harbour's Individual Fundraising Committee (IFC) members collaborated to help make this a successful event! Many helped spread the word to friends and partners. AWCM members and Our Harbour Board members who could not attend generously made donations, including donating tickets so that many members of the Our Harbour community could attend. **Nena Dyer** and **Pennie Polak** graciously arranged the incredible donations and silent auction items. We are appreciative of everyone's generosity of time, creativity and spirit!.

Cynthia Jones and I worked tirelessly creating the decorations, table runners, thank you gifts, and heart photo backdrop to bring the Alice in Wonderland theme to life. Cynthia, an Alice in Wonderland enthusiast, organized each table with their own unique theme from the fantastical Lewis Carrol book. The many days and nights spent in preparation for the event provided the special magic of Alice's whimsy, bringing people together to enjoy an evening filled with food, fun, laughter ... and moving parts of our body that have not moved in decades!

The **Cadillac Band** brought us back to the Retro music of the Good Old Days from the 50's to the 80's. I haven't danced that much since my wedding! Did I ever regret those fancy moves the following day! But the aches and pains were worth the fun we had. At the end of the evening, we auctioned off a beautiful quilt made by members of the Mosaic/que Quilters Guild. Before our evening even began, our AWCM members had sold over \$2,000 worth of raffle tickets for the quilt!

The **AWCM Fundraising Committee** was chaired by **Amanda Steele** and included **AWCM President, Amanda Hunsaker, Kathleen O'Connor, Katerina Radu, and Megan Montero.** All were vital throughout!

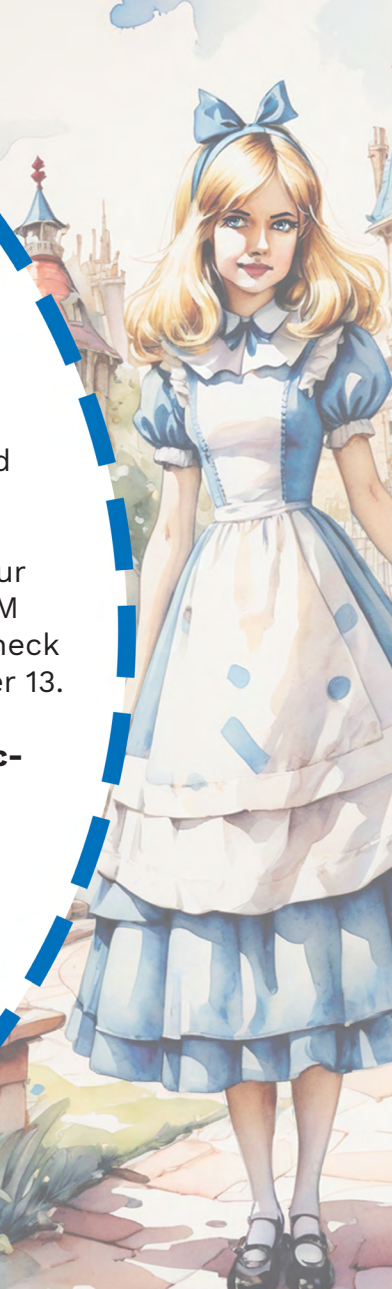
It is a gift to be part of this generous community and to support the work of Our Harbour, for whom the event raised over \$6,800! Following the event, the AWCM Board decided to top off the amount of money raised for a total of \$8,000. A check was presented to Our Harbour at the AWCM's 99th Annual Toy Tea on December 13.

Thanks so much to everyone who played a part in making this event such a success!

Postscript from Our Harbour

Alice in Wonderland ... what a fabulous evening! From the intricate perfection of the decor to the delicious meal, from the swinging music to the unique and highly desirable silent auction items! One Our Harbour guest, **Pat Geary**, aged 92 never left the dance floor! Bravo to the **Our Harbour IFC**, volunteers and staff members who contributed toward the success of this event: **Susan Kerwin-Boudreau, Carol Bulow, Ileana Cusiatic, Lyn Scott...** and of course **Francine Weston**, without whom this incredible partnership would not exist.

Thank you, Francine!



Hallowe'en *G.H., a resident*

This year we had a Halloween party. Just the kind of activity that adds value to the Our Harbour brand; **a small gathering of around 10 people**, all in a good mood, happy and caring to socialize with each other in the Clubhouse, a place that we cherish, with a nice atmosphere.

Thank you to volunteer Amélie Gauthier-Gilbert for coordinating the Hallowe'en party with the assistance of residents.

20th Anniversary RoundUp! A special tribute to our Volunteers


Dolly Shinhat and Savannah Zavitz

“Our Harbour is one of the only local organizations I know that was started by community members and remains true to its strong community roots to this day.”


Volunteer and Past-President, **Kevin Erskine-Henry**.

On October 19th, 2024, at our sold out **20th Anniversary RoundUp!** we paid tribute to all the people who have served **Our Harbour** over the last 20 years. Volunteer VIPs received complimentary tickets for the event, along with a 20th Anniversary edition T-shirt and gift of resident art cards. Volunteers' names were entered into a draw for a beautiful hand-knitted quilt donated by our partners at **Commuknitty**.

At the event, more than 23 volunteers stood to introduce themselves and share their motivation and experiences as volunteers with Our Harbour. It was truly moving to hear the different perspectives and insights from our volunteers, past and present.



The extraordinary **Cheryl Moores**, President of **Greenfield Park Legion 94**, and equally dynamic **Pat Wallace**, President of the Legion **Ladies Auxiliary**, ensured that the Legion Hall was set up for the event and prepared a delicious barbecue of burgers, Italian sausages, all the trimmings, and a wonderful array of salads. A fruit salad accompanied the fabulous western themed cupcakes from **Chocolat et Noisette!**



The Intonations, a talented and dynamic band led by Our Harbour volunteer **Dale Perks** made sure that the dance floor was never empty. Did I say dance floor? People danced everywhere there was floor space - from one end of the Legion Hall to the other! The Intonations routinely donate their time, talent and energy to community organizations, as they did for the RoundUp! How awesome is that?

Marlene McIntyre, a gifted and super-fun line-dance teacher, along with her students and fellow local line-dancers, came together to stomp, shuffle and quick step, showing off some cool moves! Marlene teaches weekly in Greenfield Park as well as in Chateaugay and Cornwall. To join in the fun, check out her website at:

<https://marlenesdancers.ca/>

The **Our Harbour Individual FUNdraising Committee** took on the tasks of ticket sales, decoration of the hall, set up of the silent auctions, collecting restaurant gift certificates, creating and/or donating themed baskets, single-malt Scotch, and unique, quilted wall-hangings. Hats off to these volunteer cowgirls and boys: **Susan Kerwin-Boudreau, Neil Bonnema** (also our emcee), **Carol Bulow, Ileana Cusiatic, Lynn Scott** and **Francine Weston**. Deputies included **Matthew Bertrand, Petra Dando, Marcelyn Querino, Cory Robinson** and **Karen Young**. Ranch Hands **Sabine Bulow, Steven Nadeau, Savannah Zavitz** and yours truly rounded out this special team. **Yee haw!!**

**Thanks to our sponsors and partners and all who attended the RoundUp!
We raised close to \$8,000!**

Our Harbour is deeply grateful to the following sponsors and partners:

Isabelle Poulet, Députée de LaPorte, represented at the event by **Brigitte Mercier**, her charming attaché who presented a certificate of recognition to our volunteers

Alexandra Mendès, MP Brossard-St. Lambert

Sherry Romanado, MP Longueuil - Charles-LeMoyne

The Intonations with special thanks to **Dale Perks** (see page 4)

Marlene McIntyre, Line-dancing teacher extraordinaire

The Ladies Auxiliary of Legion 94 and President, **Pat Wallace**

The Royal Canadian Legion 94 and **President, Cheryl Moores**



Left to right, all volunteers!: Nancy D., Jocelyn B. (Board Member), Kevin E-H., Susan K-B. (Board Member, Individual Fundraising Committee (IFC) chair), Lyn Scott (IFC), Carol B. (IFC), Kent G., Ronald A. Jr., David D., Amélie G-G., Ileana C. (IFC), Natacha S., Karen Y., Francine W. (IFC), Angele G., Susan L., Marcelyn Q., Susan K., Dale P., Petra D. (Board Member), Bob R., David G.

Volunteers who have not yet received their complementary T-shirt and art cards are invited to contact Savannah Zavitz at 450-671-9160, or email savannah.zavitz@ourharbour.org

Our Harbour Thanksgiving Community Supper

Savannah Zavtiz, Administrative and Resident Care Assistant

On **October 9th, 2024** we broke bread as a community during our annual **Thanksgiving Supper**, with 26 people!

This was my first experience coordinating an Our Harbour community event, and being able to see all of the different elements involved. One of my favorite parts was getting to see everyone gather to enjoy a meal. I love these types of events, because the focus is centered around coming together as a community, and I'm able to see some smiling faces that I may not otherwise see very often!

Speaking of the Our Harbour community, I saw it in action with the people who helped with set-up, takedown, brought some tasty dishes and helped serve. Volunteers, residents and staff brought a variety of delicious food, including turkey, ham, tourtière and lots of side dishes as well as desserts. There was more than enough to go around. Thank you all!

I look forward to carrying this experience with me into preparing the upcoming Christmas party!



Men's Group Resumes

Jean-Sebastien, Resident

Me and the men's group actually go way back... **A long time ago, our great volunteer David Gobby started the men's group.** Back then, I was very shy and introverted, but I did host a couple of men's group sessions. It wasn't my cup of tea, but I did enjoy just being able to talk about whatever we wanted in a safe and encouraging place.

So a lot has changed since then, namely COVID, which changed a lot of activity we had back then. I was happy to learn last Christmas that the men's group would start again. **Kent Gibbons, another extraordinary volunteer, was helming the men's group once more.** Kent has a very interesting background. He was a pastor living in New Brunswick, if I'm not mistaken.

It feels good again to just be able to talk about everything and nothing, and I hope this continues long in the future. Thank you Kent and Our Harbour!

Our Harbour: Annual DEFI 5Km Run/Walk Challenge

Sabine Bulow, Lead Coordinator

On September 28, 2024, we held our **4th Annual DEFI 5Km Run/Walk Challenge** to raise awareness of the importance of mental health and why healthy lifestyle habits are important! The event was once again organized in partnership with **Espace Pivot**.

An amazing route through St-Lambert, which passed the golf course, was planned with precision in collaboration with the City of Longueuil, who provided a police escort to ensure that everyone departed and returned safely. **There were a total of 74 registrants, 40 participated on the day of the walk, and a total of \$705.00 was raised!**

A BBQ was held afterward on the lawn outside the Our Harbour offices, where participants and residents gathered to enjoy a meal together, relax, and chat. Many thanks to our partner, **Tanya Angelo**, Psychosocial worker from **Espace Pivot**.

Thanks as well to our volunteers, including Master Griller, **David Dagleish, Susan Kerwin-Boudreau, Francine Weston, Kent Gibbons, Peter MacMillan, Carolle Mvie, Susan Martin-Kaller, Ronald Aiken Jr., Amélie Gauthier-Gilbert, and Ronald Aiken Sr.**

In addition, thank you to my colleague Steven Nadeau, and to all the residents who participated as well as to Régis, Jean-Sébastien, Martin and Sebastien for their help with set-up and clean-up!

See you all again next year!

Our youngest volunteer.

February 2025:

Psychedelia
Details to come.

For more information, please contact **Savannah Zavitz** at

450-671-9160.

Head-to-Toe Pilot Project up and running!

Dolly Shinhat, Director General

I wrote about the **Head-to-Toe Pilot Project** in the Spring 2023 issue of **OurHarbourviews** (“Head-to-Toe Checkup Pilot Launched Thanks to the André Gauthier Foundation”) and am delighted to share with you the progress that has been made in recent months.

Two volunteers have provided the expertise along with their time and commitment to bring this project to fruition. **Dale Perks**, BSc., RN, has been a Nurse Clinician for more than 37 years in a range of sectors and clinics. **Petra Dando**, DDS, a Board member since 2020, is a retired dentist with more than 39 years of experience, 34 in her own practice. Both have also taught in their professions at Champlain College and McGill University, respectively.

Petra and Dale were introduced to residents at a Resident Committee meeting on September 16, 2024. Residents were invited to complete a general health questionnaire, developed by Our Harbour Assistant, **Savannah Zavitz** with input from **Sabine Bulow** and **Steven Nadeau** of the Resident Care team as well as Dale and Petra.

Four residents completed the questionnaires that day. Petra and Dale met with these residents individually to dig a little deeper into their healthcare history and needs, discuss their priorities before starting the process of exploring, with each individual resident, the appropriate healthcare providers. Residents were accompanied to their appointments.

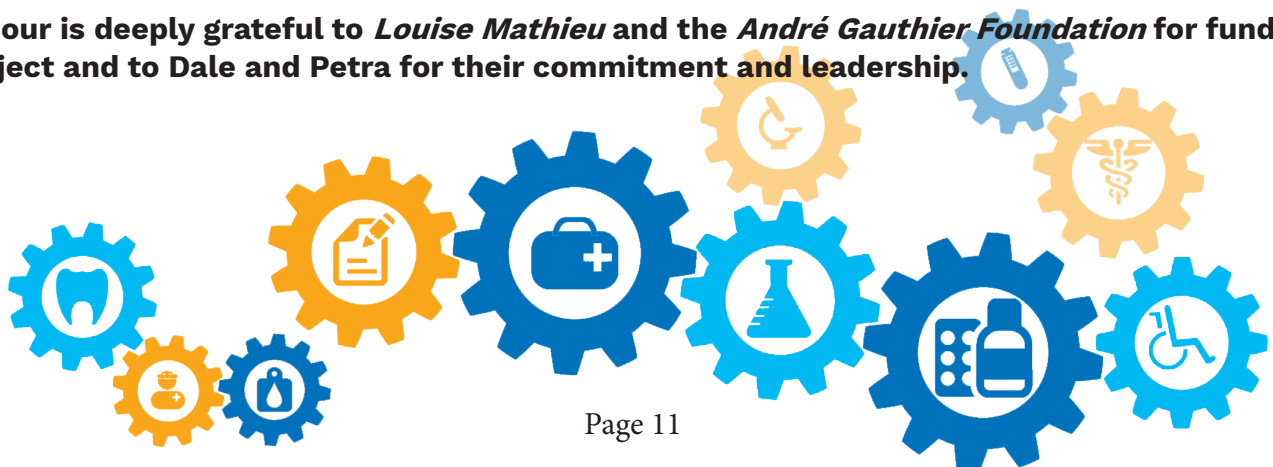
As a result, one resident has completed an initial check up at the dentist, his first in ten years, and has a follow-up appointment for additional work. In addition, he has had an eye exam and will be ordering new glasses once he has the updated prescription. With encouragement, he has received updated COVID-19 and influenza vaccines.

Another resident, who is studying for professional examinations, has had an eye examination and will also be ordering much-needed glasses. Other participants are seeking help with nutrition and diet information and support, quitting smoking and improving exercise routines.

Health care services that are free through RAMQ, or for residents receiving social welfare are accessed first. For services or health-aids that must be paid for, more affordable options are explored, such **le Bonhomme a Lunettes** for glasses. Where possible, residents must contribute something towards the cost of basic care or needs.

For more costly care that goes beyond what is available through RAMQ or more economical providers, the resident will be invited to make an application to the Pilot Project Team, which includes **Dolly Shinhat**, Director General, both Project volunteers and the Resident Care Team. Again, a financial contribution, however modest, is requested of residents who apply.

Our Harbour is deeply grateful to Louise Mathieu and the André Gauthier Foundation for funding the Pilot Project and to Dale and Petra for their commitment and leadership.



Revisiting Our Harbour's Volunteer program

Savannah Zavitz

*Canada has long prided itself as a country of people who volunteer, serve and participate. However, this landscape is shifting and trends in volunteerism and participation have been declining, especially post-pandemic. As community needs and volunteer motivations change, we need to find new ways to reinvigorate community participation. **Volunteer Canada** is navigating the complexities of modern volunteerism. We are working to remove barriers to participation so that every individual feels empowered to contribute to building more connected communities.*

- www.volunteer.ca

The Board and staff at Our Harbour see these broad societal and individual changes as an opportunity to revisit and revitalize our communications and practice with volunteers. In accordance with the **Our Harbour 2023-2024 Action Plan**, we've been making some developments in our volunteer program, specifically onboarding.

We intend to develop training materials and resources that educate volunteers on working with adults with mental health conditions, to give them a deeper understanding of our residents and their needs. We would love to introduce a wide range of resources and diverse training opportunities into the volunteer onboarding process as well.

Our overall goal is to revisit our volunteer program to align with 2025 standard practices. We believe that by investing the resources available to us, we can provide a better structure and experience in our volunteer program. After all, volunteers are the foundation of any community organization!

Heads Up! Upcoming volunteer feedback survey

We firmly believe that your ideas, thoughts and perspectives carry immense value to the progress that we would like to see. In the New Year, the survey will be sent to all past and present volunteers who would like to share their insight. We encourage everyone to provide feedback so that we can make the changes you'd want to see!

Ronald Aiken Jr., a Star in Our Harbour's Sky

Congratulations to our devoted volunteer and June **OurHarbourviews** headliner, Ronald Aiken Jr.! This year, Ronald received the **Regional Health and Social Services Partnership (RHSSPT) STAR Program Award** for his contributions to the English-speaking community of Monterégie.

Not only does Ronald donate his time to Our Harbour twice a week, but he is a regular volunteer and member with **CommuKnitty**, **St. Lambert United Church**, and the Assistance and Referral Centre (ARC). At any of our events, you'll be sure to see Ronald with his clipboard and name tag.

Thank you for your generosity Ronald, this was well-deserved!

