Our Harbourviews

2026 Winter Newsletter

Our mission: to provide safe, comfortable housing and support for adults with a mental health diagnosis on Montreal's South Shore

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Le havre
Our Harbour
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Message from the President



By Marie Muldowney, President of the Board of Directors

True to its mission, Our Harbour provides supported housing for adults living with mental illness. More importantly, Our Harbour cultivates a sense of community among residents, volunteers and staff. A healthy community provides a sense of belonging, a safe place where individuals thrive and grow together, and a place where relationships are developed. This is what Our Harbour strives to offer.

Mental health is important to everyone. Our Harbour was founded by individuals who lived the challenges of obtaining treatment and a decent life for individuals (often family members) who had a mental health diagnosis. The goal was to ensure treatment, provide housing and support personal development. Our staff work closely with residents to develop personal plans and, with their medical team, support those plans. They also work closely with volunteers to help residents feel valued.

All this important work takes place under the leadership of John McCall, who completed his first year as Director General in October. John has worked diligently to inspire our staff, support Our Harbour residents, and work with our precious volunteers.

To end on a happy note, Our Harbour will be further growing our community by opening a new apartment and welcoming three new residents in December!

Marie Muldowney

New Grant from the J.A. DeSève Foundation

By John McCall, Director General

I am very happy to share that the trustees of the J.A. DeSève Foundation have agreed to contribute $10,000 in support of our mission to provide safe and secure housing for people living with the challenge of mental illness. This very generous contribution will go a long way in helping Our Harbour maintain the life-management support that is offered to all our residents. On behalf of the entire Our Harbour community, I would like to offer the trustees of the J.A. DeSève Foundation our heartfelt thanks and gratitude.



Michael Finch recognized as a S.T.A.R. Volunteer

by Savannah Zavitz, Volunteer Coordinator

On Friday, October 30th, Our Harbour celebrated Michael Finch at the annual S.T.A.R. Award ceremony presented by the ARC Assistance and Referral Centre. The S.T.A.R. Award recognizes impactful volunteer contributions to the English-speaking community in the Montérégie. Michael Finch is the deserving recipient for this year's award for volunteering with Our Harbour.

Michael personifies hard work. Whether he is repairing, installing, lifting, hauling, assessing or beaming a smile at one of our events, Michael is someone we can count on. Our Harbour isn't the only group he gives his time to; Michael also volunteers with the Greenfield Park Lions Club, the Legion Branch 94 Greenfield Park, as Stage Manager for the Greenfield Park Players – and always extending a hand to those in his local community.

At Our Harbour, supporting residents includes providing a safe and comfortable space to live in. As one of our Apartment Maintenance volunteers, Michael helps us to create a sense of home for the residents. Here is what one of our residents recently had to say about Michael:

"I would like to thank you for all the time and help you give as a volunteer. You repaired my broken bed frame, you will soon paint my bedroom in the colour I have chosen (pink), you installed air conditioning in our kitchen last summer, and you assembled our kitchen table with your own tools. From the bottom of my heart, I wish to tell you that people like you, who so patiently give their time, are rare and as precious as pearls. Once again, thank you and I am very grateful for the work you have done as a volunteer."

- Alyss, Resident

Thank you and congratulations to Michael Finch, and to all of our incredible volunteers who go above and beyond for the residents.



Celebrating Community Partnerships

By John McCall, Director General

Our Harbour is fortunate to be operating in a community with many local organizations and resources. Whether we are partnering to host an activity for residents, or putting on a fundraising event, collaborating with local organizations is vital to the support provided to our residents.

Over the summer and autumn months we have had the opportunity to strengthen our ties within the community. Here are a few highlights:

• On October 16th, Our Harbour joined *La nuit des sans-abri* at St. Mark Park in Longueuil. It was an evening of solidarity, conversation, and community. This annual event reminds us that supported, stable, affordable housing changes lives. It was heartwarming to see the large number of people on the South Shore who participated. Thank you to *Table Itinérance Rive-Sud* (TIRS) for organizing this event.

• In partnership with Espace Pivot, Our Harbour held its Annual Defi 5KM – Walk Together for Mental Health. This year marked the 6th edition of the Défi. The walk was held on a beautiful sunny Saturday in September, and more than 100 people registered to support mental health by joining the walk or sponsoring participants. The event was a great success thanks to the many volunteers who made it happen.

• Once again, this year, residents, volunteers, staff and family members gathered at the Legion Branch 94 in Greenfield Park to celebrate Thanksgiving and share a meal. Special thanks to the Legion for kindly welcoming Our Harbour time and time again, and to The Ladies Auxiliary who volunteer their time to prepare a wonderful meal.

• Finally, our thanks go out to the organizations and volunteers who have offered their resources over the past months, including ARC Assistance and Referral Centre for the Wellness Circle, *Table de concertation en santé mentale de la Rive-Sud* (TCSM-RS) for funding Move-with-Marco, and our wonderful volunteers who lead workshops and activities, including Dale who leads the Creative Arts Workshop, Kent who leads the Men's Group, and Susan who leads the Women's Group.

It is truly heartwarming to know we can count on our community partners to lend a hand, support our cause, and enrich the lives of our residents.



Hear ye, hear ye: Our Harbour's Planned Giving Campaign

By Susan Kerwin-Boudreau, Chair, Individual Fundraising Committee (ex officio)

Because *everyone deserves a place to call home*, since 2003, Our Harbour has been providing stable, affordable housing and support for up to 30 adults who live with mental illness.

We are proud that we have been able to accomplish our mission, even during challenging periods such as the Covid years. This has been made possible largely due to the generosity of our donors. Our hope is to be able to continue to provide these services for generations to come.

When we look to the future, however, challenges abound. These include the rising cost of housing and living expenses, as well as the lack of predictable, stable funding from government resources. These factors affect not only our organization but each and every one of our residents as well.

To meet these challenges, Our Harbour will launch a Planned Giving Campaign in 2027.

As we approach our 25th anniversary, ***our goal is to enlist 25 bequests or gifts in a will that will help to secure the long-term viability and stability of our organization.*** No gift is too small…or too large…to accept.

We hope you will join us in meeting our goal. Stay tuned for more information on this exciting campaign in 2027, because *everyone deserves a place to call home.*



Our Harbour Residents Get Out and About

By Marie Muldowney, President of the Board of Directors

Our Harbour residents are getting out into the community and taking advantage of many opportunities in our own neighbourhood and farther afield. We have been partnering with fellow community group *Initium* to host biweekly badminton games for residents and volunteers. Who knew that Charles LeMoyne Hospital has a gym with a net and equipment? And who knew that so many of our residents have hidden talents that help them dominate these badminton games on a regular basis!

This year, Our Harbour provided an annual overnight visit to Île-Saint-Bernard for kayaking, hiking and just being together. We also had a fun and informative outing to Granby Zoo. Residents and volunteers also spent a sunny afternoon at the beach on Île Notre-Dame. A group of residents and volunteers also enjoyed apple picking.

Activities such as these, whether organized by Our Harbour staff or by residents themselves, encourages them to push boundaries, take advantage of local services and build a sense of community that is so important to maintain mental wellness.

Recently seen out and about

• A group of Our Harbour residents recently met for coffee and conversation at Café Espoir, a community-run café on Taschereau Boulevard in Longueuil

• Small groups of residents and volunteers have also been seen walking together on a Saturday afternoon or evening

• Our volunteer Ron hosts games and activities on Thursday afternoons

• Residents have organized a Men's Group as well as a Women's Group

• An OH resident hosts weekly invitation-only Dungeons & Dragons sessions.



Meet Our New Stagiaires

By Mariah Singh, Resident Care Coordinator

This fall, Our Harbour is happy to welcome two new student interns to our team! Their enthusiasm, fresh perspectives, and dedication to community work are already making a positive impact on our residents and staff. Throughout their placements, both students are gaining hands-on experience while working closely with our Resident Care Coordinator team.



Becca De Andrade

Becca is a third-year Social Service student at Dawson College, completing her final-year fieldwork placement with Our Harbour. Since joining us at the end of August, she has been actively involved in supporting residents with their everyday goals, meal planning, wellness routines, and community participation. She also helps facilitate group activities and encourages residents to build confidence and independence in their daily lives.

"Everyone deserves to feel supported and heard - that's why I'm here," says Becca. Becca will continue her placement with us through the Winter 2027 semester.



Tristan Brosseau

Tristan is a Special Care Counselling student at Champlain College Saint-Lambert, completing his placement with Our Harbour. He works closely with residents, supporting their daily routines, personal goals, and involvement in community activities.

One of the highlights of his placement has been the cooking classes he leads with residents. These sessions offer a welcoming, hands-on opportunity to develop kitchen skills, explore new recipes, and enjoy preparing meals together. Tristan will be with us until December.

"Be patient with yourself. Nothing in nature blooms year-round," says Tristan.

We are grateful to have Becca and Tristan as part of our team and to play a role in supporting the next generation of community workers. Their contributions bring new ideas, meaningful connections, and valuable support to Our Harbour.

Please join us in giving them a warm welcome, and if you see Becca or Tristan around, be sure to say hello!

New Leadership at the IFC

By Peter MacMillan, Chair, Communications Committee

In many ways, the Individual Fundraising Committee (IFC) is the 'face' of Our Harbour – the aspect of our organization that most people in the community encounter. The IFC is responsible for organizing and hosting major fundraising activities such as our annual gala and dinner-dance, bingo night, cake walk, and much more.

Behind the scenes, the IFC also corresponds with individual donors who support Our Harbour, sending personalized thank you notes to acknowledge their generosity.

Now, after more than 14 years with the IFC (and as the committee's first and only Chair), Susan Kerwin-Boudreau is taking a step back from her leadership role – and retiring from writing all those thank you notes.

We are very grateful to Susan for her important contributions over the years. Her energy, enthusiasm and tireless efforts have been truly foundational to making Our Harbour what it is today. Susan has also been instrumental in pushing forward an important initiative that seeks to increase long-term, stable funding for Our Harbour through a planned giving campaign.

We are happy to announce that two Our Harbour volunteers have stepped up as IFC co-Chairs, Louise Martin and Lydia Woronchak. They are already hard at work on our upcoming gala...and planning more events for 2027!



Look out for these Upcoming Our Harbour Events

We have plenty of events to look forward to - and more are in the works!

DECEMBER

Giving Tuesday – your chance to share!

DECEMBER

Christmas dinner for residents, staff and volunteers

(LAUNCH TBD)

Planned Giving campaign

FEBRUARY

Bingo Night fundraiser

MARCH

Cabane à sucre

MARCH

Psychedelia 2027 arts & crafts fundraiser

Follow Our Harbour on social media for event details or visit us at OurHarbour.org

How to support Our Harbour? Let us count the ways

- Our Harbour is a registered Canadian charity: all donations are eligible for an income tax credit
- The most direct way to contribute money is by using the online donation form on our website at ourharbour.org/donate-now/
- We are also on the popular donation platforms Zeffy and CanadaHelps
- Your one-time donation is greatly appreciated. Some people choose to sign up for a regular monthly donation, which provides more financial stability for the work we do
- In the next issue, we will present a new campaign that encourages supporters to contribute to an endowment fund or to remember Our Harbour in their wills
- If you are not able to donate, consider becoming an Our Harbour volunteer!