

Goldbloom awards

The Quebec Community Groups Network has announced the winners of the 2017 Victor and Sheila Goldbloom Distinguished Community Service Awards. Recipients were cited for their singular contributions and outstanding leadership.

Jim Carter has been a tireless and exceptionally effective advocate for improved access to health and social services in English. His long-term mentoring has exerted a quiet, positive influence through English-speaking communities across Quebec, harnessing the talent and dedication of others to succeed in leadership roles in their communities.

Clifford Lincoln, one-time member of both federal and provincial governments, is a bridge-builder and consensus maker. He has made, and continues to make, a real and lasting difference in such areas as English-language rights, the environment and education, and the rights of intellectually-handicapped persons.

Sid Stevens and **Earl De La Perrale** founded and began nurturing Sun Youth Organization in their pre-teens. Since 1954, they have worked at developing street-level programs for at-risk young people and inspiring others to contribute to community food support and emergency aid.

Claudia Di Iorio receives the QCGN's Young Quebecers Leading the Way Award for her outstanding work in advocating for road safety.

Centraide on the march

Centraide of Greater Montreal launched its annual fund-raising campaign on October 4. Under the theme Change lives for life, the "March of 1,000 umbrellas" saw a small army of Centraide agency representatives and supporters gather in downtown Montreal to publicize the agency's work of supporting people experiencing poverty and social exclusion. Last year's campaign netted Centraide \$42.4 million.

Almage at 35

The only facility in East End Montreal that welcomes English-speaking seniors every weekday, Almage Community Seniors Centre is celebrating its 35th anniversary this year. It was founded in 1982 by Catholic Community Services and named after three churches in the area: St Aloysius, St Margaret's and St. George's. An independent facility since 2013, the Centre has extended its services to two satellite centres, in Rosemont and Montreal North, which offer one day a week programs.

To date, Almage boasts some 250 members. "We have always promoted a 'seniors helping seniors' philosophy," says **Giovanna Colasurdo**, executive director. "Our members not only receive services, many of them are on the giving end, joining our 75 volunteers to make life more pleasant for the aging."

Almage's services program is two-pronged. The first goal is to improve the quality of life of seniors who still live independently. "We really encourage their community involvement," affirms Colasurdo. "As well as in-house programs, we offer them a wide range of social and cultural outings."

There is also a community support program open to anglophone seniors over 65 who are experiencing a loss of autonomy. It is designed to address their social and emotional isolation and to help prevent premature institutionalization. Accompaniment to medical appointments, friendly visits and phone calls, individual and family counselling, and a meal program are available. When possible, these shut-ins are brought to the Centre to enjoy its activities.

The vast territory covered by Almage is serviced by seven CLSCs. A recent liaison established with the CLSC Mercier-est/Anjou has opened up new prospects for Almage clients. "A CLSC social worker now sits on our board," says Colasurdo. "And they sent two nurses to speak with our members about what senior services they can provide. This has been such a breakthrough, they're even helping us to make similar links with other CLSCs in the territory."

Indigenous children at risk

A groundbreaking report on social services being provided to vulnerable First Nations children in Quebec has just been released by researchers at the McGill School of Social Work's Centre of Research on Children and Families. It is a wide-ranging investigation of child protection interventions of Indigenous children. And, for the first time, data were compiled for up to three years following case closure and out-of-home placement.

The report cites "a disturbing level of over-representation of First Nations children at every stage of the child protection process". Interventions on their behalf were 4.4 times greater than for non-Aboriginal children; out-of-home placements, 7.9 times greater; and recurrence, 9.4 times greater. The prime reason cited for this youth protection intervention is neglect, particularly for children living in their communities. Those living outside their communities experienced, in addition, higher rates of physical and psychological abuse.

The authors recommend that, for better protection and wellbeing of Indigenous children, all levels of government work together to improve the situation. At the same time, they strongly emphasize the importance of supporting the development of First Nations capacity to collect and use data on their children in the child protection system. This would include their monitoring cases of neglect at home as well as child placements in out-of-home care.

N.D.G Food Depot moves

The N.D.G. Food Depot is celebrating its 30th birthday by moving into new and improved quarters on Somerled Avenue. The new site is in the heart of the community it serves, where over 25 percent of the population lives below the poverty line. The Depot was founded in 1997 as a temporary food source for the area. Today, along with basic food supply, it offers over 20 programs, which include cooking classes and vegetable gardens. Last year over 5000 people participated in Depot programs.

Users get the last word

In an innovative study just completed at the CIUSSS West Island, users of that integrated healthcare complex have been front and centre in its appraisal of "customer satisfaction". In fact, it was because of the users' committee that this procedure has been so effective.

Health establishments are required to evaluate the quality of care and services they provide by consulting patients on their experiences and measuring their compliance against existing standards. The West Island project is unique because it is the first of the integrated establishments to undertake such a consultation across all its facilities, in partnership with a users' committee, and because of the legal parameters set up to protect the confidentiality of the personal information collected.

"We are lucky to have an excellent users' committee chaired by a competent and unifying president, **Micheline Béland**, to lead the way," affirms **Benoît Morin**, the CIUSSS chief executive officer. "The process is not yet completed, but based on our evaluation of the results, we'll implement concrete actions, putting projects in place that will allow us to improve customer service."

New rehab home for anglos

A new rehabilitation centre for English-speakers suffering from problems of substance abuse has just opened in the Townships. Dunham House, which can accommodate up to 28 persons, fills a major gap in the availability of health services to Quebec's anglophone population.

"The core of our rehab program is similar to other facilities," explains **Murray Brohman**, general manager. "But the auxiliary therapeutic programs we have – equine therapy, music, art, gardening – are very special. They're not just add-ons; they are an integral part of the treatment program, and the difference they can make is amazing." For information: 1 450 263 3434.

Adoption law adopted

After nine years of delay Bill 113, Quebec's proposed new legislation allowing adopted children to trace their birth origins, was adopted in June. It will take until June 2018 for all aspects of the bill to become law, but it will eventually resolve several outstanding issues concerning relations between adopted children and their birth parents.

Those adopted prior to this law will still have their identity protected from their biological parents unless they consent. They will have the right to know their birth names, if they are available. Twelve months after the law comes into effect, adopted persons will have the right to know the names of their biological parents and make contact with them, so long as the parents have not requested that their identity remain confidential. If the biological parents are no longer living, their names can be accessed one year after their death.

Adopted persons will also have access to the identity of their biological brothers and sisters, and will have the right to contact them, whether or not they have also been adopted. However, if the biological parents have requested anonymity, that wish must be respected.

Persons giving up a child for adoption will not be able to obtain information on its identity.

New foster youth bursaries

McGill University has launched a new Youth-in-Care Bursary program to help current and former foster youth pursue a McGill undergraduate degree. The program is an outcome of a project funded by the Student Services Innovation Fund.

The new bursaries provide a minimum of \$5,000 per year, for up to four years, and will be available to students anywhere in Canada. For information: 514 398 6013.

New charity for Catholics

Montreal's Roman Catholic community has launched a new volunteer agency to re-vitalize its traditional approach to social services and charitable causes. In effect, Catholic Action Montreal (CAM) is a Catholic volunteer bureau. The brainchild of Bishop Thomas Dowd, CAM's goal is to involve more Catholics in faith-inspired charitable service.

"We're building on the long history of Catholic social participation in Montreal," says **Judy Wong**, executive director. "Montreal's English-speaking Catholics have been a force for the common good for almost two centuries. We're continuing that concept."

There is a natural network upon which CAM can call: the 10,000 Catholics who attend mass weekly in the city's 34 parishes and the community's 51 community organizations and groups that offer English services. Despite the fact that nearly half of the city's 200,000 registered Roman Catholics do not participate in church services, they still represent a potential source of support.

"Our goal is to help individuals and groups to connect, to join together to respond to the growing and changing needs of the English Catholic community," affirms Wong. "There will be a lot more outreach and offering of services."

The first strategy of CAM is to build its volunteer base. "We're looking for new and younger volunteers," Wong explains. "We have a solid bank of volunteers working in the parishes, but so often it's always the same dedicated people who show up to help. So our first challenge is promotion of who we are and how we plan to work."

Some work has already begun. CAM arranged for the re-opening of a valued English seniors' centre in LaSalle. And the agency recently recruited volunteers to help with accommodating new asylum seekers in an empty church. For information: 514 937 2301, ext. 282.

Call for nominations

The government of Quebec is calling for nominations for its annual series of awards, one of which is for community organizations working in the field of health and social services. There are prizes for excellence and honourable mention for work in three categories: prevention, promotion and protection of health and wellbeing; support for vulnerable persons; and community impact. Deadline for nominations is Nov 10. For information: [msss.gouv.qc.ca/prix d'excellence du réseau de la santé et des services sociaux](http://msss.gouv.qc.ca/prix_d'excellence_du_reseau_de_la_sant_e_et_des_services_sociaux).

Funding tips for nonprofits

The Committee for Community Organizations (COCO) offers members information on sources and methods of fund-raising. The agency has a subscription to FundTracker Pro, which members can use for free at COCO offices. This domain is a searchable bank of all the public and private funding for nonprofits in Canada. Other information is available on starting an individual donor campaign and making fundraising friends. For information: coco-net.org.

Aid in abundance at AMI

Long the leading organization for providing support for people caring for mentally ill family members, AMI has in its roster one-time workshops which include Types of Mental Illness, Treatments for Mental Illness, Recovery, Borderline Personality Disorder, and a weekly session on Mindfulness. AMI also has a YouTube page and a SoundCloud page which provide video and audio content online 24 hours a day.

This content is in addition to AMI's basic program of open-agenda sessions for caregivers to discuss and share their experiences. Other workshops focus on assisting caregivers with learning coping skills and effective communication. For information: 514 486 1448.

In brief

Peter Kruyt has been named chair of the new MUHC board of directors.

Christopher Lockhart has been named executive director of Tyndale-St Georges Community Centre.

Doris Low was appointed manager, Adoptions, at Batshaw Youth and Family Centres.

Matthew Pearce was awarded the Ella Amir Award for Innovations in Mental Health by AMI-Quebec.

Nico Trocmé, director of the McGill School of Social Work, has been named Honorary Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada.

Judy Wong has been named executive director of Catholic Action Montreal.

REISA is holding a one-day workshop on offering, giving and receiving help on Friday, October 20. Registration is \$15, with lunch included. For information: 514 955 8370, ext. 2217.

The new address for the NDG Food Depot is 6450 Somerled Ave.

Workshops on End-of-Life Care are being offered this fall at CLSC René-Cassin for caregivers residing in the territory of the CIUSSS West Central Montreal. For information: 514 484 7878, ext. 1393.

The Volunteer Bureau of Montreal is offering training sessions on Volunteer Management, Volunteer Recruitment and Volunteer Screening. For information: 514 842 3351, ext. 231.

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