

Red Feather history online

Red Feather is a name that still strikes a chord in Montreal's English-speaking community. For over 80 years it was synonymous with charity and philanthropy in this city. To ensure that future generations will continue to recognize the major social and financial contributions made by dedicated Montrealers in the past, a website has been created to preserve the Red Feather story.

The history that was published in 1996, [Red Feather in Montreal](#), traces Red Feather up to its co-founding of Centraide in 1974. Although no longer grant-giving, its Foundation continued to function for another 28 years. This year an epilogue was added to bring the long and fruitful history of Red Feather to a close.

It is available at <http://www.redfeathermontreal.ca>.

Centraide allocates funds

Centraide of Greater Montreal will disperse some \$42 million this year to support 349 agencies and projects in Montreal, Laval and on the South Shore. The overall goal of raising and investing these monies in the community is to help break the cycle of poverty and social exclusion experienced by the less fortunate.

The funds will be allotted in four areas:

- 35 percent for youth success: to stimulate early childhood development, encourage academic perseverance, support parents and families and prevent youth homelessness
- 27 percent: to break the isolation of people with disabilities, the elderly, immigrants and refugees, and people in crisis
- 22 percent to build caring communities: to stimulate neighbourhood life, encourage volunteering and strengthen community agencies
- 16 percent for food security and to facilitate access to suitable housing.

QCGN sets its sights

The Quebec Community Groups Network (QCGN) celebrated its 20th anniversary in June with two new initiatives of importance to the province's English-speaking community. Major reorganization of Quebec's health and social service system and the future of the province's anglophone youth are targeted for special attention.

Having been very active – and effective – in obtaining adjustments to new legislation to ensure continued access to healthcare services in English, the QCGN has now set up a follow-through standing committee, chaired by **Eric Maldoff**. “It will ensure that we are aware of the legislation's impact on our historical institutions,” says **Sylvia Martin-Laforge**, executive director. “It's more important than ever that our community be vigilant and involved. And we also affirm that it is QCGN's mandate to bring to the government's attention issues arising from implementation of this legislation.”

New foundation

The QCGN has also spearheaded creation of a new foundation, Notre Home Foundation, to offer grants for English community projects. Its first venture is a new award for anglophone youth called [Young Quebecers Leading the Way](#). Nominations are now open for candidates under 30 years of age who have demonstrated outstanding leadership in their community. Deadline is August 21. Full details are available at www.notrehome.qc.ca.

Goldbloom Awards

The QCGN is now calling for nominations for the 2015 Sheila and Victor Goldbloom Distinguished Community Service Awards. These were introduced in 2009 to honour individuals who have made an outstanding contribution to the understanding and vitality of English-speaking Quebec. They are named after a couple who have dedicated their lives to that cause. Deadline for submissions is July 31. Full details are available at info@qcgnc.ca.

New care for caregivers

AMI-Quebec and St. Mary's Hospital have joined forces to assist caregivers of elderly patients experiencing a medical crisis. Together they have developed an innovative program that will provide these caregivers with information and guidance to support them both in hospital and after the patient's discharge. A two-year pilot, the project will be evaluated for longer-term and broader application.

"Many of the elderly's caregivers are elderly themselves," explains **Ella Amir**, AMI executive director. "By having someone there to help alleviate their burden in an emergency situation, we're hoping to mitigate some of the negative consequences of caregiving. With this kind of dedicated support, they'll be better able to cope and will be less likely to require services for themselves."

While it is an AMI employee who will be on hand as direct intervener, St. Mary's staff is very much involved. "The hospital has set up a steering committee to monitor and evaluate the project as it progresses," says Amir. "It's a very collaborative partnership."

West meets east

Community organizations from across the city met in March to discuss the challenges of operating in an environment of continual reorganization of the public healthcare system. Hosted by the East Island Network for English-language Services (REISA), it was the latest in a series of annual community forums promoted by the Community Health and Social Services Network (CHSSN).

This year's gathering focused on the importance of community-public partnerships and ensuring the sustainability of project outcomes. Over 50 people attended. "Often the west has no idea what's happening in the east, and vice versa," says REISA executive director, **Fatiha Gatre Guemiri**. "Now we've had an excellent exchange of ideas that have opened interesting possibilities for collaboration."

Isolated seniors a concern

Social isolation among seniors is now recognized as a serious and emerging problem in Canada, a steadily growing demographic. In Quebec that problem is compounded among some English-speaking seniors by their low rate of bilingualism and the departure of family members. The English-Speaking Catholic Council (ESCC) has taken the initiative to stimulate finding ways of aiding isolated seniors in Montreal.

"Part of our mandate is to coordinate and be a focus for community action," says **Anna Farrow**, executive director. "So we've started a series of workshops to look at this issue. In May, we brought together people working in the field of eldercare and representatives of groups involved with seniors to exchange experiences, and to discuss what needs to be done. At future gatherings, we'll look at the possibilities of cooperative action."

One challenge is to find where those isolated seniors are. Volunteers from Westmount's Contactivity Centre literally took to the streets to find them – sitting in malls and food courts, checking out people who might have contact, such as local hairdressers, libraries and grocery stores. They first focused on one-on-one interventions, then organized physical fitness and social activities. The Centre subsequently put together a guidebook of resources for downtown and Westmount seniors. For information: 514 932 2326.

New life for Chez Doris

After a painful period of having to shut down its weekend activities over eight months due to lack of funding, Chez Doris is back on keel. The city's only drop-in day shelter for women, Chez Doris welcomed over 19,000 visits last year. Women in difficulty are able to receive such basic services as meals, showers, clothing and food in addition to medical, legal and financial consultations. In January a pilot program was set up to place homeless women in permanent residences.

Batshaw runs Aboriginal unit

Given the over-representation of Aboriginal children in the child welfare system, Batshaw Youth and Family Centres has created a specialized team of social workers to improve its services to First Nations, Métis and Inuit children and their families living in Montreal. There are about 100 on file now, half of whom are Inuit.

“Aboriginals face huge adjustment when they move to Montreal from remote communities,” says **Leigh Garland**, program manager. “We see a lot of issues related to neglect and abuse when parents can’t cope because of substance abuse or depression. That’s why we maintain strong partnerships with local Aboriginal organizations to keep up with the many resources they have available. If we can link these children and families into those resources early, we can avoid many problems that could arise.”

And when a child must be placed in foster care, the Batshaw team works with those families to make sure that historical and cultural sensitivities are respected. “It’s very difficult to find culturally-matched homes,” says Garland “So we direct foster parents to the Aboriginal community here where cultural activities are organized so children can be exposed to peers of same background.”

Older homeless men studied

Men who become homeless for the first time in later life is a growing and understudied population in Canada. McGill Social Work researchers are part of a national investigation of aging and homelessness, and are working with the Old Brewery Mission to collect pertinent data. Preliminary results indicate that older shelter users stay two weeks longer than younger men. Health problems and widowhood are basic risk factors leading to their homelessness. Another is that substance abuse programs target younger men only, government programs being limited to the under-65. This study will inform professionals and policy makers how to better address the needs of this vulnerable population.

Action Centre adds up

The Action Centre in LaSalle has a few things to boast about. It is the only bilingual day centre for people with cognitive and physical disabilities in Montreal. Its program of leisure opportunities and educational courses has proven to foster social relationships and increased self-sufficiency among its clientele. It is so well managed that operating costs run at half those of similar centres elsewhere. And it saves the government money.

Established in 1998 as a joint venture of the Constance Lethbridge Rehabilitation Centre and the J. W. McConnell Foundation, the Action Centre receives half of its funding, \$135,000, from government, but is running into trouble finding the rest. “Fund-raising events just don’t cut it anymore,” says **Joanne Eward**, board chair. “Fortunately, McConnell has re-engaged its support, and we’re developing new ideas to fill the coffers. But our biggest message now is how much we’re saving the government by being here.”

That would be the \$3.5 million a year that caregiver salaries and intermediate care housing would cost without the Centre’s services. (To be eligible for subsidized housing, disabled people must leave their residence 3 days a week for 6 hours a day.) “Since we opened,” says Eward, “we’ve actually saved the government \$50 million. It would be so nice to get some of that back.” For further information: Ilham Bouzama 514 366 6868.

New Catholic organization

An organizing committee is currently working on a major new social project called Catholic Action. Spearheaded by the Montreal Archdiocese, the goal is to coordinate the many community activities happening in parish halls and church groups, such as soup kitchens, youth programs, English-language classes, daycare, and so on. The idea is to maximize existing resources and to eventually offer services to the community at large, not just to Catholics. It is scheduled to take form by autumn.

Literacy Centre closes

For 26 years a national, and internationally recognized, trail blazer in the field of adult learning, the Montreal-based Centre for Literacy has closed its doors. The Federal government, the Centre's major source of financial support, terminated core funding for the literacy and skills sector last year. With insufficient support from alternative funding sources, the Centre had to shut down.

Some key resources and materials will be maintained by the Centre's partners. For example, its library collection, the largest of its kind in Canada, has been distributed among local libraries and organizations. Its children's reading program will be integrated into the Montreal Children's Hospital pediatric program. **Linda Shohet**, founder and only executive director, will work as an independent researcher and consultant in adult basic education, workplace learning and health literacy. For information: centforlitinfo@gmail.com.

Provigo provides the space

The Montreal Children's Hospital Foundation has found a new benefactor. The Provigo grocery chain, which is developing a new building complex near the MUHC's Glen site, has offered free office space for the Foundation's 35 employees and 10 private rooms for parents. This generous gesture is saving the Foundation over half a million dollars. The new 10-storey structure will also include a seniors' home.

Too many charities?

An American expert on social impact recently pointed out that there are 1.4 million charities in the U.S., their numbers growing at the rate of 50,000 a year. More than 700 are dedicated to breast cancer alone. Canada has some 88,000 charities, one for every 375 Canadians. According to the head of the Vancouver Foundation, that means too many players running after the same donors, resulting in "needless competition and inefficiencies".

In brief

Eric R. LaFlèche, president and CEO of METRO, and **Andrew Molson**, chair of RES PUBLICA Consulting Group, are co-chairs of the 2015 fundraising campaign of Centraide of Greater Montreal.

Members of the QCGN standing committee on health and social services are **Eric Maldoff**, chair; **Geoffrey Chambers**; **Sara Saber Freedman**; **Stella Kennedy** and **Richard Walling**.

Stella Gallo, formerly Batshaw coordinator of Access, Performance and Partnership, has been named director of Youth Protection at the West Island CIUSSS.

Lesley Hill, formerly executive director of Batshaw Youth and Family Centres, was named director of the Youth Program at the Centre-East CIUSSS, which covers the largest network of youth services in the province.

Katherine Moxness, formerly executive director of the West Montreal Readaptation Centre, was named director of the Youth Program at the West Island CIUSSS.

Marina Boulos-Winton has been appointed executive director of Chez Doris.

The Centre-East CIUSSS has been given responsibility for management of all long-term care across the island.

The Centre-East CIUSSS will be responsible for the Montreal regional committee for access to English language services.

The MAB-Mackay Rehabilitation Centre has joined the Centre-West CIUSSS.

The editor welcomes story ideas: 514 937 4309.

Legal deposit:
National Library of Canada ISSN 1709 092X
Bibliothèque nationale du Québec