

2008 ANNUAL REPORT - ENGLISH

Director's Report for 2008

2008 was a year of hope, courage, and determination. New people have stepped forward to be involved in different ways. The "old-timers" continue their dedication and commitment to the goals of reaching out to work with, and for, people who are often marginalized in society. We build on what has worked in the past and are open to new ways of reaching out. Elves from several churches as well as staff at St. Mary's Hospital provided gifts for our children at Christmas.

Funding from the diocese has stabilized. We also have found, and are looking at, new ways of raising funds in order to develop our work and also to become more independent. Hockey for a Cause was held again at the Bell Centre thanks to our hockey angels. We hope to begin our sewing project at any moment and the computers, with internet access, are well-used.

Our three major outings – to Mont St-Grégoire, Granby Zoo, and Rougemont – created an atmosphere of community – loving, sharing, and laughing together. Smaller outings took place to Musée des beaux arts and Mount Royal for a picnic.

We said good-bye to long-time staff member and volunteer Joyce McDavid who died February 3, 2008, holding her funeral at the mission. On February 3rd, 2009, we remembered Joyce, and named our clothing boutique "Friperie Joyce."

My heartfelt thanks to staff, volunteers, board members and every individual and organization that supports our work. You help make Mile End Mission the success it is. Or, to use the title of our annual newsletter, you make our "Mission Possible." What a team!

Roslyn Macgregor

Fundraising

This year our fundraising did very well in some areas and not so well in others. Christmas this year was a very good turnout – we received \$3-4 thousand more than last year. Our mailing campaign didn't do as well compared to other years with a few thousand less this year. Our sale of clothes this year, which helps us a lot to fund our trips, doubled in revenue. We had a surprise fundraiser which we didn't plan on that UbiSoft invited us to make a BBQ at their open house that brought in a thousand dollars or so. Then our hockey event brought in more than 10 thousand dollars. All in all we made it through the year.

Lori Olson

Food Bank

Food bank has been operating pretty well, especially since a vote was taken to distribute bags as soon as they are ready, except the last Friday of each month when the director holds a general meeting and any problems or any concerns about the mission can be discussed by everyone. Happy New Year. Looking forward to serving you again next year.

Connie Olson, Director of Food Bank

Meals

We have meals on Tuesdays, Wednesday, and Thursday. Our meals have gotten more delicious and nutritious. Our main cooks are Gilles Andree, Kelly, Carleen. Our thanks to all who help make our lunches possible.

Carleen Talyor

Boutique Mile End

All the clothing is donated. Tuesday, Thursday and Sundays the clothes are sorted and put on the shelves for sale at very cheap rates. Clothing that isn't sold is picked up by Certex for recycling. Money made from the sale of the clothing goes toward outings for members of the Mission. Last year we went to Cabin au Sucre and apple picking. Thank-you to all who donate and all who shop at Boutique Mile End. The Boutique has been officially renamed "Friperie Joyce".

Doris, Micheline & Connie

Community Art

The free art workshops touch on art therapy and expression of emotions through drawing and collage making. A space of trust is create, which permits participants to draw, write, and release inner conflicts. The community art is a tool to speak of change. It awakens the creative energy in everyone. In presenting an open space, we invite all to find inner space and the joy of creating. In this judgement-free learning everyone works to his/her rhythm. Since 2004, this workshop has evolved with its participants. You are welcome!

Joanne Racette

Free Yoga

It's 2 years now I've been participating in yoga at the Mission being close by in the community to go Monday evenings 7:30-8:30. I fell it's my sacred time! I'm more flexible now and it lowers my blood glucose and Roseanne told someone she comes especially for us. She's a lot of fun, answers any concern, and easy to communicate with. Well by surprise, Roslyn sat down with me and asked me if I wanted to open & close for yoga. I did feel honoured and said yes. Meanwhile, the yoga teacher is bringing new methods, which is easy, and we finish with appreciation and thoughtfulness for everyone in group and for Roseanne. We come out all smiles at the end of class. You should encourage more to come to the Mission for yoga. Bonne nouvelle année.

Lynda Shinder

Computers

The Mission Mile End received new screens and keyboards and wireless hookup. Signing in is necessary. It helps people who need an e-mail account of to search the web for housing & employment, and lost relatives, and to do homework. Problems that arise are signing in and updates of explorer and adobe reader, spyware, virus protection. Usually there is a spot free with 3 computers available.

Claudia Hamilton

Scrabble

We are five hard-core scrabble players. People like to watch but often they will sit and help one of the players who is having trouble. All in all everyone has fun. We play English and French scrabble depending on who wants to play.

Connie Olson

Volunteer Coordinator

Mission is a place that functions mostly with volunteers, for whom we are very grateful. All the activities that take place in the Mission, like cooking, sorting and selling clothes, organizing different activities like outings, art classes, are fulfilled by caring and dedicated people. We are always in search of people who can offer different services, in different domains. If you can spare time, please call us.

Militsa Adamou, Volunteer Coordinator

Office Administrator

I've been taught to handle pretty much all the money that comes into the Mission and almost what goes out. I have to make sure bills are paid on time and tax receipts are issued. I take care of the pay role and paying staff. I answer e-mails, give out information about the Mission and help with special functions (open house, guignolée, etc.). I help organize trips, I do the money collection, etc. I do bank deposits alongside the treasurer. I also give out information about the laws on welfare to people who call.

Lori Olson

New Staff

The thing about being new and getting more involved with the Mission is that it's not like anything I've ever experienced before. Normally, when you walk in to a kitchen or another place you work, the people always seem glum, but at the Mission people are always smiling or joking. It is a very positive and upbeat place to work. That's not to say we don't run into trouble every now and again, but, hey, life isn't perfect and even though the Mission might not be either, it doesn't mean we can't have a good time helping out the community.

Kelly Leakey

Website Coordinator

This year, beginning September 2008, I have been employed with the Mission primarily working on the website. This position has included ensuring that the website has the appropriate updated information and communicating weekly with the Mission staff to gather that information. I am also present at the mission at least twice a month to meet with people and assess what needs to be done. I am in contact with the various volunteer translators to have material translated into French. I have also worked at making the website more visually appealing, this has included editing and positing new pictures and modifying aspects of the website during certain seasons. I have also been involved in working on various larger projects for the Mission. The first project was an online contact database. Through this database all of the Mission contacts are stored in one central location, and there is easy access to retrieve this information. Another project, which is currently being re-evaluated, is a photo gallery in which all the photos that are not presently in other locations in the website are stored for visitors to view. Finally I am in the process of working on a project to improve the way volunteer applications are received when they are submitted from the website. This program allows the mission staff to view all current applications that have been submitted, and print them. Other functions, which are not completed as of yet, will include the ability to store the relevant information for an applicant in a separate database once they have been accepted. This separate database will then be fully accessible and modifiable by the mission staff.

Tyler Braun

summer Student

This summer I had the very great pleasure of working as the Summer Student at the Mission. The three months I spent gathering stories for the newsletter, organizing outings (such as the Granby Zoo trip) and playing Scrabble taught me so much about how to live and work in a diverse community. I feel very lucky to have been a part of the day-to-day operations of the Mission, witnessing the very real difference programs such as the food bank, daily lunches, and used clothing sales make in the lives of the Mission's members. I am also grateful for the opportunity to continue my involvement with the Mission as a Board Member.

Jennifer Otto

Public Relations Assitant

Helping out with the various projects of the Mission has been inspirational and fun. I have learned a lot from everyone at the Mission, and look forward to all the upcoming events.

Stephanie Palmer

Singing Valentines

Once again we had our singing Valentines. Us at the Mile End Mission get together and have our own choir where we sing to loved ones for a small donation. We appreciate all the support.

Andrée Lenard

Baptism

Sharissa Abenna Sintim-Olson was baptized this year on May 4th, 2008. She was welcomed into the Mission family. Her actual ceremony was carried out at Ros's church, but the party was given for her at the Mission because this is her community and family.

Connie Olson

The Wedding

My good friends Florence Desmond and Marc Charbonneau recited their vows at the Mission. I was happy and honoured to be one of the witnesses, as was Connie, also a member of the Mission. It was a wonderful day despite Marc being no longer with us. God bless his soul, may he rest in peace.

Andrée Lenard

Open House

Our Open House was held from the 12th 15th of June. We had musicians, the Raging Grannies, who along with volunteers helped collect money on the street corner. Our art therapy class decorated straw hats with flowers. A bake sale was held. Certificates were given to special supporters of the mission. A good time was had by all.

Carleen Talyor

UbiSoft

The UbiSoft fundraiser event was an amazing experience because we not only raised \$1000 for the Mission, but I was able to get an inside look at how some of my favourite games by one of my favourite Montreal-based videogame companies were made. I hope this can become an annual event for the Mission.

Kelly Leakey

Granby Zoo

I would like to thank Roslyn Macgregor who organizes with staff all community activities. She keeps all kids composed riding the bus by singing. I loved the trip so much, my friend saw I'd like to go away somewhere for the day. I love all trips. Well organized by all staff, who I know work very hard. My friend Paula came on the trip and she was so impressed with Roslyn, she loved the trip. She and I are still talking about it. It was just wonderful. We had a nice time in the country air. We went floating on tubes and it was so relaxing! We really enjoyed the day. What a wonderful way to get out of the city at minimal cost. We are looking forward to Granby Zoo 2009. Bonne nouvelle année.

Lynda Shinder

Apple Picking

I thought that apple picking was a lot of fun, because I got to help cook. I also liked the hay ride. I liked the food, it tasted delicious. After we ate a candy bag – yum! After we went to a different farm. On the farm we got a hay ride. On the hay ride we saw horses and other animals. When we were done the hay ride we got bags of apples. Then we got on the bus and set off on the journey home.

Kathryn Olson

Hockey for a Cause

Last November 15th at the Bell Center, during the Mile End Mission benefit game, I had the pleasure of applauding Yvon Lambert and Stéphane Richer, Canadian ex-hockey player celebrities. There was a good exchange on the ice. The game ended 6-7. Immediately afterward, tickets were drawn to win the jerseys worn during the game. I had a nice time with great company. Thank you. When's the next game?

Marie-Claire Genest

Christmas Dinner

Every year with the generosity of many sponsors, the hard work of many volunteers and the collaboration of the YMCA du Parc, we are able to organize the Christmas Dinner. About 300 people enjoy a traditional Christmas dinner and Santa and Mrs. Claus visit with a gift for each child. Movie passes offered to teens that help. It is a day immensely enjoyed by everyone.

Militsa Adamou

Christmas Baskets

This year we gave out 120+ baskets. We had potatoes, carrots, apples, bananas, and a special commodity, chicken legs. Also we had the usual non-perishable goods, plus hygienic supplies and gift cards for everyone. Our give-out date was Dec. 19th and everything went smoothly. A big thank you to all our donors.

Connie Olson, Director of Food Bank

Christmas "Guignolée"

We decided to do it on 2 days this year: Dec. 6th & 7th. All the staff helped and some of the board members. We also had other faithful volunteers to help, collect money, cook, and make hot chocolate & coffee. Some even baked goods for the occasion. All in all we had fun and made a grand total of \$1732.24 which went toward Christmas expenses.

Thank-you to everyone who helped make this event possible.

Lori Olson

Mile End Legal Clinic

The Mile End legal Clinic, which offers free legal advice on a walk-in basis, operates in the Mission premises through the generosity of the Mile End Community Mission. The services are provided by senior law students under the supervision of M^e Geeta Narang who founded the clinic in 2004. I assist Geeta at Mile End and in conjunction with her I supervise a similar clinic in Little Burgundy in the premises of the Tyndale St-Georges Community Centre. The legal issues which are brought to the clinic cover a very wide range but the most frequent are landlord/tenant, employment and family law problems. The common thread which runs through all our consultations is the fact that the clients simply cannot afford to engage a lawyer but are nevertheless ineligible for formal legal aid. Unlike the situation in other provinces, the clinic does not receive any government funding and the lawyers involved work strictly on a *pro bono* basis. In an effort to access the funds necessary to ensure that the clinic can continue to function, it has become incorporated under the name Mile End Legal Clinic and has applied for recognition as a non-profit charitable organization. The clinic offers its service without distinction as to race, sex or religious affiliation.

Colin Irving