



NEW WMRC PROGRAM ENABLES SEMI-INDEPENDENT LIVING FOR CERTAIN USERS

FREQUENT HOME VISITS CLOSE GAP BETWEEN PLACEMENT AND LIVING ALONE

Roger Duval's anguish is clear as he recalls caring for his brother after the death of their parents seven years ago.

"Gary just wasn't happy," he says. "He had a problem accepting rules, he was very argumentative, and he would always come home at three or four in the morning."

For over 50 years, Gary had been accustomed to his own unique lifestyle, strongly tied to the LaSalle community where he grew up. Well-known in his tight-knit neighbourhood, Gary had many friends, and worked sporadically for local businesses that guaranteed him home-cooked meals and company all day long.

Despite his carefree existence, Gary was unable to cook or clean for himself, could not manage money in more than small amounts, and could not be trusted to lock doors or, as a frequent smoker, follow proper fire safety precautions. When Roger was forced to take on all of

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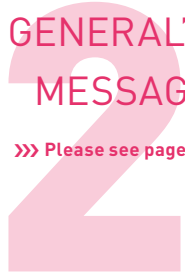


Gary Duval (left) is pleased to rent his own apartment now, with help from his educator, Pham Vo Ngoc Dung (centre), his brother Roger and others.

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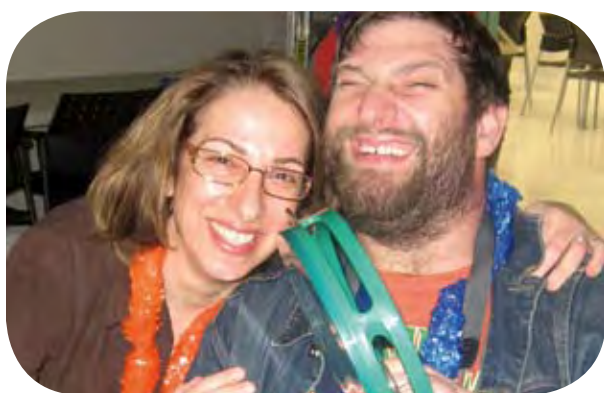
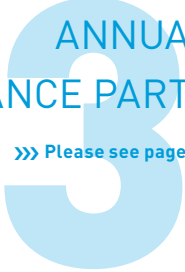
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DIRECTOR GENERAL'S MESSAGE



Ginette Bissonnette

III Director General

III West Montreal Readaptation Centre

Dear readers,

It is our pleasure to present this first issue of *WMRC Echo*.

This new initiative is a result of your many requests for a new image and newsletter to reflect your interests and concerns as parents, users, partners and members of the readaptation (CRDI-TED) network.

From now on, an editor and correspondents from the *WMRC Echo* Committee will help keep you informed of what's going on by contributing article ideas and photos on a regular basis.

You, too, can play a part! If you, or someone related to WMRC is doing something you think should be recognized, or you are holding a user-related event, please let your nearest correspondent know, or contact the editor: 514 363-3025, extension 2208.

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We look forward to sharing with you.

Happy reading!

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those tasks and more, he met with tremendous resistance, and had difficulty keeping up.

"I was extremely tired, and I had health troubles," says Roger. "I was worried about Gary's future."

While placement in a residential resource might have taken care of Gary's physical needs, it would have torn him away from the routine and community he loved so much.

Working closely with Roger and Gary, several professionals from West Montreal Readaptation Centre (WMRC) were able to develop a solution that now works for everyone: an apartment for Gary by himself, leased in his own name, and regular support from Roger, the community and WMRC. But it didn't happen overnight.

Home care for Gary was initially offered every two weeks. It was soon evident that this was not enough, however, as Gary fell back into his old habits, such as refusing to clean and collecting junk in his apartment. Even weekly visits didn't seem to help, and Roger still wasn't always able to come by when needed.

A few months later, the level of care offered to Gary now seems to be ideal, with an educator and readaptation assistant visiting him daily. Pham Vo Ngoc Ndung, his educator, says she is extremely proud of him.

"Now I remind him when it is time to clean, and he does it," says Ndung. "I convince him there is no need for three TV sets in his apartment!"

"He is very used to his routine, so I prepare him for new things."

Gary knows he can call on Roger or Ndung in case of emergency, and also has a network of neighbours who



watch out for him. He continues to work at a bar and spend time with his friends, and seems very pleased when asked if he likes his apartment. (Because of an early undetected hearing problem, he never properly developed language skills.)

"He's eating a lot better and he's able to maintain his lifestyle," says Roger. "He feels like he's part of society, like he's contributing."

This type of arrangement is new to WMRC, which has traditionally offered either residential placement or regular specialized support services to users who are already able to live independently.

"This new offering fills the gap in our continuum of services," says Stephen Duckett, WMRC's readaptation manager in charge of the program. "We now have three users benefiting from this program, and we hope to expand it in the coming year."

A fortunate coincidence is that it also makes better financial sense for WMRC. On average, it costs significantly less to provide this type of service than to place someone in a family-type resource (FTR).

More importantly, Gary's experience and studies show that semi-independent living has better outcomes on such factors as satisfaction, lifestyle normalization, community participation and personal well-being.

Yet another positive outcome is visible in the relief on Roger Duval's face.

"They don't realize the load they've taken off me," Roger says.

"I can't give high enough praise for what (WMRC has) done."



RENOVATED CAFETERIA WELCOMES USERS FOR ANNUAL DANCE PARTY



ACTIVE AS EVER, THE USERS' COMMITTEE HELD ITS FOURTH ANNUAL AFTERNOON DANCE PARTY AT WMRC HEADQUARTERS IN LACHINE. TRADITIONALLY A VALENTINE'S DAY PARTY, THIS YEAR SAW A POSTPONEMENT BECAUSE OF FIRE DAMAGE TO THE BASEMENT. NOW COMPLETELY REBUILT, THE SPARKLING WHITE CAFETERIA WAS IDEAL FOR THE MAY 10 EVENT (A SPRING FESTIVAL OF SORTS) WHICH BROUGHT OUT DOZENS OF USERS TO DANCE, EAT AND SOCIALIZE.



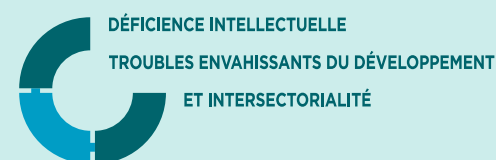
COMITÉ DES USAGERS
USERS' COMMITTEE

USERS' COMMITTEE LAUNCHES BOLD NEW LOOK

If you have visited WMRC facilities over the last few months, you may have noticed eye-catching new materials from the WMRC Users' Committee, which has enhanced its outreach efforts by designing a striking new logo, a user-friendly pamphlet, posters and more, all with a distinctive new look.

The role of WMRC's 13-member Users' Committee, which is elected by centre users and their legal guardians, is to inform users of their rights and responsibilities, promote users' interests, represent users on the WMRC Board of Directors and elsewhere, and organize user-focused events. For more information, please contact the Users' Committee at 514 363-3025, extension 2422.

VISIT WWW.INTERTEDDI.CA FOR THE LATEST RESEARCH ON ID/PDD



There's a new research team in town! It's called the Intellectual Disabilities, Pervasive Developmental Disorders and Intersectorality team.

This year-old academic-practitioner partnership has already hosted well-attended professional seminars, published a great many papers and five research newsletters (available online) and, this spring, launched a comprehensive Website at www.interteddi.ca.

The team will be holding an **open house** on Monday, October 27, from noon to 1:30, and from 2:45 to 5:00, in the basement conference room at 8000 Notre-Dame. Meet the researchers and practitioners, enjoy a light lunch, take a tour of the Website and learn about the most up-to-date findings.

For more information, please contact Coordinator Marion Steff at 514 364-2282, extension 2390.

HELP US CONTINUE BUILDING HOPE

THE KICK-OFF TO THE TAYLOR-BIRKS FOUNDATION'S FIRST CAPITAL CAMPAIGN IN 30 YEARS TOOK PLACE IN MAY AT THE DEPARTMENT OF CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES (DCFS)'S BAR-BECUE AND FUN DAY. JIM PROPHET, AND OTHER PROFESSIONALS FROM DCFS, HAVE SEEN TOO MANY FAMILIES UNABLE TO ACCESS REGULAR RESPITE SERVICES BECAUSE OF THE SEVERITY OF THEIR CHILD'S BEHAVIOURAL CHALLENGES. THE FOUNDATION HAS PLEDGED ITS HELP TO THESE FAMILIES IN DIRE NEED.

If anyone understands the urgency involved in getting the Taylor-Birks Foundation's planned respite home up and running, it's Jim Prophet.

As head of readaptation for West Montreal Readaptation Centre (WMRC)'s Department of Child and Family Services (DCFS), Jim supervises a team of four human relations agents in charge of evaluating and meeting the residential needs of WMRC users under the age of 18.

Sadly, part of that role sometimes includes placing children in homes away from their families because their parents or caregivers can no longer cope financially, physically or emotionally, with having them at home.

"The children we work with tend to be the most difficult, often with severe challenging behaviours," he explained. "When parents become exhausted as a result of that, the family dynamic becomes strained, and the family risks breaking down."

Respite care is an extremely effective way to combat that exhaustion, by providing families – sometimes with only a single parent, and in financial difficulty – with an urgently needed chance to unwind and catch up on other priorities.

"By providing an alternative to placement, respite helps to preserve families," said Jim.

WMRC does provide specialized respite services to families at risk, but the waiting list is long.

"We conceived of the respite home project because we recognized a crying need for respite," said Ian Moodie, president of the Taylor-Birks Foundation.

"Once we have reached our fundraising target of one million dollars, we can get started on building this home for the families that so desperately need it."

The respite home will be able to welcome six young WMRC users at a time, allowing up to 48 families to receive one three-day respite period per month.

With the DCFS building next door, children will have access to a Snoezelen (multi-sensory) Room and gym, as well as community activities and swimming nearby, while full-time specialized staff will help them to focus on rehabilitation objectives.

Surrounded by friends, young users will appreciate their time at the new home – and their families will appreciate it even more.

The "Building Hope" campaign committee will be reaching out to you shortly, with specific ways you can help this very important project. Please stay tuned!

*"Respite helps
to preserve families"*



The "Building Hope" fundraising committee at the campaign launch in May (from left to right): Corinna Piehler, Jacques Nolin, Martine Beaurivage, WMRC Chairman Gary Whittaker, Ronald Creary (with Marc Dinel Geoffrion), Jack Carlon, Jim Prophet, Taylor-Birks Foundation President Ian Moodie and Heather Powers.

AN EXCITING TIME FOR CENTRE MARC VANIER

The president of Centre Marc Vanier (CMV), Michel Massie, would like to urge everyone to donate to the Taylor Birks Foundation.

"Centre Marc Vanier is strongly committed to providing quality homes to people with intellectual disabilities and pervasive developmental disorders," Mr. Massie explained in a recent interview, "and we are thrilled about this latest project."

For those unfamiliar with CMV, the non-profit organization owns and maintains 31 adapted residences for users of the West Montreal Readaptation Centre (WMRC).

The exciting news for CMV right now is the Taylor Birks Foundation's "Building Hope" fundraising campaign to build a respite home on WMRC land. In its biggest project to date, Centre Marc Vanier will oversee the respite home's mortgage, construction and maintenance.

CMV has already provided funding to draw up the design and specifications of the respite home, but much more is needed to see the project through to the first brick being laid.



Centre Marc Vanier (CMV) will be in charge of building and managing the new respite home. In this photo, CMV President Michel Massie describes what the building will look like.



MEET STEPHANE BERTRAND YOUR WMRC ECHO USER CORRESPONDENT

While it may be hard to keep up with all of Stephane Bertrand's activities these days (there are so many of them), one thing is certain: his passion is radio.

"As a child, it was my dream to be on the radio," said Stephane. "I remember being told I would never be able to do that."

It was a WMRC employee who encouraged Stephane to volunteer at CKUT, McGill University's non-profit campus community radio station, three years ago.

Since then, *Avalanche*, the hour-long, monthly radio show Stephane produces with eight other WMRC users, has featured alternative news, interviews with well-known public figures and short documentaries, all from the point of view of people with intellectual disabilities.



When he's not on the radio, Stephane Bertrand uses software to transform regular images (left) into images visually impaired people can interpret (right) at the MAB-Mackay Rehabilitation Centre.

"All abilities are welcome," said Stephane, echoing the show's tagline. "We have two visually impaired volunteers and one with Down Syndrome."

Stephane and his colleagues take turns being hosts, sound engineers and clip editors, and recently featured prominently in *The Gazette*. The team has been working hard at making itself known.

Accordingly, when asked if he had a message for our readers, Stephane replied: "Listen to our radio show!"

A member of the West Montreal Readaptation Centre (WMRC) Users' Committee, Stephane also takes visually impaired WMRC users on outings, supports various community events and, now, is a Users' Committee correspondent for this very newsletter.

In his correspondent role, Stephane will keep the 10-member correspondents' committee apprised of the latest user and Users' Committee news.

Interviewed recently at the MAB-Mackay Rehabilitation Centre (also known as MAB-Mackay¹), where he volunteers twice a week, Stephane talked about the goals behind his many endeavours.

"We need to educate the public, to let people know that people with intellectual disabilities are like everybody else," he said.

Catch the *Avalanche* show at 5PM, the second Wednesday of every month, on CKUT 90.3 FM. The same group hosts the *Off the Hour* show at the same time on the remaining Wednesdays.

¹ The MAB-Mackay Rehabilitation Centre is a merger of the former Montreal Association for the Blind and the former Mackay Rehabilitation Centre. The MAB site offers a wide variety of visual rehabilitation programs and services to blind and visually impaired persons of all age groups.

CONCORDIA GRANTS RESEARCH CENTRE STATUS TO CAHD

"ONCE UPON A MIDSUMMER NIGHT" ENCHANTS SPECTATORS OF ALL AGES.

Widely recognized as offering ground-breaking and intensely beneficial creative arts therapy programs, the Centre for the Arts in Human Development (CAHD) is now a Concordia University research centre.

Located at Concordia's Loyola campus for the last 12 years, the new designation provides the centre with an infrastructure grant and some influence with regard to the university's research objectives.

"Research is one of our key mandates," said Lenore Vosberg, the centre's co-founder and executive director, and a part-time social worker for West Montreal Readaptation Centre (WMRC). "From our very first program, I saw major changes in people, which we documented and videotaped."

Volunteers and Concordia students work with centre participants (most of whom are users from WMRC, thanks to a longstanding partnership agreement with the centre) to develop story lines, work on choreography and learn original music, to eventually stage an original musical theatre production in front of an audience.

Despite the centre's precarious financing, by all accounts, the calibre of the centre's performances is outstanding, and by using creativity and a positive approach, users are able to develop hidden talents, improve their social skills and self-esteem, and deal with emotional issues.

This year's production was no exception, as a graduating class starred in "Once upon a Midsummer Night" in June, drawing over 250 delighted spectators for each of three shows. Reactions after the show ranged from admiration to tears.

"The creative process can make such a difference in people's lives," said Ms. Vosberg. "The final production sends a message of hope to the families, that everyone can have quality of life and pride in what they do."

For more information, or to donate to the centre, please visit the CAHD Website at www.cahd.net



"In the Centre's June 2008 play "Once upon a Midsummer Night," Puck (David Holden) shows the magic flowers to King Oberon (Shawn Swaffield), as Gooseberry (Nadia Rosati, assistant director) looks on."

photo: Nasuna Stuart-Ulin

BULLY 101: A FIRST FOR DCFS

A group of six teenagers attending a bi-weekly social skills group offered by WMRC's Department of Child and Family Services (DCFS) has produced an ingenious video tool to help other young WMRC users.

"There has been a lot of buzz around the video because it's the first time users have ever produced this kind of tool for themselves, and also because it will help the younger (users)," said DCFS educator Christine Adams, who guided the group and edited the video.

While demonstrating bullying scenarios, the video suggests different ways to deal with them, such as asking adults for help, standing up for friends and changing locker locations.

These very capable youths selected the theme, built their own storyboards and shooting script, starred in and filmed the entire video themselves.

“SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENTS TO THE ACCESSIBILITY OF SERVICES”

Provincial plan to standardize access procedures and service continuity



With its “Access plan for services to people with disabilities”¹ issued this summer, the Ministry of Health and Social Services hopes to standardize when and how CRDI-TEDs, CRDPs and CSSSs² across Quebec offer services.

The plan requires that each establishment designate an access manager, as well as a case manager for users receiving services from multiple resources.

“There are several objectives in the plan,” said Micheline Richer, acting director for the Department of Professional Services and Quality (DPSQ), which is overseeing its implementation at WMRC. “Ultimately, it intends to reduce waiting times across the province, and ensure continuity of care across more than one establishment, when necessary.”

According to the Ministry, by the end of the three-year implementation period, “users and their families should perceive significant improvements to the accessibility and continuity of services.”

“We certainly already meet the standard for urgent-priority users to receive attention immediately,” said Frank Vincelli, consultant for Coordination of Services to the Population and Professional Services, and WMRC access manager. “It is now a question of further refining access standards for less-urgent situations, and applying them province-wide.”

The Access Plan is available in French only at the following Website: <http://publications.msss.gouv.qc.ca/acrobat/f/documentation/2008/08-848-01.doc>

¹ Plan d'accès aux services pour les personnes ayant une déficience – Afin de mieux faire ensemble

² Centres de réadaptation en déficience intellectuelle et en trouble envahissant du développement, Centres de réadaptation en déficience physique and Centres de santé et de services sociaux.

LATEST ID RESEARCH

MOTHERS WITH ID NEED THEIR OWN SUPPORT DURING TIMES OF STRESS

A recently published study by WMRC's own Dr. Marjorie Aunos showed that, while a majority of mothers with intellectual disabilities (ID) were receiving home support, that support was oriented towards their children, most of whom did not have ID.

The study, which looked at 32 mothers with ID from across the province, also showed that parenting stress levels significantly impacted the parenting ability of those mothers, and negatively affected their children's behaviour.

Parental stress levels also worsened as children grew older, or as more children were born into the family, demonstrating the need for long-term services to adapt to changing developmental needs.

WMRC's Research and Education Department (DRE), in collaboration with the Department of Professional Services and Quality (DPSQ), has just completed a three-year pilot project to regularly support mothers with ID through role-playing, checklists, individual supports, parenting skills workshops and more. With

Mothers with Intellectual Disabilities: Relationship between Social Support, Health and Well-Being, Parenting and Child Behaviour Outcomes. Marjorie Aunos, Maurice Feldman, Georgette Goupil. *Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities*, Vol. 21, N° 4. [July 2008], pp. 320-330.



Marjorie Aunos is a well-published author and psychologist for West Montreal Readaptation Centre, Centre de réadaptation Lisette-Dupras and CRDI Gabrielle-Major.

participants showing major improvements in such measures as quality of life, the department is hoping a similar curriculum can be integrated into WMRC's regular service offering.

Dr. Aunos, who has worked with over 100 mothers with ID, said she would like people to draw from this new study that people with intellectual disabilities can be competent parents.

“Many more children will be born of mothers with intellectual disabilities than in the past,” said Dr. Aunos. “Variables such as parenting stress should be taken into account in implementing support services.”



Patricia Camargo enjoys the barbecue with her four children.



Martine Beurivage, director, Child and Family Services, Users' Committee members Kosta Tsambaleros and David Allen, and Users' Committee President Deppy Papandreou.

BBQ AND FUN DAY DRAWS 120 DESPITE ROUGH WEATHER

Official launch of “Building Hope” campaign

Pounding rain couldn't stop the Department of Child and Family Services from throwing a wildly popular second annual BBQ and Fun Day on May 31.

The WMRC gym at 231 Elm in Beaconsfield was the perfect “back-up” venue for young users, their parents, siblings and WMRC employees to enjoy a wide variety of activities and edible goodies, despite the rain.

A portrait artist, musician and climbing wall kept children busy, while the launch of the Taylor-Birks Foundation's “Building Hope” respite home campaign, with speeches by Foundation President Ian Moodie and WMRC Chairman Gary Whittaker, drew applause and cheers from the adults.



Psycho-educator Sylvie Deschamps and educator Christine Adams play with young Joshua Goring.



Amanda Vilardi reacts to her newly drawn portrait.