

La **Rose** des vents



Office municipal
d'habitation
de Montréal

Office municipal d'habitation de Montréal Tenant Newsletter

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Happy holidays to our tenants!

Please note that the Office municipal d'habitation de Montréal offices will be closed on December 26, 27 and 28, 2016 and on January 2, 3 and 4, 2017.

However, the call centre and security will be open for emergencies: **514-872-6646**

La Rose des vents is also available at www.omhm.qc.ca, under the News and Publications tab



Danielle Cécile
Executive director
of the OMHM

A woman with experience and a big heart joins OMHM management

For the first time, a woman will be the Executive Director of the Office municipal d'habitation de Montréal (OMHM). The OMHM board of directors recently gave the position to Danielle Cécile, who has been playing her new role since November 7.

"I feel privileged to be part of this team of committed, capable employees," said Ms. Cécile, who had been in her new position for just a few days at the time of writing *La Rose des vents*.

Danielle Cécile is very familiar with low-rent and social housing. She headed the Housing Department at Ville de Montréal, after having been at the helm of the social and affordable housing development

division. Holder of a master's degree in Public Administration, Ms. Cécile has led various social organizations over the course of her 30 year career. She also managed monitoring teams in charge of social housing construction projects, sanitation control and financial assistance program management.

She sat on various boards of directors, including the OMHM board from 2012 to January 2016. This enabled her to become familiar with the OMHM mission and values. Ms. Cécile describes how she sees her role at the head of the OMHM: "I feel it is important to continue the work. As a member of the OMHM board of directors, I was actively involved in developing the 2015–2019 strategic plan, which focuses

on our service offering to give you quality living environments. Continuing to improve living environments for tenants is what drives my priorities."

According to the new executive director, the OMHM has an important place in the Montréal community. "We make a big difference in the lives of thousands of some of the most vulnerable households by offering them affordable and safe housing, and by empowering them in their community. This is a win for society as a whole," she said wholeheartedly.

"I wish Denis Quirion a wonderful, very much deserved retirement. His vision for social development is a vision I also share."

Last message from Denis Quirion



Denis Quirion
Outgoing OMHM
Executive Director

After five years as a leading member of the management team at the Office municipal d'habitation de Montréal (OMHM), the time has come for me to say goodbye. These past five years have been full of projects, accomplishments and inspiring encounters, especially with you dear tenants.

Over the years, my discussions with members of the different participatory bodies, such as the Comité consultatif des résidents (CCR or Advisory Committee of Tenants) and MOUV—a movement of young people living in low-rent housing, and my talks with you during various tenant activities have helped me get to know you better. Through these encounters, I was able to gauge your satisfaction with our services, find out what your needs were and tailor what we

have to offer you accordingly. My belief is that you know best what suits you.

During my term, I worked closely with the board of directors, whose membership includes two tenants, to improve the quality of your living environments, among other goals. Working together over the past five years, we have managed to boost the budgets allocated to major work in your buildings. We also took into account the comments you made during consultations.

Of all the projects I have been involved in, some are particularly close to my heart, such as those aimed at helping low-rent housing youth succeed. The clean-up and greening brigades offer summer jobs to some 50 young people and the OMHM opens its doors to trainees from low-rent housing. A

website, Le Rebond, was recently launched to give them a voice. Low-rent housing youth use this platform to openly express their ideas and opinions. For the first time in *La Rose des vents*, an article was penned by one of these young writers. I encourage you to read it on page 16.

The OMHM has strong, dedicated teams. I want to thank all the employees for their commitment and support. I am convinced that the new executive director, Danielle Cécile, whom I know personally, will enthusiastically tackle the challenges ahead with these teams by her side. I wish her every success.

I hope you have a wonderful holiday season in the company of your near and dear ones.



Ghislaine Laramée
Tenant member of the
OMHM Board

Be part of the solution!

Everybody knows about landlords' obligations to their tenants, but we sometimes forget about tenants' obligations. How can the OMHM serve us properly if we don't tell them what's wrong? I'm not talking about light bulbs, but about more serious problems like the presence of insect pests such as bed bugs.

Bed bugs have become a real problem in Montréal, and are now making an appearance even in public places. Why? Because they are more resistant to the latest insecticides, and are carried in clothing and furniture, often without the person being aware of it.

There is no shame in having bed bugs when you realize that they even have them in five-star hotels! However, that sense of shame leads tenants to hide their presence or to try and get rid of them on their own, without notifying the OMHM. Unfortunately, off-the-shelf products are less effective than the ones used by exterminators. They make the bugs more resistant while driving them out...over to the neighbour's, which eventually leads to an infestation in other apartments and makes the problem more difficult to solve.

If we are going to put an end to the problem, we are going to have to report every single bed bug we see to the call centre at 514-872-6646. You needn't worry about losing your apartment if you call them in. On the contrary, the OMHM will be grateful to you for it. We must all take precautions to avoid letting bed bugs into our apartment, such as not picking up furniture or mattresses left on the sidewalk, and keeping our apartment clean and uncluttered. If the exterminator has to treat your apartment, you must follow the OMHM's instructions for preparing your apartment.

Be sure to read the article on page 5 about the importance of the measures taken by the OMHM. We will only be able to solve this problem, which is making life miserable for a great many tenants, if we work together. Think about it!



Richard Marchand
Vice-President
of the CCR

Covering all the angles and achieving results

The Comité consultatif des résidents (CCR or Advisory Committee of Residents) has made a great deal of progress in 2016 after better structuring its efforts and making better use of its members' individual strengths. After identifying the action priorities at the start of the year, we then discuss them amongst ourselves. Afterwards, we send a series of questions to OMHM staff in order to find out how they address those priorities.

OMHM employees in charge of those issues come to meet with us to answer our questions and to discuss possible solutions. We then sit down together and draft a notice to the board of directors.

We did this on the issue of our battle with bed bugs last summer, and the board took our notice very seriously. Management has since changed its approach, adding to the contracts with extermination companies a requirement that they show results before they get paid.

We are continuing to work on the other two priorities for 2016: cohabiting with people with mental health issues, and the quality of finishing work in apartments. We are confident that by the end of the year we will have compiled the necessary information to prepare a notice on each of these issues. We will keep you informed. In 2017, we will set new priorities based on requests made by your representatives at the October 25 tenants' annual general assembly.

Before closing, I would like to extend a warm thank you to Richard Fitzgerald, who had to leave the CCR for personal reasons. As President, his commitment was always inspiring, and his dedication outstanding.

As the year draws to an end, the members of the CCR join me in wishing you happy holidays and a 2017 marked by determination and hope.

Standardizing the maintenance and repair work to improve our services

By Jocelyne Dorris

For the past several years, the Office municipal d'habitation de Montréal (OMHM) has been working on introducing maintenance and repair standards for its low-rent housing. Those standards will make it easier to communicate with tenants and to define our interventions in our buildings.

One of the main goals of these new janitorial standards is to standardize practices in order to improve efficiency. In order to do this, the OMHM this fall implemented the building hygiene project, which involves reviewing all equipment, products and work methods.

What is the building hygiene project?

The OMHM has set up a working group whose general mandate is to draft guidelines on maintenance practices that should be followed in low-rent housing projects, taking into account features specific to each type of building.

To begin, the working group will identify the currently used products, equipment and work methods, and compare them with those on the market. This will enable it to decide on the more effective ones based on the maintenance requirements for each type of building. Next, it will prepare an operational guide on building hygiene that will provide further details on maintenance operations based on the outcome of the analysis. This guide will be a reference tool for janitorial employees, in particular maintenance and repair workers. The other things that will be assessed are how the workplace and the maintenance and repair activities are organized, in order to standardize these aspects.

Maintenance standards are grouped around 11 themes, depending on the type of building.

For small buildings (3 stories or less), they concern maintenance of:

- land,
- lobbies,
- stairwells, and
- laundry rooms.

For high-rise buildings, they concern maintenance of:

- land,
- lobbies,
- stairwells,
- laundry rooms,
- hallways on each floor,
- common rooms, and
- garbage rooms, bins and containers.



Tenants appreciate the increased presence of directors of maintenance and repairs on site. On the right, Steve Benoit, a director of maintenance and repairs in the East Sector, with maintenance and repair worker Benjamin Dakinson.

Guidance for on-site interventions

The OMHM has already made a number of changes aimed at supporting its employees at every site. These include the addition of directors of maintenance and repairs and increasing their presence on-site to support the maintenance and repair workers. This increased presence enables the directors of maintenance and repairs to get closer to the tenants and to become more quickly aware of janitorial requirements. Each maintenance and repair worker will meet with his or her director of maintenance and repairs to discuss their work practices and to identify the challenges they face.

The OMHM is pursuing skills development programs (carpentry, painting, plumbing and locksmithing) to optimize its employees' performance and reduce reliance on sub-contracting.

Through these different stages of reorganization, the OMHM is taking the necessary steps to improve maintenance and repairs in its housing projects, and thereby improve its tenants' living environments.

Important changes for pest control

By Ingrid Dirickx

On October 1, 2016, the Office municipal d'habitation de Montréal (OMHM) made important changes to reduce response times and improve accompaniment for the most vulnerable tenants. To talk about it, we met with Mélanie Sanche, Director of the Sanitation Department at the OMHM.

"Over the past few months, we have been working with a pest management expert and our suppliers to improve our practices and services to tenants," said Mélanie Sanche. "The team of sanitation agents is very responsive to tenants' needs because they know just how demanding getting everything ready for treatment can be for them."

Major changes

One of the main changes is the addition of a third extermination company to the list of suppliers, meaning that the OMHM will be able to reduce response times and improve service to tenants. The exterminator can therefore plan each treatment better. In particular, this person will be able to determine whether the tenant needs help getting the apartment ready and figure out when the tenant will be able to return to the apartment after treatment.

In the new contracts, the treatment requirements are described better. The exterminator must follow a process and respect rules, which are the same for each apartment.

Lastly, the extermination companies will have to arrange for an intervention in the apartments around the one that was infested (above, below, to the right and to the left) within two weeks.

A shared responsibility

"Having said that, getting rid of bedbugs is a shared responsibility," said Mélanie Sanche. "We need tenants to work with us in getting their apartments ready properly. Otherwise, the treatment is useless." Tenants receive a list of things to do, such as drying all their clothes in the dryer and putting them inside garbage bags, then tying the bags tightly. "We realize that this step is difficult," said Mélanie Sanche. "That's why we are working with multiple OMHM partners, both internally and externally, to help tenants prepare or to offer moral support."

There are times when the OMHM has to turn to the Régie du logement to access some infested apartments because some tenants still refuse to cooperate.



There is no shame in telling us that you have bedbugs. They are everywhere, even in hotels!

For this reason, we will be continuing with preventive building visits and even adding more visits. In 2015 alone, the OMHM discovered 258 bedbug infested apartments that had not been reported to the OMHM by tenants.

"There are some perceptions and beliefs around, and I would like to take this time to clarify a few points," said Mélanie Sanche. "First of all, there are bedbugs all over the world. In Montréal, they can even be found in hotels and private homes. So, there is no shame in having them. People also think that they will lose their apartment if they tell us they have a problem. That's absolutely not true! If you have pests in your apartment, call us at 514-872-OMHM (6646). The sooner we know, the sooner we can do something about it!"

DID YOU KNOW THAT STORE-BOUGHT PRODUCTS:

- » force bedbugs into the walls or your neighbours' apartments, without actually exterminating them?
- » are harmful to humans and animals?

When teamwork beats dust!

By Marie-Eve Leblanc

Hats off to the tenants of Habitations Hochelaga for the spirit of collaboration they have shown since the work started. These tenants have found a way to create a friendly worksite while their building undergoes some major, and much needed, renovations (see insert).

Fortunately, they have continued to look out for their friends and neighbours, despite the ups and downs of living in a construction zone. When you see them sharing breakfast in the common room, you see their smiles, stories and good spirits. This has been going on for nearly two years. Noise, vibrations and dust are part of their day-to-day life. They have been barred from their balconies, sometimes from their parking spots and even the main entrance, but they continue to be there for one another. Some of them provide security, others cook, visit a sick friend or help a neighbour down the stairs. The list of these small gestures goes on and on and is a true inspiration!

This expanded family continues to get together and help one another. The tenant association organizes breakfasts, as well as activities in the common room, and neighbours help neighbours, all of which gives the tenants a chance to forget the construction for a while. In so doing they manage to draw each other out of their isolation and to give each other a little comfort by talking, sharing their difficulties and finding solutions.

“A construction project can wear you down,” points out liaison officer Véronique Levesque-Arguin. “But at Hochelaga, everyone has managed to keep their spirits up.” The steps taken by the OMHM to mitigate the impact of the work and ensure a minimum of convenience for the residents were essential. However, they would not have been as effective without the spirit of collaboration and the helping hands that the tenants extended to one another.

Congratulations and thank you to the tenants of Habitations Hochelaga, and to the tenant committee! Together, you managed to preserve a pleasant and friendly environment. You beat the dust!



The tenants of Habitations Hochelaga with David Régnier and Caroline Moreau of the ATD Quart Monde organization during a breakfast organized by the committee.



Three times a week, Mireille Goddard, tenant and member of the Habitations Hochelaga tenant committee, serves breakfast to her neighbours and to people in the neighbourhood.

WORK COMPLETED

In the spring of 2015, the OMHM announced the major work project to the tenants. The inspection of the building facades had revealed that repairs were needed. It was important to prevent further degradation of the siding and balconies, and to better weatherproof the building in order to keep it in good condition. The work included repairing a major crack, redoing the brickwork, demolishing the parapets on the balconies, repairing the floors and installing new railings.

Building rules: so everyone can get along

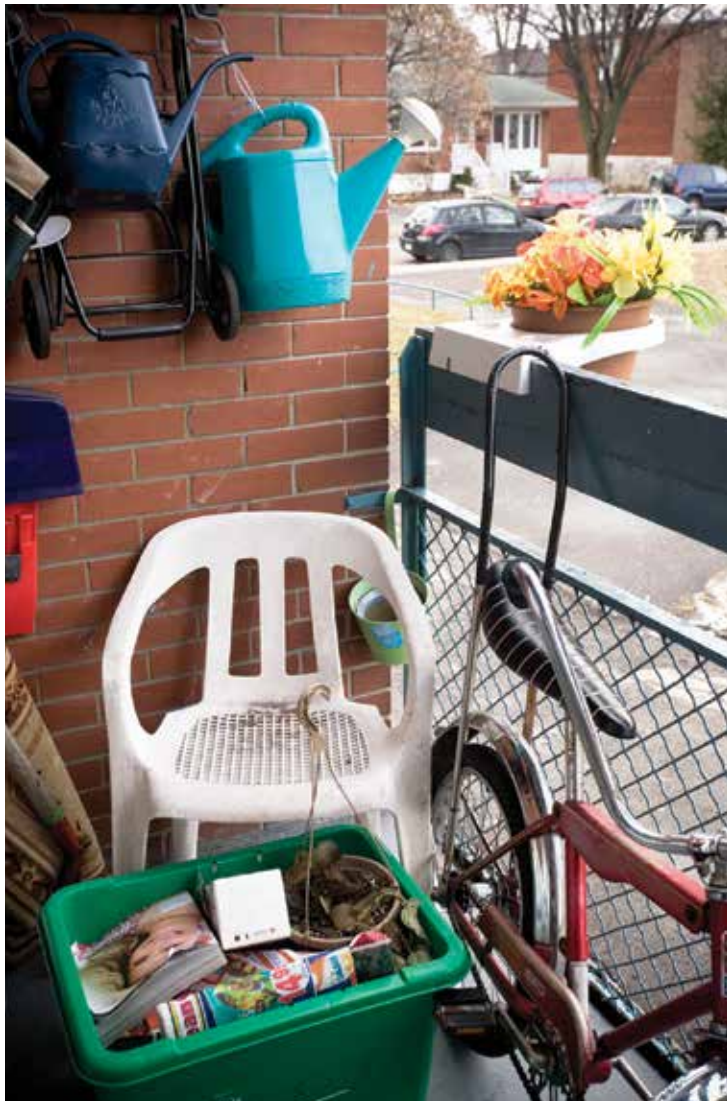
By Jocelyne Dorris

The building rules set out your rights and obligations as tenants, and the responsibilities of the OMHM as the landlord. They also help neighbours get along. The following covers three of the sections in the building rules.

An uncluttered balcony for your safety

A cluttered balcony can be dangerous, particularly if there is a young child around who can climb onto something and fall over the railing.

A cluttered balcony is also a fire hazard. You have to make sure that balconies are clear and accessible at all times. Be sure to remove the snow after a snowfall. These preventive measures can save lives. Maintenance of and snow removal from balconies are part of the building rules for your safety!



Changes in households

When you signed your lease, you gave the OMHM the names of all of the people sharing your unit. Since then, maybe you've had a baby? Maybe your oldest has moved out? Maybe someone has moved in or moved out? In either case, you have to notify your rental agent in writing.

It can be to your advantage to report these changes. If your household income drops when someone moves out, your rent may be reduced. If someone moves in, you may become entitled to a larger unit. In a nutshell, everyone is better off when you report changes!

Kitty, fido and you

Barring a few exceptions, pets are permitted in OMHM housing projects. The presence of pets outdoors may occasionally be a source of conflict. This is why all tenants must follow the basic rules of keeping pets on leash and, of course, picking up their droppings.

Pets are a source of joy, particularly for people living alone. But having a pet also carries responsibilities. When you have to be away for a few days, you make arrangements to have your pet looked after during that time. However, have you thought about who will look after your pet if something should happen to you unexpectedly or in an emergency? You may have to leave suddenly, for instance because of a medical emergency. If that should happen, who will look after kitty or fido?

As a preventative measure, you could pin a note on the inside of your door with the name of the person in charge of looking after your pet in an emergency. You can also provide a second contact name in case the first one cannot be reached. Mark down their coordinates, and be sure to let them know that you designated them to look after your pet!

Ville de Montréal recently adopted a number of by-laws concerning pet owners. To find out more, call 311.

A cluttered balcony is a safety hazard.

Most frequent questions put to the call centre

By Jocelyne Dorris



To help its tenants, the Office municipal d'habitation de Montréal (OMHM) has set up a single line: 514-872-OMHM (6646). Your call will be answered by an agent, who will either provide an answer or forward your question to the appropriate person.

The following questions are frequently asked, and are presented here in case they might save you a call. The call centre is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. Calls between 11 p.m. and 7 a.m. should be limited to emergencies that cannot wait until the next day.

Q What is an emergency?

A An emergency is a life or death situation or one that may compromise the integrity of the building, for instance a blocked toilet, a broken door or major water damage.

Q When should I call the call centre?

A Anything involving maintenance, repairs, security and exterminators should be called in. Call centre agents record the questions and pass them along to the person in charge, who follows up within a few days. However, in case of an emergency, the agent will send someone out that same day.

Q How long does it take to get a non-emergency repair?

A Non-emergency repairs are normally done within seven working days. It could take longer if the repairs require special materials that have to be ordered separately, if the work has to be done by an expert, or involves major repairs that have to be contracted out.

Q What do you do when you run into problems with a neighbour?

A When you live in an apartment building, you can find yourself living in close quarters with people whose lifestyle you don't necessarily share. It takes understanding and tolerance to deal with day-to-day situations that can disturb your peace and quiet.

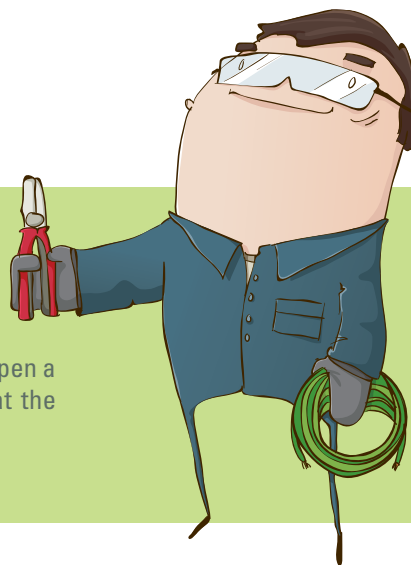
You can start by talking to your neighbour about what is bothering you, and try to resolve the issue. You can also talk to your rental agent, who will try to help or direct you to someone who can.

If the situation does not improve after that, call the call centre, and your request will be forwarded to the appropriate director, who will follow up as required.

Q How do I request a change of unit?

A Any request concerning your lease, including a change in unit or in the rent, must be submitted to your rental agent. The call centre can give you the coordinates of your rental agent if you don't have them.

Bell



If you are waiting for a technician (Bell, Vidéotron or other) or want to open a locker, you must notify the call centre 24 hours ahead of time so that the maintenance and repair worker can be informed and present.

Flower and Garden Club members will see you next spring!

By Jocelyne Dorris

After the outstanding summer we just had, we can be forgiven for feeling a little sad at the thought that fall and winter are upon us... The 800 or so members of the Flower and Garden Club can enjoy the fruits of their labours and start dreaming about next season's gardening projects.

Flower and Garden Club members play an important role in the low-rent housing projects because everyone benefits from their passion for horticulture. Flower beds and balconies overflowing with flowers are a treat for the eyes. But it is important to remember that tenants involved in the Club also make an important contribution to the OMHM's sustainable development efforts. Gardening is a way to help the environment in tangible ways. Greenery and flowers help fight heat islands and reduce litter. Harvesting vegetables and growing herbs is a source of pride and good for your health!

Experts supporting the members of the Club

This year once again, the members received horticultural assistance from Sentier Urbain. This social greening organization has been partners with the OMHM for several years. All summer, its horticultural experts go to the different housing projects to provide training and tips. They are on hand and never hesitate to pick up a shovel or a rake to help the residents.



The tenant members greatly enjoyed their visit to Biodiversity and Pollinators garden.

Sentier Urbain is in charge of distributing the gardening materials, such as flower pots, soil, compost and mulch. It is careful to do so fairly, but members must place their orders as soon as the season starts because quantities are limited.



Membership Form

Flower & Garden



Club

Together, we make life beautiful!

Over \$10,000 in prizes!

A draw will be held at the beginning of the season. Members can register in different categories (balcony or land). As a member, you can benefit from several other advantages, such as advice, training, garden tours and donations of gardening material (limited quantities).

For further information, go to the "Existing Tenants" section under the "Thinking Green" tab at www.omhm.qc.ca

Sustainable development

The organization also gives guided tours of its gardens. This summer, its Circuit Jardins tours included a visit to the Biodiversity and Pollinators garden. This free activity is hosted by fauna and flora experts, and gives participants a chance to learn more about the role of flowers, the function of pollen and the importance of animals in plant reproduction. Musical accompaniment during the tour makes the experience even more memorable. "This interactive activity gives you a chance to learn while you have fun. Members can admire the beauty of the plants and ask questions while enjoying a coffee or juice," indicates Sentier Urbain horticultural advisor Lucie Vallée.

Young people are getting involved as well!

The Club's youth program aims to spark the interest of young people living in low-rent housing in greening their environment by inviting them to get involved in landscaping projects. With the Club's assistance, some 15 organizations have helped approximately 100 young people to carry out their gardening projects.

It is also worth noting the growing complicity between the members and the young people joining the clean-up and greening brigades. Every summer, young residents of low-rent housing projects join these brigades. This is their first employment experience, and their salaries go towards their studies. They check the low-rent housing grounds, and do some cleaning and maintenance, and sometimes even a little landscaping. They are always warmly received by the residents, who value their assistance.

An activity that brings people together, which the OMHM encourages

All Club's members are low-rent housing project residents. The Club's popularity is evident, and the number of members keeps growing. The gardening projects receive lots of compliments from



Gardening helps the tenants bond, as was the case here at Habitations Laure-Conan.

the neighbours. From a personal point of view, gardening helps residents make friends and break out of the isolation from which some of them suffer.

The OMHM supports its members' projects and initiatives. Last summer, through Sentier Urbain, it handed out free of charge, to its members who asked, 2,700 bags of compost, soil and mulch, as well as 50 cedar bins and 350 plants (perennials, vegetable plants and shrubs). In addition, there were draws for 186 gift certificates to various nurseries for the members, starting in April. We would like to thank the participating nurseries: Angel Jardins, Frank Fleuriste, Mega Centre Montréal, Les serres Noël Wilson et fils, Pépinière Jasmin and Willy Haeck et fils.

"Flower and Garden Club has become a summer tradition that gives members the opportunity to develop a spirit of outreach and solidarity. The entire Montréal community benefits," pointed out OMHM sustainable development project manager Brigitte Laliberté.

Participant's first and last name (Only one membership per household)

Address _____ Apt. _____ City _____ Postal Code _____

(_____) _____
Telephone _____ E-mail _____

Which of the following best describes your project?

Balcony Land Balcony and land

N.B. As a member of the Flower and Garden Club, your membership will be renewed every year.

Information
514-872-2016

You can fill in a membership form online at www.omhm.qc.ca, under "Existing Tenants", "Thinking Green".

OR

Send your membership form to the following address:

OMHM - Club Fleurs et Jardins
415, rue Saint-Antoine Ouest,
2^e étage, Montréal, Qc H2Z 1H8

By joining the Flower and Garden Club, I authorize the Office municipal d'habitation de Montréal to use my photo in various publications.



Meeting to exchange and make proposals



After listening to the CCR report, the tenants' delegates took part in workshops to help define the priorities for 2017 and to discuss security in OMHM buildings.

Several issues were addressed within a few hours on October 25 at the Office municipal d'habitation de Montréal (OMHM) tenants' annual general assembly. Most members of the Comité consultatif des résidents (CCR or Advisory Committee of Tenants) were there to welcome the tenant delegates and to discuss the issues with them.

The meeting began with a presentation by Robert Pilon, Director of the Fédération des locataires de HLM du Québec (FLHLMQ), who summarized the CCR's role within the OMHM.

A positive report

CCR Secretary Chantal Daneau and CCR Vice-President Richard Marchand reported on the year's activities. They explained the research and analysis that the CCR had done before submitting its recommendations to the OMHM's board of directors concerning the priorities established for 2016. They also mentioned the CCR's participation in the FLHLMQ congress, and its activities aimed at promoting the creation and stability of OMHM tenant associations.

Setting priorities

This was followed by a question period, during which some serious issues were raised, including mental health, the physical autonomy of seniors, pest control and sanitary conditions. The delegates then took part in two workshops. In the first one, they suggested issues that could become priorities in 2017, topics that will be reviewed by the CCR early in the new year in order to pin down the new priorities. In the second one, they expressed tenants' expectations in regard to security. Access to buildings, keys and cards in circulation, peddlers, the role of the tenant security agent, loitering and street gangs were all covered and noted by the members of the CCR.

Closing comments

The meeting ended with a presentation by Serge Villandr , Assistant Executive Director, Low-Rent Housing Management, concerning the OMHM's top three priority orientations until 2019:

1. protect the quality of the living environment;
2. increase the supply of units and better meet the range of needs; and
3. meet the upcoming challenges by taking opportunities to improve and by relying on a competent and committed team.

Cont'd on page 3 →

Wrapping up the year in style



The time has come to start thinking about the year end. This is an important time for tenant associations. You will soon be receiving your application form for your Office municipal d'habitation de Montréal (OMHM) grants, and you will have to prepare your financial report. This demanding work is your chance to report on your situation and to set your goals and projects for the following year. If you

need assistance, do not hesitate to contact your community organizer.

Make the most of this opportunity to encourage exchanges with the tenants in your low-rent housing project and get them to take part in the activities and get involved in organizing them. They could start by giving you a hand preparing for the year-end celebrations in your projects. Make sure that these events are

inclusive and give all tenants the chance to meet in the joyful and sharing spirit of the season.

In closing, I would like to thank Richard Fitzgerald, who retired this fall from the Comité consultatif des résidents (CCR or Advisory Committee of Tenants) for personal reasons. I would like to recognize his tremendous commitment and democratic approach, which helped further collaboration between the tenants and the OMHM. CCR members are determined to keep working in that direction.

I wish everyone happy year-end celebrations. May your commitment be rewarded with joy and satisfaction in 2017!

Esther Giroux, Director,
Social and Community Development Department



Meeting at the crossroads
Seeking ways to live together in harmony

Working together to green Hochelaga-Maisonneuve

By Jocelyne Dorris

A greening pilot project in the Hochelaga-Maisonneuve neighbourhood led to the planting of close to 60 trees in the surrounding low-rent housing projects. A dozen people—volunteer tenants and horticulturalists—planted 32 trees at Habitations Boyce-Viau on a beautiful fall day. This communal activity was part of the **Les Promeneurs avisés** project in which the Office municipal d'habitation de Montréal (OMHM) is involved in collaboration with the Société de verdissement du Montréal métropolitain (SOVERDI) and the Société d'habitation populaire de l'Est de Montréal (SHAPEM).

Les Promeneurs avisés includes residents who are committed to greening their neighbourhood. Their mission includes, among other things, identifying possible sites for planting trees, with a focus on social and

community housing properties. This is why the OMHM was approached with a proposal to plant dozens of trees on its properties in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve. In addition to Boyce-Viau, the residents of 12 projects, including Morgan-Lafontaine and Notre-Dame, greeted the horticulturalists with open arms. "Next year, we aim to repeat the experience in the Montréal-Nord and Mercier neighbourhoods," indicated SOVERDI coordinator Catherine Houbart.

In order to encourage the tenants to take part in the project, community organizer Nathalie Dufort proposed that they "adopt" a tree. Those who responded to the offer received a tag with their name, which they were able to attach to "their" tree. Mohamed, a neighbour who had heard about the project from a tenant, offered to help even though he did not live in the



Tenants and horticulturalists worked hard on planting more than 30 trees at Habitations Boyce-Viau in one day.

low-rent housing project. For him, it was obvious that the greenery would benefit the entire neighbourhood. "Greening our neighbourhoods helps reduce heat islands and improves air quality, and also beautifies our living environment," pointed out Brigitte Laliberté, sustainable development project manager for the OMHM.

Tenants' involvement does not end with planting the trees, because they then have to maintain all the new trees, which need to be looked after if they are to grow!



Surrounded by CCR members, with microphone in hand, FLHLMQ's Robert Pilon facilitated the question period for tenants' representatives.

→ Cont'd from page 1

In order to illustrate how things will unfold in the day-to-day course of events, Mr. Villandré explained how the OMHM followed up on the CCR's advice requesting that the fight against bed-bugs be a priority. Since October, the new contracts signed with exterminators will ensure better monitoring of the quality of the work, and include an obligation to deliver results or the provider will not be paid. This is an excellent example of what can be achieved when OMHM tenants and staff work together.

When directors of maintenance and repairs get closer to tenants

Last January, the Office municipal d'habitation de Montréal (OMHM) reviewed the janitorial structure so that its directors of maintenance and repairs could work more closely with the tenant representatives. Their numbers were raised from 13 to 20 to make sure that they work 80% of their time out in the field. The new structure has now been in place for a few months, and we are in a position to report that these changes are being positively perceived because they provide more opportunities for OMHM employees and tenant associations to meet.

The OMHM has received feedback from some tenants and directors of maintenance and repairs on the matter. Lucille Deschênes, from Habitations Pierre-de-Coubertin, has seen improvements in that tenant representatives now have direct contact with the director of maintenance and repairs in their high-rise building for seniors. "After asking us to identify our needs, they installed access ramps and door opening buttons at the entrances. This is very important for seniors who have mobility problems," she pointed out.

Ms. Deschênes observed "more availability and attentiveness, a true customer-service approach." She added: "it feels like they are there for us."

Ms. Deschênes
has seen improvements
in that tenant
representatives now
have direct contact
with the director of
maintenance and repairs.

According to Richard Fitzgerald, a resident in Habitations Terrasse Ontario, "the new structure is certainly more efficient because they spend more time on site." However, he also mentions that "we already had very good communications with our former director of maintenance and repairs." He has only met the new one once because he has just arrived, but he did notice that he was very open to requests and responded quickly.

In regard to the directors of maintenance and repairs, Luc Dagenais indicates that he can now get closer to the tenants and thereby offer better service. "Before, with more territory to cover, I was always rushing around. Now, I meet with the residents more often. I can give them answers and reassure them," he explains. Sylvain Groulx appreciates the exchange of information with the tenant representatives. "They tell us about all the little things we need to know." As an example, he mentions a low-rent housing project where roots were growing across a path. "It was getting dangerous for wheelchairs and mobility scooters. We made the necessary repairs, and as a result improved the quality of life of the residents."

This last sentence is a good illustration of the objective of this restructuring, which has already shown positive results. Other testimonies will certainly follow early next year once the new structure will have been in place for a full year.

**THE
WORK
OF THE** 

The mission of the Comité consultatif des résidents (CCR or Advisory Committee of Tenants) is to promote the creation of tenant associations in low-rent housing projects and lend its support to existing tenant committees. To this end, its members make presentations on volunteer commitment and participatory forums in the low-rent housing projects, as well as at sector meetings.

New tenant committees

While the autumn leaves were falling and the wind was blowing, OMHM tenants gathered to elect their tenant committees. Elections were held in nine low-rent housing projects to choose the 40 volunteers who will organize activities and plan projects. Thank you to everyone for your participation and dedication.

NORTHWEST SECTOR

André-Grasset **S**

Amroune, Hakima
Duperron, Danielle
Ellien, Marie-Christine
Morales Branda, Doneris

Étienne-Desmarteau **S**

Bouffard, Gisèle
Brault, Cécile
Dion, Marthe
Labonté, Laure
Minault, Malherbe
Soudre, Marie

Jean-Talon **S**

Guebediang, Lydie Gisele
Kornafel, Krystyna
Leconte, Louis
Zukowska, Marianna

SOUTHWEST SECTOR

De l'Érablière **F**

Beaulne, Claire
Jackson, Anthony
Krzyszczuk, Piotr
Melançon, Denise

Vinet A & B **F**

Barra, Otilia
Brathwaite, Elizabeth
Kaba, Djeneba
Stroganova Pavlova, Tatiana

EAST SECTOR

Les Jardins Chaumont **S**

Audet, Yvonne
Dugas, Lise
Fournier, Barbara
Gervais, Céline

Adélar-Langevin **S**

Albert, Huguette
Belisle, Monique
Laforge, Lise
Mathieu, Robert
Parent, Suzanne
Ranger, Jacqueline

Les Jardins Angevins **S**

Casault, Claire
Collard, Denise
Lessard, Jacqueline
Pepin, Nicole
Villeneuve Richardson, Claire

Marguerite-Bourgeoy **S**

Aubin, Yves
Tremblay, Bernard
Uddin, Masum

S OMHM low-rent housing for seniors

F OMHM low-rent housing for families and people living alone

This information is provided as a guideline and is subject to change as tenant associations evolve.

The CCR wants to post your photos!



Did you know that the Comité consultatif des résidents (CCR or Advisory Committee of Tenants) has had a Facebook page for several years? All OMHM tenant associations can use it to announce their activities and to post photos taken at their events. Email your announcements and photos to the CCR, and you will see them on the "CCR Comité consultatif des résidents des HLM de Montréal" Facebook page. Remember to visit and "Like" it!

You can write the CCR at: ccrmtl@gmail.com

Upcoming training session

This training session provides the tools you need to fulfill your role. Make the most of it—it's free!

| | |
|----------------------|--|
| Date | Thursday, March 23, 2017 |
| Theme | Financial management* |
| Address | Habitations De l'Érablière 1745, rue Notre-Dame Ouest |
| Metro station | Georges-Vanier |

The session is held from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. in a low-rent housing project near a metro station. Lunch is included, but participants' transportation costs may be borne by tenant associations. To confirm your attendance, contact Suzanne Morissette by phone at **514-872-2104** or by email at suzanne.morissette@omhm.qc.ca.

* Please note that the course is held in French. Title given in English for your information.



An association can:

- see to the wellbeing and improvement of tenants' quality of life;
- represent and defend tenants' interests and rights;
- provide recreational activities and support services;
- promote tenant participation in managing low-rent housing.



Interaction is published by the Communications Department of the Office municipal d'habitation de Montréal
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Project Manager: Jocelyne Dorris **Writing and Coordination:** Hélène Morin

Photos: OMHM, Alarie Photos **Translation:** Ubiquis **Graphic Design:** Communication Art & Graf

Please send your comments and suggestions to suzanne.dupaul@omhm.qc.ca.

A top athlete at Habitations Parthenais Bruno Garneau took part in the Rio Paralympics Games

In September, Bruno Garneau took part in the Rio Paralympics, his second after London Games. His sport? Boccia, one of the sports practiced by disabled athletes.

This resident of Habitations Parthenais in East Montréal is a model of determination and perseverance. Despite his severe disability, which prevents him from speaking and limits him to navigating his wheelchair by moving his head, Mr. Garneau leads an active life. He has been passionate about his sport since 1993. Boccia players are among the most severely disabled, and are unable to do any other sport. Even athletes with all four limbs paralyzed can play the game with the help of assistants and special equipment. Mr. Garneau's assistant for more than 20 years has been Ginette Béliveau.

The two form a close team. Thanks to her sense of humour, Ms. Béliveau always manages to make him smile. When the topic of all the work involved in getting organized for all the training comes up, she jokingly replies "Well, sure, and that's why he needs me!" Both of them are satisfied with the team's performance at the last Paralympic games "under the circumstances", as Bruno had to use a new ramp with which he was not very familiar.



Ginette and Bruno demonstrate boccia at the training centre at the Institut national du sport at the Olympic Stadium. The player pushes the ball onto the ramp using the horn attached to his head.

Satisfied with his apartment

Mr. Garneau, who lives on his own, receives homecare from four people, including Ginette. He refuses to move into a special home for people with disabilities, because he would be bored. He says that he is satisfied with Habitations Parthenais, which is close to all services, because he often goes shopping. The tenants know him and he feels right at home. Ginette points out that: "when I go to the laundry room, I chat with the residents, and they tell me how impressed they are with how active he is, but they tend to feel sorry for him. I tell them that despite his disability, he lives well. He is very easy to get along with."

Before he started playing boccia, Bruno Garneau took painting lessons. Given that he can only handle the brush with his head, it could take him up to a year to finish a painting. That perseverance served him well in other areas as well: he completed his Secondary V (grade 11) at age 30. Since discovering boccia, he no longer has time for painting.



Inspired by London, upon his return from the Games, he made this magnificent painting.

Ginette and Bruno are proud of their contribution to the development of boccia. More and more young people with disabilities are joining local and national clubs, and many of them compete. Bruno Garneau is certainly a source of inspiration for everyone who knows him.

WHAT IS BOCCIA?

Boccia is essentially bocce for people with disabilities. Bocce is an Italian sport that resembles pétanque. It involves two teams with an equal number of men and women. The starting team, which is chosen by random draw, throws a white ball. Each team's objective is to send their balls as close as possible to the white one. Athletes in wheelchairs can launch their balls with their hands, feet or an instrument.

Anger

Never let that emotion get the best of you

By Mélanie Samson, OMHM social worker

Everyone gets angry from time to time. Nothing could be more normal! Anger is an emotion, and it is up to each of us to choose how we react to that emotion.

Anger is often a reaction to a situation that we find hurtful or unfair. It also happens in interpersonal conflicts. There are three ways to react to anger, and two of them are to be avoided as much as possible!

What must be avoided

The so-called “implosive” reactions are the ones that have us turn our anger inwards. For example: refusing to express our needs, remaining silent, feeling guilty. It can also involve harming oneself, refusing to care for oneself, refusing to eat or using drugs or alcohol. That type of reaction creates a negative rapport, because we remain resentful towards the other by making them responsible: “it’s your fault that I am hurting myself”.

The so-called “explosive” reactions are the ones where we turn our anger towards the other. They transform anger, which is a healthy and acceptable emotion, into aggressive, even violent behaviour, including insulting, shouting, hitting, not letting the other one speak or entertaining thoughts of revenge. In a conflict between two people, such a reaction can only aggravate the situation, because it intensifies the other’s anger, and may cause a reaction and lead to escalation.

Anger can ruin our lives if we let it get the best of us.

Best solution

The best solution is to break the conflict and return to calm. The first step is to recognize the physical signs of anger in ourselves. The following are the symptoms that will appear during an argument: flushed and hot cheeks, faster heartbeat and agitation. That is when we have to step back, find a quiet corner and breathe. Listening to one’s favourite music or show, and taking part in a sport are all ways to calm down. There is nothing to be gained from trying to solve the situation quickly because in the heat of anger, our reactions risk being impulsive.

Once we have calmed down, we can think about the reasons underlying our frustration. Did the person insult us? Do we feel slighted? What is the best way to ensure that the situation does not recur? We can talk calmly to the person by choosing the right moment,

without making accusations. If we are afraid of losing our cool during the discussion, we can instead write the person, in a respectful tone, explaining how we feel.

If the other person is not receptive, we can discuss our feelings with someone we trust who is not involved in the conflict. If we still feel angry after several attempts and over several days, we should seek help. We can turn to the CLSC psycho-social unit, or find a mediation service, where a worker will hear us out. However that worker will not be able to intervene with the subject of our conflict unless that person agrees to it.



Mediation works!

By Julie Marie Dorval

Anyone can find themselves in conflict with people around them. It could be a disagreement, noise, verbal or physical fights, or other things. When the people cannot reach an agreement, they can use mediation services.

Trajet, an alternative justice organization, provides such services in a number of Montréal boroughs. It works with individuals of all ages and from every background. It is available to low-rent housing tenants. Trajet is quite familiar with the issues that can arise among neighbours, because it has been around for 35 years and has been offering resident mediation services since 2010.

What is mediation?

Mediation enables people in conflict to meet, share their points of view, and find ways to restore harmony. They are assisted by mediators in discussing the topics that should be addressed and the questions that should be asked. When they meet, they receive help expressing themselves clearly and taking the other party's opinions and emotions into consideration. It comes down to an exercise in communication and listening. Generally, mediation resolves all or part of the conflict. In every case, the individuals involved indicated that they were happy to be able to express themselves openly and to have been listened to. One low-rent housing resident, who preferred to remain anonymous, commented "This stuff really works!" after using the service.

Many advantages

Not only does mediation help resolve conflicts and facilitate communication, but it also helps people reduce their anxiety, become more self-confident, and take charge of the situation. In short, it

"This stuff really works!", commented a low-rent housing resident after using the service.

improves everyone's quality of life. When an amicable resolution is not possible or too complicated, mediation is an invaluable tool. There is no reason not to take advantage of it because it always pays off!

If you find yourself in a conflict situation, call Trajet at 514-521-2000, extension 245, and leave a message. A mediator will call you back shortly. The service is free.

A mediation service just for seniors

Ensemble pour un bon voisinage is a project run by the Centre de formation sociale Marie-Gérin-Lajoie, which provides conflict resolution support and guidance. The project is for seniors living in low-rent housing projects in Plateau-Mont-Royal who are having difficulties in their neighbourhood. Conflicts with neighbours, misunderstandings during activities, gossip and other issues can all be addressed. Mediation uses different approaches to enable the people concerned to become aware of their behaviour and to work together on finding the best way to understand one another.

The Centre provides its services in collaboration with Office municipal d'habitation de Montréal community outreach workers and those from the local health and social service network. Its guided services are free and yield positive results. Seniors should call the mediator, Claire Harvey, at 514-276-4853.



Art studios in three low-rent housing projects in Montréal

By Julie Marie Dorval

Thanks to a partnership between the Office municipal d'habitation de Montréal and the Department of Creative Art Therapies at Concordia University, in 2012 Habitations Saint-Sulpice opened the very first art studio. Residents who took part were thrilled with the experience. On the heels of that success, two more low-rent housing projects followed suit.

Today, Habitations Alexandra and Notre-Dame-de-Grâce also have their very own art studios. Given their popularity and the benefits to residents, additional studio projects may see the light of day in several low-rent housing projects.

What are these art studios?

The art studios are welcoming places where creativity and learning are fostered. People of all ages can come together there to explore and share their artistic talents. People from different cultures have the chance to bond and to get to know one another and to appreciate the things that make them unique. They work together on projects. They make things, read stories, play music, write and engage in other forms of art. Everyone's imagination gets awakened. Some of the participants have been known to prepare meals that combine original flavours, and in so doing accomplished two things at once: they prepared a creative meal and provided an example of good eating habits. The art studios offer play and meeting areas where friendships form. The organized activities are free and easy to access.

University students taking art therapy programs also participate in the art studios. They share their knowledge with the tenants, and get to experience multi-cultural and multi-ethnic settings. Just like the tenants, the students are enriched by these encounters, where they learn a great deal from each other. The art studio also promotes links with neighbouring community organizations with which they can share information and experiences.

How do the tenants benefit?

The art studios give participants the opportunity to get together and take part in an unrestricted creative exercise. They learn to turn ideas into reality, and to express their opinions and emotions.

Everyone, regardless of age, religion or education, is welcome in the group, which makes for a unique sense of belonging. Social isolation is broken, and they are happy to see their interests taken into consideration. The harmony in their living environment, and the sense of pride that comes from creating something, writing a poem, inventing a recipe, to name just a few, are sources of tremendous joy. Residents feel valorized within their own low-rent housing project and even their neighbourhood. Their artistic talents can even reach the public at large through the activities and exhibitions organized to present their accomplishments.

If you live in Habitations Saint-Sulpice, Alexandra or Notre-Dame-de-Grâce, you can use the art studio room without registering. Just contact your association or visit the following websites:

www.arthives.org/node/169
(Art studio Saint-Sulpice, 1070 rue Louvain)

www.lesruchesdart.org/arthives/ndg-seniors-atelier
(Ruche d'art Notre-Dame-de-Grâce, 4040 rue Girouard)

www.arthives.org/node/229
(Ruche d'art Pointe-Saint-Charles, 210 rue Charron)



Photos from Studio d'art Saint-Sulpice Facebook page

Florence K charms spectators at the Foundation benefit

By Marie Bouchard

On November 14, Florence K delivered a passionate performance at the second benefit concert organized by the Office municipal d'habitation de Montréal Foundation, which works with youth in low-rent housing projects.

Nearly 400 people got together at Maison Théâtre to see and hear this writer/composer/performer. The audience was seduced by her charm, her mastery of the piano, and her smooth voice.

Florence K developed her talents as a singer and musician with the help of her parents, soprano Nathalie Choquette and musician Hany Khoriaty, who made it possible for her to become the accomplished artist she is today. Recognizing that gift, this benefit was her way of sharing that privilege with youth living in low-rent housing projects.

The Foundation is proud of the success of that fundraiser, which provides the opportunity to invest in projects that boost the self-esteem of young people living in low-rent housing, their social engagement and their desire to stay in school. The benefit was attended by youth who receive assistance from the Foundation. They spoke about the help that they have received thanks to the generosity of donors.



Frédéric Soucy, Executive Vice-President, COGIR Real Estate, and Honorary Chair for the evening; Amy Chassé-Légrand, from Habitations D'Iberville A,B,C, scholarship recipient; Florence K; Fabien Cournoyer, Foundation President; Ulda Joseph from Habitations Meunier-Tolhurst, participant in Foundation-supported programs; and Martine Philibert, Vice-President, Asset Management, Multiresidential and Hotels, Ivanhoé Cambridge, and Chair of the evening's organizing committee.

A donation of 40 Starfrit kitchen kits to promote youth activities in low-rent housing projects

By Martin Després



Marie Benoîte Bukuru, involved with Habitations Sackville's Voisins en action tenant association, receives a kitchen kit for youth activities in her sector. To her left and right, respectively, OMHM community outreach workers Laurent Picard and Andréa Quezada.

Learning to cook, bringing home a nourishing dish, feeling that our achievements improve the lives of our loved ones, are all experiences that enhance our self-esteem.

Jacques Gatien, President and Founder of Atlantic Promotions Inc. is a regular at activities organized by the Office municipal d'habitation de Montréal Foundation. Thus, he was quick to offer to lend a hand when he met Fabien Cournoyer, President of the Foundation's board of directors, at the spring benefit. "Everything is worth a try when it comes to helping young people improve their self-confidence and develop their potential. I am proud to foster the development of activities for young people in their community," indicated Mr. Gatien when the donation was announced.

The Starfrit kitchen kits were distributed to a dozen or so organizations in different neighbourhoods, including Saint-Michel, La Petite-Bourgogne, Saint-Léonard, Montréal-Nord and Hochelaga-Maisonneuve. Some 80 youth will be able to benefit from them. Mr. Cournoyer recognized the importance of that gesture: "The Foundation salutes the contribution of Atlantic Promotions Inc., and thanks Mr. Gatien for his commitment to young people."

Le Rebond: Remember?

By Martin Després



Young writers read others' articles, like Akram Taif, from Habitations Morgan-Lafontaine, who read an article written by Oudlain Dorléan, from Habitations Sackville.

You may be familiar with *Le Rebond*, a hard-copy publication for young people living in Montréal low-rent housing projects. In keeping with the times, *Le Rebond* is now going digital and will appear in the form of a website to which young people can contribute. This will help them learn to express themselves and become familiar with journalistic writing.

The site was officially launched on October 20 at the Centre Georges-Vanier. Several young people and representatives of youth organizations were on hand. Months of effort were rewarded with a modern and dynamic site that speaks to MOUV youth. MOUV is the movement of young people living in low-rent housing. They were actively involved in creating the site and guiding the designers from the outset, writing articles on topics of interest to them and about the issues they currently face.

BY and FOR young people

The site's signature, Un lieu d'échange PAR et POUR les jeunes, clearly indicates its objective, which is to promote dialogue, expression and visibility among young people living in your community. They have talents, opinions, ideas, and now... a platform from which to speak up. Check out the site at lerebondomhm.ca

Do you know any young residents between 16 and 25 years of age who would like to contribute to *Rebond*? Tell them to write us at lerebond@omhm.qc.ca. Young writers will have access to guidance from Office municipal d'habitation de Montréal communications experts. View the site's promotional video capsule at: vimeo.com/187342195

Young people living in low-rent housing see far!

By Cynthia-Martine Mugisha, a young contributor to *Rebond*

Last May, Deusdedit Mutima, a young man living in Habitations Sackville, received the Lieutenant Governor's Medal from the Honourable J. Michel Doyon in recognition of his community engagement and his involvement in his high school.

A young man with many talents

Deus is a young man with many talents. He plays basketball and soccer, sings and coaches high school students playing basketball. For a year, he has been an active member of MOUV, a movement of young people living in low-rent housing focused on improving their living conditions. This year, he started his studies in health sciences at the cégep de Maisonneuve. Deeply passionate about everything he does, his friends describe him as a "prankster", but watch out! This is not just any prankster. He is ambitious, perseverant, a leader and a prankster who sees far ahead! "I think it is important for young people to get involved in their community and to learn together to look after their environment. That is why I got involved in MOUV and in my neighbourhood's "Voisins en action" organization," he says.

An honour for the entire Saint-Michel neighbourhood

David Heurtel, member for Viau and Minister of Sustainable Development, the Environment and the Fight Against Climate Change, was on hand for the award ceremony.

Deus is proof that perseverance pays off, and that day, every young person in low-rent housing wanted to thank him for his outstanding efforts. With that medal, he demonstrated that young people in low-rent housing are champions and have their hearts set on looking after others!

Mr. Heurtel congratulated Deusdedit, saying: "You are a source of pride for all residents in the Saint-Michel neighbourhood".



Be smart during the Holidays!

By the Association coopérative d'économie familiale (ACEF) of Montréal East

We live in a society where overconsumption has become commonplace, and can be difficult to resist. Our biggest day-to-day challenge is to ignore all the marketing ploys to which we are exposed.

Studies show that North Americans see an average of 3,000 ads a day. Hardly surprising that they end up convinced that they need things, because some of those ads come at us without us realizing it. As the Holidays draw closer, some merchants and manufacturers start rubbing their hands in delight at the thought of rising sales figures thanks to the thousand and one marketing traps they will have dreamed up. Step into any shopping centre, and the game is on. Every one of your senses will draw you towards those traps...

For unwary consumers, advertising is a lure to overconsumption, where fulfilling a desire, not a need, becomes a priority. Nobody thinks about buying based on their values or of the eventual indebtedness. But it is never too late to make the right and wise choice, especially during the Holiday season.

Tips for consuming better

Here are a few tips you can use during the Holidays, and year-round, if you want to be a better consumer.

First, set a monthly budget to see how much you will have for buying gifts. Ask yourself the following questions:

- 1) what will my income be (salary, social assistance, family allowance, solidarity tax credit, etc.)?
- 2) how much do I have to set aside for my fixed expenses (rent, heat, electricity, cable/internet/phone, transportation, etc.)?
- 3) how much do I have to set aside for my variable expenses (groceries, clothes, recreation, etc.)?
- 4) how much do I have to set aside to pay my debts every month?

The toughest part is controlling the variable expenses, particularly if we do not want to go into debt. It is important to set amounts for these expenses and to stick with the plan. For example, we can set aside \$70 for food. It is important to pay off essential expenses, such as rent, which has to be paid on the first of each month.

Once you have an overview of your income and expenses, you will see how much easier it is to figure out whether you have enough left for other purchases. Try not to go over the amount you set, or you will have to use your credit card. If that happens, you will have 21 days to repay the amount or you will be charged interest.

When you are about to make a purchase, remember to ask yourself the following three questions: do I really need it, do I need it now, can I afford it? Ideally, if even one of the answers is no, then you're better off not to buy it and to give yourself time to think about it.

During the Holidays, let's think more about having a good time with our loved ones than about getting into debt.



If you would like some free assistance with preparing a budget or if you have questions about your finances or buying habits, do not hesitate to contact your ACEF. Find the closest one by calling the Centre de référence du Grand Montréal at 514-527-1375.



Rubbing Shoulders

100 years old: let's celebrate!



Irissé Virgile, better known as Madame Joseph, celebrated her 100 years on May 15, surrounded by family and residents of Habitations De Pontbriand, in the Villeray–Saint-Michel–Parc-Extension. Everyone agreed that that her tremendous disposition and joie de vivre are a source of motivation and inspiration.

A tenant of Habitations André-Grasset writes about the loneliness



Photo credit: compliments of Benoit LeBlanc.

Our tenants have many talents. One example is Roger Trépanier of Habitations André-Grasset in the Ahuntsic neighbourhood, who published his 3rd book, entitled *Jours de grisaille*. The novel is about a lonely old lady. Mr. Trépanier wanted to stress the importance of volunteers in helping seniors combat isolation. The book is available in all good bookstores (in French).

A passion that connects two residents of Habitations Saint-Raymond



At 99, it is safe to say that Mr. Yeo is the oldest member of the OMHM's Flower and Garden Club. He taught gardening and won several horticultural awards for his landscape designs, including in the low-rent housing Pouces Verts contests. One of his students, Audette Lavoie, who also lives in Habitations Saint-Raymond, in Côte-des-Neiges–Notre-Dame-de-Grâce, wanted to pay him a tribute by sending in his photo for publication in *La Rose des vents*.

A successful 25th anniversary for the residents of Habitations Gérard-Poitras



On June 16, Habitations Gérard-Poitras, in the Saint-Léonard borough, celebrated their 25th anniversary in style. A carpet of flowers awaited guests upon their arrival. Association President Chantal Daneau proudly accepted the OMHM certificate. Congratulations to all those who took part in organizing this evening, which was a huge success at every level!



Tenant Security Agents:

a REASSURING PRESENCE

- Tenant Security Agents are employees of the OMHM.
- They ensure the safety of the residents in the OMHM's high-rise buildings.
- Tenant Security Agents are available from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m.
- They make two surveillance rounds between 6 p.m. and midnight, in and around the building.



Invitation to share

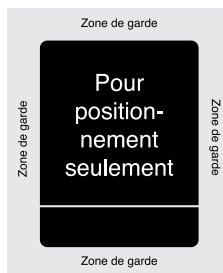
Do you too have wonderful memories to share? Send your photos, along with a brief description, to:

jocelyne.dorris@omhm.qc.ca,

or, by mail, to:

La Rose des vents

415, rue Saint-Antoine Ouest, 2^e étage
Montréal (Québec) H2Z 1H8



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Open weekdays,
8:30 a.m. to noon and
1 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.



EMERGENCY CALLS OUTSIDE REGULAR BUSINESS HOURS

In case of emergency only, our employees work until 11 p.m. on week nights, as well as during the day on Saturdays and Sundays. Don't be surprised if a maintenance and repair worker or other OMHM specialist (plumber, electrician) arrives at your door outside regular business hours. You can let him in without fear for your safety, once he has identified himself.



QUESTIONS REGARDING YOUR LEASE OR GOOD NEIGHBOURLY RELATIONS

Contact **YOUR RENTAL AGENT** for any information related to the renewal or cancellation of your lease, the arrival or departure of an occupant, your lease payment, parking, a housing transfer or a neighbourhood issue. The telephone number of your rental agent can be found in your lease.

