

# PORTFOLIO



2021-2023

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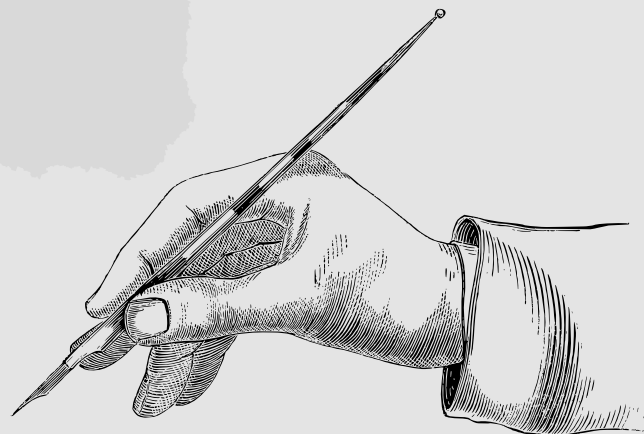
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# CHAPTER 1: WORKS FOR WEST ISLAND NEWS



PP. 3-44



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# The Liam Foundation spotlights mitochondrial disease awareness in collaboration with Chris Nilan

Hannah Johnston, Jul 5, 2022

The face of a Cunningham Pub's specialty hot sauce, a mitochondrial disease warrior, and the inspiration behind a philanthropic movement; Liam Reason is not your average 8-year-old.



At a Bell Center fundraising event, Chris "Knuckles" Nilan (right), a former Montréal Canadiens player and NHLer, learned about Liam through his father, Kevin James Reason (left). Touched by Kevin and Liam's persistence to fight Liam's mitochondrial disease, he now serves as the Liam Foundation's ambassador. Joined by Kevin for a sit-down interview with the West Island News, the two discussed mitochondrial disease awareness, and the importance of the Liam Foundation.



Liam was hospitalized in 2019 after he suffered from seizures and was diagnosed with mitochondrial disease after a month-long stay, with endless tests being performed to come to a prognosis.



PHOTO: The Liam Foundation

His father, Kevin James, describes mitochondrial disease as one that "affects the body's mitochondria, which are tiny compartments in almost every cell of the body. What that means in layman's terms is that some cells of the body do not have enough energy to function how they are supposed to."

In Liam's particular case, the disorder manifests itself through developmental delays such as autism, epilepsy, and ataxia, which result in balancing and coordination difficulties.

"When Liam was diagnosed, we were told his condition would worsen over time and that he would lose his life to this disease within ten years," shared his father, Kevin.



PHOTO: The Liam Foundation

The news was devastating, however motivating for Kevin, as he founded the Liam Foundation to dedicate his life to promoting funding and research for the disease.

The achievements the Foundation has already accomplished are monumental for mitochondrial disease visibility within the health community. It has funded an expansive and innovative medication trial in partnership with the Montréal Children's Hospital. This trial is introducing medication from Europe, which is the first of its kind and has been helping Liam and another ten children from around the world in their fight with the disease. The medication for the trial has had such a positive impact that it recently received a six-month extension from Health Canada.

That is not all the Liam Foundation hopes to achieve; they believe that a dedicated mitochondrial disease research center at the Montreal Children's Hospital is essential to fighting the disease and saving children's lives. This center would be the first of its kind in Québec, and the funding would be done in partnership with the [Montreal Children's Hospital Foundation](#) (MCHF).



PHOTO: The Liam Foundation

Those who wish to support the Foundation can buy customized soap, a tote bag, and even a beer glass, all dedicated to Liam: They can be purchased [here](#).

Even Cunningham's Pub in Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue had created a Louisiana-style hot sauce named after Liam to help fundraise for the Foundation.

Mr. Nilan hopes to support Kevin and all those affected by mitochondrial diseases through the Liam Foundation: "I see how hard and tirelessly Kevin works to help his son to live. I can only imagine what parents go through and how difficult it is for them and their children. We want people to jump on board to try and help. It's not an easy thing to do on your own, no question."

Mr. Nilan assisted the Foundation as Chair of the first annual Liam Foundation golf tournament, where they raised \$22,442, and hope to continue their philanthropic initiatives through a Laughs for Liam comedy night hosted by Ted Bird in September. Updates for the event can be found through [Kevin James Reason](#) and Chris's ([Knuckles Nilan](#)) Facebook pages.

"Little steps, but always forwards" are the encouraging words that propel the Liam Foundation forwards to continue to save the lives of Liam and all those afflicted with the disease, one day at a time. SOURCE: The Liam Foundation

# Beaconsfield's noise barrier supporters remain cautiously optimistic, despite controversy.

Hannah Johnston, Aug 29, 2022

It was an animated question-and-answer period during the City of Beaconsfield's council meeting on Monday, August 22nd.

Michel Rheault, president of the Beaconsfield Polluted Corridor Initiative (BPCI), has been awaiting this meeting to hear the initiative's fate; "My understanding is that recently, with all of the movement we have generated with this, we have found some kind of support from outside the City," Rheault shared the morning before the meeting.



PHOTO: City of Beaconsfield; Michel Rheault (left) and Mayor Georges Bourelle (right) at the August 22nd council meeting.

His speculations were realized during the meeting when Mayor Georges Bourelle shared that the City had reached out to the Ministries of Transport (MTQ) and Health to seek confirmation on the highway's health impacts. If it is, in fact, a matter of public health, the wall will be government funded.

"Considering the new information and these contradictory positions, I have written twice, in June and July, to the ministers responsible for Transport and Health, François Bonnardel and Christian Dubé, asking them for clarification," Mayor Georges Bourelle said in the press release.

Mayor Bourelle referenced a letter by Dr. David Kaiser, the physician responsible for environmental health at Montreal Public Health, who had voiced concern that residents living within 150 meters of the highway could experience adverse health effects.

At the top of the agenda was the mention of the Léger 360 survey that was conducted to receive public opinion and understand support levels based on districts.

Among the City's total population, the level of agreement with building the noise barrier project is 41%, of whom 26% strongly agree. Among the residents of Beaurepaire and Sussex streets, the number sits at 82%, of whom 79% strongly agree. However, in response to the question, are the project production costs acceptable, 69% somewhat or strongly disagree with the statement. Among the residents of Beaurepaire and Sussex streets: 21% somewhat or strongly disagree.

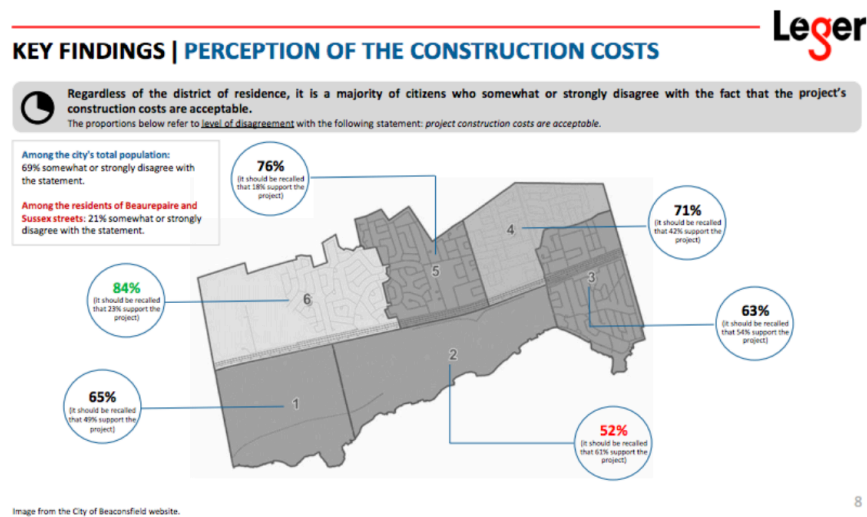


PHOTO: City of Beaconsfield

Rheault noted that the results of such a survey could be skewed; "The repercussions of the highway do not directly impact two-thirds of the population, so to ask everyone if they want to pay more taxes to fix a problem they are not hurt by, what do you think the survey or referendum will say?"

"The Mayor sees this as a personal problem instead of a community's problem, and as a money problem rather than a health problem," stated Rheault.

Under the current offer from the Quebec government, the MTQ would pay 75%; the remaining 25% would be paid by the City. According to MTQ estimates, the noise barrier would cost around 60 million dollars, meaning 12-15 million from the City's pocket. The Mayor has not applied for subsidies for the remainder of the cost; Rheault claimed that the Mayor said he should ask for the subsidies himself.

Rheault sent requests for subsidies to Environment Quebec, Environment Canada, Transport Canada, Transport Quebec (MTQ), and the Quebec Ministry of Health and Social Services. His request was a subsidy of 2-4 million from Environment Canada and Quebec, funding in full from the MTQ, and a request for a subsidized study from the federal transport ministry. It is, however, impossible for a citizen to request a subsidy; only the City may do so.

Rheault has proposed putting money aside from the City's welcome tax, approximately a million a year, to save towards the barrier, and he has requested the subsidies beforementioned. He has suggested placing solar panels along the south side of the 4.8-kilometre wall to generate electricity that could be reduced from the electricity invoice or be sold to Hydro Québec.



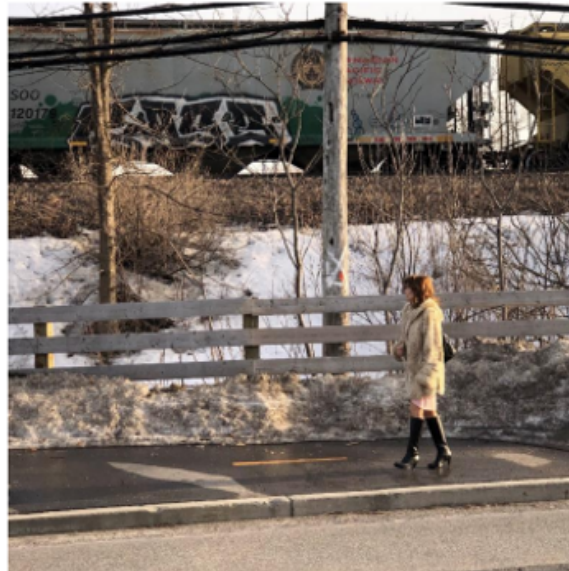


PHOTO: Beaconsfield Polluted Corridor Initiative (BPCI)

Rheault sees two arguments to justify the MTQ's total funding of the wall, the first being the data provided by Dr. Kaiser, and the second, he claims, is the history of the MTQ's knowledge of the situation; "Back in 1998, they should have paid for 100% of the wall because they were actually completing a rebuilding of the noisy 20, and that happened after they had already measured deafening noise levels in 1985-87."

Those opposed to the wall made their opinions known during the question and answer period, when a petition against the financing of the wall was presented, with 966 signatures.

Others voiced concerns about the environmental impact of building the wall and the deforestation that would have to take place. Rheault argues that new trees can be planted along the wall.

"After the elections, they will have to sit down and address this. For years we have been fighting alone and fighting Mayors, but now we have the minister of health who is on our side. We have made giant steps in the next few weeks," concluded Rheault.



# The TDPCR's 20th anniversary highlights compassion and innovation.

Hannah Johnston, Sep 15, 2022

A ribbon-cutting ceremony and gathering marked the public reveal of the state-of-the-art palliative care facilities at the Teresa Dellar Palliative Care Residence (TDPCR). Postponed by the pandemic, attendees were invited to view the Residence that was expanded to its current capacity of 23 beds. The Residence is also celebrating 20 years since its founding, initially led by Co-Founder and former Executive Director Teresa Dellar, whose loved ones and family were in attendance to commemorate the occasion.

Almost two years ago to the day, the Residence unveiled its new name – the Teresa Dellar Palliative Care Residence and closed its capital campaign and construction project- *Caring & Sharing - Under one Roof*. However, this was done very quietly due to pandemic restrictions. The project to expand the building to accommodate 23 beds came in at a budget of 14.7 million, completed in September 2020.

"We would not be where we are today without the hundreds of generous donors who were right by our side. Every individual, foundation and corporation who contributed to our campaign will forever be embodied in the bricks and mortar of this new building," shared Dawn Svoronos, President of their Operations Board.

The Residence's evolution has been exceptional. It opened as a nine-bed residence in 2002, and is now the largest free-standing palliative care facility in Canada. Since its opening, they have welcomed over 5,300 patients and more than 20,000 loved ones. In addition, the capital campaign was the springboard for launching the Montreal Institute for Palliative Care, which expands access to palliative care for Canadians all over the country through education and research programs.

Providing quality end-of-life care is no easy feat, yet the Residence understands its staunch responsibility in providing this much needed service: "We may not add days to life, but we

most certainly add life to days. Families and patients tell us how special and helpful the time spent at the Residence is for them, accomplishing many last wishes there," shared the Executive Director of the Residence, Mrs. Dale Weil.



The West Island News spoke to Mrs. Weil on this monumental occasion for the Residence.

**Q: What are some of the highlights or challenges the Residence has overcome throughout its 20-year existence?**

Mrs. Weil: The ongoing highlight is continuously being able to make such a difference in people's lives, which happens one person at a time. Each time that it happens, it's incredibly fulfilling knowing that they've had good days and that we've brought life into their final moments.

**Q: Looking ahead to what is hopefully another 20 years of excellence in palliative care, what are your aspirations for the Residence and the future of end-of-life care?**

Mrs. Weil: Only about 30% of people across the country have access to adequate palliative care. We are very passionate about helping healthcare professionals understand the principles of palliative care so that they may bring that capability to their particular experiences with patients. We try to promote demystifying palliative care for the public and make sure that they can understand all end-of-life care options. We are constantly evolving, researching, and trying to learn and improve. We never stand still.

A special thank you to Dale Weil and Elizabeth Huart of the TDPCR.

# Île-Bizard residents struggle with daily commutes as bridge detours persist.

Hannah Johnston, Sep 21, 2023.

Jen Wallace, a 15-year resident of L'Île-Bizard, begins her days earlier than usual now that her exit point off the island, the under-construction Jacques-Bizard Bridge, has had limited lanes and detours implemented surrounding the site. She wakes her children up at 5:30 a.m. and leaves to drive them to their off-island school at 6:30; anytime later, congestion accumulates, quickly creating lengthy wait times. The bridge crossing, which usually takes around 15 minutes, has been turned into an hour-long commute during peak hours for some drivers.



PHOTO: Kyle Whiteman

Traffic to cross the bridge extends to rue Des Près, a side street off of Cherrier. Captured at 7:05 a.m., Thursday September 14th.

The Construction du pont Jacques-Bizard Facebook group has been an outlet for many residents to vent their frustrations, some feeling as though the lack of visible progress towards the new bridge is disheartening and that the implemented solutions in place by the City of Montréal may not be effective. Since the end of August, one lane has been open leaving the island towards Gouin, and two lanes to get back on the island at Rue Cherrier.

Resident Kyle Whiteman believes the City of Montréal and the Plante administration are failing to hold the private contractor accountable. "This is not a borough nor a police problem. This is a clear disregard for the safety and well being of the Île-Bizard citizens."



The Jacques-Bizard Bridge from above.

PHOTO: Ville de Montréal

In their last post, the City (administrator of the group) stated that traffic conditions are expected to improve by the end of the week of September 18th. This week, the sewer and waterworks on the south side of the bridge, at the corner of Boulevard Gouin, will be completed. The related obstruction will be removed. No detours are planned for the week of September 25th, yet a new phase of work will begin north of the bridge, at the intersection with Rue Cherrier, as of October 2nd. No further details were provided at this time.



The island's Royal Montreal Golf Course will host the 2024 Presidents Cup, an international PGA tournament, from September 24-29th of next year. With the new bridge set to open before the end of 2024, Jennifer worries about the strain of this increased traffic flow on a bridge that could still be under construction. She hopes this difficult month will not repeat itself and that future construction and detours will be carefully planned in consultation with residents.



PHOTO: Devisubox

Residents can check the bridge's progress through a [live stream](#) of the construction site.

# **'Lack of resources' at the Lakeshore to blame for high ER death rates, according to veteran nurse.**

Hannah Johnston, Friday, March 1, 2024.

According to Québec Health Ministry figures, the Lakeshore General Hospital (LGH) has the highest Emergency Room death rate in Montréal. An access-to-information request granted to the Gazette reported that 3.4 individuals died for every 1,000 visits to the Pointe-Claire ER in the first ten months of the 2023–24 fiscal year. The Jewish General Hospital had an average ER death rate of 1.2 over the same period, while the ERs across the whole Island of Montreal had an average rate of 1.39.



With nearly 20 years of experience as a nurse, five of which have been in the Lakeshore's ER, Nathan Friedland feels as though some explanations are in order.



His insights lead to show that unlike the Jewish General Hospital, the Royal Victoria Hospital, the Montreal Neurological Institute, the Sacré Coeur Hospital, and the Montreal General Hospital, Lakeshore is not a true tertiary care facility. Tertiary is one of four levels of care, which involves treating special, complex conditions requiring procedures like coronary artery bypass surgery, dialysis, plastic surgery, neuro surgeries, severe burn treatments, etc. The lack of these resources on-site is a huge problem for the West Island.

"When a patient comes to the resuscitation room (or code room) and is in cardiac arrest, for example, we might be able to stabilize that patient but, the patient will then need to be transferred to a hospital that has a cardiac surgeon and a heart catheterization lab. Lakeshore has neither. That means a highly trained resuscitation nurse must accompany the patient via ambulance to a hospital with the above-mentioned resources," Nathan Friedland explains.

This also takes time, which is of the essence in critical care procedures, and an absence of a crucial staff member contributes to the pre-existing burdens associated with staff shortages. Nathan notes that there are generally only 2 resuscitation nurses on duty for as many as 5 very sick patients in the 3 code rooms. Losing one to a transport for a couple of hours can be very dangerous for the remaining coderoom patients who then only have one nurse to care for them, instead of two.

The same procedure ensues if a patient comes to the code room with a cerebral hemorrhage, massive trauma, dissecting abdominal aortic aneurysm, major stroke, or a broken neck. The Lakeshore has no neurosurgeon, no vascular surgeon, and no ECMO (extracorporeal membrane oxygenation) equipment, requiring these patients to be transferred downtown.

"St Mary's Hospital's ER - which has a lower death rate than LGH's - has, a stone's throw away from it, the Jewish General Hospital which has a state-of-the-art heart catheterization lab. It therefore takes much less time to get a heart attack victim from St Mary's to the JGH than it does to transfer a patient from LGH to the JGH. Time is cardiac tissue. The less time it takes to open a coronary artery, the higher the chance of survival for the patient."

The West Island's population is rapidly aging, and strokes or heart attacks are not uncommon amongst this population. Transporting them downtown is compromising their health, not to mention interrupting the staff's duties, according to Friedland:

"If the government is truly concerned about LGH's seemingly high death rate, it needs to give the aging West Island population the resources it deserves. Transporting elderly patients downtown and hoping they don't die en route or while waiting for an ambulance from the Lakeshore's ER is not a fair solution for patients or the staff, who are trying to save their lives."

Construction of a new Emergency Room is set to begin in the spring of 2025. The project will see the construction of a new 8300m<sup>2</sup> three-storey building including:

- 38 stretchers in cubicles;
- a 12-bed Short-term Hospitalization Unit in physical health;
- a 6-bed Short-term Intervention Unit in mental health.
- The new building will make include added:
  - examination rooms;
  - pre-triage and triage zones;
  - medical imaging rooms;
  - a 10-seat rapid assessment zone.

## **R.E.M urban boulevard project bans cars: Mayor Jim Beis responds.**

need for a connecting artery between the north and south sectors of the West Island, particularly for cars from Pierrefonds Boulevard to access Highway 40.



Mayor Dimitrios Jim Beis at Montréal City Council via livestream.

He reminded the council that discussions about an additional roadway for Pierrefonds-Roxboro and other West Island residents have been ongoing since 1986. However, the Plante Administration dismissed the plan for an urban boulevard in 2018 without consulting Beis, which he felt was imposed without consideration for residents.

Parking availability at the Kirkland R.E.M station has also been a point of contention for commuters in the surrounding area. In the early planning stages, 3,000 spots were to be made available, then 2,000, and now the predicted amount is in the hundreds. He believes that the Administration is unaware of the needs of West Islanders and that decisions such as these have been imposed unilaterally

Mayor Beis added that he is not anti-bike or public transport. However, 83% of West Islanders rely on their cars to get around, which needs to be kept in mind when planning transport projects that will serve the 30,000 people who live west of Saint-Charles.

# A mother's plea for neurodiverse visibility; Leo's story.

Hannah Johnston, Dec 22, 2023

Laurina Valente's 5-year-old son Leo, like most children his age, loves trains, merry-go-rounds, and trips to amusement centres. As much as he grins from ear to ear when he's on the merry-go-round or riding the train, the road to get there is often stressful and exhausting, especially for Laurina. Leo is autistic and non-verbal. Understanding concepts like wait times and lineups is difficult for children, especially those with autism.



PHOTO: Laurina Valente

Leo's frustration when he has to wait in long lineups can boil over into what Laurina refers to as intense "meltdowns," which can lead to physical violence, screaming, and crying. Laurina has lived through these at many children's events, such as a fair whose long entrance lineup resulted in an unfortunate end to their day. The "meltdown" had become too much to endure, and she had to carry her son away from the site as he was kicking, screaming, and clawing at her arm, which she later realized was bleeding heavily.

These lineup-induced "meltdowns" have become recurrences during activities that are meant to be enjoyable for children and their parents. Most recently, at an incredibly busy pumpkin patch, Leo had his sights set on an electric train running through the patch. The lineup and volume of passengers meant they didn't get a spot the first go-around. A distressed Leo was relieved when the train returned, but moments later, a "meltdown" ensued when they were kicked off.

Laurina was unaware that tokens had to be purchased. When she pleaded with the train attendant and explained her son's situation, he refused the money she offered him and insisted that they would have to wait in a line for tokens.

Laurina burst into tears as her son was in extreme distress, which elicited dirty looks from other attendees. When a good samaritan offered her tokens to Laurina, they were let back on, and instantly, her son's day was made.

Now, she wants to raise awareness about the conditions that neurodivergent children face and how more needs to be done to accommodate their varied needs: "A lot of autistic children's parents feel ashamed to ask for help and suffer in silence. I want to help other parents so they don't have to endure what I've been through."

She proposes offering a lineup alternative for neurodivergent children, much like the accommodations in place for children with physical disabilities at parks such as LaRonde.

Laurina no longer wants to be held back or hold Leo back from activities he loves.

"There needs to be a lineup specifically for neurodivergent children at fairs, amusement parks, and children's entertainment centres. I want to spread awareness so that there can be support and compassion from others. If they witness a similar situation, they can empathize with a parent's struggle."



# Residents of Roxboro faced with costly repercussions after heavy flooding

Hannah Johnston, Jul 1, 2022

Certain Pierrefonds-Roxboro residents are recovering from the repercussions of excessive flooding between First and Third Avenues North in Roxboro.

On June 16th, Karen Benoit, a resident on First Avenue in the Borough, noticed that water had infiltrated her basement. Soon four feet of water had inundated the basement and filled her parked car up to the steering wheel with water.

She had reported the flow of water at 4 o'clock. The fire department arrived at 6:15. The damage took its toll on "irreplaceable" antiques from 1947 that were in her home, as she estimates over \$20,000 in losses and damages. Her insurance has lapsed, and damages are therefore not covered by an insurance policy.



PHOTOS: Nicole Brad

Mr. Maniatakos showed the West Island News around his Roxboro home, which was severely damaged by flooding on June 16th. The water that had flooded the street infiltrated his entire

lower level, including the living room, garage, bathroom, and bedroom. The flooding greatly impacted Mr. Maniatakos's home on First Avenue North, which he shares with his wife. They have been living there for eight years.

### Interview

"There were two and a half feet of water at the garage door, and the water came in and overturned our freezer filled with food. What we've had to throw out is unbelievable; chesterfields, sofas, the solid hardwood floors; my wife was crying about the pictures she lost. Photos from when she was two until eighty years old have been destroyed."



He says it took the fire department an hour and a half to pump out all the water that had accumulated. He recalls the water as contaminated and believes it was rising out from the sewers.

"No city councillors, no politicians came to see what is happening. It has been 12 days, and believe me; I am going through hell," he stated.

The Mayor of the Pierrefonds-Roxboro Borough, Jim Beis, recalls the events of the 16th as an unprecedented meteorological surge.

"For the amount of rain we got on the 16th, we would need pipes almost ten feet in diameter. When you have that type of excessive rain, the capacity of the storm sewage system isn't large enough for the water to flow freely as it would under normal circumstances," Mayor Beis stated.

At 85 years of age, Mr. Maniatakos fears for his health and has uncovered mold that has developed in certain rooms. The financial burden is also troublesome for him and his wife.

"Today, I received my insurance company costs. Only \$20,000 has been covered by the insurance. What's on the paper are only the material and labor costs. I estimate about \$70,000 altogether with everything that has been lost."

Recap by Category		
	Total	%
O&P Items	878.00	1.77%
CABINETRY	551.98	1.11%
CLEANING	5,071.71	10.24%
GENERAL DEMOLITION	2,376.38	4.80%
DOORS	4,399.22	8.98%
DRYWALL	609.96	1.23%
ELECTRICAL	636.41	1.28%
FLOOR COVERING - CERAMIC TILE	5,520.87	11.14%
FLOOR COVERING - WOOD	731.52	1.48%
PERMITS AND FEES	2,344.98	4.73%
FINISH CARPENTRY / TRIMWORK	44.49	0.09%
FINISH HARDWARE	3,070.99	6.20%
FRAMING & ROUGH CARPENTRY	204.47	0.41%
MIRRORS & SHOWER DOORS	2,841.75	5.74%
PLUMBING	1,381.30	2.79%
PANELING & WOOD WALL FINISHES	5,446.92	10.99%
PAINTING	892.31	1.80%
STAIRS	304.47	0.61%
WATER EXTRACTION & REMEDIATION	37,307.73	75.30%
O&P Items Subtotal	3,730.91	7.53%
Overhead	2,051.88	4.14%
Profit	2,154.54	4.35%
GST	4,298.25	8.68%
QST		
Total	49,543.31	100.00%

Another resident, Monika Muna, who lives on Third Avenue North, claims her basement was under 3 feet of water. "Everything that was there was damaged and is unusable. This includes a T.V., a freezer, a home theatre system, furniture, most of my collection and a study room, some cameras, and more," wrote Mrs. Muna.



PHOTO: Facebook, Monika Muna

Mayor Beis claims that any city is not built for such a surge of rainwater: "Unfortunately, it is a natural occurrence where the infrastructure in any city wouldn't be sufficient enough to deal with that quantity of rainfall in such a short period. At the end of First Avenue, a pumphouse was functioning. Two larger backup pumps were started, understanding that the infrastructure was completely inundated with water."

For the residents impacted by the flooding, the Mayor mentioned an online resource: "The residents have 15 days from the event to file a claim if they feel as though the City is partly or wholly to blame for their issues. That information is found through the link where they may go and file the claim. Upon analysis, of course, it will allow them to claim money or not; it is within their full rights to file a claim with the City," said Pierrefonds-Roxboro's Mayor Beis.

The Canadian Red Cross can be dispatched in times of crisis and is a resource available to those in need who lack housing or essential needs.

"Whenever there's a crisis, the Red Cross will make themselves available to provide the necessities; this could be resources, housing, or clothing," stated Mayor Beis.

This Red Cross Canada webpage walks flood victims through what actions can be taken before, during, and after a flood.



# Lakeshore nurse offers insight into Québec ER's bleak conditions

Hannah Johnston, Aug 15, 2022



This summer has been devastating for hospitals province-wide; at the beginning of the summer, The Lakeshore General announced its Emergency Room (ER) had reached maximum capacity and that it was to be avoided at all costs.

On June 10th, the President of *Le Syndicat des professionnelles en soins de santé de l'Ouest-de-l'Île-de-Montréal* (SPSSODIM), Johanne Riendeau, stated in a press release: "We have an occupancy rate that exceeds 150%, and we are missing at least half of the nurses on several shifts, thus missing 4.5 or 6 nurses per shift."

The release from the SPSSODIM called on the Government to provide "incentives to get through the summer and obtain safe ratios to provide quality care to the population of the West Island."

Eighteen-year veteran Nathan Friedland is an emergency room nurse at the Lakeshore General Hospital. He opened up to the West Island News in an effort to shed light on the grim situation.

Many doctors and nurses have refused to speak out for fear of losing their jobs. Friedland witnessed the strain placed on Québec ERs firsthand.

"In Québec's ERs, we violate the Canadian Triage and Acuity Scale every minute of every day, even on the most basic level," Friedland stated.

Often, Friedland explained that ERs are so drastically understaffed that the triage of patients upon arrival will not occur within 10 minutes, which is the time constraint in which the Canadian Triage and Acuity Scale states that this assessment should take place. Priority 1 (P1) and Priority 2 (P2) patients are suffering from a health crisis requiring immediate or rapid action that poses an imminent threat to their lives. Friedland believes that those cases are handled as they should be; however, the problems arise beginning with Priority 3 (P3) patients.

"A P3 means you have a serious condition, but it is not life-threatening, and you are supposed to be seen within 30 minutes," Friedland explained. "This is where ERs are dropping the ball big time. I've seen P3s wait 6-8-12 hours to get seen. This has become routine. Often, these patients won't even get re-evaluated by a nurse after they have been triaged again due to a lack of staff. The result? They wait on their stretchers or in the waiting room and decompensate. Some die."

In these cases, Nathan believes that legal action should be taken against the Government and become a class-action lawsuit.

Friedland strongly believes in mandating nurse-to-patient ratios to prevent these violations;

"The worst thing a nurse experiences on the job is not being able to do work properly because she/he has too many patients. (Legalized ratios) would keep nurses in the profession and bring more in."

The staff shortage is undoubtedly a primary factor in the system's collapse. Friedland has alerted his concerns to upper management but feels they have fallen upon deaf ears; "Apathy in healthcare is like cancer, and it's very dangerous for patients."



"There is also a poor orientation program for new nurses and a non-existent retention program for these nurses in ERs," Nathan continues, "No repercussions for that either. Make no mistake about it; many ERs are very poorly managed."

Nathan believes another solution to protect nurses and keep the healthcare system afloat is holding management teams accountable when their leadership leads employees astray.

# **Former paramedic has lived the life-threatening consequences of a suffering healthcare system.**

Hannah Johnston, Nov 29, 2022

"Had we arrived at the hospital anywhere from 20-35 minutes later, we would have lost my daughter." A former paramedic from Pierrefonds, Daniel Garvin speaks out following his family's traumatic health crisis.

## Interview

Daniel Garvin put his 33 years of paramedic experience to use in a life-saving way. On November 8th, his daughter experienced a nearly fatal ruptured ectopic pregnancy. He had to take matters into his own hands when learning that the emergency response time was not nearly fast enough to get her the life-saving care she needed.

Reflecting upon the haunting experience, the Pierrefonds resident discusses the failures of our healthcare system while honoring the valiant and talented professionals within the field. He approaches the ongoing challenges of healthcare with insight and perspective as a former frontline healthcare worker and presents solutions. Garvin is currently a volunteer, instructor and honor guard for Urgences-Santé.

# Demolition of Place Brunswick is set for the end of June to begin apartment development.

Hannah Johnston, May 11, 2023

Place Brunswick's days are numbered. The strip mall at the Brunswick-Davignon intersection off Sources will be undergoing demolition at the end of June. The D.D.O plaza is currently home to restaurants La Serenata, Kitchen 73, Caribbean Curry House, formerly Aikawa, and other businesses such as La Diperie, Arthur Murray School of Dance, Accès Électronique, Dépanneur 789, Popstock Liquidation, and Singh Farm Inc.



PHOTO: Devmont

The plaza will become WestWalk Lifestyle Apartments, a mixed-use development by Devmont. The 3-phase project will include 393 residential apartments across three buildings. Building A

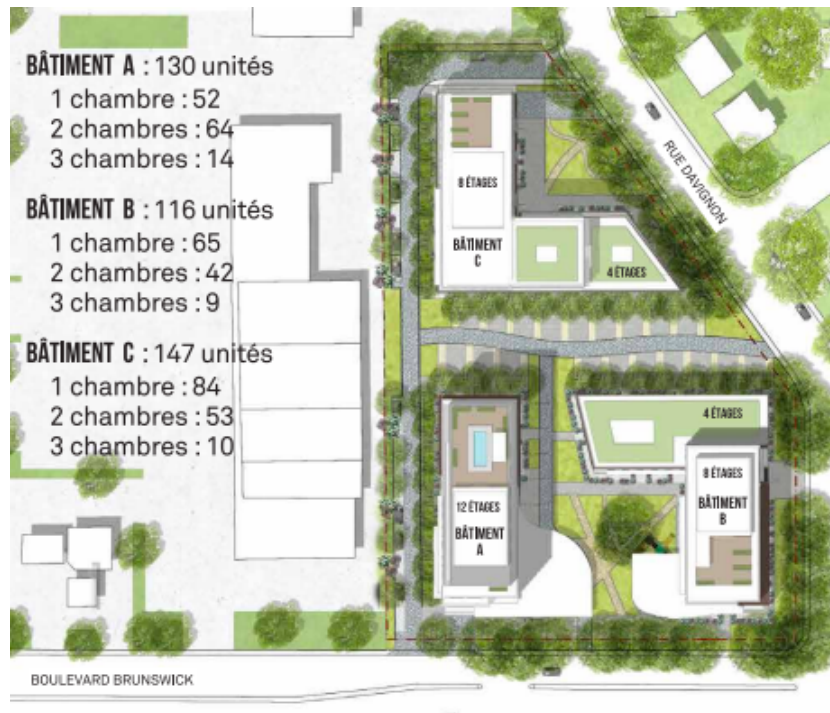
will host 12 storeys and 130 units, while the storey count of the other two is unconfirmed but will contain 116 and 147 units, respectively.



PHOTO: Devmont

Each of the three buildings will have two-storey lobbies, and the ground level of building A will be the site of a 2,200 sq. ft. gym, while the top of the 12th floor will be an outdoor terrace complete with a pool. There will be communal outdoor areas and playgrounds, and the concept surrounds a "walkable" neighborhood. This entails having restaurants and stores close by, and pedestrian-friendly streets. The development will be an eight-minute walk from the future Des Sources REM station.





PHOTOS: Devmont

Last October, the City of Dollard-des-Ormeaux declared that no referendum would be called, giving the project a go-ahead. According to the City, it would have taken 649 registrants for a referendum; however, only 377 had signed on.

Sam Scalia, Co-Founder and President of developer Devmont, will meet with nearby residents closer to the date of demolition and will provide them with the project's timeline. Those who attended last May's informational seminar will be invited back, though an exact date for that session has yet to be confirmed. He told the West Island News that he hopes to work closely with residents of the area to mitigate any inconveniences caused by the project.

The businesses currently within the Brunswick plaza will, for the most part, be relocating to locations nearby.

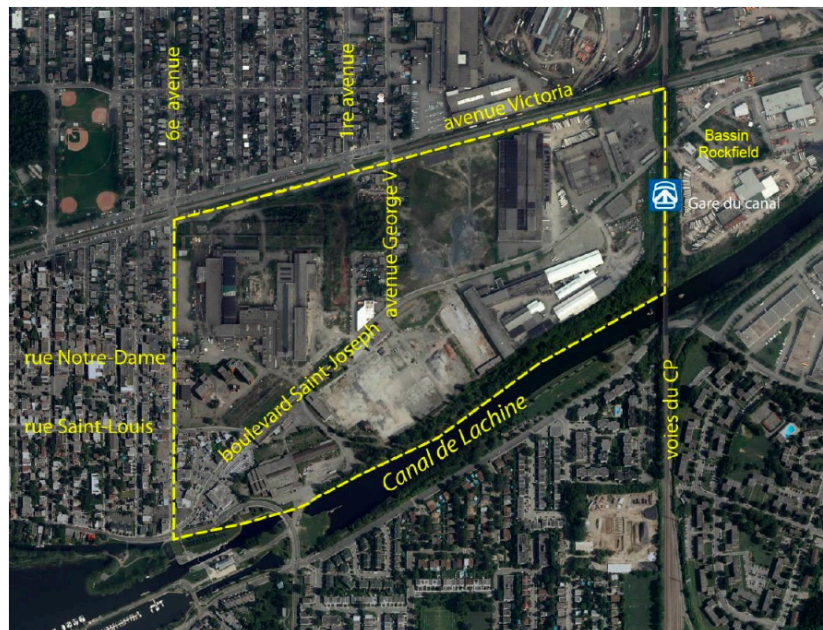
- By sometime in July, La Serenata will re-open on Saint-Charles, next to the RBC in Place Grilli.
- Aikawa Sushi has already moved across the street to Galeries Des Sources, next to Jack Astor's.
- Caribbean Curry House will move into the Plaza Shakespeare at the intersection of Saint-Jean and Roger Pilon. La Duperie will also be in the vicinity of the Roger Pilon and Saint-Jean intersection, both moving by the end of the month.
- The Arthur Murray School of Dance will be situated at the intersection of Hyman and Des Sources.
- Some businesses are still unsure about their next move; Accès Électronique has tentative plans to move into the Galeries des Sources.

SOURCE: Devmont

# Major district development in Lachine starting point for Pink Line.

Hannah Johnston, Jun 13, 2023

The City of Montréal has unveiled its plan for the programme particulier d'urbanisme (PPU) of the Lachine-East Ecodistrict. The project will be developed over 70 hectares to create a brand-new mixed-use living space. There is the potential for 7,800 housing units, including social, affordable, and family housing. A civic hub will include a park, school, and a sports and community center, and there will be approximately 10 hectares of parks and public spaces.





PHOTOS: Ville de Montréal, Réalisons Montréal.

It is within Montréal Mayor Valérie Plante's plans to have the future pink metro line serve this neighbourhood. The Pink Line would span from Montréal North to Lachine, including stops in Notre-Dame-de-Grâce, Saint-Léonard, Westmount, Ville-Marie, the Plateau-Mont-Royal, and Rosemont–La-Petite-Patrie, amongst others. Valérie Plante took to Instagram to say that "the new district in Lachine sets the stage for developing the first section of the line."

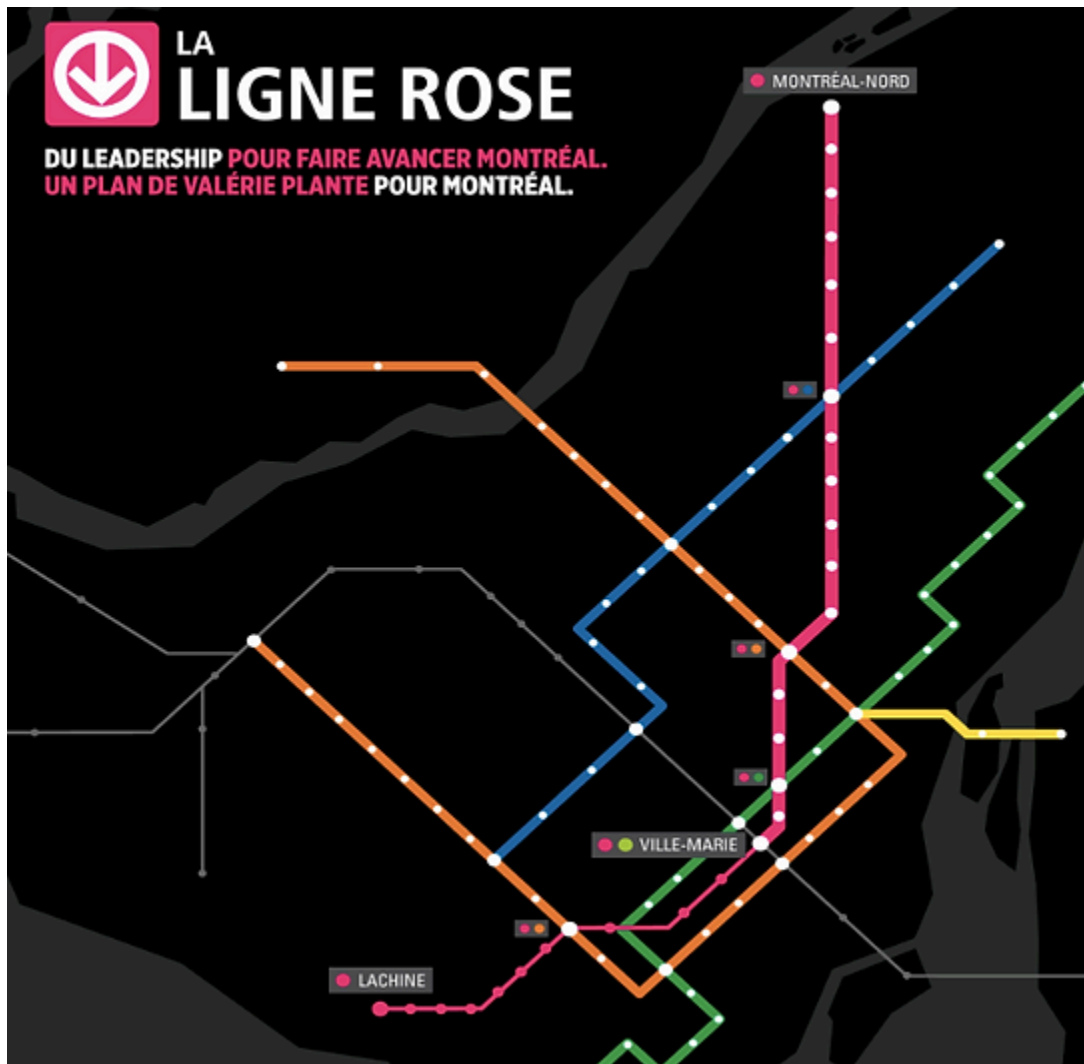


PHOTO: Projet Montréal

The description of the Ecodistrict states that the space will offer an "attractive, green and resilient environment, and turn the area into a complete and inclusive neighborhood." Developing an "efficient, low-carbon network of active and collective mobility and ensuring a significant presence of places of employment" are highlighted in the plans. The timeline gives the project until around 2050 to be completed.

The finalized PPU is expected to be adopted this month, and it was presented on June 7 before an Executive Committee meeting. The draft for the preliminary project was adopted in September of 2021.

Maja Vodanovic, the Mayor of Lachine, is optimistic about the project: "The district will enable us to create our sports center, a new public school, as well as foster employment and commercial zones in synergy with Notre Dame Street. The pink line, which is to accompany this new density, will certainly be a great gain for our entire community."

# **West Island Woodturners have been sharing and perfecting their craft for thirty-five years.**

Hannah Johnston, Sep 28, 2023

Thirty-five years ago, a group of keen West Island woodturners got together in search of a space to practice their craft. The West Island Woodturners formed, and weekly meetings between like-minded artisans have been held ever since.



PHOTO: West Island Woodturners

Their 45 members gather at a room in Pointe-Claire's Town Hall building every Tuesday and can range from beginners to seasoned professionals. The group's eldest member is in his mid-90s and has been turning since the 50s. The finished products can include decorative bowls and plates, the legs of tables or chairs, and staircase spindles. President Nigel Sears says there are no bounds to what can be made when a turner's creativity is at work:

"Mother Nature provides us with amazing raw materials. As Michelangelo said, there is a statue in the block of marble; I've just got to find it. When I look at a piece of wood, members and I will visualize how we want to transform the wood."



PHOTO: Facebook, West Island Woodturners.

Nigel makes a point of recycling wood and repurposing fallen trees, of which there were many in the spring due to wind and ice storms. He will give the property owners his first project from that tree as a commemorative gift. "Losing a tree can be upsetting; getting a part of that tree back in another form gives you a fond memory to look at."

Giving back to the City of Pointe-Claire and its community organizations is a priority for the club. Wooden ornaments were made and sold with proceeds benefitting the library, and an upcoming silent auction being held by the West Island Women's Centre will feature the group's donated pieces.



PHOTO: Facebook, West Island Woodturners.

There are no prerequisites to join; turners of all levels are welcome. You will need a lathe and tools; it also helps to have a set-up at home to work on your pieces. The turners make a point of helping one another out. If one has a larger studio or more equipment, they will lend a hand, and more experienced turners will mentor newer members.

"The basis of the club is to pass on the skill and knowledge involved to new turners and to encourage them to push themselves and try more adventurous pieces," President Nigel Sears concluded.

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## **Editorial:**

### **Our senior care system has dehumanized the most vulnerable: what needs to change?**

Hannah Johnston, 10 December 2021



Peter Wheeland with a photo of his beloved parents: Connie and Ken Wheeland. PHOTO BY PIERRE OBENDRAUF /Montreal Gazette

The headlines of spring 2020 were enough to haunt Montréal residents for years. On the 26th of March 2020, a resident of the Herron CHSLD or *centre d'hébergement et de soins de longue durée* in Dorval tested positive for COVID-19. Reports emerged that other inhabitants were beginning to experience flu-like symptoms and stated a lack of personal protection equipment for the employees and seniors alike. During the evening of March 29th, only three CHSLD personnel remained to care for 133 residents, many of whom were left unchanged and dehydrated for hours. On the 16th of April, 38 people had died since March 26th ([Rapport d'enquête sur les événements survenus dans le cadre de la pandémie de la COVID-19 au CHSLD Herron](#)). It is now reported that 47 patients died at the hands of the Herron long term care

facility

(<https://montreal.ctvnews.ca/owner-of-quebec-care-home-where-47-died-during-pandemic-testifies-at-coroner-inquest-1.5596600> ).

Peter Wheeland's parents Ken and Connie Wheeland had lived at the residence for a year and a half prior to the lockdown. He knew the situation had deteriorated so rapidly at Herron after he received a call from his mother on the evening of March 29th. "She had no breakfast that morning, her lunch was left in the hall and was brought over by her neighbor, her catheter had become so full that it exploded and she had been sitting in a dirty diaper all day." One of the three staff members responsible for the whole building arrived, and in a desperate cry for help told her : "Mrs. Wheeland, I can only do one of the things you need me to do, what is that one thing?" She asked to be changed.

The most fundamental human rights are neglected when the government does not respect its workers. "I think that it takes a very special person to be a P.A.B (*préposé aux bénéficiaires*) in those residences, I think it's the most difficult job in the world, and yet it is the most undervalued job," Wheeland said. A large part of the disintegration of working conditions for healthcare workers during the pandemic was the lack of guidance for overwhelmed and fearful medical professionals. As stated in a CBC article about the Herron CHSLD crisis; "Several workers testified that managers from the local health authority and the residence weren't on the same page as they tried to rectify staffing shortages, access to patient records and a lack of equipment, including personal protective gear and basic medical equipment to measure oxygen levels" (<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/quebec-herron-inquest-what-we-learned-1.6185524>).



In a report from the *Protecteur du Citoyen*, as issued by the Québec Ombudsman, recommendations to this crisis in collective ordinance or point 167 read: “Battered by the crisis, these environments displayed a flagrant lack of robustness that must be corrected by, among other things, adding human, material and financial resources. Care and service quality and their monitoring must also be enhanced by means of effective control mechanisms. Solid foundations must be ensured” (<https://publications.msss.gouv.qc.ca/msss/fichiers/2020/20-834-04W.pdf>).

There is no denying the staff is the cornerstone of these CHSLDs, and Wheeland believes in the government’s promised pay increases, which secures a \$49,000 yearly salary and hourly wage of \$26(<https://montreal.ctvnews.ca/under-new-agreement-pabs-will-come-close-to-promised-26-per-hour-1.5455814>). It seems almost impossible to repay the damages caused by the trauma that these workers have endured, and the sacrifices that were made, even within a system that failed to support and provide basic care to them.

Both of Peter’s parents had been diagnosed with COVID-19 and his father, Ken Wheeland, passed away on April fourth 2020 due to COVID-19 complications. On March 14th, non-essential visits to CHSLDs were prohibited, understandably in an attempt to reduce the propagation of the virus, but without adequate technologies and communication to family members, residents felt isolated and unprotected. Ken, who suffered from dementia, couldn’t understand why his family was no longer coming for visits. “One of the biggest mistakes they made was locking out the *proches aidants*, the caregivers and the families.” This was not only recognized by Peter; in point 145 from the *Protecteur du Citoyen* they admitted that “in hindsight, the consequences of this measure showed that the invaluable contribution of these informal caregivers had been underestimated. In other words, at the height of the crisis, CHSLDs were deprived of the competent assistance of families who knew their respective relatives and



the living environment”

(<https://publications.msss.gouv.qc.ca/msss/fichiers/2020/20-834-04W.pdf>). The loved ones of the elderly could have aided the overworked staff members, who often are legally bound into not speaking of residents or their conditions, as per the omerta laws of the system. If a healthcare worker publicly denounces a situation or crisis, often their job stability and reputation could be at risk. According to Andrée Poirier, President of the ATPS (*alliance du personnel professionnel et technique de la santé et des services sociaux*) ; “Minister McCann needs to put in place efficient protective measures to ensure that those who denounce unacceptable situations do not reap the repercussions or have their career jeopardized”

(<https://aptsq.com/actualites/covid-19-omerta-dans-le-reseau-la-ministre-mccann-doit-passer-de-l-a-parole-aux-acte/>).

The admittance into a senior care residence, a hospital or providing care for a senior at home can be very conflicting, with many children or guardians unsure of what to do for their aging loved one. Ken Wheeland and his wife Connie sold their family home in order to downsize, and they moved into an R.P.A (*résidence privé pour les aînés*). They had difficulty with moving rapidly, as does the majority of the aging population, and Peter was shocked when they received word that his parents were no longer permitted to live in this residence. When there was a fire drill, they took above the maximum time to leave the building and therefore were not considered as independent, free-moving residents. “This is a Québec law that absolutely has to change,” says Peter. “Seniors are often like children, they need a stable environment, a routine and in kicking them out they are deliberately breaking their routine.” They were then admitted into Herron. Ken alternated back and forth between the hospital and the residence, having been diagnosed multiple times with various urinary tract infections, but in reality Ken was showing early signs of

dementia. "The hospitals admit seniors and they want to get them out, to free the beds up as quickly as possible, so there's this game of back and forth." Oftentimes seniors are the culprits: they are not fully treated when they leave and their return into hospital is almost inevitable. Ken's care at Herron was so poor, that the doctors in hospital were wondering why his bed sore had evolved from a spot, to one that had traveled down to the bone. "There needs to be a full time employee who responds to these familial worries and complaints and who addresses them directly to the staff. Oftentimes we were afraid to speak up because we did not want our complaints to affect the treatment of my parents." Guardians of the elderly should have wide access to a variety of services, a *511* for seniors, Peter suggested. They should know their legal and medical rights and those of their parents in order to assess all the options, and be able to strongly advocate for the changes they wish to see within the system.

In the midst of this humanitarian crisis, there is hope for the mobilization of change, and there are support groups, resources and hotlines that can be reached for senior citizens and advocates for the elderly alike. *Senior Action Québec* provides information seminars, activities and resources for the geriatric population, the *Contactivity Center* in Westmount provides day services, activities and spreads awareness surrounding elderly abuse. Some support groups include *Friends for Mental Health*, which educates and humanizes mental illnesses within seniors such as Alzheimer's and dementia. We must all advocate for our loved ones, and in a blatant look ahead, we must advocate for our future selves, to implement changes before our coworkers, friends or family are at the hands of our senior care system. When Peter spoke to his mother on that fateful March 29th, 2020 evening she told him; "Peter don't worry about me, there are old people here." She empathized with those who were voiceless, who had no family members knocking on their door or calling them during a global pandemic, and she felt an unparalleled fellowship to them. She passed away on December 27th 2020, and will be missed dearly by her family this Christmas.



## **An interview with Marina Boulos-Winton**

Hannah Johnston speaks to the Executive Director of Chez Doris about women's related issues in Montréal.

by Hannah Johnston   Oct 25, 2021



Marina Boulos-Winton (Photograph by Tanis Saucier).

I had the pleasure of being joined by Mrs. Marina Boulos-Winton, who is currently the Executive Director of Chez Doris, previous Executive Director of Le Bon Dieu dans La Rue and the former CEO of the Foundation of Greater Montréal. Chez Doris was named after a homeless woman named Doris who was seeking a non-exclusive and safe space for respite after moving from Halifax to Montréal. She was found dead after being brutally murdered and the case has never been resolved. Her legacy and name live on through the variety of programs and services offered to all women in need. Doris is the only day shelter for women in Montréal offering 24/7 service.

**Q: Chez Doris offers a wide variety of services and programs that foster a sense of community and are viable and sustainable routes to ending the cycles of abuse and homelessness. What is the most powerful tool that exists to empower women at Chez Doris and universally?**

A: Currently the most effective tool is helping women find housing that is within their means or through a form of income; whether it be welfare or a job. We have seen many victims of spousal abuse. What is impactful for them is custody of their children through Youth Protection if their



children are removed. Our vision for the future is to increase these women's potential. We are starting a pilot program that will aid in helping pay for their work or school needs such as uniforms, for their transportation and equipment, namely laptops or books, which we recently found a sponsor for.

**Q: Chez Doris' commitment to the Indigenous communities in Montréal is apparent through your Inuit Assistance Program and the Urban Programming for Indigenous Peoples which is funded by Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada. How have these programs impacted Indigenous women in terms of representation and in finding a sense of community?**

A: Indigenous women are the most affected by homelessness in comparison to any other demography of people. The housing program encourages Indigenous women to find housing when they represent 12 percent of the general homeless population though they represent one percent of the Québec population. At Chez Doris right now 27 percent of the homeless population are Indigenous women, as they are constantly affected by racism. We accompany them to sign lease agreements which is very helpful to them, we rejoin Indigenous women with their children and we have enabled over 60 Indigenous women to get apartments since 2015, however they still face challenges related to their trauma and discrimination. In terms of cultural activities, the objective is to offer these women a safe space where they can reconnect to their culture, as they don't have many opportunities to do so otherwise.

**Q: What is a stigma surrounding homelessness that you wish wasn't a narrative or misconception?**

A: Well I think some donors have a misconception of being able to put homeless people immediately into the workforce, I think that's a very romantic view of what we hope to do with philanthropic dollars. It's possible, but at different rates for different people. In terms of what sometimes prevents women from getting better is the inability to recognize that they are having mental health problems. For some they must resolve other issues, overcome their history of

violence and poverty for example. They must be able to build themselves up again before continuing their lives.

**Q: During your March 2021 CJAD interview you mentioned you would see 90-120 women a day however had to limit the capacity to 40 women in the shelter due to COVID-19. Where does your capacity stand now, in this period of COVID-19 limbo?**

A: Now, within let's say a four hour period, we have an average of only 71 women, we can only allow 35-40 at a time. One of the reasons why we have the hotel is so women can stay safe in an individual room. Another problem encountered with social distancing, is that as of 10 a.m. on the weekends we must turn away women, and there are no other services available to them. Our new campaign and housing will hopefully alleviate the new stresses and demands on Chez Doris brought on by the pandemic.

**Q: Yes, and you do have a new campaign called "Chez Doris: Day and Night" which includes your new shelter that would sleep 22 women and permanent affordable housing residences. This is set to open by winter, spring 2022. How is the advancement of this project coming along?**

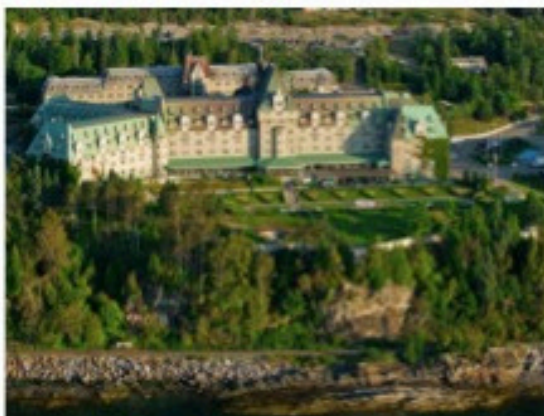
A: When the campaign was originally conceived, there was the objective of a shelter for 22 women and an affordable housing residence, but over the course of the pandemic the federal government put out request proposals for charities to purchase commercial buildings and convert them into housing for homeless people. We will be launching a shelter and two residences, a total of 46 apartments between those two residences.

**Q: Is there a way that young people can help Chez Doris, even if they don't have the means to donate, can they volunteer?**

A: Now that we have three shifts of work, students can volunteer their time. Even for simple tasks such as serving meals, we recommend that volunteers are 18 years or older, due to the psychiatric conditions of certain clientele. They can serve meals, can sort through clothing and take part in cooking and recreational activities. We have around 26 internships available per year from a variety of schools which includes JAC, especially in the Youth and Adult Correctional Intervention program.

*This interview has been edited for clarity and length*

## **Restaurant review: Fairmont Manoir Richelieu's *Le Saint Laurent* does not back down from its hilltop.**



The Fairmont Manoir Richelieu from above / Photothèque le Soleil

*Hannah Johnston / John Abbott College*

### **Le Saint Laurent**

**\*\*\* ½ stars out of \*\*\*\***

**SSSS**

**Address:** 181, Rue Richelieu, La Malbaie, G5A 1X7

**Phone:** 418 665 3703

**Website:** <https://www.fairmont.com/richelieu-charlevoix/>

**Open:** Open every day from 7:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. and from 5:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

**Wheelchair access:** No

**Reservations:** Reservations are recommended by telephone or through OpenTable.

**Cards:** All major cards

**Vegetarian-friendly:** Yes

**Parking:** Valet parking at the Fairmont Manoir Richelieu lobby.

**Price Range:** Appetizers \$20-\$28; main courses \$30-\$38; desserts \$8-\$15.



A dinner at the quintessentially Québécois *Le Saint-Laurent* is accompanied by the melodies of Céline Dion, Beau Dommage and Les Cowboys Fringants, with a panoramic view of the famed St-Lawrence River. The charming Smoked Meat Burger sits quite comfortably between a panisse and a 35-dollar braised lamb shank, with a classic *crème brûlée* buffering the exotic flavours of a pistachio cake with tomato and pepper gazpacho.

Famished and pleasantly exhausted from a day of hiking and swimming at the famed Manoir Richelieu, I opted for the main dishes. The menu was concise and mostly familiar, with the organic Charlevoix Black and Monkfish Pudding leading the roster. I opted for the beef shoulder filet with a red wine chorizo and beet glaze, a celeriac purée and glazed carrots. The meat was cooked to perfection as *moyen-saignant*, with the star being the chorizo, a moderately spicy Spanish sausage. The red wine glacée melted into the filet and married well with the chorizo, however the inclusion of the beets seemed to take away from the strong essence of this precious sausage, which could have been more fully embraced.



*Beef Shoulder Filet* with red wine chorizo and beet sauce, celeriac puree and glazed carrots.  
Hannah Johnston / John Abbott College

My aunt's squid risotto was calling to me from the opposite end of the table. Its jet black color and sumptuous looking calamari *à la julienne*, spoke for itself, with flavourings of lemon zest and cilantro oil. The tender calamari melted into the *al-dente* risotto, which absorbed each

flavour presented to it. The portions did not have Gargantua in mind, they were lighter and perhaps a sign to take a look at a dessert menu or two.



*Le Feu* with pistachio cake and chantilly, strawberry Gorria Pepper gazpacho and tarragon pesto. Hannah Johnston / John Abbott College

I sheepishly asked to look at the desserts after such a luxurious feast, and my gluttony did not lead me astray. *Le Feu*, an innocent pistachio cake with chantilly, packs a punch with a strawberry and Gorria Pepper gazpacho with tarragon pesto on the side. It married gloriously, with the strawberry being a mediator between the angelic airy chantilly and devilish tarragon and Gorria Pepper. The *Gratias Carrot* did not shy away from its vegetable roots either, with the traditional carrot cake plated with actual pieces of cooked carrots. This was a pairing that was hotly contested by the guests at my table and was the subject of many photographs. Nevertheless I was in a trance, and felt as though I could float home on *Le Saint Laurent*.



The *Gratias Carrot* with carrot custard, cinnamon sponge cake, nutmeg crumble, and Deo Gratias cheese ice cream. Hannah Johnston / John Abbott College