

NEWSLETTER
LÉGER FOUNDATION
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IN QUÉBEC

SOCIAL INCLUSION
FOR EVERYONE

LÉGER
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Fostering human dignity
here and abroad



AN URBAN OASIS FOR SINGLE MOTHERS

OASIS / CENTRE-SUD DE MONTRÉAL

For single mothers, poverty as well as problems accessing the job market often result in psychological distress and an inability to move forward. For society, this situation has major social costs. For children, it compromises their quality of life and development. This is why [Mères avec pouvoir \(MAP\)](#), with the help of the LÉGER FOUNDATION, has added the **OASIS project** to its services.

MAP originally started as 30 transitional housing units that help single mothers with young children in the Centre-Sud get on the road to independence. To participate in MAP activities, these moms must commit to a realistic life goal, which may include starting or going back to school, developing their employability, looking for a job, or working on keeping one.

“We look out for the welfare of both mothers and their children. We want things to change after these moms come through our program. And in general, things do change. We hear back from our clients, who tell us that things continue to change for them after they leave MAP. They just keep making progress. Although we call them transitional apartments, I see them more as a launching pad that gives these moms new momentum and a new start. MAP has seen a lot of successes,” said social worker Diane St-Cyr. The agency also estimates that they have an 85% success rate with mothers who stay with MAP for three years.

To improve its approach, MAP now wants to provide education about healthy lifestyles to both mothers and their children by launching a series of food security activities. In collaboration with Carrefour alimentaire Centre-Sud, and thanks to financial support from the LÉGER FOUNDATION, MAP can give clients access to a personalized purchasing group, parent-child cooking activities, individual cooking advice and tips, and plenty of psychomotor or reading and writing readiness activities for children. For the [LÉGER FOUNDATION](#), the OASIS project is a unique addition to MAP's services that strengthens its social action plan. Overall, it provides tools to help these families enjoy a better future. ■

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FAMILIES THAT LEARN TOGETHER, GROW TOGETHER

JE SOUTIENS MON ENFANT À L'ÉCOLE / SOUTH SHORE

Le Fablier, une histoire de famille helps prevent illiteracy among parents and their children aged 0 to 12. For twenty years, it has created multiple projects to promote childhood literacy and prevent school dropouts. From its experience, the agency believes that current learning tools aren't always suited to parents who have problems with reading and writing. This is why Le Fablier wants to implement **Je soutiens mon enfant à l'école**, a project that will launch this fall to encourage parents in Longueuil to help their preschool-aged children with their studies.

The latest data shows that 53% of Quebecers aged 16 to 65 experience reading problems. This keeps them from effectively helping their children with their homework. "People with reading problems have often had bad experiences in childhood. The goal is to break down this negative experience by bringing parents into their child's school environment," explained Sonia Desbiens, Coordinator of Le Fablier. "We can't equip parents with skills as educators until we change our negative perceptions of them. Throughout the workshop, we want parents to develop their independence and self-confidence. For children, our goal is for them to develop good self-esteem and receive a constructive message about school from their parents. Reinforcing the family connection contributes a great deal to school success."

After twenty years of providing adult literacy education, Le Fablier has many successes to its name. "A single mother went back to get her high school diploma after attending our workshops with her three children. Participating in your child's education in a fun environment makes you want to go further. We also encourage parents to get involved in the agency's democratic life. This experience not only gets them involved but also includes them socially too."

Before choosing the right financial partner, the agency carefully analyzed the LÉGER FOUNDATION's action strategy to see whether its mission and values aligned with its own. "We wanted to be sure that our partner's perception of poverty was the same as our own. We liked the LÉGER FOUNDATION's approach and the way it supports us. The [LÉGER FOUNDATION](#) gives us credibility, but we keep our own identity and work on what's essential: launching this new project next fall in schools on the South Shore," concluded Sonia Desbiens. ■



STARTING A DIALOGUE WITH TEENS ABOUT VIOLENCE

PAPILLON LOL / HAUTE-GASPÉSIE

The Haute-Gaspésie region is often ranked first in terms of poverty and its impact. The stress of poverty and a lack of education can cause family tension and violence, and women are often the ones who pay the price. The **Centre Louise-Amélie** is a service centre and shelter for women who are victims of domestic abuse. To prevent violence, the centre created the **Papillon LOL** pilot project for girls aged 11 to 17 in the Haute-Gaspésie region.

They chose the word “LOL,” as this popular Internet slang term means “laugh(ing) out loud” or “lots of laughs.” To broach hard topics like violence, abuse and sexism, Papillon LOL wants to create a series of workshops tailored to the reality of adolescent girls. During the discussion workshops, a group of six to ten young girls will share a light-hearted meal to make them feel comfortable. The dinners will be run by two staff members from the shelter who are trained in social work and nursing. The discussion topics may vary depending on the group’s interest, what’s in the news, or suggestions from the teens.

The ten workshops will be held outside the school network, as the agency thinks that this will put the girls more at ease to express themselves. They’ll have free rein to talk about any topic: equality between men and women, self-respect, hypersexualization, bullying, jealousy, and more. With these workshops, the centre wants these girls to hone their skills at detecting the warning signs of violence. They also want to deconstruct sexist stereotypes while forging a network of relationships and support between girls who often live far from one another.

Invitations are handed out at schools, clinics, community centres and youth centres in the wider region. A first group will launch shortly in Sainte-Anne-des-Monts, but the agency hopes that, with demand, they can increase the groups and adjust the content based on age.

“We wanted to work with the [LÉGER FOUNDATION](#) because they believe in equality between men and women,” explained Monic Caron, Director of the Centre Louise-Amélie. “When my co-workers proposed the project name, they said that LOL was also a perfect acronym for the LÉGER FOUNDATION!” she added with a laugh. ■

HEALTHY EATING AS A TEAM

COLLECTIVE KITCHEN PROJECT / SAINT-EUSTACHE

The [Centre d'entraide Racine-Lavoie](#) is an independent agency that has served the community since 1972. Its services meet the needs of residents of the greater region of the MRC de Deux-Montagnes. For about fifteen years, the [LÉGER FOUNDATION](#) has supported many of the agency's food security and poverty prevention activities. In its community, the Centre d'entraide Racine-Lavoie has become a leader in creating collective kitchens.

Again this year, the agency started ten collective kitchen groups in the region. Anyone aged 18 to 85 who wants to cook can join a group to meet people and adopt a healthy diet. Participants have to pay two dollars for each meal. They meet twice a month and prepare four or five recipes. Each group is independent and responsible for its purchases and menu. To get additional food items, they can join The [Good Food Box](#) purchasing group program, which provides quality fruits and vegetables at a low cost.

The agency also runs a "lunch box" activity, or a special collective kitchen workshop to help parents prepare school lunches. The results have been positive: 9 groups active over 42 weeks have prepared 24,000 lunches that have fed about one hundred children.

The Centre d'entraide Racine-Lavoie primarily runs a food counter. As explained by Dominique Bastenier, the agency's Executive Director, "Most people who come to the food counter are going through a crisis. We see all kinds of individuals, families and single mothers. Even if your job pays above the minimum wage, when you have children, you can still find yourself in a difficult situation. When people come here, we can offer other food security services that work over the longer term. We want to help people to create healthy habits and eat healthy diets while improving their self-esteem and social integration. We try to address the situation from all sides."

Without the important contribution of the LÉGER FOUNDATION, she believes that they would not be able to provide adequate food security resources to people in the MRC de Deux-Montagnes. ■



BONDING WITH SENIORS OVER A BIKE RIDE AND A MEAL

MEALS-ON-WHEELS / MONTRÉAL

Although Québec has approximately 300 meals-on-wheels programs, including about 100 in Montréal, **Santropol Roulant** is the only intergenerational one. University students represent the majority of people who deliver hot meals by bicycle or on foot to the elderly or people with losses of independence who want to stay at home for as long as possible. Today, 300 clients per year benefit from this hot-meal delivery service.

The average client age is 77, but the youngest client is 22 and the oldest is 103. Every year, the program delivers 21,000 meals, 5 days a week. Santropol Roulant makes deliveries in the evening, at the end of the day, and on Saturdays. Clients pay for half of the meal costs, and all clients are referred to the agency by their CLSC. Since poverty in seniors is greater among women compared to men, women represent 61% of Santropol Roulant clients.

Kateri Décaré, Meals-on-Wheels Director, described how original this project is: “Every day, young and old people aren’t likely to run into each other. Santropol Roulant’s meal deliveries create a space for them to meet and talk. The service helps reduce the prejudices that seniors have of young people and the ones that young people have of seniors. The program really creates beautiful relationships.”

A multitude of projects supported by meals-on-wheels volunteers have sprung up over time. On the roof of the agency, they grow vegetables and tend to beehives to produce their own honey. To avoid waste and process their own food, they make preserves and produce their own compost. Every year, they organize meet-ups between meals-on-wheels volunteers and clients and also run a community bike workshop, where volunteers and members can learn to repair bikes at an affordable cost.

“The [LÉGER FOUNDATION](#) has been a long-standing partner. We really count on their funding. Non-profit organizations have to fundraise every year to make enough money to offer their services. Our partnership with the LÉGER FOUNDATION means we can keep running our activities and plan for the future, which also helps us predict the impact of our programs. The benefits of this partnership are invaluable!” ■



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