

MONTÉRÉGIE

WEST COMMUNITY NETWORK



April 2022

A word from Pauline



Beautiful April arrives with new hope as the crocuses nudge their way through the earth sometimes at the same time as snowflakes appearing for the last time.

At MWCN April is also a time to celebrate our many volunteers and so we will be holding luncheons in 3 of our locations, Chateaugay, Pincourt and Huntingdon.

This year we had over 100 volunteers helping us to meet our mandate of supporting the English-speaking community throughout the Monteregie West. We have worked alongside many of you as we joined together to make our communities a better place and helping community members remain active.

Some of our very valuable volunteers serve on our Board of Directors. We have 11 board members of which 4 or 5 rotate every year to assure a continuance of leadership. Our elections take place at our Annual General Meeting on June 16th in which you are all invited to attend as we showcase the work of the MWCN. Attending our AGM gives you an opportunity to meet the whole team which now numbers 13 employees. If you or someone you may know would like to join our dynamic board and be a part of the decision making process of supporting an organization that is vital to improving the quality of life of community members working alongside our French-speaking community as well as our Native American neighbours, please send us your cv with a short explanation of why you would like to join the Board of Directors of the Monteregie West Community Network (MWCN). Thank you to all our volunteers who have contributed to the success of our organization.

Pauline Wiedow - Executive Director



MWCN has begun holding a monthly contest since February 2022.

We ask our members and partners to send in articles of their stories on a specific topic.

A three-person committee of two members and one from the MWCN team vote for a winner of the monthly prize.

In February, MWCN member Pearl Couillard, was the winner for her article on the subject: Good Things That Came From Covid.

We have received many beautiful entries for March's topic-Let's Talk About RECYCLING! The winner will be announced in May's newsletter. April is volunteer appreciation month! MWCN is excited to read your articles and stories on How Volunteering Has Affected Your Life; please share your story with us and you will have a chance to win that month's prize.

It is our pleasure to share with you the winning March submission:



How The Pandemic Inspired me.

As I slowly return to a more normal version of life I cannot help but ponder on a few upsides to the complete disaster we all have lived through. Personally, I chose not to be stuck in a sick mind but rather to self-medicate through meditation and by reaching out to keep in touch with the outside world to achieve my goal. Technology was the tool that offered me numerous ways to learn and communicate with others without having to leave my home. I chose to develop self-awareness by prioritizing my time toward activities that informed and educated me as well as providing entertainment.

Each day I reserved 30 minutes as time out to meditate. I faithfully listened to Joyce Meyer's program "Enjoy Life " as she preached on how to focus on the positive as well as the importance of hope. Her daily dose of humor was very inspiring. Another way to develop self-awareness is through art. Each week I looked forward to my art Lesson on Zoom. I am not a good artist, but I learned to practice patience and to take time to observe the beauty in the world. Without this technology the isolation would have been crippling but thanks to MWCN there were art lessons, conferences, informative programs on nutrition and many other activities that I really appreciated.

This down time allowed me to practice self-awareness which in turn gave me the power to feel free and to flourish within myself while oblivious to the restrictions of the outside world. Fortunately, this pandemic is slowly drawing to an end and for me the upside is that I learned to overcome my emotions of sadness and loneliness. Inner Freedom was the JOIE De ViVRE that helped me cope with the doom and gloom that was so prevalent at the time of this pandemic.

*Pearl Couillard
Châteauguay*

The Value of Partnerships

Lorie Marcotte

Community organizations play a very important role in the province of Quebec and sharing resources among partners is an essential element that is beneficial to everyone. Our mandates may differ, but serving the English-speaking community is one of the common goals. Without these connections, our respective communities would not benefit from the diverse expertise that each of our organizations offer.



MWCN was pleased to receive \$15,000 from CHSSN – Community Health and Social Services to promote their CYMHI program - “Community Youth Mental Health Initiative”. These funds were given to our partner – Lester B Pearson School Board, who allocated \$5000 to three of their adult centres which were able to benefit greatly by creating wonderful spaces to relax, de-stress and improve mental health within each of their locations.

PACC Adult Education Centre students worked together finding a location and researching the cost of materials for a fitness room. They were able to purchase weights, a workout bench, a cable machine, and a stationary bicycle. It is now open to 700 students who must first complete a safety orientation.

“I have been struggling with mental illness and have found exercise to be a positive and proactive coping mechanism. It has helped me focus and do better in school. Working out in the PACC Adult Student Weight Room would be a great way to start your day in a positive way!” - PACC Student 21 years old

Place Cartier Adult Education Centre is in the process of relocating their Centre. They have approx. 90 students working on this project, surveying the entire school population to create “Inspired Spaces”. One of these spaces will include ping-pong and foosball tables where both students and teaching staff can play together, building community spirit.

Gordon Robertson Beauty Academy had 2 students hire a signage company and then created a committee to choose motivational and inspiring quotes to be professionally painted on the walls throughout their Centre.



"The motivational quotes on the walls are a wonderful addition, contributing to the overall sense of positivity that is felt as soon as you walk in the building. The messages serve as reminders of the attitudes that, when embraced, support a positive mindset that can lead to success. We are so grateful that this grant has allowed us to add these inspiring messages throughout our Centre".

Claudine Turnbull, Centre Director GRBA

MWCN also recently visited two of our partners; **Ps. Jeunesse Vaudreuil**, which offers programs to anyone over 18 who are neither employed nor in school who have been alienated from the job market, and **Centre Prénatal et Jeunes Familles** which offers workshops geared towards prenatal and postnatal care, new parents, telephone support for children 0-5, and CPR for parents. With the help and expertise of our videographer, Chris Aslop, we were happy to offer them a great opportunity to produce a video showcasing each of their organizations.



St. Patrick's Day in the Valley



Did you know that St. Patrick's Day is celebrated in more countries than any other national festival in the world. In Ireland, St. Patrick's Day was predominantly a religious celebration until the early 1900's, when it was announced as Ireland's National Holiday. But it wasn't until the early 1990's that the Irish Government started a campaign to use St. Patrick's Day to showcase Irish culture. St. Patrick's Day is known for its big parades in many major cities around the world. A fun fact, in the city of Chicago they dye its river green.



In Huntingdon, our MWCN St. Patrick's Day luncheon was a wonderful way for our community to come together. At its core St. Patrick's Day is all about celebrating a community. The recent return to face-to-face activities made this St. Patrick's Day celebration that much more enjoyable. When we are permitted to share activities with our friends and neighbours, face to face, it creates a stronger social bond and strengthens relationships. This is so important to create a vibrant community. There is an undeniable energy when we reconnect at an in-person event, as people remember how much they value the pleasure of each other's company.

I must say that the celebration we had in Huntingdon was better than a pot of gold. We enjoyed an excellent traditional Irish meal, an Irish dancer, Irish blessing before our meal, music, poetry, and a traditional sing along. Just what we needed to help with the effects we have all experienced during the long winter months.

The last couple of years have been difficult on our mental health. At MWCN, we do our best to help break the feelings of loneliness and social isolation. The impact of social isolation can cause a whole raft of physical and mental health problems. The good news is that loneliness is a reversible condition and the main treatment is meaningful social connections. So accept that invitation, call a friend, go for a walk and start to enjoy the company of others while we can.

To sum things up, at MWCN we have so many great activities for you to attend, either via zoom or in person, let us help you create a great 2022.

Nora Donnelly

Winter Fest in Huntingdon Nora Donnelly

During the month of March we asked our community members to share stories with us about creative ways in which they reuse, repurpose and recycle items. One of our members took up the challenge, and shared with us her creativity at a recent event. In following our lead when it comes to repurposing items, Kathy excelled, the result was very special.

Our Huntingdon Wellness Center enjoyed an end of winter celebration this past week. We roasted marshmallows over a fire pit to make smores and drank hot chocolate. It was a wonderful way to take in some sunshine and enjoy the much-needed company of others.

The items worn were originally worn at our St. Patrick's Day event last week, hat and gloves have taken on a new life. Look at them now, they are in full bloom! Way to go Kathy, spring has sprung.



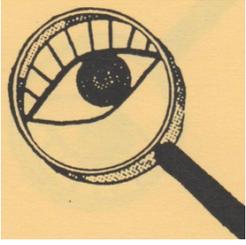
What does April mean to You?

Sprouting grass, crocuses blooming, and the tips of daffodils poking through the thawing ground come to mind whenever I think of April. As soon as spring is around the corner, my mind can't help but stray to all that needs to be done; cleaning up of the yard, getting out the patio set, turning the compost that has worked itself all winter into a nutritious amendment of the soil for my vegetable gardens and flower baskets. Inside, my home's window sills are filled with mini-makeshift greenhouses full of seedlings. The small plants will stay inside, protected from the harsh fluctuations Mother Nature has in store until the warmer rays of summer take hold. It is a time for rebirth, burgeoning, and a celebration of all that is to come!

April is also appropriately the month the world celebrates volunteerism—a definitive element in every community. This year National Volunteer Week runs from April 24th-30th with the theme Volunteering is Empathy in Action. Good Deeds Day is on April 3rd and although we should try and do good deeds throughout the year, wouldn't it be something if we could all make a little extra effort on that day? One small action like holding a door open and letting the person behind you enter before you, helping someone you don't know with loading their groceries into their car, or checking in on a neighbour or relative that you haven't seen in a while. Never underestimate the worth of a kind word or gesture, it goes hand in hand with community!

Sharon Vocino

News From Our Partners



LOW VISION SELF-HELP ASSOCIATION

Monthly virtual meeting - Wednesday, April 13, 1:30 to 3:00 p.m.

Visit www.LowVisionSelfHelpAssociation.weebly.com. To know how to join our Zoom meetings, phone Irene Lambert at 514-626-2649 or Maria Friozi at 450-692-5944.

Are you on the verge of graduation? Wondering how to get your first job? Feeling like your CV doesn't stand out?

Join our FREE online 3-part Job Search Bootcamp for post-graduation success!

PART 1: Create Your Job-Winning CV

Monday, April 25 | 10:00AM-12:00PM

PART 2: Write an Inspiring Cover Letter

Wednesday, April 27 | 10:00AM-12:00PM

PART 3: Master the Job Interview

Thursday, April 28 | 10:00AM-12:00PM



Take action and register now!
514-878-9788 | yesmontreal.ca



Supported by:



MONTÉRÉGIE WEST COMMUNITY NETWORK

Our Offices in Five Regional County Municipalities

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