



# Annual Report 2007-2008



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## Mission and Values

### **Mission**

The NDG Community Council is an organization that acts to promote, improve and sustain the well being of the NDG community and its residents.

The NDG Community Council is a hub of community information and networking in NDG. It works with citizens and other organisations, through community organising and support, to address issues of concern and find solutions. The Council focuses on quality of life, social justice issues and the involvement of Notre-Dame-de-Grâce residents.

### **Key values:**

- Inclusiveness
- Tolerance
- Representativity (reflecting the community)
- Transparency
- Social justice
- Preoccupation with the vulnerable
- Autonomy of community initiatives and projects
- Citizen participation in decision-making that includes consultation and reflection of community values
- Belief in the capacity of individuals and organisations and support for that capacity
- Democracy
- Strong community

## **Staff**

### **Halah Al Ubaidi**

Community Organizer  
NDG 2020 Public Assemblies  
Table Ronde

### **Leslie Bagg**

Community Organizer  
Housing and Local Democracy

### **Graziella Bieto-Challenger**

Translator and Administrative Assistant

### **Gillian Keefe**

Executive Director

### **Gina Lacasse**

Resource Centre Co-ordinator  
Volunteer Co-ordinator

### **Manoj Chandarana**

Bookkeeper - contractuel

### **2007 Summer Students:**

Jason Ghikadis  
Valerie Khayat  
Allanah Lynch

## **Board of Directors**

Frances Ackerman

Leslie Bagg (appointed by staff)

Louise Fournier

Erica Hernandez

Alice Herscovitch

Roxanna Irigoyen (resigned Sept 2007)

Louis Legault (President)

Sharon Leslie

Spencer Mann (Vice-president)

Peter McQueen

Grace Moore (appointed Oct 07)

Aleksandra Petrovic

John Richardson

Paul Shubin (Treasurer)

Anne Usher (Secretary)

## **Committees**

Housing Committee

NDG 2020 Support Committee

Local Democracy and Urban Planning Committee

NDG Round Table Organizing Committee

## Report of the President

**Louis Legault**

2007-2008 was essentially a year of consolidation and solidification of our NDGCC team. The rebuilding of the organisation, started a few years back, and the necessary linking with the community and its various institutions and organisations was the Council's primordial focus of this last year. We are very pleased that the Council was able to function with the same dedicated staff team for the last two years, bringing consistency and confidence to the organisation. We at the Board, as well as the staff, consciously opted to stay the course articulated in our previous Action Plan and continue working to strengthen the organisation as well as improve our role as a mobilizing organisation. We took a new look at the way our committees functioned, how the staff and the Board could better work together to obtain results, how we could better interact with other community organisations., all of which to make our council a better functioning organisation.

This action plan was the result of thoughtful reflection from the members of the Board with strong input from the staff. The heart of the matter is that the Council's role is to act to promote, improve and sustain the well being of our NDG community and all of its residents and to do so, we have taken upon ourselves to bring people and organisations together for effective reflection and action, through our 20/20 meetings, our "table ronde" of community organisation and the Council's committees.

As any living and vibrant community, NDG was faced with issues and concerns this past year that, to various degrees, affected our well being as well as our democratic rights. In this context, the Council strives to be a constructive player, as well as an engaged actor and advocate for positive change in NDG.

The following is an overview of the issues that were at the heart of our implication in the NDG community.

The ongoing concern for better municipal services is still at the center of our preoccupations. The underfunding of the CDN-NDG Borough, which has long impacted our community, was discussed at every Board meeting.

The situation of the Fraser-Hickson Library, as well as the Borough's decision to build a Sports and Recreation Center in Benny Park, was also fertile ground for the Council to encourage citizen involvement by providing opportunities to provide information and promote meaningful participation in the local democratic process.

The closing of the Centre Multi Ethnique prompted the Council to act to make sure that the services, so essential for new members of our community, were maintained in one form or another. The results were not as we had hoped. We learned profound lessons of how to better intervene when big political and bureaucratic machines decide on how things will be done, without consulting and connecting with the people living in the community who will be most directly impacted by their decisions.

As well as some difficult challenges regarding the inclusion of citizens, we did move forward on important issues for our community.

The openness of our board to reach out to elected borough officials and their staff, as well as our provincial member of parliament and to encourage partnership when appropriate, has helped develop understanding and mutual respect. I for one, believe that all efforts should be made, whenever possible, to work together in achieving common goals.

The yearly Christmas dinner served a record number of meals with the help of a record number of volunteers, with people coming from beyond our community's boundaries. It was a great success.

The creation of a Community organiser position for Benny Farm and the Centraide funding that we obtained to finance the position is to be noted as a very constructive and positive accomplishment.

The Council's pressure to make sure that the citizens of NDG would have information in the debate surrounding the demolition of the Turcot interchange paid off with the organising of a public information/consultation meeting.

We are also preparing for our 3 year Centraide evaluation in the upcoming year and are confident that our relationship will continue to benefit the community as we have received positive and favourable input from our main funder.

Our Annual Report will attest to this year's achievements by NDG residents, members, volunteers and staff. Our dedicated and committed staff has shown, once more, how they are able to achieve so much within the confines of the limited resources available to our organisation. I take this opportunity to thank them warmly. The commitment and spirit of our diverse Board made coming to meetings an enjoyable experience and facilitated the accomplishment of our mission.

This organisation could not function without the leadership, the dedication and the commitment of a good Executive Director and I can truly say, in my name as well as all of the Board members and the staff, that we are truly blessed to have such a person in Gillian Keefe. Gillian has held the fort and ably guided the Council through all of its activities, and we want her to know how we appreciate her.

The Council would like to acknowledge the financial assistance of all of its funders that include: Centraide, the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, the City of Montreal, the Borough of CDN/NDG, the Conseil Regionale des Élus, the Community Economic Development Corporation CDN/NDG, Human Resources Department of Canada as well as our MNA Russell Copeman, and of course all of our generous donors.

I would like to thank you for having given me the opportunity to serve my community by being President of the Council for the past year and as member at large in the previous years. I have greatly appreciated and learned from my experience and vow to be back in the near future.



## Report of the Executive Director

### Gillian Keefe

In our written communications this year you may have noticed the introduction of a new organizational logo that was designed by Jason Ghikadis, a graphic design student who worked for us last summer. Through the process of developing the logo we were able to re-affirm some core organizational beliefs. We wanted the design of the logo to capture and reflect the organizational belief in the capacity for positive change of individuals and organisations and the Council's support for that capacity. Also important for us to capture was our role of acting as a 'hub' for information-sharing and collective action and the idea that, in the work of the Council, community-building through the *process* of fulfilling a goal is *as important* as the *outcome* itself. These values were alive in the work of the Council throughout the year.

### Six overall Goals of our Action Plan

To anchor this year's director's report, the six overall goals of our action plan will headline the 2007-2008 key actions of the NDG Community Council. Most of these initiatives are mentioned in greater detail in other sections of this report.

#### 1. Define the issues:

The key community issues that emerged, or were crystallized, through either the monthly NDG 2020 public assemblies, quarterly Table Ronde meetings of community organizations and board meetings, included the need for:

- Concerted action regarding the local environment, particularly pedestrian traffic safety;
- Support and development of a sustainable plan for Benny Farm community development;
- Accessible services, support and NDG neighborhood inclusion for cultural communities;
- Citizen access to information, process for consultation and ongoing involvement regarding the location and design of the Benny Sports and Recreation Centre;
- Accessible library service that reflect the needs of the NDG population ;
- A plan to ensure accessible, appropriate Community space for community organizations;
- Affordable local housing generally and more specifically, supported housing for specific populations ( e.g. seniors, people with mental health issues);
- Timely, accessible groceries and furniture for people in critical, emergency situations (e.g. victims of fire);
- A grass-roots, citizen driven collective forum for advocacy on issues of poverty;
- A meeting place, where socially isolated people can gather and share a meal.

#### 2. Act as a coalition builder

The Council continued this year, in our ongoing role as table du quartier, to exchange information amongst organizations, institutions and residents through weekly e-bulletins, monthly public forums, and Table Ronde meetings

- Active involvement in the local tables de concertations including: Table Jeunesse; Action Comité, NDG 6-12, NDG table de sécurité alimentaire; the newly formed Green Table; CSSS Cavendish Table des aînés, the NDG housing committee; Benny Farm Steering Committee; CSSS Cavendish Hidden Face of NDG Table
- Active participant member in the Coalition de Montréal des tables du quartiers (CMTQ) that brings together the 33 tables du quartiers on the Island with whom we share information and work collectively on common issues
- Participate actively in the Concertation Inter Quartier (CIQ), a coalition of organizations and institutions from the neighborhoods of NDG, Westmount and St. Henri who are committed to maximize the positive and minimize the negative impacts of the development of the MUHC Health Complex at the Glen Yards
- Pulled together organizations and institutions ( ie CSSS Cavendish, CSDM, provincial representative, CDEC) concerned with the closure of the Centre Multi-Ethnique , the loss of a neighborhood resource to meet and raise our concerns with Ministère de l'immigration et des Communautés culturelles

- Worked with CDEC, CSDM, NDG YMCA, Carrefour Jeunesse Emploi, Eco-Quartier, CDN/NDG Borough, Prévention NDG to organize a NDG community event: “NDG and all its Strengths” in September 2007 to coincide with Action Communiterre’s 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary harvest party.
- Acting as fiduciary for two of the NDG Food Security Table projects
- Acting as a fiduciary for the grant, received from the borough to MUCS for the Zero Food Waste Management project
- Maintaining regular contact and sharing information with Susan Clarke who sits as the NDG Councils representative on the board of the CDN/NDG CDEC
- Participation in an international community development conference held in Grenoble, France by housing organizer, Leslie Bagg

### 3. Ensure informed action

As will be mentioned several times, a significant way we share information is through our monthly public assemblies, quarterly Table Ronde meetings and weekly e-bulletins and mailings. Although information sharing is important in its own right, encouraging action as a result of that information is of particular importance to the Council. This year we have done that through:

- Continuing to strengthen connections with staff and elected representatives at our CDN-NDG Borough office through informal meetings, attendance at borough council meetings and co-involvement in common initiatives.
- Updating our resource information and sharing it with other community organizations
- Continuing our updating of the NDG map
- Re-developing our website to increase the scope of available NDG information and user friendliness
- Presenting a collectively developed brief to CDN/NDG Traffic Commission
- Submitting a collectively developed priorities for the CDN/NDG borough Green Plan
- Coordinating information sharing regarding funding resources amongst NDG organizations and institutions

### 4. Promote long term effective action

The Council is committed to supporting initiatives that have staying power, long-term impact in the neighborhood and develop organizational capacity. To that end, the following projects were continued or initiated this year.

- Receiving Centraide special project funding to support and develop of a sustainable plan for Benny Farm community development
- Coordinating *Habiter St. Raymond*, an initiative to research the availability of feasibility of developing further affordable housing stock in the St. Raymond area
- Member of the steering committee and working groups of the CURA (Community University Research Alliance) a partnership of CIQ and several universities in a five year action research project entitled Making Mega Projects work for communities
- Providing to organizations the loan of resource material that can increase their effectiveness including a PC compatible projector for presentations, access to 2008 Directory of Canadian charities and foundations published by Imagine Canada, a resource library including clippings on local issues and tents for community events (kindly donated for community use by the Fraser Hickson Library)

### 5. Promote attachment and responsibility

Building connections amongst people and organizations is enormously important in the work of the Council as it strengthens community and encourages the development of individual and collective citizenship. .

We have assisted in strengthening local organizations:

- St. Raymond Resident Association in the development of their innovative, multi-partnered Project Media for youth project, their flower garden project and their association generally.
- Meeting with leaders of local cultural communities to encourage linking of their members to community resources
- La Symbiose: Centre Ressource pour les familles immigrantes – in board and organizational development
- NDG Barter Network – assisting in clarifying future direction

We have assisted in strengthening local resident involvement – particularly

- Bringing together NDG residents who could benefit from being with others on Christmas day to share a communal meal
- Providing assistance for 170 low income individuals and families in completing their annual tax returns



- Animating a series of information meetings with parents with children in the after-school program at École Marc Favreau.
- Evaluating the impact of the support projects of the Citizen Engagement Initiative, ten years after. Assessing how they could be re-implemented for further citizen engagement - project of McGill School conducted with a Third year student
- Coordinating a drop off point of The Good Food Box
- Providing regular volunteer experience for members of Forward House

## 6. Survive and flourish as an organization

Initiatives that have increased our organizational capacity this year have been:

- A committed, involved, forward-thinking board of 14 with diverse experience and perspectives
- A stable staff team of six who believe in the organization and are committed to working together
- Semi-monthly book-keeper support
- The arrival of a skilled administrative assistant and experienced translator
- Support and ongoing communication with Centraide
- Ongoing office volunteer development training and support
- Staff development – 2 day long planning sessions over the year.
- Gillian's participation in the *Le leadership rassembleur* professional development offered by Centraide that includes extensive training and ongoing peer-review group meetings
- The support and input of 51 organizations and 84 individual dues paying members

### Looking Ahead

As the first goal (defining the issues), illustrates, there is no shortage in NDG of important areas that need addressing in a collective approach. A significant challenge of the Council continues to be determining how our limited human resources can best be allocated to maximize the community's ability to work together on priorities. The Council specifically, and the community generally, needs to identify shared priority in order to develop a credible, community wide plan of action.

Another important challenge the Council needs to continue working on is more effective ways to both inform the multi-cultural residents of NDG about issues and resources that affect the quality of their everyday lives as well as provide welcoming 'spaces' for residents, many of whom feel voiceless, to become involved in civic life.

## Acknowledgements

### Stages

Middle East program – **Ariana Dhokerker**

CEGEP St. Laurent – **Lilliana Butnara.**

BIL project - **Stephane Holyanou**

Concordia Department of Human System Intervention - **Sharon Gulko**

Access Travail Verdun - **Mabel Ojie**

McGill School of Social Work - **Joey Berljawsky** (3<sup>rd</sup> year student) , **Laurie Bennet** ( shared with CSSS Cavendish)

**Susan Clarke** the NDGCC appointed representative on the Board of the CDN/NDG Corporation de développement économique communautaire (CDEC) who kept board and staff regularly updated on CDEC directions and initiatives.

**Sylvie Charest , Pierre Blouin, Dennis Vossos, Louise Sullivan, Benoît Usereau** , our office volunteers; their reliability, promptness and willingness to pitch in when a job needs to be done give a much appreciated spirit and energy to office life.

The staff, children, and parents of our neighbors, **CPE Over the Rainbow** who, not only regularly share their lunch with us but remind us everyday about the importance of having fun .

**Elizabeth Leslie** and **Glenn Cassidy**, our most regular contacts with our landlord, Wesley United Church. Their willingness to go the extra mile has helped us out on more than one occasion.

**Rahul Nargas** our map designer who hopes, as do we all that all the revisions will soon be complete



## In memorium –Sandra Frosst 1950 – 2007

*An excerpt of the address given by **Gail Tedstone**, past president of the NDG Community Council at the memorial service held September 7<sup>th</sup>, 2007 to celebrate the remarkable life of Sandra Frosst.*

As a Board member of the NDG Community Council in 1985, Sandra assumed the Chair of the Food Needs Committee. It explored needs around poverty and hunger. Distribution of food to the disadvantaged was becoming a challenge for the local churches. Sandra led the effort to establish the NDG Food Depot and was its first volunteer coordinator. Sandra was as concerned with finding the tuna to stock the shelves as developing programs to assist the users of the Food Bank to deal with money, jobs and housing, as well as securing the funding to provide these services. We had hoped that the need for a Food Bank would be temporary. It began as a project of the Community Council, but after 15 years of operation it needed to become an autonomous organization. Sandra again provided leadership to the Task Force mandated to explore ways to create a sustainable independent organization, which it became, in 2003. Sandra was a founding member and member of the Board of the NDG Food Depot. She became its first Honorary Board member in recognition of her contribution.

“Sustainability” became Sandra’s mantra. She believed that food security had to be achieved in ways other than handouts. La Table sur la Sécurité Alimentaire de NDG brought together partners working in food security such as the collective gardens, CLSC programs for families and children and school boards. Sandra, through her vision and creativity assisted the Table in getting seed funding for innovative projects from the Direction de Sante Publique, like the the fresh fruit and vegetable collective buying project called the Good Food Box which serves our whole community and has served as the model for other communities.

As one project after another took wings and flew, she would find other challenges. Her latest “baby” was “Au pois chic, la cuisine de NDG. The closing of “Chez mes amis” a local community restaurant was a blow to the community. If a community restaurant was to take its place, Sandra wanted it to be sustainable for the long term. In a nutshell, the vision is for a resource that would provide nutritious affordable meals for everyone whether in the restaurant, meals on wheels, at community events, in schools as well as providing nutrition education and job training. A Provisional Board is in place and we have broad community support. Sandra’s vision will sustain us in achieving the success of this ambitious project.

I cannot end without acknowledging Sandra’s guidance to the Citizen’s Engagement Initiative of the Community Council. This project undertaken between 1997 and 2000 provided the Council with an opportunity both to study and to increase the level of citizen involvement. One of its successes was a project called Support Initiatives. It provided coaching and small amounts of “jump-start” money to groups of 3 or more people who had an idea that would bring people together to benefit the community. This was an excellent way to engage citizens in the community and build leadership capacity.

In honour of Sandra, The NDG Community Council, has established the Sandra Frosst Memorial Fund. It will provide small grants to new initiatives. This is a fitting testimonial to Sandra who not only ‘jump started’ so many projects but sustained them until they could stand on their own.

Nous faisons témoignage à la contribution de Sandra à l’enrichissement de notre communauté. Nous jouissons du succès des projets établis sous son leadership

Pour emprunter quelque mots de notre amie Marie-Josée “une grande dame nous a quitté”

We will miss her.

## **NDG 2020 Public Assemblies and Round Table Meetings**

**Halah Al Ubaidi**

After three years of working in this community, I have come to realize that the position of community organizer is not a job, but rather a way of living. I have also learned that you do not have to live in a community to be a part of it, but you do have to care and always be involved. In order to identify issues of concern in the community, you have to have your ears open and eyes attentive; actually you have to use all of your senses, including your sixth sense. You have to be out in the community while you are at your desk and even when you are at home. I often talk to people I meet on the bus, in the street or even during a personal social activity in order to be connected with the community.

Organizing an assembly or a forum is an easy job when you are organized and know your community. However, behind each event there is a group of people working together to make it happen; these are the committee members. We meet several times during the year to discuss issues of concern to the community. We meet with partners and activists and then we plan the event. Some issues take more time than others. This usually depends on the participants (community workers and activists), the public involvement and the complexity of the issue in question.

Organizing an event includes identifying the issue, planning the event itself and the follow up. The latter is a challenge for me, as I don't have the privilege of focusing on one issue every year. I always move to the next issue while my heart and mind is still on the previous one. Most of these issues do not have a short-term solution; they need continual work and follow up. Below I will talk about these issues in more detail.

### **NDG 2020 PUBLIC ASSEMBLIES:**

A forum for local groups and citizens

The NDG 2020 is a monthly public meeting where local groups and citizens come together to discuss issues affecting the NDG community. The evening usually starts with a "Community Exchange", where community workers and volunteers are invited to announce new initiatives and present reports on their ongoing activities.

The second part of the meeting is a mini-forum featuring topics of importance to the community, which local groups help us to organize. The 2020 community organizer usually works with a support committee of organizations and citizens. This committee plays an important role as a link between the community and the Council.

Once again this year I had the pleasure of working with several dedicated members of the 2020 support committee. I would like to express my appreciation to each member of my committee who supported me and guided me throughout this year. Thank you to Gail Tedstone (NDG resident), Linda Bernier (YMCA), Jim Olwell (CSSS), and Bob Butler (NDG resident) for your exceptional support and cooperation.

I would also like to express my gratitude to all the community groups and individuals who participated in our events throughout 2007-2008. Appendix A includes a summary of all the events and our partners for this year.

An organizational preoccupation this year has been to ensure meaningful follow-up by the Council to issues that are raised at the public assemblies. Initiatives that demonstrate that commitment are:

Challenges faced by Cultural groups with a focus on employment: Valerie Khayat, a summer student who focussed on cultural groups in NDG produced an excellent research project, the basis of which was the focus of the September 2020 meeting. This meeting confirmed that barriers to employment is one of the most important challenges facing this cultural communities.

The closing of the Centre Multi Ethnique, in December 2007, further reduced the already insufficient services provided to this segment of the community in NDG. After the loss of Centre Multi Ethnique the Council organized several meetings between representatives of the Ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles (MICC) and leaders from the community to discuss the problem. In February, a new multicultural centre, funded by MICC, opened its door in the community – Service Integration Interculturel NDG. We are in

constant contact with this new partner and are committed to help them integrate into NDG community life. In January 2008, we organized a meeting on immigrants and employment.

In conclusion, there is a definite need within the community. We will continue our work on immigrant issues next year and ensure ongoing evaluation of the services provided to the residents in NDG;

Street safety in NDG: Following our public assembly meeting, using the excellent information we received from Dominique Sorel and feedback from the participants, we submitted a Brief to the Borough Traffic Commission on November 21, 2007. We also joined a regional coalition on traffic. We had several meetings to discuss the issue of street safety. We are planning to continue our work on this issue and welcome any participation from members and other NDG citizens;

Environment: Each year in April, on the occasion of Earth Day, we organize a forum that covers environmental issues. Last year's meeting the need for a table for the environment was indentified. This year a "Green Table" has been started under the leadership of the Eco-Quartier Décarie –Loyola .

The Council is also participating in two other environmental initiatives; the sustainable development committee, part of the Interquartier Coalition and the *Green Right of Way Movement*.

In April this year, we organized a 2020 in cooperation with the Green Right of Way Movement, a coalition of community groups, to inform residents about green spaces in our area, particularly the Falaise St. Jacques.

### **THE NDG ROUND TABLE: A Forum for Local Groups**

The Round Table is a daytime quarterly meeting that provides organizations the opportunity to reinforce networks of already existing community resources and provides them with a forum within which to coordinate their efforts.

These meetings are inclusive and focus mainly on strengthening partnerships, networking and improving communication among local groups working in and for NDG.

Many thanks and appreciation to the devoted Round Table committee members: Gail Tedstone (NDG resident), Gillian Keefe (NDG CC), Marie-José Mastromonaco (CSDM Commissaire for NDG), Shari Polowin (NDG Senior Citizen Council). Thank you and farewell to Jonathan McLelland (CDEC). Jonathan was one of the founders of the Round Table. He provided us with great support and helped us to focus. As he would say: "the committee needs to focus on the process and not on the issue."

Three successful Table Ronde meetings have been held. Addressing issues of poverty has been an ongoing focus. Through discussion and the sharing of resources, three areas of unmet needs in NDG that span across age and population groups have emerged: 1.emergency resources ( furniture and food) ;2. increased community space; and 3. encouraging social inclusion. Further discussion of these needs and developing collective actions to respond to them will be the focus of future meetings.

### **MEET THE CANDIDATES**

As a way to encourage public involvement in the schools, for the first time this year, we organized a "Meet the Candidates Night" for the School Election. We had 8 candidates from the English School Board and one candidate from the French School Board. All 9 candidates participated in the debate.

The Council will continue to organize "Meet the Candidates" meetings as part of our role to increase public participation in local democracy.

### **MAP of Notre-Dame-de-Grâce**

This year I continued to work on the map together with several committed volunteers, colleagues and community activists. My work included the supervision of the work carried out by Rahul Nargus, a student from the McGill School of Urban Planning, and contacting printing companies. Many people worked and continue to work with me on this project. Their input improved the map overall quality.

The Council received funding to reproduce the NDG map from the Borough of CDN/NDG.

## **WEEKLY E- LETTER: What is happening in NDG**

This year I continued to work on the e-letter. This is a tool for community organizations to reach out to the community-at-large and without their input the letter would not exist. This year we published 53 e-letters and we sent it to 250 NDG residents, 230 Organisations and Institutions working for NDG. We strongly encourage organizations to share it with their members.

I am grateful to all those who covered for me during my vacation. Last summer we had Alanna Lynch, who took care of several issues in August, and this year Joey Berljawsky worked with Graziella Bieto to produce the e-letter from February until the end of Joey's internship in April. I am now sharing the responsibility with my colleague Graziella Bieto. The input and feedback we have received from people encourages us to continue this work while always exploring other ways to improve the e-letter. The e-letter will be available on our website, and thus we can reach more people and they will have previous issues of the e-letter at their disposal. We are currently studying ways of putting the community calendar back on our website. Perhaps in the future the e-letter will produce itself!

### **Table de concentration 6 à 12**

Once again this year I had the privilege to work with members of the Table 6 to 12. We meet once a month and often have special guests from the parents and schools. These meetings are tremendously informative. Thank you Jim Olwell for your exceptional work that keeps us going. The Council's participation in this Table is important as it helps us better understand the needs of this segment of the community.

This year the Table decided to work on 4 issues. Of the four Table sub-committees, I am active on two:

#### Sub-committee - Embarque 6-12

The committee is producing a pamphlet that includes all the services in NDG for children from ages 6 to 12. In cooperation with Jim, I supervised Laurie Bennett, a student from the McGill School of Social Work. Laurie continued the work we started and produced the pamphlet that we are hoping to print and distribute this year. Laurie also worked with me on the school visits and she covered one for me during my vacation. These visits enriched Laurie's understanding of the needs in the community.

#### Sub-committee -Training of the Trainers

The objective of this committee is to produce a manual for community groups to help them to train their employees. We are also exploring the possibility of organizing some training workshops.

### **School Visits**

With the objective of reaching out to the community, we worked with the Parent Committee from Marc Favreau school to provide information to parents. We set up information tables and received parents of children from the after school program.

We organized 3 visits to schools accompanied by volunteers, interns and other organizations (Loyola Center, Boîte à lunch). The visits usually last one and a half hours. During each visit we reach out to approximately 20 parents. We provide them with information about the different resources in the community and we answer their questions. Some of the questions asked are concerning French and English tutoring, help with homework and different free sporting activities. Hopefully next year we will expand our visits to other schools in NDG.

### **Centre de Ressources Familiales Pour les immigrants la Symbiose**

I joined the Board of the Symbioses in June 2007 on the behalf of the Council. I participated in their activities and board meetings. As the treasurer I worked on organizing the financial files of the organisation and also worked with the other Board Members and Jim Olwell to establish a system for our spending.

In December 2007, I supervised Liliana Butnaru from CEGEP Saint-Laurent during her internship with *La Symbiose*, during which she worked on financial files.

### **McGill Middle East Program**

This year I had the pleasure of working with Ariana Dhokerker from the McGill Middle East Program. Ariana's help was essential in January, as I had to work on a 2020 assembly and a Round Table meeting. She participated in our planning meetings and played a major role in the preparation for the 2020 on Employment. This included, among other things, the preparation of the press release and the outreach poster, identifying local groups for the special presentations and contacting several multiethnic newspapers. Ariana also worked with me on the March 2020 meeting on the Housing in St. Raymond.

## Local Democracy Committee

### Grace Moore - committee member

The local democracy committee meets approximately once a month to discuss local political and social issues in the NDG community. In the past year, these issues have included the funding of the Empress Cultural Centre, the closing of the Fraser-Hickson library and proposed alternate library services, the proposed new sports and recreational centre for NDG and where it could be located, ie. On the Benny Farm site or in Benny Park, as well as snow removal and de-icing, the holding of at least some CDN/NDG Borough Council meetings in NDG, traffic calming, and a variety of other concerns of relevance to NDG citizens. On April 23, 2008, we had a guest from the Green Coalition, David Fletcher, who stressed the importance of supporting the ecological park of the Montreal archipelago.

An important part of the Local Democracy committee's work has always been preparing residents to ask questions at the local Borough Council meetings, held on the first Monday of every month. These questions can be about any public or private issues concerning the Borough and they give practice in speaking in public as well as garnering information and becoming involved in community life.

Committee members :

- **Anne Usher**
- **Behrooz Farivar**
- **Diane Chambers**
- **Gail Tedstone**
- **Grace Moore**
- **Jeff Itcush**
- **Louise Fournier**
- **Arnold Ludwig**
- **Peter McQueen**
- **Roxanna Irigoyen**
- **Sharon Leslie**
- **Shloime Perel**



## **NDG Housing Committee**

### **Leslie Bagg**

The NDG Community Council's Housing Committee brings together local residents and representatives of organizations serving NDG in an effort to understand and improve the housing situation in the neighbourhood. Members discuss problems touching the people we represent, and inform one another about existing housing opportunities and problems in NDG. We participate in province-wide campaigns, plan for and implement the development of new social housing, and network with other organizations to advocate at the borough level for better quality housing and tenants' rights.

The council wishes to thank and recognize the ongoing contributions of the following Committee members and their respective organizations:

- Arnold Bennett – HC NDG (Habitations communautaires Notre-Dame-de-Grâce) and Tenninform
- Merley Cumberbatch – Women on the Rise
- Dona Daher, Rana Jaroudi and Mazen Houdeib – Groupe de Ressources Techniques ROMEL
- Behrooz Farivar – NDG resident
- Gina Lacasse – NDG Community Council
- Spencer Mann – Montreal Urban Community Sustainment Project and NDG Community Council board member
- Alex Megelas – Habiter St-Raymond
- Harriet McLachlan – Project Chance
- Grace Moore – Comité Inter-HLM
- Catherine O'Neil and Jean Boivin – Group CDH ( Consultants for the Development of Housing)
- Michelle Ohnona – Benny Farm community organizer
- Jason Prince – CDEC CDN/NDG ( Corporation de développement économique communautaire Côte-des-Neiges/Notre-Dame-de-Grâce )

This year was an exciting one at the NDG Housing Committee and at the Council. The focus has been on supporting the social housing projects on Benny Farm and on preserving the affordability of housing in St-Raymond.

### **Habiter St-Raymond**

An on-going concern at the Housing committee has been the effects that the planned MUHC hospital will have on housing affordability in St-Raymond. In order to help local residents and organizations come up with a community vision for housing in St-Raymond, a sub-committee "Habiter St-Raymond" was formed, and with funding from the CDEC CDN/NDG, hired Alex Megelas to do a research project in the neighbourhood. Alex has been surveying community groups and developing a picture of development opportunities in the area. With the help of urban planning student intern Julia Delrieu, he will prepare a report that will be a useful tool for all groups who are mobilizing for community housing in St-Raymond. This report will be ready in July.

An exciting opportunity has come up during the course of the Habiter St-Raymond project. We have learned that the city of Montreal plans to demolish an overpass at the intersection of Upper Lachine and St-Jacques streets. Our borough's vision is to use the land that will become available for the construction of 200 to 400 units of community housing. At a 2020 public assembly organized on this topic in St-Raymond, those in attendance were enthusiastically in support of public community housing on this public land. This piece of land promises to remain a focus of the Housing Committee in the months and years to come.

### **Benny Farm**

On the Benny Farm front, the Housing Committee and the Council were glad to play a important part in launching a new community organizing project. After several meetings with representatives of Benny Farm groups dedicated to finding ways for the projects to work together and share resources, the Council was mandated to take the step of securing funding to hire a community organizer for the site. The new organizer, Michelle Ohnona, began work in March and is already helping to build community on the site through such initiatives as organizing a Benny-wide art project, producing a newsletter and multiplying the Good Food drop-off



points on site. The NDG CC will continue to support Michelle and sit on the steering committee that directs the project along with representatives of five Benny Farm projects.

This year brought other positive changes on the Benny Farm site. Residents have started to move in to Phase 1 of Habitations Communautaire NDG's Affordable Homeownership project and construction is in full swing on Tango's project for people with physical and intellectual disabilities.

### **Coop Chateau de la Chance**

Elsewhere in NDG, the Housing Committee is pleased to welcome another housing coop to the neighbourhood. Coop Chateau de la Chance will be built on Decarie near Cote-St-Luc. The project will provide 25 to 30 units affordable housing for single people under 65 years old. Many of the units will be adapted for people with reduced mobility. We look forward to this welcome addition to NDG!

### **Tenant's rights education**

As always, the Community Council has been a resource for NDG tenants who wish to know more about their rights. We accomplish this in two ways: by facilitating workshops and information sessions for interested groups; and, by answering individual tenants' requests for information at our office. This year we gave 4 workshops with a total of 24 participants on such topics as rent increases, how to use the Rental Board and the city inspectors and community housing. We also answered 568 housing questions at the Council and the Info-Depot.

### **Making Links**

The issue of affordable housing touches our neighbours in the rest of the borough, the city and the province. For this reason the housing committee has continued to be involved with networks at various levels. We are members of the borough housing committee and of the province wide lobby groups Regroupement des comités logement et associations locataires de Quebec (RCLALQ) and Front d'action populaire en reamenagment urbain (FRAPRU).



## Report on Resource Centre

### Gina Lacasse

Information and referral is one of the basic cornerstones to a strong and vibrant community. The Resource Center of the NDG Community Council continues to provide information and referral to both organizations and individual citizens.

#### **Different ways of providing information and referral**

There are different ways the council uses to inform citizens and community organizations. A fundamental way is through responding to individual phone calls and walk-in requests for information. Staff and volunteers provide this service during office hours, five days a week. In order to effectively respond to common areas of concern we have developed and continue to update 'user-friendly' printed information sheets on resources such as tenant information, general health care, mental health, government programs and services as well as existing community resources. Our 2007 summer student, Alanna Lynch, did an excellent job of updating our resource manual of local and regional resources. We also try to take the time to explain to individuals and organizations how certain resources or programs work in order to better equip people to ask the right questions to help ensure that they receive the appropriate information. Particular areas of ongoing concern are: how to talk to your social services agent; healthcare professionals at the CSSS (Centre de services sociaux); as well as assisting in the navigation of the sometimes-complicated municipal, provincial and federal departments. Taking time to walk through the process and help people become clearer about what they need to know, empowers people to act on their own behalf. Workshops on rental increases as well as employability programs were offered to different organizations throughout the year. Other ways the council provides information is through networking with other organizations, committee work and providing the weekly e-bulletin What's Happening in NDG that are initiatives mentioned elsewhere in this report.

#### **Providing information and referral at the NDG Food Depot**

The Resource Center continues to provide information and referral through the Info-Depot at the NDG Food Depot as part of its mandate and this year there have been some changes as to how we manage the service. As of October 2007, Gina Lacasse, the Resource Center Coordinator has been supervising the volunteers from the NDGCC office. This has provided volunteers the opportunity to play a more active role while still providing the support of Gina in dealing with the more complex situations that can sometimes arise with such a vulnerable population.

Another innovation is that other staff members and stagaires have been investing time and resources in the Info Depot to do outreach as well as supporting volunteers on a regular basis.

Because of the shift of providing the service and the way volunteers receive support, the Community Council is in open dialogue with the Food Depot to find out what is needed to better support this important service as well as the people who provide it. The long term goal is to gradually change how we provide support for this activity that would better strengthen the NDG Food Depot as an organization that deals with a vulnerable people, often in situations of crisis. This is an ongoing process.

A special mention goes to the continuing work and support of the Info-Depot volunteers. The Council's appreciation of the work of volunteers and field placements can never be mentioned enough. Their work included answering questions, helping prepare documents, compiling statistics, and supporting residents through difficult times. These special individuals make all these activities possible. Thank you to Louise L, Pilar, Lee-Ann, Christy S, Gilles G. and Joey our stagaire from McGill School of Social Work. Special mention goes to Colin Baker who took on a volunteer leadership role at the Info-Depot activity and made sure things ran smoothly. Thanks as well to Brent Laughren who ensured the delivery of high quality Info-Depot coverage every Monday night during Food Depot hours

#### **New partnerships being explored and developed**

Ongoing discussions continue on how the Council can best provide information referral services to the NDG population and how it can better reach individuals and organizations where and when they need it. The goal is to support organizations themselves to provide information and referral through the Council providing training and different resources. Our aim is to reach more of the population as well as strengthen the community as a whole.

A few meetings were organized with the Walkley Center to talk about their needs around information and referral as well as how we can better help that community help itself. The idea is to work with Walkley area residents in providing information and referral to other residents. The aim is to build stronger links among

neighbours who then can respond to individual as well as collective needs with greater confidence. A pilot project at Walkley will start the summer of 2008.

The coordinator of the Resource centre actively participated in the CSSS working group on barriers to access to health care services.

The NDG Community Council provided support to the CSSS Cavendish users committee to provide a community perspective of the area as well as specific issues identified as barriers to access to services and suggestions to specific tools that could be of help.

### **Information and Referral Statistics**

At the Info Depot located at the NDG Food Depot we answered 1555 official requests for information. At the NDG Community Council office, we answered 2331 requests for information. Information was given both by telephone phone and in person (walk-in). Ongoing themes of these requests were health care, housing, and general community resources. As always, the information referral is continuously provided in informal ways through our numerous activities and events as well as by the networking we do with individuals and organizations.

### **2007 Income Tax Clinic**

As always, the Community Council organized a tax clinic for people with a low income. Producing a tax report is a requirement for people to access social service programs and deductions provided by the different government bodies to help improve the living conditions of low income individuals and families. This year we served a record 170 people! Thank you to: Programmes Benevoles, a provincial/ federal program that provides trained volunteers to provide this service. A huge thank you as well is given to volunteers Simone P, Louise L and Lee-Ann who did an excellent job of setting up and managing appointments. Also thanks to Wesley Church who provided the space free of charge for the 4 days of the clinic and church volunteer Jaime Y. who helped serve coffee and snacks. This was a great example of partnership.

In conclusion, the NDG Community Council continues to explore more effective ways of providing information and referral in order to benefit individuals and the community as a whole. Our goal is to empower both individuals and organizations through being well informed so that we can act individually and collectively on issues that affect the quality of life in NDG.

## **NDG Community Council 2007 Christmas Dinner**

### **Paul Shubin**

The community Christmas dinner is an all-volunteer effort starting with the fund-raisers and the turkey donors and ending with the cooks and servers. Forty-seven turkeys were donated (try carving 47 turkeys in two days!).

Our volunteers and guests mirror the demographics of NDG, itself: all ages, shapes and sizes—a true community event.

While this event has been going on for more than 30 years (we think; can't find any documentation), the 2007 dinner was the most successful in the last eight. Between 1 and 8 pm 502 meals were served--32 more than in 2006--along with the traditional trimmings of mashed potatoes, hot veggies, cranberry sauce, stuffing and a spectacularly rich gravy.

Special thanks go to the people at **St. Ignatius of Loyola Church** who make us feel like we're at home in our own kitchen, and thank you especially to all the volunteers: you know who you are.

**And another special thanks to all who made donations, in money and in products.**

Our **wish list** for 2008 year is only slightly less ambitious than last year's:

- 10 more turkey donors, please.
- If your NDG-based organization members wish to attend the dinner as a group, let us know and we'll reserve a table for them.
- We never refuse volunteers. Tell us what you'd like to do.
- We never refuse donations either!

To offer, telephone the Community Council office @ 514-484-1471 and leave your name and number. We'll call you back.

Thanks from the Christmas Dinner volunteers

## Organizational Members 2007-2008

1. Action communiterre
2. Association communautaire d'emprunt Montréal
3. Bibliothèque Fraser-Hickson
4. Carrefour Jeunesse Emploi NDG
5. CDEC CDN/NDG
6. Centre de bénévolat NDG
7. Centre communautaire NDG
8. Centre de réadaptaton Lethbridge
9. Centre multi-ethnique de NDG
10. Chez Soi
11. Comite Jeunesse NDG
12. Concordia University/ Recreation Athletics
13. Concordia Institute of Management and Community Development
14. Conseil des ainé(e)s NDG
15. CSSS Cavendish
16. Czech and Slovak Association
17. Dépôt alimentaire NDG
18. Eco Quartier NDG/Décarie
19. Elizabeth House
20. Groupe CDH
21. GRT ROMEL
22. Head and Hands
23. Institute NHC
24. Iraqi Community Centre
25. Knox Crescent Kensington & First Presbyterian Church
26. La Maison des Enfants Montessori
27. Les habitations communautaires NDG
28. Maison des enfants Montessori
29. Maison les étapes
30. Maisons Transitionnelles 03
31. Montreal Association for the Blind
32. MUCS
33. Muslim Community of Quebec
34. New Hope Seniors Centre
35. Prèvention NDG
36. Queen Elizabeth Health Complex
37. River's Edge Community Church
38. Rosedale Queen Mary United Church
39. Royal Canadian Legion NDG BR24/106
40. Services d'animation Teninform/Housing Hotline
41. St. Ignatius Church
42. St. Thomas Church
43. TRACOM Inc.
44. Trinity Memorial Church
45. Urban Ecology Centre
46. Wesley United Church
47. Westhaven-Elmhurst Community Association
48. YMCA NDG

## NDG Community Council Public Events 2007-2008 - APPENDIX A

Date	Location	Participants	Public events	Special Presentations (Community Exchange)
6 Sep 07	Empress Cultural Centre	35	<b>2020 Public Assembly</b> Mini Forum: <u>Cultural Diversity in NDG: Between tolerance and acceptance, do we value our diversity?</u> <b>Cultural diversity in NDG, Valerie Khayat</b> <b>La Commission interculturelle, Marvin Rotrand</b> <b>Le Comité interculturel de côte des neiges, Pierre Antoine Baril</b> <b>Le Ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles, DJamila Ben Abdelkader</b> <b>The NDG Community Council networking and support tools, Halah Al-Ubaidi</b> <b>Moderator : Halah Al-Ubaidi &amp; Gail Tedstone</b>	Prévention NDG , security in NDG- Kerby Pierre-René
20 Sep 07	Wesley United Church	35	<b>6th Round Table meeting</b> <b>Focus:</b> Follow-up on last meeting regarding emerging issues, Follow-up on Communication Tools. <u>Issues raised:</u> Governing Board , Class d'accueil at St. Luc School Greater awareness of school resources State of the streets, cyclists, strollers, wheelchairs Community Space Lack of direct services <b>Moderator:</b> Jonathan McLelland and Marie-José Masromonaco, Halah Al-Ubaidi, Gail Tedstone	
15 Oct 07	Carrefour Jeunesse Emploi NDG	40	<b>2020 Public Assembly</b> Mini Forum : "Slow Down!! Solution for pedestrian safety in NDG". Presentation by Dominique Sorel	Elections for the school board in November " importance of public involvement" – Arnold Ludwig, Local Democracy Committee Presentation of CD on State of the Streets in NDG- Jeremy Wexler
22 Oct 07	Empress Cultural Centre	50	<b>Meet the Candidate</b> Title : <u>School Board Election 2007</u> 8 candidates for the English School Board :Albert Perez, Anne Williams, Elizabeth Fokoefs, Ginette Sauve-Frankel, Joseph Lalla, Leslie Alleyne, Nick Primiano, Susan Gottman One candidate for the Comission Scolaire Montreal : Marie-José Mastromonaco <b>Moderator : Jim Olwell</b>	

29 Nov 07	Wesley United Church	35	<b>7th Round Table meeting</b> <b>Focus:</b> A discussion on the future direction of the Round Table <b>Moderators:</b> Jim, Marie José, Gail & Gillian	Action Communiterre- consultation on the Community Space at the Rosedale ACEM – information on Community loans Borough CDN/NDG :Information Regarding Contrat de Ville Lutte contre la pauvreté funding E-letter : evaluation and feed back
24 Jan 08	Wesley United Church	35	<b>8<sup>th</sup> Round Table meeting</b> <b>Focus:</b> How are our community organisations dealing with the issue of Poverty in NDG? Issues raised: <b>Moderators:</b> Marie José, Gail & Gillian	Funding criteria of Fondation du Grand Montreal -Colin Berubé Le Ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles - Djamilia Benabdelkader
29 Jan 08	Carrefour Jeunesse Emploi	45	<b>2020 Public Assembly</b> Mini Forum: “ Are you an unemployed immigrant living in NDG” <b>Resource people:</b> Jonathan Mclelland ( CDEC) ,Marie- Charles Boivin (CJE) Maurice Beauchamp (CRE), Nabila Ghernati (CDEC) Marie- Paule Alexandre (CSDM) <b>Moderator</b> : Sam Boskey	Project Genesis : Rachel Heap-lalonde Montreal City Mission , Sylvain Thibault
13 Mar 08	Saint Raymond Community Center	35	<b>2020 Public Assembly</b> Mini Forum: AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN NDG: Living in St. Raymond Moderator :Alex Megeles & Leslie Bagg	Montreal Community Loan Association (ACEM), Sukran Baycura Frip-prix Renaissance, Marie-Josée Thibault
24 Apr 08	Saint Raymond Community Center	90	<b>2020 Public Assembly</b> Mini Forum: Nature in our City- The St Jacques Escarpment, Meadowbrook, and the creation of a greenway for all Introduction NDG CC , Gillan Keefe Presentation on the Falaise , Patrick Asch Prespective of Local NDG , Peter McQueen Prespective of Urban Planning Researchers , Jason Prince Moderator Sam Boskey	Comments by Politicians Cambell Stuart – Mayor of Montreal West Michael Applebaum-Mayor of CDN/NDG Borough
22 May 08	Saint Raymond Community Center	38	<b>9<sup>th</sup> Round Table meeting</b> Follow up from previous meeting - How is the NDG community addressing poverty? Report on Emergency resources (Marie-José MASTROMONACO) Developing Emergency resources (Nikki Schiebel) Responding to the needs for Community space (Gillian Keefe) Responding to social isolation (Michael Key)	Formation d'une Table Verte NDG – Nikki Schiebel Explanation of program Québec en forme - Jim Olwell Explanation of new Service Integration Interculturelle NDG (SII NDG) – Marilou Bolduc