



A CLIENT'S PORTRAIT

HELP FOUND

"I was born March 16, 1954. My father was dictatorial and very mean. He was never happy with anything and criticized all the time. He was The One after God. When I was 11 years old and I was about 15 pounds overweight, he told me that I would work in a circus, as an enormously fat woman on display.

My mother's father was a pedophile. My mother was a victim of incest and myself, from the age of 4 to 7. I grew up concealing these episodes. I started to soothe myself with food, often secretly. I felt very alone.

At 17, I made my first suicide attempt; no one in my family was aware of it. Some friends rescued me. At 19, I got my first apartment with a friend. We experimented with drugs, but my drug of choice was food. As a result of a broken heart, I took on 60 pounds in a year. I was very unhappy.

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CHEZ DORIS CELEBRATES

40TH anniversary

2017 marks Chez Doris' 40th year of providing support for women in difficulty. Named in the honour of a destitute woman by the name of Doris Halfkenny Seale (also known as Doris Toussaint), the refuge provides a safe haven to all women in difficulty. Unfortunately, Doris never had the option of going to such a place.

On November 2, 1974, she was brutally raped, tortured, and beaten to death. She was 43 years old. Her framed picture hangs at the front entrance of our day shelter and serves as a reminder that women still need a safe haven just like Doris did.

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◀ Doris Halfkenny Seale



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I always had the best grades and a photographic memory. I could have succeeded in any field, but I was too emotionally disturbed to finish my studies.

At 33, I married a man from Ghana after I became pregnant. He was manipulative and unfaithful, and we separated and divorced when our son was 5 years old. He committed suicide in a very sordid way, while my son was 15. By then, I weighed 311 pounds. Depressed, I attended Overeaters Anonymous meetings and I lost 151 pounds. Following a breakdown, I went up to 267 pounds.

I worked my whole life as a secretary, then as an executive assistant and finally as Secretary to the President of the Federation of Chambers of Commerce of Québec.

I made two serious suicide attempts in 2005. As a result of being hospitalized, I learned that I suffer from mental illness; I'm bipolar. After a 2-week stay in a crisis centre, I was told about Chez Doris. It will be my eleventh year at Chez Doris. I've benefited from their understanding, acceptance, compassion and help. I entrusted my finances in their Cheque Administration Program as I went from a \$42,000 salary to \$8,000 from one day to the next; I underwent two consecutive operations and became unable to work. If it hadn't been for Chez Doris, I'd be on the street.

I wish a long life to Chez Doris, because, we women, need the help that the organization brings us."

Elaine Armel

PS: My life story covers much more than what I have written here.

Message from the President & Executive Director

Elaine's testimony is told with uncompromising honesty, and while each woman who walks through our doors has a different story, most often they are affected by health and mental health issues, are living on insufficient funds, or in other fragile circumstances. From one day to the next, these challenges can happen to any woman and more often than not without a support network, any woman can fall into homelessness, which is why our services are so essential to the community.

Our biannual newsletter launched in 1982, has taken on a new look, and our 40th anniversary is a perfect occasion to introduce some enhancements. Please read about the major improvements and renovations we've undertaken to our building, our enriched services, and the events we have planned for this year! We hope that you will join us for our 8th Annual Tea on Sunday, May 28.

Enclosed is a response card for a donation which may also be used to purchase tickets for the tea; tickets can also be bought on-line.

Thanks for your support.



Talar Dikjian
President

Marina Boulos-Winton
Executive Director

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CHEZ DORIS: 40 years of care and history

Our founding was thanks to the initiative of Sheila Baxter of Ville Marie Social Services. She was a community worker at the time, and personally knew Doris as well as other women like her, and was disturbed enough to look more deeply into the problems that these women faced. Her research revealed a shortage of facilities for homeless women, and a complete lack of aid to transient women with additional challenges such as alcoholism, drug abuse and psychiatric problems. At the time, six institutions offered 656 beds to homeless men while only 68 beds were available to women. In 2017, those numbers have not changed very much.



1975

Concerned citizens representing churches, community groups and social agencies formed a committee and they called themselves, "The Women's Shelter Foundation." The group included Sister Dolorès Coulombe, a Grey Nun, and they sought grants to launch a day centre.

1977

The Chez Doris Women's Shelter Foundation was officially incorporated and obtained its charitable status on April 1, 1977. A federal grant of \$20,400 came through and the committee signed a one-year lease for a location on Mountain Street. In one year alone, more than 100 women were helped. Their ages ranged from 18 to 80 years.

1978

Thanks to another even larger federal grant, Chez Doris moved to bigger premises on St. Antoine, but in June 1980 disaster struck, and the building burnt to the ground. The Board found a new location on Towers Street and de Maisonneuve.

1986

Board Chair, Kiki Tremain (now deceased) obtained a mortgage to purchase a house located at 2196 de Maisonneuve close to the old Forum. By summer of 1989, thanks to a capital campaign, the mortgage was fully paid.

1994

Lacking space, Chez Doris swapped its building valued at \$195,000 with the owner of 1430 Chomedey valued at \$300,000. Chez Doris paid \$115,000 for the house.



CHEZ DORIS *gets a new look*



Interior Renovations, New Equipment, and Client Furniture

Chez Doris obtained a major grant from Service Canada to undertake interior renovations, purchase new equipment such as a steam table and stainless steel counters as well as new furniture for clients. Most of the interior renovations entailed replacing all underground plumbing, adding concrete floors and tiles, replacing flooring on the main floor as well as carpeting leading to the 2nd floor, and bringing the building up to code.



Medical Clinic

Chez Doris received a grant from Hockey Helps the Homeless, to renovate our medical clinic. We replaced all underground plumbing, installed an in-office sink, and acquired new medical equipment such as an examination table. Our medical clinic is certified by the Collège des médecins du Québec (CMQ) as a teaching site for McGill University Family Medicine Residents affiliated with the Herzl Clinic of the Jewish General Hospital. We are working on the same accreditation for Psychiatry Residents from McGill University. As well, we hope to also implement increased, paramedical services.

Foundation Walls

Our next project will begin in August. We will replace the foundation walls from the older section of our building. Our 13-inch walls are comprised of large grey stones cemented together. The cement has turned to sand and water is seeping in, which will destabilize the structural integrity of our building. We plan to replace the entire masonry wall (both above and below ground) with a poured concrete wall, install a French drain, install a membrane to protect all the walls along the alleyway and rear yard, along with corresponding interior work. As well, we must re-brick an alley wall, which was once attached to another building. So far, 80% of the funds for this project have been raised from the Fondation J.A. DeSève and The Molson Foundation.

2004

Thanks to a federal grant, Chez Doris extended the building to provide for the increased number of destitute women seeking help as well as to implement more programs and services.

2017

Thanks to a federal grant and private funding, the building is undergoing \$880,000 in renovations and repairs. Today, more than 1,200 different women are helped annually.



TEA TIME Event



Sunday, May 28, from 2 – 5 pm,

Chez Doris' 8th Annual Tea Time fundraiser – Highlights of our 40th year and those who made it possible.

Location: Grey Nuns Building at Concordia University, 1190 Guy Street, Montreal

Master of Ceremonies: Lesley Chesterman, widely respected author and food critic for the Montréal Gazette, who can also be heard on ICI Radio-Canada and CHOM.

Tickets: \$65 for 1 ticket, 2 or more tickets \$50 each. Tickets at the door, \$75 each. Tickets are on sale online at: chezdoris.org/tea-time-2017, by phone at 514 937-2341 ext. 227, or by mail by filling out the enclosed response card.

For more information and sponsorship opportunities, visit chezdoris.org/tea-time-2017 or call Marina Boulos at ext. 225.

Other Events

Wednesday, June 14, 2017 at 5:30 PM

Annual General Meeting and Open House – Showcase of recent renovations. 40th Anniversary cake will be served.

RSVP: Natalie Côté at 514 937-2341 ext. 227 / natalie.cote@chezdoris.org

Thursday, November 2

Disco party at New City Gas – Celebration of Chez Doris' launch in 1977, at the height of the disco era, with more than 1,000 people.

Artistic Director: Sheldon Kagan

Event planner: Oxygène Événements

Location: 950 Ottawa Street, Montréal

Tickets: Sponsorship and VIP opportunities at \$20,000, \$10,000 and \$5,000 will be available. Individual tickets will be \$50.

For more information: Marina Boulos at 514 937-2341 ext. 225 / marina.boulos@chezdoris.org

Sunday, December 3, 2017 2 PM – 5 PM

Holiday Craft Fair – We will be fundraising through the sale of baked goods, arts & crafts, including homemade holiday cards and Aboriginal crafts, as well as the very popular mittens and scarves, all made by the ladies of Chez Doris.

Location: 1430 Chomedey Street, Montreal

For more information: Natalie Côté at 514 937-2341 ext. 227 / natalie.cote@chezdoris.org

NEW SERVICES

Notarial Services

Every year, Chez Doris unfortunately loses some of its women to illness, homicide, or suicide. Faced with the dilemma that there is often not a final will, Chez Doris now offers free will-writing services thanks to notaries, Elsie Montcho and Elizabeth Beaupré.

Special thanks to

We'd like to thank our volunteers for providing more than 26 on-going programs and activities. The following are recent examples of volunteer contributions:

St. Valentine's Day: Female employees from the law firm Lapointe Rosenstein Marchand Melançon, donated 150 handbags filled with beauty products. Each woman took a turn to select a purse from a large assortment. The mood in the house became euphoric, and each woman's troubles seemed to melt away for the day.

International Women's Day: Chez Doris was one of many women's organisations invited to a free shopping spree at Ardene's Decarie location. We revelled in a large selection of accessories, shoes, and clothing to choose from for our women. To celebrate the day, Ahmadiyya Muslim Community sponsored a magnificent brunch and Buff Beauty Lab donated their time and gave free manicures!

PROGRAMS

Aboriginal Housing Program

To date, our Aboriginal Housing Program launched over a year ago has placed 26 homeless women and their children in furnished apartments. An anonymous company, which along with other retailers, provide appliances and beds when urgently requested. As well, we now work in partnership with Cedar Park Church in Pointe-Claire which organizes food drives for the women.



We Now Have a Truck!

Thanks to funding from Service Canada, Chez Doris bought a truck to move Aboriginal people into apartments. The goal is to work in partnership with Aboriginal organizations to maximize the number of Aboriginal people in housing. We must now raise at least \$15,000 for expenses such as gas, insurance, a driver and movers, and a storage unit to store donations of furniture and housewares. Many thanks to Groupe LeClair for great price on the vehicle.



When Chez Doris Comes to Life

Chez Doris comes to life on the weekends thanks to our Recreational Specialist, Nahla Abdelhamid. Her role consists of finding new opportunities to break social isolation, antisocial behaviour, and substance abuse. With a small budget of \$200 a month and a good network, Nahla has organized over 100 activities over the past year. To help Nahla accomplish her goals, we always need bus tickets, passes to Montréal attractions, movie gift cards, and of course, funds.

FROM THE CLASSROOM TO CHEZ DORIS

Dietetic and Human Nutrition Students

Students from McGill University have been helping with designing our food menu according to Health Canada recommendations, in order to better meet the nutritional requirements of our clients. Chez Doris serves an average of 130 meals a day. Many of our clients cope with chronic diseases such as hypertension and diabetes. Their goal is to also incorporate food and safety procedures according to the guidelines of the Ministère de l'agriculture, pêche et alimentation.

Nursing Students

McGill Nursing students provided our older clientele with mobility challenges, pictures and easy explanations for daily exercise. Meanwhile, a nursing student from Université du Québec en

Outaouais, meets the physical needs of our clientele by changing dressings, checking blood pressure, etc., and has begun to accompany our caseworkers to home visits for clients with chronic health issues.

MBA Students

McGill MBA students distributed a questionnaire to evaluate the health care needs of our clientele to guide us on the services to be provided once the medical clinic would be fully renovated. The main findings were that 10% of the respondents use no medical services at all. The top mental health problems experienced by our clientele are: Depression, Anxiety, PTSD, Eating Disorders, Alcohol and/or Drug Abuse, and Schizophrenia. Meanwhile, the top medical conditions are: Chronic Pain, Asthma, Hypertension, Chronic Lung Problems, Infections and Skin Problems. As a result, we have recently added to our schedule, a physiotherapist and an ergotherapy specialist.

donate

CHEZ DORIS

40TH ANNIVERSARY FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN

2017

chezdoris.org

CHEZ DORIS

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OPENING HOURS

7 days a week
8:30 am – 3:00 pm

We accept on-line donations. See "Make a Donation" tab on our web site's home page. We accept also publicly traded stocks, and estate gifts including insurance policies. For more information contact Marina Boulos, Executive Director, at 514 937-2341, ext. 225 or marina.boulos@chezdoris.org

Chez Doris is a registered charity offering daytime shelter 7 days a week for all women in difficulty. Its drop-in program serves up to 100 women per day. Services include: breakfast and lunch; showers, hygienic products, and a clothing room; 6 respite beds; information and referral assistance; a financial management program; an Inuit assistance program; an Aboriginal housing placement service; health and mental health services; tax filing and legal services; as well as educational and socio-recreational programs.

Registration number: 101835841RR0001