



COURRIER

News from Chez Doris

A safe haven for women in difficulty

Newsletter | Autumn-Winter 2020

PORTRAIT OF A CLIENT

DETERMINED TO SUCCEED: LISA'S STORY

Lisa was born on April 20, 1980 to a single mom struggling with mental health issues. At two years old she was placed with a foster family who legally adopted her at the age of three. Her childhood and teenage years were difficult. Lisa remembers struggling with feelings of abandonment, anger and isolation despite her foster mother being a warm and kind person. She performed very well academically but endured bullying from her peers at school. She was never able to develop any true friendships.

At eighteen she was placed in a transition home with the goal of attaining some practical life skills that would enable her to eventually live independently. While in the transition home she witnessed a horrible murder. A roommate was violently killed in front of Lisa. The trauma from this experience resulted in her quitting school and leaving the transition home.

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Photo: Lisa/Courtesy of TanisSaucier.com



Holidays in the time of COVID-19

Due to the pandemic, this year, thanks to donors, we will offer our clients special holiday meals and gifts delivered to their homes, rather than the traditional in-person holiday celebration. Deliveries are scheduled for over 250 clients who will receive their feasts on the 19th, 20th and 21st of December. Additional financial contributions would be greatly appreciated for the cost of food and presents for these holiday baskets and for on-site celebrations for our homeless clientele. Volunteers can help with the preparation of packages and gift-wrapping as well as deliveries.

Donations in support of Chez Doris' holiday and year-round efforts may be made online at: chezdoris.org/en/get-involved/make-a-donation. To volunteer with the preparation and delivery of gift baskets, please contact Leah Peck at **514 937-2341 ext. 238**.

For more information or to help out financially for the holiday projects and beyond, please call Tania Filippone at **514 937-2341 ext. 229** or reach her by email at taniafilippone@chezdoris.org.



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PORTRAIT OF A CLIENT

DETERMINED TO SUCCEED: LISA'S STORY



Lisa became homeless; she sought refuge at the Patricia McKenzie Pavilion emergency overnight shelter. They referred her to Chez Doris where she began seeing a psychologist who diagnosed her with PTSD. She also came to our day shelter to eat, socialize, and take part in other activities such as art classes.

At twenty she moved into an apartment. However, over the next five years Lisa struggled with depression and food addiction; unable to keep her apartment clean she was eventually evicted. She returned to the Patricia McKenzie Pavilion.

A year later she moved into a new apartment. She began dating a neighbour's son, but the relationship soon became verbally and physically abusive. During that time, she became pregnant and at twenty-nine she gave birth to her daughter.

Months later she confided to her caseworker at Chez Doris about the abusive relationship and her fears for her daughter's safety. Her caseworker encouraged her to contact her local CLSC social worker. With a broken heart, fearing she would lose her daughter, Lisa contacted the social worker to protect her child.

By thirty-four, Lisa had endured an abusive relationship, lost custody of her daughter to foster care and was left emotionally broken. Additionally, her physical health was deteriorating; she was suffering from diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and sleep apnea. As part of her treatment, her doctor recommended weight loss surgery.

Lisa's caseworker saw her through this journey, accompanying her to multiple medical appointments and helping her prepare for her diet. At 404 pounds Lisa needed to lose weight. After her diet she was down to 383 pounds and ready for surgery. She later lost a further 119 pounds and no longer suffers from diabetes or high blood pressure.

Her improved physical and mental well-being gave Lisa newfound energy and motivation: with the help of her caseworker she registered for a high school equivalency exam this year, and successfully passed her 6 exams and is now a high school graduate!

Her determination did not stop there. She subsequently enrolled at the École des métiers des Faubourgs-de-Montréal to become a nurse's aid and has just one course left to complete. She has also successfully graduated from the financial administration program at Chez Doris and is now able to take care of her own finances. Lisa wants readers to know how important Chez Doris' caseworkers were in helping her reach her goals.

“I'm excited for my new chapter but sad to leave my [Chez Doris] family behind. I hope my story helps just one other person to believe that change is possible despite all odds.”

Message from the President & Executive Director

Chez Doris comes to the aid of a great variety of women struggling with an array of challenges such as mental illness, addictions, violence, poverty, isolation, and lack of housing. One common difficulty they all face is that they are alone and have no one to lean on. Chez Doris is their lifeline of support. We are consistently there to lead them towards stability, autonomy, and recovery, despite any setbacks or barriers along the way.

The pandemic has compelled Chez Doris to find creative solutions for women experiencing homelessness in Montreal. Between March 17 and October 31, precisely 637 different homeless women have walked through our doors seeking help. Consequently, our services have become increasingly adapted and expanded, to serve the most vulnerable women. We have extended our hours of operation to 8:00 PM, which now includes a dinner service. And, thanks to partial funding from the Makivik Corporation and the federal program, Reaching Home, managed by the CIUSSS du Centre Sud de l'Île de Montréal, Chez Doris will adapt its day shelter to offer a 24/7 service from December 1, 2020, to March 31, 2021, and offer 18 overnight beds and 16 seated resting places. As well, we have implemented a housing program with the goal of placing 60 homeless women into long-term apartments.

The above initiatives are only possible thanks to the generous support of donors like you.

Chez Doris stands strong because of the community that surrounds it.

We thank you in advance for your support, and offer our best wishes for the holidays and 2021!



Marina Boulos-Winton
Executive Director

Carole Croteau
President

“Chez Doris helped break my isolation. They provided active listening, support, accompaniments, and help with resources including free food and clothing and a psychologist who I still see today. They helped me with daily budgeting. I was also introduced to a volunteer who gave me the tools to learn how to crochet and embroider, and recreational activities to enjoy with friends for the first time.”

MOVING FORWARD



While we are not alone, the pandemic has had a profound effect on us. Chez Doris has adapted its services and implemented a great number of changes including enhanced cleaning protocols, augmented services, increased staffing and revisited logistics and the delivery of services to ensure the safety of all. As a result, this year's annual operating budget has increased to \$3.5 million, over a million dollars more than last year's operating budget.

In the face of the pandemic and given that we will also be launching two new points of service, Chez Doris will need to substantially increase its fundraising efforts. Therefore, and after careful consideration, the Board of Directors voted on September 28, 2020, to not renew our contract with Centraide. Consequently, as of October 1, 2020, Chez Doris is no longer a Centraide-funded agency and will no longer receive an assured annual contribution of \$145,795.

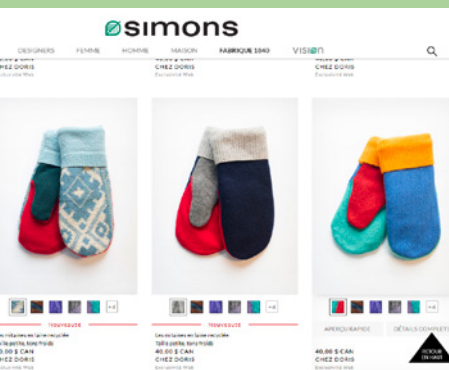
We are very honoured to have had Centraide's support since 1988. However, given that Centraide imposes restrictions preventing us from fully being able to fundraise, and does not have the financial capacity to offer increased support at a time when our services are in huge demand, our triennial agreement was not renewed. This will enable us to increase and diversify our fundraising capacity. In the meantime, we look forward to staying in touch with Centraide to report on trends and recommend sustainable solutions for vulnerable populations.

A Successful Partnership

La Maison Simons | Fabrique 1840

This year, Chez Doris is proud to have collaborated with **Maison Simons, Fabrique 1840**, which showcases unique Canadian designers and creators. With holiday fairs no longer possible in person due to the pandemic, Maison Simons agreed to sell our one-of-a-kind mittens on their online store. **The success was instantaneous!** The first 100 pairs of mittens sold out in two days. Given the success, Simons offered to put another hundred pairs online, which also sold at lightning speed.

The Mittens Project is one of the most popular socio-recreational activities at Chez Doris, spearheaded by long-time volunteer Tina Donolo. Together, clients and volunteers transform donated wool sweaters into beautiful mittens. The women have no prior sewing training and, in some cases, have limited skills. Some suffer from mental illness and are on medication, which makes it difficult for them to concentrate, despite this, the women who participate in the Mittens Project are extremely proud of their achievement with each completed pair.



The money raised through the sale of the mittens, after shipping and handling costs, is entirely used for Chez Doris' client activities and outings.

A few mittens, slippers and scarves are still available and are now on-sale on our on-line store at:
<https://boutique.chezdoris.org>

They make wonderful holiday gifts!



Manon Chevalier

Manon Chevalier has over 30 years of experience in the publishing world. Following 15 years in the news department of La Presse, she founded Communications Chevalier in 1989.

Her company quickly established itself as the most important independent publisher of corporate inserts as well as special and thematic supplements in Quebec. Since then, she has continued to innovate in conception, design, and production and today has more than 700 supplements to her credit. Manon continues to maintain solid business ties with all major news outlets throughout Quebec and Canada. She joined our Board of Directors at this year's Annual General Meeting and will be able to offer Chez Doris her expertise in the field of communications and media relations.

New PHILANTHROPIC DIRECTOR



In July 2020, Andy Fratino joined the team as Director of Philanthropic Development. He has almost 20 years of experience in various leadership and management positions in customer service, sales, human resources, and philanthropy. He has excellent interpersonal skills, is bilingual and is putting

his talents and experience towards helping find new sources of funding to fully address the needs of Chez Doris' clientele.

He may be reached at andy.fratino@chezdoris.org or at 514 937-2341 ext. 250.

PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES



Granby Zoo Visit

Many thanks to Armelle Foisy for organizing a garage sale for Chez Doris, and for donating all the proceeds. Due to her generosity, 17 women were able to enjoy a day at Granby Zoo; an experience which allowed them to discover wildlife and form new friendships along the way.

OUTDOOR CONCERTS

From August to September, outdoor concerts were held for the clientele of Chez Doris. Matthias Maute, artistic director of both two-time JUNO-award winner Ensemble Caprice and Ensemble Vocal Arts-Québec, brought together 17 professional singers and musicians to our doorstep as well as on the neighbouring grounds of the Notre Dame Congregation. Our women also enjoyed the Valérie Milet & Stéphane Tétrault duo, musical ensemble Kletztory, and B'nai Brith's community organizer Joanne Cutler and her husband Merv Middling who performed classic rock songs. Many of the concerts were made possible by sponsors, namely Mécénat Musica donors and Festival Classica.



Outdoor concert featuring a women's choir accompanied by 9 musicians in partnership with Ensemble Caprice and Festival Montréal Baroque.

COPING WITH THE DEATH OF CLIENTS

Over the last few months Chez Doris' team grieved the loss of **Tammy, Dinah, Kitty, Alice, Lucy, Elaine, and April**. All were premature deaths that were tragic and sudden. Six of the deaths were among our Indigenous community, who have seen a rise in drug overdoses and violence. Notably, Chez Doris' staff members have received training from the organization Cactus on how to respond to a client experiencing a narcotic overdose and how to effectively administer the life-saving antidote Naloxone. Additionally, we have implemented Naloxone training for clients as well as weekly harm reduction workshops which include promoting health, well-being, safety, and inclusion.

Special Thanks to the Following Volunteers



Julie Brochocka Dominique Gaulin

Julie Brochocka and Dominique Gaulin

With isolation and feelings of loneliness on the rise, Chez Doris has expanded its mental health services to include a team of experienced volunteer active listeners to assist our caseworkers and clients. We are most pleased to welcome both Julie, a retired psychologist, and Dominique, a licensed social worker who is pursuing her Ph.D. in social work studies.



Anders Eklund

An Albertan who recently arrived in Montreal to begin working towards becoming an RCMP officer; since joining our team, he has provided invaluable help by running errands reaching as far as Terrebonne, completing house maintenance projects, and helping with apartment moves and home deliveries.



Elder Nipko and Elder Hawk

A Team from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints

Over the past year, Chez Doris has been joined by a wonderful team of missionaries from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, all of whom have helped to manage our in-kind donations of clothing, hygiene products, and non-perishable food items, as well as work behind the scenes to put on our events, and holiday deliveries.

We are recruiting!

Chez Doris is looking to fill positions over the next few weeks and months to fulfill our core mission and address the growing needs of our organization. If you, or someone you know, would like to be a part of our dynamic bilingual team offering support to vulnerable and homeless women, we encourage you to visit our website to view the full range of opportunities: chezdoris.org/en/get-involved/jobs-internships.

donate

CHEZ DORIS

ANNUAL FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN

2020-21

chezdoris.org

CHEZ DORIS

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Montreal, Quebec H3H 2A7
T: 514 937-2341 | F: 514 937-2417

info@chezdoris.org

facebook.com/ChezDorisRefuge

twitter.com/ChezDoris

linkedin.com/company/chez-doris

OPENING HOURS

7 days a week | 8:30 am – 8:00 pm
Dec. 1, 2020 - March 31, 2021 | 24/7

We accept on-line donations. See "Make a Donation" tab on our web site's home page. We also accept third party gifts, 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 or Andy Fratino, Director of Philanthropic Development at ext. 250 or andy.fratino@chezdoris.org.

Chez Doris offers services and programs to provide for women's most basic and immediate needs related to coping with homelessness, poverty, mental illness and/or addictions. It is the only women's day shelter in Montreal open 7 days a week, and from December 1, 2020 to March 31, 2021, will be open 24 hours a day. Services include: breakfast, lunch and supper; access to showers, hygienic products, and a clothing depot; emergency food bags; respite beds; telephone information and referral assistance; a financial management program; an Inuit assistance program; a housing program; health and mental health services; legal & tax filing services; as well as educational and socio-recreational integration programs.

Registration number: 101835841RR0001