



# COURRIER

News from Chez Doris

A safe haven for women in difficulty

Newsletter | Spring-Summer 2022

## A SALUTE TO VOLUNTEER PAT HARDT

While 2022 marks the 45<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Chez Doris, it also marks another milestone: twenty years of volunteering at Chez Doris by long-time Board Member Pat Fitzpatrick Hardt. Rare and treasured are volunteers like Pat who find a cause they feel passionate about and who stick around for the long haul.

Ironically, unlike many of our clients who turn to Chez Doris following a burnout, Pat began volunteering at Chez Doris to pre-empt a burnout! At the time, she was working full-time as the Cross-Cultural Counsellor for International Students at Concordia University while also traveling back and forth caring for her ailing mother in Barbados. While she loved her career and the students she counselled, she opted for a better work life balance and chose to reduce her workload. This freed up time and allowed her to offer one-on-one counseling sessions on a volunteer basis to Chez Doris clients one afternoon a week. But as one caseworker recalls, Pat was also always available to informally counsel staff, and was a pillar for the caseworkers themselves. Appreciated by all, it wasn't long before Pat was invited to further her volunteer commitment and join the Board of Directors.

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Photo: Pat Hardt



### A benefit cocktail for Chez Doris in honour of Elizabeth Wirth

Join us for a benefit cocktail in celebration of the accomplishments of Chez Doris' Day and Night Campaign and for a memorable tribute to the campaign's extraordinary Co-Chair, Elizabeth Wirth. The event, under the honorary co-presidency of Mila Mulrone and Louise Roy O.C., Q.C., will feature live entertainment. All proceeds raised will support Chez Doris' new emergency overnight shelter on Chomedey and our new permanent residence on De Champlain.

**Date & Time:** Wednesday, June 15, 2022, from 5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

**Location:** Le Salon Richmond, 550 rue Richmond, Montréal, QC H3J 1V3

**Master of ceremonies:** Ben Mulrone

**Tickets:** \$300

**Circle of Care:** \$1,000 (1 ticket), \$7,500 (5 tickets) or \$10,000 (8 tickets)

**For tickets:** contact Suse at 514-937-2341 x 228 or scan this QR Code.



## LONG-TIME VOLUNTEER PAT HARDT

As a Board member, Pat recommended many programs and services to be implemented for our clients that continue to this day, including AA meetings, summer camp, outings, as well as support groups and discussion sessions. Pat also enthusiastically took part in many outings with the women. Indeed, Pat's real passion has always been working directly with clients; her hands-on engagement has also enabled her to be an effective voice for Chez Doris' clientele at the Board level particularly as a member of the Client Committee.

Pat was also Chair of our Nominations Committee for 7 years. Not only did she volunteer countless hours per year, notably for Chez Doris' Tea Fundraiser, but her ongoing networking efforts helped recruit many talented Board Members. Pat also initiated many partnerships, including with Concordia University, various community gardens, with Mariposa Café, as well as enlisted the support of the Thérèse Casgrain Foundation. Her efforts easily helped raise and/or save at least \$20,000 yearly for Chez Doris.

While Pat's hands-on work with clients came to a sudden halt with COVID, time was on hand to complete her memoirs, chronicling her life journey which began in Barbados from where she left for Montreal to study nursing at the Royal Victoria Hospital as a young woman. Pat's warm Bajan smile and words of wisdom will be very much missed by her Board colleagues and the extended Chez Doris family as this year will mark her final year as a member of the Board, and we thank her deeply for all her contributions and the lasting impact she has had on Chez Doris.

(Pat's memoirs, "In the Crook of the Frangipani Tree" is available for sale, a percentage of which is also donated to Chez Doris, for more info contact [ladypat20@hotmail.com](mailto:ladypat20@hotmail.com)).

## Message from the President & Executive Director

Forty-five years ago, in our first year of operations, 100 women turned to Chez Doris for safety and a meal. Currently, as many as 100 women turn to Chez Doris each day.

Over the course of forty-five years, many of our programs that today seem so engrained grew out of the work of dedicated staff and volunteers like Pat Hardt who took the time to carefully listen to our clientele to fully understand their needs. Out of these exchanges new programs and activities were born such as our cheque administration program, mental health services, clothing room, income tax clinic, and so on. We continue to respond to women's needs by implementing new services, such as our new nursing clinic and mobile dental service highlighted in this newsletter.

This summer, all the temporary shelters set up for the homeless during the pandemic will close by June 30. Above and beyond the impact of these closures, more needs to be done in order to address the longstanding deficit in affordable housing and emergency shelters for women. Our new residences and night shelter will provide 46 new permanent affordable rental units and 24 new emergency beds.

We wish to thank all of you who have donated and pledged support for our Chez Doris, Night and Day campaign. A special thanks goes out to our extraordinary campaign co-chair Elizabeth Wirth whom we will be honouring at our "Gimme Shelter" benefit cocktail on June 15 at Le Salon Richmond. We hope to see you there!

Thank you, as always, for your support,



Marina Boulos-Winton  
Executive Director

Carole Croteau  
President

## CHEZ DORIS: 45 years and counting

The inspiration for opening our day shelter came from Doris Halfkenny Seale also known as Doris Toussaint. Sadly, on November 3, 1974, Doris' lifeless body was discovered in a shed near de la Gauchetière and St-Urbain streets. Chez Doris is named in her honour and in response to her wish for "a safe place to go...". Over the years, extraordinary people and partners contributed to the evolution of our programs and services in the hope of providing women with the help they need.

1975

Concerned citizens representing community groups, social agencies and religious groups formed a committee. The group included Sheila Baxter, an anti-poverty activist, and Sister Dolorès Coulombe, a Grey Nun, and together they sought grants to launch a day centre.

1977

Chez Doris Women's Shelter Foundation was officially incorporated and obtained its charitable status. The first grant obtained by Chez Doris, for \$20,400, paid for a one-year lease at a location on de la Montagne Street. In that one year, more than 100 women were helped.

1986

Chez Doris moved to larger premises on St-Antoine Street until disaster struck in the form of a fire following which Chez Doris temporarily relocated to Towers Street. It was in 1986 that Chez Doris obtained a mortgage to purchase its own building, located at 2196 de Maisonneuve Boulevard, to serve as its day centre.

1994

By the mid-nineteen-nineties Chez Doris was lacking space on de Maisonneuve and a new location was purchased at 1430 Chomedey Street - Chez Doris' current location - to which an extension was added in 2004 in response to the growing number of women needing help.





NEW PARTNERSHIP WITH  
**MCGILL UNIVERSITY'S  
 INGRAM SCHOOL OF NURSING**

Thanks to a partnership with McGill University, this January we launched a nurse-led clinic onsite two days a week. This is one of five nurse-led clinics established in January of this year thanks to the support of Sun Life. Many women experiencing homelessness suffer from more than one physical health condition and are among those most in need of medical services, despite being among those with the least access to health care due to barriers such as language, discrimination, addiction, and mental health problems. Our clinic is run by Alex Magdzinski and six nursing students who provide clients easy access to health services, offering improved patient experiences and ensuring continuity of care as many of our clients do not otherwise access medical services. Alex has extensive knowledge in addictions, mental health and Indigenous communities. The treatments he provides include wound care and injections of antipsychotics when required, care for hypertension and diabetes, referrals and support for smoking, alcohol and drug reduction or cessation. Between January 15 and March 30, 2022, 111 consultations took place.



**DENTAL CLINIC**

In February a mobile dental service was added for our clients, allowing them to access multiple medical services under one roof that includes access to a general practitioner, psychologist, psychiatrist, foot care nurse, massage therapist, reiki specialist, and mobile eye clinic.

This free service is made possible thanks to the Carole Epstein Foundation. Dental Hygienist

Rim Adib oversees the services which include full cleanings, fluoride treatments, evaluation of the gums, deep scaling treatments for gum disease, education on oral hygiene as well as follow-ups and referrals. The service is available once a month for up to six women. In the first two months, twelve clients were seen, and in one, oral cancer was detected.



*It's a date!*

**Annual General Meeting**

This year's meeting will be presented in person with limited places as well as virtually.

**Date & Time:** Monday, June 13, 2022, at 5:30 PM

**Location:** 1445 Lambert Closse, main floor and by zoom (more details to follow by email to registrants)

**RSVP:** Suse Gomes at 514 937-2341 ext. 228 / [administration@chezdoris.org](mailto:administration@chezdoris.org)



**GROCERY GIFT CARDS**

Pandemic protocols prevented us from welcoming volunteers to sort food for grocery bags, and so we opted instead to provide grocery gift cards. With food costs rising at a remarkable rate, our grocery gift card program plays a vital role for our clients and their children who are struggling with food security. In the last year, we provided 150 different women and children in need with monthly grocery gift cards. Our grocery program has a positive impact on the mental and physical health of clients enrolled as it not only ensures that they have a dignified and autonomous shopping experience but also allows them to access healthy food choices.

**2018**

Chez Doris received a major donation of \$1 million from the late Carole and Andrew Harper for the purchase of a building to serve as a night shelter for homeless women. That same year, the Société d'habitation de Montréal agreed to build a permanent residence for Chez Doris with 26 affordable studios, which Chez Doris would manage.

**2020**

The pandemic took hold, and despite this, Chez Doris launched a \$15 million campaign for its expansion projects to respond to the growing needs of homeless women. Chez Doris also responded to a call for proposals from the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation to purchase a commercial building and convert it into housing for homeless women, which was accepted.

**2022**

By March 2022, close to 200 homeless women and children will have found housing in the private sector through our expanded Housing Search and Support program. By summer 2022, Chez Doris will have concluded its major fundraising campaign and will launch a 24-bed emergency shelter as well as two permanent supportive residences later in the year.

## SPECIAL CELEBRATIONS



Our annual Christmas party resumed after a one-year hiatus. The party was half the size of past years. One hundred and fifty fully vaccinated women enjoyed a traditional meal at LaSalle College, were serenaded by crooner Pierre Perpal, danced to the music of Sheldon Kagan Entertainment, and received gifts including those of the Shoebox Project. We also held a children's Christmas party at Carlos & Pepe's in Vaudreuil, where children were entertained by a magician, face painter, and animators who ran an art station. On Valentine's Day, the women received candies, chocolates, and a Tim Horton's gift card. On International Women's Day, our day centre was converted into a spa for two days where women were pampered by manicurists, hairdressers, a massage therapist, and skin care specialists.

## 2021 VIRTUAL AUCTION & HOLIDAY FAIR

Our 2021 Virtual Auction and Holiday Fair was held from November 17 to December 1. Thanks to record participation at these events, we were able to raise a combined \$30,878.

A special thank you to Sarah Alter who recruited caring companies to donate a variety of great prizes and a big thank you to all the donors who generously participated.

## FABRIQUE 1840 & THE MITTENS PROJECT

For a second year in a row, Chez Doris collaborated with Fabrique 1840 of La Maison Simons resulting in our hand-made recycled wool mittens being featured and sold through the company's website and just like the first year, they sold out very quickly! Through this partnership, we were able to sell over 200 pairs of beautiful mittens and raise \$6,060. As with every year, the money raised from the sale of the mittens allows us to offer special activities to the group of women who participate in the creation of these beautiful items.

## Volunteer Appreciation



Marianne serving breakfast on International Women's Day.

Chez Doris would like to express its profound appreciation for the 179 volunteers who have uplifted our organization with their commitment to our mission and women, and for their great diversity of talents. Our volunteers are some of the most familiar faces to welcome our women to the shelter and were front and centre during the service of more than 35,000 meals, the provision of 298 medical services, and the filing of 365 income taxes for 2021. Moreover, Chez Doris' volunteers have demonstrated a great degree of leadership in helping us to bring new and stimulating experiences to our women, in building trusting and supportive relationships fostered through specialized services, and by assisting our organization during the changing waves of the pandemic and as we embark on a major expansion. Year after year, Chez Doris' vitality and progress towards a greater vision of the future for Montreal's most vulnerable women is greatly facilitated by those who give of themselves so generously. We thank each and every one of our volunteers for the tremendous role that they play in this collective effort to create a safe haven.

## EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

Christine Deschênes is our new Assistant Executive Director. She fills a new position which began in November 2021. She has previously worked as the Executive Director of Tracom, is a social worker and has worked in the CIUSSS network as a research officer, clinical supervisor, and manager. Taking on this new position was a challenge which she accepted with enthusiasm, as it was for her a call from the heart: "I had the impression that it was made for me". Her mandate, which is chiefly to support the senior staff achieve their objectives with the implementation of new sites and services, and to oversee operations, gives her room for new ideas to help the organization grow efficiently and according to women's needs.

Now four months into her position and having had time to observe the team in place, Christine sees its strengths: "People are really committed to the mission. There is a concern to offer the best services to women, even in positions that do not directly involve the clientele." You may also come across her on the front line, doing occasional replacement shifts and getting a feel for the reality of intervention work with our clients. Christine describes her vision as follows: "creating humanitarian spaces for women to feel empowered". Welcome to the team, Christine!



# donate

## CHEZ DORIS

45<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN

## 2022

[chezdoris.org](http://chezdoris.org)

### CHEZ DORIS

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### DROP-IN HOURS

7 days a week | 8:30 am – 9:30 pm

We accept online donations. See "Make a Donation" tab on our website'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](mailto:marina.boulos@chezdoris.org)

Chez Doris is a registered charity offering a day and night shelter 7 days a week for all women in difficulty. The drop-in program serves up to 100 women per day. Services include: meals; access to showers, hygiene products, and a clothing room; respite beds; information and referral assistance; a financial management program; an Inuit assistance program; Indigenous cultural programs, overnight shelter, housing placement services and support; physical and mental health services; tax filing and legal services; as well as educational and socio-recreational programs.

Registration number: 101835841RR0001