



COURRIER

News from Chez Doris

A safe haven for women in difficulty

Newsletter | Fall 2022

FRÉDÉRIQUE'S STORY

NEW HOPE FOR WOMEN

Frédérique, 46, found herself without a home a little more than two years ago, after her godmother she had been looking after was moved into a care facility. Frédérique then began bouncing between life on the street and staying at a rooming house, an existence that took a heavy toll on her, both physically and mentally. She eventually found an apartment she could afford in Verdun, the community where she grew up. Then, just over six months ago, she was seriously injured when she was hit by a truck. While she was recovering in the hospital, her apartment was vandalized and left in a state of extreme disrepair. Her landlord held her fully responsible for all the damages and consequently, evicted her. Without anyone to turn to, Frédérique came to Chez Doris, where she has been living for several months now. She credits Chez Doris with giving her a safe place to live while providing three full meals a day and support from the caseworkers as she sorts her life out. "They really care. They're so warm and easy-going, and they help me do what I need to do, without ever judging me or making me feel worthless." She brings up the example of when she tested positive for COVID-19 and Chez Doris gave her a closed-off room, allowing her to safely isolate when she had nowhere else to go.

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Benefit cocktail reception



On June 15, 2022, the **Chez Doris, Day and Night** fundraising campaign concluded with a benefit cocktail reception at Le Salon Richmond. Presided by Honorary Co-Chairs Mila Mulroney and Louise Roy, O.C., O.Q., the event honoured the achievements of Elizabeth Wirth, the Chair of M.F. Wirth Rail Corporation, who co-helmed the campaign alongside François Carrier, Head of Investment Banking & Co-Head of Capital Markets at Desjardins Capital Markets.

We owe a sincere debt of gratitude to everyone who donated for their commitment and generosity, to Ben Mulroney who emceed the event and to all the guests who came to show their support for Chez Doris. Special thanks also go out to our team of volunteers whose contributions were instrumental in making the evening a success. This was a first for our organization, and we hope it will become an annual showcase for the work we do and the achievements of the women we have helped.

In all, more than \$15 million was raised in connection with the Chez Doris, Day and Night campaign. These funds have been earmarked to get two new points of service up and running, namely the Elspeth McConnell overnight shelter for women experiencing homelessness, which opened September 19, and la Résidence Marcelle et Jean Coutu, which will be operational by spring 2023.

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NEW HOPE FOR WOMEN

Frédérique would often sleep on one of the overflow cots that were set up at the day shelter after the emergency accommodation services at a downtown hotel were discontinued, and she needed a place to sleep. As one of the first women to stay at the new overnight shelter when it opened in September, she has a lot of positive things to say about it. "It's great! It's so clean and we all have our own space to sleep and keep our things. It's very comfortable." She points out that being assigned the same bed for 30 days instead of having to register on a daily basis has made things much simpler and less stressful for her. Frédérique's naturally cheerful disposition, her outgoing personality, and the kindness and warmth she shows everyone she meets have been a welcome addition to the environment in the shelter. Despite everything she has gone through, she manages to keep her chin up and spread happiness wherever she goes.

A new facility for homeless women: **THE ELSPETH MCCONNELL OVERNIGHT SHELTER**

On September 19, 2022, we celebrated the opening of the new Elspeth McConnell overnight shelter, named in honour of the founder of the Doggone Foundation, a strong supporter of Chez Doris.

Located near our day shelter, this new facility will accommodate women seven nights a week and help us respond to the ever-growing needs of women experiencing homelessness.

After major renovations and construction, the building, which was originally built in 1870, can now house 22 to 24 women a night and provide them with a safe, welcoming space designed specifically around their individual needs.

The three-floor shelter features a 22-bed sleeping area, two emergency beds, a locker room, several washrooms and showers, laundry facilities, a dining hall, a small kitchen, and a multipurpose room.

Women can stay at the shelter for up to 30 consecutive days and will have access to personalized support as they benefit from a range of complementary programs and services offered through Chez Doris.

The launch of this new point of service is a major milestone for our organization, on this, our 45th year anniversary.

Message from the President & Executive Director

Sometimes life deals women like Frédérique a hard blow. They end up destitute and homeless through no fault of their own. Many of them have experienced ongoing violence and trauma and are at much greater risk of being marginalized by society, as compared to their male counterparts. At Chez Doris, we play a decisive role in helping women meet their individual needs in a safe and comforting environment conducive to moving forward. Unfortunately, housing insecurity is affecting more and more of the female population as 80% of the women we serve nowadays don't have a place to call their own, compared to 20% only four years ago.

We remain resolute in our determination to develop affordable housing to stem the rising tide of homelessness, as evidenced by our most recent fundraising appeal. Through this initiative, we received more than \$15 million in donations and government grants, enabling us to open an emergency overnight shelter and a permanent residence (see page 3 of this newsletter for donors of \$100,000 and more). An additional residence is also in the construction phase, and the final touches are being put on our strategic plan, so we can reach out to housing-insecure and homeless women even more effectively and impactfully.

As a community organization, we are reliant on donations to carry out our work. Your generosity is the fuel that will keep us running for many years to come.

On behalf of all the staff and volunteers at Chez Doris, we wish you a wonderful, joyous and safe holiday season.



Marina Boulos-Winton
Executive Director

Carole Croteau
President



SPOTLIGHT ON TWO KEY ASPECTS OF THE SHELTER

In an effort to serve as many women as possible while ensuring our operations run smoothly and comfortably, the sleeping area in the shelter has been optimized with 22 Japanese-style sleeping pods. Not only does this innovative approach give the residents extra privacy, but each pod is also conveniently equipped with a nightlight, an electrical outlet and Wi-Fi access, along with its own ventilation system, to help prevent the spread of any potential viruses.

To make the shelter as inclusive as possible, the renovated design also incorporates an elevator serving all three floors as well as a bathroom for women with reduced mobility.

ABOUT THE ELSPETH MCCONNELL SHELTER



Project costs to purchase the building, carry out the renovations and oversee the project: **\$5.2 MILLION**



Total area after renovations: **2,732 SQUARE FEET**



Project duration: **19 MONTHS** from ground-breaking (December 2020) to completion



5 SHOWERS AND 5 WASHROOMS



24 BEDS AVAILABLE
(22 sleeping pods and 2 emergency beds)



Estimated number of overnight stays per year: **8,760**



20 OUT OF THE FIRST 22 WOMEN
indicated that they want permanent housing



73 DIFFERENT WOMEN
accessed a shelter bed in the first 30 days

PROJECT MANAGER

Atelier Habitation de Montréal

ARCHITECT

Eric Leblanc, CASA Architecture

CONTRACTOR

DASH

SPECIAL THANKS TO THE CHEZ DORIS BUILDING COMMITTEE

Chaired by Sylvie Girard, partner at CGA architects Inc.

CHEZ DORIS

Day and Night

Our gratitude goes out to the co-chairs of the campaign, the volunteers on our campaign cabinet and all those who stepped up and donated.

CAMPAIGN CO-CHAIRS

Elizabeth Wirth, Chair of M.F. Wirth Rail Corporation
François Carrier, Head of Investment Banking & Co-Head of Capital Markets at Desjardins Capital Markets

CAMPAIGN CABINET

Johanne Berry, C.M.
Manon Chevalier
Carole Croteau
Susan Doherty
Dr. Rosie Goldstein
François Lamoureux
François Morin
Lucy Riddell
Marie-Christine Tremblay
Colleen Wicha

EXCEPTIONAL GIFTS

Carole and Andrew Harper Foundation
Doggone Foundation
Government of Canada
Gouvernement du Québec
Hewitt Foundation
La Fondation Marcelle et Jean Coutu
The Azrieli Foundation
Ville de Montréal

LEADERSHIP GIFTS

Anonymous (1)
The Rossy Foundation
Elizabeth Wirth
Mongeau Family Foundation - CN Helping Hand

MAJOR GIFTS

Anonymous (2)
Baazov Family Foundation
Desjardins
Eric T. Webster Foundation
Fondation Famille Léger
Fondation J.A. DeSève
Fondation Famille Leclair
Fondation Jacques et Michel Auger
National Bank
Power Corporation du Canada
R. Howard Webster Foundation
Scotiabank
Sharon Azrieli
TD Bank Group
The Birks Family Foundation
The Drummond Foundation
The Gerald Schwartz & Heather Reisman Foundation

PARTNERSHIP WITH ZARABELLA



In order to provide the women we serve with support that is better aligned with their needs and make their well-being a priority, pets are allowed at the Elspeth McConnell Shelter, making it the only women's facility in Montreal of its kind. This is the result of a joint initiative with the Zarabella Foundation, whose mission is to help people living below the poverty line provide care to the animals they love.

Zarabella has provided leashes, disposable litter boxes, pet food and training for our staff.

They also drafted a protocol aimed at ensuring the health and well-being of animals at the shelter, as well as the residents and staff who come in contact with them.

HOLIDAY SHOPPING: BOUTIQUE CHEZ DORIS

Looking for ethically and locally made products to give as gifts (or to pamper yourself) this holiday season? Be sure to head over to our online store to browse through some of the wonderfully creative items made by the Chez Doris community during our workshops. You'll see handmade mittens, scented candles, holiday ornaments and many more unique finds. They're the perfect way to show your love for that someone special... and for the women at Chez Doris!

Start shopping now at boutique.chezdoris.org/en/

Thank you to our volunteers



We would like to express our undying gratitude to all the volunteers who give of their time to make Chez Doris what it is.

Heartfelt thanks go out to the Jacques Maurice Group — Scotia Wealth Management for putting in the extra effort to make sure the overnight shelter would be ready to welcome our first residents. Sixteen employees from the Group assembled welcome baskets and bags, cleaned out cupboards, moved furniture, made up beds in the sleeping pods and ensured that a whole host of other things happened, and all in record time. It was quite the challenge, but their positive, take-charge attitude made all the difference.

Does the work we do at Chez Doris speak to you? Would you like to chip in, individually or as a team? There are plenty of opportunities to get involved in our organization, especially at this time of year. We are currently looking for volunteers to help prepare and serve meals during the holidays to make our celebrations even more magical for the women who come to us.

Go to [Become a Volunteer \(chezdoris.org\)](https://becomeavolunteer.chezdoris.org) or scan the QR code to find out more about what kind of volunteer positions we may have for you.



CAREER OPPORTUNITIES AT CHEZ DORIS

As our programs and services have grown at Chez Doris, so have our staffing needs. We would like to take this opportunity to welcome our newest hires and thank them for having joined us in fulfilling such an important mission.

If you'd like to be part of this amazing organization, take a moment, and have a closer look at our current job listings. You can either scan the QR code or go to the section of our website **Jobs and Internships (chezdoris.org)**.



donate

CHEZ DORIS

45TH ANNUAL FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN

2022

chezdoris.org

CHEZ DORIS

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facebook.com/ChezDorisRefuge

twitter.com/ChezDoris

linkedin.com/company/chez-doris

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. 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 also include emergency beds, 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