



News from Chez Doris **COURRIER**

A safe haven for women in difficulty

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SPRING 2024



CLIENT PROFILE

SINCLAIR SCHOLARSHIP GRADUATE

Hamadi was born in Middle East where she grew up with her grandparents and sister. Five years ago, in her thirties, she decided to move to Canada on her own, in search of a better life and new opportunities. Despite her secretarial experience and her hopes to work in IT, the language barrier and non-recognition of her studies hampered her efforts to find employment in her adopted country. Recommended by an acquaintance in a situation of vulnerability, she began attending Chez Doris in 2017, after finding herself destitute, without resources or support.

Hanadi discovered the range of services offered by Chez Doris after benefitting from the free meals provided at the day shelter. She received valuable help from the staff for her daily needs – clothing, food baskets – and for administrative procedures, such as obtaining a driver’s licence, a health insurance card, and her Canadian citizenship. Her participation in social activities and the mitten-making project also helped her to break out of isolation and build friendships.

When she was recommended to take part in Chez Doris’ back-to-school program, Hanadi quickly realized that this opportunity could change her life. This initiative, made possible thanks to the Sinclair Fund, enabled her to embark on an educational journey while maximizing her chances of success. The purchase of a laptop and textbooks, as well as the transportation costs to get to CDI College in Pointe-Claire, where she also received a scholarship, were all covered.

During her three-month internship, Hanadi gained valuable experience in IT, especially in computer repair and database management. Although facing adaptation challenges, she felt valued in her first paid job in Canada, enjoying the camaraderie of her colleagues.

Today, Hanadi is grateful for this second chance. She strives to improve her language skills and is actively looking for a job in IT. She is aware of the challenges ahead but is determined to make her dreams come true through hard work and perseverance. Hanadi is proud of her journey. She recognizes the significant impact Chez Doris has had on her life and expresses her gratitude towards the organization and its staff. She encourages women in similar situations to seek help from organizations like Chez Doris, to have confidence in themselves, and to step out of their comfort zone to overcome obstacles, emphasizing the importance of building a support network for their personal and professional development.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

At this memorable moment, it is with a great sense of gratitude that we wish to share with you several important news for our organization and the cause we uphold.

We wish to acknowledge with respect and gratitude the contribution of Marina Boulos-Winton, who has announced her departure after a decade at the helm of Chez Doris. Her efforts, vision, and commitment to women experiencing homelessness have marked our organization and had a real impact. We are also filled with renewed optimism as we welcome Diane Pilote as the organization’s new Executive Director.

With her expertise in corporate restructuring, organizational planning, and strategic plan development, she brings immeasurable added value to our organization and an enriching perspective to our team. We are convinced that she will pursue Chez Doris’ mission with great success and that, under her leadership, we will continue to make a positive change in the lives of the women we support.

During this period of transition, we wish to thank all who give a helping hand to Chez Doris: our partners, volunteers, and donors whose support allows us to fulfill our mission every day.

We recognize that the challenges we face are many, but we are also convinced that, through our collective commitment and solidarity, we can overcome all difficulties and continue to work towards a world where all women can live in dignity and safety and with hope.

Together, we can make a difference.

Carole Croteau

Chair of the Board of Directors

“I am honoured and very privileged to be able to hold this position at Chez Doris. The challenges are great, and I am confident that I can contribute to the growth and success of this organization, which is so essential for many women. It is with great enthusiasm that I accept this mission. I am eager to working with the entire team to make this organization a benchmark in support and accompaniment for vulnerable and homeless women,”

emphasizes Diane Pilote, General Manager



Carole Croteau
Chair of the Board of Directors

Diane Pilote
General Manager



REOPENING OF THE DAY SHELTER

Our day shelter gradually reopened its doors last December, Monday to Friday, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. As before the pandemic, we offer again free meals to vulnerable women living in housing and those experiencing homelessness.

To better meet the growing needs of our community, we have used that temporary closure to undertake renovations to create more welcoming, functional, and safe spaces. We increased the seating capacity of the dining area from 50 to 85 to accommodate our two types of clients and installed a new fire alarm system that complies with the current safety standards. In addition, works and aesthetic additions have been carried out in our common rooms, such as the installation of new lighting fixtures and the refurbishment of our walls.

This work also involved optimizing our employees' work facilities. In addition to these initiatives, we have purchased and installed a new stove in our kitchen to allow our staff to work more efficiently and thus provide quality meals to our beneficiaries in the best possible conditions.

GIVING TUESDAY GIFT CARD PROGRAM

Last November, as part of the global Giving Tuesday event, we launched our "Offer Them Food Security" fundraising campaign. The seven-day initiative aimed at raising \$100,000 to enhance the food security for over 150 women each month, with the support of an anonymous donor who matched all donations up to \$50,000. The funds raised were earmarked to feed the women by providing them with grocery gift cards through our food program. Our campaign was a tremendous success, not only did we reach our goal, but also far exceeded it by raising a remarkable sum of more than \$165,000. Thanks to the generosity of our donors and our main anonymous donor, we have been able to increase the number of annual beneficiaries already supported by 75. This translates into a total of 3,300 gift cards that we will be able to give to these women in 2024. This aid will be especially important at a time when food prices are rising steadily, hitting hard the women who rely on the government assistance of \$887 per month to meet their essential expenses.



NEW TRAINING PROGRAM IN THE KITCHEN

Financially supported by the City of Montreal, Chez Doris' new Pre-Employability Program in the Kitchen is set to run until December 31, 2025. Launched in October 2023, this innovative program started with thorough research by one of our social workers to evaluate best practices. In November, our clients began their culinary training in our kitchen, supervised by our head chef and an intervention worker, committing five hours a week to learning.

Designed for women aged 18 and over living with mental health issues and who have been out of the workforce for several years, this initiative offers individualized support, transferable life skills and a six-month follow-up after graduation, including job search assistance. Currently, four women are enrolled in the program, with a graduation ceremony scheduled for May.

Each participant receives comprehensive coaching that includes cooking and life skills workshops, as well as material benefits such as free uniforms, a bus pass, and a \$200 monthly allowance for kitchen work.

This program is part of an ongoing effort to provide skill development opportunities for vulnerable and homeless women. By teaching them kitchen skills, we aim to empower them, provide them with employment opportunities and facilitate their social reintegration. By acquiring hands-on expertise, these women can not only provide for their food needs in a nutritious way, but also develop a sense of pride and self-confidence.





The holiday season can be a time of loneliness for some vulnerable and homeless women. That's why, during the whole month of December, we organized several festive activities to support our clients in these sometimes difficult times. To kick off the celebrations, the women had the privilege of enjoying lunches prepared and served by the City of Montreal's firefighters during an event held at our day shelter. Then, nearly 200 sheltered women participated in a gift distribution and photo session with Santa Claus, where they received bags filled with treats and a gift card of their choice. Homeless women also took part in a special celebration featuring a magician, bingo, manicures, and a festive meal served by City of Montreal police officers. The day ended with 71 women receiving gift cards and presents. To wrap up these festivities, on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, a meal accompanied by sweets and a shoe box filled with gifts was delivered to the women residing in our permanent residences, much to their surprise. The echoes of laughter and joy still resonate within the walls of our facilities, marking unforgettable moments of sharing and happiness.

Alongside these numerous activities, starting December 11, every Monday, Wednesday and Thursday of the month, our housed clients were able to enjoy a restaurant outing in small groups of 10, accompanied by our socio-recreational animator. This initiative has been essential in breaking the isolation that some of them feel due to broken ties with their families or loved ones. These events were made possible thanks to the invaluable commitment of our volunteers and donors, who deeply care about the well-being of all women in difficulty. Without their support, none of this would have been possible.

ACT OF GENEROSITY

During the holiday season, the Air Canada team demonstrated a generous commitment to Chez Doris. Their contribution took the form of a \$450 donation in food gift cards, as well as essential items such as hygiene products and winter clothing, accompanied by treats. In addition, a manicure was offered to homeless women as part of a Christmas dinner held on December 19 at our day shelter, helping to boost their self-esteem in a caring and safe environment. We extend our deepest gratitude to the Air Canada team for this gesture, which provided much-needed support to the women we assist.

“Our team is proud to have participated in this collective effort, which aimed to break isolation and bring comfort to vulnerable women by donating essential items and offering manicure sessions during the holiday season. The Air Canada team is delighted to have been able to help create this beautiful, warm, and humane experience for those who need it most.”

– The Air Canada Team



MARINA BOULOS-WINTON'S DEPARTURE

After a decade of dedication at the helm of Chez Doris, we bid farewell with respect and immense gratitude to our Executive Director, Marina Boulos-Winton. Her tireless efforts, inspiring vision and unwavering commitment to vulnerable and homeless women have forever marked our organization and have had a tangible impact on the lives of many.

The incredible growth Chez Doris has experienced over the past ten years, both in terms of services offered to women and in the acquisition of spaces to meet homelessness-related needs, is largely due to Marina's ability to sensitize and mobilize the Montreal community about the importance of our cause. Thank you, Marina, for your profound impact and invaluable contributions to Chez Doris.



2024 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

We are delighted to invite you to our Annual General Meeting (AGM) on June 18, 2024. This event is of great importance to our organization as it allows us to present our financial results, the summary of our activities as well as our most recent initiatives, including our new permanent residence and the reopening of the day shelter, now accessible to housed and homeless women. We will as well present our new management team structure, designed to provide better service to our clients and to create an optimal working environment for our employees, and our future projects for the coming year.

We look forward to seeing you in great numbers!

Location

The Church of St. Andrew and St. Paul,
3415 Redpath Street, Montreal, QC H3G 2G2

Date

June 18, 2024, 5:30 PM

To confirm your attendance

514-937-2341, ext. 245, or
administration@chezdoris.org.



POSTPONEMENT OF THE FUNDRAISING COCKTAIL CALL FOR DONATIONS

Due to the extra effort and time required to manage five points of service instead of just one within a few years, along with the exponential increase in our clientele, we regret to inform you that we are unable to hold our fundraising cocktail this year. All our efforts are focused on offering the best possible service to our clients.

We plan to host a new cocktail party in spring 2025. In the meantime, we would sincerely appreciate if you could consider donating your planned contribution to the June event to help offset our significantly increased spending to help women in need.

donate **CHEZ DORIS 2024** 47th annual fundraising campaign

Chez Doris is a charitable organization that offers a wide range of services to any woman in difficulty. Every day, we welcome up to 100 women in a welcoming and safe environment.

Our services and programs include: a day shelter, meals, access to showers and hygiene products, respite beds, an overnight shelter with 24 beds, telephone information and referrals, a financial management program, Indigenous cultural programs, a housing placement and support service, physical and mental health services, legal services, tax preparation service, educational and socio-recreational programs as well as two social housing units.

Registration number 101835841RR0001

Mission

To support and empower any woman who is in a precarious situation to realize her full potential.

Vision

That anyone who identifies as a woman and is vulnerable or experiencing homelessness in our city feels safe, is treated with dignity and has the opportunity to thrive.

Valeurs

Inclusion • Equity • Dignity • Compassion

Chez Doris

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