



LIVING OFF 100\$ PER MONTH: IT'S FAR FROM ENOUGH!

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CHEZ DORIS
AMBASSADOR
AND PARTNER
TO REOPEN
THE FULFORD
RESIDENCE

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THREE WOMEN, NOW OFF THE STREETS, SHARE THEIR STORIES

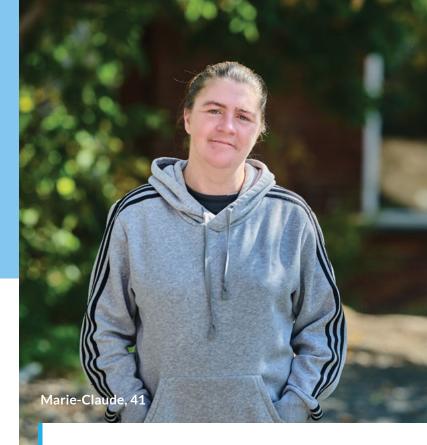
At the Marcelle et Jean Coutu Residence, a simple gathering with a table, four chairs, and three women willing to share their life stories created a moment of magic. With the reassuring presence of their support worker Oly, Marie-Claude, Marie, and Jackie began tentatively, but quickly grew more confident as they sensed they were in a safe space.

THE BEST DAY OF MY LIFE: MEETING MY NINE-YEAR-OLD SON FOR THE FIRST TIME

Marie-Claude, 41, has a long and difficult history with addiction. As she herself admits, she used to welcome help—to a point. Inevitably, she would go back to shooting up. She struggled to maintain her sobriety and spent two decades living on the streets after being kicked out of her home at a young age. Her turning point came after a tragedy: giving birth on the street, only to have her son taken away by the Director of Youth Protection (DYP).







With tears in her eyes, she recalls the joy of seeing him again for the first time nine years later—her best day ever—and looks forward to celebrating Halloween with him!

Today, Chez Doris represents stability for Marie-Claude. Where she once came for meals, she now prepares food for other women, proud of her progress. For the first time, she is about to pay her own bills, taking charge of her life.

Marie, 54, has been a resident at Résidence Marcelle et Jean Coutu for a year, celebrating a big achievement: her first year of sobriety. An author of three novels and a former teacher, she lost her way, believing she could control her substance use. This delusion led her to the streets and estrangement from her children.

She became totally dependent on her son, who cared for her despite the pain of seeing her trapped in a life of addiction and homelessness. It was the news of her youngest daughter's pregnancy and imminent delivery that prompted her to seek help and enter rehab.

HAVING MY OWN PILLOW: **WORTH ITS WEIGHT IN GOLD**

Jackie, 35, struggled with alcoholism for years, along with her partner. Although they both appeared high functioning, at a certain point, she recognized the need for change. When she decided to stop drinking, her partner's abuse escalated, leading her to the streets during the pandemic.

These memories are painful, and as she recounts them, her emotions surface. For a long time, she found it difficult to trust support workers, but eventually established a great connection with one who guided her to Chez Doris, marking the beginning of a new chapter.

Since December 2023. Jackie has called the Résidence Marcelle et Jean Coutu home. It has been a true blessing, allowing her to envision a peaceful future, take sewing classes, and share her space with her cat, Jenny. The simple pleasure of no longer carrying her life in a bag has made an enormous difference.

With emotion, Marie speaks of the warmth she found at Chez Doris, where she began to regain her independence. Her children and five grandchildren welcomed her back into their lives, and she finds joy in cooking for them, relishing the return to normalcy.

Every night, she thinks of the Coutu family, especially Marie-Josée, whom she had the opportunity to meet at the opening of the residence. The family has forever changed her life.



FEELING FULLY HUMAN

The greatest challenge for these three women is overcoming the harsh judgments of others. After years of feeling dehumanized, they struggled with self-esteem. Thanks to Chez Doris, they are finally experiencing compassion and understanding, enabling them to see beyond their pasts.

For the first time in a long while, they feel recognized as whole individuals—and this newfound recognition has given them wings.

OLY, A TOWER OF QUIET STRENGTH

At first blush, Oly's vibrant energy can be intimidating. However, her infectious laughter quickly disarms those around her, revealing a deep sense of compassion. In initial conversations, she is discreet about her own past, yet it's easy to surmise that, like the women at Résidence Marcelle et Jean Coutu, she has weathered her share of dark times. Oly tends to keep her own story private, prioritizing the well-being of the women she supports in her role as a senior support worker.

Her dedication to their journeys is heartfelt. She beams with pride when she describes the joy of seeing a resident rise with a big smile, serene and rested after a night in a proper bed. Every day, she walks alongside them as they rebuild their lives—encouraging them, helping them regain their confidence, and offering comfort during setbacks. She has wiped away countless tears, including her own, providing a warm, compassionate shoulder.



« When I come to work at the Residence, I am always blown away. Each woman, in her own way and in her own time, recovers her dignity and her independence. All we need to do is show her that there are people who truly believe in her. That's what I love most about my job! »

PREVENTION IS KEY!

When a woman finds the courage to step through the doors of Chez Doris, she may be carrying a burden of trauma or struggling to meet her basic needs. It's crucial that **we welcome these women without judgment.**

At Chez Doris, our goal is to offer preventive support. But first we must offer the essentials: food, a place to sleep, clothing, and a safe space. Then we can help them with skill development.

Chez Doris offers several **support programs, including** a **financial management program designed to help women set up and manage a budget.** This program offers them support in getting their bills paid and filing taxes, as well as home visits and psychosocial care.

Regaining or improving control over their lives brings immense satisfaction. It boosts their confidence in achieving independence and provides them with a sense of self worth. More than just providing the tools they need, the program helps women becoming homeless or helping them break free from that cycle.

The comprehensive range of services and programs at Chez Doris reflects the belief that vulnerability is not just a label. Each woman has her own story. She could be a sister, a mother, a daughter. Offering her a meal is our first act of inclusion. It may seem like a small gesture, but it's often the first step in showing her that she's not alone. She then can begin to take steps toward her growth and autonomy.



YOUR GIFTS ARE MORE IMPORTANT THAN EVER

We proudly opened the Résidence Marcelle et Jean Coutu on September 6, marking a significant milestone for our community..

Marie-Claude, Marie, and Jackie's stories speak to the profound impact your support has on the lives of the women we serve, as well as on their loved ones, with whom they are reconnecting after difficult times.

Isolation exacerbates homelessness. Many times, mental health issues or dependencies push away loved ones. They can only watch their mothers or sisters transform into people they no longer recognize and feel helpless to support.

At Chez Doris, we intervene at various stages in the homelessness cycle. Our programs accompany clients as they seek sustainable and stable housing solutions.

Women at risk of homelessness join us for meals and activities, fostering social connections with peers and specialized support workers. For those currently experiencing homelessness, Chez Doris offers essential resources and programs that provide comfort and support as we help them find long-term housing.



Our feminist approach ensures that we meet women where they are on their journey, welcoming them into our organization without judgment. This creates a safe environment where they can begin to reclaim their dignity and move forward.

As the cold season approaches, the need for safe, warm places becomes even more urgent. Your contributions are crucial now more than ever, enabling Chez Doris to support as many women as possible. Thank you for your continued generosity!

Carole Croteau

Chair of the Board, Chez Doris



CHEZ DORIS WELCOMES ELISE MONAGHAN JOUBERT TO LEAD OUR FUNDRAISING EFFORTS

This past August, we were thrilled to welcome Elise Monaghan Joubert as our new Director of Philanthropy. Elise brings more than 20 years invaluable experience in fundraising management to support our mission of providing essential services to more than 1500 vulnerable women in Montreal each year.





Before joining us, Elise played a key role in the success of several prestigious institutions, including McGill University, the MUHC Foundation, the Canadian Cancer Society, and the AXA Foundation in New York. Her extensive background in strategic philanthropy and expertise in major donor relations make her an invaluable addition to our team. Her work promises to significantly enhance our capacity to uplift women from poverty and insecurity.

Fulford Residence Campaign

In her new role, Elise will oversee all philanthropic efforts at Chez Doris. A top priority is leading an \$8 million campaign to restore and re-open the Fulford Residence, a historic Montreal building long dedicated to serving vulnerable women. This expansion will allow us to provide even greater support and foster independence for women facing poverty.

Welcome, Elise!

CHEZ DORIS EXPRESSES APPRECIATION TO MILA MULRONEY FOR HER COMMITMENT TO THE CAUSE AND HER INVOLVEMENT IN THE FULFORD RESIDENCE CAMPAIGN

"Montreal is a great city. Sadly, there is still a lot that needs to be done to help our homeless women. My involvement came from a place where I remembered being an immigrant to Montreal as a young girl. My mother spoke no English and no French. When we came, we just got by. These days we have to help Chez Doris help those that are not as fortunate. Women are the backbone of our society. Helping them is helping us all."

Ms. Mila Mulroney, Chez Doris Ambassador and Partner to reopen the Fulford Residence



\$100 A MONTH TO SURVIVE: IT'S JUST NOT ENOUGH!

Last March, I stepped into the role of Executive Director at Chez Doris, following a few months as Director of Operations where I gained valuable insights into the vulnerabilities of women in our community. Over time, I have developed a deep connection with the women we serve, and my passion for our mission has only grown. I firmly believe that prevention—beyond just support—is within our reach. However, one undeniable truth remains: **funding is the lifeblood of this work!**

Every month, hundreds of women come to Chez Doris with a simple dream: to live with dignity.

"Now, imagine if, after paying your rent, you were left with just \$100 to last the entire month. This is the harsh reality for an increasing number of the women who walk through our doors."





It's clear that \$100 is simply insufficient to cover basic necessities like food, clothing, and transportation. The current economic climate and housing crisis have only intensified these challenges, making it harder than ever for these women to achieve independence. At Chez Doris, we strive to support them by providing prepaid cards for food, budgetary advice, free meals, activities to combat isolation, and invaluable emotional support. More than anything, our clients need a welcoming presence—another woman ready to stand by them on their journey toward self-sufficiency.

To sustain our programs, we need your help! Your donations are crucial to fund the range of services that empower these women to reclaim their dignity and acquire the tools necessary to move from insecurity to independence.

Our programs also play a vital role in halting the downward spiral, preventing the most vulnerable women from returning to the streets.

As we look ahead, let's remember that November 3, 2024, marks the 50th anniversary of Doris's death. At a young age, Doris fled her life in Halifax to escape violence, embarking on a difficult journey. She envisioned a safe space for women in similar situations, free from invasive oversight or too many questions. While she may never know the place that honours her name, I am confident that if she could see us now, she would take joy in our achievements. In her memory, we carry the responsibility to continue our mission of hospitality and support.

Diane PiloteExecutive Director

WANTED: KIND-HEARTED PEOPLE

Chez Doris is looking for volunteers who are interested in making a real difference to help our women in need. It's simple: you just need to give a little bit of your time, share your skills and your compassion.

Our needs are urgent. We are looking for:

- △ Psychologists or psychotherapists
- △ Family doctor for our Day clinic

For any inquiries or suggestions, please feel free to contact our volunteer coordinator at **rhetta.parnas@doris.org** or **514** 937-2341 ext. 238.

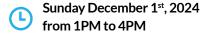


HOLIDAY FAIR, BY THE WOMEN OF CHEZ DORIS

This festive event is the perfect opportunity to find gifts and articles made by our talented women (mittens, scented candles, etc.) to fill your loved ones with holiday joy, all while encouraging our mission and helping vulnerable women living in homelessness, poverty or insecurity.









The needs are urgent. | **HELP US!**

Donate to help us reach our goal of guiding 2000 women on their path to self reliance by 2027.

2000 E CHALLENGE

Scan the QR code or visit **chezdoris.org**

