

**THE YMCA OF MCGILL UNIVERSITY**

**(THE YELLOW DOOR)**

**ANNUAL ACTIVITIES REPORT**

**2005 - 2006**

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## President's Report

One of my favorite things about the Yellow Door is that it truly offers something for everyone. It touches people from all generations. Thanks to the tireless staff of the Yellow Door interest from seniors in programs like Access Internet, the Yellow Ribbon Social Club and Elderly Project continues to rise. More and more students make their way to the Yellow Door each year. Sometimes they visit us to get food from the Food for Thought program or enjoy a healthy lunch at the Rabbit Hole Café. Sometimes they come to listen to music in our cozy Coffeehouse on the weekends. Often they come to give their time and improve their community by being one of our volunteers.

The Board of Directors had an energizing planning meeting in February, at which we decided to focus our energies on fundraising, recruiting new and diverse board members and continuing to raise our public profile. Our aim is to keep spreading the word about our excellent intergenerational programs.

The fundraising committee kept busy this year by planning another entertaining "Comedy for a Cause" event and coordinating our annual fundraising letter campaign. The committee also continues to hold bake sales on McGill campus to raise a bit of money and tell students what the Yellow Door is all about. We have also begun focusing on exploring funding possibilities for specific projects like the Yellow Ribbon Social Club and Access Internet projects.

I am honoured to have been involved in another successful year serving and enjoying the community at the Yellow Door. Thank you to the members of Board of Directors, the fundraising committee, the executive committee and Pietro Bozzo for your ongoing hard work and support. Thank you to all of the Yellow Door staff. You have done an excellent job keeping our programs running smoothly and effectively. Your energy and enthusiasm are inspiring. And, last but not least, thank you to everyone who supports the Yellow Door by giving generously during our fundraising campaigns.

*Alexis Nolan*

*President*



## **General Secretary's Report**

### **Understanding Our Role**

Understanding the role of community organizations in our society is important not only for decision-makers, but also for users and service providers. A global perspective of the mission, history and make-up of each organization can help to define our roles both collectively and individually. The result can be a more fluid line of communication between all concerned parties and a more effective social safety net.

In the case of the Yellow Door, it is crucial to recognize its history to fully comprehend the scope of each existing program. Naturally, the social, educational and health-related characteristics of the community have evolved considerably during the last one hundred years. To be effective, the Yellow Door has had to adapt to these societal changes.

It is no accident that programs like the Elderly Project and the Coffeehouse continue to attract both volunteers and users. In each case, the programs still manage to fulfill a specific role in our community. The question is, how can we keep these programs pertinent and up to date? To begin with, we must determine the relevance of each program by looking at their respective origins. For instance, the Elderly Project was created in 1972 essentially to give volunteer support to the senior population in the downtown community. The goal was to break the elderly's isolation and to enhance their autonomy. This could be achieved by recruiting students with some spare time to help seniors with daily living tasks and also to provide them with some much needed companionship. Historically, this project suited the mission of the organization. By helping isolated seniors, students could learn and grow as individuals. It was a perfect match. Furthermore, by establishing relationships between these two

generations, the Elderly Project was pioneering a new approach in the provision of volunteer services to the elderly.

The context was therefore well suited to the creation of what we still call the Yellow Door Elderly Project. In 1972, the surrounding community consisted of a growing business presence, an aging and relatively poor local population, and a growing student population thanks to the four large universities situated in relative proximity to each other.

Thirty-four years later, those conditions are still prevalent in our territory, despite the influx of young professionals into what used to be low cost housing. Indeed, the gentrification of the local area may eventually force a slow exodus of the older and poorer population. However, Canada's census figures still show us that the elderly population is growing and most of them are living below the poverty line.

Moreover, the facts that people are generally living longer coupled with the reality that governmental health and social services budgets are shrinking make the need for volunteer services even greater.

Therefore, to remain pertinent and up to date, the Elderly Project must continue to offer the same opportunities to both volunteers and clients. It is in doing so that it can contribute to the development of community service and also the betterment of individuals both professionally and personally.

This is just one example of how an organization like the Yellow Door can stay cogent in its community. Additional examples can be seen in our other programs. Over the last twelve months, we have witnessed a resurgence in the popularity of the Coffeehouse program, and a solidification of both Chaplaincy projects known as the Rabbit Hole Café and Food For Thought.

Most of this increased interest in our activities has been the direct result of a concerted effort to raise our visibility. More promotions, public service announcements, newspaper interviews, a much improved newsletter, and a more interesting website have combined to increase public awareness. However,

these elements do not detract from the fact that the Yellow Door is still responding to real needs in our community.

Our continued success depends on how well we can spread the word about our programs, services and overall opportunities. It will no doubt be a constant challenge to find new and innovative ways to accomplish this feat.

### *Special Funding*

Jocelyn Porter and Jessie Sutherland were recruited last year to co-coordinate the Access Internet project on a voluntary basis. It was hoped that during this time, a sponsor would be found to finance a part-time salary. Thus far, no one has come forward with the necessary financing. None the less, Jocelyn and Jessie have continued to manage the requests with their limited schedule. As the Elderly Project statistics will show, the popularity of the service is still remarkable despite the lack of funding. Hopefully, the Yellow Door will have greater success in the next fiscal year in finding some recurrent funding to allow the program to flourish.

The Yellow Door had a little more success in finding some temporary funding for its Yellow Ribbon Social Club. Thanks to the discretionary budget of Mister Jacques Chagnon MLA for the riding of St-Marie, we were able to provide a part-time salary for an 11 week period. Perhaps it will be possible to continue the funding in 2006-2007 through the same discretionary budget plus other local sources.

Meanwhile, both programs continue to attract the attention of clients and volunteers. Nathalie Morin of L'Office d'habitation de Montréal and Mélanie Lapointe of the CSSS-Métro have collaborated with our coordinators to recruit clients and assure the cooperation of the tenants committee of the Residence Durocher. The result has been not only the recruitment of new clients for the Social Club, but also for the Elderly Project and Access Internet.

### *Hard Work Pays Off*

We started the current fiscal year by slowly replacing our entire coordination team. Aileen Borrueal and Katherine Black were hired as Elderly Project coordinators, Holly Fleming was recruited to manage the Coffeehouse program, Heather Unger was hired to coordinate the Rabbit Hole Café through McGill's Work Study program and Carmen Martens was recruited to do her Social Work internship as the Food For Thought project Coordinator. Later on in the year, we hired Jesika Starnino to head the Yellow Ribbon Social Club while volunteers Jessie Sutherland and Jocelyn Porter ran the Access Internet program. In addition, we had the good fortune of having Shannon Webb and Marcus Boire as our 2005 Summer Career Placement students.

These individuals were largely responsible for our successes during the past year. They brought innovation, motivation creativity and caring to their jobs. As their supervisor and colleague, I was privileged to work alongside each of them. The Yellow Door is fortunate for also having a great support staff: Yves Lachance, Gilbert Roudier, Bill and Pat Smith and Edward Charow. They, along with a core of veteran Board members have provided and continue to provide a sound base from which to launch new programs and sustain current ones.

#### *Board and Advisory Committee*

**Officers:** Alexis Nolan, President; Susan Campbell, Vice-President; Flo Tracy, Chair, Personnel Committee; Mark Guilbault, Treasurer; Carolyn J. Pepler, Past President.

**Members:** Rhonda Amsel, Syed Attulah, Roger Balk, Gida Cotron, Barbara Jarnes, Ainsley Jenisek, Tim Merret, H.S. Monahan, Channing Rodman, Vanessa Sakadakis, Martha Ann Stewart, Seema Whig.

#### **Special Thanks**

Finally, I would like to extend my special thanks to all the individuals mentioned above for their support and friendship during the past year. After close to twelve years as General Secretary, I am very grateful for having had the opportunity to

work with this extraordinary organization and look forward to future challenges for the Yellow Door.

*Pietro Bozzo*

*General Secretary*



## **Elderly Project Report**

Below is an official account of the Elderly Project's Activities for the last twelve (12) months. This is followed by a statistical report on volunteer and client numbers for the same period.

### **Overview**

In August 2005, the two new Elderly Project coordinators took on the challenge of becoming familiar with all of our clients and volunteers and figuring out how to run the program efficiently and according to our needs. Throughout the year, we continued to adapt logistically and tried to improve all aspects of the program. We focused on client recruitment in particular while continuing to recruit volunteers. We also focused on providing volunteer training workshops and making our client and volunteer parties as enjoyable as possible. We helped the General Secretary to restart the Social Club and subsequently reaped the benefits of having another coordinator on staff, Jesika Starnino.

### **John Molson School of Business Internship**

Kim Salée-Roberts, a marketing student from Concordia University did an excellent job during her eleven-week stage as the Elderly Project's Events and Communications Coordinator. Kim took over the Social Club and was responsible for planning and running the activities and outings on a weekly basis. They enjoyed picnics at Westmount Park, the Jazz Festival, and a trip to the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts and the Westmount Library. This year was a special one for the Social Club because it was celebrating its one-year

anniversary. Kim did a fantastic job planning this event, which took place at the Foyer Durocher on June 15. Over 35 guests showed up, including many Social Club members and volunteers, CLSC social workers, political party representatives, and Yellow Door staff. The event was a huge success! In July there was the Summer Party, which was also organized by Kim from the Yellow Door, along with Entraide Bénévole Métro, CLSC Métro and the Manoir Charles-Dutaud. Over 100 guests showed up at the Lighthouse Community Centre and they all had a good time at the “Western” theme party! Apart from all the activity and event planning, Kim also worked along side Benjamin Shingler as Elderly Project coordinator and assisted with all the duties. Kim also used her creative skills in creating our beautiful fall newsletter as well assisting in translating the articles. Clearly, Kim contributed much to the Yellow Door and was certainly missed when she left in August. However, Kim continues to graciously offer her time in translating articles for our newsletters. Thank you Kim for all the hard work you put into the Elderly Project!

#### **Summer HRDC Students**

Summer at the Yellow Door wouldn't be the same without its HRDC Summer Career Placement students, Marcus Boire and Shannon Webb. For ten weeks, Marcus and Shannon did a great job in assisting with the Elderly Project, especially since they were already volunteers of ours. Both Marcus and Shannon did friendly visiting and each saw two clients on a regular basis as well as doing many accompaniments and helping out with the Social Club. They were always there to assist the Elderly Project coordinators and help with office work. Marcus also took on the role as full-time coordinator of Access Internet with the help of co-coordinator at the time, Claire Rillie, and made sure everything went smoothly. We are very grateful for all of the work that Shannon and Marcus did for us.

**Program Services: Friendly Visiting, Accompaniments and Friendly Favours**

In September, we received the usual influx of new volunteers and thus needed more clients to match the demand. To meet this demand quickly we gave some clients an additional friendly visitor and asked existing “accompaniment-only” clients if they would like to receive friendly visits. Many of them were interested. Then we launched a client recruitment campaign, which included postering in local community associations, schools, churches, local CLSCs and other community partners. We pursued a closer relationship with another organization that thrives on young volunteers, Santropol Roulant. We accompanied Santropol Roulant volunteers on their routes to distribute information to potential clients face-to-face. We also secured community service announcements on CFCF 12 and Global TV, and approaching local print media with article pitches. This resulted in print articles about the Elderly Project and Access Internet in *The Senior Times* and *The Gazette* and a feature-length cover story in Concordia University’s *The Link*. This client recruitment campaign resulted in a closer relationship with our community partners, a perceived increase in client referrals, and increased visibility of The Yellow Door in general. We received many self-referrals from clients as a result of the newspaper articles in particular. In total, the Elderly Project and Access Internet received 46 new clients during the year 2005-2006.

In the Elderly Project office, we abandoned our old email system and, with the help of volunteer Shathies Atputharajah, we began using Gmail. Nevertheless, phone contact remained the primary way that we keep in touch with our clients. The coordinators, stagiaires and office volunteers spent a good part of the day on the phone with potential or current clients.

Throughout the year, we slowly moved towards a much-needed re-vamping of our website. This was finally accomplished in May 2006 thanks to many hours put in by volunteers Christopher Obwanga and Jesse Sutherland. Past volunteer Victor Lee also taught staff how to update the website themselves.

#### **Volunteer Recruitment, Training and Recognition**

We recruited volunteers through new and old channels this year, through McGill University and also by word-of-mouth. The Yellow Door's wonderful reputation makes volunteer recruitment very easy for the coordinators! In total, we trained 180 new volunteers in 2005-2006.

We hosted three volunteer workshops this year with an average attendance of 15 volunteers per workshop. These workshops trained volunteers to better understand issues affecting the elderly and to better communicate with their clients. We would like to especially thank Vanessa Sakadakis, Carly Pepler and the Sexual Assault Centre of the McGill Students' Society (SACOMSS) for leading the workshops. We started issuing volunteer photo ID cards in the spring of 2006. We hope that these cards will give accompaniment volunteers in particular a way to identify themselves if the need arises.

#### **Office Volunteers**

Our office volunteers Lisa Wilkinson and Caitlin Good were a huge help to the Elderly Project. They came into the office once a week for a whole school year and assisted with photocopies, filing, entering data, creating birthday cards for clients and making phone calls to volunteers for events. Anna Waring is another wonderful office volunteer who joined us in January.

#### **Volunteer Social Events**

We are aware that our volunteers don't get many opportunities to meet their fellow volunteers because they are often on a one-to-one basis with their clients. To fill this need we started hosting monthly coffee chats here at the Yellow Door where volunteers can get to know each other and discuss their volunteer experiences with coordinators and their fellow volunteers.

#### **Volunteer Gala**

In April we had our Annual Volunteer Gala to thank all the volunteers of the Yellow Door for their hard work and dedication throughout the year. The gala was

held at restaurant La Cabane Greque and the event was a success with a turnout of 59 guests.

### **Satellite Services**

**Accès Internet** – Access Internet continues to be successful in teaching seniors how to use a computer and surf the web. We found that with all our advertisements, clients have really become interested in learning how to use the Internet and the number of clients has grown. This year we made new ties with St. Margaret's Day Centre, where several Access Internet volunteers work with their clients each week.

Access Internet has been so fortunate to have such a dedicated volunteer coordinator, Jocelyn Porter. Gavin Smith also did a great job in assisting Jocelyn as volunteer coordinator from September to December 2005. Presently, Jesse Sutherland and Jocelyn make an excellent team in recruiting and training volunteers and assessing and managing the clients.

**The Yellow Ribbon Social Club** – Despite delays due to renovation of the club's meeting room at 425 Sherbrooke, the Yellow Ribbon Social Club re-opened in January 2006 under the direction of Jesika Starnino and a team of dedicated volunteers. Hired thanks to a grant from Jacques Chagnon's office, Jesika proved to be a wonderful coordinator who got the club back on its feet and then some. In May 2006, we received another grant from Laurence Bergman at the Ministry of Revenue to prolong the Social Club for another four weeks. As always, we wish we had more funding for this increasingly popular client service.

### **Social Events for Clients**

We had two client Christmas parties in 2005, one hosted jointly with EBM and the Manoir Charles-Dutaud and one Yellow Door party, which was held at Bishop Mountain Hall. We hope to improve on a good thing next year and continue the tradition of the Yellow Door's own Christmas party.

## Stagiaires

This year we received three stagiaires from the École des Métiers des Faubourgs' homecare program. It was a boon to us to have such caring and dedicated stagiaires who were also all native French speakers. We also had two stagiaires from the occupational therapy program at the University of Montreal, two from the McGill School of Social Work and one from the Pearson Adult and Career Centre. All stagiaires did friendly visiting and assisted with other activities such as the Social Club.

*Aileen Borruel and Katherine Black*  
*Elderly Project Coordinators*



## Chaplaincy Report

### Food For Thought and the Rabbit Hole Cafe Programs

For a second year, a social work intern ran the Food for Thought emergency food resource. Carmen Martens staffed the programme on Thursdays and Fridays, working in close collaboration with the Rabbit Hole Café coordinator, Heather Unger. As in previous years, both the Yellow Door and Chaplaincy Service supported the Rabbit Hole Café position, with the Work-Study programme covering part of the cost. The Rabbit Hole Café had consistently high participation, frequently over thirty students. The 2005-2006 year was noteworthy for the greater integration of the two aspects of the Y.D. food security projects, and for the well-run volunteer schedule. RHC equipment was significantly upgraded, and in recognition of the very responsible delivery of the project, Pietro Bozzo sought and received approval to have a stove installed in the FFT office. This has transformed the capacity and quality of the RHC and made it much easier to integrate volunteers in the food preparation.

Under C. Martens' direction, FFT held educational lunch talks on body image and on budgeting. Together, C. Martens and H. Unger hosted a cooking workshop

and produced two recipe collections, to the great appreciation of participants and of Holiday Hamper recipients.

In addition to funding from Chaplaincy Service and the many contributions of the Yellow Door, the projects benefited from the Mazon Foundation, the Principal's Skating Party and smaller staff contributions, and a Saint Andrew and Saint Paul Presbyterian Church grant for food vouchers (the latter administered through Chaplaincy Service.)

Finally, the Food for Thought, Rabbit Hole and Coffeehouse coordinators partnered with Sarah Parks Ricker to paint, re-cover and decorate the basement in a fresh, welcoming 'Mediterranean' gold and blue colour scheme.

While Carmen Martens now moves on to a clinical *stage*, Heather expects to be available for another year at the Rabbit Hole, and we are pleased that we expect to be assigned another social work student.

#### **Student Christian Movement**

For four Thursdays in October-November, students gathered at the Yellow Door for a lively discussion series entitled *Jesus and Empire*, a challenging view of the engagement of the 'Jesus movement' with the colonial regime in first-century Palestine. The discussions were led by Ph.D. candidate Mario Di Giglio-Bellemare.

The tradition of collaboration between the Yellow Door and Chaplaincy is a highly valued aspect of Chaplaincy Service.

*Reverend Gwenda Wells*

*McGill Chaplaincy Director*



#### **Coffeehouse Report**

I want to start out by thanking Peter Bozzo for giving me an opportunity that has and continues to enhance my life and work in countless ways. I hope the Yellow Door Coffeehouse remains part of my life experience for a long time to come.

## Highlights

Apart from the great shows that have happened since September, all of which are varied and interesting in unique ways, all of which have helped my volunteers and I grow the big highlight this year has been the renovations in the coffeehouse.

Last February, with the help of Carmen and Heather from the Rabbit Hole Cafe and Sara from McGill Chaplaincy and with the financial support of the Yellow Door and McGill Chaplaincy, we were able to give the old basement the face lift it deserved. It is nice and bright and yellow with little lights and gauze of different colors on the ceiling and the old couches have been re-upholstered with the same Denim that is on the stools. It is quite beautiful and the artists and audience members alike appreciate the warm ambiance the renovations have created.

Another highlight is that for the first time in a few years we are extending our season from the beginning of May until mid-July.

## Finances

At the beginning of the year finances were slim. On an average night the Coffeehouse brought in 15 people and with ticket prices at \$5.00 for Friday's and \$6.00 for Saturdays.

Between September 16 and December 31, 2005 the Coffeehouse brought in roughly \$500.00 but since then ticket prices were raised to \$6.00 for Friday's and \$7.00 for Saturdays (sometimes \$8.00 and even \$10.00 for certain shows).

Groups that drew great crowds were re-hired resulting in about seven or eight sold out nights. I am consistently trying to put the word out so more and more we are getting audience members from my e-mail list (that now is at 500 and will continue to grow from each show) and from different sources. To date I send our press releases to 18 different sources (including the Gazette, the Hour, the

Mirror, the McGill Daily, the Concordian, CKUT's listing, etc.) and will continue to find new places to advertise our venue.

As a result, since January we have deposited \$824.00 (after renovations expenses which were roughly \$100.00 and all other expenses) and have another couple of hundred from the last three weeks and will continue to have concerts until July 09, 2006 hosting and closing the season with Jazz concerts in conjunction with the Montreal Jazz Festival.

### **Artists**

Some of the artists that have played this season are Rob Lutes, Stephen Barry, Andrea Revel, Joe Grass, Robert David, The Echo Hunters, William McNally, Raquel Hoekman (last year's Canadian Idol contestant), Only Forward, Howie, formerly from Bear Left, Colin Perry and Blind and many talented McGill students who blew me away at open mic, and although not as well known to the folk scene in Montreal brought great audiences and their own unique charm.

The Coffeehouse is almost booked until the end of the season and we hope to get Linda Morrison, Dakota Dave Hull and many others lined up for the fall of 2006.

### **Goals**

I could not have done any of this without the help of my volunteers, in particular Steve Goldstein who does sound almost every weekend and tapes the shows for the artists, giving them a CD at the end of the performance.

Next year I want to learn how to do the sound myself, I want to work more on promotion (we have a sandwich board we are going to put outside), I am working on raffle tickets and getting gifts donated and I want to work on getting more volunteers involved at the Coffeehouse now that I know what I need for it to be a success.

I would like to have more benefit concerts that support social change and community needs, as well as getting the direct neighborhood more aware of the Coffeehouse.

We have been fortunate to have the Cafe Santropol donate the last few months and next few months of organic fair trade coffee and I want to get a cappuccino maker and make more interesting baked goods for cheaper costs. Rhonda Amsel from the board donated 100 amazing biscotti and I want to involve her next year for her wonderful low fat, low sugar biscotti.

In conclusion, I love music in such a profound way that the amazing artists and staff at the Yellow Door keep me inspired and make me want to keep pushing my envelope, so that the Yellow Door Coffeehouse can be the venue it was in the 60's and I so appreciate the opportunity I have been given to do so.

*Holly Fleming*

*Coffeehouse Coordinator*



## Elderly Project Annual Statistics

April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2005 – March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2006

### Friendly Visiting (F.V.)

	04-05	05-06
<b>Average number of clients receiving F.V. per month</b>	46	32
<b>Average number of volunteers providing F.V. per month</b>	42	39.6
Total number of volunteers providing Friendly Visits	91	126
Total number of Friendly Visits	2660	2050
Total number of FV hours	7982	6151

### Accompaniments

	04-05	05-06
Total number of accompaniment clients	48	38
Total number of volunteers used for accompaniments	90	121
Total number of accompaniments requested	710	726
Total number of accompaniments filled	674	656
Total number of accompaniments cancelled	36	70
Total number of accompaniment hours	2708	2989

### Friendly Favours (F.F.)

	04-05	05-06
Total number of Friendly Favour clients	13	18
Total number of Friendly Favours filled	176	197
Total number of volunteers used for Friendly Favours	22	36

Total number of Friendly Favour hours	440	474
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**Access Internet (A.I.)**

04-05      05-06

Total number of volunteers providing AI visits	19	44
Total number of clients receiving AI visits	26	38
Total number of AI hours	446	930

**Yellow Ribbon Social Club**

04-05      05-06

Total number of clients attending Social Club	-	41
Total number of Social Club volunteers	-	11
Total number of Social Club volunteer hours	-	143

**Demographics Tables**

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Client's Language	2004-2005	2005-2006
French	39%	25%
English	61%	51%
Both	-	23%
Neither	-	1%
<b>Client's Age</b>		
35-54	4%	3%
55-64	8%	11%
65-74	26%	25%
75+	55%	50%
Unknown	7%	11%
<b>Client's Gender</b>		
Female	84%	91%
Male	16%	18%

**Volunteers**

04-05      05-06

Number of volunteer hours for Friendly Visiting	7982	<b>6151</b>
Number of volunteer hours for Access Internet	446	<b>930</b>
Number of volunteer hours for Accompaniments	2700	<b>2989</b>
Number of volunteer hours for Friendly Favours	440	<b>474</b>
Number of volunteer hours for Administrative Help	521	<b>302</b>
Number of volunteer hours for Miscellaneous Help	133	<b>307</b>
Number of volunteer hours for Social Club	N/A	<b>143</b>
Number of volunteer hours for Volunteer Training	N/A	<b>283</b>
Total number of volunteer hours	12,222	<b>11,579</b>
Total number of Elderly Project volunteers	247	<b>230</b>

### Elderly Project Clientele

	04-05	05-06
Total number of new clients	41	<b>46</b>
Total number of client files closed for year	19	<b>21</b>
Total number of clients who used Friendly Visiting Service	69	<b>56</b>
Total number of clients who used Accompaniments Service	48	<b>38</b>
Total number of clients who used Friendly Favour Service	13	<b>18</b>
Total number of Yellow Door clients	145	<b>144</b>

Not including clients who receive A.I. volunteer services at St.Margaret's Day Centre.