



LA PORTE  
OUVERTE  
MONTRÉAL



THE OPEN  
DOOR  
MONTRÉAL



# ANNUAL REPORT

2021

## WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT

This past year has been one of growth and adaptation, change and flexibility as The Open Door Montréal faced multiple challenges with the ongoing waves of the pandemic.

At the beginning of the year, because of COVID-19 government health and safety measures and social distancing, we were required to decrease the number of clients who could enter the center at any one time. The CIUSSS Centre-sud also requested that we increase the number of hours of service to provide beds, food and shelter on a 24-hour, 7-day per week basis. In just over a 4-month period of time, the size of the staff team more than doubled and along with the addition of auxiliary teams of security guards and cleaners, an increase of 52% in the preparation of meals and a 162% increase in the number of client visits, the impact on material and human resources was major. The staff have been committed to the clients and enthusiastic about their involvement in spite of fatigue and illness. Thank you !

In May 2021, Mélodie Racine, our Executive Director of 18 months took a new position in Quebec City after having moved there several months earlier. Mélodie had managed the center and programs from a distance, but committed to coming into Montreal 2-3 days each week to support and manage the staff and the client services. Thank you!

Jenna Smith stepped down from the Board in August 2021 after having served as a member for almost 2 years. Your wise input and community experience was very appreciated. Thank you !

Luce Amyot, Eric Latimer and Tony George were faithful Board members in the support of the Executive Director and the subsequent Acting Director as well as in active participation in Board responsibilities. Thank you !

While I have been President of the Board of Directors over the past 4 years, I took on the role of Acting Director in May until we were able to hire a new director, Christine Malebranche in December 2021. It has been a privilege to work directly with the core staff team and the Board over 2021, to interact with community and health and social service partners and to deepen my knowledge and understanding of The Open Door Montréal.

We look forward to 2022.



**RUTH BRESNEN**

President, Board of Directors  
The Open Door Montréal

## MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Ruth Bresnen, President  
Luce Amyot, Vice President  
Tony George, Treasurer

Eric Latimer, Secretary  
Jenna Smith, Member (January - August 2021)

## THE TEAM

The year began with the continuation of the 24-hour services in order to respond to the ever-growing needs of people experiencing or at risk of homelessness. Over time, the measures that had guaranteed service during the winter were continued on a 24/7 basis since homelessness does not take a vacation during the summer season. The team has adapted to better meet the needs of the center and its clients. We started the year 2021 with a total of about 20 employees, including

- An executive director
- A coordinator of workers
- About fifteen intervention workers
- Two kitchen assistants
- Two case managers for the Housing First program
- An operations manager
- A receptionist and volunteer manager.

As of December 31, we had approximately 27 employees, including

- A centre coordinator
- A team leader for the intervention workers
- About fifteen intervention workers
- Two outreach workers
- A chef and a kitchen assistant
- Two case managers for the Housing First program
- A housing officer
- Two executive assistants
- A bookkeeper

Thank you to all these dedicated people without whom the achievement of our mission would not be possible.

## VOLUNTEERS

### OUR PRECIOUS VOLUNTEERS

Whether they are present at the reception desk, in the laundry room or in the kitchen, their support is necessary for the smooth day-to-day running of the organization. This was even more true in 2021. The numerous health procedures added many steps to follow to ensure the safety of everyone in the center (employees, clients, partners, volunteers). Despite all the obstacles that the pandemic put in their way, despite the fact that many of them contracted the disease, many volunteers returned each week to give their time to the vulnerable people we serve.

**Number of volunteers : over 100!**

**Number of volunteer hours : 5171**

Volunteers come from several sources, the first being the participation of clients in the life of the Montreal Open Door community. In addition to these, there are neighbours, groups from different businesses or organizations and students. This year, one of our regular volunteers took her involvement even further. With a few fellow students from McGill University, she created the "McGill Students for the Open Door Montréal". These student volunteers coordinate the presence of a few dozen of their colleagues who wish to get involved with our community.



Wimmy Miller, President,  
« McGill Students for The Open Door Montréal »



Volunteers from « McGill Students for The Open Door Montréal »

### Interesting Statistics:

Average volunteer hours per shift: 4

Average volunteer hours per day: 15 (this is the equivalent of two shifts per day)

Average volunteer hours per month: 430

Average volunteer attendance per month: 105

## THE CENTRE

The Centre offers food services, a rest area, the possibility of taking a shower, a laundry service, clothing donations, etc. We offer our clients a support service and the necessary tools for any social reintegration process they may need.

We are now open at all times. We offer a service without any interruption, including during the holidays.

The Centre also welcomes many partners who bring their expertise and thus give added value to our organization. For example, the presence of representatives from the Homelessness legal clinic team our clients to fully understand their rights and to be well represented when necessary. Also, the regular presence of a nurse on site allows us to offer basic health care and a more regular follow-up, thus improving the quality of life of many. In 2021, we reinstated a collaboration with the CIUSSS allowing for the screening of clients who wish to be screened for sexually transmitted infections.

During the year 2021, our rigorous enforcement of public health rules has greatly limited the spread of the COVID-19 virus among our clients. In partnership with the CIUSSS, screening and vaccination clinics were held regularly at the Centre. It was only in December that an outbreak occurred. Unlike last year, fortunately, we did not have to close our doors.

### **A Few Figures :**

Number of visits : 59,741, an increase of 162%

Number of showers : 7828

Washing machine loads of client clothes: 467

Meals: 67,493 - an increase of 52%

## OUR SPECIAL ACTIVITIES

In 2021, we were not able to hold as many special activities for our clients as we would have liked, due to public health measures. However, our team has worked hard to offer them special attention.

### Country food



In the Inuit culture, the sharing of traditional food is very important. Throughout the year, some of our clients receive country food from their relatives in the North. At the Open Door, we facilitate this sharing by giving them access to our kitchen facilities.

### Carving Room

Many of our clients practice the art of soapstone carving. This year, we have renewed our stock of stones and tools, allowing them once again to create beautiful works of art.



### National Day of Truth and Reconciliation



September 30, 2021 was the first-ever National Day of Truth and Reconciliation. Since a significant portion of our clients are Indigenous, a few members of our team, accompanied by clients, took part in the walk marking this day.

## OUR SPECIAL ACTIVITIES (CONTINUED)

### Secret Santa

Following the conference given by our coordinator to the students of St-George high school in Montreal, the youth wanted to get involved with our clients. They organized an internal campaign to offer gift bags for Christmas to our regular clients. Thanks to these students, these clients all received a gift with their name on it, consisting of warm clothing and other essential items that are more difficult to obtain.



### Christmas Dinner

Like every year, we prepared a traditional Christmas dinner. With the help of volunteers who helped cook turkeys, we were able to offer 150 meals to our clients. The dinner consisted of turkey, mashed potatoes, carrots and cake for dessert.

## OTHER STATISTICS

The Center also offers a wide range of direct and personalized services to our clients. For example :

- 1371 new people
- 218 animals welcomed

At The Open Door Montréal, our doors are truly open to all, without question, regardless of sex, gender, age, origin, cultural background, religion, and state of health, both physical and mental. Intoxicated people are admitted, as long as the safety of other members of our community is not threatened. When this is the case, the appropriate partners are called to assist in providing the person with the care they need. Pets are also admitted, accompanied by their owners, to provide them with a warm, safe environment and food.

- 7044 direct interventions with clients
- 63938 reminders of public health measures related to the COVID-19 pandemic
- 10 people returned to their northern community
- 43 accompaniments to detoxification programs

Our workers must adapt to each situation and to each client receiving our services. Direct interventions can range from crisis management to help in finding housing or a job, to emergency first aid. Despite all the constraints brought about by the management of the pandemic, we still managed to help people who wanted to be reunited with their families in the North, or to seek help to overcome their addictions.

Receiving a donated piece of clothing is not as simple as it seems. For The Open Door Montréal, it means :

- Calling for donations and managing offers
- Welcoming donors
- The first sorting
- Washing the clothes
- Second sorting by category and size
- Management of storage
- Seasonal management
- Filling the reception bins
- Transporting donations that do not correspond to the needs of our clients to other charitable organizations



And finally, the delivery to clients according to their needs.

In 2021, this process was even more challenging than in the past due to the condition of our laundry equipment. Our washers and dryers are used day and night, seven days a week. They have now reached the end of their useful life. The renewal of this equipment will undoubtedly be our challenge in 2022 in order to continue this essential service to our clients.



## OUR PROGRAMS

### Canada Summer Jobs

In partnership with the Canada Summer Jobs program, The Open Door Montréal was fortunate to welcome three young employees who came to assist the team during the summer. Two of them greatly assisted the workers by taking charge of the reception and the laundry, including the management of clothing donations. The third person assisted our cook by preparing the evening and weekend meals. All three were also responsible for training and accompanying the volunteers in their respective areas of activity. To our great delight, two of them were able to join the permanent team of the organization and are still working at the end of the year 2021.

### Outreach Team

For many reasons, not all people experiencing homelessness use the services offered at the center. It remains important for us to be able to respond to their needs as much as possible and to offer them support. To do so, a team of two outreach workers goes to meet them as often as possible. During their outings, our outreach workers walk several kilometers. They offer them snacks and beverages, first aid items, clothing, as well as listening and advice. They can also accompany them to medical appointments, or others, depending on their needs. In 2021, our workers had 6680 encounters, 86% of them with an Indigenous person.

217 days of outreach (Monday to Friday)  
14,399 food donations  
937 clothing donations

## **SOCIAL INTEGRATION PROGRAMS**

The Open Door Montreal can be proud of its success in maintaining its social integration programs during the pandemic. Adaptations had to be made, such as the addition of "COVID-19" protocols and the modification of tasks, but which still allowed us to meet the standards and remain available for those who needed it.

### **PAAS-ACTION**

Our partnership with Emploi-Québec has allowed us to hire three participants in the PAAS-Action program. One of the positions is in the kitchen as a cook's helper, another in the laundry room and the third as a housekeeper. This program is designed to give access to a 20-hour a week job in a very flexible way to clients of our services or referred by other community organizations. With the accompaniment, encouragement and maintenance of strong ties by the program's facilitator, participants acquire socio-professional skills, develop skills such as emotional management and team spirit, and build a positive work experience. Each participant is accompanied individually and in groups through weekly workshops.

### **COMMUNITY HOURS**

The Open Door Montréal has a reputation for being flexible and accommodating to people who need to do community hours. In keeping with this reputation, we have been able to help many people move their cases through the organization by contributing to the daily operations according to their strengths, availability and needs. Thus, correctional officers continued to send us cases of people who needed to find a tolerant place that quickly adapted to their changing situation. Our support, presence and kindness allowed many people to not only complete their hours, but also to develop relationships that allowed them to tackle other obstacles related to their recovery and healing.

### **COMPENSATORY HOURS**

The partnership with the YMCA gives the opportunity to those who want to do compensatory work hours in order to settle a debt that they are unable to pay following a fine. Thus, under the supervision of the same worker responsible for the community hours program, a follow-up is done to allow these people to settle their debt.

## **SOCIAL INTEGRATION PROGRAMS (CONTINUED)**

### **HOUSING FIRST PROGRAM**

The Housing First program enables many Indigenous, primarily Inuit, people to access housing of their choice with rent subsidies. Through accompaniment by a case manager using a strengths-based approach, program participants acquire or develop the skills necessary for residential stability. This can be done through help with legal issues, by participating in social integration programs at the center or with other partners, or even by returning to school. The objectives are always chosen by the participants and respected by the case managers. This allows them to move towards a greater balance and towards a global social reintegration.

The challenges of confinement during the pandemic have been a harsh reality for many participants who have experienced a sense of isolation. However, the case managers adjusted their working methods and always maintained contact.

Despite the difficulties experienced in Montreal with respect to housing, the team managed to house or maintain housing for more than 12 people during the entire year.

### **SHORT-TERM SUPPORTIVE HOUSING PROJECT**

This one-time program was offered twice in 2021. Its goal is to enable as many people as possible to find housing quickly. Offered to all of our clients, the only criterion is to have the ability to be self-sufficient after three months. In order to give a boost to our participants, this program offered them three months of rent, the payment of everything necessary to settle into housing and to find a job, up to a maximum of \$5000 per person. Thanks to their hard work, our housing officers were able to house 22 people between April 1 and December 31, with a two-month break.

## OUR PARTNERS AND DONORS



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