



**Women's  
Centre  
of Montréal**



**ANNUAL REPORT  
2018-2019**

FOUNDED IN 1973,  
The Women's Centre  
of Montréal is a nonprofit  
organization  
registered under  
charitable organization  
number 11884 6450 RR 0001.

The Foundation of  
the Women's Centre of Montréal  
is registered under  
number 12077 8386 RR 0001

# **HELP WOMEN HELP *themselves***



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**Women's  
Centre  
of Montréal**

# Our mission

**The mission of the Women's Centre of Montréal is to provide educational and vocational training, as well as information, counselling and referral services to help women help themselves.**

**This non-profit organization also works to communicate women's concerns to the general public and acts as a catalyst for change regarding women's issues.**

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The background of the entire page is a soft-focus image of various pink and orange flowers, likely cherry blossoms, scattered across the white background. The flowers are in different stages of bloom, with some showing detailed petal textures and others as softer, out-of-focus shapes.

# Introduction

**T**he Women's Centre of Montréal, founded in 1973, is an organization rooted in the heart of the community and committed to taking proactive action on the constantly evolving needs of women and families in Greater Montréal as well as the ever-changing demographics and social dynamics.

In addition to providing direct services to the population we serve, the Centre also works with a variety of community and institutional partners with the ultimate goal of improving the living conditions of women and families.

The Centre offers services 50 weeks of the year (closed between Christmas and New Year), from Monday to Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., and on Tuesday and Thursday evenings until 9 p.m. from September to June.

The public can learn about services on our website, through our presence on social media (Facebook and LinkedIn), from information sessions and from our general brochure and our more detailed leaflets.

Last year, the Centre's team of **50** employees, responded directly to more than **40,000** requests and made indirect contact with nearly **4,000** people through presentations in tradeshow, booths and teaching institutions, activities in the neighbourhood and the Foundation's annual fundraising event.

Please read on to learn about all our efforts and achievements.





## MESSAGE FROM THE *President* OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE CENTRE

**I**t is my great pleasure to deliver to you today my third report as President of the Board of Directors of the Women's Centre of Montréal.

Since 1973, the Women's Centre of Montréal has been dedicated to helping women help themselves, and after 46 years of existence, the Centre is still just as relevant: that is 46 years of making an important difference in the lives of women of all origins, and 46 years of supporting women so they can achieve independence and lead productive, rewarding lives.

This mission has expanded to become a wide variety of services and activities that you can learn more about in these pages. You will also find reports from the chairs of the various Board committees.

The Centre's activities would not be possible without the many employees and volunteers who work each day for the well-being of the women, their families and their communities. I extend my warm thanks to them.

The Front Line Service and Employability Service teams are directed by extraordinary women, Javiera Arroyo, Cécile Demers and Emmanuelle Brion, who, despite many challenges, keep the Centre working smoothly each day and always rise to the requirements of the task. I also extend my thanks to the administration team, who contribute to the Centre's management and the success of our Foundation's events.

Of all the volunteers who help the Centre, I especially want to express my recognition to the members of the Boards of Directors, present and past, with whom I have had the pleasure to serve, discuss and learn. This year, we welcomed Joëlle Thibault as a new member and Emmanuelle Brion as our employee-member. I also want to thank Brigitte Chartier, whose term has come to an end. It has been a great pleasure to work with her for eight years now. Her involvement with the Centre has been remarkable and it deserves recognition. Thanks, likewise, to Barakissa Savadogo for her contributions as a participant-member.

The Board is also responsible for the Centre's strategic planning and major orientations. This exercise is currently underway, with the collaboration of several volunteers, including the past president Leslie Molko.

I also want to mention the involvement and enthusiasm of the members of the Board of Directors of the Foundation of the Women's Centre of Montréal, whose fundraising activities have been incredibly successful, allowing us to fulfil our mission. Thank you all!

Our thanks go out to the participants at these benefit activities and to our many donors and funders.

As for me, as the Centre's constitution and bylaws dictate, my term has come to an end and I have to step down as president and Board member, and my heart is somewhat heavy as I address you for the last time.

It is hard for me to express how much the Centre has enriched my life and helped make me more open and sensitive to the needs of others. I hope I have been able to give the Centre a fraction of what it has given to me. Although I have to leave the Centre, it will never leave me. Thank you to everyone for the privilege you gave me.

And lastly, a few words for Johanne Bélisle. Johanne, for me you are the hub of the Centre. Your dedication, your eloquence, your energy and your deep conviction in defending the well-being of women are simply remarkable. I salute you and thank you profoundly.

Congratulations to the new directors and to your new president for 2019-2020.

**Louise Béchamp,**  
Labour and Employment lawyer



## MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE *Director*

*A*n organization like the Women's Centre of Montréal has to count on the engagement and dedication of many people. As I have said many times, it really is a great privilege to work with these women regularly: our participants who are regaining power in their lives through enormous efforts and with great successes small and large, our workers, our volunteers and our interns who represent our future...

The contributions of business people who are sincerely proud to help improve our community are also extremely valuable, not to mention the contributions of our faithful funders, who allow us to achieve the organization's mission and maintain and expand our services and activities.

I want to take this opportunity to sincerely thank the outgoing president of the Centre's Board of Directors, Louise Béchamp, who is leaving us after eight years of commitment. Thank you for your support, your unconditional dedication to the cause, your thoroughness and your efficiency. During these eight years, you always put the interests of the Centre and the Foundation first, and you defended them skilfully!

Thanks, also, to Brigitte Chartier, who has been our treasurer for eight years and who is also leaving at the end of her term. Your expertise shed valuable light on our financial management and helped implement many processes that have contributed to the sound management of our organization.

Finally, thanks to our participant-member, Barakissa Savadogo, who is also coming to the end of her term. Your participation as a front-row witness to the Centre's impact has been much appreciated.

The last year has been demanding, stimulating and, as always, very rewarding.

The heart-breaking life stories recounted by asylum seekers were hard for the Front Line Service team to hear, and the full employment situation was an additional challenge for our Employability Service.

In this vein, in addition to our regular activities, we held the fifth edition of our "Paying It Forward" networking activity for our employability participants, continued to write articles for Jobboom and established a new partnership with Yves Rocher for hiring interview simulations. We also welcomed Centraide volunteers for the "Elles Centraide" initiative, for a much-appreciated annual networking meeting with our job seekers. We also updated the skills of our team.

In the Front Line Service, we developed two new projects for adult women who survived sexual abuse in childhood. In November 2018, nearly 70 people attended the opening of the "Survivarts" exhibition (financed by the Québec Ministry of Justice) to discover the works of six extremely courageous women who shared their suffering to raise public awareness about the tragic consequences of sexual abuse in childhood and help prevent it from continuing. The second project - "Il était une fois et une fois il sera" (financed by Bell Let's Talk community fund) - is underway. Our partnership with the L'Oréal Foundation also continued, with a third cohort in the "Beauty for a Better Life" training program.

We also extensively overhauled our website, thanks to a partnership with Sextans Design & Web, and launched our strategic planning exercise.

In terms of collective action, we continued to be involved with the Table de quartier (Corporation de Développement Communautaire Action Solidarité Grand Plateau), the Communauté Saint-Urbain (for the reclassification of Hôtel-Dieu de Montréal) and several other tables and cooperation groups related to our areas of intervention.

Finally, it is with enormous pleasure that we announced a fundraising record at our Foundation's 21<sup>st</sup> annual benefit evening in March.

I am very proud of the achievements of our team, which draws its energy from the incredible validation our work provides, knowing that our actions have a real impact on the lives of the women who come to our door every year. I want to share with you a note we received from one of our partners, Weegates: "The difference you make today counts in all our tomorrows."

I invite you to read about our achievements and share the touching testimonies in these pages.

Thanks for believing in us and in all these women who, with your support, are able to move forward into better lives and contribute fully to the development of our community.



Johanne Bélisle, s.w.



# FRONT LINE *Service*

The Front Line Service is an indispensable resource for women seeking to improve their living conditions. It brings together services to meet their economic, personal, family and social needs. Our workers reach out to women of every background and social status, offering professional support in situations of domestic violence, psychological distress, trouble making ends meet, adaptation and integration difficulties for newcomers and indigenous women settling in Montréal, and so on. It also offers them a series of educational activities to acquire new skills, recreational activities to have fun and volunteer activities so they can get socially involved and create a network with other women.

All these accomplishments are made possible through the contributions of many stakeholders. We want to point out the valuable financial support of the following partners: the Ministère de l'Immigration, de la Diversité et de l'Inclusion, Centraide of Greater Montreal, the CIUSSS Centre-Sud-de-l'Île-de-Montréal, the Ville de Montréal in partnership with the Ministère du Travail, de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale, Canada Summer Jobs, the Ministère de la Justice, Bell Let's Talk community fund, the Fondation J.A. DeSève, the Fondation J. Armand Bombardier, the Fondation Dufresne & Gauthier, the Fondation Jacques Francoeur, the RBC Foundation, the L'Oréal Canada Foundation, the Foundation of the Women's Centre of Montréal, Montreal Real Estate Foundation for kids, Power Corporation and Pharmaprix.

## Information and Referral Service

Every woman who phones the Front Line Service is greeted with professionalism and empathy. Our information counsellor, supported by attentive and engaged volunteers, listens to the woman and strives to fully understand their needs. In a warm, non-judgmental environment, the women who contact us receive information that help them take action in various spheres of their lives. They are put in contact with a counsellor or guided to other resources that are more aligned with their needs. This helps them learn about the various resources that can be useful

for them and their families. Every woman who calls us also gets fast direct access to our internal services, which gives her the assurance that she is not alone and that she will be able to find appropriate assistance. This year, our telephone information and referral service answered **30,979** requests.

## Legal Information

Accessing a legal resource is hard and costly for some women, and yet knowing their rights has a direct impact on their empowerment. Our legal information service helped **222** women get specific, professional information about different topics, such as separation, working conditions, immigration, consumer's rights etc. In the last year, **8** volunteer lawyers met with women to inform them, reassure them, guide them and orient them on legal matters. After the meetings, the participants were better equipped to make the right decisions for their personal and family lives. They could undertake or pursue practical steps to get out of poverty or end a violent relationship, for example. By learning more about their rights, they were able to improve their lives as tenants or workers or be more vigilant about their consumer's habits.

## Fight against Poverty

Trouble paying bills at the end of the month is the lot of many women, especially heads of families, seniors, unemployed women and those working part-time or for low wages. To help them materially, we offer food assistance, clothing assistance, diapers and other baby items and Christmas baskets for the holidays. These services do not eliminate poverty, of course, but they do stand as emergency assistance to help them deal with certain expenses. This little helping hand makes the women feel more secure, because they know that in their more difficult moments, they can count on the Centre for a certain level of food security and for free clothing in good condition.

These services are provided thanks to the valuable contributions of many partners and community members.

With contributions from Moisson Montréal, which provided us with 32,594 kg of groceries (worth \$166,650), we were able to offer **3,460** baskets of groceries to women and their families, to provide some food security.



We can also count on regular donations of groceries from Le Chaînon. Our participants also benefit from pharmacy items (corrective glasses, toothpaste, soap, toothbrushes, shower gel, stuffed animals for children, etc.), thanks to the Pharmaprix at 3861 Boulevard St-Laurent. They can also always count on the generosity of engaged citizens who come daily with bags of gently used clothing, bedding and household items. This year we were able to provide emergency clothing **1,391** times.

Our Christmas Campaign has a significant impact on the lives of hundreds of families for whom the holidays can be difficult from an economic, family or personal perspective. To warm their hearts, many different stakeholders mobilized to offer well-stuffed baskets of food, toys for the children and gifts for the women. We want to thank Moisson Montréal, which is a vital donor of food not only for our regular food assistance program but also for our Christmas Campaign; *Opération Père-Noël*, which offers gifts for children who write a Christmas wish letter; the corporate groups that collected non-perishable food items from their employees; schools that held new toy drives and all the donors who made a financial contribution to our 41<sup>st</sup> Christmas Campaign. Thanks to the Montreal Gazette Christmas fund, we also distributed \$125 cheques to **80** women. We also want to mention the work of all the corporate volunteers who came in groups and many other volunteers who came on their own to lend a hand decorating and preparing the rooms, moving boxes, sorting food, making up the baskets and helping out on distribution days. Our Christmas Campaign distributed **743** baskets for the benefit of **1,560** adults and **949** children.

To help our participants eat a healthy and economical diet, our collective kitchen activities bring together a small group of women who decide together what they will cook and purchase to make the meals. Our collective kitchen is comprised of three groups: one for any interested women, one for indigenous women who are taking part in our indigenous program and one for the mothers and expecting mothers in the Mother-Child program. The participants not only bring home the good food they prepare together and save on their grocery bill, but they also build bonds of friendship, create a support and mutual assistance network, break their isolation, discover new foods and learn new recipes. This year, we held **32** collective kitchen activities.

## Welcoming Newcomers and Asylum Seekers

Immigration is an important factor for Québec, especially because of the worker shortage, the low birth rate and the ageing of the population. Many means are deployed to support the integration of people who have chosen our province. According to the general data, women make up half of the immigrants we welcome each year. Women leave their home countries for many different reasons: family plans, good job prospects in Québec, joining a spouse, our egalitarian and democratic values, urban safety and social peace, and many more. Some leave their countries fleeing violence or instability or to ensure their own safety and that of their children. This is the case of many asylum seekers looking for a better future for their families who came or were referred to the Centre. We saw their determination to give their children a better future and to integrate here by learning French to find work and lead a productive life.

With funding from the Ministère de l'Immigration, de la Diversité et de l'Inclusion and its *Réussir l'intégration* program, our experienced team offered services to **599** women who have been in Québec for less than five years, as well as **373** women who have applied for asylum. In total this year, our team carried out **3,554** interventions with **972** women from **87** countries.

Our intervention meetings allowed us to inform them and orient them, give them tools to encourage integration, support them through personal difficulties and introduce them to an array of community and institutional resources. We also offer activities so they can form connections with other women and create a support network. For those who are having financial trouble, our assistance services reduce their monthly expenses for groceries, clothing or diapers.

One of the keys to integration is unequivocally learning french. The ability to speak french allows women to not only improve their understanding of their environment, join the work force, continue their education or develop their independence, but it also allows them to connect with each other, spark dialogue and build meaningful bonds. This year, **120** women registered for the part-time french second language course for adult immigrants (Ministère de l'Immigration, de la Diversité et de l'Inclusion). Our 12-hour-a-week part-time courses are 11 weeks long. Since we had several students with young children who did not

have spots in daycare, our drop-in daycare service offered them quick access for learning french. Along with the Ministry's course, our french conversation workshops offer participants the chance to practice french and improve their communications, which gives them confidence and a sense of personal achievement. This year, **120** women who place a great deal of importance on their linguistic integration registered for the workshops.

A range of group activities on different topics of interest were also offered to the newcomers. These activities combine the practical with the enjoyable by focusing on themes related to the host society (urban safety, women's rights, our health care system, consumer's rights, etc.) and also encourage good discussion over a snack. **41** activities were carried out this year with **397** women.

## Group and Community Activities

Trips outside of Montréal are rare for many women, largely due to transportation, so last summer we arranged two outings by bus, to Parc Safari and the Récréo-Parc in Sainte-Catherine. They were two magnificent and highly enjoyable days of sharing, fun and fascination for the children. The outings gave the women a chance to socialize, unplug from their daily lives and discover new locations, while the children enjoyed a family outing, full of fun and excitement.

Our volunteers and collective kitchen members continued to offer the Soup of the Month club, giving our participants a friendly space to enjoy a comforting soup at lunch time. This year, we offered **8** soups, each one different but all nourishing and delicious. We have fun each time getting people to guess the ingredients and spices in our recipes. To make these meetings even better, we hold discussions on different themes: the new Canada Food Guide, the legalization of cannabis in Canada and its impacts, women who influenced us, the environment, and public issues and gatherings. Every meeting is a space where women can talk and enjoy time together before returning to their workshops or activities.

## Help for New and Expecting Mothers

Becoming a mother is an important step in a woman's life. It often involves joy and excitement, but also a complete reorganization of life, expenses, uncertainty, questioning and a need for support and the opportunity to share experiences. Clearly

understanding this reality, the Centre offers many services for mothers. To help compensate for financial difficulties, we were able to offer diapers and small pharmacy items (wipes, thermometers, sippy cups, bibs, etc.), thanks to the greatly appreciated financial contribution from the Fondation Jacques Francoeur, which helped **356** mothers and **405** children.

Meanwhile the Cigognerie group, which is for immigrant women with young children, offered a space to talk about the realities of being a mother, sharing joys as well as harder moments, and tools for the education and care of their children. The friendly meetings help the women break their isolation, develop a support network and establish solidarity and mutual assistance. It is not unusual to see these women exchange children's clothes and other items as they share a snack together. This year, **10** meetings were held with the group's **8** participants.

## Mother-Child Intervention Program

This program meets the support needs of expecting and new mothers in the first years of their children's lives and accompanies them in their own social integration process (return to school or entering the job market) and in embracing their role as a mother (development of parenting skills and bonding with the child). The educational program for the children encourages their socio-emotional, psychomotor and cognitive development, as well as their language and creativity skills.

This year, **51** mothers, mainly immigrants (22 who completed their participation and 29 still actively participating) and **30** children took part in the program (some participants remained in the program even after they found daycare spots for their children, which is why there were more mothers than children). Of these participants, **9** were pregnant and **6** gave birth during the year.

The team, made up of one counsellor, 2 educators and an assistant educator, carried out many activities with the mothers, the children, and the mothers and children together, as well as activities that included the father, the brothers and sisters and sometimes even the grandparents.

**52** workshops were held to strengthen or develop the mothers' parenting skills, and **62** workshops for their psychological health.



# TESTIMONY

*“My name is Saida, and I am from Chad. I have a daughter who is one year and five months old. I’ve been in Canada for a year, as an asylum seeker. I joined the Mother-Child program in January 2019. When I first came to the Centre, I was very stressed, because my situation here is not easy. Being all alone with a child and not knowing what to expect for our future is really difficult. But since I started taking part in the activities of the Mother-Child program, I feel much better. At the Centre, I found a place where I feel safe, where I can get out of my isolation and meet other mothers like me who are full of questions and doubts but who strive each day to move forward and give their best to their children. I am really grateful to the Mother-Child program because thanks to the activities offered to us each week, I feel better equipped to educate my daughter despite our circumstances. I love coming to the Centre so much that I am looking for a job that will give me at least Fridays off so I can continue to come and take advantage of the activities and share them with my daughter. Thank you so much to the Mother-Child program for helping me integrate and become a better mother.”*

Saida, participant in the Mother-Child intervention program

**12** allophone women (mainly asylum seekers) took part in the francization program offered by the Ministère de l’Immigration, de la Diversité et de l’Inclusion. Learning french allowed them to acquire oral and written french skills and encouraged their social integration and their sense of competency in relation to their older children.

In addition to health eating habits, the **17** collective kitchen activities inspired the mothers’ creativity, organizational skills and french communication capacity, when each one in turn took charge of a cooking activity.

**23** outings/recreational activities were held so the mothers could try inexpensive activities and socialize together as a group.

The Mother-Child workshops provide a space for sharing among mothers and children, strengthening the attachment bond. These bonds were reinforced through **25** mother-child activities (preparing a fruit plate, artistic expression through paint, making a sock puppet, playdough games, etc.).

The participants also had the benefit of personalized follow-up (**163** follow-ups) to address various personal or family issues or problems related to the integration process. These meetings helped build their

independence, support their psychological well-being and provide practical tools for handling certain difficult situations in a positive way.

The pedagogical activities for the children were designed to optimize their entry into daycare or elementary school. The themes for the activities focused on integration and sharing within a group, the expression of emotions, learning french, fine and gross motor skill development, creativity, autonomy and expressing needs.

Based on the reports from the mothers and discussions between the participants, the counsellor and the educators, we have noted the following:

- The mothers who took the francization course can communicate better and understand their environment. Mastery of french is indeed an important step toward their social and economic integration.
- The workshops focused on the women’s well-being strengthened their self-management skills, broke their isolation and nurtured their self-esteem (especially acceptance of their body after the birth), helping them to better understand their emotions such as frustration, sadness and anger and manage them more positively, as well as manage their time and get better organized (have an agenda, plan daily activities and prioritize).
- The workshops on parenting skills helped the participants become more aware of their role and responsibilities.

Based on the development observations for each child, we noted the following: half of the children now use french as their language of communication and have french expression skills appropriate for their age and level of development;

- 97% of the children acquired knowledge and are able to transfer it to new situations;
- 97% of the children are able to engage in harmonious relations with others in different settings;
- 53% of the children are able to carry out small tasks, 37% need help and 10% can do them all alone;
- 93% of the children have acquired adequate motor skills for their level of development and age;
- 87% of the children are able to use various means and tools to express their creativity.

Through the program, the mothers found a mutual assistance network, support and solidarity, replacing

what they lost when they left their country of origin. The participants report that taking part regularly in activities, weaving ties and finding resources under one roof contributes to the well-being of the mother and the entire family.

This program, which has been a challenge to financially maintain, was supported in the last year thanks to the contributions of the Fondation J.A. DeSève, the Fondation J. Armand Bombardier, the Foundation of the Women's Centre of Montréal, the Fondation Dufresne & Gauthier, the RBC Foundation, L'Oréal Canada, Pharmaprix, Power Corporation and the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux, through its *Y'a personne de parfait* program.



## Fight against Conjugal Violence

Conjugal violence is a complex social phenomenon and a systemic problem. It is an obstacle to gender equality, and it leads to serious consequences in the lives of women, children and families, particularly in terms of physical and psychological health.

Psychosocial intervention work is crucial to protect women and their children and help them break the cycle of violence. It is also important to accompany women and support them in reporting the violence done to them and in legal proceedings. For most women, the legal process they have to face is a source of stress when they are unfamiliar with the various steps and with the role they must play.

With the financial support of the Ville de Montréal and the Ministère du Travail, de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale, the Centre has continued to offer its assistance and accompaniment service for women facing conjugal violence. This service helps prevent and reduce violence against women and improve their access to the legal system. More specifically, the purpose of our interventions is to listen to, support and equip women to allow them to make informed choices and come through the difficulties caused by the violence they have experienced. Short- and

medium-term follow-up is offered to reduce their isolation, work on their self-esteem, mitigate the consequences of violence, reduce the risk of recurrence or homicide and improve their sense of security. For those who file a complaint or have to go to court, this service provides accompaniment in the process – at the police station, at the lawyer, if required, in criminal court or in superior court, for matters of separation and child custody.

The women we accompanied told us how fortunate they felt to have been able to put their experiences into words and above all to have met a counsellor who understood their reality. Demystifying the issue helped them name their feelings and feel safer and less guilty, thanks in part to the emergency plan developed during each intervention. Many of the women decided to end the violent relationship during or after the follow-up, and some decided to file charges. Those who decided to remain in the relationship said they felt strong enough to set boundaries and make more informed choices in the future. Most of the women we accompanied to court mentioned how beneficial our service was to them. They said they felt heard, validated, understood and above all safe, despite their incredible fears. Some told us that if they had not been accompanied, they would probably not have gone to court or would not have pursued the process.

This year, the psychosocial counsellor in charge and **10** volunteer companions offered accompaniment **72** times to **53** women. A total of **138** women benefited from psychosocial follow-up.

Sharing expertise and developing knowledge are essential to optimize this service. This is why our participation at the Table de concertation en violence conjugale de Montréal is so important. These connections formed with other stakeholders in the field are crucial for better collaboration, knowledge pooling, resource sharing and shedding light on the realities experienced by women victims and their children, with the ultimate goal of reducing this form of violence.

Although providing immediate help to women struggling with conjugal violence is crucial, raising awareness and providing information are critically important to prevention, especially with new Québécois who may be unfamiliar with the laws and resources here. With the financial support of the Direction des services de francisation (Ministère de l'Immigration, de la Diversité et de l'Inclusion), we held **71** conjugal and family violence prevention and awareness

sessions, and we met with **1,195** newcomers (men and women) in francization classes in the colleges and universities. At these sessions, we discuss the Québec policy on conjugal violence, the values of respect and gender equality and the law. This platform allows us to inform the participants and raise their awareness about physical, verbal, psychological and sexual violence and provide resources that can help them.

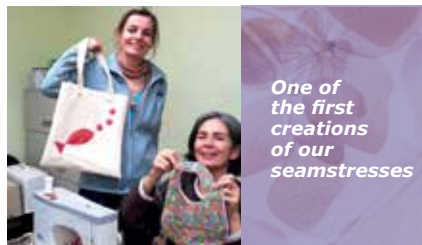
## Educational Service

The primary objective of the Educational Service is to respond to women's needs for learning, professional development and entertainment, whether to smooth access to the job market, explore personal interests, encourage integration into Québec or break out of their isolation. The courses and workshops are offered for free or at low cost and take place in a warm, friendly atmosphere.

Several options are offered: language courses and conversation groups, computer courses, cultural visits, community workshops and wellness workshops. Our english courses allowed **30** students to learn or consolidate their english skills, often for better access to the labour market or to meet a professional need. Along with these courses, **54** people took part in english conversation workshops for oral practice in small groups. The computer courses, which focus on introductory computer and web skills, gave **7** participants their first opportunity to explore the computer world. Courses on the main office programs helped **33** participants develop the skills to improve their personal or professional situation.

This service also offers group activities and workshops that focus on physical and psychological well-being while providing the opportunity to break isolation. Singing, yoga, dance, Pilates, sewing, knitting, drawing and painting workshops allowed some **100** participants to share fitness activities and creative time with other women. These workshops offer benefits that can be unique to each participant's situation: mothers taking workshops to enjoy some "me time," women taking part in an activity to reduce anxiety, establish a structured schedule and maintain a good pace of life, or women wanting to reduce their isolation through activities they love.

To meet the participants' demand for workshops that encourage a more eco-friendly lifestyle, two initiatives were launched this year: a fresh food conservation workshop and a series of sewing workshops. For the



sewing workshops, the participants learned basic techniques by making reusable shopping bags or baby items, repairing clothing and making household items.

The guided tours and creative workshops at the Montréal Museum of Fine Arts attracted **39** women. Thanks to the "Musée en partage" program, they visited the major exhibitions From Africa to the Americas: Face-to-Face Picasso, Past and Present and Alexander Calder: Radical Inventor. Some of the guided tours were followed by workshops in which the women could develop their creativity and learn new artistic techniques. The fact that these tours are free enhances direct access to artistic heritage for our participants.

This year, **383** women enjoyed courses, workshops and activities organized by the Educational Service.

*"The diversity of the Educational Service is definitely its greatest strength and its greatest asset. Working in it means meeting women from all kinds of different backgrounds who are on very different journeys. One thing brings us all together: the desire to learn, to go a bit further, to improve ourselves. It is a great pleasure to be able to work with teachers and volunteers to create an atmosphere that is conducive to learning and welcoming to everyone."*

Julie Boyer, Coordinator, Educational Service

## TESTIMONY

*"I was enrolled in the Pilates and Kundalini yoga workshops this summer. I had a few extremely emotional and mental rough patches in the summer. The course was incredibly well done, and I really loved it. It helped me avoid falling into depression, truly. So hats off! Congratulations! I hope the course can be given again, with equal success. The teacher is a professional, and the course is really, really well structured and respectful for beginners. I really love what you have done by offering us this opportunity at such a low cost. I have talked to everyone I know about it."*

Manon Bourdeau,  
participant, wellness  
workshops



## Psychosocial Services

Many women struggle emotionally and psychologically with depression, a loss of self-confidence, trouble maintaining interpersonal relationships, mourning, abusive relationships, conjugal and sexual violence, and the list goes on.

This year, **62** women received support from our team of **19** volunteer health care professionals (psychologists, social workers, sexologists, relationship therapists) and the service coordinator. Through ten to twelve individual appointments, these volunteers provided the participants with tools to support their personal growth, help them recognize their own strengths, develop better self-esteem and healthier relationships, set boundaries and gradually regain power over their lives. In their appointments, the participants find the space to talk freely without fear of being judged. They become more assertive and can see their particular situation from several angles and feel encouraged to find their own voice.

To help women who experienced sexual abuse in childhood, we offer two types of support groups (introductory and advanced). The introductory group allows the participants, who are engaged in a healing process for the first time, to break out of their isolation and share their experiences with other women in a safe environment. The wave of reports about sexual assault in the last two years and the groundswell of the #MeToo movement have had an impact on the number of women who call on our services. We therefore held three introductory groups this year.

Three advanced groups (stage 2) were also offered for women who wanted to pursue their healing journey. This year, thanks to funding from the Ministère de la Justice and its fund for victims of crime, the participants in the first group put on an exhibit called *Survivarts*. In spring 2018, they began a series of creative workshops to make unique and very personal artworks attesting to the impact of the sexual abuse they suffered in their childhood. Through this process, the participants decided together on the content and artworks they wanted to explore (painting, masks, sculpture, quilting, drawing, writing, voice recordings, etc.). They supported and encouraged each other throughout the process, building a support network.



This artistic process allowed them to not only express their experiences but denounce them and raise public awareness about the consequences of the abuse on their adult lives. Their creations were presented in an exhibition held during the **12 days of action to end violence against women**. During the 12 days of action, three events took place in relation to the exhibition: the opening, which allowed the public to be touched by the works and understand the participants' experiences, thanks in part to discussions and explanatory texts accompanying each piece; a roundtable with organizations that work to support women, men and children who were sexually abused during childhood and a creative workshop on the theme of healing. These three events brought in **150** visitors.

Here is a comment left by one of the visitors:

*"Please know that I not only heard you today, but also saw you and felt you. You showed me suffering but also resilience, your flaws but also your fortitude. I believe there is no greater sign of courage than daring to show your vulnerability. Thank you, bearers of hope. I will never forget the footprints you have left on the road to change."*

This winter, we offered a second advanced group, this one in drama therapy, to allow the women to explore the different kind of oppression they have experienced since the sexual abuse of their childhoods. Through this process, they regained some power over their lives despite the difficult consequences in terms of mental, physical and emotional health. Role playing created some distance and allowed them to explore new perspectives and avenues of their experiences.

And finally, thanks to *Bell Let's Talk*, which supports projects to improve mental health, a third advanced group began this spring. The participants will make

# TESTIMONY

*“By working on an exhibition that gave every contributor her own voice, the Survivants project allowed me to advance along the path I had already begun, of feeling able to share my experience in a way that felt safe and productive to me. In this group project, I felt a lot of emotions: pride, strength, solidarity, lots of love and gratitude, but also anger, melancholy and vulnerability. I am happy to have been well enough supported to face those sometimes-difficult emotions. I took part in this project to explore my feelings, destigmatize incest and bond with other women who have had similar experiences. I also discovered that the people we share with reflect back to us an image of strength and courage, and that feels amazing! Thank you to the counsellors who accompanied us along our respective healing paths, for all their emotional work and their capacity to guide us toward fulfilment, which is held up to us like a reassuring candle in moments when it is hard to generate our own light.”*

J.

videos exploring the consequences of incest and its impact on their daily lives, the mental health risk factors, means of protection and relationships with close friends and counsellors. This year, **37** women took part in the groups.

The coordinator of the service also participated in several meetings of the Table de concertation sur les agressions à caractère sexuel de Montréal. The roundtable brings together several community organizations and other stakeholders concerned by sexual violence against women. These meetings allow us to stay up to date about what is happening in Montréal, share our practices and knowledge and work together to create a better place for women in our society.

## First Nations Women Working Toward Well-Being

There are over 13,000 indigenous people living in greater Montréal (2016 census), nearly half of whom are women. Whether they have come to look for better prospects for their future, further their education or flee difficult life circumstances (conjugal, family and sexual violence, unemployment, overcrowded and/or substandard housing, etc.), they hope that coming to the urban environment will improve their living

conditions. The biggest challenges they face are unfamiliarity with available resources, discrimination and institutional racism, economic precariousness, addiction (alcohol, drugs, gambling, etc.), homelessness (again this year, nearly half our participants are homeless or at high risk of becoming homeless), etc.

A lot of initiatives have been launched to facilitate their integration into the urban environment, including our First Nations Women Working Toward Well-Being program, established in 2003 and funded by Centraide of Greater Montreal. This program accompanies women in their daily challenges, offers them a non-judgmental ear and moral support, guides them to external resources and serves as an advocate to protect their rights and break the cycle of precariousness and homelessness, as well as offering material support for their basic needs (food and clothing assistance). The psychosocial counsellors create safe speaking places that allow the women to make informed decisions to change their daily realities and still maintain their rhythm and values.

The counsellors also do home visits to break the loneliness that intensifies the suffering of isolated women. These visits are much appreciated and also help maintain and strengthen established bonds by ensuring that the counsellors can monitor the participant in her own environment. This year again home visits were up because of the deteriorating state of health of our participants.

To help the women detach from their traumatic backgrounds, build a support network and gradually break out of isolation, they are invited to take part in recreational activities. They joined in, for example, on collective kitchens, Bingo and the annual picnic on Indigenous Peoples Day. These activities also provide an opportunity to share news about the indigenous community in Montréal.

We continued to take part in the meetings of the Montréal Urban Aboriginal Community Strategy Network and other roundtables to improve public services for the indigenous community in Montréal. We made **4** presentations on the situation of indigenous women living in the urban environment, reaching nearly **100** people. Our work in partnership with other groups was increased this year, especially with the Montréal Native Friendship Centre, the Native Women's Shelter, Projet autochtone du Québec, Wolf Street Patrol, Open Door, Chez Doris, The Commission de

développement des ressources humaines des Premières Nations du Québec, Québec Native Women (a primary partner since the creation of the program), and Femmes du Monde in Côte-des-Neiges. These partnerships spread the word about our program and expand the service offering for the indigenous communities in Montréal.

In 2018–2019, this program reached **85** women from different nations and communities and provided **1,046** interventions.



Great  
mood  
and fun!

## Volunteer Services

According to the Réseau de l'action bénévole au Québec (RABQ), every year over **2.2** million people volunteer in Québec. The motivations to volunteer are innumerable: to take part in a positive change in the community, to meet new people or to share skills and talents. Volunteering is not only a gift, but also an exchange. This year, at the Women's Centre of Montréal, **588** volunteers, including **143** regular volunteers, contributed to the well-being of their community. In total this year, over **6,858** volunteer hours supported the Centre's activities: sorting and distributing clothing and food, leading courses and activities, giving legal information, providing psychosocial services and accompaniment for victims of conjugal violence and offering general information about our services. During the Centre's Christmas Campaign, there were also **209** corporate volunteers working alongside the **35** individual volunteers preparing and distributing baskets for **743** families. The corporate world also pitched in on a number of drives this year, including a makeover for our family wardrobe.

The achievement of our mission is also made possible through the involvement of volunteers on the Boards of Directors of the Centre and its Foundation, as well as their various committees. Their expertise and dedication help spread the Centre's reputation. To express our recognition of our volunteers, we honour them on our Volunteer Recognition Night, during

Volunteer Action Week in April. This evening gives our volunteers and the Centre's employees a time to celebrate together, get to know one another better and highlight their contributions to our participants' well-being.

*"As a newcomer to Canada, I had the good fortune to join the Women's Centre of Montréal as the volunteer coordinator. I am sincerely appreciative every day for working in an environment where I meet and share with so many people. The volunteer teams are also remarkable: they provide constant support to the women, bring their joy and energy to the Centre and always enjoy seeing each other again. For that, I thank them."*

**Elise Abguéguen,**  
Volunteer Coordinator.

## Tribute to Lina Moreau:

Our dear Lina left us last March at the age of 61. She was of Innu origin and came from Pessamit. We met her for the first time in 2012 when she enrolled in our "First Nation Women Working Toward Well-Being program" and became almost simultaneously a volunteer in food and clothing assistance service. Lina was smiling, warm, open and listened to others. She was also a strong and resilient woman. Always ready to help, a model of authenticity with heart-warming humour, she was universally appreciated by both her fellow volunteers and the Centre's staff.

She took great pleasure in meeting women of various origins: "Thanks to the Women's Centre of Montréal, I feel like I am travelling all over the world." She was also very present for members of Montréal's Aboriginal community by taking part in important events,

## TESTIMONY

*"As a new resident in Montréal, I am really grateful to have discovered the Women's Centre of Montréal. I have the impression that I have found a community here, in this wonderful space where women help each other. I feel less isolated in the city and more aware of the diverse realities of women who immigrate to Montréal. I was motivated to volunteer at the Centre because my mother was an immigrant. Settling in Canada was hard, but my mother showed incredible resilience, which saved us. I see that same resilience in all the women at the Centre. It is so inspiring."*

**Kimia Ghomeshi,**  
volunteer in the clothing  
assistance service and  
telephone reception



## TESTIMONY

*“My name is Jeanne. I am a master’s student in social work at UQAM. Since January 2019, I have been an intern with the Women’s Centre of Montréal Front Line Service. I can see the employees’ desire to help the women help themselves. That is unequivocally the heart of the Centre’s practices. It has been a joy to be part of this hive that moves together to improve the living conditions of women. I feel very fortunate to have been trained and advised as a future psychosocial counsellor by this team. I have noticed several times that it is not only that my know-how that has been shaped by the Centre, but my interpersonal skills and who I am as a person have been positively influenced from spending time with both the women who come to the Centre and my colleagues. Thank you to the Centre for welcoming me so warmly as an intern. I am learning so much at your side.”*

Jeanne Allard-Tremblay,  
Intern

celebratory dinners, ceremonies and more.

Her smile, kindness and chocolate cravings will be missed...

### Internships and Summer Jobs

Professional succession is an important issue, which is why we are proud to contribute every year by welcoming students in the field of helping relations. This year again we had the pleasure of receiving **3** students through the Service Canada summer job program for students. They worked as psychosocial and information counsellors for the summer. Their versatility within the team, their rapid adoption of their tasks and the professionalism they demonstrated were remarkable. We also had **2** social work interns, one undergraduate and one qualifying for graduate studies at the Université du Québec à Montréal, and **2** master’s students in art therapy from Concordia University. These interns all showed great professional and intellectual maturity. There is no doubt that they will play a very meaningful role for the clients they serve in the future. We wish them every success in their personal and professional lives!

## EMPLOYABILITY Service

This year brought new challenges for our team: as the current economic environment is conducive to full employment in Greater Montréal and a lower unemployment rate, the needs of our participants are changing. We put our adaptation capacity into gear and adjusted our way of responding to the needs of the women who contacted us.

This year, the women who called on us were more likely to demonstrate very specific needs and a clear preference for individual coaching over group programs. Some had a well-established professional profile, university education and relevant experience for employers and they were especially looking for high-quality coaching to help them present themselves at their best, get a more interesting position that called on all their skills and experiences or take stock of their career in order to validate their medium- or long-term professional goals and reposition themselves with regard to work. Others were in more vulnerable situations, disconnected from the job market for a wide variety of reasons, and mainly in need of gaining confidence in themselves and their potential to define a validating professional goal that would allow them to regain financial autonomy and find a positive view of their life experience.

Whatever the profile of the women who reach out to us, the goal of our team is to improve their quality of life by helping them find a satisfying job that suits their profile or successfully reorient their career to reflect their personality. How? By fostering self-confidence, independence, motivation and positive thinking. Our team is committed to the success of our participants and offers top-quality follow-up, with flexibility and understanding for each person’s reality.

The counsellors’ determination to keep their practices up to date with the current job market, combined with their experience and training, also contributes to the quality of the services we offer.

Our employability development services and activities are made possible by the financial contributions of Emploi-Québec de l’Île-de-Montréal.

## Job search coaching

Whether the goal is to help a participant quickly join the workforce or undertake a career reorientation, our employment counsellors are unique in their customization based on the reality of the recipients and their accommodation of their entire situation. Our participants often tell us that they especially appreciate the quality of the coaching, as the counsellors are truly engaged in their work, and the warm welcome offered to them from the time they first come to the Centre until they achieve their objective and even afterward.

This year, **563** women took advantage of our services, mostly in individual coaching. The group programs were offered mainly for specific goals, such as joining male-dominated sectors or career reorientation for women 50 and over.

### Job Search Process

During the coaching, the counsellor takes the time to help the participant clearly define her action plan and objectives. She accompanies the participant throughout the process to ensure she makes use of the full potential of the job search tools and presents her best self to prospective employers, during interviews, professional meetings or networking events. The employment counsellor puts all her skills to work to equip the woman, based on her needs, her history and her profile, to optimize her chances of success and overcome phases of discouragement or obstacles she may encounter along the way. The follow-up is very regular and focused on action. Special attention is paid to the person's motivation and self-esteem.

### Career reorientation

Many of our participants feel the need to reorient themselves, change career or find their second wind. Sometimes they have lost their passion for their job or have the sense that what they are doing no longer reflects their core convictions. They are considering moving to a new industry or field and they need guidance to ask the right questions and reflect on their professional future in order to get a new, satisfying job. The coaching offered to them focuses particularly on an in-depth skills assessment. The counsellor may use personality tests and other self-knowledge tools to establish a realistic and positive

professional goal for the participant, making the resulting job search process more motivating and effective.

## TESTIMONY

*“Before I discovered the Women’s Centre, I had been unemployed for about six months. I was a little discouraged and maybe a little depressed about my situation. I went to the Women’s Centre of Montréal for the first time during a job fair and the welcome I received was very friendly. Shortly afterward, I arranged an appointment with a counsellor in the Employability Service. I was looking for advice about my job search and how to update my skills in order to be more competitive on the job market. I had just finished the francization program and I didn’t want to embark on a full-time program. My counsellor suggested I do individual counselling with her, and I agreed because it was flexible.*

*In addition to coaching for my job search, I discovered that the Centre offers so many other services that allowed me to do group workshops and receive food and clothing assistance and even do sessions with the psychosocial service. With the Employability Service, I was able to take computer courses to bring my skills up to date. The course on Word, Excel and PowerPoint that I took at the Centre was better than the private one I had taken in the past.*

*But what helped me the most was the encouragement I received there. My counsellor’s positive attitude, all the workshops, especially on the networking evenings, and the Pay It Forward mentoring program were amazing. At the workshops, I also discovered the importance of my own network and I started getting back in touch with my former contacts, and that is what finally helped me get a job as a customer service representative for a company in the cement industry.*

*My counsellor and the other people who helped me at the Centre allowed me to regain my confidence in my capacity to find a good job, and the camaraderie I felt with the other participants in the workshops and courses was also fantastic. It made me feel as if I am not alone. I will always remember the Women’s Centre as a light in a dark tunnel. When I was feeling rejected by some people in some places, the people here received me with open arms. When you lose your job, especially in your 50’s and after a long time with the same company, it is psychologically very difficult and depressing. Discovering the Women’s Centre of Montréal was like discovering hope.”*

Mary

## Individual Counselling

Our individual counselling service is targeted, adapted to the participant's reality and rhythm, and absolutely confidential. Each week, the participant meets with her counsellor, who offers expertise and knowledge about the job market, based on a customized action plan. Throughout the process, the counsellor is there at every step to coach the participant in the achievement of her goals.

Our individual counselling service is offered by appointment, in french and in english.

## Group workshops

Our team is firmly convinced that joining a group is very helpful in our participants' job searches. It lets them expand their network by meeting other women who are in the same process and it gives them a great source of motivation and a lot of mutual help.

Theme workshops are also offered regularly to our participants, on topics related to job searches from a woman's perspective, touching on motivation or offering opportunities to put the ideas they have examined with their counsellors into practice, such as:

- LinkedIn: how to create an excellent job search profile
- Job search strategies and the hidden market
- The results-oriented CV
- Practice interview questions
- Online and video interviews
- Work happiness/flow
- Managing job search stress
- Sexual and psychological harassment
- Multiple intelligences
- Limiting/energizing job search beliefs
- 7 keys to success
- Pay equity

## Predominant male fields

Seeing the job market from a new angle is what we propose to our participants with our services that focus on the sectors of the future, which, in Québec, are dominated by men. Coaching women in these fields is a kind of expertise that our Employability Service has been honing for over 25 years. Our programs in this area are unique on the island of Montréal.

Even now, it is sometimes surprising to note that so many prejudices persist about women taking on jobs

that are still predominantly held by men. Some sectors, such as information technology, for example, sometimes seem as if they are reaching some kind of parity, but it is actually not true. Did you know that only 13% of IT programmer-analysts in Québec are women (14% in Montréal), according to the latest statistics? A job is said to be "non-traditional" when 33% or less of the people who do it are women. This is still the case for positions related to engineering, business management, horticulture, security agencies and, even more strikingly, the construction industry.

## Non-Traditional Career Exploration Program: Virage

Lots of prejudices still exist, and it is still appropriate to provide a space for women to go beyond those prejudices and discover different but interesting job opportunities that are accessible to them. Lots of jobs mainly held by men right now in Québec do not require long training and can offer women job opportunities with very appealing working conditions and salaries. They are often accessible with short-term training (Diploma of Vocational Studies, Attestation of College Studies...), less physically demanding than many positions held by women (such as patient care attendants and laundry attendants) and they have more manageable schedules than many jobs in the health care industry, for example.

The Virage orientation program is offered **6** times a year, allowing participants to explore their interests in order to make a career choice that suits their personality and their capacities. Guided by a career orientation counsellor, they discover careers they might not have thought of, visit educational institutions and learn about current trends on the job market. They also have the opportunity to talk to enthusiastic female workers in these fields and learn about various aspects of some jobs through the "student for a day" field activities, to make sure their choice of program is realistic for them. This year, our participants chose to study for careers in fields such as bus driving, general property maintenance, machining techniques, plumbing, car mechanics, web programming, cable and circuit assembly and construction machine mechanics.

## Program for Women with a Non-Traditional Profile: Action-Réaction

Our **11-week** Action-Réaction group was offered **8** times this year in french, with the option to do a



**4-week on-the-job internship.** It gives women with training in male-dominated fields the opportunity to receive customized top-quality coaching to achieve their goal.

The tools offered to the women who take this program allow them to develop job search methods based on realities in these fields in Québec. Role-plays of obstacles to integration in non-traditional sectors, the focus on the importance of networking and direct contact with employers, the possibility of acquiring workplace experience through an internship and personal follow-up help smooth the socio-professional integration of these women. For several years, and again in 2018–2019, we have welcomed mainly immigrant women and newcomers to Québec in this program.

This year, the jobs our participants found included security agent, construction estimator, furniture sander, mechanical building engineer, programmer-analyst, civil engineering research associate, construction site worker, electrical engineering project manager, assistant gardener, assistant landscaper, process engineer, network development project manager, urban planner and worksite supervisor.

## TESTIMONY

*“Before coming to the Women’s Centre of Montréal, I felt alone and disappointed because I had been looking for work for months. I had also just separated from my husband and had to go through the entire process of finding a new apartment for my daughter and me and starting from zero. After just immigrating a few years ago, it was hard to go through all these major changes at the same time. So I arrived at the Centre with a need to work in order to buck up my spirits, feel useful and, above all, have the sense of starting to give back to society after all the help I had received.*

*Since I had professional experience in workplace security, I joined the Action-Réaction job search program for women in non-traditional trades, in January 2019. This group gave me so much! My morale and my self-esteem increased, my confidence returned, and I was able to see that it was possible for me to achieve my goal – I just had to believe in it. What helped me the most was the positive attitude and persistence of my*

*counsellor, and her knowledge and experience. Since my first meeting with my counsellor at the Centre, I have benefited from her capacity to motivate her participants. She is very warm.*

*Thanks to this program, I got a paid internship as an occupational health and safety counsellor in a company in my field. I was able to develop my skills and also contribute the knowledge and experience I acquired in my native country. My situation changed. I am now active in my professional field and I am getting recognition and support from my immediate supervisor. In my private life, everything has changed as well. I am more positive, and I have started seeing things in another light. I have dreams now, for my daughter and for myself.*

*I really want to thank the Centre and my counsellor for the help and support I received.”*

Carol

## Specific Program for Women 50 and Over

Success has no age! That is what our team believes and conveys to the women 50 and over who sign up for our service. These women are often looking for a new breath in their professional and personal sails, and they feel the need to adjust the tack of their work and career. They are questioning themselves and want to take stock of their life trajectory.

This **7-week** group program, specifically created for them, is offered **5** times a year. It fosters sharing and exchange among these women of the same generation. The program encourages them to think about what defines the “colour of their parachute” and set out again with a positive project for the future. The counsellors accompany them in a customized professional process to help them discover and clarify their professional goal, increase their personal confidence, develop their skills, gain a better understanding of the job market and assert their training and experience to achieve their goal. The participants in this group regularly tell us that they regained trust in themselves and self-esteem thanks to the effective self-knowledge tools, listening ear and support they received to draw up a balance sheet of their assets and competencies, both personally and professionally. Having redefined their needs, expectations and goals, they are better equipped to learn new job search methods.

Our services for women 50 and over are offered through individual counselling, a group program and refresher courses.

## Refresher courses in computer skills and English

To update their knowledge and skills, refresher courses in English and computer skills are offered for free to women 50 and over who need them. These **100-hour** courses help them attain a basic level of English or gain comfort with Office Suite programs such as Word, Excel and PowerPoint and learn to navigate the web and use email. This year, **2** English courses and **4** computer courses were offered.

The groups also offer an opportunity to learn in a friendly environment, surrounded by other women their age who are also looking for a job or in career transition. These skill top-ups optimize their chances of success.

## TESTIMONY

*“The Women’s Centre of Montréal really helped me get back up off the ground. After 34 years in a fascinating job in the media, I was told that my position was going to be abolished. I thought I would be able to find a job in the only field I knew, but unfortunately it did not go at all as planned. I sent my CV to every newspaper, TV station and radio station, but I got no answers. The media is undergoing a massive transformation, and there are fewer and fewer jobs. So after I spent several months turning in circles, the counsellor at my local Emploi-Québec employment centre suggested I go to the Women’s Centre and do the workshop for women 50 and over called Discover your employment goals. So I did. I started the group program and, with the help of wise advice from my counsellor, I drew up a balance sheet of my skills. That helped me regain confidence. I realized I had more strings on my bow than I had believed. I also decided to change my professional orientation and pursue my teenage dream of becoming a counsellor for the homeless and other vulnerable groups. It was a 180-degree shift! I have to admit that although it was an idea I cherished, without the sincere encouragement of my counsellor, I would not have succeeded. She helped me write up my CV and I went for it! I also took computer courses, and I met great people there. Extraordinary women. Together, we were stronger. We encouraged each other.*”

*A few weeks later, I was starting my new career as a counsellor and one thing led to another and I held three jobs at the same time. Today I am very grateful to my counsellor. She encouraged me to go for it. Sometimes I lost confidence, but she always respected my pace, without judgment, and that is really important in the professional reorientation process, especially when you’re over 50.*

*I encourage women to go to the Centre to discover their potential, both professional and personal.”*

Johanne

## Tool kit!

### Workplace internships

Women who are looking for work in predominant male fields and newcomers to Québec can do a **4** week workplace internship. It is an excellent way to develop or acquire skills that are complementary to their training, enrich their CV or get their first work experience in Québec.

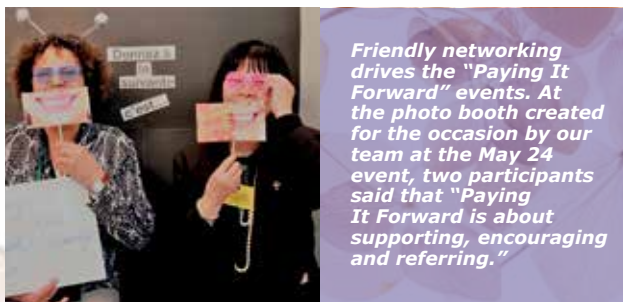
An internship is also a way to expand their professional network and to obtain references. They also serve as an important recruitment tool for businesses as it gives them a short trial period to assess a potential candidate’s skills. For our participants, an internship also helps them learn about the work environment in their chosen field and see the business culture up close.

### “Paying It Forward” Movement

“The Paying It Forward movement” is a mutual assistance and sharing network of former participants who are now working – the “inspirers” – and women who have just signed up for our programs – the “inspirees.” The movement offers opportunities for supportive and constructive discussions, the sharing of life experiences and hopes, and the creation of wider networks through pairing and mentoring. It is an excellent way for our participants to expand their professional network, receive advice from a person currently working in their field and advance their career. Paying It Forward gives them an additional source of motivation in their job search.

The movement relies on an enthusiastic team that organizes networking evenings around carefully

chosen and developed themes to encourage reflection and discussion among the women who attend. This year again **two** networking events were held, each attracting about **50** participants to explore the theme of feminine intelligence, artificial intelligence and humans' place in the coming changes, as well as roundtables on the specifically female challenges of finding work in 2018-2019.



## Other free services

### Professional wardrobe – We dress your self-esteem!

Our professional wardrobe is a testament to the spirit of initiative and cooperation in the Women's Centre community. Thanks to the generosity of women who offer their time and/or clothing, women actively engaged in the challenge of finding a job can get a professional outfit for free if they need it. Every woman who benefits from the opportunity to choose appropriate clothing for her professional aspirations remembers the kindness of others, and it is more than clothing that is recycled through the experience of giving and receiving.

### A job-search space

Our participants can enjoy the spaces renovated by Google and access to tools to make their job search easier. The Centre offers Wi-Fi and an internet connection in all our rooms, computers in a light, pleasant space that can be used outside of workshop hours, and a room with telephones and laptops with webcams to communicate privately with employers.



## Promoting our programs and activities

To spread the word about our programs/activities and to establish or build on connections with the community and schools, from April 1 2018 to March 31, 2019, we distributed promotional materials, held promotional activities and took part in networking events. Here is a brief overview:

- 16 information booths
- 10 presentations to organizations/institutions
- Participation in 8 networking activities
- Ads in certain media and on various websites
- 6 articles for Jobboom
- Conference called "The 7 keys of motivation" at the National Career Event Fair
- Visits to multiservice rooms in Emploi-Québec local employment centres
- eNewsletter
- Social networks: management of Facebook page and LinkedIn page
- Radio interview with Radio-Canada International about our program for women 50 and over
- Promotional materials delivered to libraries, businesses, organizations and training centres

## Participation in job fairs

We had an information booth at 9 job fairs, allowing us to make contact with job seekers. In addition to presenting our programs and activities, our counsellors shared, provided information, answered questions and offered advice. At the spring 2018 National Career Event Fair, last April, two counsellors gave a talk called "The 7 keys of motivation" that was greatly enjoyed by the **75** people in attendance.



# COLLECTIVE *Action* AND COOPERATION

## *Our Participation*

The Centre is involved with a number of groups focused on social and economic issues that affect women. Our collective action keeps us in tune with emerging social issues and allows us to share our expertise and be proactive helping women in Greater Montréal improve their living conditions, working in conjunction with other stakeholders.

### **Commemoration of the Events at the Polytechnique**

As we do every year, we took the time to mark the tragedy that took place at the Polytechnique on December 6, 1989. This year, we looked at the most tenacious myths in our society about violence against women. We explained and deconstructed twelve myths that still support violent harm against women. Over **40** women attended this highly emotional event and discussed the social issues related to the persistence of these myths. They became more aware of the negative impact of these preconceived ideas for themselves and for the people around them. Every year, the commemoration re-examines violence against women, with the hope of ultimately eradicating it.

### **International Women's Day**

To celebrate International Women's Day, our March 8 committee organized an activity on the theme of diversity. The participatory event got the participants talking about equality and openness to diversity, a discussion that was fuelled by three guests who had personally faced different kinds of discrimination. The participants then broke out into small groups to discuss and reflect on practical actions that can be taken to make our society more inclusive and what to do if they witness injustice. The meeting brought together about **30** participants and wrapped up with

a shared meal. It had a real impact on our definition of respect and especially our capacity to apply the tenets of respect in our own circles. The women in attendance also left with clear tools that will help them include these notions of respect for others in the way they bring up their children.

### **Centraide March of 1 000 Umbrellas**

Each year, as employees, volunteers and participants, we express our gratitude to Centraide of Greater Montreal, the Centre's loyal financial partner, by joining in the March of 1 000 Umbrellas in October. Rain or shine, with our umbrellas and our banner, we show up at this rendez-vous marking the beginning of Centraide's annual fundraising campaign for organizations that fight poverty and exclusion.

### **Neighbour's Day**

Although our work extends all across Montréal, our neighbourhood is special to us. Going out to meet our neighbours, whether they are organizations or people, lets us promote the wealth of services available in the heart of Milton-Parc. Again this year, the sharing of information documents and community initiatives was enlivened by music, performances and snacks, for the enjoyment of all our fellow citizens.

### **Roundtables, Groups and Committees**

Roundtables give organizations and public institutions the opportunity to share their expertise on various issues that affect the most vulnerable groups in our society. As violence against women is a natural concern for us, we are involved in the **Table de concertation sur les agressions à caractère sexuel de Montréal** and the **Table de concertation en violence conjugale de Montréal**. These two roundtables allow us to stay

informed, share our practices and expertise and work together to create a better place for victims of sexual assault and conjugal violence.

To offer a better response concerning the issues related to newcomers and their socio-economic integration, we continue to contribute to the **Table de concertation des organismes au service des réfugiés et immigrants (TCRI)** and specifically the **Regroupement des organismes au service des nouveaux arrivants (ROSNA)** and the **Regroupement des organismes en francisation du Québec (ROFQ)**.

For the immigration committee of the **Table Interaction du quartier Peter-McGill**, through inter-organizational sharing, we participated in the launch of a reflection on the committee's mission statement and action territory, the possibility of having a project manager, the organization of a networking day to support community stakeholders and to make contact with residents and problems newcomers have accessing mental health resources.

To help provide essential, high-quality, user-appropriate services to the indigenous people living in Montréal, we also continued to take part in the meetings of the **Urban Aboriginal Strategy Network** and the **Table d'accessibilité aux services de santé et de services sociaux en milieu urbain pour les autochtones à Montréal**.

Food insecurity is still a serious issue for many women in Montréal. Our involvement with the **food security committee** of the **CDC-ASGP** neighbourhood roundtable shows the Centre and other Plateau organizations that while local food supplies are diverse and of good quality, they are inaccessible to the poorest people. The committee's goal is to offer better services to people who need food assistance. Aware of this reality, we offer neighbourhood women a monthly food assistance service, emergency food assistance and collective kitchen activities, and we keep them informed about other alternatives and food resources, including l'Épicerie solidaire.

Homelessness is a social issue that affects a fair portion of our society. Our involvement with the **CDC-ASGP homelessness committee**, which is made

up of many different players and stakeholders, supports initiatives that help improve services for people experiencing homelessness and serves as a social engine of change.

On the employability front, we continued to participate in **Projet 109** to maintain cooperative ties with the **CHUM**. The goal is to harmonize the service offering from organizations with human resource needs. **Three** presentations about job opportunities and recruitment criteria were offered in June, October and December last year, for women interested in job opportunities in the health care sector.

This year we also took part in meetings of the **Alliance des centres-conseils en emploi (AXTRA)** immigration committee, dealing with the issues and challenges faced by organizations and immigrants.

## Communauté Saint-Urbain

Since 2013, the Centre has been part of a group of partners working to preserve the Hôtel-Dieu de Montréal site and maintain its public vocation in the service of the community. The **Communauté Saint-Urbain (CSU)** was officially created in February 2017. The Executive Director of the Centre has been elected on the Board of Directors since this date. The project aims to develop an inclusive living space offering housing to different client groups as well as health and community service functions, while preserving the extraordinary heritage of the Hôtel-Dieu de Montréal community that it represents, following its move to its new location in the CHUM.



*The Communauté Saint-Urbain, is mobilizing against the sale of one of the pavillons of the Hôtel-Dieu Hospital in Montreal.*

## Partnerships and Cooperation

### Collège de Maisonneuve

In January 2019, we renewed our cooperation agreement with Collège de Maisonneuve to teach **25** hours of dynamic job search methods to students registered in attestation of college studies programs subsidized by Emploi-Québec. Using lectures, exercises and guided practical assignments, the workshops help the students develop communication skills suitable for their job profile and implement successful strategies related to their professional goals. **7** groups are planned for next year.

### Verdun Vocational Training Centre

We offered 2 three-hour workshops on intercultural communication to **45** students at the Verdun Vocational Training Centre. This activity examines the main cultural differences that influence the way people think and act. The students explore their own values and think about the constraints that may emerge in the context of cultural diversity.

### Jobboom

Our partnership with Jobboom continued in the form of **6** articles on topics related to women and work, published on the website, the social networks and the monthly Jobboom newsletters. These are the themes we covered:

- Motivation at work
- Experienced workers
- Harassment on the job
- Volunteering and the job search:  
a winning combination for female newcomers
- Integration and job maintenance
- Information meetings

### South Korean Delegation

On September 17, we had the pleasure of welcoming a delegation from the Korean National Council of Women at the Centre. During this visit, we presented our services and their impact on the lives of the women who come to the Centre. A discussion period also gave us the opportunity to share and learn that women's organizations are rare in Korea and have no government support. The members therefore all volunteer to help improve living conditions for women and their families.



*Thank  
you to the  
delegation of  
the "Korean  
National  
Council of  
Women" for  
their visit to  
the Centre.*

## Community Contribution

The community shows its support to the Centre in a variety of ways, and we can count on the generosity of many different players who want to help improve the socio-economic conditions of women and their children. This concern for the well-being of our participants is demonstrated every day in many different ways.

### Pharmaprix

Our warm thanks to the Pharmaprix at 3861 Boulevard Saint-Laurent and its owners, Eric Van Hoenacker and Pierre-Benoît Tremblay, exemplary models of community engagement. Our faithful partners for more than ten years hold a lemonade and corn-on-the-cob stand for the Centre's benefit each year during the Festival Mural and Saint-Laurent boulevard street Fair. Although our employees and volunteers



are involved in these events, Eric and Pierre-Benoît rally their families, employees and friends for several days to make it a real success. We sincerely thank them for supporting our cause.



*The lemonade and corn-on-the-cob stand of our partners!*

### Montréal Museum of Fine Arts

Again this year our participants enjoyed free guided tours of the major exhibitions at the museum. These visits, made possible through the partnership between our Educational Service and the museum, offer the women special access to works of art along with information that further enriches the experience. The outings are always greatly appreciated by our participants, who are very grateful.

### Presence of Employers at the Centre

This year, **4** activities in partnership with businesses were offered to our job search participants. In April 2018, two representatives of Sun Life Financial gave a talk on the challenges and opportunities of being a woman in the financial industry. In May 2018, we held a career salon in partnership with the Réseau d'entreprises d'économie sociale en aide à domicile (EÉSAD), which was very popular with our participants. On May 18, we held a talk on recruitment in the public service, and in August, two representatives from the Ville de Montréal made a presentation on daring to embrace manual trades. A total of over **150** women took part in these meetings with employers. Job opportunities, hiring criteria and the selection process were all discussed. The attendees had the chance to ask questions, talk directly to the employers and hand in their CVs.

### Elles Centraide Networking Activity

In November, for the fifth consecutive year, a networking and exchange activity was held for the major Centraide of Greater Montreal donors and **a dozen** Employability Service participants. These accomplished professionals and businesswomen talked informally with our participants and shared their career paths. The participants benefited from a stimulating and valuable networking experience that ranged from the theoretical to the practical. The event was much appreciated, as always. We want to sincerely thank the Centraide donors for their involvement and for helping to restock our professional wardrobe.

### Montréal Insurance Women's Association (AFAM)

The Centre has also been relying on the faithful and very precious support of AFAM for over **25** years. Attuned to the cause of women facing difficulties and fighting cancer, every year this organization holds a fundraising event and gives the proceeds to the Centre, Le Chaînon and WICC (Women in Insurance Cancer Crusade). With over 150 guests from the insurance industry, the event was held in the enchanting setting of the Le Mirage golf club. The popular electronic auction gave the guests the opportunity to make great deals for the benefit of three good causes!

### Partnership with L'Oréal Canada

Since 2017, **34** women have taken part in the Beauty for a Better Life project, which gives them access to **500** hours of training to become hairdressing assistants, as well as an internship in a salon. This experience not only allowed many participants to find a job in hairdressing but also gave them the self-assurance to begin training in other fields or undertake a job hunt related to their original profession. Most of them joined the workforce or returned to university to pursue their socio-economic integration and financial autonomy. Again this year, we attended the graduation ceremony for the participants in the third cohort and heard their testimonies about the positive effect the experience had on their lives.

## “Suited for a Cause”

In collaboration with Richter and BCF Avocats d'affaires, the RBC Royal Bank of Canada held the fifth edition of “Suited for a Cause” in its artificial intelligence research lab offices, Borealis AI. For the guests, it was an opportunity to tour the avant-garde lab and meet Ms. Nadine Renaud-Tinker, President, Québec Headquarters at RBC Royal Bank, who was the special guest for the evening.

The entry price for the activity was a professional clothing item or accessory for the job seekers enrolled in our Employability Service activities.



*The fabulous team of the 5th edition of “Suited for a cause” with the assistant Director of the Women’s Centre of Montréal, Maud Briancourt.*

## PwC young professional women cocktail party

This initiative was arranged to encourage young professional women at PwC to network and to raise their awareness about the Centre’s cause. The women were also invited to sort through their wardrobes for items to donate to the Centre’s professional wardrobe. During the evening, Les Effrontés (stylist services and consulting) made a presentation on Silhouettes from A to X and offered professional sartorial advice.

## Partnership with L’Gros Luxe restaurants

We want to thank **both** L’Gros Luxe restaurants, in the Plateau Mont-Royal and Mile-End for their support. During the holiday season, both restaurants donated \$1 to the Centre for every plate of mac and cheese they served.

## Social and corporate involvement

This year **93** volunteers from the corporate, institutional and university communities came to lend us a hand and spruce up our spaces, especially our wardrobe and collective kitchen.

We thank them all for their involvement: TD Bank, BMO, Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec, Hydro-Québec, Industrial Alliance, Mercer Canada, Rogers and McGill University.

## Christmas Campaign

Our 41<sup>st</sup> Christmas Campaign was another great success, thanks to the many partners who stepped forward to help: groups of corporate volunteers who pitched in before and during the distribution of the baskets, schools and workplaces that held food and toy drives, people who made cash donations and people who offered their time. Without these resources, we would not have been able to offer **743** Christmas baskets. We also want to thank Cominar and Redbourne, which generously offered the storage spaces that facilitate the logistics of donation management.



*Our thanks to the PwC team for its dynamism and efficiency!*

## Pampers

The exceptional donation of **Pampers** has enabled us to provide diapers to more than **700** children and distribution will continue over the next year.

# Membership AND PARTNERS

## Women's Centre of Montréal

- CDC Action Solidarité Grand Plateau
- Communauté Saint-Urbain
- Montréal Council of Women
- Milton-Parc Community Coalition
- Table des groupes de femmes de Montréal

## Front Line Service

- Accès bénévolat - Est de Montréal
- Alliance des communautés culturelles pour l'égalité dans la santé et services sociaux (ACCESSS)
- Association des haltes-garderies communautaires du Québec
- Association québécoise Plaidoyer-Victimes
- Batshaw Youth and Family Centres
- Canadian Mental Health Association
- CDC Action Solidarité Grand Plateau / homelessness and food security committees
- Cégep André-Laurendeau
- Cégep du Vieux Montréal
- Cégep de Rosemont
- Cégep Gérard-Lodin
- Cégep Marie-Victorin
- Cégep Saint-Jérôme
- Cégep Saint-Laurent
- Centre d'action bénévole de Montréal (CABM)
- Centre d'Ivritvik
- Centre Jeunesse de Verdun
- Chez Doris
- CLSC du Plateau-Mont-Royal
- Commission de développement des ressources humaines des Premières Nations du Québec
- Concordia University
- Côté cour
- CPE Soleil Le Vent
- Cree Health Board
- L'Gros Luxe restaurant at 451 Duluth Est and 150 Bernard Ouest in Montréal.
- La porte ouverte/Open door
- La Rue des femmes

- Le Chaînon
- Makivik Corporation
- Moisson Montréal
- Montréal legal aid
- Montréal Museum of Fine Arts
- Montréal Native Friendship Centre
- Native Montréal
- Native Para-Judicial Services of Québec (SPAQ)
- Native Women's Shelter of Montréal
- Palais de justice de Montréal
- Pharmaprix at 3861 boulevard Saint-Laurent, Montréal
- Premier arrêt
- Projet Autochtone du Québec Inc.
- Québec Native Women, Inc.
- Regroupement des organismes au service des nouveaux arrivants (ROSNA)
- Regroupement des organismes en francisation du Québec (ROFQ)
- Regroupement des inter-organismes pour une politique familiale au Québec
- Regroupement intersectoriel des organismes communautaires de Montréal (RIOCM)
- Réseau pour la stratégie urbaine de la communauté autochtone à Montréal
- S.O.S Violence Conjugale
- Table de concertation des organismes au service des réfugiés et immigrants (TCRI)
- Table de concertation en matière d'agressions à caractère sexuel de Montréal
- Table de concertation en violence conjugale de Montréal
- Table de concertation sur la faim et le développement social du Montréal Métropolitain
- Université du Québec à Montréal (UQÀM)

## Employability Service

- Alliance des centres-conseils en emploi (AXTRA)
- Association québécoise en gérontologie (AQG)
- Au bas de l'échelle
- Centre de formation professionnelle de Lachine
- Centre de formation professionnelle de Verdun
- Centre Pauline-Julien
- Centre William-Hingston
- Centre Yves-Thériault
- Chamber of commerce of Metropolitan Montréal




- CHUM (projet 109)
- Collège de Maisonneuve
- Comités sectoriels de la main-d'œuvre de la chimie et de la pétrochimie; de la fabrication métallique industrielle, de l'industrie des plastiques et des composites; de l'industrie électrique et électronique ainsi que celui du transport routier
- Conseil d'intervention pour l'accès des femmes au travail (CIAFT)
- École de formation professionnelle Léonard-de-Vinci
- École de formation professionnelle Verdun
- École des métiers du Sud-Ouest de Montréal
- École des métiers de l'aérospatiale de Montréal
- École des métiers de l'équipement motorisé
- École des métiers de la construction du Montréal
- École des métiers du meuble de Montréal
- Groupe d'aide et d'information sur le harcèlement au travail de la province de Québec (GAISHT)
- obboom
- Mentorat Québec
- Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur
- Option Consommateurs
- Table Interaction du quartier Peter-McGill

## THANK YOU TO OUR MAIN FINANCIAL PARTNERS



Montréal 

Québec 

Canada 

## VOLUNTEER committees

### Strategic Planning Committee

*Louise Béchamp, Johanne Bélisle, Brigitte Chartier, Caroline Lacroix, Joëlle Thibault; Marie-Andrée Ulysse*

In the last few months, the Board has begun the update and renewal process for the three-year strategic plan. This exercise is still underway, but we expect to be ready to implement the new plan by fall. We are confident that it will elicit everyone's support and interest.

### Human Resources Committee

*Javiera Arroyo, Johanne Bélisle, Julie Cuddihy, Cécile Demers, Christiane Garant, Céline Moreau, Joëlle Thibault*

The committee followed up on a variety of human resources issues, to support the Centre's management staff. It also began a reflection on the best strategies for human resource planning and mobilization. As it does every year, the committee examined the employees' compensation, drawing on in-depth studies carried out by different specialized firms and organizations to formulate recommendations for the Board concerning the annual pay raise.

## Finance Committee

*Johanne Bélisle, Brigitte Chartier, Roxane Coté, Duffay Romano*

A step was taken to prepare for the succession with the addition in 2018 of a new member on the finance committee. Her involvement all year long helped prepare for a smooth transition for the Finance Committee's activities in the years ahead.

As part of its regular responsibilities, after adopting the budget projections, the Finance Committee proceeded with the monthly review of the financial statements and budget analysis to ensure that all the Centre's objectives are being achieved.

Finally, the Finance Committee continually reviews the Centre's practices and processes in order to improve them and effectively manage risk. The committee is aware of the need to stay informed about changes that may affect the Centre in terms of risk management.

## Public Relations and Marketing Committee

*Johanne Bélisle; Siham Bouras; Maud Briancourt; Anissa Hébert; Caroline Lacroix; Heidi Picard, Isabelle Troitzky*

Last year was a step forward in modernization, with a complete overhaul of our website, the primary showcase for reaching out to many of our client groups. We also continued our efforts to post rich, dynamic content on our various platforms and social networks. We believe that the website update will help us achieve our visibility goals.

## Program Advisory Committee

*Johanne Bélisle, Isabelle Goupil, Maria Stroia, Maria Sol Terraza, Marie-Andrée Ulysse*

The analysis of our user satisfaction survey was central to the activities of the Program Advisory Committee. To contact as many respondents as possible, we extended the questionnaire deadline, which allowed us to achieve our objective in terms of the number of questionnaires analysed.

The results show that 94.46% of the users consider the services they received excellent or very good. All the comments were carefully studied, and measures were taken to improve services where the Centre's capacity permitted.

Financing and changes in our clientele are two issues that the committee will continue to examine over the year ahead.



MESSAGE FROM THE  
*President*  
OF THE BOARD  
OF DIRECTORS  
OF THE FOUNDATION

*T*he mission of the Foundation of the Women's Centre of Montréal is to promote and support the interests, goals and objectives of the Women's Centre of Montréal. This would not be possible without the dedication of women and men whose great generosity has allowed the Foundation to spread its reputation so far and maintain the essential services offered by the Centre. On behalf of the Foundation, I want to thank everyone for their commitment to this important cause, which allows the Centre to help thousands of women and families in Greater Montréal.

Once again this past year we were fortunate to be able to count on very dynamic event co-presidents and patrons, and with their help, our benefit evening achieved **record-breaking results**. I want to sincerely thank them and all the people who took part in our benefit events and contributed to their success. We are very honoured to have the support of these women and men who have extremely demanding positions and who hold the mission of the Centre and its Foundation dear.

In 2019, the Foundation held its **21<sup>st</sup> annual benefit evening** on March 21, co-presided by **Lorena Biason, Vice-President, Financial Planning, Québec, RBC Royal Bank, and Simon Lauzier, Senior Vice-President, Investment Optimization and Capital Markets, Ivanhoé Cambridge**. Thanks to the tireless efforts of the co-presidents and a tremendous team of **26** very engaged patrons, the evening was a historic and resounding success, raising over **\$340,000!**

With regard to governance, thanks to the coaching volunteered by Ms. France-Anne Fortin from PwC, our Board of Directors continued the review of its processes, to ensure the Foundation has a Board that is effective and efficient and that follows best management and governance practices, to support its continued growth. In that vein, it was our pleasure to welcome two new directors, Sophie Roux (Montréal Port Authority) and Cathy Perron (Aon).

In closing, succession is always on our minds, and we are making an appeal to the business community to expand our pool of volunteers and recruit co-presidents and patrons for our benefit events, sit on special committees and contribute to corporate drives and various specific pro bono services.

I look forward to seeing you at the Foundation's benefit events!

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Marie-Claude Frigon". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline.

**Marie-Claude Frigon, CPA, CA**



# Event

## Annual benefit evening “Une constellation pour Elles”

Thank you to our co-presidents, patrons, partners, donors and everyone else who participated in the 21<sup>st</sup> annual benefit evening of our Foundation, which was held at the Parquet de la Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec on March 21.

The evening, with the theme “Une constellation pour Elles,” was co-presided by **Lorena Biason, Vice-President, Financial Planning, Québec, RBC Royal Bank**, and **Simon Lauzier, Senior Vice-President, Investment Optimization and Capital Markets, Ivanhoé Cambridge**. **Myriam Fehmiu** lent her legendary spirit and hosting skills to make the event a very special moment of generosity, talent and emotion, generating record net receipts. These funds will allow the Women's Centre of Montréal to continue to offer a warm welcome, an attentive ear and innumerable essential resources so that thousands of women and families can have a better life and revive their hopes for the future.

The event offered our **400** guests an abundance of unforgettable moments, such as the moving creative testimonies of the Survivarts artists, the excitement of the auction and draw, delicious canapés and the enjoyment of meeting old friends and making new acquaintances, all in the lovely setting of the Parquet.

Be there next March 19, 2020  
for the next edition!



2019 benefit-evening “Une constellation pour Elles”

## Bravo, and thanks again to our patrons:

**Manon Angers** / RBC Royal Bank; **Khadija Azizi** / RBC Royal Bank; **Johanne Bélisle** / Foundation of the Women's Centre of Montréal; **Alexander Chau** / RBC Royal Bank; **David Cristofaro** / RBC Royal Bank; **Lydia D'Errico** / RBC Royal Bank; **Brigitte Dagnault** / Sun Life Financial; **Mario Di Bernardo** / RBC Royal Bank; **Dominique Fortier** / PwC; **Louise Fourès** / La vie en Rose; **Manon Hamel** / Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec; **Caroline Lacroix** / Cominar; **Geneviève LeBrun** / Transat; **Geneviève Levac** / RBC Royal Bank; **Elif Lévesque** / Osisko Gold Royalties; **Eugenio Mannarino** / RBC Royal Bank; **Julie Mimeault** / National Bank; **Sherine Morsi** / RBC Royal Bank; **Catherine Newman** / National Bank; **Anne No Delaïde** / RBC Royal Bank; **Angela Onesi** / Fasken; **Nadia Petrolito** / L'Oréal Canada; **Sophie Roux** / Montréal Port Authority; **Catherine Schraenen** / Ville de Montréal; **Marie-Hélène Sicard** / Sodexo Canada; **Alexander Watson** / RBC Royal Bank

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J'apprends avec mon enfant

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Lawyer and dispute resolution consultant

### **Barakissa Savadogo, Participant Member**

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