



# To the Point.....

## Saint Columba House

Fall 2010



### “Not everything that counts can be counted...” Albert Einstein

Albert Einstein, in his inevitable straightforward fashion brings home a simple reminder that everything that counts cannot be counted. And volunteers and volunteering fall into this notion; its value and impact on a community are immeasurable. There is a popular trend in the funding sector to push the non-profit organizations to assign a monetary value on vol-

unteer time. However, as a director of a community organization, I know the valuable impact that volunteers play in our ability to deliver effective, life-giving, healthy, meaningful services and programs to a community. It is very difficult to put a dollar value on volunteer time. Our volunteers provide many intangibles that cannot be easily quantified. For example, our volunteers demonstrate the amount of support we have within our community, help a child to read, deliver a hot lunch to a shut-in, and bring key resources of knowledge and skill to Saint Columba House. Our volunteers contribute to the well being of our programs, anchoring and integrating us firmly in the community. These large and small acts freely

given are what bind the community together. I have come to understand that volunteering is about giving, contributing, and helping other individuals and the community at large. It is working with others creating a meaningful, healthy, civil society.

The purpose of this newsletter is to acknowledge the importance and value of the many volunteers, who enable us to live out our mission at Saint Columba House. And through their commitment are building a compassionate and civil society; one loving act at a time. To our volunteers, I thank you for joining with us in creating a concerned and loving community.

*Patricia Lisson, Director*



### Programs of Saint Columba House

Community Lunch

After-School

Alternate School

Hand-in-Hand

Day Camp

Community Organizing

Volunteerism

Women's Group

Spiritual development

Student internship

### Giving from the heart – connecting the “Firm” to the surrounding community

Me Yannik Tanguay, a corporate lawyer and partner in the law firm of Dutton Rainville, expressed to me over dinner his obligation to give back to the community. He spoke passionately of the importance of family, and how the stresses and strains of life on his family have had a huge impact on forming his moral responsibility to society – ‘as individuals we need to care for each other’. As we continued to talk, he expressed the importance

of connecting the corporate sphere with the ‘real world’ – the relationship with the local community is essential in achieving healthy corporate practices and it brings a sense of place and belonging to our work. He committed his firm financially to the work of Saint Columba House and we discussed ways in which he could dedicate his time, talents and energy to making a difference in the community.

*Patricia Lisson, Director*

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**Hand-in-Hand Library Time**



**Fall canning workshop**



**Parent-Child Activity**



**After-School Fun**

## Call to service...

On September 23rd Saint Columba House held its first volunteer orientation evening; we hoped to share our story and identify the significance that volunteers play in our ability to provide effective, empowering programs, as well as highlighting the impact of volunteering on the health of the community.

A long time volunteer: Julie Holdgate, who was offering leadership for the evening, passionately explained how volunteering enabled her to acknowledge herself as a valuable, skilled person. For her, this was significant and she went on to say, that volunteering enabled her to stay healthier, active, fit, and more mentally alert.

This event, garnered the interest of

two youth groups, who are planning to spend a hands on evening at the 'House'; two possible volunteers, who are scheduling a day to experience the programs in operation and decide where they best fit; and a second volunteer orientation evening to be held in January.

If you or someone you know has an interest in volunteering, do not wait for January, just give us a call (514-932-6202); we would be happy to meet with you. Volunteers are needed in all of our program areas; however we do have an urgent need for tutors in the After-school Program and in the Early Childhood Education Program on Wed. mornings, assisting while parents are attending workshops.

## Volunteers respond to our story by thinking Green...

The Clarenceville, Lacolle Pastoral Charges, long time supporters of Saint Columba House, extended an invitation for us to share our story as part of their worship. Donna Leduc and I headed out to the Pastoral Charge in late winter; we were guests to a wonderful worship service, followed by a time of fellowship and conversation. It was early May, when I received a telephone call from Sandy Savage; she had been touched by the stories. She poured out her dream of connecting the gardens of her neighbours with Saint Columba House. "Do you think this is possible", she asked. From this 'Green dream' grew a developing relationship between the farmers of the Pastoral Charges, the Lunch Program of Saint Columba House and our roof top Oasis Garden. In fact, the project reached beyond us to include the Old Brewery Mission and a local senior's project. The gardens in the Pastoral Charges were expanded by a couple of

rows and the extra produce would be brought to us. In June, the gardeners arrived at our kitchen with an ample supply of rhubarb. Rhubarb was not a common item on our menu, so this gift of fresh local fruit caused a flurry of excited conversations, requiring our cook to think outside of the box. The rhubarb was transformed into a tasty cobbler and the rest was frozen. In late August, a truckload of fresh vegetables arrived and became the core of the menu in the opening days of the lunch program. And the blueberries, cabbage, onions, beets along with the produce from our garden were transformed into pickles, relish and jam by two groups of keen Oasis and Maison d'youville gardeners, in our first ever canning workshops. Thinking green can result in building strong community by linking with new friends and thinking outside the box.