

**Report to the
Community**

A Year of Adaptation and Solidarity

20-21

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A Word from the President and the Executive Director



JACKIE DEMERS
P.D.T.
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



ISABELLE BONNEAU
ING., MBA, PH.D.
PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD
OF DIRECTORS

We will all remember the year of the pandemic. We will all remember it, because it impacted us all, with varying, unequal effects across society. And the Dispensary's mothers, as we affectionately like to call them, were hit particularly hard.

Although uncertainty and resilience were some of the key themes of the past year, for the Dispensary team, commitment and innovation played just as big a role.

We would like to start off by pointing out how quickly the team pivoted to remain in contact with the families as soon as Quebec was "put on hold." When their work hours were reduced in anticipation of a decrease in philanthropic revenue, our team members did not back down. They quickly found innovative ways to reach out to our mothers, both one-on-one and in groups. After the holidays, when they resumed their regular schedules, they ramped up their efforts to meet the needs of our families and allow the Dispensary to continue to progress.

Despite the challenges generated by the pandemic, many pregnant women who requested our services were able to book their first appointments around mid-pregnancy and receive additional follow-up from our nutritionists and practitioners. This was very reassuring for them, considering the implications of being pregnant, giving birth and becoming a parent during a pandemic. The idea of living through such an important time isolated at home, possibly having to give birth alone, unable to visit the doctor and without the direct support of friends and family is very worrisome for a pregnant woman, regardless of her income. It becomes especially so when added to concerns about paying the rent, buying food and diapers, being a good parent and giving birth to a healthy child.

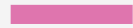
These courageous women approached the Dispensary to obtain support and did everything in their power to improve their circumstances and ensure their newborns had everything they needed for a good start in life.

We must also mention the remarkable commitment of the members of our board of directors, who proactively and efficiently dedicated themselves to managing the effects of the health crisis and its consequences for the team, the families, our funding and the future of our organization. Thanks to their efforts, we can look forward to a more stable year ahead, despite the lingering uncertainties.

Finally, we must draw attention to the great sense of solidarity that emerged this past year. The importance of community action, collaboration and continued complementary services, as well as the ability of each person to make a difference, were all amply brought to light. Overall, this chaotic year came to a positive close thanks to our loyal, generous donors, the government bodies and institutions that reacted quickly to adapt service offers and the community organizations that found innovative ways to respond to emerging needs. Our relationships with many of our action and financial partners were strengthened, and several collaborations were enhanced, while others were constrained. We came to realize the extent to which our community, based throughout the province but concentrated in Montréal, is a precious ally in the quest for greater equality and favourable conditions for all, thanks to the openness, commitment and resilience of the many organizations and institutions that comprise it.

We will all remember how this past year highlighted the importance of our social safety net, while also putting it to the test. It forced us to change our pace and taught us useful lessons about community development. Overall, it resulted in greater solidarity and inspiration throughout our community. We are proud to say that we were able to support the adults of tomorrow when it really mattered.

The Dispensary



MISSION To foster optimal infant health through social nutrition services for pregnant women in precarious situations, one pregnant woman, infant and family at a time.

VISION To provide each child with an equal chance to achieve self-fulfillment.

VALUES

| | |
|------------|-----------------------------|
| Humanism | Innovation |
| Fairness | Participative collaboration |
| Commitment | Resilience |

STRATEGIC PLANNING

Our 2018-2022 strategic plan includes four main areas that allow us to take action, along with other relevant stakeholders, to improve the conditions in which children are born and grow up, through direct action with pregnant women, their children and their families, as well as through broader community efforts.



Social Nutrition

Social nutrition is an interdisciplinary approach that focuses on women in vulnerable situations during their pregnancy and the early months of their infant's life.

Through biopsychosocial assessments, clinical nutritional interventions and actions based on various health determinants, social nutrition helps women properly nourish themselves and their babies and experience healthy parenthood at a critical time in their child's life.

Our practitioners work with women based on their families' needs, abilities and potential to improve the conditions in which their child will grow up, by facilitating access to various material, professional, community, institutional and other resources.

Who is it for?



Pregnant women with low incomes

Pregnant women with precarious immigration status

Pregnant women who use psychoactive substances



140 years of nurturing life and building futures

[A video](#) produced this year by TACcom presents the Dispensary and its activities.

Taking Action for Pregnant Women, Babies and Families

Present from day one

For our team members, the first two weeks of this fiscal year—and of the pandemic—were spent contacting the mothers who were receiving our services, both by telephone and other technological means. Many of the women were facing service closures and had little information or means to deal with the consequences of the crisis. They were afraid.

We are proud that during this critical period of widespread and unprecedented uncertainty, we were able to continue to provide psychological first aid to these women and help direct families to appropriate sources of information.

A year of adaptation

Throughout the year, we were able to adapt to the health crisis and its effects, as well as to the needs of the families we served.



We harnessed technology to stay in touch with the mothers, and we implemented a mail-out system for Olo coupons, vouchers and other written materials.



In order to communicate relevant, timely information to the team and to the families, our community development working group developed a process for sorting and processing the constant flow of information on the pandemic, the health guidelines and the community and institutional services that remained available.

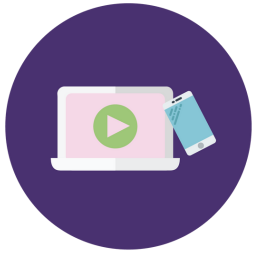


We set up a process for meeting face-to-face when a situation warranted it, although at year's end, most of our services were still being delivered remotely.



We remained in contact with our partners, who hosted neighbourhood nutritionists even when the pandemic-related health measures prevented on-site service delivery. Our ongoing dialogue with local organizations was a valuable source of information.

Starting in April, virtual workshops were made available to all.



When participation levels in the virtual workshops waned after the first few months, we offered our facilitation services to our network of family service organizations, in order to make them more accessible (in person and virtually).

We also created video briefs to make the content of our workshops more readily available to families, as well as to integrate it into other services and presentations.



I learned a lot through the course. I didn't know I shouldn't add salt and sugar to pureed foods. I found the information from the workshop very relevant!

A mother who attended the *Baby's First Foods* workshop

Despite our best efforts, far fewer women sought our services this year; this phenomenon was also observed in the healthcare network.

Although there was no improvement in the situations of families during the pandemic, this reduction in requests can potentially be explained by increased social isolation, technical and technological limitations and the difficulties experienced by the women we serve. These phenomena have been observed throughout Quebec through an increase in the use of emergency food banks, a decrease in reports to youth protection services and a greater number of femicides.

Because we were forced to reduce the team's work schedule for about half the year, we redistributed the tasks and, despite everything, succeeded in maintaining and improving follow-ups with mothers, who were able to obtain their first appointments earlier in their pregnancies. They therefore benefitted from more frequent monitoring throughout their pregnancies.



SERVICE REQUESTS

This year, 225 new pregnant clients obtained services from the Dispensary.

This is a decrease of 41% from last year. The women were between eight and 38 weeks pregnant when their files were opened. The Dispensary accepts clients at any point in their pregnancy.

How do they find us?

Word of mouth accounted for 46% of referrals, up 18% from last year.

Referrals from community organizations dropped from 45% last year to 34% this year.



PRENATAL FOLLOW-UP THROUGH SOCIAL NUTRITION

Targeted nutritional follow-up starting at week 16 of pregnancy

On average, mothers who enrolled early were first seen at around week 20, whereas last year it was at around week 23.

However, a third of the mothers began their journeys in their third trimesters, due to late registration.

1509

social nutrition consultations took place during the prenatal period.

On average, each mother received **six consultations during her pregnancy**, which is one more than last year.



POSTNATAL FOLLOW-UP THROUGH SOCIAL NUTRITION

Birth and breastfeeding

Low birth weight
4,7%

compared to 9.5% for the province of Quebec*

A birth weight of less than 2,500 g is considered low.

Breastfeeding
94%

of the mothers initiated breastfeeding at birth.

Prématurité
3,4%

compared to 7.9% for the province of Quebec*

*Among socially and 1 materially disadvantaged families.¹

1 out of 3 mothers had at least one consultation with the lactation and perinatal consultant.

1608

social nutrition consultations took place during the postnatal period.

On average, each mother received **six postnatal consultations**.

With 41% fewer mothers enrolled, but only 21% fewer prenatal and postnatal visits than last year, **interventions took place earlier and were more comprehensive.**



COMPLETION OF SOCIAL NUTRITION FOLLOW-UP

A few months after birth, once the mother feels comfortable in her role, the baby is growing well and is almost ready to eat solid food, and the family knows where to obtain continued support, our services come to an end. Near the end of their journeys with us, mothers are invited to attend our introductory workshop on complementary foods. This year, 45% of mothers attended.

On average, we were involved for

8.6 months of the women's lives this year.

¹ Ministry of Health and Social Services publications on fetal, newborn and child health statistics. *Évolution du nombre et de la proportion de naissances vivantes de faible poids pour l'âge gestationnel selon l'indice de défavorisation matérielle et sociale lié au lieu de résidence de la mère, Québec, 1989-2012.*

A total of 440 women received social nutrition services.

36% were served through our local partners.



51% of the women earn a salary below livable income. ¹

This is an Increase of 14% over last year

Among other sources of income, 16% of women rely on income security and 7% rely on employment insurance. 10% of the families have no income.



5% of referrals originated directly from our partners.

This is an increase of 78% over last year.



29.5% of the women were born in Africa (Central, East, West or Southern).

The country of birth of 16.5% of the women is in North Africa, 15% in the Caribbean, 14.5% in Canada or the United States, 10% in Asia, 9% in Latin America and 3.4% in the Middle East.



22% of the women have precarious immigration status.

25% have refugee status or are asylum seekers.



The Dispensary serves the women of Greater Montréal and the surrounding areas.

28% of the women live in the territory served by the CIUSSS de Est-de l'Île, an increase of 12% over last year.

33% of the women live in the territory served by the CIUSSS Nord-de-l'Île, 14% in the territory served by the CIUSSS de l'Ouest-de-l'Île, 10% in the territory of Centre-Sud-de-l'Île and 7% in the territory of Centre-Ouest-de-l'Île.

The number of women from the territories of the CISSS de Laval and the CISSS de la Montérégie-Est increased by 35% and 42%, respectively.

¹ Livable income is an indicator established by the [Institut de recherche et d'informations socioéconomiques \(IRIS\)](#) that measures the threshold at which a person is considered to be out of poverty.

177 virtual workshops were delivered to families



183 Dispensary participants

Pour un total de 358 présences.

6 short videos

on the subject of food security.

Collaboration with partners

14 workshops were delivered by our partners and six were delivered by the Dispensary on partner premises.

3 Main Themes

53 workshops on breastfeeding and perinatal health

After attending a prenatal workshop, 84% of participants said they felt very comfortable talking to their child, even during pregnancy or when their child was very young (less than one year old).

33 workshops on food security

In a telephone survey of mothers who had attended a *Baby's First Foods* workshop, 93% of respondents said they had introduced complementary foods into their children's diets at between four and six months of age.

15 workshops on accessing resources

During the workshop, 100% of participants identified a key need for their families and acknowledged a personal strength they could rely on when facing challenges.

During the first few months of our virtual workshop delivery, several stakeholders from the healthcare network and its agencies participated in our workshops, so as to implement similar services for their family-based clientele.



I was impressed that despite the physical distance, the facilitator kept the workshop interactive the entire time. Her approach was great—very human and dynamic. I would like to sincerely congratulate you for what you do. You're a wonderful resource for families.

Nurse Clinician, Early Childhood and Youth, CIUSSS de Montréal

Essential foods and other items

Thanks to the availability of emergency funds and ongoing support from Centraide, the Olo Foundation, Moisson Montréal, Énergie Valéro Inc. and our MNA Jennifer Maccarone, as well as innovative community initiatives such as the September 13th Miracle and the *Fermière Solidaire Proximité* card from the *Carrefour Alimentaire Centre-Sud*, we were able to continue to provide food and nutritional support, despite being physically apart.



Other extraordinary support measures included the distribution of baby clothes in collaboration with the *Fondation de la Visite*, the provision of blood glucose metres and test strips for managing specific cases of gestational diabetes and loans of breast pumps and baby car seats.

What women are saying about their experiences

With the aim of optimizing the child's development, the social nutrition approach works directly with the woman and her experience of motherhood to target certain changes.

One-on-one interviews were conducted with 30 women who had completed their social nutrition journeys.

1. TRUST

100% of clients cited at least one positive attribute to describe their relationship of trust with the nutritionist.

57% of clients became more aware of their own parenting strengths and skills, reflecting an increase in their levels of self-confidence.

Through all their support and help, I felt like I had someone to talk to if I had any issues concerning my pregnancy and baby and I really gained the confidence to be able to become a mother.

Je me souviens que j'avais le DPJ impliqué dans ma vie et c'était une histoire très difficile, mais dans l'ensemble, ma nutritionniste ne m'a jamais jugé et elle m'a toujours donné la force de gérer n'importe quelle situation.

2. KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

100% of clients learned about at least one of the following topics: healthy eating (73%), breastfeeding (40%), child development (37%) and positive parenting (17%).

40% stated that they had adopted healthier eating habits and 40% said they had become better at breastfeeding.



Manger du poisson n'était pas quelque chose que je faisais souvent et quand j'ai compris à quel point c'était important, j'ai commencé à l'intégrer davantage dans mon alimentation. J'étais aussi un peu anémique avant ma grossesse et elle m'a vraiment aidé à comprendre comment je pouvais l'améliorer.

A lack of knowledge is one of the most common challenges, especially for women who are pregnant with their first babies.

63% of clients stated that they had adopted new behaviours to strengthen the bond between them and their child.

83% of clients reported that they had learned about how to communicate with their unborn or 0- to 6-month-old children.



After my delivery I spent a lot of time speaking to my babies every time I got a chance, whether it was while feeding or giving a bath.



Ils m'ont fourni les outils nécessaires pour résoudre mes problèmes auxquels je faisais face en tant que maman.

For 67% of the women interviewed, access to a Dispensary health professional helped them feel better equipped to face the issues they encountered. In addition, 40% said they had received psychological first aid.

3. A SENSE OF FOOD SECURITY

This year, for the first time, we tested out a series of questions on women's sense of food security. After piloting the questions, we determined that the assessment tool requires some tweaking, but the following are some preliminary results.

93% of those surveyed responded that the information (recipes, resources and tips) they received improved their ability to make healthy food choices.



The majority of clients reported having better access to healthy foods that suited their taste, in sufficient quantities.

4. ACCESS TO RESOURCES

82% of clients reported having been referred to other services by their nutritionist.

77% of clients said they had been directed to other sources of information, such as workshops, websites, videos, recipes, etc.



My nutritionist gave me some handouts with a list of nearby organizations.



What women are saying about their experiences

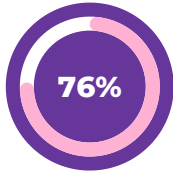
[A video](#) produced this year by TACcom highlights the Dispensary's impact on its clients.

Local service points

Thanks to the financial support of the Conseil du Système Alimentaire Montréalais (CSAM) as part of its 2020-2022 integrated action plan, we conducted an assessment of the impacts of our community-based interventions and of clients' levels of satisfaction.

We conducted personal interviews with 63 clients who had received services through our local partners in the past two years.

Concertation Femmes
Fondation de la visite
Fourchettes de l'espoir
Maison Bleue St-Michel
Rond Point



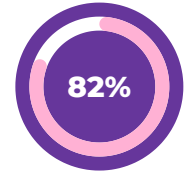
PROXIMITY

The clients we interviewed stated that they preferred not to have to travel to the Dispensary's downtown location to receive services. However, if they had not had the choice, 60% would have made the trip anyway.



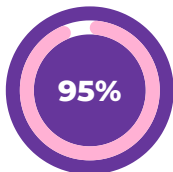
KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

The clients learned about at least one of the following topics: healthy eating (95%), breastfeeding (44%), child development (57%) and positive parenting (32%).



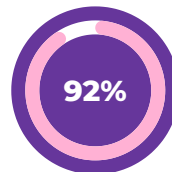
ACCESS TO RESOURCES

The clients reported having been referred to other services by their nutritionist.



PARENTING SKILLS

The clients became more aware of their own parenting skills and strengths.



ATTACHMENT

The clients stated that they had adopted new behaviours to strengthen the bond between them and their child.



TRUST

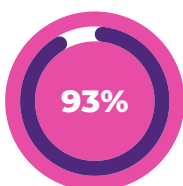
The clients cited at least one positive attribute to describe their relationship of trust with the nutritionist.

These results reveal that our community-based interventions facilitate access for the women we wish to reach, and that the social nutrition services they receive at those locations have a positive impact on them and their children.



The good nutritional advice I received was one of the main turning points for me. She provided an outside listening ear. I always looked forward to seeing her and laughing with her.

A mother who was served through Rond-Point



OVERALL SATISFACTION WITH SOCIAL NUTRITION SERVICES

Women rated their satisfaction level with the one-on-one services they received as 5/5.

Community development

Our social and community worker coordinates this component, which aims to create and develop ties with organizations and other relevant service providers, in order to respond to the multiple needs and challenges of the families we serve. Like a field worker—but serving all of Montréal—and assisted by a working group of practitioners, she finds appropriate means, key players and suitable methods for ensuring accessibility to the best services.



An increase in referrals to our services from community organizations.



A resource management tool is being developed to facilitate the work of practitioners.



Various workshops were facilitated by Maison Buissonnière and Maison Grise, as well as by Esther Bérubé, a volunteer mother.



Information briefs on the 2-1-1 service and on resources for welcoming and assisting immigrants were produced.



A social calendar was created, featuring key and recurring actions for meeting the frequent, shared needs of families, as well as a monthly newsletter for women.



A successful virtual version of the Family Christmas Party was held. Fifty families and some very special guests attended. (p22)



The Dispensary is a safe haven for anyone who knocks on its door. For me, it has been a sanctuary for my mind, a harbour for my anxieties and a shelter for my worries. Thank you a thousand times over. No matter the height of the wave a family has to ride during pregnancy, you are the organization best equipped to help.

Ms. H. T.

Dispensary client and participant in the Family Christmas Party contest

A dynamic practice

To ensure that our activities remain relevant, appropriate and effective, we work hard to document, update, evaluate and adjust our approach. To this end, we created the first version of our Social Nutrition Practices Guide this year. It will continue to evolve over time.

Specifically, we revised our eligibility requirements and intake processes, created several operating procedures and provided training to our practitioners in areas of expertise linked to the practice of social nutrition. Practitioners attended the training sessions based on their needs and interests. We also held group training sessions for the entire intervention team, to complement the program.

A solutions-based approach

M. Yves Gros-Louis, Psychologist

Understanding, detecting and intervening more effectively for victims of domestic violence

La Maison Grise

Post-pregnancy body image

Équilibre

Healthcare literacy and plain language

Autrement dit

Taking Collective Action for the Community

The involvement of the Dispensary in the lives of families takes place during the pregnancy period and the first few months of the child's life. Because we help families identify their priorities and specific needs, we also need to be able to refer and direct them to appropriate services and resources, so that they may pursue their journey toward a better future.

For this reason, we implement activities targeting the broader community, in accordance with our community development program, with the aim of improving conditions for these families by collaborating with others to draw on the strengths and expertise of all. In this way, we pursue our vision of enabling all children to reach their full potential.

Concerted action, collaboration and the sharing of expertise

In March 2020, an open forum bringing together stakeholders and managers from organizations and institutions that work with families was to be held as part of the Dispensary's 140th anniversary celebrations. Naturally, with the onset of the pandemic, the event was cancelled. In January 2021, we held an adapted version of the event called *Le Café des Possibles*, which was masterfully facilitated by Annick Davignon of Dynamo.

Café des possibles

January 21, 2021

25 organizations
43 participants

Together, let's dare to reinvent the way we support the neediest families, starting at pregnancy.

After nearly a year of the pandemic, the need to gather together to discuss how to best support families from the earliest days of pregnancy was more strongly felt than ever.

Concrete visions emerged for creating and cultivating a new village, a caring village, where every family can experience pregnancy (and all its joys and sorrows) in a safe, secure and equitable manner.

The participants expressed a desire to follow up on this emerging vision with an event to develop concrete actions. They also stated that they were glad to meet new stakeholders and organizations and that they were interested in developing new partnerships. We can therefore say that we accomplished our objectives for this event and that it marked the beginning of new opportunities for collaborative, concerted action.

Our links with local coalitions

Peter-McGill Community Council

The downtown west side, where Higgins House is located, benefits from dynamic collaborations that address the area's unique issues.

Throughout the past year, the Dispensary continued to collaborate to the best of its abilities, concentrating its efforts on a collective action plan aimed at reaching and offering services to the most isolated families and supporting the implementation and evolution of the Innovation-Assistance project, which enabled us to provide concrete support to the families in greatest need during the pandemic.

Other areas of Montréal

Through the development of our community outreach activities, we joined the family and early childhood coalitions of Montréal-Nord, Bordeaux-Cartierville and Saint-Laurent.

Because of the pandemic, our activities in these neighbourhoods were somewhat limited this year. Nevertheless, these groups served as valuable sources of information for our practitioners. Thanks to the coordination of these groups, we were able to support initiatives and continue to nurture links between organizations.

Collaborative research

CONCEPTION Study

Anick Bérard, researcher at CHU Ste-Justine and member of the Dispensary Corporation, initiated a study with a team of researchers from different Canadian and European universities to better understand the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the health of pregnant women and their babies.



The Dispensary is proud to help recruit participants for the CONCEPTION study, to ensure that women in the most precarious situations are represented in the results, allowing everyone to learn from them.

Nutritional status of vulnerable pregnant women and perinatal health issues

Élise Carbonneau, under the supervision of Bénédicte Fontaine-Bisson, Associate Professor and Associate Undergraduate Director of the School of Nutrition Sciences at the University of Ottawa, has chosen to base part of her postdoctoral work on the Dispensary's approach.

Her intention is to help us better support our clients and optimize the use of our resources by documenting the most effective aspects of social nutrition. This may inspire researchers from here and elsewhere to pursue research on nutritional interventions for vulnerable pregnant women and inform the development of future social nutrition interventions for vulnerable pregnant women elsewhere in Quebec and Canada.

Fruitful partnerships

In cases where it would improve access or quality of services to pregnant women, particularly those in precarious situations, the Dispensary collaborates with other influential groups in knowledge-sharing, skills development and service planning and implementation.

This year, we worked with:

The Olo Foundation's expert committee on nutrition and perinatal care

Discussions on best practices and information related to front-line nutrition services during pregnancy.

The Rond-Point partners' committee

Contributed to the drafting of its Implementation Guide.

The Quebec Public Health Association's Table of Experts

Discussions regarding the production of video briefs on perinatal health for parents with low literacy levels.

Doctors of the World

Support for their initiatives and advocacy for health care coverage for all.

Mouvement Allaitement du Québec

Web conference for members on breastfeeding support for women in vulnerable situations.

The Social Inequalities in Health component of the Notice of Pregnancy project

Aided the Ministry of Health and Social Services to ensure that the Notice of Pregnancy system it plans to implement next year is also used by pregnant women in precarious conditions.

Round table of nutritionists working in maternal-fetal medicine (MFM) in hospital settings

Sharing of tools and practices among clinical nutritionists for interventions with pregnant women.

Équilibre

Member of the advisory committee for the *Maman bien dans sa peau, bébé en santé* project on the subject of body image after childbirth.

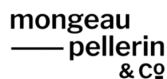
Sharing our own expertise

30 questions and requests were addressed to us by individuals and organizations in relation to our social nutrition expertise (food security, breastfeeding, ethnicity, nutrition, etc.).

Toward greater social and community impact

Because we believe that optimizing the efforts of all will lead to greater social and community impact, we employed targeted coaching to focus on three important elements.

Our goal: **To build on what we know, keep learning as we go and continue to innovate so that all children may reach their full potential.**



With Mongeau Pellerin & Co.,

we created a map of our ecosystem's stakeholders.



We benefitted from the support of The Hub, a LabOA initiative supported by Centraide,

to consolidate our learning organization behaviours and remain innovative.



We joined the 'Collision' cohort of Esplanade's Impact8 Pathways

to review our strategies for reaching our target population and better meeting its needs.



These initiatives will serve us well as we contemplate our strategic horizon.



Nurturing Life is our online perinatal nutrition information and training service for practitioners in community organizations operating in the field of perinatal care.

Since 2010, the Public Health Agency of Canada has financially supported our province-wide initiative.

105 members

from 44 organizations in 12 Quebec health regions

SATISFIED MEMBERS

84% of the members surveyed consider the Dispensary to be a reference in perinatal nutrition.

25 publications

40 short videos

GEARED TO OUR CLIENTELE

Published content in a style better suited to our target audiences (members and pregnant women). The video briefs are coming soon.

Website redesign and updated branding

A NEW LOOK

The website was redesigned and redeveloped by the Smartegy Agency to better meet members' needs. More than 160 publications were updated.

5 training sessions

A total of 46 participants

An average of 11 people per workshop

BETTER-EQUIPPED PARTICIPANTS

98% were satisfied with the content, the course delivery and the technical aspects of the sessions.

96% increased their knowledge of perinatal nutrition.

94% learned additional perinatal intervention strategies to apply with their clients.



Overall, the members of Nurturing Life demonstrated an increased level of satisfaction with the available tools, which they are employing more frequently than last year.

The Nutritious and Economical Food Basket

Since the 1950's, the Dispensary has been establishing the cost of a healthy basic diet, based on the Nutritious Food Basket.

.....
This project is supported by the *Direction régionale de la santé publique* du CIUSSS Centre-sud de Montréal and is part of the Conseil du Système Alimentaire Montréalais' integrated action plan.

A committee of experts is involved in the project and has met four times since September 2020.

Malek Batal

Full Professor and TRANSNUT Director, Department of Nutrition, Université de Montréal
Canada Research Chair in Nutrition and Health Inequalities

Sylvie Chamberland

Director of Citizen Engagement and Mobilization, Carrefour Alimentaire Centre-Sud

Jocelyne Gamache

General Coordinator, Quebec Collective Kitchens Association

Marie-Claude Gélinau

Urban Environment and Healthy Living Services, Public Health Branch, CIUSSS du Centre-Sud-de-Montréal

Minh Nguyen

Associate Fellow at the Institut de Recherche et d'Informations Socio-Économiques (IRIS)

From the Dispensary:

Annie Brodeur-Doucet, Jackie Demers, Jeanne Lemoine and Suzanne Lepage

A few weeks before the pandemic began, our project manager began working on an ambitious redesign of this tool to keep it up-to-date, relevant and more accessible to those seeking ways to advocate for better food security.



In Progress

A review of the methodology and a verification of the foods contained in the basket

Five focus groups (with 43 participants) have been conducted to validate the content of the basket.

Development of a new tool

We have begun work on a new web application that will allow us to gather, analyze and disseminate price survey data to illustrate the cost of healthy, budget-friendly foods. We intend to make the tool available free of charge to organizations and communities seeking information on the cost of healthy food in a given territory.

Variation in food costs during the pandemic

This year, exceptionally, with the support of the City of Montréal, we conducted monthly price surveys to determine whether the health crisis had had any specific effects.

We are happy to report that no major price increases were observed.

IN MARCH 2021

\$9.15

per person, per day, for a typical family of four

BETWEEN APRIL 2020 AND MARCH 2021

The cost of the food basket increased by 1.55%

However, this increase was not as great as expected, nor has it been observed on all food-related expenses.

While several foods were subject to supply adjustments at the beginning of the crisis, prices did not increase as feared.



Let's talk about it!

The cost of food is a broad topic that interests many. This year, we were able to share our findings and expertise on several occasions.

May 14, 2020

We reported the results to our partners through webinars and Noovo's NVL news bulletin.

July 7, 2020

We presented our five findings on staple food prices during the pandemic: Conversation DUX (in French only).

October 14, 2020

We participated in a web panel discussion organized by the Conseil du Système Alimentaire Montréalais.

From January to April 2021

We held workshops through McGill University's Bachelor of Nutrition program to raise awareness of food insecurity through case studies.

We would like to thank those who recognized and publicized our quick actions and important role during the crisis.



May 10, 2020

Observatoire des tout-petits

The *Observatoire des Tout-Petits* interviewed our executive director for its "Creators of Solutions" series.

May 20, 2020

ICI Première

Isabelle Craig talked about our services on the *Tout un matin* radio show (5:51).

June 20, 2020

ICI Toronto

During a broadcast, Freddy Mata talked about pregnancy nutrition and cravings across cultures.

May 25, 2020

David Birnbaum, MNA for D'Arcy-McGee, presented a list of 30 pandemic heroes to the Quebec National Assembly.

Number 30, Zoe Faubert, who was born in the midst of the pandemic, symbolizes what many families went through this past year. In his post, Birnbaum highlighted the work of the Dispensary, and Mitch Garber made a donation of \$500.



March 2021 Our team is tight, even from a distance!

Financial Solidarity

This year's fundraising situation was unique. We would therefore like to begin this section by acknowledging the flexibility of our main donor agencies, who allowed us to focus on meeting the needs of families during the health crisis. The Public Health Agency of Canada, the Ministry of Health and Social Services, Centraide of Greater Montréal, the *Direction Régionale de la Santé Publique du CIUSSS du Centre-Sud-de-Montréal* and the City of Montréal enabled us to modify our services by securing our funds for the current year, which was a tremendous boon to our initial service adjustments.

The area of greatest uncertainty was charitable donations

Our Mother's Day Benefit Luncheon, which would have concluded our 140th anniversary celebrations on May 8, 2020, was cancelled for the second year in a row. We would like to recognize the commitment of our honorary chairperson, Marie-Lyne Beauchamp, Chief Operating Officer, Casual Dining at MTY Group, with whom we thoroughly enjoyed planning the event. We would also like to acknowledge the challenges she faced while working in one of the industries hardest hit by the health crisis.

Mylène Paquette, who was to be the spokesperson for this special event, sent words of wisdom and encouragement to our team and our families during the first few weeks of turmoil.

The Agnes C. Higgins Awards Ceremony, which was to be held during the luncheon, was also suspended.



In difficult times, the only thing a person can control is their attitude. I therefore wish you all the best in getting back to basics and choosing a positive attitude in the face of the difficulties of this pandemic. The storm will pass!

Mylène Paquette

The cancellation of this event and our awareness of the pandemic's overall effects led us to anticipate a significant reduction in fundraising revenue.

However, our donors demonstrated their belief in our work by being as generous as ever, if not more. In addition, our annual campaign committee performed exceptionally, both carrying out our appreciation campaign for past donors and canvassing for our year-end campaign.



Special thanks to the committed individuals whose initiatives produced valuable results.

Pascale Valois and Nicolas Doyon

who encouraged the guests at their virtual wedding to support the Dispensary.

Mario Lalancette and Hélène Laurendeau

who, with the support of other nutritionists, promoted our campaign to nutritionist colleagues.

François Paré

who has been encouraging his annual Christmas party guests to make donations for the past 20 years.

Our canvassers

who enabled us to raise over \$60,000.

In Memoriam Donations and Bequests

Donations were made to the Dispensary in memory of the following individuals:

Elizabeth Armour
Nicole Daudelin
Jean-Paul Desrosiers
Holly Jonas Higgins
Marcel St-Arnaud

Legacy bequests following the death of Marjorie Pike were made during the year.

Donations of Securities

A loyal family made a gift of securities valued at \$24,482.

Once again this year, many family, corporate and other foundations placed their confidence in the Dispensary to help them achieve their visions through regular support programs, one-time donations or targeted giving. We warmly thank them for their invaluable contributions and their trust.

Our sources of revenue

A total of **\$284,687** was raised through donations and in-kind gifts this year. Thank you for nurturing life with us!

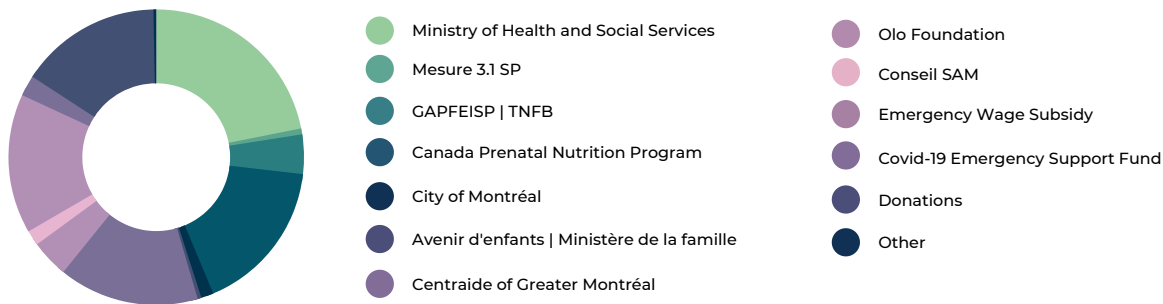


Figure 1. Sources of revenue for 2020-2021

Along with our generous donors, aid programs made a significant difference this year, as shown in Figure 1.

The federal wage subsidy program alone brought in over \$280,000. The emergency funds administered by Centraide and Moisson Montréal enabled us to make several modifications to our service delivery. The \$10 food vouchers created by the Olo Foundation saved us a lot of money and contributed directly to the purchase of essential food items for families (a value of \$19,750 distributed to families).



Énergir conducted a digital billing campaign that generated significant revenue, allowing them to distribute \$50,000 among four organizations selected by employee vote, including the Dispensary.

Solidarity during the holiday season

In the unique context of the 2020 holiday season, we wanted to create an event that would bring people together, make them feel welcome and encourage them to interact and connect. Our team therefore worked hard to organize a day of fun online activities that allowed families to join in at their leisure. To contribute to the event, which was marked by recognition and gratitude, families provided images and personal stories reflecting what the Dispensary means to them: meaningful moments upon which to build.

The day ended with a special visit from Jean-Marc Léveillé and Alexandre Da Costa of the Longueuil Symphony Orchestra, who launched their virtual Christmas concert and distributed 100 free passes to the families, a gift that was suited to the health context and appreciated by the families.

Following a difficult autumn season, we wished to spread positivity and acknowledge our donors by conducting an appreciation campaign.

Our donors were contacted by volunteers simply to be thanked for their donations and were sent a [video](#) highlighting the importance of their support in enabling us to keep moving forward.



The Dispensary thanks you!

[A video](#) produced this year by TACcom.



Thank you to the 10 groups who prepared and distributed Christmas baskets to 22 Dispensary families.

Agnes C. Higgins House

When the crisis struck, we had begun to seek funding to maintain the building. Now, after more than a year of providing services with minimal access to our House, we are reconsidering the overall use of the building with respect to our needs and those of the community.



Governance

The board of directors held six regular meetings and two special meetings. A crisis task force and a follow-up task force were formed; they met nearly ten times between the spring and the early fall to manage the uncertainty caused by the crisis.

The Governance Committee

was able to complete the board's self-assessment and address its findings. In addition, our prospective risk study was launched and certain practices and procedures relating to data confidentiality were implemented or modified. A questionnaire was sent to our permanent staff and board members to develop a common vision for our governance practices. The committee was also charged with ensuring the consistent integration of a collaborative approach to client engagement (patient-partner approach) into our practices, although at this time, the actions are largely internal.

The Finance Committee

continued to monitor financial data and processes, in addition to supporting senior management by filling the position of administrative services manager following the retirement of Lan Pham, who had occupied the position for 32 years.

The Nominating and Human Resources Management Committee

revised and implemented the senior management assessment process, reviewed the roles of the directorates and assisted with the implementation of relevant follow-up processes for the team during the pandemic. The harassment policy was also updated.

The Visibility Committee and the Canvassing Sub-Committee

supported the implementation of our donor appreciation campaign and annual pre-holiday campaign, and the creation of videos about the organization.

The Humans Who Keep the Dispensary Going

Board of Directors

Isabelle Bonneau, President

Société du Parc Jean-Drapeau

Mélanie Sirois, Vice-President

Dotemtex – Recherche de cadres

Julie Turcotte, Treasurer

CPA Candidate - National Program (HEC)

Dr. Jean-Marie Moutquin, MD, Secretary

Retired

Dr. Astrid Bicomumpaka Shema, MD

CIUSSS de l'Est-de-l'Île-de-Montréal

Elizabeth Gauthier

City of Laval

Roxane Girard

Fonds Capital Culture Québec

Zeina Khalifé

BMO Private Banking

Mario Lalancette

Quebec Produce Marketing Association

Jocelyne Pinsonneault

Corporate Director

Isabelle Tremblay

Thunder Lotus

Pascale Valois

CIUSSS de l'Ouest-de-l'Île-de-Montréal

Committees (active this year)

Committees are composed of administrators, volunteer professionals and staff members, who generously donate their time and expertise.

Governance Committee (and sub-committees)

- Pascale Valois, president
- Astrid Bicomumpaka Shema
- Isabelle Bonneau
- Jackie Demers
- Elisabeth Gauthier
- Francine Martel
- Jean-Marie Moutquin
- Contribution : Corrinne Montcho and Isabelle Renaud

Finance Committee

- Julie Turcotte, Chair
- Isabelle Bonneau
- Jackie Demers
- Lotfi Dridi
- Roxane Girard
- Maxime Joly
- Phuong-Lan Pham

Nominating and Human Resources Management Committee

- Isabelle Tremblay, president
- Isabelle Bonneau
- Jackie Demers
- Elisabeth Gauthier
- Mélanie Sirois

Visibility Committee (and sub-committees)

- Jocelyne Pinsonneault, president
- Suzanne Boyd
- Annie Brodeur-Doucet
- Jackie Demers
- Mario Lalancette
- Annie Langlois
- Jean-François Renaud
- Mélanie Sirois
- Pascale Valois
- Special contribution: Isabelle Giroux

To accomplish its mission, the Dispensary relies on the contributions of its volunteer board members, the exceptional expertise of its practitioners, the valuable support of its administrative staff and the services of the volunteers and interns who carry out diverse tasks and projects throughout the year.

Staff

Executive Director

Jackie Demers, P.Dt.

Fundraising and Communications Director

Position abolished during the year

André Bertrand*

Program and Project Director

Annie Brodeur-Doucet, P.Dt.

Family Care Coordinator

Tammy Tran, P.Dt.

Project Managers and Writers for Nurturing Life

Stéphanie Fortier, Dt.P. (contract)*

Catherine Vézina, Dt.P. (contract)

Project Manager for the Nutritious and Economical Food Basket (NEFB)

Jeanne Lemoine (contract)

Administrative Assistant

Beatriz Rivera-Oropeza

Accounting Assistant

Phuong-Lan Pham (retired at the end of the fiscal year)

Administrative Services Lead

Lotfi Dridi

Dietitians/Nutritionists

- Raphaëlle Chevalier, P.Dt. (contract)*
- Isabelle Dubé, P.Dt., Member of the Registre des Droits Acquis de l'OTSTCFQ (on parental leave)
- Stéphanie Fortier, P.Dt. (contract)*
- Catherine Labelle, P.Dt. (on parental leave)
- Suzanne Lepage, P.Dt.
- Andréa McCarthy, P.Dt., M.Sc.
- Karen Medeiros, P.Dt.
- France Proulx-Alonzo, P.Dt., Psychologist (M.A.)
- Véronique Ménard, P.Dt., M.Sc., IBCLC (leave without pay)*
- Dina Salonina, P.Dt.
- Catherine Vézina P.Dt. (contract)
- Ouardia Zeggane, P.Dt.

Perinatal and Lactation Consultants

- Selma Buckett, IBCLC
- Rita Daaboul, SF, BScN, IBCLC*

Social and Community Worker

Lorraine Doyon-Fréchette

Term Support Consultants

Janine Choquette-Desrosiers

Alexa Gaucher-Holm, P.Dt.

Volunteers

This year, the board members and 17 volunteers helped carry out the Dispensary's mission. Throughout the year, they were an invaluable source of expertise for our committees and of support for our services (food sorting, assessments, translation, tool development, preparation of mail-outs, etc.).



In 2020-2021, our volunteers and interns contributed a total of more than 3,400 hours of service.

We would particularly like to thank the following companies and educational institutions that encourage their employees and students to donate their time (in addition to their internships): Onepoint, McGill University (CHAP program), Concordia University School of Graduate Studies.

*Departure during the fiscal year

Interns

Nutrition – McGill University

Annabelle Assad, Valérie Bouzo and Alexa Gaucher-Holm

Nutrition – Université de Montréal

Charlotte Dumaine, Andréanne Lemieux, Kristel Nguyen, Chloé Normandeau and Virginie T. Wilkie

Techniques in Special Education – CECEP Vieux-Montréal

Claudia Constantineau-Durocher

Corporation

Including the board of directors, the Dispensary Corporation has a total of 101 members.

Acknowledgements

On several occasions, we were able to offer training and development to our team members and we would like to thank all those who supported our efforts in this regard, including Dynamo, CoCo and the Centre Saint-Pierre of the Centraide of Greater Montréal network, and the Joseph Armand Bombardier Foundation.



Thank you to our major funding partners and product suppliers.

Photos (cover page and p. 3)

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Jackie Demers

Translation (French-English)

Tania Grant

Printing

Litho Express



Founded in 1879, the Dispensary is Quebec's leader in social nutrition for pregnant women living in precarious situations. Each year, it helps hundreds of women in Greater Montréal receive adequate nutrition during pregnancy and give birth to healthy babies. Through innovative clinical and community interventions, it enables new parents to nurture the optimal development of their babies and families.

The Dispensary is a not-for-profit organization supported by Centraide and the Olo Foundation.

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