

# Being there

2019-2020 REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY



# Table of Contents

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A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT AND THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	P3
THE DISPENSARY	P4
TAKING ACTION FOR OUR CLIENTS	P5
SOCIAL NUTRITION PRACTICES	P14
THE DISPENSARY'S ROLE WITHIN ITS NETWORK AND ITS COMMUNITY	P16
THE DISPENSARY'S ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY TO CARRY OUT ITS MISSION	P20
THE DISPENSARY TEAM (AS OF MARCH 31 <sup>ST</sup> , 2020)	P23

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# Being there

We believe that 140 years ago, when Emily DeWitt and the YWCA created the Montreal Diet Dispensary, it was with one important intention: To be there. To be there for the less fortunate people of the city, to be there through their difficult times and, even back then, to accompany them in their efforts to improve their living conditions.

In 2019-2020, our intention was definitely to be there. To be there for the families who were most at risk of facing their pregnancies without support while living in precarious conditions, and to be by their sides in their quest for better living conditions. This year, we accompanied 624 pregnant women and new mothers as they carried and brought new life into the world.

We were there for, and with, our partners:

- Those with whom we implemented local services
- Those who answered the call to provide responsive services to meet the needs of families or to support our team
- Those who sought our services to meet the needs of their teams or clientele
- Those with whom we collaborated to ensure the continuity of services and foster the healthy development of all children in specific geographical areas
- Those with whom we have been seeking ways to remove barriers to services
- Those who allowed us to reach out and share our expertise

This past year we were also there for our own organization, to ensure it remains relevant and current:

- By continuing to work hard on our Social Nutrition Practices Guide
- By taking care of our team members and investing in training on the social nutrition approach, the way we believe it should be carried out
- By integrating five new directors while also updating our governance structure in order to remain proactive and inclusive
- By planning the renovation of the Agnes C. Higgins House

Finally, being there took on its full meaning at the end of the fiscal year, when the coronavirus pandemic took hold of Quebec. From the very beginning of the crisis, we were there, even from a distance, so that pregnant women and new mothers had access to food, a support person and information on the situation to ensure they were safe and able to connect with programs and services.



Jackie Demers  
P.Dt.  
Executive Director



Isabelle Bonneau  
Engr., MBA, Ph.D.  
President of the Board of Directors

We would like to take this opportunity to thank those who are always there for us and who enable us to accomplish our mission. This year, in addition to contributions from our major financial partners the *Ministère de la santé et des services sociaux*, *Centraide* of Greater Montreal and the Public Health Agency of Canada, we benefitted from the valuable support of donors in the form of bequests and donations of securities, as well as contributions to our campaigns and events, for which we must thank our faithful, dedicated canvassers. The *Fondation Olo* and *Moisson Montréal* generously increased their distributions to our families. The City of Montreal, Valero Energy Foundation of Canada, *Avenir d'enfants* and several foundations supported our strategic actions this past year. And the *Direction régionale de santé publique du CIUSSS du Centre-Sud-de-Île-de-Montréal*, through a grant to update the Nutritious Food Basket, will enable us to continue to work with other players in the food security sector to ensure they are adequately equipped as they advocate for access to healthy food at low cost.

In these uncertain times, being there seems to us the best way to get through whatever challenges the future holds, together. That is how we envision the future: Being there so that people living in precarious conditions can continue to benefit from our support and essential services as they bring forth new life, laying the foundation not only for each child, but also for our entire society.

# The Dispensary

CLIENTELE

APPROACH

THE DISPENSARY WISHES THAT ALL PREGNANT WOMEN IN PRECARIOUS SITUATIONS IN MONTREAL HAVE ACCESS TO SOCIAL NUTRITION SERVICES DURING THE PRENATAL PERIOD AND DURING THE FIRST FEW MONTHS OF THEIR CHILD'S LIFE.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

ROLE

## Mission

The Montreal Diet Dispensary is a community organization whose mission is to foster optimal infant health through social nutrition interventions with pregnant women in precarious situations, one pregnant woman, infant and family at a time.

## Objectives

- Reduce the number of babies born with low birth weights
- Encourage and support breastfeeding
- Empower families to take charge of their physical and mental well-being while also fostering their social integration
- Make information and training on subjects related to perinatal nutrition accessible to practitioners throughout Quebec

## Key strategies

- From mid-pregnancy to six months after birth: provide nutritional counselling to pregnant women using the Higgins Method®, offer breastfeeding support and provide parents with pre- and postnatal group activities.
- Work with complementary partners before, during and after our involvement in the lives of the families we serve.
- Continuously improve our practices through innovation, assessment and documentation.
- Highlight the experiences and skills of Dispensary families.

## Values

- Because our actions are guided by notions of human dignity and because we support each individual's freedom to be the architect of his or her own fulfilment, we demonstrate **humanism**.
- At the Dispensary, **fairness** is exhibited through access to the free services we provide to pregnant women in precarious situations and to new mothers, without judgment and regardless of their background or living conditions, as well as the way in which we integrate these women into our organizational processes. The principle of fairness is also reflected in the relationships between our team members.
- At the Dispensary, **commitment, innovation and collaboration** are showcased by the organization's members and staff, as well as by the mothers we serve, the members of their families and other people close to them when they combine their experience, expertise and commitment to provide services of the highest quality.
- When our organization, pregnant women in precarious situations and their family members find the strength to bounce back and regain confidence in the future after facing difficult situations, we call this **resilience**.

## Vision

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

The diagram provides an effective illustration of the organization's mission, as well as the four priorities that guide its implementation. Through these strategic priorities, as well as the Client's Journey, we present the 2019-2020 Dispensary Report to the Community.

# Taking Action for our Clients

ENSURING THAT THE DISPENSARY'S SOCIAL NUTRITION SERVICES ARE ACCESSIBLE TO A GREATER NUMBER OF PREGNANT WOMEN IN VULNERABLE SITUATIONS WHO MAY NOT BE BENEFITTING FROM EXISTING SERVICES



## BEING THERE

### COVID-19 and the Dispensary- Pregnancy never takes a break !

When a health crisis occurs, the most vulnerable groups are unfortunately the hardest hit. Because they often lack appropriate care long before the crisis strikes, their health is more negatively affected than that of the vast majority of the population. We have regretfully seen this occur once again with the COVID-19 pandemic.

At the Dispensary, the majority of our mothers live in precarious socio-economic situations and many of them also have uncertain immigration status. In order to maintain optimal nutritional and social conditions for these vulnerable pregnant women and significantly improve their chances of giving birth to healthy babies, the Dispensary has made every effort to continue providing its services in virtual mode since March 16<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

These virtual services include assessments and nutritional and social follow-up services such as dietary recommendations, breastfeeding support, perinatal follow-ups and referrals to appropriate complementary resources and/or food banks, which are always accessible and in operation. Many of the mothers have expressed gratitude to their practitioners for providing them with comfort and a sympathetic ear along with nutritional counselling.

We wish to highlight the resilience of the mothers and families who have accessed the services of the Dispensary during the COVID-19 pandemic and who may already have lived through other types of equally painful crises. Our practitioners are always there.

At the time of this writing, the Dispensary was considering making its virtual group workshops available to all women and families currently in need of them, as early as April 2020.

These virtual services are made possible thanks to the dedicated financial assistance of Centraide, Valero Energy and the Dispensary's generous supporters. Thank you.





The Dispensary's services for pregnant women in vulnerable situations are unique and stand out from other nutritional support services in Quebec in that they are accessible and free of charge; they integrate social, economic and community elements; and they include both individual and group consultations as well as educational workshops. The services can be provided either on the Dispensary's premises (Agnes C. Higgins House), which are an inviting, family-type setting, or on the premises of partner organizations that are physically located closer to the homes of our target population (community-based interventions).

FROM APRIL 1<sup>ST</sup>, 2019 TO MARCH 31<sup>ST</sup>, 2020

NUMBER OF PREGNANT WOMEN

ACCOMPANIED: 624

(24% COMMUNITY-BASED INTERVENTION)

NUMBER OF INDIVIDUAL

CONSULTATIONS: 3,860

BABY'S AVERAGE AGE AT THE END

OF THE PROGRAM: 6.4 MONTHS

## Target Populations

- Pregnant women in financially precarious situations (living below the poverty line).
- Pregnant women with precarious immigration status.
- Pregnant women who use psychoactive substances.

## The Client's Journey 2019-2020

- When a pregnant woman contacts the Dispensary for the first time, a client file is opened and the woman is referred to her first group session: **the Welcoming Group**. Next, she meets with a nutritionist for a thorough assessment. Consultations and follow-up sessions are held every two to three weeks until the baby is born.
- For women who receive individual services during their pregnancies, face-to-face or telephone follow-up sessions are targeted at **one week, two weeks, one month, two months, four months and five months after the baby is born**. All the mothers and babies are invited to the «**Three-Month-Old Babies' Party**», which is a group activity in a festive setting, and **info session on introducing complementary foods**.
- Throughout their journeys, all women have access to **the services of perinatal and lactation consultants, as well as those of our social and community worker**, should the need arise. They may also participate in **group workshops** that complement our social nutrition services. Our **drop-in daycare centre** is available to encourage mothers to participate in these workshops.



## Services at Agnes C. Higgins House

### Welcoming Group

During the past year, **13** Welcoming Group sessions were held. A total of **71 participants** attended. On average, participants were 20 weeks pregnant.

### Individual consultations

- **5%** of the mothers were expecting their first child.
- **1,905 prenatal consultations** were held (nutrition, perinatal period, social).
- On average, the mothers were 26 weeks pregnant at the time of the first meeting.
- **2,049 postnatal consultations** were held (nutrition, breastfeeding, social).
- Number of individual breastfeeding consultations: **238**.
- **152 spouses** took part in the consultations, for a total of **532 visits**.



### The Three-Month-Old Babies' Party

The third month of life is an important milestone in an infant's psychosocial development. This is the time when parents begin to realize their child is no longer a newborn and babies begin to look directly at their parents and smile at them. To celebrate this stage, the Dispensary holds the Three-Month-Old Babies' Party. These parties provide mothers the chance to chat with their peers while learning about the importance of stimulating their children. At the same time, the Dispensary's practitioners are able to check on the babies' growth and provide advice on women's health and on how parents can take charge of the well-being of their children and families.

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**121 babies celebrated their 3-month "birthday" at the Dispensary**

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### Group workshops

The purpose of our group workshops is to provide information that complements our individual and group consultations. Workshops that cover topics related to nutrition for pregnant women, babies and families are led by our nutritionists, while for the most part, workshops on preparing for childbirth, breastfeeding, parenting skills, child development, networking and other topics are led by our perinatal consultants and our social and community worker. However, in some cases, they are led by practitioners from other organizations with expertise in specific subjects.

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**Number of group workshops delivered in 2019-2020: 165**  
**Number of participations: 541**

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### Drop-in daycare

To encourage mothers whose children do not attend daycare to participate in its group activities/workshops, the Dispensary provides drop-in services at its De Bon Coeur daycare.

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**Number of participations: 385**  
**Number of children: 250**

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## Community-based interventions

One of the key objectives of the Dispensary's 2018-2022 strategic direction is to make social nutrition services available to women in locations closer to their homes. For this reason, the Dispensary's nutritionists step out of their offices at Agnes C. Higgins House to conduct their consultations directly on the premises of community/partner organizations, often with pregnant women who are at very high risk of giving birth to babies with low birth weights. We like to call them our **neighbourhood nutritionists!** Through this approach, our nutritionists are able to integrate themselves into local communities and become important assets in each woman's multidisciplinary intervention plan, which is implemented and coordinated by practitioners from partner organizations.

### Doctors of the World

At the Doctors of the World clinic for **pregnant migrant women**, all the women encountered by our nutritionist had either a work visa, a tourist visa, a student visa or no status at all in Canada. For the most part, these pregnant women did not have access to free health care. Some of them had so-called "high-risk" pregnancies and required close medical follow-up due to factors such as diabetes, high blood pressure or multiple gestation.

Of the 274 pregnant women who visited the Doctors of the World clinic, our nutritionist met with and opened files for 106. Of these 106 women, **71 were provided with individual nutritional follow-ups and five** were awaiting follow-up at the time of this writing.

Another **14 women** received services from both a Doctors of the World nurse and our nutritionist because they had gestational or type II diabetes without GARE (high-risk pregnancy) follow-up, or high blood pressure without GARE follow-up.

### Rond-Point

*Rond-Point* is a group of professionals with expertise in perinatal and early childhood development in families where there is a problematic use of psychoactive substances. *Rond-Point* offers medical, nursing and psychosocial activities and services, in a single location, to parents and families who have lived with or continue to live with drug or alcohol consumption issues. About half the women seen by our nutritionist at *Rond-Point* also visit the Dispensary for a consultation, where they are provided with access to food items or other services. One of the impacts of our services is that these women gain enough confidence in themselves and their practitioners to venture out of their safe space at *Rond-Point*.

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Number of women accompanied: 21  
Number of group activities: 1

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### YMCA Residence

A nutritionist and a breastfeeding and perinatal consultant from the Dispensary held 12 **Welcoming Group recruitment sessions** on-site at the YMCA residence, where asylum seekers are temporarily housed. A total of **78 pregnant women** participated; files were opened for 11 of these women and they were also provided with nutritional follow-up.

### La Fondation de la Visite

The mission of the *Fondation de la Visite* is to prevent child abuse and neglect by fostering positive parent-child relationships and ensuring that every newborn benefits from a warm and stimulating family environment.

Our neighbourhood nutritionist used to meet the women of the Montreal-North area in the premises of *les Fourchettes de l'espoir*, but with their office space becoming limiting, *La Fondation de la visite* has warmly welcomed us, to keep us present in this sector.

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Number of women accompanied: 31  
Number of prenatal  
and postnatal follow-ups: 61  
Home visits: 4

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### Concertation femme in Bordeaux-Cartierville

The mission of *Concertation femme* is to improve women's quality of life in order to reduce isolation and foster emotional, social and/or financial independence by providing an environment that favours the search for solutions. The Dispensary contributes to this endeavour by providing nutritional counselling services, mainly to pregnant migrant women living in Bordeaux-Cartierville, St-Laurent and Ahuntsic.

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Number of women accompanied: 24

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### La Maison Bleue Saint-Michel

The first few months of 2019 saw the beginning of a new collaboration between *La Maison Bleue Saint-Michel* and the Dispensary. One of our nutritionists facilitated three sessions on gestational nutrition on-site at *La Maison Bleue Saint-Michel* during their prenatal courses. An average of **six pregnant women** attended each session. Since then, four women have been jointly accompanied by *La Maison Bleue Saint-Michel* and the Dispensary and two children between the ages of 18 and 36 months have had a consultation with the neighbourhood nutritionist.

## Portrait

This year, the Valero Energy Foundation of Canada enabled us to assess the needs of several groups of pregnant women—Aboriginal women, women with precarious immigration status and women who use psychoactive substances—and to identify their main barriers to access to perinatal services. In addition, the Valero Energy Foundation of Canada helped us identify the key stakeholders who work with these groups. This information ties in with one of the priorities of our 2018-2022 strategic direction: Ensuring that the Dispensary's social nutrition services are accessible to a greater number of pregnant women in vulnerable situations who may not be benefitting from existing services.







## Who did we help this year?

### Proportion of clientele accompanied according to referral source (direct or indirect)

Word of mouth	43.5%
Community organizations	41.6%
Health network	11.1%
Other	3.8%

### Status in Canada

Asylum seekers and refugees	27.3%
Precarious status (work, study or tourist visa or no papers)	21.8% (compared to 19.9% last year)
Canadian citizens	25.5%
Permanent residents	25.5%

Demographic profiles of our clientele

Age	
Adolescents 14-19	1.1%
Adults 20-24	8.6%
Adults 25-34	56.9%
Adults 35-39	25.5%
Adults 40 and over	8.0%

Sources of income	
Insufficient income	44.0%
Income security	20.9%
Employment insurance	4.7%
Loans and bursaries	5.5%
No income	13.1%
Sufficient income	6.4%
Other	5.5%

Continent/Region	
Central, East, West and Southern Africa	31.28%
West Indies	17.08%
North Africa	15.82%
Canada, U.S.A.	12.36%
Latin America	10.54%
Asia	8.53%
Middle East	3.45%
Europe	0.90%

Other Interesting Facts	
Proportion of our clientele that has lived in Canada for less than two years	60%
Proportion of the families we accompanied that are single-parent families or families in which one spouse lives in another country	28.7%
Proportion of the women have at least a secondary 5 education level (or equivalent)	87%

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## Food and supplements, nutritional correction factors and dietary recommendations

Due to their low incomes, 91% of the women who were accompanied by the Dispensary this year received nutritional supplements (one litre of milk, one egg, and one dose of prenatal multivitamins per day - Olo, as well as food items from *Moisson Montréal*), which ensured they would consume protein and other nutrients essential to the health of the baby. However, the provision of nutritional supplements and vitamins is only one aspect of the Dispensary's nutritional intervention program. The Higgins® method bases its nutritional assessments and interventions on risk factors that help determine the type of corrective nutrition required for each pregnancy. Of the expectant mothers we accompanied, 67.3% presented with conditions that required at least one form of corrective nutrition. This involved increasing protein and caloric intake to compensate for nutritional needs caused by one or more of the following risk factors: malnutrition, a history of unfavourable pregnancy outcomes, being underweight, insufficient weight gain halfway through pregnancy, short spacing between pregnancies, pernicious vomiting and severe emotional distress. Other risk factors exist to which corrective measures of this nature do not apply (including poverty, gestational diabetes, smoking, drug abuse, etc.).



## The Impact of our Interventions

The impact of the Dispensary's services on the lives of the women we accompany can be measured through a variety of elements, such as babies' birth weights; the provision of reliable information; teaching, monitoring and support by Dispensary practitioners; opportunities to meet with and converse with other mothers; and the acquisition of knowledge on how to foster the development of a baby. The following are some main points for the year.

- **Low birth weights (babies born weighing less than 2,500 g): 5.4%** (Dispensary) compared to 9.5% (province of Quebec) amongst families that are materially and socially disadvantaged.

*Source: Publications du ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux > Statistiques sur la santé du fœtus, du nouveau-né et de l'enfant > 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*

- **Premature births: 6%** (Dispensary) compared to 7.9% (province of Quebec) amongst families that are materially and socially disadvantaged.

*Source: Publications du ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux > Statistiques sur la santé du fœtus, du nouveau-né et de l'enfant > 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*

- **95,8%** of the mothers initiated breastfeeding at childbirth and 61.2% breastfed exclusively and/or totally two to four months postpartum.





### Increased knowledge and improved skills

Women's skills and knowledge regarding proper nutrition, breastfeeding, child development, healthy pregnancy, positive parenting practices and external resources were improved.

- 63.2% of mothers interviewed at pre- or postnatal meetings acknowledged that they had retained important information on gestational nutrition as it pertained to the development of their unborn child.

Secure attachment (child in a secure relationship with their parent) is a particularly important element of our social nutrition approach. It is widely known that this type of attachment begins in the womb.

According to a questionnaire that was completed by all participants in our group activities (mainly those that focused on childbirth, breastfeeding, and parenting skills), we observed very positive responses to the following:

- 89% of respondents expressed interest in speaking positively to their unborn children.
- 90% of respondents expressed a desire to practice skin-to-skin techniques with their newborn child.
- 79% of respondents felt better prepared for childbirth.

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*"I enjoyed the childbirth workshops. I was worried about having a C-section, but when my third child came, I was totally ready. The workshops let me know what to expect, but I would have liked to talk about it even more."*

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In 30.7 % of the individual mother-practitioner consultations carried out over the past year, the mothers spontaneously told us that they speak positively to their unborn children or to their babies aged 0-6 months.

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*"I learned how important it is to talk to my baby. I do it all the time now."*

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During our workshops on subjects such as neighbourhood resources, low-cost healthy cooking, infant sleep and complementary foods, our practitioners (workshop facilitators) took note of the knowledge gained by the participants during the workshops and performed a follow-up several months later by means of a questionnaire/ survey completed by the participants. The following are some of their observations:

- 79% of participants confirmed that they had used the 2-1-1 information and referral service, and 100% of those participants had been able to find one or more resources to meet their needs.
- 100% of participants were able to identify a characteristic of their baby's sleep, based on their age, and 100% were able to name a safe sleep rule for their baby.
- 100% of participants expressed their intention to put what they had learned at the Dispensary into practice with their child.
- 95% of mothers said they had introduced complementary foods into their child's diet 4 to 6 months after birth.
- 74% of mothers had cooked a recipe prepared in one of our cooking workshops and 95% had put into practice at least two of the 10 main recommendations for saving on their grocery budgets.

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*"I learned that I should introduce food allergens and meat first. I received a lot of guidance about foods for my baby. Things have really changed since I had my first child. I'm glad I attended these workshops."*

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### Awareness of internal resources

By nurturing their mother-infant bond, women felt more confident in their role of mother and adopted new behaviours that fostered the development of their child. The sessions led by Dispensary staff enabled women to recognize the strengths they had within themselves and led them to affirm—through assessment interviews—that they had developed not only self-assurance and self-confidence, but also the ability to stretch their own limits out of love for their child, demonstrating their internal coping skills.

- In 36.5% of the individual mother-practitioner consultations that were carried out over the past year, the mothers spontaneously told us that when it came to their children, they had been able to do more than they thought they were capable of. As an example, some of the mothers told us that they had made themselves eat even when they felt nauseous because it was good for the baby. They also told us that the Dispensary's follow-up program had given them confidence in their ability to breastfeed exclusively.

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*"I learned that I was able to be a mother for a second time!"*

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*"The Dispensary saved my baby's life. At the Dispensary, I learned that if my baby wasn't moving much, I should go to the hospital. One morning, my baby was moving less than usual so I went to the hospital, where I found out the heartbeat had slowed down. They did an emergency C-section at 34 weeks and told me that if I had waited even just a few more hours, it would have been too late. The Dispensary truly saved my baby's life."*

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*"Thanks to the Dispensary, I felt empowered and ready. I gained self-confidence. I had been feeling very discouraged about my pregnancy, but after my appointments and the workshops at the Dispensary, all that changed. I became more independent. I even learned to set up a budget on my own!"*

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### A relationship of trust with a significant person from the Dispensary

Women developed a feeling of belonging toward the organization (sense of trust). The mother-practitioner trust relationship is indispensable to implementing the recommendations that lead to the healthy birth and development of a child.

According to feedback from our focus groups, the mothers who are accompanied by the Dispensary believe that our practitioners possess appropriate knowledge and experience, good listening skills, a non-judgemental approach and a reassuring presence, in addition to being very available.

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*"I felt like they listened to me and accepted me the way I am. I really needed to talk to someone and it was good to feel like I was being heard."*

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*"The kindness you show the mothers is wonderful. Here, it's not about culture or religion or where you're from, we're all just mothers."*

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*"You're so welcoming, open and kind to the mothers. Thank you."*

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According to our practitioners, the vast majority of Dispensary clients display a high level of confidence in them.

### Peer support (social networks with other mothers)

During group workshops, our clients expressed their appreciation for opportunities to interact with their peers. They told us they had developed friendships, learned that they were not alone in experiencing difficult situations and accepted that it is sometimes necessary to ask for help. The participants also acknowledged that our group activities helped reduce their sense of isolation. Furthermore, talking with other mothers gave them feelings of courage and security and made them feel less alone.

According to a questionnaire that was completed by all participants in our group activities (mainly on childbirth, breastfeeding, and parenting skills):

- 84% of mothers reported that they had conversed with other mothers.

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*"The other mothers talked about their experiences. They gave me ideas for activities to do with the kids. I enjoyed taking the cooking workshops with them. It was a great opportunity to get out and feel less alone."*

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*"I found out from the other mothers that you have to have a lot of patience. I also learned that I have to let my baby set the pace. The Dispensary helped me get better organized."*

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# Social Nutrition Practices



## OPTIMIZING OUR SOCIAL NUTRITION PROGRAM

THE DISPENSARY'S SOCIAL NUTRITION PROGRAM IS BASED ON THE HIGGINS® NUTRITIONAL INTERVENTION METHOD, A SCIENTIFICALLY PROVEN METHOD THAT FOCUSES ON THE PREGNANCY PERIOD. SOCIAL NUTRITION ALSO COVERS THE FIRST FEW MONTHS OF A NEWBORN'S LIFE AND RELIES ON THE INVOLVEMENT OF VARIOUS MEMBERS OF THE PREGNANT WOMAN'S SOCIAL CIRCLE, AS WELL AS HER FAMILY. THE APPROACH TAKES INTO ACCOUNT A NUMBER OF HEALTH FACTORS (SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, AND CULTURAL STATUS; ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE; ETC.) IN ORDER TO PROVIDE INTERDISCIPLINARY INTERVENTIONS THAT ENABLE WOMEN TO GIVE BIRTH TO HEALTHY BABIES, NURTURE THEIR BABIES' DEVELOPMENT AND FLOURISH AS PARENTS AND COMMUNITY CITIZENS.

## Our Social Nutrition Approach

While continuing to refer to the impact assessment measures we implemented through EvalPop a few years ago, we also applied our logic model in order to better prioritize activities that will contribute to the changes we wish to see, both for families and the community. We significantly improved our ability to monitor our organization's capacity to provide services that are in line with our mission. Thanks to the efforts of several working groups, we also moved forward on better defining our role within the community and identifying the partners who most effectively help us meet the needs of our families. The continuity of services over the course of a family's journey is an important component of social nutrition. This year it took on a more tangible form.





## Standardizing our Social Nutrition Practices and Approach

Our practitioners worked on the implementation of the Client's Journey, which was adopted last year. They also continued to hold meetings to share best practices in social nutrition, provide each other with support, identify challenges and propose solutions.

After reviewing the process for creating the best practices manual, our team members began to develop various tools to help them better serve our clients and standardize their practices. Marie-Claude Gélinau of the *Direction régionale de santé publique du CIUSSS du Centre-Sud-de-Île-de-Montréal* will continue to support the team in these endeavours.

This year, we clarified our needs in terms of social and community interventions while specifying the role of our social and community worker in meeting these needs. To this end, we developed tools to help our nutritionists improve the living conditions of our clientele. In addition, the team worked on better defining the limits of our interventions and the role of our breastfeeding and perinatal consultants. The same was done for the process of referring clients to our consultants and to the social and community worker. In an effort to continually improve our service offer, we revised our Three-Month-Old Babies' Party to promote learning and sharing amongst mothers.

## Updating our Service Offer

By introducing these new ways of working, we are able to more easily adapt our service offer to the needs (or requests) of our clientele, the current context or the realities of our own capacity.

We improved the Client's Journey by implementing a final follow-up session with newborns once their mothers attend the workshop on complementary foods. This means that the final follow-up is now done when the baby is almost five months old rather than six months old. This change allows us to start providing counselling services earlier in the pregnancy.

In the fall of 2019, we invited **La Maison grise** to deliver workshops on parenting and on cultural differences and adaptation to our families. We have thus been able to provide Dispensary families with relevant, up-to-date information while remaining focused on our own strengths.

# The Dispensary's Role within its Network and its Community

## Our Collaborations with Other Agents of Change

Our mission, scope of activity, outreach on the Island of Montreal and nearly century-long presence in the Peter-McGill district have put us in a position to share our expertise and render it accessible to others. They have also motivated us to collaborate with other organizations to raise awareness of the issues that affect our clients and the community. For this reason, we are involved in local and regional round tables, healthy eating and food security groups, strategic think tanks and groups that focus on implementing service channels and means for exchange.

As always, we are driven by a single objective: **to ensure that all children, regardless of their background or social status, have an equal chance to achieve self-fulfillment.** We firmly believe that through the participation of the stakeholders in each family's community, this can be achieved!

## Sharing our expertise

### NURTURING LIFE

Launched as SVPNutrition in 2009, [Nurturing Life](#) is a virtual Dispensary program that provides community workers throughout Quebec with **free** distance training and information on perinatal nutrition, enabling them to provide effective services to their clients. Nurturing Life is unique in that it focuses on nutritional needs during the gestation and newborn periods and is based on the Dispensary's practical experience.

The Nurturing Life program is comprised of 134 members from 64 different organizations in 16 health regions across Quebec.

Some highlights from 2019-2020

- 6 online training sessions (webinars) were delivered, with an average of 6 participants per session, representing 10 Quebec health regions. 89% of practitioners who attended an online training session reported an increase in their knowledge of perinatal nutrition (pregnancy, breastfeeding, fetal development, newborns, infants).
- 19 articles, 21 case studies and write-ups, 6 information sheets, 4 video briefs and 22 *Saviez-vous* spots were published in the *Nurturing Life* section of the Dispensary's website. Visitors viewed an average of nine pages per visit.
- 70 different members (52% of the membership) visited the site at least once. Some members visited on multiple occasions: 33% visited more than twice, 23% visited more than three times and 17% visited more than four times. Total: 5,180 visits and 10,927 pages viewed; this is twice last year's number.
- The four video briefs were viewed 2,936 times. The most popular was the one on raw eggs, with 1,152 views.
- In a member survey, 83% of respondents said that the content of *Nurturing Life* helped them learn more about perinatal nutrition (pregnancy, breastfeeding and infants). Furthermore, 78% consider the Dispensary to be a reference in perinatal nutrition.

### THE NUTRITIOUS FOOD BASKET (NFB)

In 1932, the Dispensary created the Food Price List, which was a list of healthy foods available at low prices. This list became the precursor to Canada's food basket, which itself evolved into the [Nutritious Food Basket \(NFB\)](#) in the 1950s. The NFB is a guide to meeting nutritional requirements at low cost. The Dispensary monitors the supermarket cost of the NFB every four months and publishes its findings, providing up-to-date information on **the minimum cost of feeding a family of four an adequate, healthy diet in Montreal.** The NFB formed the basis for the Dispensary's reputation in the domain of food security.

**Between January 2019 and January 2020, the cost of the NFB increased by 3.7% (between January 2018 and January 2019, it went up by 4.7%).** There was a major increase (more than 20%) in the prices of fish, peanut butter and pulses (legumes). It was the first time in more than 10 years that there had been such a significant increase in the price of pulses. It is worth noting, however, that with an average price of \$5.50/kg, they remain a very economical source of protein.

Information and articles on the NFB are available on the Dispensary's website.

### Towards a new NFB

The NFB was last updated in 2005. It is therefore time to modernize it to take into account the evolution of the food system, current realities and today's consumption habits. The process of updating it will provide us with an opportunity to further automate our food pricing surveys to make them more user-friendly and to make it easier to other organizations who wish to conduct their own pricing surveys, with our support.

Thanks to funding from the *Direction régionale de santé publique du CIUSSS du Centre-Sud-de-Île-de-Montréal*, we took the first steps in initiating this project at the very end of the fiscal year.





## Our involvement in joint projects

### PETER-MCGILL COMMUNITY COUNCIL

- We participated in Families Downtown ("0-12" committee of the Peter-McGill Community Council) and its coordination committee.
- We pursued our involvement in the collective impact approach of the J.W. McConnell Foundation's *Innoweave program*, collaborated on services for pregnant asylum seekers and children of asylum seekers and advocated for funding for the neighbourhood.
- We supported the actions of My Peter-McGill (PIC, supported by Centraide) and the food security committee and gave a presentation on the achievements of Families Downtown at a neighbourhood forum.
- We signed a letter supporting the briefs of the *Comité logement Ville-Marie* and the Peter-McGill Community Council as part of the OCPM's public consultation on the by-law for a mixed metropolis.

### CONCERTATION PETITE ENFANCE-FAMILLE DE MONTRÉAL-NORD (CPEFMN)

- We attended CPEFMN meetings ("0-5" committee of Montreal-North) and supported the actions of the round table.
- We lent our support to the Journée de visibilité on November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2019, during the *Grande semaine des tout-petits*.
- We established links with organizations and stakeholders in the territory that will serve as contact points for our outreach worker and ensure continuity of services.

### COMITÉ DES ORGANISMES SOCIAUX DE SAINT-LAURENT (COSSL)

- We attended meetings of the COSSL's Early Childhood Committee ("0-5" committee of St-Laurent) and supported its initiatives.
- We established links with organizations and stakeholders in the territory that will serve as contact points for our outreach worker and ensure continuity of services.

### TABLE DE CONCERTATION JEUNESSE BORDEAUX-CARTIERVILLE (TCJBC)

- We attended meetings of the TCJBC's Early Childhood Committee ("0-6" committee of Bordeaux-Cartierville) and supported the actions of the round table.
- We established links with organizations and stakeholders in the territory that will serve as contact points for our outreach worker and ensure continuity of services.

### CIUSSS

- In collaboration with the *CIUSSS Nord-de-l'Île de Montréal*, we implemented a coordinated process for requesting prenatal follow-ups for pregnant women, so that more pregnant women have access to these services when they need them.
- We are considering implementing a similar process with the *CIUSSS Centre-Sud-de-l'Île-de-Montréal* and collaborating with them on continuity of care for the clients of various programs.
- We established links with the *Maison de naissance* in this area.

### ÉQUILIBRE

We sat on the working committee of the "Maman bien dans sa peau, bébé en santé" project to develop training on body image for practitioners working with pregnant women. In addition, the Dispensary's team of practitioners received training on the subject and helped revise the tools created for the project.

### FOOD SECURITY

- We participated in the SAM Council forum and proposed two actions for the integrated action plan.
- We took part in *Les grands échanges* held by *Moisson Montréal*.
- We attended meetings of the *Table de concertation sur la faim et le développement social du Montréal métropolitain* and participated in their forum.

### CENTRAIDE

- We took part in the Centraide March.
- We contributed to the Centraide Agency Speakers' program: 8 presentations to approximately 350 people.

### DIRECTION RÉGIONALE DESANTÉ PUBLIQUE DU CIUSSS DU CENTRE-SUD-DE-ÎLE-DE-MONTRÉAL (PERINATAL)

- We sat on the regional breastfeeding committee (*Comité régional en allaitement maternel (CRAM)*).
- We took part in the consultation on the implementation of Montreal's pregnancy notification system.
- We collaborated with the SIPPE representative in Montreal.

### OTHER ACTIVITIES AND CONTRIBUTIONS

- We participated in the perinatal forum held by the *Ministère de la santé et des services sociaux* in November 2019.
- We attended two of *Horizon 0-5's* regional meetings (regional early childhood round table) and co-facilitated a session on food security during the Day on Living Conditions.
- We participated in the consultation of the *Agir pour les tout-petits* committee.
- We took part in the regional forum of the *Special Commission on the Rights of the Child and on Youth Protection*.
- We signed a letter of opinion and took action for the *Observatoire des tout-petits* for access to health care for migrant babies and pregnant women with precarious status.
- We sat on the *Rond-Point* partners' committee as part of our on-site outreach activities.
- We served on the *Fondation Olo's* committee of experts on nutrition and perinatal care and took part in inter-organizational meetings with the aim of improving access to services for low-income pregnant women and maintaining collaborations between organizations.
- We participated in the *Round Table of Nutritionists Working with Maternal-Fetal Medicine (MFM) Clients in Hospital Settings*.
- We provided two training sessions on the introduction of complementary foods to workers from the Portage Mother & Child Drug Addiction Rehabilitation Program.
- We held a videoconference on the Montreal Diet Dispensary's social nutrition practices with nutritionists from the CISSS Gaspésie Regional Public Health Branch's Child and family program.
- We delivered a workshop on discovering and adopting the new Canada Food Guide during the national meeting of the *Regroupement des cuisines collectives du Québec*.



## Communications



### The Dispensary's 140<sup>th</sup> anniversary - 140 Years, Forever Young!

On June 10<sup>th</sup>, 1879, the Dispensary first took action to help families in need. To mark its 140<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2019 under the theme **140 Years, Forever Young!**, the Dispensary held activities throughout the year for its mothers and their families, as well as for its loyal supporters, staff, partners, donors and all those who have shaped it and been involved in its development over the years.

### THE "140 YEARS, FOREVER YOUNG!" ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND GREAT BIG REUNION

Close to **150 people** attended the Dispensary's annual members' meeting and Great Big 140<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Reunion on June 10<sup>th</sup>, 2019, at the Sofitel Montreal Golden Mile Hotel. Throughout the lively and colourful evening, guests were entertained by the Parminou Theatre Troupe. Jean-Marc Demers, president of the Dispensary's Board of Directors, and Jackie Demers, executive director of the organization, shared the honour of presenting a review of the 2018-2019 fiscal year and highlighting the contributions of all who had been involved in achieving the positive results (board members, staff and various committees as well as donors, partners and volunteers).

Members of the Parminou Theatre Troupe brought important moments of the Dispensary's history to life and lauded its 140<sup>th</sup> anniversary by frequently chanting a rhyming jingle that, loosely translated from French, proclaimed, **"140 years! Impressive, isn't it? Still in the service of children, and still a child at heart!"** Those in attendance were fortunate enough to see comeback appearances by Agnes C. Higgins and Marie-Paule Duquette, both of whom were portrayed by members of the troupe.

Cathy Wong, city councillor for the Peter-McGill district and president of the Montreal municipal council, made an excellent speech in which she described the important role the Dispensary has played in the community for so many years and, more specifically, the organization's impact on the future of each child who has been born healthy as a result of the services provided. Ms. Wong also wished the Dispensary a happy 140<sup>th</sup> anniversary and promised to attend some of our celebratory activities, specifically the next edition of the Défi sportif and the Baby Race on October 19<sup>th</sup>, 2019.

### THE INAUGURAL AGNES C. HIGGINS AWARDS

There is another reason that June 10<sup>th</sup>, 2019, was a significant date: It was the night we presented the very first Agnes C. Higgins Awards. These awards recognize individuals, groups or companies that make significant contributions toward the achievement of the Dispensary's mission and to the well-being of vulnerable pregnant women, their newborns and their families. The tagline for the awards is: **Nurturing the future, one pregnant woman, one newborn and one family at a time.**



The **Agnes C. Higgins Tribute Award** was presented to **Marie-Paule Duquette**, who was Executive Director of the Dispensary for 33 years (1981-2013).

The **Agnes C. Higgins Social Nutrition Award** was presented to **Hélène Laurendeau**, a nutritionist and broadcaster who is well-known for advocating healthy, varied eating habits for all.

The **Agnes C. Higgins Business Award** was presented to **Sean Finn**, Executive Vice-President of Corporate Services and Chief Legal Officer at CN, as well as to CN, for their remarkable financial contributions over the past few years.



### A TRADITIONAL CHRISTMAS

The Dispensary held its traditional Family Christmas Party in a rollicking, foot-stomping atmosphere at the Montreal YWCA on December 19<sup>th</sup>, 2019. The 175 people in attendance—including 99 children—took part in a variety of Québécois holiday traditions: stories, call-and-response songs, folk music, square dancing, jigs, *tourtières* and yule logs.

Thank you to the musicians under the direction of Allan Hurd, to the families and children, to the members of the Dispensary team and to Toy Tea, CHM Communications and Santa Claus! A heartfelt thank you also goes out to the volunteers from the Concordia University School of Graduate Studies for their outstanding contributions, dressing as Santa's elves and distributing gifts to the children. The party was a great success! It will definitely go down in Dispensary history.

### OPEN SPACE MEETING

The Dispensary's first-ever open space meeting was scheduled to be held on March 27<sup>th</sup>, 2020, under the theme **“Working together to accompany families in need, from pregnancy to infancy.”** Nearly 60 people had already confirmed their attendance when the forum had to be cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the public health measures that ensued. This event remains relevant for the future of collaboration and family support and we intend to modify the format so that we can hold it as soon as possible.



### The Baby Race

On October 19<sup>th</sup>, 2019, the third edition of the Dispensary Baby Race was held at the *Centre Sportif de la Petite-Bourgogne*. Ten Dispensary babies took part in two heats of five babies each, and the big (symbolic) winner was baby Jose Jhon!



Once again, the Dispensary would like to thank its sponsors the Dairy Producers of Canada and Samson Groupe Conseil, Inc.

To view Montréal.TV's coverage of the event, click [here](#).  
(in french only).

### Media relations – Social media and other activities

This past year:

- Montréal.TV provided coverage of the *Défi sportif* and the Baby Race.
- We were in contact with the media for the announcement of the annual increase in the cost of the food basket.
- We welcomed Jennifer Maccarone, MNA Westmount-Saint-Louis and Official Opposition Critic for Families, to the Dispensary for a visit.
- The following notable personalities became associated with the Dispensary: Rachel Leblanc-Bazinet, Marie-Line Beauchamp, Mylène Paquette, Cathy Wong, Jean-François Chicoine and Michael Fovero.
- The number of people following our Facebook page increased from 1,536 to 1,800 and many of our posts reached more than 1,500 people.
- We published four issues of our *Nourrir la vie, bâtir l'avenir* newsletter.
- A few short videos were produced and published on our social media accounts.
- As part of our 140<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations, we posted some of the Dispensary's historical moments on our Facebook page.
- At the end of the fiscal year, our social media accounts proved to be very useful for communicating with our partners and clients on how we were pursuing our activities during the COVID-19 pandemic.

# The Dispensary's Organizational Capacity to Carry out its Mission

ENSURING WE HAVE THE FINANCIAL, HUMAN AND ORGANIZATIONAL RESOURCES  
WE NEED TO TAKE ACTION FOR OUR CLIENTS



To achieve its mission, the Dispensary must ensure it is equipped with all the necessary tools, be they resources, policies or practices. In order to become more efficient, we must be able to identify needs, implement actions to meet those needs and assess the results.

## Fundraising Events

### The Défi sportif

The third edition of the *Défi sportif*, which was held on October 19<sup>th</sup>, 2019, at the *Centre Sportif de la Petite Bourgogne*, generated **\$15,594** in funds.

More than 70 participants came together for the supercharged event and were cheered on by close to 20 volunteers as they made their way through the various challenges. Although they may have suffered from a few aches and pains the next day, they all had a great time! In honour of the Dispensary's 140<sup>th</sup> anniversary, which was celebrated this year under the theme "140 Years, Forever Young!," the *Défi sportif* welcomed its first youth competitors.

The course, which was designed by kinesiologist Tom Bédard—also the instigator of the event—encouraged participants to work in teams while also pushing their own personal limits to collect as many points as possible. Challenges in both the competitive and recreational categories included burpees, sit-ups, rope-jumping, obstacle courses, walking lunges and leapfrog. The pumped-up contestants gave it their all!

To view Montréal.TV's coverage of the event, click [here](#).  
(in french only).

The Dispensary would like to thank all the participants and donors, as well as the following sponsors and partners: Dotemtex – Executive Search, the Braque Agency, the *Brasseurs de Montréal*, Starbucks and Canadian Tire at Alexis Nihon, the *Centre sportif de la Petite Bourgogne*, *SEQUOIA Massothérapie, Inc.* and *Jérôme Lebrecht Massothérapie*.

Congratulations to the winning teams

- Competitive category: The Destroyers
- Recreational category: Le retour des sombreros



## → The Dispensary's Organizational Capacity to Carry out its Mission

### 7<sup>th</sup> edition of the Mother's Day Benefit Luncheon

The Dispensary had to cancel the 7<sup>th</sup> edition of its Mother's Day Benefit Luncheon, which was scheduled for Friday, May 10<sup>th</sup>, 2019, at the Sofitel Montreal Golden Mile Hotel. Following this, the Dispensary set up a committee to organize this year's benefit luncheon, which was to be held on May 8<sup>th</sup>, 2020. Plans for the May 2020 event were well underway when the Dispensary was forced to postpone it to comply with the public health measures enacted to fight the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Our fundraising campaigns

### Fundraising Campaigns

#### MAY 2019

In May 2019, we approached the participants of previous years' Mother's Day Benefit Luncheons to solicit special donations, since the Dispensary was forced to cancel the 2019 event.

#### ANNUAL FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN – 140 YEARS, FOREVER YOUNG

The theme for this year's annual fundraising campaign was "140 Years, Forever Young." It was held from November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2019, to March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020. The campaign was aimed both at donors who normally donate during the holiday season and those who generally donate through our annual campaign. Thank you to our **12 faithful fundraisers, who are always there for us** and who contributed once again to the success of this campaign.

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Total funds raised through both campaigns:  
**\$94,981**

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### CHRISTMAS

As in years past, Telefilm Canada employees rallied together to raise \$1,790 through their *Grande Bouffe de Noël* event, with proceeds going to the Dispensary.



We also continued our tradition of distributing Christmas baskets, prepared by our donors, to the neediest families. In total, **23 baskets** were distributed. Furthermore, through our continued partnership with The Gazette, we were able to provide extra donations to **108 families**.

### THE MARCHÉ 3 PILIERS

In addition to making healthy, organic food accessible and affordable, the *Marché 3 Piliers* supports organizations that promote healthy eating. The market provided the Dispensary with the equivalent of approximately 1% of its monthly sales, excluding credit card sales, in the form of vouchers. A total of **36 vouchers worth \$100 each** were distributed to Dispensary mothers over the past year.

### THANK YOU!

On behalf of the families we serve, the Dispensary would like to thank all those who solicited donations on its behalf from their friends, acquaintances and members of their networks. We thank you from the bottom of our hearts.

### IN MEMORIAM DONATIONS AND REQUESTS

Donations were made to the Dispensary in memory of the following individuals:  
**Pierrette Chagnon-Binette, Ailen Collins, Jocelyn Drolet, Alain Lortie, Nicol Gemma-Perreault and Denyse Savard.**

This year, additional disbursements of the bequest made in memory of **Barbara Auclair** were also received by the Dispensary.

TOTAL FUNDS RAISED THROUGH SOLICITATION EFFORTS (BENEFIT ACTIVITIES - FUNDRAISING), SPONTANEOUS DONATIONS AND PLANNED GIVING:

**\$231,083**

THANK YOU FOR BEING THERE, FOR SUPPORTING US AND FOR HELPING US NURTURE LIFE!



## Human Resources

Once again this year, the entire Dispensary team displayed its commitment to our mission. In addition to their regular tasks, they took on projects aimed at ensuring the Dispensary remains efficient and relevant. They updated the roles, job descriptions and profiles of the community worker and breastfeeding and perinatal consultant positions; they modified the generic and modular integration plan we developed last year and they redesigned the training program for new employees.

Also this year, the supervision and support of the entire intervention, family services and projects team was officially transferred to the Director of Programs and Projects (this team had previously reported to upper management). This has resulted in more regular follow-ups, more timely adjustments to tasks and better access to supervisory resources for members of the team.



The social committee, which had taken on the mandate of organizing team activities to foster cohesion and create an enjoyable workplace environment, continued its work this year, celebrating birthdays and maternity leave departures and organizing surprise activities both within the workplace and outside the office (BBQs, mini-golf, "Sorcière secrète," etc.).

Our much-appreciated volunteers and highly motivated interns also made significant contributions this year by assisting in our Agnes C. Higgins House maintenance efforts, providing assessments of our activities, updating our intervention tools, etc.

## Governance

Our 140<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations were launched with great pomp and circumstance at the 2019 Annual General Meeting in the presence of families, partners, current and former employees and several members of the corporation.

The Board of Directors met six (6) times in regular session. Isabelle Bonneau, who is currently pursuing her *Administrateur de société certifié* certification, presided.

Last year, the *Governance Committee* spent considerable time reflecting on the role of families within our governance structure and considered how our structure could be more effective, relevant, consistent and representative. This year, it approved and implemented a governance policy, a code of ethics for the Board of Directors and a self-assessment tool. The Board determined that the current by-laws do not require a major overhaul since they do not restrict the actions deemed necessary to allow our governance structure to evolve along with the organization.

Given that one of our objectives is to integrate the women who benefit from our services into our governance structure, we consulted an expert in "patient-partner" relationships and agreed that this type of framework would be consistent with our approach. It would allow those who are willing and able to do so to increase their contributions to the Dispensary's activities, in accordance with their day-to-day realities. For example, they could share their stories during consultations, provide volunteer services or, as was suggested by several women who were questioned on the subject, redistribute children's items for the benefit of other women.

After welcoming a new treasurer last August and recruiting a volunteer expert, the Finance Committee reviewed its operating methods this past year. It first updated its procedures for monitoring our monthly financial statements and then, in consideration of the budget structure that is in place, it reflected on the best way to ensure effective financial follow-up with the accountable departments and the Board of Directors. It also began to consider how we could reduce our expenses after several years of strategically investing in activities with the goal of defining and consolidating our social nutrition programs through our various assets.

The *Human Resources Management* and Nominating Committee worked on adapting the management salary policy, which is based on the employee salary policy that was implemented at the beginning of the year. It also focused on policy adjustments to ensure compliance with legislative changes and, more importantly, to ensure the appropriate measures are in place to allow management to best support the team. The Committee was pleased to welcome five new members this year to complete the Board of Directors, which is now made up of 12 committed, active members.

The implementation of the ad hoc *Visibility Committee* was slightly delayed and its mandate was modified in accordance with our priorities and the means at our disposal. Recruitment efforts were led by the Benefit Luncheon steering committee, which unfortunately had to temporarily cease its activities when the COVID-19 crisis began.

## Agnes C. Higgins House

Thanks to the Rouge architectural firm, we have received plans for the work that needs to be done to make Agnes C. Higgins House a safe location for us to continue to pursue our mission of welcoming families who can travel downtown to benefit from our services. We are now in the process of soliciting financial partners to help us carry out this important project, which is currently on hold due to the pandemic.

# The Dispensary Team (as of March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020)

In order 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.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Isabelle Bonneau, **President**  
City of Montreal
- Francine Martel, **Vice-President**  
Gowling WLG
- Julie Turcotte, **Treasurer**  
CPA candidate –  
National Program (HEC)
- Jean-Marie Moutquin, MD, **Secretary**  
Retired
- Astrid Bicomumpaka Shema  
CIUSSS de l'Est-de-l'Île-de-Montréal
- Elizabeth Gauthier  
City of Laval
- Zeina Khalifé  
BMO Private Banking
- Annie Langlois  
Massy Forget Langlois  
Public Relations
- Jocelyne Pinsonneault  
Corporate director
- Mélanie Sirois  
Dotemtex – Executive Search
- 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

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

### Finance Committee

- Isabelle Bonneau
- Jackie Demers
- Maxime Joly
- Phuong-Lan Pham
- Julie Turcotte

### Nominating and Human Resources Management Committee

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

### Agnes C. Higgins Awards Committee

- André Bertrand
- Jackie Demers
- Annie Langlois
- Dominique Lapierre
- Suzanne Lepage
- Francine Martel

### 2020 Luncheon Benefit Committees (steering and support)

- Marie-Lyne Beauchamp
- André Bertrand
- Astrid Bicomumpaka-Shema
- Isabelle Bonneau
- Jackie Demers
- Francine Martel
- Mylène Paquette
- Jocelyne Pinsonneault
- Mélanie Sirois

## STAFF

### Executive Director

- Jackie Demers, P.Dt.

### Fundraising and

### Communications Director

- André Bertrand

### Programs and Projects Director

- Annie Brodeur-Doucet, P.Dt.

### Family Services Coordinator

- Tammy Tran, P.Dt.

### Project Manager and Writer for

### Nurturing Life

- Stéphanie Fortier, P.Dt. (contract)

### Project Manager for the Nutritious

### Food Basket

- Jeanne Lemoine (contract)

### Administrative Assistant

- Nah Diarra Kavalo Sissoko (acting, departure during the year)
- Beatriz Rivera-Oropeza

### Accounting Assistant

- Phuong-Lan Pham

### Dietitians/Nutritionists

- Raphaëlle Chevalier, P.Dt. (contract)
- Isabelle Dubé, P.Dt., member of the Registre des droits acquis de l'OTSTCFQ
- Stéphanie Fortier, P.Dt. (contract)
- Catherine Labelle, P.Dt.
- Suzanne Lepage, P.Dt.
- Andréa McCarthy, P.Dt. M.Sc. (parental leave)
- 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. (parental leave)
- Catherine Vézina, P.Dt. (contract)
- Ouardia Zeggane, P.Dt.

### Perinatal and Lactation Consultants

- Selma Buckett, IBCLC
- Carole Ann Girard, IBCLC (departure during the year)
- Rita Daaboul, SF, BScN, IBCLC

### Drop-in Daycare Coordinator

- Vacant

### Social and Community Worker

- Lorraine Doyon-Frêchette

### Freelance Writers – Nurturing Life

- Caroline Pomier, P.Dt.,  
Caroline Rouleau, P.Dt. and  
Jenny-Lyne St-André, P.Dt., M.Sc.

### Summer Students

- Rumelle Dorival Lazard  
(social work student)
- Marissa Lawson (nutrition student)

### Term Support Consultant

- Janine Choquette-Desrosiers

### Volunteers

More than 70 volunteers, on our board members, helped carry out the Dispensary's mission this year. Whether it was helping care for children at our drop-in daycare, sharing expertise in committees, completing administrative tasks or calling clients to invite them to group activities, volunteers provided crucial services to the Dispensary and its families every single day. In total, volunteers contributed more than **2,400 hours of service** in 2019-2020. The estimated market value of those hours is **\$44,500**.

We would particularly like to thank the following companies and educational institutions that encouraged their employees and students to donate their time: Onepoint, Willis Towers Watson, L'Oréal, ACM Advisors, Université de Montréal – nursing program, Université de Montréal – young philanthropists' association, McGill University – CHAP Program, Concordia University – School of Graduate Studies, the Concordia University Stingers (ice hockey) and Dawson College. And finally, a special thank you to the five mothers who gave back to the Dispensary through volunteer service.

## Interns

- Nutrition – McGill University:  
Angelo Lo and Alexa Florintino
- Nutrition – Université de Montréal:  
Andrée-Anne Riendeau, Roxanne Alie,  
Karolane Cadrin and Ann Fecteau.
- Communications – Université de  
Montréal: Khadidja Chikri
- Social Work – McGill University:  
Meghan Miller
- Technique en éducation spécialisée -  
CEGEP Vieux-Montréal: Lysa Paquette
- Technique en travail social – CEGEP  
Marie-Victorin: Anne Jean-Louis

## CORPORATION

Including the Board of Directors, the Dispensary Corporation has a total of 101 members.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

On several occasions we were able to train and develop our team and we would like to thank all those who supported our efforts in this regard, including Dynamo and the Centre Saint-Pierre of the Centraide of Greater Montreal network; the Joseph Armand Bombardier Foundation; the teams of *Équilibre*, *Doctors of the World*, *PRAIDA* and the *Direction de la Protection de la Jeunesse*.

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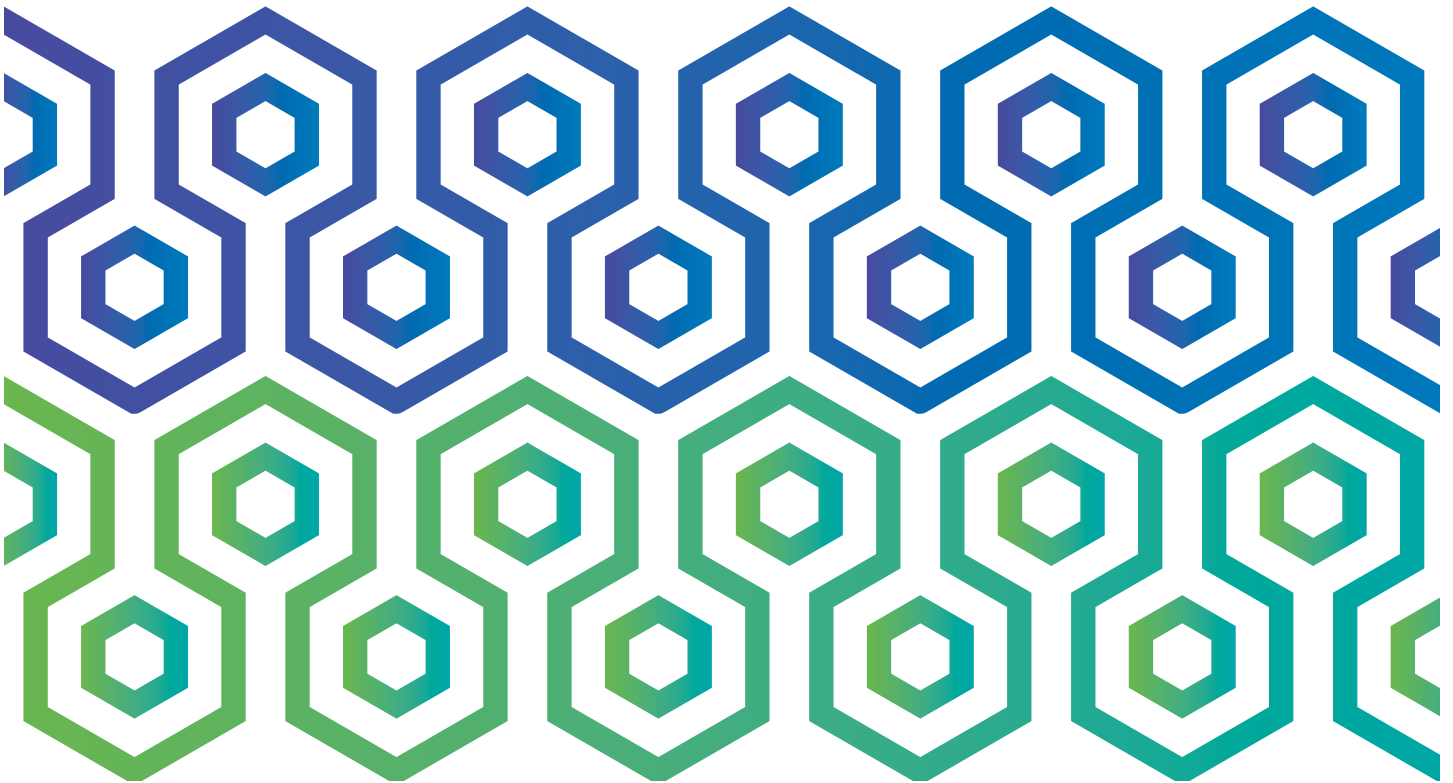
Photos : [Nathalie Choquette](#)



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Founded in 1879, the Dispensary is Quebec's leader in social nutrition for pregnant women in vulnerable situations. Each year, the Dispensary helps approximately 650-900 women in Greater Montreal receive adequate nutrition during pregnancy so they can give birth to healthy babies. Through innovative clinical and community interventions, the Dispensary enables new parents to nurture the optimal development of their newborns and families.

The Dispensary is a not-for-profit organization supported by Centraide and is a member of *Fondation Olo*.



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