

### ADAPTING OUR SERVICES TO THE COVID-19 CRISIS

- New hours at the Day Centre – open weekdays, Monday to Friday, 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.
- Full, nutritionally balanced cold meals served, starting at noon (can be eaten on site or taken out), and a capacity of 25 youth instead of the usual 72.
- The Bunker is now accepting 9 people per evening, instead of the usual 17. Revised hours are 10 p.m. to 9:15 a.m.
- The Emmett Johns School is open for the 2020 back-to-school season and can accommodate 9 students at a time instead of the usual 17.

### SOME OF OUR SERVICES REMAIN CLOSED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE

- Art and music rooms
- Corporate volunteer activities, third-party events and donor visits
- Public donations of food and other goods
- Veterinary outreach clinic

## DESPITE THE PANDEMIC, DANS LA RUE IS DETERMINED TO MEET THE URGENT NEEDS OF HOMELESS YOUTH

Since the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic, our counsellors have noticed that vulnerable youth have been naturally inclined to turn to DANS LA RUE for assistance. They see us as a safe destination, where there is always someone available to help.

Given the extra obstacles youth in high-risk situations have had to face – public health and safety rules, government-imposed lockdowns, housing and job losses, discontinuation of school programs and more – the way forward is more challenging than ever for them.

During these difficult times, the youth we see have an even greater need for psychosocial assistance. Food and a place to sleep are important, but the emotional support provided by our counsellors is more vital than it ever has been for dealing with the additional stress, anxiety and social isolation.

Compliance with health and hygiene protocols has made it possible for us to continue offering our essential services. And we are doing everything in our power to deliver the best possible services under the circumstances, so youth can look to the future with confidence. ■

#### DANS LA RUE

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# FINDING A PLACE TO LIVE DURING A PANDEMIC

**An unstable living situation is one of the defining characteristics of the youth we serve. And right now, in these extraordinary times, homeless youth need a helping hand more than ever before!**

The importance of helping youth in high-risk situations move forward in their lives and achieve stability by finding a place to live is one of our goals here at **Dans la rue**.

COVID-19 has made this process more complicated and disrupted existing support networks, with the closure of a number of service partners. ■

**DANS LA RUE thanks SUTTON-QUÉBEC and its franchisees and brokers**

## 2019 HOUSING AND SHELTER STATISTICS AT DANS LA RUE

- 3,000 overnight stays at the Bunker
- 32 apartments with community support
- 8 new tenants in our apartment building
- Support for 600 rental or housing applications

## THE BUNKER

**Open 365 days a year, the Bunker emergency shelter provides basic services (a place to sleep, a meal, showers and laundry facilities) to a mixed group of at-risk youth aged 12 to 21.**

It is a safe haven where they can take a break from life on the street. A team of counsellors is also available on site to address their psychological needs.

The pandemic has weakened the social safety net available to youth who are on the verge of homelessness. The counsellors at the Bunker have reported a greater level of fatigue and stress among youth, who are keenly aware that their lifestyle and the existing strains on their physical health put them at greater risk of contracting the coronavirus. The Bunker remains a safe way for them to protect themselves from exposure.

With the onset of lockdown measures in mid-March, a number of changes had to be made in the Bunker's operations. Admittance procedures have been enhanced to meet public health requirements, including mandatory masks and handwashing upon entry, and support for subsequent screening measures is available as required. ■



## APARTMENTS

**Our 17-unit apartment building, which opened in 2014 thanks to Pops' determination, is home to 15 youth and two families receiving support from DANS LA RUE.**

Counsellors are on site to make the experience a positive one for tenants as they take advantage of this stable living situation to get a fresh start.

As the pandemic took hold, this stability was particularly appreciated by our young tenants who were able to shelter in place in their apartment. The common room was shut down, however, as were all group activities. Counsellors have nevertheless continued to provide one-on-one follow-up to help fend off the feelings of isolation experienced by youth and young families.

**« The timing was lucky. I moved into the apartment just before COVID hit. So I've gone through it IN MY OWN PLACE. »**

- Olivier, resident of the **Dans la rue** apartments

The situation has had an impact on efforts designed to promote self-sufficiency, given the ongoing limitations imposed on the services offered by some of our partners. This setback is a growing source of concern, as these services are important in helping youth learn how to make better, healthier and more positive decisions. ■

# THE DAY CENTRE: A LIFELINE DURING THE PANDEMIC

**The main concern voiced by our Day Centre counsellors with regard to the pandemic has been the growing social isolation experienced by homeless youth.**

Before COVID-19, youth could spend the better part of the day here, taking advantage of the art and music rooms, for example, to forget about the hardships of street life. But now, with physical distancing and several of our programs on hold, access to our services is limited. Their patience is shorter, overall, and the situation is taking a toll on their mental and physical well-being.

**« Hats off to all my fellow counsellors who have been working on the front lines since the beginning of the pandemic, listening to youth and making them feel like their life matters. It just goes to show that Pops is still looking out for us from above! »**

*- Jules, a Dans la rue counsellor since 1998.*

Having counsellors on site is vital for making youth feel welcome at **Dans la rue**. Their presence also reinforces the importance of self-care, especially in the midst of the pandemic. They have helped ensure youth are screened for COVID-19 when necessary, address their basic needs and allay their feelings of desperation. ■



## FAMILY SERVICES

**Home visits were put on hold when lockdown measures were introduced and replaced by weekly telephone check-ins.**

The increased frequency has made it possible to keep tabs on families' needs, but it is more difficult for counsellors to gauge a parent's anxiety over the phone.

Young families enrolled in our Family Services are already marginalized, and their support networks are often minimal at best. As this lack of contact continues,

both families and our counsellors are suffering the consequences. ■

## BACK TO SCHOOL AT DANS LA RUE

**The Emmett Johns alternative school specializes in helping students develop cross-disciplinary skills through an adapted academic and social integration curriculum.**

In September 2020, nine students were welcomed by a new team made up of two school counsellors and a teacher from the Centre de ressources éducatives et pédagogiques (CREP). They offer one-on-one learning aligned with the needs of homeless youth to ensure they do not lose access to school. We are also firm believers in providing support for students enrolled in programs outside of **Dans la rue**.

## REMEMBERING POPS

**Place Emmett-Johns was unveiled on October 30, 2019, to pay tribute to our beloved founder, Father Emmett Johns.**

By naming this square after Pops, we are keeping his memory alive and beautifying a public space, not to mention educating the public about someone who made an indelible mark on this neighbourhood and the whole city. ■

## NEW VAN SOON TO HIT THE STREETS OF MONTREAL

**This fall, keep your eyes peeled for a brand-new Van roaming the streets of Montreal!**

And be sure to follow us on Facebook to find out what fate has in store for our current vehicle. More on this soo... ■

## SUMMER AT DANS LA RUE

All the vegetables and herbs grown naturally and sustainably by MicroHabitat on the rooftops of the Montreal Eaton Centre have been donated to the Bunker emergency shelter. A huge thank you to everyone involved!

Homeless youth enjoyed a number of activities at the Day Centre this summer, revolving around such themes as cotton candy, ice cream and a quirky selection of coffee, as well as a bike repair workshop. ■



**Thank you to all our donors for stepping up to help homeless youth during these uncertain times, with a special shout-out to all those who made donations specifically related to COVID-19:**

Eidos-Montréal and Square Enix Montréal – 35 000 \$

Écho Foundation – 25 000 \$

John Dobson Foundation – 25 000 \$

McKinsey & Company – 20 000 \$

Fondation Jacques et Michel Auger – 20 000 \$

Flourish Arbonne Foundation – 18 000 \$

Home Depot Canada Foundation – 15 000 \$

Centraide of Greater Montreal – 15 000 \$

J.W. McConnell Family Foundation – 10 000 \$

William and Nancy Turner Foundation – 10 000 \$

Morris and Rosalind Goodman Family Foundation – 10 000 \$

Mr. Georges Robitaille – 10 000 \$

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