

ACTION REACTION



ACTIONREACTION VOL.1



Director's Message

It is with great pleasure that I introduce you to the first edition of "Action Reaction". The Action Centre (AC) newsletter is created and developed by its members to keep our donors, partners, members and the disabled community at large informed about our organization's successes and our fundraising campaigns.

Created in 1998 by the Constance Lethbridge Rehabilitation Centre, the AC community day centre was set up to service adults living with physical or cognitive disabilities from all over Montreal. Located in LaSalle, we are the only bilingual centre of its kind in Montreal. We now assist over 140 members by offering social and psychological rehabilitation through a variety of courses, programs and outings. The AC operates on the belief that everyone has the potential to make a contribution to society. A strong emphasis is placed on empowering members to be part of the team. We strive to help those who are trying to help themselves.

Living with a disability myself and using a wheelchair full time, I know first hand how easy it is to feel isolated. The AC offers an opportunity to break the vicious cycle of isolation and allow our members to experience independence, friendship and most importantly a sense of family and belonging.

It is imperative to acknowledge that our organization has survived entirely on the generosity of the public. Private donations represent 90% of our revenue; the other 10% is received from government sources. It has been a tremendous pleasure working with our cities finest philanthropists and dedicated volunteers who have helped make our organization what it is today. We truly wish to continue this invaluable relationship.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank, in advance, the members of our newsletter team who have met weekly to brainstorm ideas, write articles, and take photographs to make this newsletter a successful one.

Sincerely,

Kevin Harrison
Director and Strategic Manager – Action Centre



ActionReaction Team

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ANNUAL SOIRÉE 2007



Fundraising Soirée a Grand Success!

By: Michelle Drolet

On the evening of October 27th, at the upscale Club Atwater over 200 Montrealers gathered to raise funds for the Action Centre (AC) at its 6th Annual Fundraising Soirée. Chaired by Mark Culver, Vice President of Formula Growth and his team of dedicated volunteers, the event hit an all time record of \$300,000 in donations. The AC's funding comes predominately from private donations, therefore this year's event proved most fruitful.

Honourees from this year's event were Mr. Pierre Boivin, President of the Club de Hockey Canadien, and his wife Lucie, for their tireless dedication and commitment to such causes as the McKay Rehabilitation Centre, the Montreal Canadiens Children's Foundation, St-Justine Hospital, the Special Olympics, the Action Centre and many others.

A joyful, festive atmosphere reigned at the Club Atwater. People mingled about, eating scrumptious shrimp and other delights, and discussed the various items offered at the silent and live auctions. The anticipation was palpable as the silent auction closed and the live one began.

The auctioneer, Mr. Mel Hoppenheim, did an excellent job, joking and gently cajoling the audience to bid higher for each successive prize.

One such prize, "Leaving on a Jet Plane," was for a trip for eight on a private jet to Acapulco. The winner and his entourage were to stay at a luxurious villa offering breathtaking views of gardens and a waterfall. This route to a winter paradise went for \$50,000.00! In addition, NHL alumni, Murray Wilson, signed up to take on the AC's wheelchair challenge in May, 2008. "Chair Aware" challenges Montrealers to spend a full day in a wheelchair. The crowd was extremely generous and the Centre reaped \$18,000 from this one gesture alone.

Guests included Marcel Aubut, Phil & Anna Belec, Herbert Black, Pam Dunn, Bob Gainey, Réjean Houle, Chantal Marquis, Sue McConnell, Pierre & Diane Michaud, Geoff Molson, Georges Morin, John Rae, Sandra & Leonard Schlemm, Ginger Petty, Maurice Pinsonneault, Karen & Peter Velan, Marc Villeneuve and special guests; emcees Andrew Carter of CJAD AM & Jamie Orchard of Global T.V.

Although the donations are still coming in, we can safely say the event was a grand success. The AC is extremely grateful to the Soirée's organizing committee, its chair, guests, donors, sponsors and volunteers! Hope to see you all next year at the 7th Annual Fundraising Soirée!

"In Charity there is no excess" Francis Bacon

MEMBERS



Photographed by: Seymour Silverman

Claude was born in Casablanca and came to Canada at ten years of age. He learned to speak English while attending high school in Montreal. He is married and has one lovely daughter named Rachelle. In addition, he lives with six cats and one dog.

Unfortunately Claude was born with a defective heart. At the age of 15, surgery became necessary. Due to a complication, Claude was in a coma for 23 days. Upon awakening, it was discovered that his motor and cognitive functions had been affected. As a result he has to spend his life in a wheelchair. However that has not impeded him. He discovered that many of his so-called friends were just that; "so-called." He did not become discouraged, instead he came to the Action Centre.

He is very active at the Centre, serving on the Board of Directors as well as the services committee. He attends Vimax, an adapted gym, where he lifts weights and does regular exercise.

His attitude is outstanding. He goes out of his way to help people and would be a great friend to have.

Written by: Peter Cohn

Neither Rain, nor sleet...

On Friday October 12th, 2007, the Action Centre brought some of its members to Totem in Rougemont to pick apples. Despite the rain, the activity was a great success.

At Totem, there are many dwarf trees which facilitate picking for people with physical disabilities. Each member gets a slice of pie, apple juice as well as five pounds of apples. Members can buy additional apple products such as apple pie, apple cider and apple jelly.

As people walked and wheeled along the autumnal path, it was evident the outing was enjoyed by both volunteers and members.

Written by: Claude Sabbah

The Centre – a poem by Denise Landry

*The Action Centre is more
Than a building with four walls,
Filled with computers, furniture,
Wheelchairs and canes.*

*The centre is full of living people.
Souls of various colours, histories
And abilities. Happily mingling.
Sharing feelings and thoughts.
Caring and learning from each other.*

*People coming together; finding similarities
In their differences. Bounteous understanding,
Respect and friendship is found in everyone
That comes into our splendid little centre.*



Réjean Houle, Andrew Carter, Pierre Boivin, Catherine Boivin, Sandra Schlemm, Leonard Schlemm, Kevin Harrison, Jamie Orchard, Chantal Petictler

The “Chair Aware” challenge

by Michelle Drolet

There are thousands living with a physical disability in the Montreal area, yet accessibility is extremely limited. In fact, Montreal is the only major metropolitan cities in North America without full accessibility on its public transportation route. In general, people have little knowledge of the daily challenges faced by those with physical impairments. Getting to work, going to a restaurant or to the grocery store is sometimes so difficult that many people stay at home living in isolation. In order to raise money and awareness, the Action Centre launched the 'chair aware' challenge in 2006.

The event involves finding individuals to sign up and spend one day in a wheelchair. The participant will be asked to raise a minimum of \$2,000 in pledges for the Action Centre.

Tax receipts are issued for donations over \$20.00.

Last year's event was a success thanks to our partners Global TV and CJAD. Global TV's Jamie Orchard and CJAD's Andrew Carter took the challenge a second time and realized there was still so much to learn. Eighteen participants raised over \$72,000. The top earners were Diane Soroka from London Life (\$13,000) and Team Telus (\$10,000). The remaining \$49,000 was raised by the Montreal Canadiens Hockey Club (Pierre Boivin and Réjean Houle) as well as BMO, Alcan, RDS, CIBC Wood Gundy, National Bank, Lombard Odier and several other dedicated participants. We wish to thank all those involved especially our wheelchair sponsor Action-Médic.

The third annual 'chair aware' challenge will begin May 1st, 2008 and continue throughout the month of May, the Action Centre's Awareness month. We invite individuals and corporations in Montreal to participate with CJAD & Global TV for this event. For more information or to sign up, email us at chairaware@centreaction.org.

Please join us and see what it is like to live with a physical disability. *“The wisest mind has yet something to learn.”* (George Santayana)