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## Message from the Board

Greetings, and welcome to our Newsletter!

It has been a difficult time over the last few months, as we have struggled to maintain WIM's efforts on the West Island. In an effort to move WIM forward, our Board of Directors have been putting substantial volunteer effort into not just keeping WIM operating, but planning for the future and re-visioning the organization.

This has not been an easy task. Coupled with our

change in organizational structure, we've also had to deal with the financial crisis and volatility that we've all been experiencing (see below).

Nonetheless, throughout our challenges, the support coming from you, our donors, has not wavered. On behalf of the board, I would like to extend my thanks for your continued desire to help us make a difference in the lives of the less fortunate among us.

As a vehicle to help keep you all informed of our activities, we will be sending out this newsletter periodically, as well as using other tools (like Facebook – see below) to help you stay informed.

Finally, if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me or any other board member. You can also find our contact information on the back of this newsletter.

Darren Sleep,  
President and Chair,  
West Island Mission

## Christmas Distribution – December 13, 2008

It may be hard to believe, but it is Christmas again. Seems like we just put the lights and tinsel back in the attic when it is time to pull it back out again!

For many, Christmas is a time for family, giving and receiving gifts, and far too much eating. For some however, Christmas is one of the most difficult times of the year. For those living at or beneath the poverty line, Christmas can be the most stressful and depressing times of the year.

Again this year, WIM will be working to provide food and gifts to those in our

community most in need of aid. This year we have partnered with Youth Unlimited (YFC) to provide food and gifts to almost 300 homes.

Andrea Gariepy of Youth Unlimited is spearheading this initiative, and she has brought around her an enthusiastic group of volunteers to arrange for food and gifts, coordinate volunteers, and contact donors, churches and corporations to help fund this initiative. This is no small task, but thus far the results from her team's efforts have been impressive.

Nonetheless, there is much more work to be done, and there are lots of ways to get involved. We're still looking for food, funds, and many hands to make light work.

If you feel inspired to participate, please call (514) 912-6813 and let us know how you would like to help, or contact Andrea Gariepy at [andrag@montreal youth unlimited.org](mailto:andrag@montreal youth unlimited.org)

## WIM Featured in Montreal Gazette



*"Sometimes we don't realize that there are a lot of people in need. We have 12.5 percent of West Islanders living below the poverty line."*

*- Caroline Tison,  
Executive Director,  
West Island  
Community Shares*



WIM was featured last Thursday, November 20, 2008 in the Montreal Gazette. In the article, "Food bank shelves are bare, lines getting longer," Jason Magder featured three organizations that provide food assistance to West Islanders.

The article's point was that the financial downturn not only affects those with RRSPs and stock market portfolios, but the most

vulnerable segment of society – the poor.

You may be wondering, "What does the stock market crisis have to do with feeding the underprivileged?"

It is difficult to measure its impacts directly, but to name just a few, the market crunch creates unemployment, raises food and gas prices, and generally makes it more

difficult for those living on the financial margins to either escape or survive.

What it means for WIM is that our financial resources are stretched even thinner by higher food prices and higher demand. It is at this point that we must maintain our efforts to help, while doing so in the most efficient way possible.

## Stay in Touch with Facebook

Many of you no doubt use and enjoy online community networking tools such as Facebook as a way to stay connected to friends and family (and sometimes even complete strangers). In fact, it seems it's hard to find someone who is NOT connected to Facebook!

WIM has had a Facebook group since 2007. Belonging to this group is

not only a good way to add one more application to your Facebook profile, but will also help you stay in touch and informed with WIM's activities and efforts to alleviate some of the poverty on the West Island of Montreal.

In the future, we plan to add information on how you can help, volunteer opportunities, the essential food items that we need to maintain our

efforts, and future developments with WIM's progress in feeding the underprivileged in our neighbourhoods. What are you waiting for? Join up!

### ***Recent Activity:***

Emergency Baskets delivered - 2008 Year-to-Date:

**377**

Program Baskets (large distributions) delivered - 2008 Year-to-Date:

**394**

Projected 2008 Total Baskets Distributed:

**1000+ Baskets!**

Next Distribution, Christmas (**December 13, 2008**)

## Back-to-School Distribution – A great success!



The West Island Mission held its fourth annual Back-to-School Distribution on Saturday, August 16<sup>th</sup> for underprivileged families in the West Island with the support of local businesses, charitable organizations, associations and the community at large.

This year over 400 children and their respective families

received basic school supplies, gently used clothing and well-balanced food baskets to help them during a time of year when the financial strain is often the most difficult.

We would like to extend our sincere appreciation to all of our sponsors, donors and volunteers alike for their unrelenting kindness. A special thank you to the following organizations for partnering with us during

this event:

- Loblaws – Kirkland
- I.G.A. – Kirkland
- Baha’l Community of Montreal
- Kirkland Library
- Italo
- Bureau en Gros – Pointe Claire
- Westview Bible Church
- Parmalat
- Boulangier Lanthier
- Premier Meats
- Village d’Enfants
- Merck Frosst Employee’s
- Charity Trust Fund



### Contributing to WIM

Cash Donations

Cheque Donations (please make cheques payable to West Island Mission)

Pre-authorized Debit Donations (form available online at [www.wimmoi.com](http://www.wimmoi.com))

Online Secure Credit Card Donations (available online at [www.canadahelps.org](http://www.canadahelps.org))

**West Island Mission**

P.O. Box 46539  
RPO St-Jean Boulevard  
Pierrefonds, QC  
H9H 5G9

PHONE:  
(514) 912-6813

E-MAIL:  
westislandmission@gmail.com

**We're on the Web!**

See us at:  
[www.wimmoi.com](http://www.wimmoi.com)

**Volunteer Opportunities Available**

Are you looking to spend some time volunteering? WIM is always in need of a few good people to help us with our program.

Working with WIM provides not only a good opportunity to give to the community, but can also be used for credit with certain International

Baccalaureate programs.

WIM is in need of sorters, food-drive and fund-raising organizers, delivery drivers and recipient coordinators. There is plenty to do.

If you are interested in volunteering, or would like further information, call us at (514) 912-6813 (leave a

message) or email us at [westislandmission@gmail.com](mailto:westislandmission@gmail.com).

Come join us as we improve the lives of the less fortunate on the West Island. You'll be glad you did.

We look forward to working with you!

**Help Beyond Food – Mental Health Assistance**

In today's high-speed pressure society, there are a large number of obstacles that stand between the less fortunate and a more prosperous future. For some, mental health may be one.

Community Perspectives in Metal Health (CPMH) is a non-profit West Island community organization

dedicated to helping people with mental health problems achieve their fullest potential while meeting the challenges of everyday life.

WIM works with CPMH to provide food assistance to those people whose metal issues limit their abilities to provide for their own needs.

If you or a loved one are over 18 years of age and living with a mental illness, CPMH can help. They provide a range of in-home assistance programs designed to make your life easier. Remember, you're not alone.

For more information on CPMH's program, contact Jennifer Harper, Director, CPMH, at (514) 696-0972.

***About West Island Mission...***

West Island Mission was founded in February 2005 by Eric Tetreault.

Our purpose is to help

alleviate poverty on the West Island of Montreal through the provision of food and other aid to those in need.

WIM is a non-for-profit, non-denominational charitable organization.

**WEST ISLAND MISSION**

P.O. Box 46539  
RPO St-Jean Boulevard  
Pierrefonds, QC  
H9H 5G9



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