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Message from the Board

Spring! Just the word invokes feelings of fresh starts, renewal and hope. Grass growing greener, trees budding and flowers blooming paves the way for summer and all it brings.

For many of our West Island neighbours however, Spring does not bring much hope in their daily lives. Meeting monthly financial obligations and basic grocery needs remains a critical issue, especially with the prevailing uncertainty in the world economy.

As you will read in this newsletter, WIM has experienced a significant increase in our weekly deliveries to our recipients, averaging more than 22 baskets weekly. Despite this increase, WIM has been able to provide generous baskets

that meet the needs of our recipients. And this is good news, made possible by the financial support of corporations, groups and individuals.

There have been some positive and uplifting events occur these past months that you will read about in this Spring edition newsletter: a very successful Christmas 2009 distribution, increased financial support as result of a mail drop campaign and our Second Annual general meeting where volunteers, supporters, corporate sponsors and local churches met informally to learn more about where WIM is right now and what we are planning for it's future.

You will also read about board position turnover, which the board of directors feel is

important to keep WIM renewed. Darren Sleep has moved on from the position of President to Vice President, which will include the communication portfolio. In his two plus years as President, Darren guided WIM through a very difficult transition; as a result of his leadership, WIM is in better shape today. On behalf of the Board, I want to thank him for all his work and dedication to bringing WIM to where it is today.

If you are already a volunteer/supporter of West Island Mission, thank you, it is really appreciated. If you are reading this newsletter for the first time and want to know how you can help, please contact us @ wimmoi@hotmail.com

Donald Harris,
President and Chair,
West Island Mission

Delivering Hope – a driver's experience

Can you imagine trying to prepare supper for a young family and having little or nothing in the house to eat? Combine that with knowing that you have no money or credit with which to feed your family, and you may be imagining reality for a surprising number of families on the West Island.

Now imagine you being the person who makes a difference in that situation. For about 25 of WIM's dedicated volunteers, the experience of being face-to-face with poverty and helping out happens every time they deliver WIM's weekly deliveries. What are

their experiences like?

"Volunteering with WIM has really been an eye opening experience," wrote one volunteer, "It's amazing to see how many folks are in need in our very own city. Helping out on a Saturday morning to deliver food gives me a feeling of happiness and satisfaction. It truly is better to give than to receive."

For other volunteers, it's often the cute little moments that stay with them. On one occasion, a young single mother looked into the bag, spun around excitedly and shouted to her little girl, "Yay! We have bananas... and Juice too!!"

On another occasion, a volunteer recalled a basement apartment door opening to a very small apartment because the young lady who answered the door had her bed and most of her belongings set up in what normally would be the living room/kitchenette. He gave her 2 bags and went back to his car to get the rest. When he returned, two little children had materialized. They were carefully lined up at the door so that all three could thank him together. What an amazing experience!

To begin collecting your own experiences as a WIM volunteer driver, please contact us at wimmoi@hotmail.com.

Musical Chairs - with a Purpose



“Every gun that’s made, every warship launched, every rocket fired, signifies a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold but not clothed.”
- Dwight D. Eisenhower, 34th American President



Some of you (the sharp cookies) may have noticed that the message from the Board (see page 1) was signed by Donald Harris rather than Darren Sleep. Up until now, Darren was both the President and Chair as well as the newsletter editor, so this was an easy and obvious role. But things have changed.

As part of our continuing efforts to keep the board fresh and avoid burning out our volunteer directors, we have begun to develop policies around positions held by board members, including lengths of terms

and movement from positions.

With this in mind, the position of President and Chair of West Island Mission is now (officially) a 2-year appointment, after which they will move to the position of Vice President. It is our hope that this will allow the various directors to add their own flavour to WIM, bringing different experiences and skills to the forefront. Keeping the past president as VP is intended to maintain some continuity of leadership on the board.

As such, Donald Harris is now WIM’s President and Chair of the Board. Donald

brings fresh enthusiasm to WIM, and many years of accounting experience working with CN. Darren Sleep now moves to the position of VP, where he and the rest of the directors will help Donald keep things “on the rails”.

But what of the other executive positions? Surely those directors acting as treasurer and secretary deserve a break now and again.

It is our hope that as WIM continues to develop, the board will bring in new talent to help with those positions as well. Stay tuned...

AGM 2010 – Same Purpose, New Place

Some of you may recall, and may have attended, last year’s first annual West Island Mission AGM, held at the Dollard Civic Center. It was a great meeting where we updated our supporters on what we had been up to.

Fast forward to 2010. This year’s AGM was held at the brand new East Pierrefonds Community Center on Thursday, March 25, 2010.

In keeping with WIM’s desire to be accountable and transparent to our stakeholders, attendees to the meeting were given an

overview of WIM’s 2009-10 fiscal year. Topics covered included WIM’s finances, budget for the next fiscal year, operations, associations with other organizations, and strategic plan for the next few years.

Following the formal presentation, WIM board members fielded questions from attendees on a range of topics. Many people had suggestions for fundraising, and great ideas about how WIM could be more effective at meeting the needs of the less fortunate on Montreal’s West Island.

Attendees to the meeting

included representatives from many corporate sponsors, 9 area churches, at least one recipient, and a range of other interested folks.

One important aspect of the meeting was WIM recognizing our major corporate partners. WIM’s president, Donald Harris, presented plaques to 3 major sponsors (look for one of them on display at a local IGA in Pointe Claire!).

To all who attended, we thank you for your support and interest in helping us make a difference in the lives of the less fortunate!

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.

Christmas Distribution – December 12, 2009



The West Island Mission held its annual Christmas Distribution Saturday, December 12, 2009 for underprivileged families in the West Island.

This year our volunteers and sponsors helped deliver a bit of Christmas cheer to almost 150 families across the West Island.

WIM responded to our recipients' requests again this year, and once again our volunteer base kicked into high gear. Over 200 volunteers participated in the collecting of food, organizing and wrapping gifts, helping with fundraising, assembling

the baskets, and helping deliver all over the West Island.

But food and gifts are not the whole story. Our fundraising campaign for the Christmas Season raised over \$20,000 to help fund WIM's activities well into the New Year. Generous donations came from various corporations, community groups, churches and individuals, many of whom had not sponsored WIM previously.

The success of this year's campaign comes in no small part to this year's lead corporate sponsor,

Cummins Eastern Canada, who gave a generous donation, and co-signed a letter with WIM asking the community for support.

We would also like to offer our thanks to all the volunteers who worked tirelessly throughout the Season to make this effort an incredible success. On behalf of WIM's Board of Directors, and our recipients, we wish to extend a big thank-you to everyone who made this a huge success.

See you all next year!



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)

Online Secure Credit Card Donations (available online at www.canadahelps.org)

West Island Mission

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Looking to the Future; Planning for Sustainability

Poverty is not going away. Unfortunately, this is a fact of life, both on the West Island of Montreal and in the rest of the world. In order to be an effective tool to help meet this need, West Island Mission, like any organization, needs to think long-term to help meet this ongoing need.

As part of our restructuring, West Island Mission underwent a 2-year strategic planning exercise to develop our vision and goals, and to think clearly about what we

need to do to achieve them.

The mission of The West Island Mission is to provide food on an emergency, as needed basis, to under privileged families on the West Island of Montreal, irrespective of their personal history and background.

WIM's long-term vision is to host a food bank and a network of integrated services to tangibly help break the cycle of poverty in the West Island.

WIM's strategic plan includes 5 themes to meet our long-

term vision:

- 1) Pursuing Potential Affiliations.
- 2) Improving Financial Viability.
- 3) Improving Communication to the Public.
- 4) Generating Effective H.R. Management.
- 5) Develop Effective Policies and Procedures.

It is our hope that by working on these themes we can help alleviate poverty on the west island. For a copy of WIM's strategic plan, email us at wimmoi@hotmail.com.

Volunteer! Volunteers! Volunteers!

Operating our food bank is kind of a "good news, bad news" kind of business.

On the one hand, we are happy to report that we have no paid staff, and therefore we have very little overhead. The bad side is that this puts us in constant need of volunteers, at all levels of the organization.

If you, or anyone you know, have any interest in

volunteering, let us give you a relatively short list of possible activities that you could apply your efforts:

- deliver food (2 hours on Saturday mornings once per month, but you need a car)
- help prepare food baskets (2 hours in the morning or afternoon, once every couple of weeks)
- pick up food (a few hours

now and again, picking up food at local drop-offs, such as local libraries).

As you can see, these are very basic positions, but they are great for getting to know what we do. We also have a few other opportunities, but they would require a bit more time to explain. If you are interested in these, or perhaps other opportunities, drop us a line at wimmoi@hotmail.com.

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ATTACH MAILING LABEL HERE!

