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Message from the Board

Spring is a time when we turn the page on winter, take stock and figure out what needs to be done for the summer.

Whether it means some much needed renovations of our homes or clean-up of the garden and lawns, something always needs to be done.

West Island Mission and its board of directors have had to conduct a similar review of our winter season and look ahead to what we have planned for the summer season and beyond. As you will read in this edition of our newsletter, WIM has been affected by the double "whammy": economic conditions not improving for

many of our recipients and an ever growing list of new people requiring our services. This is hardly surprising when you consider spiking fuel prices, rising grocery prices and constant economic uncertainty. This has resulted in a maximum weekly basket delivery number of 30 families with an ever growing waiting list. Based on these weekly numbers and our present storage capacity, the time has come for the board of directors to seek a solution to deal with this reality.

Given these conditions, the board is actively seeking new premises with more space to meet these needs. You will

also read about our terrific 2010 Christmas distribution, this year held at the Marcel Morin centre in Pierrefonds. We also bid farewell to one board member while welcoming a new one. In all of our correspondence, we always mention that you can help and many opportunities exist. For those who already help us, thank you. You are making a difference in the lives of our fellow West Island neighbours. For those who want to lend a hand, please contact us or visit our website. You can never underestimate the help you can give to one in serious need.

Donald Harris,
President and Chair,
West Island Mission

Highlights from WIM's AGM

Have you ever found yourself wondering how West Island Mission faired over the last year, or how your contribution of time or funds was used in 2010? Your opportunity to find out occurred recently at the Pierrefonds East Community Center.

WIM hosted its 3rd annual AGM on Thursday, March 24 at 7:30 pm.

Announcements about the meeting were posted on WIM's website and in local media, and invitations were sent out to sponsors.

The board of directors was joined at the meeting by a small group of interested supporters and community members and leaders. Donald Harris (President), Kent Elvidge (Treasurer) and Darren Sleep (Vice

President) gave a short presentation on last year's activities, WIM's current operations and fiscal status, as well as a sneak peak into what we have planned for next year. The rest of the board as well as WIM's Director of Operations were present to help field questions from those in attendance, and for a good discussion time after the meeting.

And where do we currently stand? Some highlights from 2010 include: a significant increase in support to the community (WIM delivered 500 more baskets than any year in our existence); 2 very successful seasonal distributions in which we distributed school supplies (Back-to-School) or Christmas presents (Christmas) along with generous food baskets to

over 300 families; and becoming certified under Imagine Canada's Ethical Code certification program. Our financial position last year was strong (thanks to continued support from the community), and we are looking to increase our efforts next year to provide more help to the community in need.

Our AGM is an important meeting for WIM, as openness and transparency is of vital importance to what we do. Without complete accountability to our supporters and the general public, trust is very hard to achieve. Our AGM is but one vehicle for achieving this goal. If you would like a copy of the AGM presentation or any other information about what we do, please contact us at wimmoi@hotmail.com, or call 514-912-6813.



“To give real service you must add something which cannot be bought or measured with money, and that is sincerity and integrity.”

*Douglas Adams,
British Author
(1952-2001)*



Making Changes – Moving Forward

To everything there is a season. Once again, there are some changes at WIM that we would like to highlight. Serving an organization like WIM is very rewarding, but it is also a commitment. As life changes for our long-time volunteers, they sometimes feel like it is time for them to step aside. While we are always a bit sad to see them go, we welcome the opportunity to get “new blood” involved to bring new ideas and fresh energy.

Renada Dekker has served on the board since mid-2009, and has been instrumental in helping WIM forge new policies and

deliver various aspects of the program. In addition to sitting on the board, she has participated in the Policy Committee, and coordinated a delivery team on Saturday mornings. Unfortunately for WIM, new opportunities have come her way, and she has therefore stepped down from the board. While she will be sorely missed, she has agreed to continue running a delivery team and volunteering where she can. A big thanks to her for her work so far.

With Renada leaving the board, we are pleased to announce the arrival of Alexandra Armstrong to the board. Alexandra brings a

wealth of experience with various non-profit organizations, an unquenchable enthusiasm, and an interesting multi-cultural perspective (she speaks several languages!).

On a final note, Wendy Gariepy has stepped off the board, and now serves as WIM’s Director of Operations, a part time paid position that keeps our operations running smoothly. We look forward to seeing the mission grow under her watchful eye!

As WIM continues to work to meet the needs of the community, Alexandra will help us move forward in new and exciting ways! Welcome to the Team!

How Donations Become Baskets

At the risk of dating myself, does anyone remember those little cartoons on television when you were a kid about, “How a bill becomes law”? The process for a donation becoming a food basket is similar (although without all the politics!).

First of all, it is important to note that many aspects of WIM’s operations involve the donation of countless hours of time, primarily by volunteers. There is literally an army of people that power what we do.

Foodstuffs that are donated directly to WIM, either through a drop-box or by individuals or organizations, gets picked up by someone

with WIM and taken to our operating facility. There, more volunteers will catalogue it and stock it onto our pantry shelves.

Financial donations go to either paying for some of WIM’s overhead (e.g., rent, staff), or used to buy food when our pantry gets low. Purchased food is usually bought at well below the market price, thanks to the generous support of some local grocers, or occasionally picked up at sale prices (we watch the flyers too!).

Food baskets are assembled by volunteer teams working at our facility, usually during the week. “Basic” baskets are initially assembled early in the week for our expected

deliveries, and the baskets are finalized later in the week based on the final list of actual recipients and their specific needs (the generation of the final list, as well as all the time on the phone to get it ready, is also done by a volunteer!).

Finally, baskets are picked up and delivered to recipients by teams of volunteers each and every Saturday morning. There are approximately 5 teams of 6-8 drivers that participate from 10-12 am on a rotating basis.

As I said, without volunteers, very little of this can be done. If any of these activities interest you, please contact WIM and join in the fun!

About West Island Mission...

West Island Mission was founded in February 2005.

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 18, 2010



Christmas time is arguably WIM's busiest time of year, and 2010 was no exception. In addition to preparing for our annual distribution, the "giving" season is often the time of year when we receive the most generous contributions from the community, both in terms of financial contributions and food donations.



Our distribution this year was held in a new venue, the Marcel Morin Community Center in Pierrefonds. The space was generously donated by the city, and WIM volunteers descended on the center, Christmas cheer in hand, to deliver a spectacular

event! Our annual Christmas Distribution was held December 18, 2010.

WIM served nearly 200 families this year, and had over 250 volunteers participate. As for donations, the community stepped up (as usual) and contributed over \$20,000 worth of food. These donations not only helped families at Christmas, but continued to power WIM's efforts well into 2011.

In addition to the many volunteers, individual donors and community organizations that participated, the corporate community stepped in as

well, with over 30 corporate partners getting involved (including 14 local bank branches!).

And what a day it was! As you can see from the pictures, there were an abundance of smiles filled with Christmas spirit that permeated the event. Boxes were packed and cars were loaded up by volunteer scouts and football players, and everyone seemed to have a great time.

Many thanks to the volunteers, corporate and community partners, teams and organizations that joined us to make this event a great success!



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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We're on the Web!

See us at:
www.wimmoi.com

There was an Organization that lived in a shoe...

...they had so much work, they couldn't operate effectively in their current space.

Ok, that was a horrible attempt at a rhyme.

In any case, the analogy fits. Not long ago, WIM moved it's operations into a U-HAUL storage facility (see WIM newsletter 2009, volume 2, issue 1). This facility has been an incredible asset for WIM's operations as we got on our feet and got to work. It is also a fact that U-HAUL

has been a fantastic partner that has supported WIM's work in countless ways, and we owe them a great debt of gratitude.

However, over the last couple of years, WIM's operations have increased threefold, and our need for storage space has almost kept pace. In addition to our main locker, we've been forced to lease extra space. In addition, our increasing involvement of volunteers has meant that on many a cold winter's night,

volunteers have shivered away as they cheerfully prepared baskets for up to 30 families a week!

What, you may ask, is the solution? While we greatly appreciate U-HAUL's help, and look forward to working with them in the future, it is clear that WIM must now seek out another space that better meets our needs in terms of storage operation space.

Additionally, we're optimistic that such space will also serve as a pick-up center for those recipients that have the ability to get around. This would allow us to once again increase our capacity to help more families while keeping our costs (in terms of both financial assets and volunteer time) as low as possible.

Keep your eyes on this space in future newsletters about our next move to better serve our community and those who work with us to make a difference.



Pictures of current WIM lockers shortly after Christmas Distribution (weekly deliveries set-up – lower part of left picture).



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