



July 31, 2012

Volume 5, Issue 1

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Message from the Board

Wow! Has it been a year? West Island Mission has been busy, busy, busy since last May, and that often means something falls off the too-crowded table. Our last newsletter was May of 2011. No time like the present to correct that oversight. Much has gone on, so buckle up!

First off, WIM has been working hard to both coordinate our services with social programs on the west island, including both the CLSC and other charitable organizations, while at the same time getting our name out to the public (see "*Getting the word out!*"). If people don't know who we are it is hard to access our services or

support our efforts, so this has been a recent priority.

As usual, our Christmas Distribution in December went off in a big way with much success (see the pictures on page 3). Thanks to all who participated. We also held a food drive in June (but it is not too late to contribute!), which will help support our weekly recipients. We are also planning our Back-to-School 2012 Distribution. Keep your eyes on our website as to how you can help by sponsoring a backpack of school supplies.

Finally, on page 4 you'll read about our Annual General Meeting held in march at our warehouse on Labrosse in Pointe Claire. A very large

number of supporters came to ask questions, see our new location, and enjoy donated snacks.

Last but not least, I would draw your attention to the story of Jeanne on page 2 (see, "*Generosity Making a Difference*"). Jeanne and her dog "Lucky" have been such an inspiration to us that we felt a need to share (with her permission of course!).

As usual, thanks for your support of our vital work. We could not do this without the encouragement and donations of so many people of the West Island.

Darren Sleep,
Vice President,
West Island Mission

Getting the word out!

Part of the challenge of operating a non-profit social service such as a food bank, is that it is difficult to justify expenses that don't get directly and immediately to our recipients. At WIM, we want to ensure that as much of every dollar that gets donated translates to immediate food relief. But there are always other costs, and if those are not looked after, our ability to deliver aid will eventually fail.

A good example of this is promotions. If few people and organizations know of our services, we will not attract funding to help us help others. Further, people who need our services may not know of our existence or

how to reach us when they are in need. Unfortunately, advertising is expensive, and our resources are already dedicated as much as possible to finding and distributing food to as many families in need as we can.

Fortunately, there are low (or no!) cost solutions to this problem. This spring, our board of directors have been working to develop an outreach campaign to make the WIM name more well known in the community.

For starters, some sponsors have been working to help us distribute WIM information and flyers to various areas across the West Island that WIM serves. Second, we've developed a pamphlet that will be put into the hands of as

many social workers, church and CLSC staff as possible, such that they know we can be called on if they become aware of a need.

Finally, WIM will be appearing at a kiosk at Fairview Pointe Clair for a promotional event this summer. Our purpose for being there is simply to raise awareness of the very real need on the West Island, and advertise WIM as a way people can help, either through volunteering or other support. If you see us at the mall, please stop and say hello.

It is our hope that these efforts will lead to more familiarity among West Islanders of the need in their community, and of WIM as a way they can make a real difference in addressing this need.

Generosity Making a Difference



“Charity is injurious unless it helps the recipient to become independent of it.”

- John D. Rockefeller, American industrialist and philanthropist (1839-1937)



Sometimes our supporters wonder about the money and food they donate. Does my contribution actually affect the lives of anyone? How do I know?

Let me tell you about Jeanne Emily. She is a recipient who lives alone with her lhasa apso, “Lucky”. In early 2011, while playing with Lucky, Jeanne Emily felt a sharp pain in her chest. After a number of visits to her doctor and several tests, she was diagnosed with breast cancer and scheduled for surgery. Months later she was informed by her surgeon that the initial

surgery was unsuccessful, and a full mastectomy was required.

Meanwhile Jeanne Emily had been unable to work, and her government support was barely covering her rent. Additionally, she found providing nutritious meals for herself increasingly complicated, both because of the rising cost of fresh produce, as well as the cost of nutritional aids like Ensure.

Enter West Island Mission. We do not provide all the food needs of our recipients, but our

once monthly basket program was able to help Jeanne Emily and Lucky get through, and occasionally provide the nutritional supplement Ensure to help her through her illness.

Now on the road to recovery, Jeanne Emily says, “West Island Mission has saved our lives, and given us hope. Without their help, I’m not sure we would have survived.”



Jeanne Emily and Lucky

Recent Food Drive and Upcoming Distribution

Summer - the time for relaxation, hammocks in the backyard, toes in the sand, and barbequed everything. Vacation is a time to forget about stress and relax. Unfortunately, hunger and need do not take vacations. For many families on the west island, there is little difference between struggling to put food on the table in winter, spring, summer and fall - the fight is never-ending.

That’s why WIM began holding a summer food drive every June to help reduce this stress, provide some support to those in the struggle, and to help raise awareness of this

need among our community. Although, our “official” summer food drive was held from June 9 to July 14, food and donations can still be dropped off at our warehouse facility at 139 LaBrosse, in Pointe-Claire from 1:00 pm to 3:30 pm Monday, Tuesday and Thursday, or 8:30 am to 10:00 am Saturdays. Please help.

Once the summer starts to wind down, it will be time to think about heading back-to-school. Surprisingly, this is one of the most stressful and yet most important times for families with young children. A successful education is the key to escaping from the cycle of poverty, yet paying for school supplies for

children is a huge challenge for families that struggle to make ends meet.

This year, WIM’s Back-to-School distribution will not only provide nutritious food to local families with young children, but we also supply school-aged children with a backpack loaded with school supplies recommended by local schools. Further, we are collecting gently-used clothing for distribution. In order to provide these tools, we partner with local businesses to either donate the supplies or help us purchase them.

This year’s distribution is taking place August 18. Volunteers are needed, and people can sponsor a backpack full of supplies for \$25.

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 17, 2011



Although it has been over half a year since WIM's Christmas Distribution, remembering that cold morning in December still brings a warm smile to all those who participated.

A large group of willing individuals worked hard in the weeks before the distribution to sort food donations, pack boxes and wrap presents, all destined for west island families in desperate need of a little Christmas hope.

The morning of the event was bright and clear, and many families and individuals gathered to help deliver generous food baskets and presents throughout our area.

A number of local dignitaries also showed up to acknowledge WIM's efforts, and to learn a little bit more about what WIM does, and how the community gets involved to support their neighbours.

Christmas is always a time of great generosity, and this year was no exception. This effort was supported by over 275 volunteers, 20 businesses, 5 banks, 10 community organizations, 5 churches, 7 schools, 5 daycares and 3 libraries. In total, WIM received over \$25,000 worth of non-perishable food donations,

which not only supported our Christmas recipients, but served our weekly recipients well into the new year.

In total, 211 families received Christmas baskets, a significant increase over last year's effort. Many of these families included children for whom these baskets represented their entire Christmas.

We at WIM would like to acknowledge and thank everyone who participated this year, and helped bring joy and hope into the lives of the less fortunate in our area. See you 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)

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We're on the Web!

See us at:
www.wimmoi.com

Open House held at WIM's New Location

For the first time since WIM began holding our annual AGM, this year's meeting was held at our own facility. West Island Mission's 4th Annual General Meeting and open house was held at our new warehouse location on LaBrosse Ave. in Pointe Claire. Supporters, volunteers, local politicians and friends of WIM gathered to meet the board, hear news of this year's work, and enjoy a few donated snacks.

generously donated to ensure no one left the meeting early to satisfy hunger. Information on WIM's financial condition was made available on a side table, and board members were more than willing to discuss WIM's activities of the past year, as well as plans for the future. A slide show was running as well, with pictures from our various activities and events from the past year.

the same format will be used again to share the successes and concerns of WIM with our



supporters. Keep an eye on WIM's website (www.wimmoi.com), and expect the announcement for next year's meeting sometime in the New Year. Until then, thank you for your continued support!

Interest in this year's meeting

The atmosphere was particularly relevant, as people mingled among shelves of donated food and prepared baskets that were ready for the next delivery. Snacks for the evening were

was higher, with attendance at the meeting reaching a new high of approximately 50 people. Given the success of this year's event, it is very likely



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