

# SPRING cycle

Santropol Roulant's Cycle Newsletter

Spring 2006

## Meals-On wheels in Quebec turn 40: Honoring a Sector

This year marks the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Meals-on Wheels (MOW) in Quebec. The first MOW initiative was developed in 1966 at the St Mathias Church in Westmont through the collaboration of the Victorian Order of Nurses and the Montreal Volunteer Bureau. Today there are over 300 diverse MOW groups in Quebec, 100 in Montreal, providing over 1 million healthy meals per year to 14,500 seniors and people living with a loss of autonomy.

According to the Montreal Volunteer Bureau one third of MOW initiatives are categorized as traditional "Church Basement Popotes", known in Quebec as *Les Popotes Artisanales*. They serve about 25 homemade meals 2 to 3 days per week. They are unfunded and run entirely by volunteers whose average age is 70 year old. As the volunteers at these Popotes grow older there will be a need to attract a new generation of people to continue their work.

Another third of the MOW sector is made up of associations and community groups that re-distribute pre-prepared meals purchased from hospital food services or private suppliers. 50% of these meals are fresh and 50% are frozen. Due to a lack of resources, many of today's groups have had to buy outside meals.

The last third of the MOW sector is made up of larger community organizations, that deliver hot home cooked meals and/or pre-prepared meals.

Despite the fact that MOWs are under funded and mostly volunteer based, they have managed to keep their meals healthy and affordable. We are proud and inspired to be part of a sector that has been able to mobilize such an incredible amount of resources and energy.

At Santropol Roulant, the grassroots meals-on-wheels program is the vehicle that we use to pursue the dream we have for a city where the overriding feeling is one of connectedness rather than that of isolation, a community where its members nourish and care for each other.

Thank you to all of our members who recognize the valuable contributions local Meals-on-Wheels organizations, like our own, bring to the community and for your unwavering commitment to help us keep our meals affordable.

Since 1995, with the energy of over 100 volunteers per week, Santropol Roulant has made over 310,000 meals and delivered them by bicycle, on foot and by car to seniors and people living with a loss of autonomy across Montreal.

We use food as a vehicle to break social isolation between the generations and to strengthen and nourish our local community. A social service with an environmental and social change ethos, Santropol Roulant continues to innovate and experiment with new ways of connecting people to food, to their environments and each other.



The gang in the Santropol Roulant kitchen



*"It is often said that the value of a society is measured by the manner in which it treats its elders, please allow me to add that this same value is also measured by the way in which elders treat the young. I want to congratulate Santropol Roulant for its dedication in bringing these two generations together."*

**Gaston Doucet, 70 yrs**

## Eatin' and Retreatin'

Santropol Roulant has always been a place that brings people together, where we talk about our lives, our work, and the world we'd like to live in. We place a great deal of emphasis on the power of simple and open conversation, and these organic exchanges often give birth to our most creative and inspiring initiatives. This winter, Santropol Roulant staff and board took two days out of our busy schedule to take a step back and look at the work we do, how we work together, and where we stand after 10 years of operations.



Organizations like the Roulant rarely have the time to convene, especially staff and board together, and this time is crucial to appreciate the work we are doing, share our preoccupations, brainstorm on how we can better work together and support each other, and perhaps most importantly, to think collectively and creatively about the kind of organization we want to be. With a new staff team, an evolving membership model, and ten years of experience to grow from, the 2006 retreats were especially timely.

We met to think about the future, how we'd like to grow and develop, and how our staff and board could better work together to achieve our goals. We emerged from our time together with stomachs full from potluck and spaghetti lunches, and confident that Santropol Roulant's next decade will be as energizing and rich as our first, with new ideas about working with our membership, securing our future, and how we'd like to see Santropol Roulant evolve our leadership in the community.

More information and detailed minutes from the staff/board and board retreats are on the web!

## MONTHLY GIVING: Spread the love

Becoming a sustaining donor is an important way you can support the Roulant. It's simple and provides the steady financial support needed to continue nurturing caring relationships and fostering a healthy well nourished community. Our goal is to raise \$2,543 in monthly donations to cover the rent of our kitchen and office space.

We're at \$135 per month so far! Please join us in reaching our goal by our 12<sup>th</sup> birthday in June 2007. Be a monthly donor today!! As we like to say to each other around the office. Do it!





## A Crabby Old Woman

When an elderly woman died in the geriatric ward of a small hospital near Dundee, Scotland, it was believed that she had nothing left of any value. Later, when the nurses were going through her few possessions, they found this poem. Its quality and content so impressed the staff that copies were made and distributed to every nurse in the hospital. One nurse took her copy to Ireland.

The elderly woman's sole bequest to posterity has since appeared in the Christmas edition of the News Magazine of the Northern Ireland Association for Mental Health.

A slide presentation has also been made based on her simple, but eloquent, poem. And this little old Scottish lady, with nothing left to give to the world, is now the author of this "anonymous" poem winging across the Internet:

### *Crabby Old Woman*

*What do you see, nurses?  
What do you see?  
What are you thinking  
When you're looking at  
me?*

*A crabby old woman,  
Not very wise,  
Uncertain of habit,  
With faraway eyes?*

*Who dribbles her food  
And makes no reply  
When you say in a loud  
voice,  
"I do wish you'd try!"  
Who seems not to notice  
The things that you do,  
And forever is losing  
A stocking or shoe?*

*Who, resisting or not,  
Lets you do, as you will,  
With bathing and feeding,  
The long day to fill?*

*Is that what you're  
thinking?  
Is that what you see?  
Then open your eyes,  
nurse,  
You're not looking at me.*

*I'll tell you who I am  
As I sit here so still,  
As I do at your bidding,  
As I eat at your will.*

*I'm a small child of ten  
With a father and mother,  
Brothers and sisters,  
Who love one another.*

*A young girl of sixteen  
With wings on her feet  
Dreaming that soon now  
A lover she'll meet.*

*A bride soon at twenty,  
My heart gives a leap,  
Remembering the vows  
That I promised to keep.*

*At twenty-five now,  
I have young of my own,  
Who need me to guide  
And a secure happy home.*

*A woman of thirty,  
My young now grown fast,  
Bound to each other  
With ties that should last.*

*At forty, my young sons  
Have grown and are gone,  
But my man's beside me  
To see I don't mourn.*

*At fifty once more,  
Babies play round my  
knee,  
Again we know children,  
My loved one and me.*

*Dark days are upon me,  
My husband is dead,  
I look at the future,  
I shudder with dread.*

*For my young are all  
rearing  
Young of their own,  
And I think of the years  
And the love that I've  
known.*

*I'm now an old woman  
And nature is cruel;  
'Tis jest to make old age  
Look like a fool.*

*The body, it crumbles,  
Grace and vigor depart,  
There is now a stone  
Where I once had a heart.*

*But inside this old carcass  
A young girl still dwells,  
And now and again,  
My battered heart swells.*

*I remember the joys,  
I remember the pain,  
And I'm loving and living  
Life over again.*

*I think of the years  
All too few, gone too fast,  
And accept the stark fact  
That nothing can last.*

*So open your eyes, people,  
Open and see,  
Not a crabby old woman;  
Look closer . . . see ME!!*

*Remember this poem  
when you next meet an  
old person who you might  
brush  
Aside without looking at  
the young soul within ... we  
will all, one day, be there,  
too!*

## UPCOMING Summer Events

June 8 <sup>th</sup> :	11th Birthday Party
June 15 - 18 <sup>th</sup> :	Main Madness St. Laurent Sale
June 21 <sup>st</sup> :	Garden Opening on the roof
August 3 <sup>rd</sup> :	Garden BBQ at the roof
August 24 <sup>th</sup> - 27 <sup>th</sup> :	Main Madness St. Laurent Sale
September 9 <sup>th</sup> :	Annual Bazaar,
	September 10 <sup>th</sup> if rain
Septembre 23 <sup>rd</sup> :	Garden Harvest Fest/ Fête des réoltes
September 27 <sup>th</sup> :	Annual General Meeting

## Kitchen Workshops in full swing

Every second Thursday afternoon of the month our chef Armel is sharing his culinary know-how (and slick dance moves) in a workshop series not to be missed. Learn to make sauces, casseroles, fancy deserts and more. Enjoy a communal meal, some good conversation and, if you're lucky, take home a few leftovers. Check out our website for more info.

## Roulant Recognized

We are proud to announce that we've been awarded the Centraide *Agnes C. Higgins Award*, recognizing outstanding innovation on the part of an agency in meeting the social needs of the community. Yeah Roulant!!

## GOING GREEN... ...local & organic

Last January we committed to preparing 20% of our homemade meals-on-wheels with local organic food. Our aim is to support local Quebec farmers, reject the use of pesticides or chemicals, prepare the most nutritious food possible, and respect the natural environment. We were shocked to read that the average meal travels 30,000 km to get to our dinner table and as a result causes the release of almost 4 tonnes of carbon dioxide into the air. Since transportation accounts for 25% of all Canada's green house emissions we can do a lot to reduce air pollution and fight global warming just by buying local food. We're into that!

If you're into it too please consider contributing.  
A \$250 donation makes a Local/Organic Day possible – that's 100 meals!



## Elana: Our new director of development and communications

Hi!! My name is **Elana** and I will be taking over for Fiona as the new Director of Development and Communications here at Santropol Roulant. However, I am not new to Santropol Roulant. Last summer, I participated in the CEI internship (helping place business students in the not-for-profit sector). Since then, I have also been working at the Roulant one day a week helping out with fundraising. I am very excited to be here full-time from now on. I have many ideas, but I would love to hear your views and suggestions, so please don't be shy. Give me a call at **(514) 284-2771** to chat, if you're interested in helping with fundraising initiatives, or just to say hi. I look forward to meeting you soon!!

