

[REISACTION]

The East Island Network for English Language Services Newsletter

[TOPICS]

REISA's Annual General Meeting	1
.....	
Reorganization of English services in the East end of Montreal	1
.....	
Gerald McShane Community Learning Centre	2
.....	
A Portrait of Saint-Léonard	2
.....	
Hygiène de vie et santé mentale	3
.....	
Matinées pour aînés	3
.....	
Training and Retention of Health Professionals	4
.....	
Workshop on services for the elderly	4
.....	
Brainy Boomers Series 2012	5
.....	
Resource Guide Update	5
.....	
AMI-Québec 2011 National Champion Of Mental Health	5
.....	
MCSA Senior's Symposium	6
.....	
5-30 Health and Wellness Challenge 2012	6
.....	
BCRC Blood Drive	6
.....	



The East Island Network for English Language Services
Le Réseau de l'Est de l'Île pour les services en anglais

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Community and public partners work to develop and promote access to English-language health and social services in the east-end of Montreal.

If you would like to learn more about any of the projects mentioned, please feel free to email me at cmaiolo@reisa.ca. Thank you for reading!

REISA's Annual General Meeting

REISA will be holding its Annual General Meeting on Thursday, June 21st at 9:30am at the Leonardo Da Vinci Centre. Network partners are invited to attend the meeting and hear about REISA's activities during the 2011-2012 fiscal year.

Reorganization of English services in the East end of Montreal

L'Agence de santé et des services sociaux de Montréal has decided to dismantle the Pivot team, a psychosocial team at the CSSS Pointe-de-l'Île since 1993, with the mandate of serving the English-speaking population of the East Island of Montreal. REISA has presented a position paper to the Agence and the four CSSS identifying the following challenges: considering linguistic barriers in primary health and social services as an issue of quality of services and risk management; placing clients and communities at the center of the reorganization and defining an action plan for the development of organizational climates within which clients feel at ease to use the English language.

REISA made the recommendation that the Agence should: develop a strategy for the implementation of high quality, efficient, pertinent and equitable practices to enhance accessibility of English-language health and social services; promote a vision of linguistic access as an essential component of the safety, quality and efficiency of services in each CSSS. REISA offers to collaborate fully with the Agence and its partners to develop sustainable

[REISACTION]

The East Island Network for English Language Services Newsletter

solutions towards ensuring the quality of services to the English-speaking population in the East Island.

Gerald McShane Community Learning Centre



A new Community Learning Centre opened up this past Fall in Montreal North, on the East Island of Montreal. The Gerald McShane Elementary School CLC is coordinated by Bobbie Variantzas. Mrs. Variantzas has worked for three school boards, and recently worked as a Child Care Worker at Hampstead School on the West Island.

Mrs. Variantzas has begun surveying the local community in order to find out what the specific needs are. Several organizations have joined the CLC steering committee including REISA, the local Police and the English Montreal School Board. Amongst other initiatives, the CLC has partnered with *Les Fourchettes de l'Espoir* in a Community Teaching Garden project. The project entails teaching the children how to grow fresh produce, enabling them to learn about a variety of vegetables and how to eat healthy. *Les Fourchettes de l'Espoir* is a local community kitchen that will be tending the garden during the summer holiday with the help of the youth from their summer camp. The CLC is also partnering with the community kitchen on another level: the organization will be offering a weekly daycare

program for students who stay after school during which they will follow a cooking class and prepare meals to bring home to their families.

The CLC has also partnered with *Un Rayon de Soleil*, a five-year plan women's centre and Centre de petite enfance for young mothers in need. The Moms for Moms program allows the mothers to visit the CLC and take home cribs, clothing and other necessities that have been donated. Furthermore, through a Literacy project, the students at Gerald McShane have written storybooks that will be published and copies provided to the mothers staying at *Un Rayon de Soleil*.

A Portrait of Saint-Léonard



(Representatives from the English Montreal School Board, the Éco-Quartier Saint-Léonard and the Italian-Canadian Community Services participate in group discussion.)

REISA in collaboration with the Community Health and Social Services Network-CHSSN and l'Institut National de Santé Publique du Québec-INSPQ organized a Community Consultation for English-speaking residents of Saint-Léonard in May. They were invited to give their views of Saint-Léonard past and present, with regards to topics on the economy, education, environment, employability and personal well-being. The goals of the consultation were to

[REISACTION]

The East Island Network for English Language Services Newsletter

better understand the community's overall vision of its current and potential situation and bring together key actors around issues that spur action.

Residents as well as representatives of the community, public and private sector participated. The Consultation served as qualitative information for the development of a portrait of the community of Saint-Léonard that will be ready in the Fall. The INSPQ has held community consultations in five other communities: Bonne-Espérance on the Lower North Shore, New Carlisle in the Gaspésie, Sept-Îles on the North Shore, Sutton in the Eastern Townships and Laval in the Greater Montreal region.

Hygiène de vie et santé mentale



REISA sits on a committee for the promotion of physical and mental health of students ages 6 to 12. In 2011, the English Montreal School Board, la Commission Scolaire Pointe-de-l'Île, le Collectif Jeunesse and le CSSS de Saint-Léonard et Saint-Michel joined forces to look at the needs of elementary level students. Partners working in the public and community sectors were invited to participate. Three subcommittees representing different categories of needs emerged: *prévention de violence*, *hygiène de*

vie et santé mentale and *immigrants et nouveaux arrivants*.

At a meeting in early 2011, REISA stressed the importance of incorporating mental health in the overall promotion of good health amongst children. REISA is working with other committee members to devise a strategy that would promote good health in a pilot school on the East Island of Montreal. Activities including weekend sports, workshops on healthy eating and meals for underprivileged families will bring together students who attend both French and English schools in the area.

Matinées pour aînés

Viomax is an organisation offering services to the physically challenged persons. The centre's gymnasium offers activities such as adapted yoga, dance, ultimate frisbee and wheelchair volley-ball, and a physical conditioning room offers equipment for training. Furthermore, a large pool area offers different swimming classes including adapted aqua fitness and aqua-jogging.



REISA has partnered with Viomax, the Italian-Canadian Community Services of Québec and the Leonardo Da Vinci-LDV Community Centre in the

[REISACTION]

The East Island Network for English Language Services Newsletter

development of a senior's project called *Matinées pour aînés*. The project is aimed at offering seniors recreational activities including an exercise program adapted to different groups of seniors, *aquacise*, and nutritional workshops. 25 seniors from different senior centres have been recruited and activities will begin mid-June at the LDV Community Centre's new pool area and fitness rooms.

Training and Retention of Health Professionals



REISA made important progress in the McGill Training and Retention of Health Professionals project this past year. REISA placed 11 students in community organizations on the island of Montreal, 7 of which are located on the East Island. The community organizations include a Respite centre and daycare for children with special needs, the Italian-Canadian Community Services, a detoxification and reinsertion centre, and a community centre. The students that were placed studied in several programs including Therapeutic Recreation, Social Work, Special Care Counselling and Dietetics, at Concordia University, McGill University and Vanier College.

Moreover, REISA is currently discussing student placement directly with two CSSS', Ahuntsic/Montréal-

Nord and Saint-Léonard/Saint-Michel, according to their needs and resources for supervision.

REISA will be presenting a kiosk at the English Montreal School Board annual Career Fair in partnership with l'Agence in the promotion of careers in health and social services amongst English-speaking and bilingual youth.

Workshop on services for the elderly

In May 2012, REISA met with Alliance des communautés culturelles pour l'égalité dans la santé et les services sociaux-ACCÉSSS to learn about the workshop that they are offering to staff of community



organizations on services and programs available to the elderly and their families in different communities. The workshop covers issues from emergency and ambulatory services, vaccination and home care services, to information on tax deductions, household security, fraud protection and pension plans, amongst various other topics. The Italian-Canadian Community Services will be organizing a training session for partners in the Fall.

Founded in 1984, ACCÉSSS is a federation of over 100 community organizations working to promote *accessibility and the adaptation of health and social services to ethnocultural communities* in Québec. ACCÉSSS has led initiatives aiming to train and

[REISACTION]

The East Island Network for English Language Services Newsletter

sensitive healthcare workers and professionals working in public and community institutions on the realities of immigrant communities. To learn more about the organization, visit their website at www.accesss.net.

Brainy Boomers Series 2012



In the Spring of 2012, REISA in partnership with the McGill Centre for Studies in Aging, the Laurier Macdonald Community Learning Centre and TD Waterhouse organized a series of four lectures on topics of interest to the baby boomer generation. The goal of the series was to suggest practical steps to improve and maintain brain health, as well as to promote healthy lifestyle choices amongst the most populous generation in history. Professionals including a Notary and Naturopath gave lectures on building a retirement pay cheque, securing a financial future, living a healthy lifestyle, estate planning and the importance of wills. This is the second year in a row that REISA collaborates in the organizing of this lecture series.

Resource Guide Update

REISA has updated its guide on Health and Social Service Resources for English-speaking communities in the East Island of Montreal. The guide contains

resources in different fields including addiction, diseases, education, employment and volunteering, emergency and temporary housing, referral and community centres, adult, youth and senior helplines, violence and sexual assault, etc.

The update will be available electronically for community and public partners across the province of Québec in the Fall of 2012. Please email me if you would like to be on our emailing list!

AMI-Québec 2011 National Champion Of Mental Health



REISA would like to congratulate AMI-Québec Executive Director and REISA Board Member Ella Amir. AMI-Québec was awarded the prize for the 2011 National Champion

Of Mental Health in the community sector by the Canadian Alliance On Mental Illness and Mental Health-CAMIMH. CAMIMH is composed of 19 organizations nationwide who work to increase awareness on mental illness, improve mental health literacy and develop a national mental health strategy with the federal government.

Furthermore, Ella Amir was featured on CTV's Power of One segment in January 2012. In the article, colleagues testify to E. Amir's hard work and dedication to an important cause, and clients give

[REISACTION]

The East Island Network for English Language Services Newsletter

testament to how the organization has helped them. Please email me for a copy of the article!

MCSA Senior's Symposium



The McGill Centre for Studies in Aging is organizing a Senior's Symposium on October 12th 2012. The full-day symposium will feature morning lectures by health professionals including a Neurologist and Psychiatrist on the topics of the prevention of Alzheimer's, fit body and fit mind, successful cognitive and emotional aging and sex and aging. Themes of afternoon workshops include videogames and seniors, prevention of neurodegenerative diseases, exercise and neurons in action.

5-30 Health and Wellness Challenge 2012

REISA promoted ACTI-MENU's 5-30 Health and Wellness Challenge during the Spring of 2012. REISA offered and delivered English-language promotional material related to the health challenge to three of the four CSSS' in the East Island of Montreal. The material was made available to their clientele in each of their CLSC waiting rooms. REISA engaged a group of patients at a local pharmacy to register for weekly

walks in collaboration with a community nurse. Moreover, information about the challenge was sent to high schools and elementary schools across the English Montreal School Board. Finally, REISA visited seniors groups to explain the challenge, register participants and follow-up with their questions or concerns.

According to www.healthchallenge.ca, over 150,000 people registered for the challenge this year. 254 municipalities and local communities promoted the challenge; this number represents a 40% increase from 2011. Moreover, over 600 organizations and workplaces promoted the challenge this year.

BCRC Blood Drive



(Dr. Charles Drew)

The Black Community Resource Centre, member of REISA's Board, held their very first Blood Drive on May 4th 2012, surpassing donor expectations all while having a great time! Héma-Québec considers 45 donors successful and 20

donors successful for a first-time blood drive, and the Charles Drew Blood Drive recruited 105! Volunteers and donors were treated with music and refreshments.
