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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.

The Montreal Community Resource Initiative Project Forum and Workshop

On March 25th and 26th the CHSSN and REISA hosted a Montreal Community Resource Initiative (MCRI) Project Forum and Workshop at the Delta Hotel in downtown Montreal. Janet Forsyth, REISA Consultant in community organizing, presented funding strategies as well as strategies of partnership-building and effective methods of planning and reporting. The African Canadian Development and Prevention Network (ACDPN) presented their community based model for development of best practice prevention approaches. AGAPE, CCS and the NDG Senior Citizens' Council presented on poverty amongst the populations that they serve. Other groups such as COCo, AMI-Québec and the Black Community Resource Center presented statistics about different cultural communities and existing health programs.

Representatives of both community groups and institutions expressed that the forum was relevant and that they received new and interesting information. Participants said that the forum was a great way to hear about different initiatives, possibilities for funding, models and programs, particularly for community groups working in isolation. Everyone at the forum recommended that this type of



(Leith Hamilton and Jean-Philippe Vézina of the ACDPN present a community-based model for development of best practice prevention approaches.)

meeting be organized at least once a year, the majority claiming they would attend up to four times a year. *Email me for a copy of REISA's report on the MCRI forum and workshop, claudiam@scciq.com.*

REISA in the process of Incorporation

At a network meeting in May, REISA partners approved a preliminary set of bylaws prepared by interim steering committee members Dominic D'Abate of Consensus Mediation, Francoise Boucher of Service bénévole de l'Est de Montréal, Maria Maiolo of the Servizi, Howard Nadler of Batshaw Youth and Family Centres and Dorothy Williams of the Black Community Resource Centre. Network members stated that the decision to incorporate demonstrates the success of REISA in supporting groups to respond to the needs of the community. As a result of incorporation, REISA's decision-making will consist of another level of support and guidance to the coordinator.

Needless to say, volunteered time and effort from the various partners involved in the creation of the bylaws during a six-month period shows enthusiasm and dedication, and a secure level of stability for the network.

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Shedding light on the situation: A Mental Health Consultation

On April 13th 2010, REISA brought together over 40 representatives of both community organizations and public institutions on the topic of limited access to Mental Health services in English in the East Island of Montreal. The objective of the consultation was to enable the community to better understand existing mental health services in order to support the development of new services. A roundtable discussion allowed Directors and Service Coordinators of the four CSSS' in the East Island to present their institutions' situations in terms of available services and services in planning.



(Representatives of the CSSS' Saint-Michel/Saint-Léonard, Lucille-Teasdale, Ahuntsic/Montréal-Nord and Pointe-de-l'Île.)

Then, it was time for community groups to speak about their frontline experiences. Diane Doonan, Coordinator of CCS-Almage 50+ Satellite Centres, described the reality of English-speaking seniors. Ms Doonan explained that the majority of English speaking seniors feel embarrassed about their inability to speak French. Thus, many of them remain in isolation and never end up receiving any service at all. Ana Santos and Alison Sipos, guidance counsellors for the EMSB, proceeded to explain the reality that teenagers are faced with. Throughout the school year, teenagers with serious mental health problems approach the counsellors for help. On several occasions, the teenagers are put on waiting lists where they were not recontacted until several months afterwards. Ella Amir, Executive Director of AMI-Québec, spoke about the reality of adults seeking services.

Participants claimed that the consultation was very useful in that it allowed for the sharing of visions, experiences and frustrations. Participants were sensitized to the reality of the situation. Several participants suggested that CSSS' should be combining their efforts in the amelioration of English language services. Other participants appreciated the consultation because it encouraged networking amongst community groups. *Email me for a report on the consultation or a copy of the article that appeared in The Suburban, claudiam@scciq.com.*

Diabetes distance telemonitoring

A Diabetes distance telemonitoring project involving NPI's across the province of Quebec and their local CSSS' is underway. During an eight-week period, 50 patients will transmit their blood glucose levels three times a day to nurses from local CSSS' and NPI project coordinators via loaned blackberrys. Dr. Antonia Arnaert, Associate Professor at McGill University School of Nursing, will measure the acquisition of self-management skills. Hired dieticians will answer dietary questions that the patients may have throughout the duration of the project and present information via videoconference for the group of patients. The dieticians will evaluate the patients' dietary knowledge before and after the trials.

This particular project differs from other projects involving telemonitoring because of its community support component which we hope will reduce the cost of telemonitoring. It targets individuals who are on-the-go, students, working adults, as well as home-bound patients. The project allows patients to improve their quality of life and avoid preventable visits to the hospital because of unmonitored blood glucose levels. An underlying consequence of such a project would be the decrease in costs for public institutions like hospitals and CSSS'. The ultimate goal of the project would be for public institutions to adopt this method of telemonitoring for diabetes amongst other diseases. The trials start in June 2010 and funding from the Public Health Agency of Canada has been granted for a second set of trials for 2011.



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A successful Health and Wellness Challenge

REISA participated in ACTI-MENU's Health and Wellness Challenge this year. The challenge promotes an active lifestyle and a healthy diet by encouraging participants to eat 5 fruits or vegetables and exercise for 30 minutes every day for a period of six weeks. The wellness component was new to 2010 and it involved participants targeting an objective to improve their wellness, for example, communicating better or maintaining good relationships.



(Dietician Mina Mirtaheri teaching daycare children about eating a balanced diet.)

Mina Mirtaheri, a dietician hired by REISA, promoted the challenge within a daycare, two high schools, a senior's center, several senior satellite groups, a community center and a fitness center. A total of 538 were recruited for the challenge! Weekly newsletters were created and sent to registered participants. The newsletters contained general information on nutrition, quizzes, healthy recipes and tips on how to

reach different goals. The dietician recommends that the high schools continue to create newsletters encouraging students to fulfill their goals beyond the length of the challenge.

Sunday school providing a point of access for drug prevention

The Servizi and REISA plan to implement an adapted version of Special Care Counselling Professor Janice Clarini's drug awareness and prevention program into the Sunday school program at pilot parishes in the East Island of Montreal in the Fall. The program hopes to promote healthy choices amongst youth, beginning with education about eating right and relationship-building for children aged 7 and 8, and moving along to topics such as drug and alcohol consumption for 11- and 12-year-olds.

Another dimension of the project would consist of informing parents and grandparents about drug use amongst youth via different media such as radio and newspaper. Ms Clarini voiced that it is important that parents know that they did not fail as parents just because their child is using drugs. The purpose of the articles and radio broadcasts would be to explain the reasons why children use drugs, the signs that they may demonstrate if they are using and what the parents or grandparents

can do to prevent drug use or deal with it if it is already occurring.

Putting REISA on the map

REISA's very first publication of a health and social services resource guide for English-speaking communities in the East Island of Montreal has been embraced with open arms! The guide was long-awaited and is now available to public institutions and community groups who wish to receive it. REISA partners as well as professionals of several institutions including the Montreal Children's Hospital, the McGill School of Social Work, the MUHC and the Jewish General Hospital have received the guide.

The conjoint REISA and Servizi website is in construction and we are anticipating its launch for the end of the summer! The website will serve as an online tool for browsing through health and social services resources, keeping up to date with partners' events, and reading the latest on our organisations' project development and plans for the future. A documentation center will allow viewers to read up on articles relevant to the English-speaking community as well as past reports and documents provided by the CHSSN, REISA, the Servizi or partners who wish to share their work online. *If you have any suggestions for the*

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website, please don't be shy to write, claudiam@scciq.com.

Annual Senior's Day in Magog



(At the Magog arena with the Servizi team and two members of the Almage 50+ Satellite Centres.)

On May 12th, the Servizi and REISA team along with seven members of the Almage 50+ Satellite Centres headed off to Magog to attend the Townshippers' Annual Senior's Day event. 'Lifelong learning – in your golden years keep on blooming' was the slogan of the day. Eric Manolson of the Townshippers' Association described the event as a place where seniors can interact and share useful information. Seniors sat at round tables in the Magog Arena and watched different presentations on active living, learning, exercising and security at home and were also entertained by a singer and a dancing group. Kiosks promoted different organizations offering services to English-speaking seniors across the province of Quebec.

The first event took place in 1999 and it was bilingual. Since then,

the event has been divided into two days, French and English, and participation has drastically increased from a mere 200 seniors to 1200. A large organizing committee plan the annual event, consisting of community organizations and representatives of the CSSS. Senior's Day is the second largest event to bring English-speaking seniors together in the Eastern Townships after Townships Day. The Almage members wish to attend the event every year!

NEWS & EVENTS:

'How to reach autonomy in your later years'

The Italian-Canadian Community Services of Quebec (Servizi) host numerous conferences at the Leonardo Da Vinci Center throughout the year, inviting speakers to present on health topics of interest to the community at large for free. The upcoming conference will be on Wednesday, June 30th, at 7:00 pm, and is on *How to reach autonomy in your later years*. The conference will be given in English and Italian, and French when necessary, by Dr. Giuseppe Maiolo, family physician, and several expert speakers including Me. Pasquale Artuso, Teresa Di Palma and Sandra Wong. The series of conferences will continue in the Fall. *Contact the Servizi at (514) 274-9461 for further details.*



Health Check on CBC Radio One

On Wednesday afternoons between 4:00 and 4:30 pm, CBC Radio One broadcasts a segment called *Health Check* on their 'Breakaway radio program'. Bruce Todman of the CHSSN interviews different people from regions across the province of Quebec who tell their stories about health and social services projects and programs. Regions have presented on diverse topics such as mental health telephone workshops, cancer awareness through videoconferencing, health survival packs, job shadowing and a collective community kitchen. Visit the following link for radio capsules of past segments: [http://www.chssn.org/En/Health Education Program/health resource library.html](http://www.chssn.org/En/Health_Education_Program/health_resource_library.html).