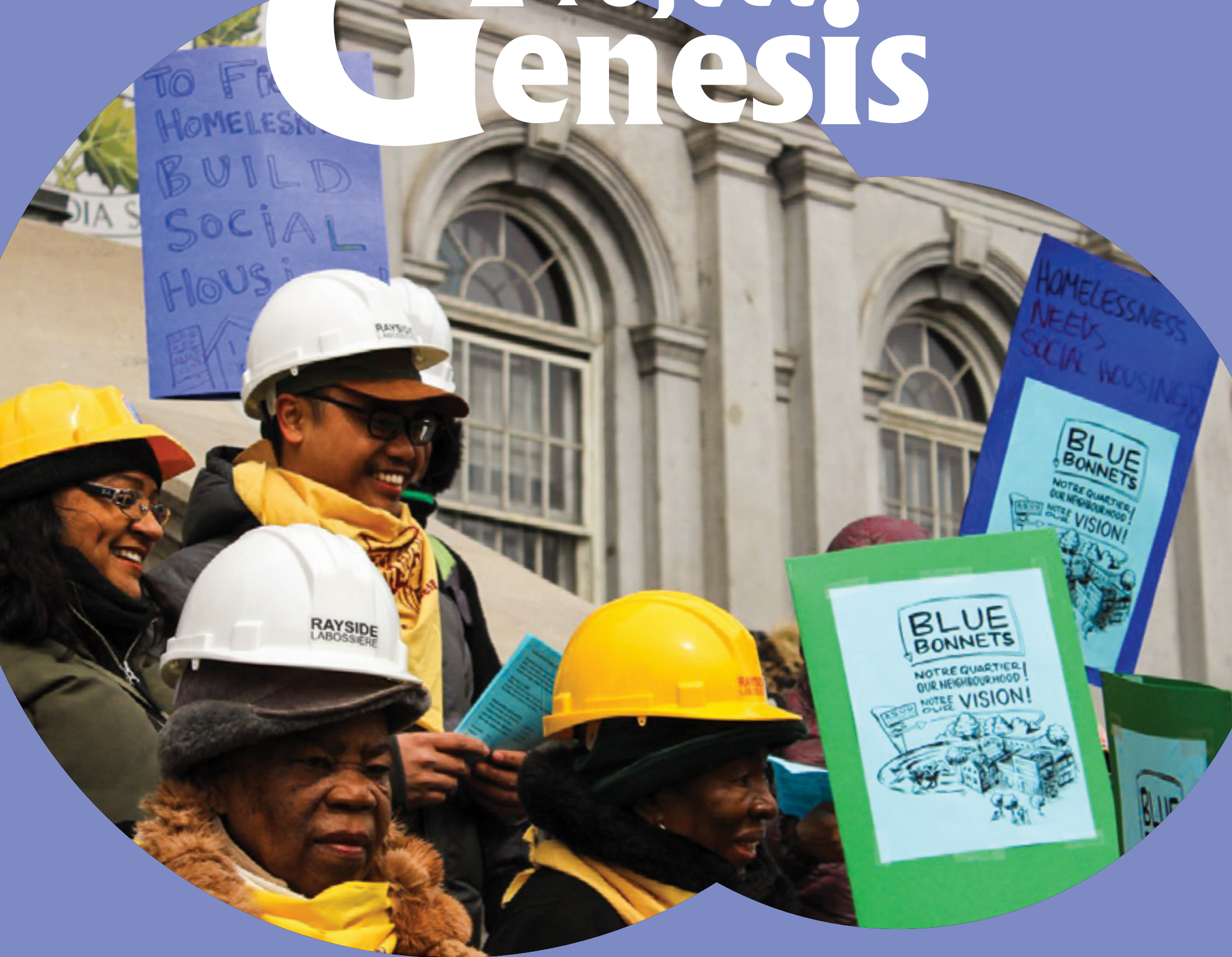


# CP Project. Genesis



**Annual Report  
June 2017 – May 2018**

**40 years**

*Ce rapport annuel est aussi disponible en français*



# Project Genesis 2017–18 Annual Report

*A look back at our 40<sup>th</sup> year of community services and action.  
Join us as we look enthusiastically to the year ahead.*

This Annual Report reviews the 2017–18 year and looks ahead with a calendar and examples of our planning for the upcoming 2018–19 year. We hope it allows you to become more familiar with our services and programs, and to appreciate the impacts of our work.

So many people have brought us to this point, when we can look back at 40 years of working together to achieve our social justice mission. We extend a genuine *thank you* to each of you.

We also express a warm appreciation of all those who are bringing us into the next 40 years. Know that you're invited to participate and contribute in practical ways, according to your strengths and experience, to our commonly-held goals and to Project Genesis' sustained success.

Project Genesis, a not-for-profit community-based organization, is grounded in Montreal's diverse Côte-des-Neiges neighbourhood.

What do we strive for? We help people to better understand their social rights and to better exercise them. Guided by our recognition of the dignity of each person, we focus primarily on housing rights and access to basic income public social programs. Sustained by our vision of meaningful collective action, we foster participation in improving the concrete living conditions of neighbourhood residents and ending poverty.

Project Genesis assists people seeking to overcome a range of obstacles, by:

- providing accessible individual services for resolving immediate difficulties
- offering community organizing on local issues, widening participation and contributing to longer-term change
- strategically linking our individual services to our community organizing for maximum effectiveness

We hope that you're inspired by these glimpses of the past year, that you will share the vision of social justice and community well-being underlying our work, and that you will join us.

—Mohamed Benkiran and Edy Henich, co-Chairpersons, and  
Michael Chervin, Executive Director

*Image: At the launch of the report "Left out of the Triangle" in October 2017, local residents pinned their dreams for the development of the Namur—Jean-Talon sector to a painted map.*



# Storefront individual services



*The practical support offered by the Project Genesis Storefront enables people with income or housing problems to more effectively tackle the obstacles facing them. The drop-in centre provides detailed information, assistance filling out forms and writing letters, referrals and individual advocacy that make a concrete difference in living conditions for many people.*

SEPTEMBER 2018

SEPTEMBER 2018

## Glimpses of our work in the past year

- Storefront volunteers, student interns, and staff provided **9,215 in-person and follow-up interventions with thousands of individuals and families from 134 countries of origin.** In addition, interventions were also offered by telephone, serving even more people. Through the Storefront, we offered practical assistance in a **wide range of areas, including housing, welfare, pensions and family allowances.**
- Besides English and French, our volunteers and staff were able to offer services in languages including Arabic, Farsi, Hebrew, Haitian Creole, Hindi, Italian, Mandarin, Russian, Spanish, Ukrainian, Urdu and Vietnamese.
- Storefront service users ranged from teens to seniors approaching 100 years of age.
- Our drop-in centre had opening hours both in the daytime and once a week in the evening. Our advisors **also provide services by telephone** to accommodate those who cannot come to the Storefront in person. **Our Home Advocacy Services** bring Storefront services to those in our neighbourhood who are homebound.
- Our confidential services have always been available to all, regardless of immigration status. Identification is not required, and service users can remain entirely anonymous if they so choose.

impact on the front-line providers of these services: rigorously-trained volunteers, and law and social work students doing a practicum with us. That Project Genesis is successful in its attempts to engage broad participation in fulfilling our social justice mission is evident from Storefront volunteer advisors responses to an anonymous survey:

- “The service users are amazing, and I walked out every week feeling good after interacting with them; also, watching the staff interact with clients provided an example of the type of lawyer I want to be.”
- “It’s such a good feeling knowing that you’re really helping people.”
- “The team is extraordinary and truly inspiring! It’s honestly the best framework of support and training that I’ve ever received as a volunteer.”

## Looking to the year ahead, goals and means include:

- Continuing to ensure the high quality of our Storefront services through a range of means, including thorough ongoing training and support of volunteers, updating reference materials, supervision by Storefront staff of all interventions, verifying the quality of all interventions, and providing follow-up where relevant.
- In addition to soliciting feedback from Storefront advisors, circulating a new survey for Storefront reception volunteers, as a way to benefit from their insights.

## The Storefront: Visible impacts

Beyond the frequently-cited positive impacts of the Storefront on the living conditions of service users, our Individual Services work has a strong

*Image: Storefront advisor Lythiana takes notes following an intervention.*

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
27	28	29	30	31	1	2 <sup>o</sup>
3 <sup>Labour Day</sup>	4	5	6	7	8	9 <sup>•</sup>
10 <sup>Rosh Hashanah</sup>	11 <sup>Rosh Hashanah</sup>	12	13	14	15	16 <sup>o</sup>
17	18	19 <sup>Yom Kippur</sup>	20	21	22	23
24 <sup>o</sup>	25	26	27	28	29	30



# From Storefront individual services to community organizing committee: contributing to broader improvements



OCTOBER 2018

OCTOBER 2018

For Leaford, the Storefront is “first aid for any person who doesn’t know about the law or the country” and Project Genesis is “a college for your rights.”

Leaford has suffered many setbacks, though one wouldn’t suspect it from his warmth and cheerfulness. He came to the Storefront because he had to stop working due to a work accident and was left without income. Although he is well beyond the usual pension age, he does not have the required years of Canadian residence in order to qualify. He was unable to access the benefits that he should have been entitled to after having been injured in the workplace, as his employer refused to put him on the payroll despite repeated requests.

Over the course of numerous visits, Storefront advisors provided referrals, made phone calls, filled out forms and explained letters. They helped Leaford access welfare benefits and then obtain additional amounts due to his health problems. Leaford declares “you opened my eyes, my wisdom, my understanding. To know what to do, where to go, what questions to ask. I get a full understanding when I come here.”

When asked if he would like to be involved in Project Genesis’ Anti-Poverty Committee, Leaford jumped at the opportunity and he has become a very

dedicated member. He invites friends and acquaintances to workshops and he truly values such opportunities for learning. In the committee meetings, he is happy to be able to support others who are facing difficulties: “I can pass on good words to someone and encourage them.”

Leaford is particularly touched by the campaign against travel restrictions for welfare recipients, as he has no family members in Canada and has not seen most of his relatives for years. Last year, his grand-daughter bought him a ticket to visit her and other relatives in the States, but he was unable to see all the family members he hoped to visit, as he could not spend more than a week there.

Project Genesis benefits greatly from the enthusiasm that Leaford brings as a member of the organization. He declares: “So many things are going on at this place!” And indeed, he is in attendance at many activities and his contributions are deeply appreciated.

*Image: Leaford, Storefront service user and volunteer with Project Genesis’ Anti-Poverty Committee.*

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
1	2 ◐	3	4	5	6	7
8 ● Thanksgiving	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16 ◐	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24 ◐	25	26	27	28
29	30	31 ◐	1	2	3	4

# Supporting tenants' rights



*Project Genesis works to support individual tenants' rights and to strengthen recourses for all local renters facing problems. This involves struggling for fairer access to justice at the Rental Board and working with other groups to improve the application of municipal by-laws that protect the right to decent housing.*

NOVEMBER 2018

NOVEMBER 2018

## Glimpses of our work in the past year

- 3,388 of our 9,215 in-person and follow-up Storefront interventions involved housing problems, an increase from the previous year. More people came to us for housing problems than for any other single issue. The primary area of focus was supporting tenants in resolving problems in their apartments (such as mould, vermin, and needed repairs: 764 interventions), followed by helping tenants respond to rent increase notices (479 interventions), and evictions and repossessions (442 interventions).
- Our collaboration with local community organizations—such as the CDC-CDN (the Côte-des-Neiges community council), l'OEIL, the Mountain Sights Community Centre, and the NDG Community Council—included meeting many times with the local *Service des permis et inspections*, and with the new Borough leadership, to improve application of the municipal housing code.
- Through our ongoing popular education activities, we distributed 2,200 housing rights pamphlets in 12 languages throughout the neighbourhood, offering basic information on tenants' rights and responsibilities, and inviting people to contact us. Our tenants' rights workshops further informed and engaged hundreds of neighbourhood residents on their rights and responsibilities. Our Outreach team knocked on 1,577 doors of apartments in the more isolated areas of Côte-des-Neiges, to strengthen awareness of tenants' rights and to inform people of local resources and social programs.

## Tenants' rights: Visible impacts

- Our Storefront fulfilled a vital role in helping tenants understand their rights and exercise their recourses. This work—explanations, letter-

writing, Rental Board hearing preparation—helped to stem the tide of rising rents and deteriorating dwellings, and prevented people from being forced out of their homes.

- The work of Project Genesis' Housing Rights Committee, in collaboration with groups across Côte-des-Neiges and NDG, contributed to the attribution by the CDN-NDG Borough of recurrent as well as one-time funds to strengthen the Borough's housing inspections.

## Looking to the year ahead, goals and means include:

- Continuing to respond to a multitude of tenant problems through our Storefront individual services, including explaining recourses, assisting with required documentation and demystifying Rental Board hearings.
- Through close collaboration between the Storefront and the Outreach team, tracking and quickly responding to threats of forced illegal evacuation due to renovations as well as evictions on the grounds of subdivision or expansion of existing apartments.
- Increasing our work within the local *Coalition salubrité* (made up of CDC-CDN, Project Genesis, l'OEIL, NDG Community Council, LogisAction, CIUSSS) and other Community organizing initiatives with the aim of significantly improving the CDN-NDG Borough's and the City Centre's application of the municipal housing code.

*Image: During the municipal elections campaign in fall 2017, Project Genesis and the Coalition salubrité organized a press conference in front of a building on Goyer St.*

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
29	30	31	1	2	3	4
5 <sup>Diwali</sup>	6	7 ●	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15 ○	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23 ○	24	25
26	27	28	29 ○	30	1	2

# Promoting social housing for low-income households



*Project Genesis helps people apply for much-needed subsidized social housing, works to maintain existing local social housing, and promotes the construction of new social housing in the neighbourhood.*

DECEMBER 2018

DECEMBER 2018

## Looking back at our work in the past year

- In the **Storefront**, 333 of our 3,388 housing interventions were related to low-cost housing, often involving helping people check the status of their Low-Cost Housing applications on-line and updating their application files. We were frequently called upon to explain how it is that a poorly-housed family can wait more than five years to be granted a dwelling.
- The **community organizing** team held 12 workshops this past year to explain and discuss the various types of social housing and to help households apply for Low-Cost Housing (HLM), co-op housing and not-for-profit housing.
- In autumn 2017, Project Genesis, the CDC-CDN community coalition, and the Mountain Sights Community Centre co-published and launched a detailed and widely-used report on the **Namur-Jean-Talon 'Triangle' development**. Despite recommendations generated by a public hearing, the actual development in the Triangle included few social housing units, disregarding dire local housing needs.
- In spring 2018, Project Genesis' Housing Rights Committee organized a public assembly at a local public school, to exchange with new neighbourhood residents on their housing needs. Those in attendance recognized the importance of the construction of new social housing and lent their support to the goal of a minimum of 2,500 social housing units on the Blue Bonnets site.

## Promotion of Social Housing: Visible impacts

- Project Genesis' concerted work with local housing organizations and the CDC-CDN contributed to the present municipal administrations'

promise of a proportion of 20% of social housing units among the dwellings to be constructed on the Blue Bonnets site, an improvement over the previous commitment of 15%. Blue Bonnets is the largest tract of publicly-owned land in Côte-des-Neiges and has the potential to provide desperately-needed social housing for many neighbourhood individuals and families on low incomes.

- **Alliances with housing organizations across the province** contributed to significant funding commitments within the federal National Housing Strategy, announced in November 2017, for renovations to existing social housing and the construction of new social housing units.

## Looking to the year ahead, goals and means include:

- A strategic shift to **increased community organizing work at the neighbourhood, borough and municipal levels** towards the construction of new social housing given, for example, the recent transfer of responsibilities for the AccèsLogis social housing program from the province to the city.
- In collaboration with other groups, persevering toward the goal of a minimum of 2,500 social housing units on the Blue Bonnets site.

*Image: Volunteers of Project Genesis' Housing Rights Committee, through creative activities, invited other residents of the neighbourhood to join in FRAPRU's march for the right to housing from Ottawa to Quebec City in September 2018.*

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
26	27	28	29	30	1	2
3	4	5	6	7 ●	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15 ◐	16
17	18	19	20	21	22 ◐	23
24	25 Christmas Day	26 Boxing Day	27	28	29 ●	30



“We won’t give up the fight for social housing.”



“Because of the problems in my apartment, my sugar has gone sky high and my blood pressure has gone bananas... when you have problems in your apartment it has a bad effect on you. Having roaches and rats and when they don’t clean up the place. It’s not nice.

When it comes to housing rights... I like to come to Genesis. Everybody takes care of everybody. It’s nice to know that we could go and fight for housing rights and social housing...

We’ve been fighting for Blue Bonnets for so long, and we still don’t know if we’re going to get anywhere. So the best thing I say is to keep fighting and let them know we’re serious and we aren’t going to stop until something happens. I hope we have the courage and the strength to fight and I know that Project Genesis isn’t going to give up. We won’t give up the fight for social housing.

Last year one moment that has stayed with me is when we went to Quebec City for the National Tenants’ Day and put all the banners we’d made up on the bridge and I spoke at the demonstration. Everybody was having a good time—it was really fun.”

—*Locent, member of Project Genesis’ Housing Rights committee and Anti-Poverty Committee*

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
31	1 <small>New Year’s Day</small>	2	3	4	5 ●	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14 ○	15	16	17	18	19	20
21 ○	22	23	24	25	26	27 ●
28	29	30	31	1	2	3

# Support to overcome obstacles regarding welfare



*Project Genesis supports individuals in addressing problems related to welfare, promoted public awareness of the realities of those receiving welfare, and advocated for improvements to the program.*

FEBRUARY 2019

FEBRUARY 2019

## Glimpses of our work in the past year

- In our Storefront 1,462 of last year's 9,215 in-person and follow-up interventions were related to welfare, an increase from the previous year. The majority of these were related to assisting people in determining if they were eligible for benefits and helping them through the often arduous application process.
- With the recent closing of the local welfare and employment office, staff from the **Individual Services and Community Organizing** teams met with the staff of the newly-named *Services Québec* office on the border of Côte-des-Neiges, to better understand the transition in services, to look at improving access to welfare, and to discuss the implementation of the new *Objectif emploi* program for first-time applicants.
- Over the past year our **Anti-poverty Committee** members kept the spotlight of public attention on the unjust travel restrictions imposed on welfare recipients. The devastating effects of these restrictions were repeatedly witnessed in the Storefront. People were forced to face penalties for their absence from Quebec for more than seven days in a month or forego visits to family members—in some cases, dying parents or sick children.

## Welfare: Visible impacts

- Over the past year, the Storefront assisted hundreds of people, including asylum-seekers and others in very vulnerable situations, in overcoming obstacles to accessing, maintaining and increasing welfare benefits. Pointing to the effectiveness of this assistance are service-user testimonials, positive results noted in follow-up, and the fact that increasing numbers of asylum-seekers come through our doors, having been referred by other refugees and by the staff of organizations they consult.

- With community partners across the province in the *Coalition pour l'accessibilité aux services des Centres locaux d'emploi* (CASC), Project Genesis contributed to practical improvements in the administration of the welfare program by regularly meeting with representatives from the *Ministère du travail, de l'emploi et de la solidarité sociale*, and following up with them to track the implementation of changes.
- In spring 2018, in recognition of its expertise, Project Genesis was accorded a limited intervener role in a *Tribunal administratif du Québec* case. The case—brought by an individual who was penalized for visiting his family for longer than seven days in a month—challenges the travel restrictions under welfare legislation.

## Looking to the year ahead, goals and means include:

- In the Storefront, continuing to respond to the increased demand for our services from asylum seekers and those who assist them by increasing our expertise and being available for consultation by staff of other organizations.
- Closely tracking the consequences of the provincial government's implementation of the new *Objectif emploi* program for first-time applicants to welfare and bringing public attention to problematic effects when relevant.

*Image: Several Project Genesis volunteers and staff at a press conference held prior to a hearing at the Administrative Tribunal of Québec in February 2018. The purpose of the hearing was to decide on Project Genesis' requested role within a legal case challenging the regulation that severely limits travel outside of Quebec for people on social assistance. The request has been accepted and Project Genesis can contribute its expertise within the case.*

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
28	29	30	31	1	2	3
4 ●	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12 ◐	13	14	15	16	17
18	19 ◐	20	21	22	23	24
25	26 ●	27	28	1	2	3



**“It is heart-warming to know that in Project Genesis, there are people who work and volunteer here that are making a great difference in people’s lives.”**



“There’s a saying: ‘Be part of the change you want to see in the world.’ As a member of the Anti-poverty committee, you feel part of that change. I also feel the same as a member of the Welfare action subcommittee, a committee that is only for people who are receiving welfare. Other people in the group are often going through the same situation you are. Sometimes if you have a problem, others will have a solution. It helps so much to know your rights. It is empowerment. You really feel like you are making change, be it when writing open letters, going to demonstrations, sharing information, hearing other people’s views, learning to be a part of a meeting, facilitating meetings, learning new skills or meeting politicians in our community who can make a difference politically.

A campaign that is very close to my heart is the reduced bus fare for people with low incomes. It is important that people have a right to move around so they don’t become isolated. We need a bus fare that doesn’t keep you captive. It’s very defeating to have to go somewhere and not be able to, be it for a job interview, for food banks, for doctors’ appointments, to get to family and friends, or just to enjoy the city. I would not be able to cope without my bus pass. You need to use the bus even to go to welfare appointments.

They’ll call to ask that you come in, you go, that’s a bus ticket. They need a new document, that’s another ticket. You need to declare a change in your situation, that’s another one. Now that they’ve closed some welfare offices, people must travel farther.

I make sure that as many people as possible know about our work. I have brought petitions, flyers and information about housing and welfare from Project Genesis to other places, to make sure that people know their rights. It is heartwarming to know that in Project Genesis, there are people who work and volunteer here that are making a great difference in people’s lives. Everyone’s hearts are in it. At Project Genesis, we live our philosophy.”

—Lisa, volunteer, Project Genesis’ Anti-poverty committee and Welfare action subcommittee

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
1	2	3	4	1	2	3
4	5	6 ●	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14 ◐	15	16	17
18	19	20 ◐	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28 ◐	29	30	31



# Improving the financial situation of low-income households

*Project Genesis worked in a range of ways to improve the situations of low-income households.*

### Glimpses of our work in the past year

- In our **Storefront** we assess the basic financial situation of those accessing our services, to verify whether they may be eligible for government benefits and programs of which they are not aware. For example, individuals and households may be eligible for provincial and federal family allowances, the provincial Shelter Allowance, additional amounts on the welfare cheque, or the Guaranteed Income Supplement. These types of interventions accounted for **1,692** of our total **9,215** interventions, and often led to increasing the income of low-income households.
- Volunteers in our **Anti-Poverty Committee** participated in a range of ways to advocate for the adoption of a social fare to allow people living in poverty access to public transport.

### Better living conditions for low-income households: Visible impacts

- Many Storefront files notes confirm the success of benefit applications, rent-increase refusals and assistance with rental board procedures, for example. Numerous are the service users who expressed particular gratitude towards the **Storefront**, following **reception of payment of benefits they hadn't known they were entitled to**, whether it was an additional \$20 monthly for a person with diabetes, or several hundred

dollars in monthly Guaranteed Income Supplement for a senior. Most new service users are referred to us by word of mouth, from other service users who have been helped in the Storefront.

- As a member of the *Mouvement pour un transport public abordable*, Project Genesis lent its voice to **build momentum for affordable public transit**, leading to the present Montreal political administration's stance in favour of a social fare.

### Looking to the year ahead, goals and means include:

- Improving conditions for low-income households by continuing to facilitate access to various government benefits through our **Storefront individual services**.
- With our **Anti-poverty Committee**, undertaking and supporting action on prioritized issues including the adoption of a social fare for public transportation, substantial improvements to the welfare program, and the reduction of Hydro Quebec residential rates.

*Image: Project Genesis members David, Anna and Dorothy at Project Genesis' March 2018 Members' Assembly.*

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
1	2	3	4	5 ●	6	7
8	9	10	11	12 ◐	13	14
15	16	17	18	19 ◐ Good Friday	20	21
22 ◐ Easter Monday	23	24	25	26 ●	27	28
29	30	1	2	3	4	5



# Providing services to older members of the community



*Through our Storefront and our Home Advocacy Services (HAS), we provide invaluable services to older members of our community. Through its local door-knocking work the Outreach team provides many seniors with useful information and referrals, in their own homes.*

MAY 2019

MAY 2019

#### Glimpses of our work in the past year

- Our Home Advocacy Services (HAS) are specifically geared towards those in our neighbourhood who are unable to come to the Storefront, including frail seniors, people with visual impairments, or those with mobility challenges. This past year, the HAS program provided 306 interventions, including home visits, telephone calls, and follow-up interventions.
- We once again prepared income tax returns for our HAS service users so that they could continue to access benefits such as the Guaranteed Income Supplement and Shelter Allowance (163 interventions).
- Through our Storefront, we helped seniors apply for provincial and federal pensions, as well as the Guaranteed Income Supplement. We supported people through the application processes, including gathering difficult-to-obtain documents proving their history of residence in Canada. Last year, 1,547 of our 9,215 in-person and follow-up interventions were related to pensions. 24% of people using Storefront services in the past year were aged 65 and over.

of the Home Advocacy Services program. Assistance with housing problems or income issues made it easier for Côte-des-Neiges seniors with mobility challenges to remain in the community, in the homes that many have occupied for decades.

- Many immigrant seniors are denied or granted diminished federal pension benefits because some of their years of presence in Canada are undocumented. With the support of Storefront volunteers and staff, these seniors accessed the Old Age Security Pension and Guaranteed Income Supplement benefits to which they were entitled, considerably increasing their monthly income and quality of life.

#### Looking to the year ahead, goals and means include:

- Creating new tools to support Storefront service users in appealing to their local elected representatives regarding excessive delays in the processing of their Guaranteed Income Supplement payments.
- Continuing to ensure the quality of our Home Advocacy Services and integrating further awareness of HAS into our wider programs.

#### Work with seniors: Visible impacts

- Communication from other agencies, file notes and informal testimonials of service users have pointed to the beneficial effects

*Image: Meropi, Youssef and Aissa, members of the Outreach team.*

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
29	30	1	2	3	4 ●	5
6	7	8	9	10	11 ◐	12
13	14	15	16	17	18 ◐	19
20 <small>Victoria Day</small>	21	22	23	24	25	26 ●
27	28	29	30	31	1	2

JUNE 2019

# Home Advocacy Services (HAS)



JUNE 2019

“This year, I was given the amazing opportunity to work with the Home Advocacy Services (HAS) program and to help coordinate the HAS Tax Clinic. HAS caters to the needs of the elderly and to people with reduced mobility, offering them the same services at their homes as they would get at the Storefront.

After helping them with their problem, I sometimes stuck around for a few minutes to chat, trying to help break the isolation that some people with reduced mobility experience. Our service users always expressed immense amounts of gratitude whether by offering me a glass of juice or a hug.

As a Social Work student, I aspire to advocate for the social rights of everyone, regardless of their situation. Through their very inclusive approach, Project Genesis gave me a good idea of what it looks like when an organization stops at nothing to fight for and to make sure that each one of their service users understands their rights are and has them respected.”

—Lucky, student intern with Project Genesis

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
27	28	29	30	31	1	2
3 ●	4	5 Eid-ul-Fitr	6	7	8	9
10 ◐	11	12	13	14	15	16
17 ◐	18	19	20	21	22	23
24 Saint-Jean Baptiste	25 ●	26	27	28	29	30



# Reaching out to our community



*Project Genesis volunteers knock on doors to reach isolated individuals and families in particularly isolated sections of the neighbourhood. Members of the Outreach team gather information on their housing and income challenges and provide relevant information and referrals to strengthen people's efforts to address these challenges.*

"Hi, I'm Erik and I'm a volunteer with Project Genesis!" In the year and a half since I joined the Outreach team, I must have uttered that phrase several hundred times, going from one door to the next in Côte-des-Neiges. One thing I've learned in that time is that many tenants aren't quite familiar with their rights. Basic info that many of us take for granted, such as 30 days is the time-frame to respond to a rent increase, is unfortunately not as widely known as it should be. I can't tell you how often I've met people who are under the impression that they have to accept an increase in rent, regardless of the amount. The number of tenants who are completely unaware that they even have rights is more upsetting. All of this creates conditions that some landlords choose to take advantage of. This is where Outreach comes in.

...The gratitude expressed by many of the tenants we meet makes it all worth it. In the end, that's basically the reason I do this. That's what makes me proud to be a member of the Outreach team, and I think that pride shines through a bit every time I introduce myself, "*Bonjour, je m'appelle Erik et je suis un bénévole de Projet Genèse!*"

—Erik, Outreach team volunteer

## Glimpses of our work in the past year

- Through our **Home Advocacy Services** program, we provide individual services to people with limited mobility, within their homes and by telephone (see more in the section on "Providing services to older members of the community").
- Our **community Outreach door-knocking team** visited apartment buildings in our Côte-des-Neiges neighbourhood, to inform tenants on their housing rights and responsibilities, and to offer them information on our services and those of other local organizations. Many of these buildings were signalled by the Storefront following visits by tenants complaining of illegal rent increases and deposits, pressure to move out, or landlord inaction in the face of poor heating, lack of hot water, or vermin infestations.

- The Outreach team, including **17 volunteers**, regularly followed up on referrals from the Storefront identifying local buildings where tenants could especially benefit from our services. Last year, the Outreach team visited **55 buildings**, and knocked on **1,577 doors**, an increase of 300 more than in the previous year. We spoke directly with tenants present in their households, and left information pamphlets when no one was home. In addition to door-knocking, the Outreach team reached residents in local parks and other public spaces on **11 occasions**.
- Project Genesis community organizers provided **8 tenants' rights workshops**, hosted by groups including Mountain Sights Community Centre, La Maison bleue, Multicaf Cafeteria, an emerging women's group in the Mountains Sights sector of Côte-des-Neiges, ALAC, and the Independent Living Montreal group for people with physical and mental challenges.

## Community outreach: Visible impacts

- Retention of **volunteers in the Outreach team** has been unusually high this past year, pointing to a meaningful and positive experience in providing needed assistance to neighbourhood residents.
- Project Genesis is often contacted by community organizations who—having hosted our **tenants' rights workshop**—request additional tenants' rights workshops, pointing to the popularity and effectiveness of this popular education work.

## Looking to the year ahead, goals and means include:

- **Pro-actively distributing information about rent increases** to local tenants in buildings of six units or more, in anticipation of particularly high rent increases.
- **Expanding the Outreach team's links** with the local CDN-NDG Borough Permits and Inspection Office, including referring buildings with problems for follow-up by municipal inspectors.

JULY 2019

JULY 2019

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
1 <sup>Canada Day</sup>	2 ●	3	4	5	6	7
8	9 ●	10	11	12	13	14
15	16 ○	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24 ●	25	26	27	28
29	30	31 ●	1	2	3	4



# Building community

*Through various facets of our work, we contribute to building an engaged community of volunteers, organizations, and donors, working together for a more just society.*

AUGUST 2019

AUGUST 2019

#### Glimpses of our work in the past year

- 68 volunteers and 14 students and interns gave their time as advisors, receptionists in our Storefront and for our Home Advocacy Services. 55 volunteers made up our Housing Rights Committee; our Outreach team had 17 volunteers, and our Anti-Poverty Committee brought together 67 volunteers. Many of these volunteers became involved after receiving services through our Storefront. Project Genesis counted a base of 157 members.
- The Storefront is well-known among community organizations, social rights lawyers, and government institutions for its expertise and effectiveness, and we fostered greater collaborative relationships with workers in numerous other groups. Service users in need of assistance outside our areas of intervention benefit from individually-tailored referrals to other services.
- In our community organizing work, we consistently collaborated on our priority issues with other organizations in the neighbourhood and in wider coalitions, strengthening our combined resources for increased local impact.
- In addition to other sources of funding, 201 individuals, businesses and foundations donated money to Project Genesis during the past year. These included people who had benefitted from our services, current volunteers and members, people involved with Project Genesis in the past, as well as those who simply wanted to support and sustain our work. Project Genesis is sincerely grateful to all those who showed such generosity.

#### Community building: Visible impacts

- In a survey distributed this past year, a Storefront volunteer wrote: "...to be able to witness how passionate and caring the staff is about service users makes you feel proud to be part of Project Genesis."
- The perseverance of Project Genesis, in concert with other local organizations, contributed to the municipal housing inspections department taking a more systematic approach to fining landlords when by-laws ensuring building cleanliness, health and safety are contravened.

#### Looking to the year ahead, goals and means include:

- Creating new ways of strengthening the close links between Project Genesis' individual services and organizing work.
- Increasing our participation in a range of means, in collaboration with other community groups, to improve living conditions in the neighbourhood.
- Continuing to provide opportunities for volunteers to develop skills, to identify priorities for change, and to engage in concerted action.
- Advancing the long-term continuity and sustainability of Project Genesis.

*Image: Mauly, Sriyani, Rosario and Hong Vi at Project Genesis' Volunteer Appreciation Party in April 2018.*

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
29	30	31	1	2	3	4
5	6	7 ●	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15 ○	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23 ●	24	25
26	27	28	29	30 ●	31	1



# Project Genesis 2017–18

## Storefront and Home Advocacy Services: Volunteer advisors

Kezia Agofouet Nzougan	Jessy Léger
Nickenson Aldonzar	Tamara Lipcovich
Catherine Balfour	Theo Lyons
Karine Barrette	Jill Martis
Karla Baston	Diana Mazloum
Lana Belber	Djamel Meridji
Jennifer Besner	Jeanne Olivier-Gobeil
Judy Bird	Scott Paradis
Caroline Brodeur	Rosemarie Patch
Peter Butler	Christian Poisson
Maya Caplan	Jacinte Poisson
Alexander Comeau	Nalida Rasavady
Emilie Duchesne	Bruce Reed
Betty Etingin	Vaughan Roche
Sara Fisette	Louis Rodgers
Nadia Gouy	Rachel Sandwell
Bianca Grasso	Arshia Sattari
Max Griffin-Rill	Audrey Speck
Clara Hessler	Stefan Stijelja
Marilyn Killen	Simone Truemner-Caron
Jacob Krane-Paul	Camille Turcotte
Isabel Lee	

## Storefront: Volunteers at reception and other volunteers

Honorine Kaze	Elli Jensen
Habiba Lynda Attalah	Mary Chris Llorente
Papia Chaudhuri	Carmen Nono
Abiose Cromanty	Kiara Palanca
Émilie Duchesne	Reuben Rose
Irina Maria Grecu	Kelly Schwab
Gabriel Gutierrez	Carrie Villar

## Pro-Bono students and Student interns

Bruno-Olivier Bureau	Isabel Lee	Kevin Montano
Meropi Deligiannis	Megan Lindy	Greer Nicholson
Kate Deveau	Mary Chris Llorente	Carly Rosenfeld
Manouchka Guerrier	Tyson Lowe	Lucky Williams
Jessye Kilburn	Shi Yu Luo	

## Outreach team volunteers

Gilbert Angwandi	Bianca Grasso	Kevin Montano
Nevzat Ayaz	Erik Hamon	Karl Pelton
Line Bonneau	Tariq Kureishy	Mama Soumahoro
Frédérique Cannon	Sani Halimé Mahamat	Ahmat Youssouf-Boy
Aissa Diallo	Degan Mahdi	Chelsea Yuan
Éloïse Girard	Anne-Sophie Massicotte	

## Housing Rights Committee volunteers

Terry Abrams	Luie Buczynsky	Priscilla George	Mauly Mathur	Monica Regacho
Jeanne Achille	Monica Campbell	Kazem Ghasemzadeh	Leaford Morgan	Albertha Rennie
Khokha Aissani	Iocent Crammer	Alison Gurnsey	Barbara Mungal	Clare Rodricks
Lisa Altman	Abiose Cromanty	Kurt John	Pierce Nettling	Nandinie Seneviratne
Myrtle Anderson	Nola Davis Shaw	Rochelle Kert	Hong Vi Nguyen Thi	Eleanor Smith
Gilbert Angwandi	Clever Dedekuma	Shahidul Islam Khan	Louisa Nimrod	Yvonne Smith
Joyce Bailey	Monique Dumas	Daren Laine	Zoila Ordonez	Soc Kha Son
Candy Barnes	Bernadette Duval	Kim Le	Guerie Palmer	Mama Soumahoro
Mohamed Benkiran	Suzanna Engel	Charles Levine	Teresita Panesa	Rosario Tapia
Ghyslaine Bonhomme	Aida Flora	David Manning	Lolita Paringit	Dorothy Taylor
Odette Bougie	Maria Ines Garduno	Sriyani Marceline	Nalawattage Pinto	Leroy Wedderburn

## Anti-Poverty Committee volunteers

Jeanne Achille	Amina Dakirellah	Anna John	Roger Myre	Alexander Rudavin
Suhail Ahmad	Nola Davis Shaw	Kurt John	Naima Naz	Carmencita Sapanta
Khokha Aissani	Meropi Deligiannis	Gegrehiwet Kidane	Louisa Nimrod	Salma Soroka
Myrtle Anderson	Aissatou Diallo	Daren Laine	Karl Pelton	Joan Spragg
Gilbert Angwandi	Lisa Dick	Kim Le	Nalawattage Pinto	Rosario Tapia
Candy Barnes	Rebecca Diehl	Hanh Le	M.T.H. Porag	Dorothy Anita Taylor
Mohamed Benkiran	Monique Dimos	Charles Levine	Monica Regacho	Rodrigue Tegofack
Malika Bhatti	Adrian H. Dragan	Nancy Limoges	Merle Reisler	Russell T. Thompson
Etienne Boisvert	Bernadette Duval	David Manning	Albertha Rennie	Hana Toayer
Ghyslaine Bonhomme	Suzanna Engel	Sriyani Marceline	Danny Rhéaume	Leroy Wedderburn
Debbie Byer	Debra Fogel	Mauly Mathur	Marina Rishkevitch	Amos Williams
Monica Campbell	Priscilla George	Ripting Maude Moore	Maurice Rivera	
Iocent Crammer	Maria Ines Garduno	Leaford Morgan	Clare Rodricks	
Abiose Cromanty	Nouman Jabour	Barbara Mungal	Reuben Rose	



## Project Genesis members

Terry Abrams  
Jeanne Achille  
Mozzam Ahmed  
Ruth Ainsworth  
Rehana Akhter  
Gilbert Angwandi  
Candy Barnes  
Karla Baston  
Salina Begum  
Monette Bellot  
Hattab Ben Slama  
Mohamed Benkiran  
Malika Bhatti  
Judy Bird  
Rosally Dacon Bobb  
Ghyslaine Bonhomme  
Line Bonneau  
Eva Bontemps  
Mariela Borello  
Anna Boros  
Odette Bougie  
Bryna Brodt  
Luie Buczynsky  
Peter Butler  
Debbie Byer  
Monica Campbell  
Maya Caplan  
Zoé Carlton  
Alia Chakridi  
Kriss Clément  
Alexander Comeau  
Iocent Cramer

Abiose Cromanty  
Fatima Cyclewala  
Diane Davies  
Grace Davis  
Nola Davis Shaw  
Rocco Dellerba  
Debjani Dhar  
Aissatou Diallo  
Lisa Dick  
Rebecca Diehl  
Lethecia Dixon  
Adrian H. Dragan  
Claude Dumont  
Cecelia Dunkley  
Marc Duplessis  
Bernadette Duval  
Chana Edelstein  
Suzanna Engel  
Waheeda Esmail  
Denise Felsztyna  
Ben Finkelberg  
Susan Fitch  
Kate Forrest  
Donalda Gabriel  
Maria Ines Garduno  
Priscilla George  
Carolann Gibbs  
Russell Harrison  
Mohamed Hassani  
Edy Henich  
Clara Hessler  
Phyllis Hoekman

Dua A. Hyjazie  
Mohammed Ibrahim  
Sally Jarillo  
Catherine Jenner  
Elli Jensen  
Anna John  
Elizabeth John  
Kurt John  
Elaine Kalman Naves  
Rochelle Kert  
Md Shahidul Islam Khan  
Saifuddin Ahmed Khan  
Abul Khayer  
Joe Klein  
Yvanna Kroitor  
Tariq Kureishy  
Paul Ladouceur  
Daren Laine  
Dorita Laloma  
Kim Le  
Charles Levine  
Nancy Limoges  
Tamara Lipcovich  
Barrington Lowe  
Linda Magher  
David Manning  
Sriyani Marceline  
Mauli Mathur  
Brigitte Mayes  
Erika Meere  
Djamel Meridji  
Mohamed Aslam Mirza

Oliver Mispelhorn  
Katelin Moore  
Ripting Maude Moore  
Kim Moss  
Baj Mukhopadhyay  
Barbara Mungal  
Roger Myre  
Naima Naz  
Hong Vi Nguyen Thi  
Louisa Nimrod  
Liza Novak  
James Olwell  
Alexandra Panaccio  
Teresita Panesa  
Miriam Peletz  
Judith Phillipson  
Nalawattage Pinto  
Christian Poisson  
M.T.H. Porag  
Angela Rahaniotis  
Donald Ratnaraja  
Monica Regacho  
Merle Reisler  
Albertha Rennie  
Danny Rheume  
Mauricio Rivera  
Vaughan Roche  
Kathleen Roderiques  
Shara Rosen  
Laolu Rosiji  
Connie Rothstein  
Alexander Rudavin

Annette Rudy  
Rachel Sandwell  
Arshia Sattari  
Aaron Schachner  
Claudette Scott Wright  
Nandinie Seneviratne  
Jerry Shendelman  
Emma Siematycki  
Nagappan Sinnapillai  
Sandy Sjollema  
Dieula Smith  
Valerie Smith  
Salma Soroka  
Wadjih Souami  
Loic Soundé  
Audrey Speck  
Joan Spragg  
Ksenija Sredanovic  
Sandra St Louis  
Rosario Tapia  
Framboise Taub  
Dorothy Anita Taylor  
Rodrigue Tegofack  
Lokesvari Thampoo  
Camille Turcotte  
Victor Velikson  
Leroy Wedderburn  
Amos Williams  
Vivian Wiseman  
Chelsea Yuan Guo  
Fazilett Zouania

## Board of Directors (Project Genesis members)

*Up to August 2017*  
Mohamed Benkiran,  
Co-chairperson  
Monica Campbell  
Alia Chakridi  
Debjani Dhar  
Aissatou Diallo  
Marc Duplessis  
Suzanna Engel  
Waheeda Esmail  
Denise Felsztyna  
Ben Finkelberg  
Edy Henich,  
Co-chairperson  
Lynne Marton  
Albertha Rennie  
Salma Soroka

*As of August 2017*  
Mohamed Benkiran,  
Co-chairperson  
Odette Bougie  
Grace Davis  
Alia Chakridi  
Abiose Cromanty  
Debjani Dhar  
Aissatou Diallo  
Suzanna Engel  
Denise Felsztyna  
Edy Henich,  
Co-chairperson  
Daren Laine  
Albertha Rennie  
Shara Rosen  
Arshia Sattari

## Staff

Mélissa Abboud,  
Individual Services Staff  
Claire Abraham,  
Community Organizer  
Marilyne Alerte,  
Individual Services Staff  
Youssef Benzouine,  
Community Organizer  
(since December 2017)  
Michael Chervin,  
Executive Director  
Madeleine Cohen,  
Individual Services Staff  
Arlene Field,  
Lawyer & Individual  
Services Staff  
Corinne Fontaine,  
Receptionist

Ahmar Husain,  
Administrative Assistant  
Cathy Inouye,  
Community Organizer  
Sheetal Pathak,  
Community Organizer  
Nathalie Rech,  
Community Organizer  
(until September 2017)  
Nathalie Sereda-Bazinet,  
Individual Services Staff  
(until December 2017)  
Susan Sokol,  
Individual Services Staff  
Margaret van Nooten,  
Individual Services Staff

## Replacement or project staff

Veronica Aimar,  
Canada Summer Jobs  
Program (2017)  
Daniel Paul Bork,  
Community Organizer  
Otto Buxton,  
Receptionist  
Helly Diallo,  
Canada Summer Jobs  
Program (2017)  
Eric Lê,  
Individual Services Staff

Yalda Machouf Khadir,  
Canada Summer Jobs  
Program (2017)  
Philisha Richards,  
Canada Summer Jobs  
Program (2017)  
Negar Zanouzani Azad,  
Canada Summer Jobs  
Program (2017)

## Administrative Committee

Mohamed Benkiran  
Alia Chakridi  
Michael Chervin  
Edy Henich  
Albertha Rennie  
Arshia Sattari





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Margareta Brathwaite	Michael Epstein	Carl Laxer	Mahmood Ridha	Leroy Wedderburn
Bryna Brodt	Lance Evoy	Elizabeth Laxer	Delores Rosen	Vera Medley Welcome
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Sandra Brown	Marie Carmel Fonrose	Judith Lermer Crawley	Eleanor Roth	Arlene Zimmerman
Freda Browns	Krista Gallant-Mears	Tamara Lipcovich	Marie Cecle Roy Archer	Sonia Zylberberg
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Monica Campbell	Carolann Gibbs	Abby Lippman	Paula Sacks	

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## Grants — Centraide of Greater Montreal, Federation CJA & government

Centraide of *Ville de Montréal*

Employment and Social Development Canada

Federation CJA, including in-kind services

*Ministère de l'Immigration, de la Diversité et de l'inclusion*

*Programme de Soutien à l'action bénévole*, through the MNAs David Birnbaum, Hélène David and Kathleen Weil

*Service régional des activités communautaires et de l'itinérance, CIUSSS Centre-Sud-de-l'île-de-Montréal, Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux*

*Société d'habitation du Québec*

City of Montréal





*“I don’t remember how I first heard about Project Genesis, just that it was the place to go when you needed help. I first went to the Storefront with passport problems. Then... I used their services again to resolve my husband’s pension problems. They were so helpful that I asked how I could repay them... that’s how I became a member of the Home Advocacy Services. After a training period, I began visiting people at their homes, offering our Storefront services to those who were physically unable to come to us. I enjoyed working with those my age and older. My activities convinced me we needed to lobby for improvements in anyone’s life.”*

— Betty Vineberg, past volunteer with Home Advocacy Services and the Social Action Committee.

Project Genesis would like to sincerely appreciate both newer donors and the many donors who sustain us year after year. These donations make an incredibly positive, practical difference in the lives of many.

Project Genesis would like to offer particular appreciation this year to Daniel Rabinowicz and Joanne Trudeau, the Dorrance Drummond Family Foundation, David Abramson, and Bruce Reed for their impactful donations.

As well, Project Genesis would like to express its deep gratitude for the legacy gift of dedicated individual services volunteer and committee member Betty Vineberg, which will continue making a significant difference for the years to come.

We would also like to thank each and every person who has contributed, whether through their donations or through their participation, to Project Genesis’ success in serving the community over the past 40 years. Your gifts enable us to continue our important work into the future!

*Image on cover page: Project Genesis Housing Rights Committee volunteers joined members of the Mountain Sights Community Centre and the CDC-CDN at a rally in front of City Hall marking the demolition of the Blue Bonnets long-abandoned clubhouse, a step toward the site’s upcoming development.*

*Project Genesis gratefully acknowledges the sustained in-kind material support of the Jewish General Hospital.*

*This Annual Report’s layout design was done by LOKI.*

*Appreciation to Cedric Martin for the several photos he volunteered for this Annual Report.*

*This document is printed on 100% recycled paper.*



# GP Project. Genesis

## Our Mission

Project Genesis is a community organization committed to the values of social justice, equality and non-discrimination, and empowerment. With our members, we work towards social change with the goal of improving the quality of life of the disadvantaged. More specifically, our goals are:

- to improve the accessibility of social, government and community services to the disadvantaged (the poor, senior citizens, those with little formal education, new immigrants, etc.)
- to provide community organizing services on issues of local concern
- to promote citizen participation in Project Genesis and other agencies and organizations which provide services to the community

### **Project Genesis**

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