

Carnival raises funds for McDonald house

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Each year at the Winter Carnival organized by the city of Cote St. Luc, money is raised for Montreal's Manoir Ronald McDonald - a temporary home for families of children with critical illnesses who must travel to Montreal from elsewhere for medical treatments. Last year more than \$3,000 was collected, and at this year's carnival, held the weekend of Feb. 11 to 13, \$5,000 was raised through local associations, event participants and the public.

Since an internal fundraising campaign was launched at the Montreal Neurological Institute and Hospital in 2006, faculty and staff have been giving generously to the Neuro - to the tune of more than \$500,000.

This year, the Putting Our Heads Together campaign raised close to \$110,000 - more than in any previous year of the campaign, although more than \$100,000 was raised in each of the past two years. A celebration was held Feb. 11 to congratulate the Neuro faculty and staff and to thank the former co-chairs and more than 140 canvassers for their support. The participation rate among faculty and staff was 36 per cent, which is among the highest rates when the Neuro is compared with similar institutions.

More than 700 items of winter clothing for Montreal's homeless were collected at the third annual Blankfest Quebec event, held Feb. 25 at Katacombes on St. Laurent Blvd. Admission to the event was a blanket or an item of winter clothing.

"I'm so proud of this city and all the people from our community who came together to help those in need," said music publicist Jon Asher. "I want to thank everyone who helped along the way to make this the most successful Blankfest Quebec to date."

Asher organizes the event in collaboration with the Old Brewery Mission, which is the beneficiary of the items. Among the items collected were 259 shirts, 90 sweaters, 59 winter coats, 26 blankets, 66 tuques and 47 scarves.

This year's Blankfest featured a guest performance by indie rocker Kenn Rowell, founder of the original New York City-based Blankfest event, with his band, the Baghdaddios. Asher was inspired when he read of Rowell's efforts in organizing Blankfest, which was established in 1997 and has collected more than 6,000 donations for the homeless of New York and inspired similar efforts elsewhere.

Also featured at Montreal's Blankfest event were Vinyl Hero, Emery Street, the In & Outs, and Kill Matilda from Vancouver.

The Old Brewery Mission is the largest network of shelters for homeless men in Quebec and the largest resource for homeless women in the country; it provides nighttime refuge to more than 125,000 homeless people each year and more than 338,000 meals, as well as transition and counselling services for its clientele. More than 3,000 people requested emergency assistance during the past year; more than 600 are no longer living on the street.

In late January, Sid Stevens of Sun Youth was a guest on radio station CJAD's Saturday in Montreal program, with Eramelinda Boquer and Todd van der Heyden guest-hosting that day for regular host Anne Lagace Dowson. During a discussion of the shortage at the Sun Youth food bank, Boquer invited listeners to keep the giving spirit of the holidays alive - and challenged them to give at least 300 bags of groceries to the organization by February.

Listeners responded with a total of 315. Among the many who responded were students of the Hebrew Academy of Congregation Beth Tikvah of Dollard des Ormeaux. Grade 6 students, with help from Academy

coordinator Bonnie Leiner, collected seven boxes of kosher food for Sun Youth's monthly kosher food program. More than 220 women attended the first Eat, Love, Live Ladies' Evening, an evening of food, music and dancing in support of the West Island Cancer Wellness Centre, held at the Towne Hall Restaurant in February. The event was sold out two months in advance, with word of mouth as the only advertising.

The event raised \$45,000, including \$10,000 from a silent auction. Key sponsors of the evening included L.A. Leasing, McDonald's Restaurants of the West Island, Desjardins des Sources-Lac St. Louis, Valeo Pharma, Sun Grape Marketing, the St. James Hotel, Silver Star Montreal, Stuart Weitzman and ReMax Royal (Jordan). The event was organized by the centre's Ambassador Club: co-chairs were club members Marisa Trottier and Kim Bellas Boyd.

The West Island Cancer Wellness Centre, a non-profit organization, provides men, women and children who have cancer and their support circle of family and friends with wellness information, education, services, programs, and support for mind, body and spirit. All services are free of charge.

Visit www.wicwc.org for more information. For information about membership in the Ambassador Club, contact the centre's director of development, Jill Boileau, at 514-635-9355 (SHOULD READ: 514-695-9355).

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Credit: SUSAN SCHWARTZ; The Gazette

Illustration

RAMI NEGEV / Cheque presentation from the city of Cote St. Luc to Manoir Ronald McDonald: Carnival mascot Luc Carnival; ANTHONY REVOY / Cote St. Luc city councillor Allan. J. Levine; NICOLAS CARPENTIER / councillor Steven Erdelyi; BARBARA PAVONE / Ronald McDonald;; Caption:

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