

AVATIL
ACTIVITY REPORT
2013 - 2014

May 2014

The following is a summary report of AVATIL's programs and activities for 2013-2014, as well as a description of AVATIL's financial and community partners, whose support is invaluable in enabling AVATIL to continue to provide quality programs and services.

The report also includes a summary of AVATIL's Strategic Plan 2014-2017. At the last AGM in May 2013, AVATIL reported on plans to initiate a strategic planning process for the development of an action plan that would guide the organization over the next 3 years. A strategic planning committee was formed and met regularly for the past year. The Board of Directors recently adopted the strategic plan and a summary will be presented this evening. The complete Strategic Plan Report will be available in the fall.

As part of the strategic planning process, the committee consulted with 20 professionals in the community, individually or in groups. Those consulted include representatives from community and funding partners such as the Agence, CSSSSs, CRDITEDs and community organizations. AVATIL also received valuable feedback from a consultative committee. The information, recommendations and insights they shared with us were invaluable to the planning process and in helping us validate our key objectives. I would like to thank all these individuals for their collaboration.

SUMMARY OF CLIENT CENSUS

During the period April 1, 2013 – March 31, 2014, AVATIL provided services to 198 clients. AVATIL had 151 joint clients with WMRC at March 31, 2014. AVATIL continues to meet WMRC's client accountability measures on client interventions as well as reviews of client objectives every 90 days.

CLIENT PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

The following is a summary of the programs and services offered this past year. AVATIL promotes the provision of services along a continuum – external services for adolescents and adults living with their families, transitional residential services for the development of independent living skills and long term community support services for clients living on their own in the community. An emphasis is placed on building and maintaining a network of supports throughout their lives.

Adolescent and Young Adult Outreach: A new group of adolescents joined the adolescent group in September 2013. The program of activities included a weekly discussion group after school as well as a monthly Saturday social activity. While group meetings were held in various locations in the community last year, the group was held in Lachine this past year, as this was

an accessible location for them. The young adult program of activities included two weekly discussion groups after school as well as a monthly Saturday social activity.

Topics for both the adolescent and young adults groups are adapted to the interests and needs of group members. Group topics have an educational component, where information/material is presented. The information is used to promote discussions, sharing of opinions, feelings and experiences. Group discussions are also opportunities to develop social skills, effective communication and conflict resolution skills.

Residential Services: Twelve residents participated in AVATIL's three residential programs this past year. In 2013-2014 an average of 4 residents participated in The Fay and John Bland transitional living program in Lachine, which prepares individuals for independent living. The residential program promotes the acquisition of practical skills for independent living and the social skills to communicate effectively, and to develop a network of support. When residents graduate from the program, AVATIL assists them with their apartment search as part of the beginning of the community support services they can receive. Family meetings are held every 6 months in order to review the residents' objectives, and their progress in the program. Residential activities include a cooking program Mondays – Thursdays, a weekly life skills group, a weekly residents meeting and Saturday morning apartment organization and grocery shopping. A monthly social activity is also organized. One apartment this past year was designated as a respite apartment, for a client who was previously living in the community.

Kiwanis House, located in Lachine, provides an additional transition period to residents who leave the Fay and John Bland residence before they integrate in the community. Three residents participated in the residential program this past year. The residential program is similar to the one at the Fay and John Bland residence, but there is less of an emphasis on structure as residents have a greater level of independent living skills.

The Bessborough Co-op, located in NDG, continues to provide a residential alternative to six residents for the longer term.

Community Support Services: AVATIL's community support services are part of the long-term support services AVATIL provides to clients living in apartments in the community. Once again in 2013-2014, AVATIL provided community support services to 65 individuals living on their own.

The intensity of support provided continues to vary from several contacts per week to contact every 1- 3 months for clients who have a greater level of autonomy. Community support services include: practical skills support such as apartment organization, assistance with budgeting, menu planning and grocery shopping; advocacy and counseling around personal issues; resource linking with community resources to reduce the risk of social isolation and to ensure that clients are participating actively in the community; up to date health profiles to ensure that medical appointments are up to date; accompaniment to health-related appointments, as needed; smoke detectors and emergency flashlight inspection and free battery replacement at least once yearly as part of the ongoing safety and security project.

Family meetings are held with clients in our residential and community support services where objectives are identified by clients in areas such as residential, health, vocational and finances. These goals are reviewed with their AVATIL counselors every 3 months.

AVATIL is in contact with the CSSS Lachine-Dorval-LaSalle and the CSSS West Island for clients who require home care services, and in particular, for clients receiving CLSC nursing services who have chronic conditions or for those who have been recently hospitalized.

For a number of clients over the age of 40 receiving community support services, we have noted a significant increase in health-related needs this past year. We continue to be vigilant around factors which make it more difficult for our community support clients to enjoy a good quality of life in the community, and that also place them at risk for social isolation.

Safety and Security Project (phase 2): We have almost completed the second phase of our safety and security project, which consists of providing a laminated key tag with emergency contacts and medical information to every client living on their own in the community. As well, we are completing a bank of photos of community support clients to keep on file in case of an emergency.

Social Development Services: AVATIL's social development services are accessible to all AVATIL clients. The program of activities continues to consist of discussion groups, social and recreational activities in the community and larger special events that bring together clients and family members.

AVATIL Groups and Activities: The following is a summary of the AVATIL groups, activities and special events that were held April 1, 2013 – March 31, 2014.

Weekly Groups

- Adolescent group: Tuesdays 4-6 pm. An average of 4-6 adolescents participated
- Young adult groups: Mondays 4-6 pm and Tuesdays 4:30-6:30 pm. An average of 6 young adults participated in the Monday groups and an average of 10 young adults participated in the Tuesday group.
- "Grad groups" for clients in the 25-40 age group living on their own in the community: Mondays and Thursdays 6-8 pm. Each group averages 7-10 participants.
- Comitas (Moonlighters alternating with Sunshiners) for clients over the age of 40: Wednesdays 6-8 pm. These groups each had 12-15 participants.
- Lunch and Games Club: Mondays and Wednesdays 11 am - 3 pm. AVATIL was able to expand its lunch and games club from one day to two days in September 2014, providing greater opportunities for AVATIL's aging clientele to socialize with friends and to share a nutritious, low cost meal. An average of 6 participants at each lunch. Includes quilting group alternate Wednesdays 1-3 pm with an average of 8-10 participants
- Christmas Choir: Weekly meetings October-December with 12-15 participants. A new choir group began in April of this year.

Weekend Activities

- Adolescent recreational/social activities: one Saturday per month

- Young adult recreational/social activities: one Saturday per month
- Comitas social activity: one Saturday per month and 3-4 art classes per year
- Comitas potluck dinners: every six weeks on Sunday afternoons. A yearly Comitas Christmas dinner and anniversary event with approximately 50 clients, family members and volunteers at each event
- Night on the Town: one Saturday evening per month with over 20 participants

Special Events and Activities

- Monthly shared suppers: held all year on the last Tuesday of each month (average of 40 participants)
- Walkathon: June 2013. Annual fundraising event with over 80 participants
- Summer camp: August 2013 (5 days and 4 overnights) at Perce Neige camp
- Meg and David Day: fireworks/dinner cruise at the Old Port held in July 2013. This annual activity is held in memory of two AVATIL clients who passed away.
- Annual Christmas party: December 2013. Attended by over 200 clients, family members and friends
- Winter camp: February 2014 (3 days and 2 overnights) at Perce-Neige camp (20 participants)
- Cabane à sucre: March 2014. Annual activity with 40 participants

Client Participation on Committees

- Travel and Culture Committee: This committee was implemented last year, with a yearly budget from the special projects fund. The committee has organized a trip to Niagara Falls scheduled in July. It will also use proceeds from a client fundraising event organized last year to make the trip more affordable for clients.
- Client Fundraising Committee: This committee was implemented to manage funds raised by clients through the annual fundraising events and to subsidize client activities. This past year, the committee helped subsidize the price of client tickets to the Christmas party, and also provided a subsidy to the Mosaicultures event last summer.
- Other Committees: Clients benefited from the participation of family members on the following committees this past year: An apartment makeover committee implemented to paint and improve the appearance of client apartments in need and a newsletter committee that includes contributions from clients and family members.

Summer Program

AVATIL clients looked forward once again to a full calendar of summer activities in 2013. Activities were held all day Mondays – Saturdays and included weekday lunches and suppers as well as a number of day outings throughout the city. Highlights included day outing, Zumba dance before lunch, sports activities and the ever-popular rehearsals for the end of summer variety show. Four full time summer students animated the summer program of activities.

Summer Community Kitchen Meal Service

The EMSB community kitchen program was once again transferred to AVATIL during the summer so that low cost, nutritious meals could continue to be provided to clients living on their own in the community. The service provided 15 clients with two frozen meals per week during the summer. 6

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

AVATIL continues to collaborate with a number of establishments and organizations in the community. We appreciate their partnership in providing services to our clients.

English Montreal School Board: For over ten years now, AVATIL clients have been benefiting from their participation in the AVATIL Community Kitchen, a program held in collaboration with the EMSB. Approximately 10 AVATIL clients participate Monday – Friday 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. at the Marymount Centre. Participants continue to prepare low cost, nutritious meals to 4 weekly AVATIL groups and provide a frozen meal service twice per week to over 15 clients living in the community. AVATIL also collaborates with the EMSB in participating at their yearly information fair on services to individuals who have an intellectual disability.

Logements James Turner: AVATIL's partnership with Logements James Turner, which owns and manages the 3 buildings that house AVATIL's residential programs, provided 12 AVATIL clients with residential services and low cost housing this past year.

CSSS Lachine-Dorval-LaSalle and the CSSS West Island: AVATIL maintains contact with both CSSS's in their provision of home care services to our clients living on their own. AVATIL also receives client referrals from both CSSS's.

West Island Local Table for Intellectual Disability and Autism (WILT): AVATIL continues to participate actively on this Table and also has a co-leadership role. The Table brings together approximately 15 agencies and organizations in the West Island. This past year, the Table has formed two sub-committees. AVATIL is participating on a sub-committee developed to map out the services that exist for aging DITED clients as they transition into retirement and to identify gaps in services so that these can be addressed.

There is a general acknowledgment that transition planning for retirement has not been prioritized for clients as they age. The goal of the committee is to develop a tool that clients and family members can use to identify residential, vocational, social and health resources available to clients as they approach retirement.

Table de concertation DITED sud-ouest: This Table brings together approximately 15 agencies and organizations located in the sud-ouest territory. AVATIL is an active participant at this Table.

Table Régionale: In its co-leadership role on the Table de Concertation DITED Ouest de l'Isle, AVATIL participated at meetings this past year to explore the development of a regional DITED

table that would include a representative from each local DITED table in Montreal in order to share information and to work on common priorities.

CRADI (Comité régional des associations pour la déficience intellectuelle): AVATIL, along with several other CRADI members met with managers of the DITED teams at the CSSS West Island and the CSSS Dorval-Lachine-LaSalle this past year. The goal was to explore their service offer to the DITED clientele. As well, two AVATIL clients recently participated in a CRADI research project on aging.

Lester B. Pearson School Board: Collaborations this past year included outreach to young adults in the adult special education classes at John Abbott College and Vanier College.

McGill School of Social Work: AVATIL maintains an ongoing collaboration with the school of social work and continues to provide fieldwork placements for social work students. Three students completed their fieldwork placements at AVATIL this past year.

Volunteer West Island: AVATIL continues to benefit from their ongoing support for the recruitment of volunteers.

Borough of Lachine: AVATIL organizes a number of its groups and activities in venues that AVATIL can reserve for free in the Borough of Lachine. We thank them for their ongoing collaboration.

FUNDING PARTNERS

AVATIL continues to maintain a number of longstanding funding partnerships through service contracts, grants and subsidies from the following agencies and organizations:

The West Montreal Readaptation Centre (WMRC): AVATIL maintains an important service contract with WMRC. As of September 1, 2013, AVATIL benefited from a renewal to the service contract with WMRC up to March 31, 2016. AVATIL's previous contracts were one year in duration. Since September 2012, monthly deductions to our subsidy are made for each client census that falls below 160 clients. This continues to impact AVATIL with a small but important loss in our projected funding for 2013-2014. I would like to thank Rhoda Root, director of adult services at WMRC, for her ongoing collaboration and support and in particular, for her assistance with AVATIL clients who have required more specialized services this past year.

Agence de la santé et des services sociaux (PSOC program): The PSOC program provides recurrent funding that supports AVATIL in its global mission, to work both with individuals who have a diagnosis of a mild intellectual disability as well as those who do not have a diagnosis and who fall in the cracks of existing services. AVATIL continues to benefit greatly from this funding as well as development money we receive.

West Island Community Shares: For the past nine years, AVATIL has been benefiting from funding from WICS. I would once again like to thank their Executive Director, Caroline Tison, and the WICS fund distribution committee for their support of AVATIL and for their commitment and energy in raising funds for the benefit of 36 community groups in the West Island.

Human Resources Development Canada: AVATIL once again received a subsidy under the Canada Summer Jobs Program in 2013 to hire two full time students.

Emploi Québec (PAAS Action program): Eleven AVATIL clients continue to participate in this social integration program. The majority of the program hours are completed at the AVATIL community kitchen. Participants receive a monthly allowance for their participation and AVATIL receives funding to oversee the activities related to each client's participation.

Donations from individuals, service clubs and foundations: AVATIL gratefully acknowledges the generous donations from many long-time donors as well as new donors to our organization. These donations are used as part of special projects funds and enable AVATIL to support projects that government funds do not cover.