



The essence of our House is the aspect of community, which is reinforced by the basic elements of ; respect, acceptance and caring.

Life At Labre House

Newsletter of The Benedict Labre House

Septembre 2008,

www.benedictlabre.org

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear friends,

As I am sure that you can all tell from my past messages, I love the fall season for "oh so many" reasons. The changing colors of the leaves, the warm cozy smell of stews and roast's cooking through out the day, and the gentle breezes all bring with them a sense of calm, comfort, appreciation and the need for preparation. We have enjoyed our summer and now need to prepare for the long winter months to come. It is also a reminder that within these next couple of months comes two important, (not to mention my favorite) celebrations, Thanksgiving and Christmas. Now is when I start to plan our Thanksgiving meal, I start to pick up my traditional meal items as they go on sale, I start to do a little baking, a little decorating and I begin to dream about the day that my family and friends take the time to get together to pay thanks for all we have. This is no different here at The House. As the cold air starts to creep in we begin to talk of what our Thanksgiving and Christmas meals will be this year. In the past we have had some wonderful meal teams prepare these meals with love, making them a celebration for all to feel thankful for. This year I would like to ask you all to think about helping us prepare these meals.

As you are aware, I myself have much to prepare for this year as well, as my due date comes closer and closer I find myself feeling very confident in the Houses year to come. I know that Santiago, our Staff, volunteers, guests, our Board, and our

astonishing community will take good care of our beloved House in my absence. I send you all my love and appreciation for making the last three years of my life incredible. I thank all of you who have sent myself and my family well wishes for our soon to arrive little bundle of joy. I look forward to introducing our little Teagan to this loving community. I will see you all in my next message in winter 2009 where I am sure I will have much to say. I wish the House and all of you a WONDERFUL year filled with Love.

*Your Friend,
Kat Gray*

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Executive Director

Kat Gray (on maternity leave)

The Benedict

Labre House

308 Young Street,

Montreal, Quebec,

H3C 2G2

MESSAGE FROM THE INTERIM DIRECTOR

Hi everyone, it's been a busy and eventful summer to say the least. First and foremost I would like to thank everyone for their continued support, especially during the busy and rainy summer period. I would also like to warmly thank Lorna who has been coming in every Thursday afternoon to fill in for me so that I could have enough time to complete all my school assignments. As you know we are a volunteer based organization and we could not do the things we do without your help. On another note, I'm looking forward to an exciting and fun filled year as Interim Director. I have many plans and plenty of creative ideas which I look forward to sharing with you all. If anyone has any suggestions, questions, feedback, projects or any ideas on any issues pertaining to the house, please do not hesitate to get in touch with me as I'm always available to talk. Lastly, I just want to wish Kat and Marc all the best in the upcoming year with the arrival of their new baby.

*Cheers,
Santiago Garcia Rejon*

MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD

Dear Friends,

As I settle in to my duties as the President Benedict of Labre House, I am constantly reminded of my first recollections of Labre House. It was nearly 50 years ago and I was a grade 10 student at Loyola High School and a member of the Sodality of Our Lady. As part of those activities meal teams were organized, exactly as they are today, to supplement the efforts of the full time staff. While the area of the city was not new to me since my father worked just around the corner on Murray Street, the experience sure

was. I vividly remember arriving to find the cliental, entirely men in those days, shivering on the Young Street sidewalk. As our teacher guided us into the house, I remember searching for the right balance between being cordial and friendly without showing the sadness that I was feeling inside.

Almost five decades have passed since that experience but two elements of that story still resonate today.

The first relates to the importance of our volunteers. Labre House serves over 40,000 meals a year, distributes thousands of articles of clothing and personal use items, and

coordinates the facilities for hundreds of showers and loads of laundry every month, all on a total annual expenses budget of less than \$130,000. That astounding fact speaks to the dedicated staff that we have who squeeze every last drop out of themselves and the limited resources, because they simply love what they do and who they are doing it for. It also speaks loudly to the community minded companies, churches, schools, municipal organizations and individuals who collectively provide us with the steady stream of volunteers, without whom we could not exist. Please keep those meal teams coming.

The second element that survives today from my Loyola story is that "we are non judgmental". We are proud to be a Catholic organization with Catholic roots but our mission is to provide a home and to "nourish the body, mind and soul" of ALL who need it. We welcome all who show up at our door, without reservation provided the standards of mutual respect are maintained.

One last note more in the realm of a Labre House "family matter" although we are happy and proud to share it here. Between the time you read this Newsletter and receive the next one, our very own Kat Gray will welcome Teagan into the world, a little girl sure to bring joy to Kat and her family. Kat, you are in all our daily prayers and best wishes.

Sincerely,
 Stan Vincelli
 President of the Board

SUPPER BOWL SERIES 2008

Book your Supper Bowl Event Today!!!! Supper Bowls are a simple approach to community awareness and involvement. We offer a simple meal using bowls decorated by our guests which the participants keep as a reminder of the event. We will animate a discussion in hopes to allow people to reflect on the issues of need and their individual involvement in their community. For information or to book a Supper Bowl you can contact Santiago.

Our Garden Oasis 2008

Our garden can be described as an oasis in the middle of a concrete jungle. It's a place where people can come to relax and get away from the hardships of the streets. Many of the house guests come to enjoy their morning coffee and newspaper in the calmness of our garden. This year's version is quite impressive,



we've grown a wide variety of fruits, vegetables and herbs. (Red and green basil, little peppers, jalapenos, cabbage, beets, parsley, carrots, tomatoes, cherry tomatoes, chives, strawberries, cucumbers, zucchinis, petunias, chamomile and



rhubarb) Cultivating such a wonderful garden requires plenty of hard work, fortunately Eric and George (two of our house guests) took it upon themselves to make sure the garden was properly looked after. It's really quite amazing to see a little seed grow into a fruit bearing plant. Our wonderful chef Yvon always makes sure to incorporate as many garden vegetables in his meals.



Fall/Winter Wish List

We are in need of second-hand or New items. They are:

- Underwear
- Razors
- Toothbrushes
- Toothpaste
- Socks
- Meat/Milk/Eggs
- Non perishable food
- Men's Pants
- Shoes or Boots
- Blankets
- Sleeping Bags

URGENT

We need your help in preparing our 2008 THANKSGIVING and CHRISTMAS MEALS

We are in need of meal teams and groups to help us prepare for our much loved Thanksgiving and Christmas Meals. These two meals are widely anticipated here at the House as they truly signify the meaning of Home. We like to make things as homelike as possible, from serving pumpkin pie for dessert at Thanksgiving, to giving each guest a wrapped gift after our famous Christmas meal. It is the little efforts like this that make The Benedict Labre House so special, and we could not do it without the help of wonderful volunteers. We are beginning to prepare these meals for this year, and would be in need of individuals or groups to volunteer to help. For more information Please contact Santiago.

The Lakeshore Church Youth Group

I would like to send out a special thank you to the Lakeshore church youth group and its two tireless leaders Tammy and Paul. These guys were absolutely incredible this summer. They truly epitomize the saying 'many hands make for light work'. The group infused the house with an incredibly positive energy. They did a tremendous job of connecting with our guests and making them feel at home. Many of our guests really enjoy when youth groups come in to help because it reminds them of their families and their children. The house takes on a lighter mood when they are there.



By far the best event of the summer was the BBQ they organized in the garden the second week of July. They came well prepared ready to serve about 140 people. The gourmet menu comprised three different types of salads, hotdogs, chips, watermelon, plums, not to mention a lemonade stand. Smiles were not hard to come by that day. Everyone was in a great mood, people sat together on the picnic tables to enjoy the food, the music and the all around good atmosphere. It was really something special.



We have forged a strong relationship with the Lakeshore church youth group that we hope will continue for a long time. Thank you again guys.

Summer Activities

Horseshoe Tournament

The horseshoe tournament turned out to be a huge success on many fronts. The weather was perfect for the event, with blue skies above and a slight wind blowing from the northwest, it's no wonder we had such a great turnout. The elimination style tournament featured 16 players with skills ranging from expert to novice, they were all buying for the grand prize of a 'Sac Surprise' (a little bag filled with toiletries, socks, underwear and a BLH t-shirt). Despite the disparity in skills we still saw some very competitive matches. All the players cheered each other on and the experts helped give tips to the novices. On a personal note, what I enjoyed seeing is how the participants took charge of the tournament and made it their own. There was a real spirit of comradery and good sportsmanship in the



air. At one point I heard a man say to the group "You see we can have a good time without drugs and alcohol". I was happy to see that the tournament brought people together, allowed for meaningful interactions and important realizations. On an end note the proud winner of the 2008 Benedict Labre House invitational was Carl.

Photography Project

This year's photography project has been rolling along smoothly. A total of seven participants signed up this year. They've been wandering around the city taking pictures of their lives and things they find interesting or visually appealing. Some really interesting pictures have been taken thus far. Upon our return in September we're going to sit down together and choose which pictures we want to exhibit. Also in September we're planning on making the frames for the pictures that we plan on exhibiting. The exhibition will be held in October, I've yet to decide on a date but I will make sure to get the word out so that people can come and view the exhibit. We've also been kicking around the idea of creating a calendar with this year's best pictures.

The Benedict Labre House makes a splash on the Montreal art Scene

Many creative and artistic people come to our House. The YMCA has an annual art contest for artists and writers who have a criminal record and who would like to gain visibility in the community for their work. This year we are proud to announce that three of our guests will be exhibiting art in the contest. Kenley who is a painter submitted a beautiful mountain landscape on canvas and Gab and Max submitted each their favorite photo from this year's photography project. If people are interested in going to go see their work, the vernissage will be held September 22, 2008 from 17h to 19h at 335, Place D'Youville in the Old port in a beautiful building. The winner has a chance to win cash prizes as well as their own exhibit at the downtown YMCA. I just want to wish the three guys who participated in this year's contest the best of luck. I'm happy to see that they showed the enthusiasm to enter the contest. Building self confidence is always a good thing.

On another artistic note, our house poet Motion of Emotions, has entered into a spoken word contest offered by the black theatre workshop. The contest will take place sometime in September or October. I will make sure to keep people up to date if people are interested in going to see Motion perform. He is a great speaker and we're going to work together to make sure he's prepared and ready to win.

Inside Scoop

An interview with Ian

How long have you been involved with the House?

I started coming here about 2 years ago. I started to volunteer this summer and really liked it so I asked Santiago if he had any space on the Re-insertion program. I got hired as a dishwasher. I'm at the house regularly but my shifts are officially Monday, Saturday and Sunday.



Have you had a chance to meet some of our meal teams?

Absolutely, since I work on the week-ends I've met several meal teams. They're a lot of fun and the food that they prepare is always delicious

What prompted you to ask to work at BLH?

I've always like working with people and working at the house is a very people oriented job. I also wanted to help and to encourage people and make people laugh.

What types of jobs have you done before?

I've worked mainly as an animator, DJ, MC and I've also worked in radio. I'm a pretty outgoing person and these types of jobs really suit my personality. I got a chance this summer to animate the horseshoe tournament with Santiago and that turned out really well. I've also worked with kids before as an educator at a maison des jeunes. I used to take them on outings and teach them life skills.

What do you like about the House?

What I like about the House is the amount of services that it offers no other place offers the amount of services that is offered at the House. I also like the homey and respectful atmosphere of the House.

How is the re-insertion program helping you?

Due to a personal situation I ended up on the streets, I believe this program is a good stepping stone and will help me slowly get myself back on track. Having a job at the Benedict Labre House gives me structure and a reason to get up in the morning. I enjoy coming to work and belonging to a team that is helping the community.

Please send donations to:

**Benedict Labre House,
308 Young St.,
Montreal QC, H3C 2G2
(514) 937-5973**

Name: _____

Address: _____

Amount: \$20 () \$50 ()

\$100 () Other (\$)

A tax receipt will be sent to you.

A Heartfelt THANK YOU.