



# MAISON DE L'AMITIÉ

## Newsletter – Summer 2018

### A citizen fighting to stop waste

*Interview with Atlantide Desrochers*

By Moses Nkurunziza

**Atlantide, many people are curious about the woman behind Partage & Solidarité. Who is Atlantide?**

I am a mother, and someone who has always had family support for anything I've taken on. I'm also the founder of the organisation Partage & Solidarité, whose mission is to collect unsold and wasted food, and to then redistribute it for free to citizens in need. For me, giving back to the community is a duty.

**How did the problem food waste become your fight?** --- Walking in the street one day, I saw several commercial garbage bins filled with food that was still fine to eat. It was a shock to me to see this, and that's where the idea came to me that I could share what I find and offer it to people in need.

**How did you manage to build your community and make it grow?** --- I started a Facebook group called Partage & Solidarité in October 2016. At first, the idea was to have a place to share and exchange on various problems in society. In time, it became a little more focussed on problems related to food consumption and food availability; people were motivated to exchange messages on this. This space allowed for people to post food items that they had and weren't going to use, to share with others that would be in need of them. This initiative attracted so many people; the group grew to 3,000 members within a few months.

**Who can join this group?** --- I do not refuse access to anybody. Just because a person happens to be above the poverty line, it doesn't necessarily mean that they are managing to feed themselves adequately. Sometimes a person really doesn't make enough, even though by other criteria their income may be too high for them to be able to qualify for access to a food bank. Our group is open to all, and we encourage everybody who wishes to help the project grow, to post their ideas on the page.

**How was the Maison de l'amitié able to meet your needs?** --- I've always been drawn to the mission of this organisation. When the opportunity came around to collaborate with them on their new Cabane de l'amitié project, I jumped at the chance, with my proposal of the Frigo-Partage. This collaboration will serve the community, and I'm very proud to be able to count on their support. Partage & Solidarité will handle the second aspect of the project – that of making food available to others, offering assistance to the community in this way.

**You have a petition circulating, and it has reached over 8,000 signatures – what is its goal?** --- The ultimate goal is to be able to force businesses [by law] to stop deliberately contaminating unsold stock that they've thrown in the waste bins. We simply want them to stop [contaminating food items by] throwing other waste over top of the otherwise perfectly fine food items, so that we can collect these items in their normal perfectly edible state.

**What does the future look like for you?** --- The legacy I want to leave for my family is a world in which each individual has enough to eat; to get there, I take it on as my personal mission to inform future generations about the issues related to food wastage.



Atlantide Desrochers



A show of support at the official opening of the Cabane de l'amitié, a project of Maison de l'amitié which also houses the Frigo-Partage run by our partner Partage & Solidarité. Atlantide Desrochers (founder and head of Partage & Solidarité) et Maeva Vilain (borough councillor) are cutting the ribbon; looking on are Hélène Laverdière (Federal MP), Alex Norris (city councillor) and Patricia (of Caisse Desjardins du Plateau Mont-Royal, primary sponsor at \$4,000). Many thanks also to our generous individual donors (\$6,000).

Find the group on Facebook: *Partage & Solidarité* ( <https://www.facebook.com/groups/partageetsolidarite2016> )

## Our major spring & summer events

### CULTIVONS LE PLATEAU

Saturday, May 26, 2018

The *Cultivons le Plateau* event is the free distribution of flowers and compost provided by l'arrondissement du Plateau Mont-Royal, who also provide financial support for the wider event. It was co-organized this year between *Maison de l'amitié* and *Alternatives*.



*Cultivons le Plateau* also comprised a whole urban agricultural fair along Duluth Avenue, featuring around 15 exhibitors who had seedlings, medicinal plants, fine herbs on offer, as well as gardening tips, baskets, workshops, and more. Shop keepers and merchants along Duluth Avenue also brought out their tents to add to the street fair.



*Cultivons le Plateau* is also a family affair.



After a rainy morning, the sun came out and people were out to enjoy the day.



## Cabane de l'amitié becomes a reality!

A space to encourage sharing; here people can freely give or take useful items instead of throwing out and/or always having to re-buy things others may have. We officially opened the Cabane on May 26, 2018. Many thanks to Caisse Desjardins du Plateau Mont-Royal for their financial support of the project. We are equally very grateful for all the donations received from volunteers and students of the *Maison de l'amitié*, from neighbourhood residents and local business owners, and from members of our greater community.

After the first month, people have given 1,248 items, and taken 1,064.



## La Fête des Voisins

Sat., June 9, 2018

In the daytime : *Maison de l'amitié* lent a hand to the parents on the school council of *l'École au Pied-de-la-Montagne* in the organization of their Neighbours' Day celebration and garage sale, from which all proceeds are going towards improvements to the schoolyard. \$2,000 profit raised in a great community atmosphere with live music.



In the early evening, out in front of the *Maison de l'amitié*: a potluck dinner, free hotdogs, sangria, live music and camaraderie.

## Ongoing Events...

**MARCHÉ FERMIER**  
de la Maison de l'amitié  
Thursdays  
and Sundays  
from May 17  
to November 11  
at métro Laurier



It's now the 10th year for our Farmer's Market, and we are organizing a party at the market on August 26th, to celebrate the success of this project and the relationships that have been formed along its journey.



**Duluth en'Arts** brings great music into our neighbourhood every Saturday for 8 weeks (June 23 - August 11). Thanks go out to *l'arrondissement du Plateau Mont-Royal* and to *Desjardins* for their financial support.

## ROCKSTAR VOLUNTEERS

### Homin Jeong (English teaching)

Homin first started volunteering at the *Maison de l'amitié* in September 2014 as an assistant English teacher. He took on co-teaching, and then teaching responsibilities, with his classic care and commitment.

*Thank you, Homin!*

### Imayacil Batista Treto (Spanish teaching)

Maya first began teaching Spanish here in May of 2015. Since then, she has been a bulwark of the intermediate Spanish class, with many of her level 4 students returning to take her class again and again! *Thank you, Maya!*



### Estelle Caro (French teaching)

Estelle began volunteering as an assistant in the French classes in March of 2017. However, she quickly took on a teaching role, and has now become one of our go-to people for substitute teaching at all levels. Always ready, always smiling, always gracious! *Thank you, Estelle!*



## NEWS CORNER

Our condolences to the family of **Delphine Burkholder**, who passed away this past spring. Delphine was a full time volunteer with the *Maison de l'amitié* in the early 1980's.

In addition to his role as building supervisor, **Lukas Thienhaus** has become the new Student Residence Coordinator. Thank-you to *Jonna Fitzpatrick* for her contribution to the residence last year.

After 20 years at the *Maison de l'amitié*, **Desa Lozo** retired at the end of June 2018. We express our warmest thanks to *Desa* for all her contributions and for the warmth she brought to our centre. Best wishes!

We welcome **Haoussa Thiam**, our new accountant who has been with us part-time since the winter, and will now fill *Desa's* shoes.

Welcome also to **John Smith**, who is completing a work experience contract as our communications agent, and will continue on in the role part time.

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EDITORS : Luke Martin, John Smith  
GRAPHIC DESIGN :  
Christine L'Heureux, John Smith  
AUTHORS : Moses Nkurunziza,  
Luke Martin, Dora-Marie Goulet, John Smith  
TRANSLATION: John Smith

BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
PRESIDENT : Daniel Abman  
VICE-PRESIDENT : Lucille Marr  
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ADMINISTRATOR : Malcolm Balk  
ADMINISTRATOR : Dionne Codrington



120 avenue Duluth East  
Montreal, QC  
H2W 1H1  
Tel. : 514-843-4356  
info@maisondelamitie.ca  
website : www.maisondelamitie.ca



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