

RELATIONAL  
*health* CENTRE

ANNUAL  
REPORT  
2019-2020



LA RUE DES  
FEMMES

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# MESSAGE FROM THE *President & Founder*

## *The wager of the heart*

Violence wounds. It exiles you from the heart and from the self. From humanity. This is the reason why, 25 years ago, we embarked on a quest to heal the wounds of violence. Through love and safety. I made a “wager of the heart” and founded La rue des Femmes / Herstreet so that women in a state of homelessness—those most wounded in our society—could access caring services that heal.

Twenty-five years is the time it took to build a relational health centre at the heart of homelessness, because being the heart in exile destroys relational health, safety and happiness. And the key to relational health is the heart.

It took a space of protection and welcome. A place for listening to distress and healing wounds. We needed to build trust with women survivors of profound trauma. To train and support our dedicated workers. It took a therapeutic approach and methods: a science of relational health, of the heart, of trauma. It took researchers to perform documentation, validation and modelling. It took visionaries to provide encouragement and assistance. And it took philanthropists as well as public,

private and community partnerships. It took a shift in the homelessness paradigm. Because a new way of seeing requires new ways of doing and of communicating in order to change the world. It was about giving back to women in a state of homelessness, wounded, sick women, their status as true, whole people. Credible, respected, and freed of shame.

It took 25 years to make La rue des Femmes into a space of care and knowledge. A relational health centre that, by 2024, will have evolved into a relational health institute, putting relational health at the heart of homelessness, at the heart of their lives and of our lives. At the heart of humanity.

And together, we have won the wager of the heart.

For this, I thank you.

*Léonie Couture*

*President and Founder, La rue des Femmes*



A black and white portrait of Sophie Lemieux, a woman with dark hair, smiling. She is wearing a dark top and a necklace.

# MESSAGE FROM THE *Chair* OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**First things first: like every year, we took in and provided care to more than 1,200 women. La rue des Femmes' unique relational health approach ensured that they found the security, connections and strength they needed to regain their freedom and autonomy, and the hope that goes with them. Thank you to our devoted staff!**

In addition, because the needs are greater than its current intake capacity, La rue des Femmes moved forward with a project that it has long cherished: the establishment of a relational health institute. After substantial efforts by management, we were awarded significant funding from the federal government—a strong show of support that acknowledges our innovative approach. Thank you to our management team for their dedication!

Lastly, we must mention the memorable celebrations held to mark the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of La rue des Femmes. Thank you to all our donors for their generosity, and thank you to our volunteers for their time!

The members of the Board of Directors see to our organization's sustainability and good governance with the invaluable assistance of volunteer expert consultants. By supporting La rue des Femmes, they place their time, talents and financial means at the service of an organization that helps women in distress gradually build themselves back up. Once again, thank you!

That said, we must, all of us together, continue our efforts to make a difference for every woman that La rue des Femmes takes in and cares for. Let us keep on working and believing in the importance of our mission!

*Sophie Lemieux*

Vice-President, Institutional Markets  
Fiera Capital

# 25 YEARS AT THE *heart* OF HOMELESSNESS

La rue des Femmes / Herstreet was born out of a profound desire on the part of its founder, Léonie Couture, to come to the aid of women experiencing homelessness. She was driven by the conviction that it is possible for women to heal the serious wounds they have suffered and to return to a normal life.

The recognition of the concept of relational health has been at the heart of La rue des Femmes' actions since its founding, and has informed every one of its achievements over the past 25 years.



## 1996

LrdF lays the foundations for its relational health approach with the input of the women it assists, **offering care and activities aimed at reconstruction** (art workshops, massage therapy, qi gong).



## 1994

**Birth** of  
La rue des Femmes (LrdF)



## 1995

In a modest building on Avenue du Parc, **LrdF opens a day centre** for women experiencing homelessness or at risk of becoming homeless.



## 2001

The La rue des Femmes  
**Foundation is established.**

**2002**

## Olga House is built

Olga House is the outcome of a project to combine a day centre and a shelter under the same roof. It is a multiservice centre that takes in and cares for women experiencing homelessness.

*The name Olga House pays tribute to Olga Velan and her husband Karel Velan, visionaries and patrons of La rue des Femmes from the very beginning.*



**2010**

Suzanne Bourret, Manager of Clinical Services at LrdF, receives the Florence award from the Ordre des infirmières et infirmiers du Québec for her community engagement and outstanding contribution to the improvement of living conditions and the health of the most disadvantaged population groups.



**2006**

## Dahlia Centre opens

**LrdF's services are expanded with the addition of 13 supervised studio apartments**, creating a reassuring safe space and a living environment to help women transition back to society.



**2013**

**The Vers une troisième Maison campaign is launched**; it is LrdF's first major fundraising drive. With demand exceeding capacity at Olga House, opening a third house is a must.







## 2014

LrdF's commitments in the area of health are recognized for the first time, as it is awarded the Égalité prize in the Health category for its planned relational health community centre.



## 2016

La rue des Femmes: **Relational health centre**

A four-year strategic plan is mapped out to win recognition for La rue des Femmes as the very first relational health centre in Québec—a centre that will build its reputation and influence through innovative, efficient practices not only in the province but across Canada and around the world.

## 2015

Jacqueline House opens

***The third house provides emergency and short-term shelter as well as support services and referrals to help women escape a life on the streets.***

*In May 2015, LrdF opens Jacqueline House, expressing its gratitude to Jacqueline Desmarais and the Desmarais family, among its most generous patrons.*





## 2018

In July 2018, at the Citadelle in Québec City, Léonie Couture is made a member of the Order of Canada for her dedication to the promotion of women's health and the fight against poverty and homelessness.



Centre de santé relationnelle  
au ♥ de l'itinérance

***La rue des Femmes  
refreshes its brand image.***

## 2017

Research report Une intervention novatrice auprès des femmes en état d'itinérance : l'approche relationnelle de La rue des Femmes is published.



The research project, conducted in partnership with the Protocole UQAM/Relais-femmes, the Institut de recherches et d'études féministes (IREF) and the Groupe de recherche sur l'inscription sociale et identitaire des jeunes adultes (GRIJA), confirms the effectiveness of the approach developed by LrdF.

## 2019

LrdF receives support from Women and Gender Equality Canada to conduct assessment and modelling of its intervention practice.

The Jaclyn "Jackie" Fisher walk-in clinic, offering basic health care adapted to the needs of women experiencing homelessness, is inaugurated.



## 2020

Major fundraising campaign: More than a roof... healing homelessness. LrdF relational health institute.





Centre de santé relationnelle  
au cœur de l'itinérance

# Les Visionnaires

« Ils ne savaient pas que c'était impossible, alors ils l'ont fait. »  
– Mark Twain

La rue des Femmes, organisation à but non lucratif fondée en 1984, est un centre de santé relationnelle qui accueille et soutient des hommes en état d'itinérance sur le réseau d'urgence.

L'exposition Les Visionnaires veut reconnaître et célébrer les actions de la personnalité humaine, celle qui a permis que nous soyons ici aujourd'hui, qui nous a permis de respirer en tant qu'êtres humains, et qui nous a permis de nous élever au-dessus de nos différences, pour faire ensemble un monde meilleur, et contribuer à l'avenir de notre société.



**Officially launched on  
September 19, 2019,**

at the Caisse du Complexe Desjardins,  
the exhibition Les Visionnaires was  
presented on social media for five  
months, celebrating the  
outstanding commitments of each  
of these 25 visionaries.

« THEY DID NOT KNOW IT  
WAS IMPOSSIBLE. . . SO  
THEY DID IT. » – Mark Twain

## OUR Visionaries

On the occasion of its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary, La rue des Femmes inaugurated the exhibition Les Visionnaires, paying tribute to its early pillars: women and men who believed in its mission and helped spread the word about its one-of-a-kind relational health approach. With their respective areas of expertise and resources, they have helped La rue des Femmes do its good works and helped ensure its many accomplishments.

### HEARTFELT THANKS

To everyone who has contributed, directly and indirectly, to the fulfilment of La rue des Femmes' mission.

The Les Visionnaires exhibition was made possible thanks to the generosity of our sponsors:



**1<sup>st</sup> row**

Olga et Karel Velan  
Jacqueline et Paul Desmarais

**2<sup>nd</sup> row**

Aissata Binta Diallo  
Suzanne Bourret  
Emmanuel Poitevin-Chaignon  
Francine Pichette  
Jocelyne Lafleur

**3<sup>rd</sup> row**

Monique Leclerc  
Lorraine Pipon  
Ma Deva Eshana  
Lucie Forand  
Diane Bertolami

**4<sup>th</sup> row**

Pierre Bourque  
Shulamit Lechtman  
Léonie Couture  
Diane Derome  
Sœur Estelle Le Courtois

**5<sup>th</sup> row**

Lucia Kowaluk  
Alexandre Taillefer  
Henri Chapedelaine  
Magelle Pellerin

**6<sup>th</sup> row**

Madeleine Chenette  
Diane Trépanière

**7<sup>th</sup> row**

Chantale Michaud



# A *pivotal* YEAR

**The year just gone by, 2019–2020, has been a pivotal one in the history of La rue des Femmes.**

**La rue des Femmes is now 25 years old!** Many celebrations were held, each one providing an opportunity to pay tribute to the donors, volunteers and workers who have played a part in our success. Each was also an opportunity to renew or strengthen ties with everyone who has believed in our mission and enabled us to help of so many women over the years.

**The research project in partnership with UQAM is well on track after a year of work.** Support from the federal government and our local partners is helping to further La rue des Femmes' efforts in researching and developing its innovative relational health intervention practice. This will ensure that our research can benefit organizations working with the homeless assistance community right across Canada.

**In September 2019 we opened our walk-in clinic at Maison Jacqueline.** Ensuring access to medical services in a setting adapted to the needs of women experiencing homelessness is a project that our founder, Léonie Couture, had nurtured for several years. It embodies her vision of integrating, under one roof, the full spectrum of care that these women need.

**From centre to institute.** La rue des Femmes has reached a defining moment in its history. With our three houses at maximum capacity, it has become impossible for us to offer more beds, more activities and more therapeutic care—in short, we cannot care for more women. For this reason, the La rue des Femmes relational health centre is expanding into a relational health institute. That new designation is a formal reflection of our work and our mission to care for and heal these women who are victims of trauma, and of our commitment to delivering a real, sustainable solution to the problem of homelessness.

With 25 years of significant accomplishments, La rue des Femmes is a sound organization, solidly established in society and firmly focused on our future.

I joined La rue des Femmes three years ago, inspired by my deep love for the organization, its vision and its team members. In that time I learned all about its past achievements and current projects. So it was with immense pride and emotion that I agreed, in June 2020, to take on the role of Executive Director. I share my energy and passion for the cause of women with the entire La rue des Femmes team as we pursue the far-reaching vision of our founder, Léonie Couture.

*Nicole Pelletier*

Executive Director, La rue des Femmes



## THE YEAR BY THE NUMBERS

**1234**   
women welcomed  
and cared for

**22 844**   
overnight stays

**4429**   
shelter stays

**638**   
users of  
emergency beds

**44 056**   
daytime stays

**1706**   
daytime  
bed stays

**99 193**   
meals served

**202**   
participants in  
rehabilitation  
activities  
(counselling  
and therapy)

**320**   
recipients of care  
in counselling  
and therapy

**107**   
women returned  
to housing in the  
past 5 years

**350**   
women maintained  
in housing

## CARE AND SERVICES OF LA RUE DES *femmes*

La rue des Femmes, a non-profit organization founded in 1994, is a relational health centre that welcomes and cares for women in a state of homelessness. Afflicted with complex post-traumatic stress disorder, these women have lost their relational health: the vital capacity to be safe and connected to themselves and others. The unique intervention approach of La rue des Femmes enables them to heal their relational wounds, to rebuild themselves and to return to a normal life.

### OUR MISSION

- › Offer therapeutic and preventive care to women in a state of homelessness or at risk of becoming homeless.
- › Engage in research and provide training in relational health to care providers.
- › Raise public awareness of the issue and challenges of homelessness.
- › Promote relational health as a key aspect of overall health that is as vitally important as one's physical and mental well-being.

### OUR VISION

- › Change people's understanding of homelessness.
- › Modify the approach to the care provided to people living in a state of homelessness.
- › Become a leader in relational health care, research and training.
- › Offer our services to all homeless women, regardless of the severity of their situation.

# Care AND SERVICES

## SHELTER SERVICES: A SAFE HAVEN



*For five years, my former life hasn't existed and my new life doesn't exist yet. In this no man's land, La rue des Femmes is my haven. It's my place to live, my food, my safety. In this nest, they put me up for the night and put up with me as well. It has helped me, and is helping me right now, to go from living to dying. From my tsunami to my resurrection. And that's something! »*

*- Nicole\*, La rue des Femmes participant*

### Transitional shelter

12



supervised studio  
apartments

20



individual  
rooms

75



women stayed in  
a room or studio

100%

occupancy rate

Transitional shelter provides stability to participants, which in turn gives them the time and support they need to rebuild their lives. In-room stays vary in length depending on need. Supervised studio apartments ease the transition to autonomous housing; the women have use of a complete dwelling and every effort is made to help them develop their activities of daily living and regain their autonomy.

### Emergency shelter

Emergency shelter services help address the immediate essential needs of women experiencing homelessness and begin a process of stabilization.

Because demand is so great, La rue des Femmes also offers daytime shelter spaces, providing places to rest for women who have not been able to sleep the night before.

25



beds

8



overflow  
spaces

75



women stayed in  
a room or studio

638



women received emergency services,  
including **336 first-time recipients**

4354



stays with a maximum  
duration of 72 hours

9905



refusals due to lack  
of space

130%

occupancy rate





## DAY CENTRE: A LIVING ENVIRONMENT FOR CARE DELIVERY AND HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION

Participants have access to a range of services including basic services (meals, second-hand clothing counter, laundry, showers), care aimed at rebuilding their lives and re-establishing relational health, a program of structure-enhancing activities, a housing maintenance and integration program, and follow-up in the community.

La rue des Femmes' day centres are an inclusive community and nerve centre for preventing homelessness, fostering care and reintegration into society. They are open five days a week for walk-in participants and all week long for residents.

**Two day centres with a capacity of 80 to 130**

**1159**   
women taken in

**44 056**   
presences

**99 193**   
meals served

**1706**   
daytime bed stays for women who cannot stay overnight due to a lack of emergency housing spaces

« I'd become like a wolf: hurt, thirsty, starving. Angry. You welcomed me with love. You took time for me. And you calmed me. You helped me see my own light, and I pushed my anger away. »



- *Claudie, La rue des Femmes participant*



## SERVICES TO HELP REBUILD LIVES AND REGAIN RELATIONAL HEALTH

### Care delivery



**1234** 

women helped

**46 879** **h**

hours of care delivery

**62** 

care providers

Care delivery, or intervention, is at the heart of the work we do to help rebuild lives and provide healing relational health care. Care providers receive ongoing training in La rue des Femmes' one-of-a-kind relational health approach. They help the most severely stricken women feel secure when they need it, including in moments of crisis, allowing them to express their deepest suffering.

### Counselling and therapy

- > Art therapy
- > One-on-one counselling
- > Addiction/dependency counselling
- > Relational health workshops
- > Massage therapy
- > Energy healing (reiki)
- > PEACE (Processus empathique d'abandon corporel et émotionnel)

**320** 

women helped

**2024** **h**

of care delivery

**12** 

specialized care providers

These services incorporate La rue des Femmes' relational health approach. They are based on understanding of the process of surviving extreme trauma, the need for security, shared humanity, caring and connection. They also consider each woman's individual journey.

### Relational health workshops

Relational health workshops for participants were introduced in April 2019. By understanding the origins of their post-traumatic stress, the process of trauma survival and the impacts of post-traumatic stress on their physical, mental and relational health, women experiencing homelessness can play a more active role in their healing process and return to a more normal life.



**After a PEACE session, women feel soothed.**

The effects can be immediate and lead to testimonials like: 'I feel I'm starting to love myself.' 'Thank you! My pain has decreased by half.' 'I feel so much lighter.'



- Isabelle Mimeault,  
Head, adapted yoga and program

PEACE 



**Art therapy saved my life!**

With this piece, I had to show how I was feeling. At the time, I was in a toxic relationship. The hands I drew are the hands of the man who was choking. Looking at what I'd created in hindsight, I made the decision that enough was enough.



- Sylvie (fictionalized name)  
La rue des Femmes participant

## Rehabilitation

**1417 h**  
of activities

**202**   
participants

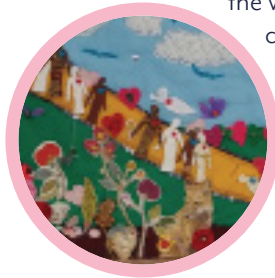
**2284**   
presences

- › Themed celebrations
- › Socialization activities
- › Hairdressing
- › Cultural outings
- › Cooking in groups
- › Zootherapy
- › Crafting
- › Textile art
- › Choir
- › Karaoke
- › Adapted yoga
- › Gardening

Each of these activities provides settings for women to break free from their trauma as well as build a sense of security and relational comfort, and in turn rediscover the satisfaction of being in touch with themselves and others.

The group quilt is an allegory of relational health, a march toward healing, a “way of the heart” that retraces one’s life journey and leads from survival to existence.

Each element represented in this quilt has a precise meaning: the hearts symbolize the support and the bonds of love that participants weave every day. Making the quilt unleashes positive energy and the women find a way of connecting with themselves, others and the world.



*The group quilt is a project of the textile workshop led by Pauletta Soublière and completed with the help of La rue des Femmes participants as well as workers.*



## REHABILITATION SERVICES: REGAINING INDEPENDENCE

### *Help with reintegrating into society and in-home assistance*

**20** 

women placed in housing this year

**107** 

women placed in housing in the last 5 years

**350** 

women provided with in-home assistance

Helping women access housing and hold on to a home is an essential service. The search for healthy, safe and affordable housing is becoming more challenging each year.

### *Follow-up and assistance*

**4240 h**

**107** 

participants

Follow-up and assistance in the community, available to both residents and non-residents, are indispensable to ensuring a successful return to a normal life. They include, among other things, support for legal, medical and family proceedings, as well as follow-up services with a social worker, a nurse and a retired psychiatrist.

### *Financial security assistance*

**98** 


participants

Recognizing that financial security is a key factor in maintaining housing and regaining autonomy, La rue des Femmes offers a financial and budget management assistance service.

Given that 9,905 requests for shelter (rooms and emergency beds) are refused annually, several hours each day must be dedicated to referring women to alternative resources.

The increasing amounts of assistance provided and referrals to health services testify to the worsening condition of the women who seek assistance through our resources.



For two years now I've been receiving support and guidance from La rue des Femmes to make sure I can keep my home. I've put down roots in my new neighbourhood, doing volunteer work, building relationships—all because of the sense of security. I got myself off the street and regained hope. I know, it's a cliché: but if you only knew how important it is to have an affordable place to stay, in a healthy environment! 

*Huguette (fictionalized name), La rue des Femmes participant*

# SIGNIFICANT *achievements*

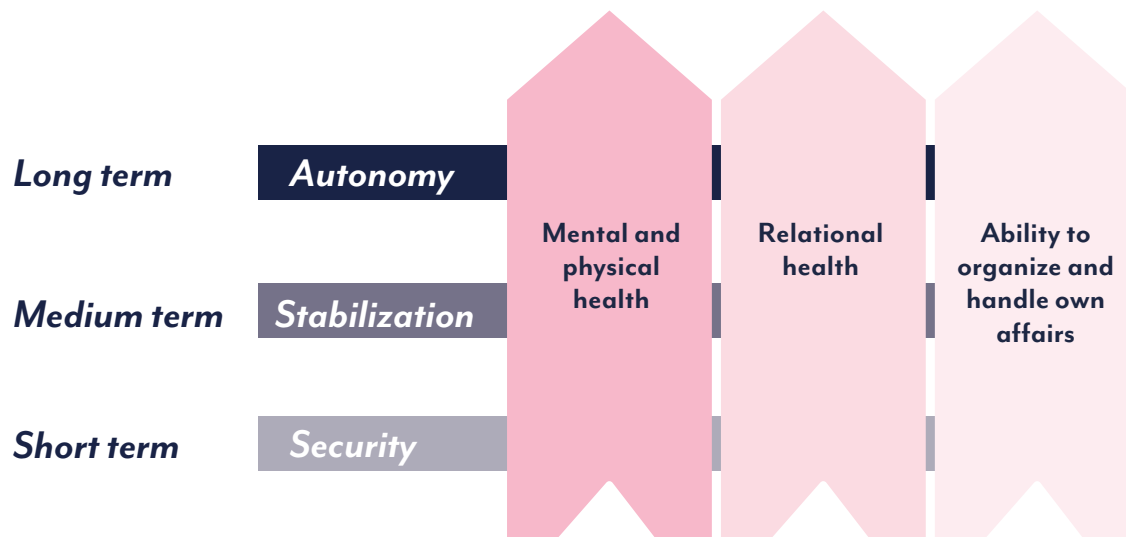
## THE RELATIONAL HEALTH RESEARCH PROJECT

The relational health research project, which began in 2019, will last five years and enable LrdF to evaluate and develop a model based on its relational health practice, broaden its array of care and rehabilitation activities, and increase its specialized care delivery and intervention staff so that it can nurture more women experiencing homelessness. It will help mainstream relational health practice all across Canada.

The research team at UQAM, headed by Sophie Gilbert, a psychologist and professor in the university's Psychology department, is developing and administering data collection and analysis materials to LrdF participants and workers, with an eye to measuring the impact of the relational health approach on positive care outcomes for women experiencing homelessness.



*In May 2019, the Honourable Marc Garneau officially announced the awarding of substantial financial support from Women and Gender Equality Canada for the LrdF relational health project, as part of its program to develop promising practices to meet the needs of survivors of gender-based violence.*



**Violence** ➡ **Trauma** ➡ **Loss of relational health** ➡ **State of homelessness**

## CREATION OF THE JACLYN “JACKIE” FISHER WALK-IN CLINIC, A PILLAR OF OUR MAJOR FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN

Access to medical care is a crucial issue for women experiencing homelessness, as health services are not appropriately tailored to their needs. To address that need, in September 2019 La rue des Femmes, with contributions from two partners, opened Jacqueline House, a walk-in clinic where such women can, in surroundings appropriate to their condition, receive basic medical attention as well as referrals to specialized care providers. This walk-in clinic is a significant complement to LrdF’s relational health services and care offering.

The Centre-Sud-de l’Île-de-Montréal CIUSSS (integrated university health and social services centre) provides the services of a nurse clinician five days a week. The Jaclyn Fisher Foundation provided the clinic with the materials it needed along with the services of a social worker specialized in relational health in support of our nurse, and is ensuring the clinic’s sustainability.

The Jaclyn “Jackie” Fisher Clinic provides a broad range of care and services to women experiencing homelessness:

- › Prescriptions and medication follow-up;
- › Follow-up and prevention for pregnant women and sex workers;
- › Diagnostic services and specialized care referrals;
- › Follow-up and accompaniment service in medical centres;
- › Education in health problems specific to persons experiencing homelessness (e.g., PTSD, HIV, hepatitis, STDs).

145   
consults

107   
beneficiaries  
of services

*The Jaclyn Fisher Foundation was created in memory of the late Jackie Fisher, an extraordinary young woman whose life was tragically cut short at age 25 following a lengthy battle with Crohn’s disease and cancer.*



**Clinique  
Jaclyn “Jackie” Fisher  
Clinic**





# Community AWARENESS

## INCLUSION ACTIVITIES

Every year a large number of activities are held both at La rue des Femmes and outside its three houses. They are typically organized by the care-delivery staff or by interns. All of these activities have a common goal: to give our participants opportunities to build connections with the community.



**Garden  
created at  
Jacqueline  
House**



### *Healthy vegetable gardening*

In the summer of 2019 La rue des Femmes took part in the Potagers en santé (“healthy vegetable gardening”) project initiated by Sentier urbain. Each week, urban farming workshops were led by a team of dedicated volunteers and members of our care-delivery staff. Each was an opportunity for the happy gardeners to maintain and strengthen social connections in communion with nature.

### *Queens brunch*

On Sunday, January 19, 2019, Olga House was the scene of our traditional Brunch des reines (“queens brunch”). In a spirit of celebration, happiness and good humour, participants welcomed Nathalie Goulet, Montréal City Councillor and Executive Committee Member responsible for social inclusion, sports and recreation, the status of women, homelessness and youth.







### **Alexandre's supper**

On December 16, 2019, Alexandre Taillefer and his partners-in-cuisine got together once again to prepare a traditional, comforting Holiday meal. It was an eagerly awaited event—and the room was filled to capacity!



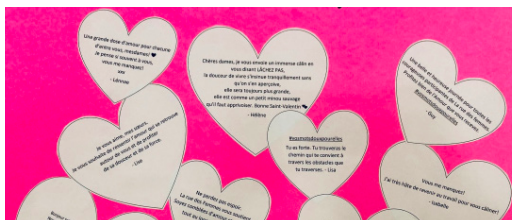
### **Les Olympes de la parole**

In the spring of 2019, Annette Hong Kim and Clara Goddard of the Villa Sainte-Marcelline private school produced a video at La rue des Femmes as their entry in the Olympes de la parole competition. They interviewed Léonie Couture with the goal of analyzing the impact of poverty on women's homelessness situations. They earned second prize at the awards ceremony.



### **International Women's Day**

On March 9, 2020, to mark International Women's Day, La rue des Femmes celebrated women around the world with an event organized by our interns. Taking place in a festive, warm atmosphere, it followed the theme “Féministes de toutes nos forces” (“feminists with all our might”). In attendance was Josefina Blanco, a Plateau-Mont-Royal Borough Councillor and member of the Standing Committee on Montréal's Social Development and Diversity.



### **Valentine's Day**

Answering the call “Remplissez leurs coeurs d'amour” (“fill their hearts with love”), which went out on social media for Valentine's Day, web users made gestures of solidarity and sent words of comfort to participants.

### **A vibrant solo dance performance**

In December 2019, 20 participants had the chance to engage with the intimate creative world of choreographer Caroline Laurin-Beaucage, who performed Intérieurs, a piece blending dance, art video, design and technology, for them.

Our thanks to the DANSE DANSE company for inviting them to this striking performance!



# 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary CELEBRATIONS



Several events were held to mark the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of La rue des Femmes, enabling us to see how far we have come in our work with homeless women over the past quarter-century and to pay tribute to everyone who has made such committed contributions to the creation and flourishing of La rue des Femmes.

## ***Gala de la santé relationnelle 2019 : du cœur plein la tête !***

The 10<sup>th</sup> edition of La rue des Femmes' Gala de la santé relationnelle was memorable in every respect. This year's theme was "Du cœur plein la tête" ("heads full of heart"), and guests explored the poignant world of La rue des Femmes through a moving testimonial by our founder, Léonie Couture, a compelling spoken-word slam by our spokesperson Catherine Proulx-Lemay, and a performance by Nathalie Simard that wowed everyone in the room.

Chaired by Nathalie Tremblay, General Manager of the Caisse du Complexe Desjardins, and Jacques Dufresne, Head, Client Relations, and Executive Vice-President of BFL Canada, this 10<sup>th</sup> edition of our annual gala was attended by some 450 guests and raised more than \$300,000 in support of LrdF's mission.

## ***25<sup>th</sup> anniversary cocktail party***

On September 19, 2019, a cocktail party was held to kick off La rue des Femmes' 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations. It also served as the inauguration of the Les Visionnaires exhibition, with several of La rue des Femmes' builder community in attendance. In all, some 150 partners, donors and volunteers took part in the event, held at the Caisse du Complexe Desjardins.



## ***Les Visionnaires exhibition***

The Les Visionnaires exhibition was presented on social media platforms for five months, highlighting the outstanding contributions of each of our visionaries in turn.



## ***Workers' dinner***

In December 2019, a Christmas party organized especially for our workers provided the opportunity for La rue des Femmes to acknowledge their remarkable dedication and unflagging support.

Around 60 workers and friends took part, in an atmosphere of warmth and kindness.



# OUR *commitment* TO THE COMMUNITY

## A SURVEY TO CONTRAST PERCEPTIONS WITH REALITY

On the occasion of its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary, La rue des Femmes commissioned a survey to gauge public perceptions in Greater Montréal of homelessness, and in particular of women experiencing homelessness.

The results of the survey, conducted by the firm Ad Hoc Research in September 2019, reveal the discrepancy between public perceptions and the reality on the streets, and underline the importance of demystifying homelessness and its root causes.

### *Survey on women and homelessness*

**58%** 

**of respondents acknowledge that violence is the greatest danger to women living on the streets.**

*Ad Hoc Research, September 2019*

## WOMEN'S HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION AND RESPONSE PARTNERSHIP

This partnership aimed at preventing and reducing homelessness experienced by women, created two years ago with five other shelters, aims to pool expertise, defend the needs of women with one voice, and take part in decisions that affect them, in compliance with gender-based analysis.

This year, the partnership resulted in multiple meetings with representatives of the local CIUSSS and the City of Montréal to discuss women's needs and what projects should be implemented to meet them, including a September 16, 2019, meeting to validate and prioritize needs in emergency and short-term shelter resources for women experiencing homelessness.

### ***Women's Homelessness Prevention and Response Partnership***



## LA RUE DES FEMMES AFFILIATIONS AND PARTNERSHIPS

La rue des Femmes has always ascribed great importance to its affiliations and partnerships, building special relationships with groups and organizations that share its vision.

### ***Groups that assist women experiencing homelessness***

- › Association d'entraide Le Chaînon
- › Auberge Madeleine
- › Les Maisons de l'Ancre
- › Chez Doris
- › Maison Marguerite
- › L'Exode – centre de répit et de dégrisement
- › Passages
- › Projet autochtone Québec (PAQ)

### ***Groups and federations***

- › Fédération des femmes du Québec (FFQ)
- › Relais-femmes
- › Réseau d'aide aux personnes seules et itinérantes de Montréal (RAPSIM)
- › Réseau québécois d'action pour la santé des femmes (RQASF)
- › Table des groupes de femmes de Montréal (TGFM)
- › Fédération des OSBL en habitation de Montréal (FOHM)
- › Réseau d'action des femmes en santé et services sociaux de Montréal
- › Regroupement intersectoriel des organismes communautaires de Montréal (RIOCM)

## PARTICIPATION IN EVENTS AND ROUNDTABLES DEALING WITH HOMELESSNESS

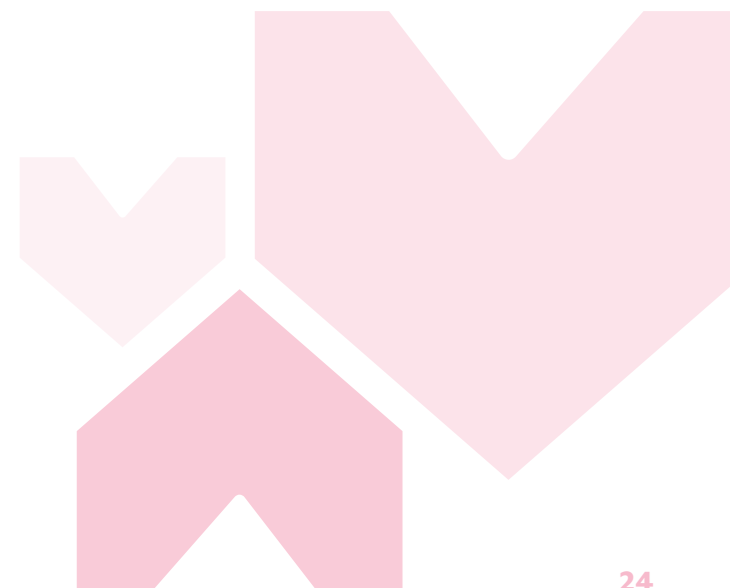
La rue des Femmes continues to use all forums available to it to raise awareness of its relational health approach to helping women who experience homelessness. Here is a partial list:

- › **Study day on implementation of wet services in Montreal**, organized by the Centre-Sud-de-l'Île-de-Montréal CIUSSS, the Institut universitaire sur les dépendances of the CCSMTL, the City of Montréal and their partners, April 4, 2019;
- › **Roundtable on women and homelessness** organized as part of scientific activities of the CREMIS (research centre on social inequalities and discrimination), May 9, 2019;
- › **Discussion meeting on challenges in providing shelter to women experiencing homelessness with Québec Health and Social Services Minister Danielle McCann**, organized by RAPSIM, May 24, 2019;
- › **Meeting to validate and prioritize needs in emergency and short-term shelter resources for women experiencing homelessness** of the CIUSSS and the City of Montréal, September 16, 2019;
- › **Validation and presentation of the results of research into the state of emergency shelter services in Montréal**, led by Jacinthe Rivard of Université de Montréal, September 4 and November, 2019;

- › Presentation to Université de Montréal medicine students as part of a lunch and learn series, November 25, 2019;
- › **45<sup>th</sup> anniversary forum of the RAPSIM**, February 13, 2020.

LrdF participated in various issue tables:

- › **The CIUSSS women's committee**, for planning of services for women;
- › **The winter emergency services shelter committee**, for planning and follow-up of services.





# MEDIA *visibility*

## PRINT MEDIA

- « Itinérance chez les femmes : manque de ressources disponibles à l'année », Béatrice Roy-Brunet, Le Journal de Montréal, September 25, 2019
- « Itinérance : Montréal et Québec bouclent le financement du wet shelter et d'autres ressources », Zacharie Goudreault, Journal Métro, October 25, 2019
- « 300 000 \$ pour les femmes en état d'itinérance », La Presse, November 19, 2019

- « Deux adolescentes amassent des sacs remplies pour les femmes itinérantes », Vicky Girard, Journal Le Reflet, November 29, 2019
- « L'itinérance des femmes intimement liée à la violence », lettre d'opinion de Léonie Couture, La Presse, December 16, 2019
- « Les Noël de l'itinérance », reportage de Justine de l'Église, ICI RADIO-CANADA, December 27, 2019
- « Réparer les âmes brisées », Rima Elkouri, La Presse, January 26, 2020
- « Les refuges pour itinérants sur le qui-vive », Jeanne Corriveau et Marco Bélair-Cirino, Le Devoir, March 18, 2020
- « La maison de la dernière chance », Harold Gagné, Sélection Reader's Digest, March 2020

## RADIO

- « Dehors la nuit : la situation des femmes itinérantes », QUB radio, May 30, 2018
- « Itinérance chez les femmes : manque de ressources disponibles, à l'année », interview with Léonie Couture, Lisa-Marie Blais, Le Québec Matin, September 28, 2019
- Interview with Ann-Gaël Whiteman, Care-Delivery Coordinator, and Nicole Pelletier, Executive Director, La rue des Femmes, on Life Unrehearsed with Corrie Sirota and Matt Del Vecchio, CJAD, March 8, 2020

## TV

- « La dure réalité des femmes dans la rue », story by Maxime Bertrand, ICI RADIO-CANADA, September 24, 2019
- « Itinérance chez les femmes : manque de ressources disponibles à l'année », interview with Léonie Couture, Lisa-Marie Blais, Le Québec Matin, September, 2019
- « Catherine Proulx-Lemay parle de son rôle de porte-parole de l'organisme La rue des femmes qui vient en aide aux femmes itinérantes et dans le besoin », La semaine des 4 Julie, Noovo, March 2, 2020;
- « Les itinérants enfermés dehors », story by Yasmine Khayat, ICI RADIO-CANADA, March 23, 2020;
- Interview with Léonie Couture and Ginette Girard, a La rue des Femmes participant, Denis Lévesque, LCN, September 24, 2019.



Credit: Maude Chauvin, Sélection Reader's Digest



## NEWS RELEASES ISSUED BY LA RUE DES FEMMES

- « Sondage sur l'itinérance au féminin : confronter perceptions et réalités,” October 9, 2019
- « Gala de la santé relationnelle La rue des Femmes : plus de 300 000 \$ amassés au profit de La rue des Femmes,” November 25, 2019

## INCREASED SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCE

Social media platforms have become an indispensable communications tool for La rue des Femmes. This media presence is part of a visibility strategy that aims to inform the community and raise their awareness of issues around homelessness as well as promote relational health as an innovative, effective care approach for women experiencing homelessness.

### LA RUE DES FEMMES SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCE

*Numbers of followers/subscribers*

*Facebook*



**4598**

*Instagram*



**781**

*Twitter*



**4402**

*Linkedin*



**974**





## A *dedicated* TEAM

This past year, La rue des Femmes celebrated 25 years since its founding: 25 years spent caring, comforting, reassuring; 25 years of total dedication to the healing and rehabilitation of women experiencing homelessness. Because homeless women need care to heal and find the path back to a more normal life.

A visit to Olga House or Jacqueline House reveals just how much these women need us: post-traumatic stress has left them in a state of fear, distress and solitude. A visit to Olga House or Jacqueline House also reveals just how well they are cared for! The workers at La rue des Femmes open their hearts wide to give them all the attention they seek. To do everything they can for each of them. All with a smile that shines.

As spokesperson for the past seven years, I have seen this and I can testify to it. To how moving it is, every time I visit, to see the courage of the women sheltered there, and the immense dedication of the care providers and all the workers. So today, I am thinking of all of you, workers at La rue des Femmes, and I want to express my gratitude. You show us the greatest and noblest gifts humanity has to offer: empathy, benevolence, generosity. You put the face of humanity on our world.

Quite simply: thank you!

*Catherine Proulx-Lemay*

Spokesperson, La rue des Femmes

## STAFF

The La rue des Femmes comprises 108 workers: 65 full-time, 38 part-time, and 5 contractual. A continuous-training program is available to care providers to upgrade their knowledge of the La rue des Femmes relational health approach, which focuses on recognition and healing of relational injuries and severe trauma. The training also ensures consistency of care delivery.



## INTERNS

**26**  **7048 h**

interns

There were 26 internships completed at La rue des Femmes in 2019–2020: 15 were from Québec universities and colleges, 1 was from Université de Moncton, in New Brunswick, and 11 were from France. They were from social work, special education, social medicine, nursing and sociocultural facilitation programs. All benefited from the expertise of the La rue des Femmes team and gained hands-on experience in such areas as organizing activities and events for participants.



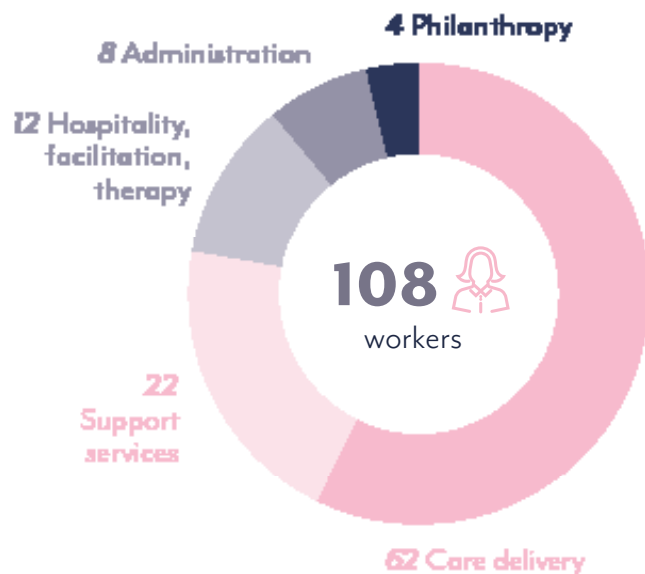
## VOLUNTEERS

**101**  **4455 h**

volunteers

contributed

Each year, La rue des Femmes relies on a large team of dedicated volunteers. They are responsible for such activities as organizing the annual benefit event, collecting material donations, organizing the Holiday celebrations, preparing meals, helping out with the second-hand clothing counter, transportation, storage of deliveries, maintenance and minor renovation work, providing IT support, and preparing direct-mail materials. Participants benefit greatly from their contribution and the entire team appreciates their kind support.



## Voice of the heart

Founding Les Voix du Coeur, La rue des Femmes' choir, in May 2013 was a dream come true for writer and musician Monique Leclerc: participants could express themselves through song. Every Thursday afternoon until the fall of 2019, she could be seen bowed over her cello, conducting her cherished singers with head movements. Her aim was to foster unison, keeping alive fragile bonds of the heart. "My choir members' heart is a continent that can drift from tumultuous joy to violence, suddenly and incomprehensibly. I tame that duality by opening my arms." These words of Monique's say so much about her!



From the bottom of our hearts, we say thank you, dear Madame Leclerc. For your enormous smile, your wonderful hugs, your birthday cakes at the ends of practices, your unforgettable annual picnics—for your huge heart that radiates its love. You are truly our voice of the heart.

# Members OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

La rue des Femmes' Board of Directors comprises volunteers who contribute a range of complementary expertise and skills. Their wise counsel, vigilance and solid commitment help ensure the organization's sound management and sustained growth. La rue des Femmes expresses its deepest gratitude to them.

## EXECUTIVE

### INTERIM CHAIR

**Sophie Lemieux**  
Corporation Fiera Capital

### TREASURER

**Gerarda Capece**  
Résidence Berthiaume-Du Tremblay

### SECRETARY

**Geneviève Marchand**  
Ovivo inc.

### OFFICERS

**Léonie Couture**  
Founding President, La rue des Femmes

**Suzanne Bourret**  
Clinical Director, La rue des Femmes

**Stéphanie Archambault**  
Legal Aid of Montreal – Laval

**Johanne Babin**  
Hydro-Québec

**Mylène Dupéré**  
Groupe Sélection

**Annette Dupré**  
City of Montreal

**Louise Leduc**  
Leduc Marketing, stratégie et recherche inc.

**Julie Marineau**  
Ernst & Young LLP

**Julie Pouliot**  
Énergir

**Renée-Claude Turgeon**  
BBA

# Community CONTRIBUTION

## FUNDING

La rue des Femmes' operating budget was in excess of \$4 million this year. Expenses related to the research and development project as well as salary increases indexed to the cost of living explain the increase.

Operating expenses have increased over the years:

- › Opening of Jacqueline House in 2015
- › Addition of the 10 year-round emergency spaces at Jacqueline House that were previously available only in winter, July 2018
- › Addition of eight overflow emergency spaces in 2019

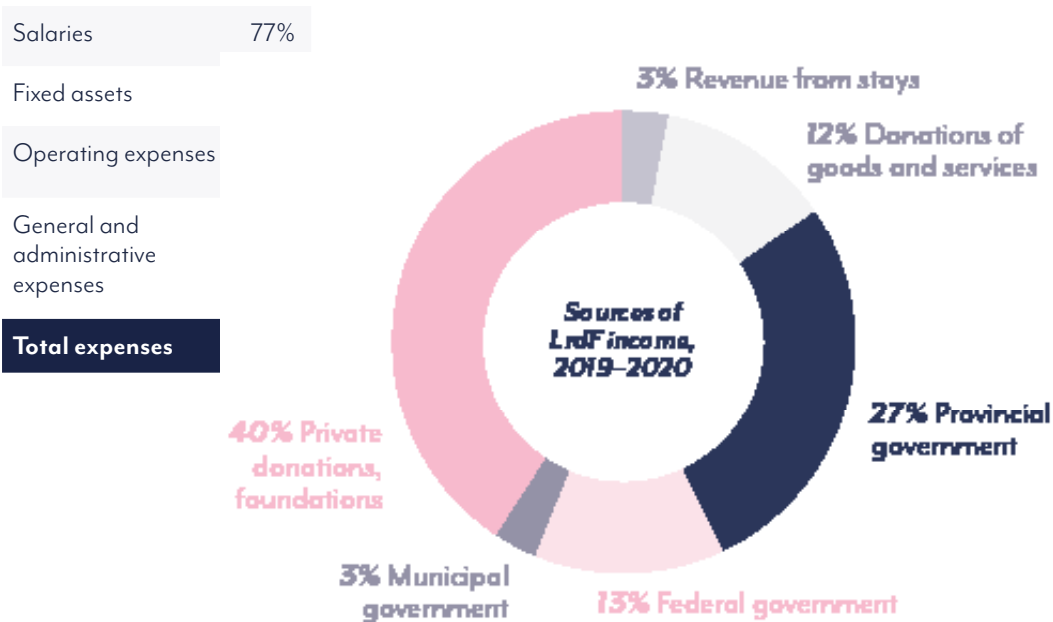
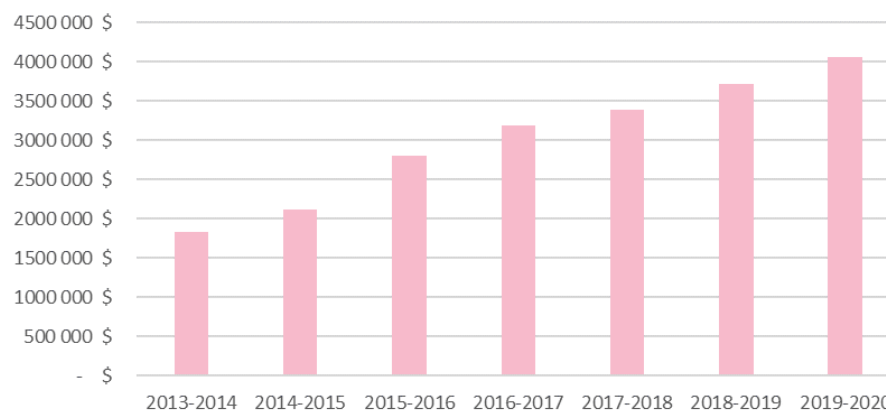
Payroll accounts for the largest share of expenses. Operating expenses include the cost of meals and services provided to participants.

La rue des Femmes' overall mission is funded by the Québec Government's PSOC (Programme de soutien aux organismes communautaires). Funding for specific projects undertaken in 2019 was provided by the City of Montréal, the Government of Canada **Reaching Home program**, and Women and Gender Equality Canada.

In March 2020, La rue des Femmes received federal government subsidies totalling \$37,000 to cover exceptional costs related to management of the COVID-19 crisis.

Despite significant amounts of government funding, private donations and self-generated income remain La rue des Femmes' primary source of funding.

### Increase in operating expenses



# Donations OF GOODS AND SERVICES

Donations of goods and services are a significant contribution to the services that La rue des Femmes provides to women. Encompassing everything from emergency meals to fresh food, hygiene products, clothing and gifts, these donations help ensure participants' safety and wellness, and help them regain their dignity.

Other services donated in kind also help keep administrative expenses down: graphic design, translation, marketing and public relations consulting, website administration, as well as telecommunications and IT services.

***Every donation is hugely appreciated by our participants. From the bottom of our hearts, La rue des Femmes thanks all of our donors for thinking of them!***



Donations of goods and services	
Clothing and accessories	242 852 \$
Food	153 184 \$
Hygiene and cleaning products	144 474 \$
Services	32 750 \$
Equipment	5 992 \$
<b>Total</b>	<b>579 242 \$</b>

SOCIÉTÉ DE DÉVELOPPEMENT SOCIAL	YMCA	AGENCE ANN TIMMONS	CROIX ROUGE
ARBONNE	BOUTIQUE CLAUDIA	TACT CONSEIL	CAFÉ BROSSARD
MCMAHON DISTRIBUTEURS PHARMACEUTIQUE INC.	CASCADES	DEUXIÈME PEAU	TRAVELWAY
ATTITUDE MARKETING	BEC	ENTREPRISE ÉLECTRICITÉ	HÔTEL GAULT
EXCELDOR	AGENCE ISABEL BRODEUR	FISSURE DE BÉTON ALAIN GRENIER	CANADIAN TIRE NO 312 TERREBONNE
LIEBERMAN RANCHEDMONTAGNE	ALIMENTS ROMA	INDUSTRIES LASSONDE	DAVID'S TEA
MAÎTRE CORBEAU	MONTHLY DIGNITY	LES ENTREPRISES SAMUEL LABELLE	ÉCOLE DES MÉTIERS DE LA RESTAURATION ET DU TOURISME DE MONTRÉAL
BUGATTI GROUP	TRADUCTION (ANDRÉA ET PAMELA)	PEP CONCEPT	LOTO QUÉBEC
GABRIELLE JULIEN	MAUVE MANGO CRÉATIONS	FLEURISTE FLORATERIA	RESTAURANT OSTARIA DA ELDA
A. VOGEL	TONY RAVENDA	MILLÉNAIRE COIFFURE	VINCENT SÉGUIN
PROVENCHER_ROY	FRANCIS DION		

# GENEROUS *initiatives*

Increasingly, La rue des Femmes and its Foundation can look to the contributions of members of the community who are deeply committed to what we do.

The scale and diversity of support provided exemplify the extensive efforts put in by the organization and the Foundation in upholding the mission and work of La rue des Femmes.



## THE SCOTIBANK 21K

On April 27 and 28, 2019, La rue des Femmes took part in the Scotiabank half marathon for the second time. Around 20 runners turned out at Parc Jean-Drapeau in support of La rue des Femmes and its mission. The charity run raised more than \$9,300 for us this year.



## TOUR DE L'ÎLE

Françoise Roy, Josée Bouret, Michèle Falardeau and Cécile Breton rode the Tour de l'Île on June 2, 2019. It was their sixth time taking part, and this time they raised \$14,200 for La rue des Femmes—a new record!



## BNC WORKSHOP ON CONFIDENCE

On April 25, 2019, National Bank of Canada's Réseau Femmes en tête – Accélérateur d'ambition au féminin held a workshop on confidence for 100 women attendees. The event included an "equity poker" night and raised more than \$2,800 to assist women experiencing homelessness.





## CASINO

On March 6, 2020, to mark International Women's Day, the Casino de Montréal Syndicat de la Condition féminine held its 14th consecutive benefit event for La rue des Femmes, raising a total of \$1,750.



## PHARMAPRIX

As part of the Love You women's health campaign, launched by the Pharmaprix banner last fall, Store 045 at 390 Sainte-Catherine Street West chose to donate the proceeds of its local drive, \$1,460, to La rue des Femmes.



## LE TRICHEUR

As a contestant on the game show Le Tricheur in February 2020, actress Catherine De Léan played for La rue des Femmes and donated her \$1,150 winnings.



## GALA ARTIS

Boutique Mariclod came up with a wonderful fundraising initiative following the Gala Artis awards ceremony on May 12, 2019! Two evening gowns generously returned to the store by stars Anick Dumontet and Sophie Prigent were auctioned off for charity. Our thanks to Anick for choosing to donate the \$650 from the sale of her gown to La rue des Femmes.



## ÉNERGIR – DECEMBER 6 REMEMBRANCE

To mark the Journée internationale d'action pour l'élimination de la violence à l'égard des femmes, Énergir held a white ribbon drive that raised over \$2,000 for La rue des Femmes.



## SOLIDARITY FOR THE HOLIDAYS

The year-end celebrations saw amazing moments of solidarity and support! Organizations, companies, students and families came up with initiatives that were unprecedented successes. Thousands of donations were collected ahead of the Holidays. Thank you to all our donors, partners, volunteers and friends for giving so generously to the cause of women experiencing or at risk of experiencing homelessness.



## VERISK 3E

Employees of the firm Verisk 3E in Montréal decided to make a \$2,857 donation to La rue des Femmes.

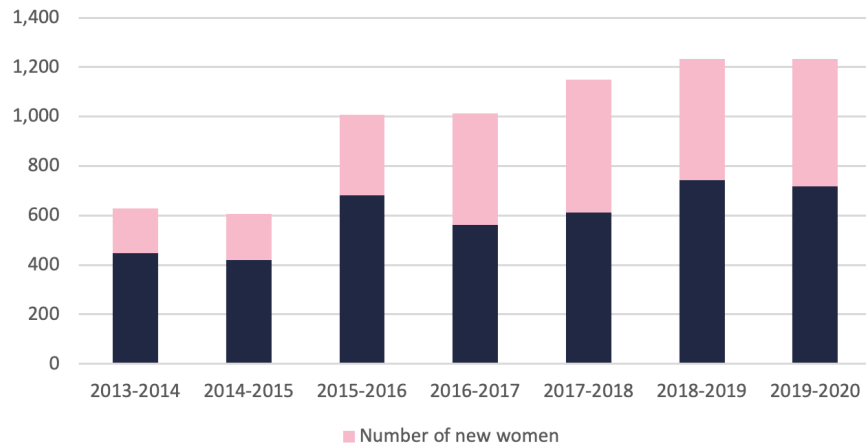
# THE YEAR 2019-2020 *by the numbers*

2019-2020

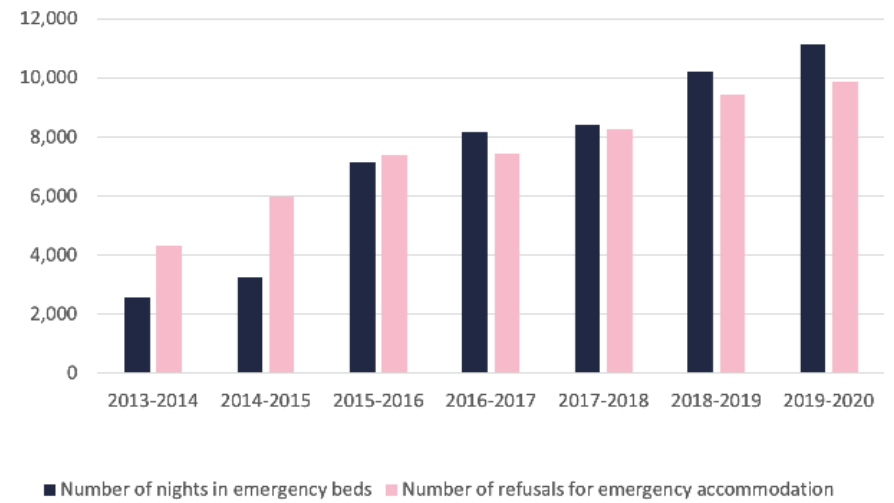
Participants	Women welcomed	1,234
	Women welcomed for the first time	516
	% of newly welcomed women	42%
	First Nations women	37
	Women from the Inuit community	34
	Total Indigenous women	71
	Women from the transgender community	18
	Women with refugee status	6
Shelter	Beds available	57
	Overflow beds from January to March 2019	8
	Overnight stays in emergency beds	11,132
	Overnight stays in individual rooms	7,320
	Overnight stays in supervised studios	4,392
	<b>Total overnight stays</b>	<b>22,844</b>
	Daily average of women sheltered	63
	Emergency bed admissions	4,354
	Individual room admissions	58
	Supervised studio admissions	17
	<b>Total admissions</b>	<b>4,429</b>
	<b>Available-bed occupancy rate</b>	
	Rooms	100%
	Studios	100%
	Emergency beds	113%

Refusals	<b>Total shelter refusals</b>	<b>9,905</b>
	Daily average of women refused shelter	27
Day centres	Presences, Olga House	23,560
	Presences, Jacqueline House	20,496
	<b>Total presences, both day centres</b>	<b>44,056</b>
	Meals served, Olga House	55,506
	Meals served, Jacqueline House	43,687
	<b>Total meals served</b>	<b>99,193</b>
	Day bed stays, Olga House	496
	Day bed stays, Maison Jacqueline	1,210
	<b>Total day bed stays</b>	<b>1,706</b>
Services to assist in rebuilding lives	Intervention, support and individual follow-up (hours)	46,879
	Counselling, sociotherapy, relational therapy, addiction counselling (hours)	2,024
	Structure-enhancing and rehabilitation activities (hours)	1,417
	Follow-up, support and guidance in the community (hours)	4,240
	<b>Total intervention, follow-up and care (hours)</b>	<b>54,560</b>
	Ambulance transfers	156
	Women participating in the counselling program	320
	Women participating in activities	190
	Women benefiting from financial security assistance	98
	Women re-established in housing (including SRA [residential stability assistance])	20
Human resources	Workers as at March 31	108
	Volunteer hours	4,455
	Total volunteers as at March 31	101
	Working hours completed by interns	7,048
	Total interns	26
	<b>Total workers, volunteers and interns</b>	<b>235</b>

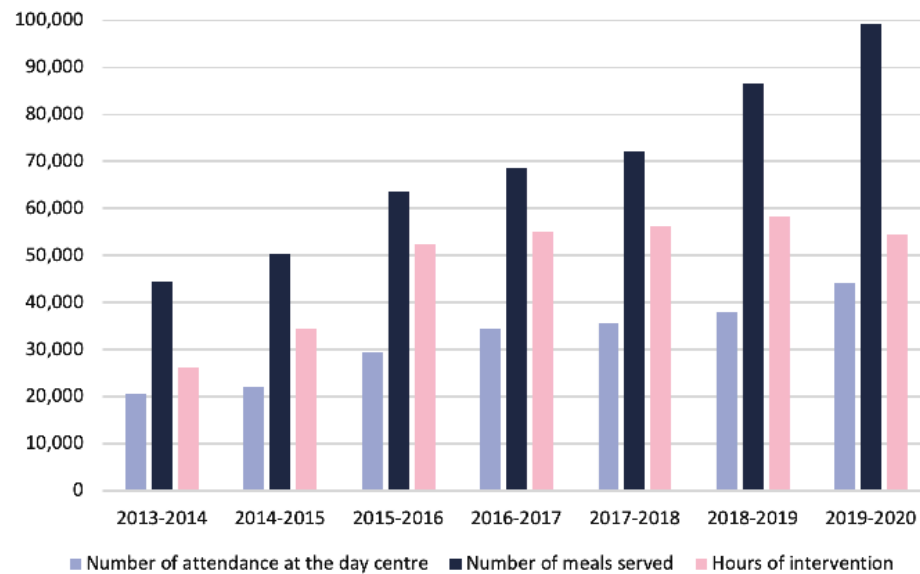
### Number of distinct women helped



### Trend in shelter services



### Trend in day-centre services





# Contact US

514-284-9665 | [www.laruedesfemmes.org](http://www.laruedesfemmes.org) | [info@laruedesfemmes.org](mailto:info@laruedesfemmes.org)  
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