

EDITORIAL

In this community, let's make it the right of all children to start off a new school year with a head start and a happy face.

Backpacks bring smiles and success

By Sharon McCully

Canada signed The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 26 years ago on May 28, 1990, entrenching in law the provision of basic needs for every child, including the right to food, clothing, a safe place to live and to have their basic needs met. In an accompanying child-friendly document, the Charter tells children: "You should not be disadvantaged so that you can't do many things other kids do."

That's where the community is called to action.

Not all parents have the means or resources to create a level playing field for their children. They can't afford to send their kids to hockey school or summer camp or to pay for swimming lessons.

At a more basic level, many parents struggle to meet the day-to-day requirements of food, shelter and clothing, let alone absorb hundreds of dollars in back-to-school expenses for a new backpack, school supplies, indoor and outdoor shoes, gym clothes and more.

Consequently, what should be one of the most exciting times in a child's life, often becomes a stress point for low-in-

come families and a negative experience for many children.

Operation Backpack was conceived to help ease the burden of families at the beginning of the school year by providing new school bags and essential supplies to children identified by school authorities.

Last year, close to 100 children at Lennoxville Elementary and Alexander Galt were discreetly given new backpacks and supplies to help kick off a new school year on the right foot.

This year, donations from the community will help designated students at Lennoxville Elementary, along with children from the area's feeder schools entering Alexander Galt Regional High School for the first time.

Your donation, regardless of the amount, will go towards the purchase of supplies, identified by teachers for each grade, and stuffed into spiffy new backpacks, carefully selected by Operation Backpack volunteers. The backpacks will be distributed to the families prior to the start of the new school year.

If you have already sent a donation, please accept thanks on behalf of these children. If you would like to support this worthwhile endeavour, you can



send your cheque to the co-ordinating body, the Lennoxville and District Women's Centre (LDWC), 257 Queen Street, Sherbrooke, Qc. J1M1K7

Tax receipts will be issued.

Alternatively, you can stop by The Record booth June 11 on Friendship Day in Lennoxville to learn more about the

program and make a donation.

The first day of school is right up there with Christmas and birthdays on the excitement scale for kids

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"Cab" Gab for two volunteer centres



THE SCOOP

MABLE HASTINGS

On Thursday, May 26, 2 staff and 6 Board members from the Missisquoi North Volunteer Centre (CAB) in Mansonville paid a visit to the CAB Cowansville Volunteer Centre in an effort to learn more about the various CAB's in the area. The group was welcomed by Cowansville CAB General Man-

ager, Dimka Belec who warmly welcomed guests and spoke about the objectives, structure and strategic plan of the CAB Cowansville; noting that many organizational changes are being put into place this year.

Shawn-Marie Dawson, Community Development Coordinator, explained the process of recruitment, training and recognizing the many volunteers who work for the CAB in Cowansville. The use of volunteers is central to the mandate of the CAB and all activities depend on volunteer support from the community.

"We were very impressed with their ability to run so many programs entirely on volunteer support," shared Hilary Head, CAB Missisquoi North board member.

Next up was the Service Assistant Co-ordinator, Amélie Fournier who spoke about the various services which are

available at the CAB Cowansville. Both groups noted the similarities in programs offered by the two groups and were able to benefit from several interesting exchanges regarding topics like, the publicizing of services, the procedures in place to obtain services and the support from other organizations.

The CAB Cowansville is situated in the manse of the United Church and the highlight of the visit was the opportunity to attend the weekly community meal that takes place every Thursday in the basement of the church next door. The guests enjoyed soup, pizza and salad plus a muffin and coffee. There was a large turnout for the meal of over 100 people who came together in a friendly atmosphere sharing a lunch prepared for all by a group of about a dozen hard-working and cheerful volunteers.

The group later visited the kitchens

and storage rooms belonging to the church which the CAB uses for their lunch and food bank supplies.

While some of the other Missisquoi North CAB staff and board members had previously made the visit, this outing gave most of the remaining team a chance to find out more about the other CAB in Cowansville.

"This provides us with much food for thought as we reflect on our own organization and its objectives," added Head.

For more information about the Cowansville Volunteer Centre (CAB), visit their website at info@cabcowansville.com or call 450-263-3758. For more information about the Missisquoi North Volunteer Centre in Mansonville visit: www.cabmn.org or call 450-292-3114 or the Youth Centre at 450-292-4886



COURTESY

Members of the Mansonville Missisquoi North Volunteer Centre (CAB) visited the Cowansville Volunteer Centre (CAB) to share and learn

THE RECORD

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ON-LINE SUBSCRIPTIONS

QUEBEC:	1 YEAR	71.50	3.58	7.13	\$82.21
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