

2017 Activity Report

Montreal Chapter

OUR MISSION
MEET THE NEEDS OF PEOPLE
WITH MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS
LIVING IN THE CHAPTER'S REGION
AS APPROPRIATELY AS POSSIBLE





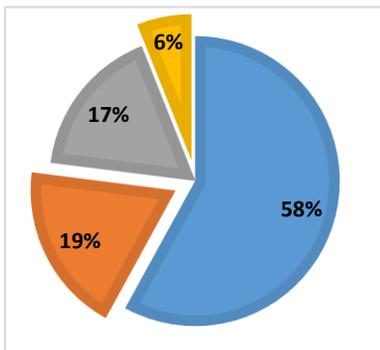
Introduction

We will remember 2017 as a year of change and continuation. For example, the Montreal Chapter was able to carry out some of the projects planned at the last General Meeting, and it worked on achieving the objectives it set during the strategic planning of 2016–2020.

Statistics

In 2017, 1,159 people used the services of the Montreal Chapter including 102 members who participated in the organization’s associative life. Of the users of services, 25% are Anglophones and 75% are Francophones.

ORIGIN OF THE CALLS

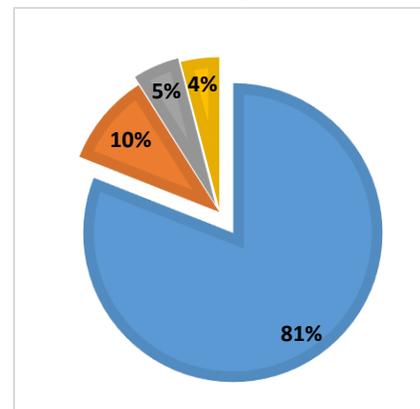


This year, the Montreal Chapter team answered over 330 requests. The number varies from one year to the next. Of the calls and emails received, 58% came from people who have multiple sclerosis, 19% from significant others (including caregivers), 6% from health professionals and various community organizations and 17% were from other users.

REASON OF THE CALLS

81% of requests were from people seeking information, documentation, guidance and/or emotional support, 10% of the callers wanted information on available financial support, 5% on educational programs and 4% were from people who wanted support in defending their rights.

There are many reasons for



All requests are important. However, some need more research and consultation. Indeed, requests for advocacy and the need for support are complex and numerous.

Information

Informing and raising the awareness of people with MS continues to be a key goal for the Montreal Chapter. To do this, two information workshops were organized in 2017, one in the winter and one in the fall.

WHAT TAX BENEFITS ARE YOU ENTITLED TO RECEIVE FROM THE GOVERNMENT?

On February 22, 2017, Luc Lacombe, FCA, M.Fisc., rose to the challenge of describing – in plain and simple language – the Registered Disability Savings Plan (RDSP) and the tax credits that people with multiple sclerosis can benefit from. We should also mention that a freezing Monday night in February did not discourage the 42 people who came out to take part in this information session!

MANAGING THE INVISIBLE SYMPTOMS OF MS

Judith Brouillette, RN, MSN, MScN, a nurse and counsellor at the neurology clinic at the Jewish General Hospital of Montreal, gave a detailed presentation on the invisible symptoms of multiple sclerosis and the proposed treatments to mitigate or cure them. This presentation attracted about 20 people to the Montreal Chapter's office on October 3, 2017.

NEWSLETTER (*LIAISON BULLETIN*)

The semi-annual bulletin and the summer calendar are currently the main means of communication used to inform members and users of our services about the Chapter's activities and the resources offered to the community. Published in English and French, with the help of our volunteers, our newsletter was sent to 1,159 people, half of whom have agreed to receive this publication by email to help us reduce our mailing costs. The summer activity schedule is distributed in hard copy at the annual barbecue in June and sent out only by email. All these publications can be consulted on the Montreal Chapter's website. We published articles on various topics and resources, including the Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse, the Tel-écoute and Tel-aînés phone services, the free accompaniment service offered by PIMO, the Information and Referral Centre of Greater Montreal, and progress in the potential adoption of a federal accessibility act.

Thank you to all of our contributors for their participation in our *Liaison Bulletin*.

CREATION OF A FACEBOOK PAGE FOR THE MONTREAL CHAPTER

The Montreal Chapter's Facebook page is a new information tool. It allows us to announce the Chapter's ongoing activities, presentations and workshops. We also post the latest news on MS research, as well as important information on the Chapter and on multiple sclerosis.



<https://www.facebook.com/SPMontreal/>

Support

SELF-HELP GROUPS

We hold bimonthly and monthly meetings of self-help groups for various clients, such as:

- ✓ French speaking people living with MS (15 registrations, 9 meetings)
- ✓ Caregivers (12 registrations, 11 meetings)
- ✓ English speaking people living with MS (22 registrations, 19 meetings)

VISITS TO LONG-TERM CARE FACILITIES

Visits to the CHSLD Notre-Dame-de-la-Merci long-term care facility continued every two weeks. These visits are organized to reach people housed in long-term care facilities whose health does not allow them to go out. They are a type of coffee club and give participants an opportunity to talk to others and exchange information.

Social and recreational activities

Low cost social activities offered by the Montreal Chapter are always very popular. They break isolation and increase the feeling of belonging to the MS Society, in addition to acting as a self-help network. Outings to restaurants and the choir are activities to which even people with reduced mobility can easily have access to.

BUFFET GET-TOGETHERS AND RESTAURANT GET-TOGETHERS

Outings to restaurants were held every two weeks in January and February and every week starting in March, when the snow starts to melt. Note that, in winter, participation in events depends crucially on people's ability to get out of their homes and travel around town.

Participants enjoy meeting at our buffet get-togethers (6 in 2017) and restaurant get-togethers (17 in 2017). However, let's not forget that two outings had to be cancelled due to the weather and the closure of a restaurant. On average, we have 25 at the restaurant get-togethers and it is still the Buffet FuLam that holds the record for the highest participation with over 50 guests. The Halloween lunch was held at the Buffet Fu Lam, participants were invited to pick an accessory to dress up for the occasion.

Finally, this year we tested the community hall of the supermarket Provigo Angus, as well as five new restaurants. In fact, we always try to find new places that meet our accessibility requirements so our participants can try new restaurants.

ONE-OFF ACTIVITIES

- ✓ **The Barbecue** under the marquee, which attracted 102 participants at the beginning of June, was a winner once again.
- ✓ **The Christmas party** was a huge success, with more than 90 participants attending an elegant lunch at the Plaza, in downtown Montreal.
- ✓ **A little picnic by Beaver Lake** in July brought out about 30 people. All participants had to bring their own lunch.
- ✓ Unfortunately, **the picnic at the home of Ginger Petty**, on Île Bizard, had to be cancelled. After postponing the event from July to August due to the damage caused by the spring floods, Ms. Petty finally had to cancel it on the very morning of the picnic because violent storms were forecast for the middle of the day.

6@8 SPIN

These are outings organized mainly for people aged 18 to 45 who have multiple sclerosis. This activity was developed a few years ago to reach young adults. In 2017, 11 meetings were held with seven to thirteen people each time.

GAME DAY

Game Day was held 23 times and 20 people have now registered for it. This activity, held every second Tuesday, even during the summer, consists of an afternoon when we play board games, have fun, relax, talk to friends and have a good time.

CHOIR

The renowned *Gang de malades* choir is made up of some 15 enthusiastic singers. They took part in 30 singing workshops and put everything they had learned into practice at their end-of-year concert, which took place in early June.



Adapted sports activities

The sports activities we offer allow people with multiple sclerosis to keep in shape safely and at a low cost. We should note that these activities are better adapted to their physical condition than the courses usually offered in the community. The teachers are professionals in the field of adapted physical education who focus on the specific needs of each student.

WALKING SCHOOL

The École du mouvement (walking school) continues to be a very popular activity. The physical exercises help people with MS to develop new motor skills and motor actions through dynamic neuromotor training, which has an impact on their autonomy and quality of life. Every Monday, four classes are given to groups of approximately 15 people. In 2017, 136 classes of 1 hour and 20 minutes in length were given. Participants in the two groups can do the exercises while seated if they prefer. This adapted version helps persons with reduced mobility to stay active, which contributes greatly to their well-being and improves their state of health. Courses are taught by two kinesiologists who have acquired many years of experience in working with people who have MS and who have received special training to meet their needs.

ADAPTED YOGA

The adapted yoga courses are also well attended by the users of our services. We offer two courses, one sitting down, every Thursday from February to December, except in summer. In 2017, 56 hour-and-a-half courses were given.

Adapted yoga improves the quality of life of people who have MS and encourages them to adopt an active lifestyle. Participants can improve their posture, concentration and stress management in addition to building their physical strength and flexibility. Finally, they acquire basic knowledge that allows them to practise yoga independently and safely.

Thank you to our instructors for their commitment.

Volunteering

Without our volunteers, we would not be able to hold all of these activities. Again this year, our volunteers donated a lot of time to Montréal Chapter activities whether they sat on the Board of Directors, assisted the co-ordinator in organizing activities or accompanied members during activities. Thank you for your kind hearts and dedication!

There is more...

Provincial activities in which our members participate

QUEBEC SUMMIT ON MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS The third Quebec Summit on Multiple Sclerosis was held on April 8, 2017, in Boucherville. Almost 500 people had a chance to attend presentations by specialists and eminent researchers from Quebec.

YOUTH CAMPS The MS summer camps for young people aged 7 to 17, who have a parent with MS, were held in June at Camp Richelieu, and in August at Camp Edphy. Sixty young people from across Quebec were given the opportunity to enjoy a free week of sports, games and MS workshops. Three kids from Montreal were selected and benefitted from a wonderful experience.

ESPOIR FAMILLE CONFERENCE This annual event, which is for people with multiple sclerosis and their families, encourages all participants to exchange ideas and help each other to cope better with MS. Workshops and talks are given on various MS-related topics and a program of activities is organized for young people aged 6 to 17. In 2017, the annual provincial conference was held from October 20 to 22 at Le Victorin hotel in Victoriaville and hosted nearly 250 people, including five families from Montreal.



OUR ACHIEVEMENTS IN BRIEF

- ✓ Responded to over 300 calls
- ✓ Interesting and varied outings at low prices, opportunities for meeting and exchanging ideas throughout the year to break isolation
- ✓ Constant and committed involvement of our volunteers

Board members

Kristen Robillard, Chair
Sylvie Francoeur, Vice-Chair
Sev Pallotta, Secretary-Treasurer
Line Bouliane
Emérence Kubela

Cécilia Gaudet
Katia Prévost
Sylvain Lapalme
Roseline Fournier

THE TEAM

Marie-Claude Dufour, Director
Patricia Rizan, Coordinator, Programs and Services
Daniel Lapalme, Coordinator, Programs and Services

MONTREAL CHAPTER REGION

The cities located to the east of Lachine, Dorval and Pierrefonds on the Island of Montreal form the Montreal Chapter.

The office is opened all year from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., from Monday to Friday.
Call for an appointment.

PANAM Organization
recognized by the City of Montreal

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