

03 ON OUR OWN



**ANNUAL REPORT
FOR 2018**





A WORD FROM OUR DIRECTOR

Dear fellow O3 Board members, staff, residents, volunteers and supporters,

As I approach my one-year anniversary at O3, I must say first and foremost what a privilege it has been to be the Director of this organization and serve the 29 families who are a part of our community.

What drew me to O3 was the opportunity to work with young parents who have had a hard start in life, or those who came to parenthood earlier than anticipated, and needed some support. I wanted our families to know that even though they may face obstacles, or the world may say they made a mistake, or there may be days that are really hard, they have people in their corner - our staff, our Board, our donors, our dedicated volunteers, our partners, and each other - those who believe in them, who believe that O3 families deserve every opportunity life has to offer, and that O3 is the place to obtain the tools and resources for success.

I remember the first workshop I observed at O3: Parenting Part 1. The staff had set up a series of workstations where parents could sit and do arts and crafts with their children, in order to strengthen the parent-child bond. Tears came to my eyes as I realized that our families are no different than others: these were parents spending quality time with their children, creating memories and special moments. Our families simply need more support than others may need, but the foundation of love and care is there.

Since that workshop, I have spent this past year getting to know the mothers, fathers and children in our O3 family. I have learned their needs, fears, challenges, strengths, hopes and dreams. As the Director, the challenge I face is managing the limited resources we have in order to prioritize the needs of our families while having the greatest positive influence over the outcome of their lives.

With the support of the Board, the staff, our partners and our residents, I am looking forward to this upcoming year of growth, new programming, making more space for dads, and supporting our parents in their quests for higher education. I am filled with excitement as the O3 family takes our next step forward.



Sincerely,

Ushana Houston



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Dear fellow O3 Board members, staff, residents, volunteers and supporters,

It has been an honour to serve as the Board President in 2017-2018.

The year was marked by a number of important achievements. Firstly, our mission and programs are thriving: O3 reached maximum occupancy and residents attended programs and activities with unprecedented enthusiasm. Moreover, two residents and their children are transitioning out of O3 into their new independent lives. We are excited to see what's next for them.

O3 welcomed a new staff member in almost every position in 2017-2018. The new staff members not only hit the ground running but were able to increase the programs offered to residents. Ushana Houston took over as Director of O3. Her passion for our mission and fresh perspective will surely lead the organization in exciting new directions. Abigail Lawson took over as Resident Development Coordinator from our longtime RDC Bonnie Pero, who cared so deeply for our residents. Abigail is already pushing us all to take action and accomplish more. Olivia Herron became our first full time Workshop and Community Development Coordinator, allowing O3 to offer more programming and follow up to residents. We also welcomed Mireille N'gouan as our new bookkeeper.

O3 buildings have faced heating issues as a legacy of the building deficiencies in the Benny Housing Project. For several years, O3 staff and Board members have worked with the SHQ to arrange to have major work done on the buildings' heating system, so that the buildings could have even, consistent heating and reduce the amount of maintenance work required. While we had hoped that the work would be undertaken in 2018, administrative delays gave us the opportunity to receive additional opinions on how we can best accomplish our goal. We remain hopeful that this project will be completed, in an optimal manner, in 2019.

Finally, O3 raised an all time high of \$80,000 in 2017, thanks to the amazing Media Experts' comedy night fundraiser and individual and corporate donations. This incredible amount is a reflection of the community's confidence in the work done at O3. We know that we may not be so lucky to be able to have this type of fundraiser every year, so we are looking to expand our sources of funding in the future.

Thanks to everyone who contributed to O3 in 2017-2018. Your continued support is fundamental to helping young parents better their lives and those of their children.



Sincerely,
Sacha Liben

OUR MISSION

O3 is a Montreal-based not-for-profit community organization.

Our mission is to support young parents in difficulty in achieving their goals by providing them with affordable housing and opportunities for personal, educational and parental growth.

By providing an encouraging, community-oriented environment for our promising families, O3 envisions a healthy and stable next generation, one child at a time, one family at a time.



OUR BOARD

Sacha Liben, President
Sharon Rossy, Past President
Marilyn Rowell, Vice President
Christine Evans, Treasurer
Emma Trayhern, Secretary
Jennifer Douglass, Member
Joanna Kolb, Member
Tina Palotta, Member
Josie Scalia, Member
Preeya Bissoonauth, Associate Member
Stefan Gow, Associate Member
Len Liben, Associate Member
Stephanie Normandin, Associate Member
Ria Rombough, Associate Member
Andrea Weaver, Associate Member
Shamara McLeod, Resident Member
Szilvia Szabo, Resident Member
Chelsea Watts-Smith, Resident Member



OUR STAFF

Ushana Houston, Director
Linda Babins, Interim Director
Fiona Keats, Interim Director
Bonnie Pero, Resident Development Coordinator
Olivia Herron, Workshop and Community Development Coordinator
Judy Battista, Childcare Worker
Ben Palmai, Building Manager
Elayne Aber, RDC Supervision
Julia Griffiths, Drama Therapy Master's Student Intern
Iyana Potts, Summer Student
Gabrielle Thomas, Summer Student



O3 PROGRAM



**EDUCATION
& CAREER**



**PARENTING
SKILLS**



**INDIVIDUAL
SUPPORT**



**BUDGETING
SKILLS**



**AFFORDABLE
HOUSING**

WE TAKE A HOLISTIC APPROACH...

Our program includes group workshops, individual support, community-building activities, as well as safe and affordable on-site housing.

This year we hired a Workshop and Community Development Coordinator, which has allowed us to better tailor our workshops to the needs of our residents. With the support of our partners, we have been able to hire skilled facilitators well-versed or professionally trained in their workshop topic. We have also continued to focus on hiring facilitators who reflect our community, and this has helped build engagement and commitment from workshop participants.

WORKSHOPS

We hold workshops twice a week, and each runs for 3-5 sessions. Workshops not only provide essential skills, but also offer a space for residents to learn from one another and discuss their hopes and fears around a variety of topics.

Before each workshop, a resident prepares a meal, and parents and their children enjoy family dinner together in our community room. When parents begin the workshop, the children head to our playroom where Judy, our amazing childcare worker, provides supervised play time with the help of dedicated volunteers. None of our workshops would be possible without offering childcare.

This year some of the workshops we held included:

Budgeting
Collective Kitchen
Art and Expression
Parenting

Transforming Community
Yoga and Mindfulness
Healthy Relationships
Co-Parenting



"My favourite activity is the collective kitchen, where we all cook- it takes you away from making supper." - Schirline

INDIVIDUAL

The Resident Development Coordinator is the heart of our one-on-one programming. Residents meet with her monthly, more often as needed, for emotional support, referral to community resources, and goal-setting.

During their meetings with the RDC, parents set and work toward goals relating to:

Education and Career
Personal Growth and Self-Care
Parenting and Child Development
Community Involvement and Leadership
Budgeting

This spring, our Resident Development Coordinator of five years, Bonnie Pero, moved on to take the next step in her own life, moving back to her hometown. We would like to thank Bonnie for her dedication to our families over the last five years, and praise her for all of her work building O3 and the many programs we see today.



"The social worker actually helped me get back into college, and helped me pick the career I am studying now, special care counselling." -Tiffany

COMMUNITY

Many of our parents have expressed that O3 is their first experience of safety, community, friendship and family. Besides the fact that all of our families live on site, a sense of community is also fostered through the connections made during our many community-building activities, such as an annual trip to the Ecomuseum Zoo, spa nights, drop-off childcare, collective kitchens, holiday parties, coffee clubs and community recognition of resident accomplishments.

Many of the children also forge lasting friendships as they navigate their early years in our courtyard and playroom. This is their home, too.

Parents learn to support one another by helping each other with childcare, parenting tips, mentoring new residents and modelling positive co-parenting for one another.



"It's the experience of seeing others going through the same thing we're going through, it gives us a place to keep on going forward, we're not alone [...] it's like a community, and you're all together and you're all helping each other out." - O3 Dad

ACADEMIC GRADUATES

Nashaia

Tell us about your journey at O3

"My name is Nashaia and I've been at O3 for 1 year now and this past March I graduated from high school.

I applied to O3 because I wanted to be in a supportive environment and my friend who also lives here said it was the best solution and encouraged me to. While at O3 my main goal was to complete high school and attend workshops which I enjoyed, especially the budgeting one, it was a fun group!"

How did O3 help you flourish during a challenge you faced?

"I had someone to talk to at O3 who motivated me to do better, which made me realize things about the unhealthy relationship I was in."



What are you excited about for the future and what do you want others to know about O3?

"I am looking forward to getting my Masters degree and buying a house someday and being able to afford the things I want. I would tell anyone applying to O3 that it's a good place to be, the staff helps you through your struggles and will also help you with budgeting so you can get out of debt."

"I am looking forward to getting my Master's degree and buying a house someday ." - Nashaia

Chantal

Tell us about your journey at O3 Chantal

"My name is Chantal. I moved to O3 4 years ago and recently received my PAB certificate in November 2017. I came to O3 because I wanted to finish school and I needed financial stability. I like O3 because I learned about budgeting and I've been able to meet other moms."

How did O3 help you flourish during a challenge you faced?

"When I was having financial trouble the staff at O3 was very supportive."



What are you excited about for the future and what do you want others to know about O3?

"What's most exciting to me is being debt free, being able to support my daughter financially and also to get a good education. I would tell anyone moving to O3 that everyone is here to help you. The workshops will benefit you in the long run and everyone cares about your education."

ACADEMIC GRADUATES

Jael

Tell us about your journey at O3 Jael:

"My name is Jael. I moved to O3 two years ago because I needed support and an affordable place to live while doing my studies. I was in the process of completing sec. V math and then decided to apply to a program outside of my comfort zone and challenge myself. Being the only girl in my program, Electronics in Telecommunications, I was faced with sexism, I was sexually harassed by classmates and criticized by teachers for being in the program, but I fell in love with what I was learning. O3 and the community here was a big support through all of these challenges."



How did O3 help you flourish during a challenge you faced?

"I experienced many parenting challenges because my daughter was struggling developmentally and O3 supported me by helping me to advocate for myself with the daycare and teachers who wanted to label my daughter. I educated myself and became informed, and the staff here reassured me by listening and supporting my position. I also saw my daughter's social skills improve since being at O3, and having a community right here meant she didn't have to go far in order to interact with other kids".

"I am looking forward to completing my degree in Engineering and having financial security." - Jael

What are you excited about for the future and what do you want others to know about O3?

"I am looking forward to completing my degree in Engineering and having financial security. I would tell anyone applying to O3 that it is a place to grow and flourish. You have resources at your finger tips and if you don't have support this is a good place to be and not to be taken for granted, I am very grateful."





*"O3 has had
an amazing
impact on my
life, definitely
a positive
one."
-Shamara*



03 IN NUMBERS

29

APARTMENT
UNITS

163

VOLUNTEER
HOURS

35

FAMILIES
SERVED

6

DEDICATED
STAFF

952

MEALS
SERVED

68

WORKSHOP
SESSIONS

"Graduating from O3 is bitter-sweet. I really miss the program. I really miss the social worker and the environment, but at the same time, I'm very excited to continue with my education and the next chapter in my life."-Tiffany



THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS!

Auberge Shalom
Ballet de l'Ouest de Montreal
CABM Volunteer Bureau of Montreal
Ville de Montreal, Borough of CDN-NDG
CJE Carrefour Jeunesse Emploi
CSSS Cavendish/CLSC Benny Farm
DESTA
Eco Quartier NDG
Frontier College

Elizabeth House Family Assistance
Jamaica Association
Le Chateau
Masion de la Famille Mosaik
McGill School of Social Work
Native Women's Shelter of Montreal
NDG Community Council
Stonehaven Productions
Table de Concertation 0-5 Cavendish
The Ecomuseum Zoo

THANK YOU TO OUR FINANCIAL PARTNERS!

Atrium Innovations
Brian and Alida Rossy Family
Foundation
Cookie and Larry Rossy Family
Foundation
Fednav
Gabriel Rossy Memorial Foundation
Kathleen Weil. MNA

Media Experts
Service Canada
SIPPE
Ville de Montreal-Borough of CDN/NDG

Individual donors, big, small and in-kind,
who help our families all year long.

A VERY SPECIAL THANK YOU TO...



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www.o3onourown.com

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