

**2024-2025**

**ANNUAL REPORT**

**03 ON OUR OWN**



# O3's Beginnings

O3 started as an initiative from Maison Elizabeth House which recognized a need in the community for transitional housing for young vulnerable mothers. It is a four building structure with 29-unit apartments constructed with the assistance of Société d'habitation du Québec, and the Office Municipal d'habitation de Montréal to provide rent subsidies for its residents. Buildings were official opened December 2005. In 2012, O3 became an independent organization with its own charitable status and board of directors. Today, O3 continues to create a circle of support to young families.



## What We Do

O3 is a small non-profit organization that offers support services coupled with transitional housing to young vulnerable parents aged 16-30 years old with at least one child 0-5 years old.

Each family can stay for up to 5 years, during which time they work on goals relating to apartment living, mental health, financial literacy, education and career, parenting, healthy relationships, and healthy living.

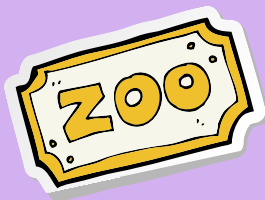
## Our Core Beliefs

We believe that strong family systems are key to reaching success. We support the primary parent, co-parent and the child to be able to leave O3 Independently.



# A Year in Review

## 2024 - 2025





# Our Board of Directors

With four new board members joining our team this year, we focused on building a strong base for our board and our committees.

We launched our Resident Advocacy Committee - seen here meeting with residents outside - to great success. Residents and board members loved brainstorming and collaborating together in the sun.

We look forward to strengthening our Fundraising committee and continuing to prioritize resident engagement in the year to come!



**Debbie Douglass (President)**  
**Raeanne Francis (Vice-President)**  
**Sissy Duong (Treasurer)**  
**Elizabeth McPhedran (Secretary)**  
**Clarinda Daley**  
**Maria Valente-Fernandes**  
**Nora Jean-Baptiste**  
**Elizabeth Kabbash**  
**Linda Kisa**  
**Susan Layne**  
**Melissa Keller**  
**Andrea Shillolo (Sept -)**  
**Victoria Abidi (June - Sept)**

**Selection Committee Members:**  
**Ria Rombough**  
**Sharon Rossy**  
**Marilyn Rowell**



# Report from the Board President

It has been a tremendous honour to serve my third year as President of the Board of Directors of On Our Own (O3).

This year, we welcomed four new board members. I want to extend my sincere gratitude to all our board members for their active participation and ongoing support.

We also launched a Resident Advocacy Committee, which meets in person with O3 residents, to encourage and support resident engagement. This committee has focused on identifying resident concerns and ensuring consistent, meaningful dialogue throughout the year.

In a significant development, the Board voted to delegate full responsibility for the resident selection process to our Executive Director, Amanda Murphy, and her outstanding team. This shift reflects our confidence in their expertise and allows operational matters to be handled more efficiently and effectively.

Our building office renovations were completed, and the space we have is now very well utilized. Amanda continues to demonstrate remarkable leadership in seeking out opportunities to expand programming and support for residents. She has successfully secured several grants, including the Rossy Foundation, the Trottier Foundation and TD Canada Trust. These have funded important initiatives, renovations, and much-needed repairs.

On the fundraising front, our annual comedy show was, once again, a resounding success—thanks to the incredible talents of Joey Elias, Mark Sherman, and the Media Experts team. We were thrilled to welcome Derek Seguin to this year's lineup, adding even more energy to the event. We also held a spin class fundraiser led by Joe Diab at Gym Fit Forme. Looking ahead, we aim to grow our fundraising efforts to support both existing and future projects.

I'm continually inspired by all that O3 has accomplished, especially in the years following the pandemic. The dedication and passion of the entire O3 team have been truly remarkable, and I'm excited to see what the year ahead holds. A heartfelt thank you to the entire O3 team and our dedicated board members. Wishing everyone a wonderful and restful summer!

**BOARD PRESIDENT  
DEBBIE DOUGLASS**



# 03 Staff



**Amanda Murphy**  
Executive Director



**Jade Parkinson-Gayle**  
Resident Development Coordinator



**Millicent-Ann Castillo**  
Community Development  
Coordinator



**Jean Souakolay Lama**  
Fathers Engagement Coordinator



**Brittany Sweet**  
Parenting Attachment  
Educator



**Nos Njikelana**  
Administrative and Program  
Assistant



**Reyhane Khoumbin**  
Finance Coordinator



**Judy Battista**  
Childcare Educator



**Howard A. Johnson**  
Cooking Educator



**Jaylen Westfield**  
Summer Student



**Justin Thomas**  
Building Manager

# Director's Report

Another year has absolutely flown by! We started off strong all watching the eclipse together in the park, and ended the year strong about to embark on our second annual staff retreat, which was filled with both hard work and much deserved relaxation.

This year end marks the end of our second year of the Strengthening Montreal Fund major capacity building grant from the Rossy Foundation, and the end of our Impact Measurement work with consultants Stephanie Garrow and Veronique Carbonneau. Through this work we refined our Theory of Change to define what we are holding ourselves accountable to, and mapped every aspect of our programming onto our Theory of Change outcomes. We integrated various tracking mechanisms to collect data and better understand our impact. (And I personally had a blast designing on our Miro board.)

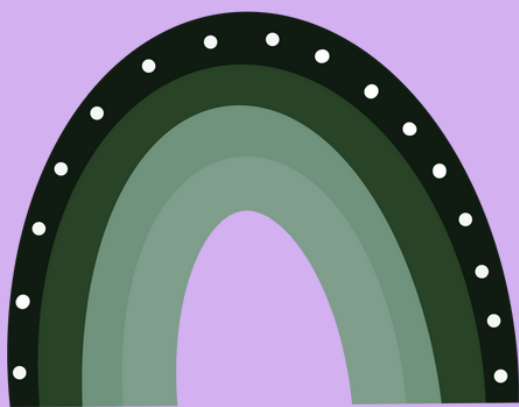
With the help of Nos, who joined the team this year as our Administrative and Program assistant, and our Board, we've been working hard to diversify our funding, increase our grants and foundation partnerships, and ensure our future stability. And on top of that we once again got to laugh our way to our 13th annual comedy fundraiser!

We welcomed many new residents this year, and that comes after a lot of repairs and renovations to apartments. Since I stepped into this position in early 2022, we have flipped 27 out of our 29 apartments, and on top of that we have completed many other major renovations - such as repairing patio stairs, recaulking the building exterior, restoring our windows, and our playground and office renovations. Although we have a busy building summer planned, we're hoping for a calmer winter and to shift out of our major renovations phase.

In the current housing affordability crisis, it's increasingly important that we focus on transitioning families to stable, affordable apartments after their time at O3. This is why we've formalized a seventh domain of Apartment Living. We're thankful to the Trottier Foundation for funding an expansion of our programming to focus on building connections with local coops, housing nonprofits and the private sector to help create direct channels to affordable permanent housing, as well as developing more in depth programming to help residents understand their rights as tenants.

As always, it's an honour to lead what I truly consider to be the best team ever, and to get to work together every day to support an amazing community of parents and children.

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**  
**AMANDA MURPHY**







# RDC Report

Every year at O3 is profoundly impactful to me—both personally and professionally. It continues to be one of my greatest pleasures to contribute my time and talent to the O3 community, as well as learn from the residents and their children who embody growth, resilience, and perseverance every day.

Over the past 12 months, I have had the opportunity to welcome 10 new residents on their journey into O3—learning about themselves and their lives before O3, and orienting them toward the opportunity that O3 can be. I am excited to see what the residents uncover about themselves and how they use O3 to propel their families forward, whether it comes to their confidence as parents, professionals, or young people in an ever-changing world.

Through one-on-one meetings, strengths-based coaching, and trauma-informed support, I have witnessed significant milestones—residents enrolling in school, securing employment, learning to co-parent with more confidence, building routines, and advocating for themselves and their children. Through the refinement of our Theory of Change, this year we have been able to identify clear, objective commitments to the residents coming through our program—such as an emphasis on apartment living skills, developing a life plan for a sustainable future, and building a strong parenting bond and attachment. In this process, we have adopted a new intake questionnaire and social contract review process that supports both staff and residents in clearly identifying the goals of being in the O3 program.

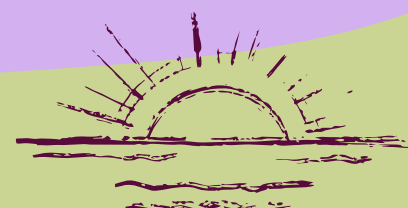
One highlight for me in the past year was hosting Career Day—an event where we invited local professionals who were once young mothers and who are part of the BIPOC community to come and share with residents about their professional experiences and their stories of managing the challenges of professional development and parenting. Some of our guests even included past O3 residents from 10+ years ago! My hope is that the residents can see themselves in these professionals and recognize the potential they too carry.

I also hosted a Special Care Counselling intern, who supported our residents with their IAP goals, as well as contributing study skills to our weekly study night sessions. The support of valuable interns goes a long way in increasing RDC capacity to give the residents consistent support that aligns with their varying needs. On a more challenging note, our residents are faced with increasing economic hardships in today's climate—whether it be the affordability of food or concern about sustainable living after O3. The need for a livable income is a prominent stressor for our residents, and it will be important that as an organization we continue to respond to the sensitivities of this current reality, and we continue to increase our capacity in order to ensure O3 residents have consistent access to individual, personalized support that responds to their diverse needs.

As we move forward, I remain committed to contributing to a community that is trauma-informed, healing-centered, and rooted in the empowerment of our residents. I continue to be inspired by their strength and resilience and am grateful to work alongside a passionate team that believes deeply in each individual's potential.

Much love,  
Jade

**RESIDENT DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR**  
**JADE PARKINSON-GAYLE**



# CDC Report



For the past three years, I've had the honour of serving as the Community Development Coordinator at O3 On Our Own, a role that has allowed me to blend my passion for community building with my commitment to supporting young families and their children. In this role, I have hosted community events, facilitated workshops, worked individually with residents, and so much more! But it's the daily conversations with residents where they share with us their accomplishments that really make my heart full. Sure, challenges happen but that is part of the adventure we are all here for! I am truly in a special place where change happens on a daily basis and I get to witness the residents' growth and resilience, and hear them stand up for themselves.



This year, we've been busy bees: refining our Theory of Change and putting into practice the values and curriculum we have worked so hard on. We upgraded our in-house budgeting series to better reflect meaningful conversations around the challenges of being a parent in a world and an economy that is changing so rapidly. We also expanded our gardening-parenting program with funding from the David Suzuki Foundation. With this program, I hope to inspire parents to move at a slower pace alongside the growth of their children and to create memories and build valuable skills that last a lifetime. I also briefly took on facilitation of Collective Kitchen. One of my favourite things was watching a child's willingness to cook and help in the kitchen blossom over just a few weeks! Food insecurity continues to be a challenge for many families, and with our new Theory of Change we've also focused on implementing more food skills and food knowledge into our collective kitchen.



Over the past year, we've also increased our food and material donations. The invaluable support of our Director Amanda, Assistant Nos, our neighbors, Carolyn's Community and so many more, we've established two emergency pantries within our office. We're deeply grateful for the generous support we've received. Your kindness fills our pantries and our hearts, allowing us to continue providing essential nourishment to our community. Alongside these pantry donations, I am so proud to say that we've worked together as a team to find mattresses, sofas and so many more household items.



We have accomplished so much! I am so proud to be working alongside this team who are so dedicated and passionate about creating spaces of growth with so much care, time and hard work. I am so lucky to be part of this team. It's been incredibly rewarding to witness the transformation that occurs when individuals and families are equipped with the tools, knowledge, and confidence to take charge of their futures. As I reflect on these past three years, I'm filled with gratitude for the opportunity to contribute to a community where growth, resilience, and connection are at the heart of everything we do.

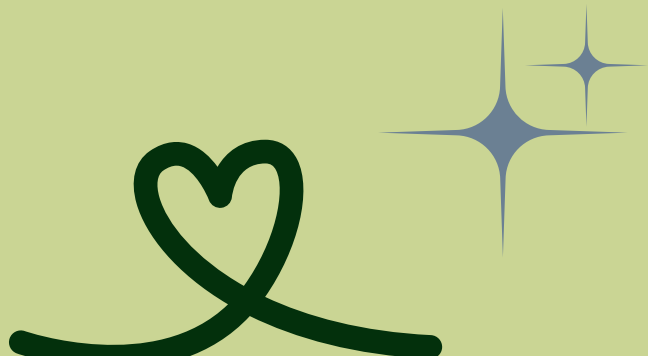
**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR**

**MILLICENT-ANN CASTILLO**





# So many donations!





# Fathers' Programming Report

With the advent of an addition to my family, it was a busy and successful year. As a result, I was away for a few months. Many of our current program participants are in the 'revive' stage - they are demonstrating some stability, have a clearer understanding of their children's development and needs, and are open to receiving services offered. It is great to see so many fathers committed to changing their personal situation, growing into their role within the family, and having a positive influence on their family and peers. They are able to do this by becoming more aware of their emotions, by being sensitive to the needs of their children and co-parent, and by using better communication techniques. We have seen increased engagement even in offsite coparents, many of whom have been much more present for O3 workshops and community activities.

Many participants have forged strong bonds through one-on-one meetings and taking part in clinical workshops. Most of them were able to find a sense of belonging, feel valued in their role as fathers, as well as having a space to express themselves and be able to communicate what they were feeling in a positive way. We also integrated co-parents into our parenting and budgeting programs this year, to help facilitate balanced co-parenting and active collaboration. For another year, we also offered our "Between Father's" workshops, which cover different O3 domains and offer dads a place to learn together and support each other.

In conclusion, I thank each participating father for giving me the chance and the confidence to be able to support them in the highs and lows, in moments of doubt, in moments of vulnerability and especially in moments of transition when the goal is achieved.

Yours sincerely,

Jean Lama



# Parenting Program Report

As the Parenting Attachment Educator at O3, I support a parenting program grounded in trauma-informed, relational, and neurodiversity-affirming care. The program continues to evolve through ongoing collaboration with parents.

Throughout the year, I brought in tools like routine charts, emotion and sensory regulation strategies, and brain-based learning models, not as fixed solutions, but as starting points. These frameworks are intentionally non-prescriptive, offering space for parents to adapt and reshape them in ways that reflect their own values, traditions, and worldviews. Some of the most meaningful strategies have come not from what's offered, but from how parents reimagine and expand on those tools in dialogue with one another.

In both workshops and one-on-one sessions, we explored *Dr. Dan Siegel's Hand Model of the Brain* and *Dr. Bruce Perry's Regulate-Relate-Reason-Repair* framework to support stress recovery and strengthen connection. Rupture is normalized, and repair is practiced as a core relational skill. Using these models as a foundation I support caregivers in decoding behaviour by asking: Is this a stress response? A missing skill? A will conflict (autonomy/emotion)? Or sensory over- or under-stimulation? This framework helps families understand behaviour in the context of development, trauma, and systemic oppression, rather than through blame or shame.

Key programs this year included:

- Gardening & Parenting: co-facilitated with Millicent (CDC), blending nature-based play, sensory regulation, and child-led connection through hands-on activities and reflection.
- Baby Stimulation Group: for parents with infants under 6 months, focused on co-regulation, sensory exploration, and early communication.
- Peer Support Parenting Groups: a space where parents co-regulate, craft, and bring real-life challenges to the group, often generating insights that go beyond any one model.

At the heart of my work is the belief that all behaviour is communication, and that all children do well when they can. Parenting doesn't happen in isolation, it unfolds within systems shaped by colonization, racism, ableism, and economic injustices. My hope is to offer support that responds to these realities, while equipping parents with tools to build strong, safe relationships that protect and heal.

I'm forever grateful to work alongside such incredible colleagues, whose support and presence make this job never feel like "work." And to all the parents and kids: thank you. You make parenting feel less lonely, more possible, and often, more joyful. I'm deeply grateful that I get to learn in community, and that my daughter gets to grow up surrounded by it.

**PARENTING ATTACHMENT EDUCATOR**

**BRITTANY SWEET**

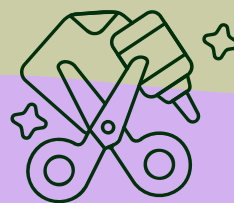


# Kids' Programming Report



Our summer student Jaylen returned in 2024 to lead more exciting parent-child activities - including group outings to the nearby splashpad and pool and arts and crafts! Jaylen always brings a positive and supportive energy to the space, encouraging our young parents to make the best of their time at O3. We are grateful for all the creative games and outings and happy memories.

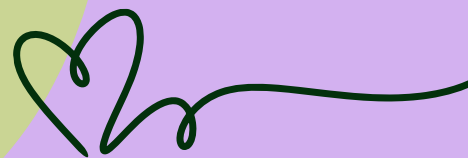
**SUMMER STUDENT**  
**JAYLEN WESTFIELD**



This year many new children integrated successfully into the playroom. It was a delight to welcome them and help them feel at home in our childcare space. We had so much fun exploring and discovering together.

With so many new parents attending programming, we had high occupancy in the playroom this year and we often needed additional childcare workers. A big thank you to Chava, Liyah, Chelsea, Theone and Umaia, who all assisted with childcare this year and made sure all the O3 kids stayed safe and had a great time.

**CHILDCARE COORDINATOR**  
**JUDY BATTISTA**





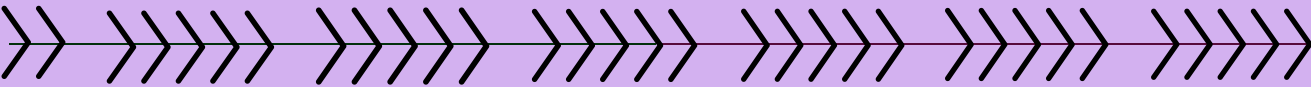
# Parents & Children





# Thank you to Martine

A big thank you to Martine Wagnac for her years of work and dedication at O3! We said goodbye to Martine as our building manager at the end of summer 2024 and wish her all the best in her work moving forward, and celebrating her many successes at O3.



## Building Report

We went through many changes this past year with our building team. With Martine's farewell we welcomed a temporary building crew: Soli Yarrow, acting as building manager; Cal Probetts and Payton Surette as building maintenance and repair crew. We are so grateful for all their hard work and innovations for the betterment of O3.

There was lots to do and lots got done! Thanks to our interim building crew we were able to flip 4 apartments! Floors and walls were fixed, new appliances installed and walls freshly painted. The office space has been updated and the storage room renovated. Our garden beds repaired for our parenting programming and throughout fall and winter the grounds were well maintained. Care was taken to tend to the many small repairs in apartments over the seasons.

We now welcome Justin Thomas our new building manager. It's exciting to start a new chapter with a dedicated and kind building expert!



**New Building Manager**  
**Justin Thomas**



**Interim Building Manager**  
**Soli Yarrow**



**Interim Building Maintenance Crew**  
**Cal Probetts**



**Interim Building Maintenance Crew**  
**Payton Surette**



**Occasional Building Repair**  
**Ishmael Marshall**





# Staff Pics

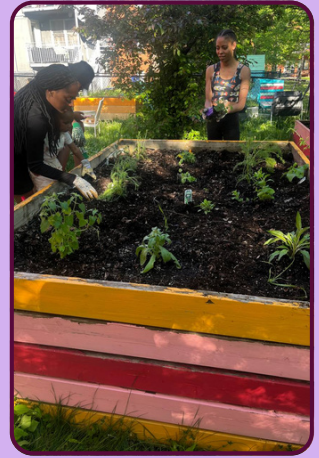




# 03 Food Program

Our food programming continues to thrive with many delicious collective kitchens and a growing garden! From sweet treats on mothers day to fresh veggies and herbs from the garden, we are continuing to teach food knowledge and skills, and cook the meals that people want to eat!

The children get a chance to learn and play in the garden on planting and harvesting days and practice their fine motor skills and learn kitchen safety during parent-child collective kitchen activities.



## Thank you to Howard

We say goodbye to Howard who was our cooking educator for collective kitchen. He brought so much joy and vibrancy along with his skills as a cook and an educator! Thank you for the many wonderful meals Howard and we wish you great success with your music career and all you do after O3! Though he may still join us from time to time for a good meal and celebrations in the community.



**Howard A. Johnson**  
Cooking Educator

# Thank You To Our Donors & Funders!

Atrium Innovations  
Malouf Family Foundation  
Brian and Alida Rossy Family Foundation  
Gabriel Rossy Memorial Foundation  
Drori Bellini Foundation  
Janice & Mark Sherman Family Foundation  
Jonathan & Susan Wener Family Foundation

And to Debbie and Jennifer Douglass,  
Joe Diab and Fit Forme Gym

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and Prevention Network



Public Health  
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Agence de la santé  
publique du Canada

And as always a very special thank you to

MEDIA X EXPERTS

and to **STONEHAVEN** productions

Along with Mark Sherman, Ian Maclean & Joey Elias  
for their help with our comedy show fundraiser

And to everyone who made a private donation this year!  
Your contributions are greatly valued and we are so thankful for your support.

# Thank You To Our Partners !



Office municipal  
d'habitation  
de Montréal



Centre intégré  
universitaire de santé  
et de services sociaux  
du Centre-Ouest-  
de-l'Île-de-Montréal



GRAPHIC  
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## **Keep in touch!**