



Centre communautaire  
Tyndale St-Georges  
Community Centre



fall newsletter 2015

## Believe in yourself, and success will follow

How students react to their report cards can say a lot about how they feel about learning.

When the High School Program (HSP) started 4 years ago, students would worry about bringing in their report cards, says Anthony Symonds, the High School Program Director at Tyndale St-Georges. A low grade, instead of being part of the learning experience, would make students nervous to talk about it. But then an interesting thing started happening: students began bringing in their report cards, asking for help. "Students would bring us their report cards even before bringing them home," says Jennifer Maxwell, High School Program Coordinator and Educator in the After School Program.

School attendance and graduation rates also went up, and the need for summer school courses dropped. Grades started to rise across the board: in the past year, grades in French, Math, Science and English have all gone up by at least 5%. And this past year, all grade 11 students successfully graduated.

What led to this change? Stricter studying rules? Rote learning? "We worked with volunteers and staff to create a safe atmosphere. Regardless of their grades we believed in them," says Anthony.

It's a feeling shared across the department and echoed by other staff. A big part of that, says Jennifer, is creating a safe space where students feel comfortable asking for the help that they need and feel assured they'll be helped, not judged.

Building that kind of trust takes time, and HSP staff and volunteers go the extra mile to create a safe atmosphere. Volunteers and staff work to get to know participants, have developed relationships with teachers to get early notice of when students need help, and do leg work to bring in old exams for practice, or copies of textbooks that students will need to succeed.

It's been four years since the High School Program started, and the successes are starting to be clear. Each year, keep trying to build a winning formula. This includes trying out new approaches with staff, volunteers and participants. Before being able to build

relationships with students, staff need to know how to work together, so as a first step the HSP brought in staff team building. When students needed extra help, the program added an extra tutoring night on Tuesdays that's become popular. And this summer, following an end of session meeting of staff and tutors last year, the program decided to mix classes between age groups. The result has been a huge success, says Jennifer, with older students helping out younger ones and building more of a support network in the program. It's worked so well, that it will be continued into the fall program.

Anthony is excited about what this fall could offer. This year will see the most Grade 11 students ever in the program - 15 - and

he thinks all will be able to graduate without summer school. HSP could also see its biggest enrollment yet: word is out in the community, and while in the past there have been 55 participants, that could go up as high as 80.

It's a lot of work, but Anthony is sure that the team - including Jennifer, Ushana Houston, the Family Resource Coordinator, Darnell Jones, the Education Coordinator, Mariam Aziz, the specialized tutor, and the rest of the staff and volunteers - is up

to supporting students to set their sights even higher.

Because in the end, according to Anthony, it's about helping students achieve what they are capable of.

*"All success kids have is because of them," says Anthony. "It's not because of a program. All we did was allow them to believe in themselves."*



## Director's Message

It's hard to believe that after close to 5 years as the Executive Director, I will be moving on to new opportunities in the New Year. It has been such a privilege to be part of this wonderful organization. In this newsletter, you will hear of the many fantastic programs that the Centre offers to the residents of Little Burgundy. These are programs that have been created by a dedicated staff, supported by generous donors and carried out by hundreds of volunteers. I am always struck by how many amazing people stand behind the programs we run and the difference that they make in people's lives. I will leave this organization with many fond memories and will continue to be connected to its work as a donor and supporter of its events.

- Jen de Combe, Executive Director



## Early Childhood: Building Bonds Through Diversity

In just one session last year, the Early Childhood Department had 45 families from 30 different countries speaking 20 different languages.

At first, you might think this could mean confusion, difficulty in communication or even divisions.

Cultural diversity is in fact the cornerstone of the Early Childhood program, which works with children 0 to 5 years old and their parents. Walk into one of their sessions, and you're more than likely to hear them singing a familiar song like Head & Shoulders, but in one of the many languages of their participants.

One of the department's points of pride - and successes - is helping parents and their children, many of whom are new to Canada, to feel welcomed and part of the community.

"Parents have told us that without Tyndale, they would feel isolated and uncertain about how to handle the stresses of new parenthood," says department director Maria Panova. "When they come here, they see 'hello' written on the wall in different languages. We run activities valuing different cultures. For some, it's the only place to get support."

Having an open space in which to share their language and traditions is an important part to helping parents feel at ease, and



bond with their children. Some of the ways the Early Childhood staff help parents feel at home includes having parents create a Cultural Puzzle featuring memories from their home countries, holding discussions where parents share stories and wisdom about their own upbringing, and giving space in the Early Childhood newsletter for parents to write articles about their traditions and the holidays they celebrate.

Feeling a part of the community helps parents to feel more confident and secure, which helps in their interactions with children. And it also goes a long way to helping children learn and feel more comfortable with their parents.

"Sometimes even at that young an age, children will rebel because they'll see uncertainty in their parent," says Maria. But when a child sees and hears their parent telling a story, singing a song or leading an activity,

she says, you can see the child staring at their parent and feeling connected.

Exposure to other languages and cultures helps children learn and builds their curiosity. While it can be hard to quantify success at that young an age, the Early Childhood Educators - and their participant parents - can see it. "By the end of the program we see that they become independent, they are ready to learn, and that they are ready to move on," says Maria.

## A Summer of Amazing Community Support!

We're amazed and thankful for the support we get from our community. Over the past months we held our annual auction dinner, and were again beneficiaries of the GOAL Tournament. Both were resounding successes!

Our Masquerade-themed gala at the Rialto brought out 180 people and raised over \$130,000! Special thanks to Sandra Miron and her amazing committee for their imagination and hard work to organize the event. We'd also like to thank the Tyndale St-Georges kids, volunteers and staff who helped make it a success. We were glad to see so many new faces this year, and are grateful to everyone for supporting our work.

The GOAL tournament, organized by the Burgundy Lion Pub, featured 24 teams fighting for the famed Bobby the Lion trophy and raised over \$14,000 for our programming! Thanks

to Paul Desbaillets and the Burgundy Lion team, and to all the restaurant and bar teams who came and played their hearts out. It was another super fun day!





# New Ways to Learn French at Tyndale St-Georges

Learning languages is a lifelong effort, and can be especially valuable when searching for a new job.

Providing a strong French program is one of the primary focuses of our Adult Development Department. While public funds for French courses have decreased, we've innovated to make sure community members can still work on their French.

The result? Five new workstations featuring the Rosetta Stone language software. This world-renowned program is considered the standard for learning languages, and we're excited to offer it to the Little Burgundy community. "We're always looking for ways to improve our programming," says ADD Director Rosie Segee, and languages are always at the top of the list.

Having French learning stations is just another way the Adult Development Department is making itself a resource for the community. Along with the new software, the department continues to increase its Seniors program and offer employment training. "People can come by, have a coffee, chat, read the newspaper," says Rosie. And as of this fall, all you'll need to work on your French is to bring your own headphones!



## Food That Feels Good

Marvin Corbin, who joined Tyndale St-Georges as our new Kitchen Animator over the summer, remembers coming to Tyndale as a teen in the mid-1980s. We used to look forward to getting food at Tyndale after school, he says, remembering how he and others in his class would run over to the Centre. Getting food to break up the day made a big difference to him and his friends back then, just as it does for the young people coming to Tyndale St-Georges today.

The emphasis today is on nutritious meals and snacks, something that Marvin hopes to keep building on.

As Kitchen Animator, he's responsible for planning and providing food for all the after school and high school participants - adding up to hun-



dreds of snacks and meals served each week.

He's planning on getting even more veggies into the meal plan, along with making sure there are lots of cooked meals. He can see the difference, and excitement, when kids are served hot, homemade spaghetti after school. "They need something nutritious and filling to give them energy to do their homework and other after school activities," he says.

Marvin's own children are at Tyndale St-Georges, and being back here with them feels good. "I feel motivated when I get up in the morning," he says. "It's great to see my kids and the kids from the neighbourhood, and how the food here keeps their spirits up."

## Don't Miss Tyndale's Treasures!

When Ivy Okrah began working at the Tyndale Treasures store, she wasn't sure what to expect. A participant in our Possibilities Employment Program, she began a placement to learn more about retail. Since then, Tyndale Treasures has taken on a life of its own, and Ivy is the permanent store manager.

Stocks of donated clothing are booming, customers are coming from across the neighbourhood - and ordering from as far as Ottawa and Vancouver - and sales have tripled.

Even more importantly, the store is providing more and more affordable business attire and accessories to Little Burgundy residents, with suits, shoes and designer clothes being offered at a fraction of their retail price.

Community is a huge part of the success for the store, says Ivy. Her connections with residents of Little Burgundy, including the Ghanaian community, mean that more and more people know about the store. And she makes sure to remember people's names and what they like - and gives them a personal call

when something comes in for them.

There's also the support of the Montreal West Presbyterian Church, local businesses and community partners, partnerships often built with Susan Mackinnon Bell, Tyndale St-Georges' Fund Development Director - that help make sure we have incredible clothes in stock.

And all that adds up to not just great, affordable clothes for the community, but more services, since all profits go towards funding our programming at Tyndale St-Georges.

"It's an exciting time at the store," says Ivy, adding that she's looking forward to seeing even more new faces come to the store!



Sushi Night Benefit Dinner  
**Restaurant Sushi Aikawa**  
 55 Brunswick Ave.  
 Dollard-des-Ormeaux, H9B 1P7  
 514.684.4333

Thursday, November 5th  
 6:30 p.m.



\$80 per person Tax receipt \$ 45  
 Includes: Sushi and a welcome glass of wine



For tickets & information contact:  
 Susan Bell at 931-6265 ext. 25 or  
 susanbell@tyndalestgeorges.com



**Travel too much?** No time to use all those Aeroplan Miles? **Consider donating them to the Tyndale St-Georges Charitable Pooling Account** to be used

as raffle prizes at our Special Events activities. Contact Susan Bell for full details or go to <http://beyondmiles.aeroplan.com/> to donate the miles directly to Tyndale St-Georges.

## Planned Giving

Cash, appreciated securities, charitable lead trusts and retained life estates are all ways to make a planned gift to Tyndale St-Georges. As with any planned gift, donors should consult legal and financial counsel before entering into any agreement. Contact **Susan Bell at 514-931-6265 ext 25** or [susanbell@tyndalestgeorges.com](mailto:susanbell@tyndalestgeorges.com)

# Wishlist

## Children, Youth and Families

Scientific calculators  
 2 laptops  
 Tablets  
 USB keys  
 Electric pencil sharpeners  
 Quality Headphones  
 Markers



## Early Childhood

Musical instruments for young children



## Volunteer

Mini-fridge



## Adult Development

Water bottle dispenser  
 Laminating machine  
 Pair of computer speakers

## Make a difference

Here are two easy ways to make a difference by supporting Tyndale:

- 1 Clothing Drive Party:** Want to have a few friends over for a good cause? Why not host a clothing drive party? Instead of a hostess/host gift, ask all your guests to bring gently-used work attire which can be donated to Tyndale Treasures clothing store. We specialize in "dress to impress" clothing for job interviews and workplace attire. All funds raised in the store are donated back into Tyndale programs, and you and your friends get to clear out some space in your wardrobes!
- 2 Birthday Fundraiser.** Having a special birthday? Don't want your guests to bring presents, just their presence? Consider asking your friends to donate to Tyndale St-Georges Community Centre in honor of your birthday. If you would like to host a fundraiser, please contact Susan Bell at 514-931-6265 ext 25 to learn how to get started.



Connect with us online!



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@TyndaleStGeorge

## Tyndale St-Georges Community Centre

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