

Laurentian English Caregivers Co-op

October 2009

A new health care player is adding to the services available to the population of the Laurentians. Christina Vincelli is a caregiver with 15 years experience providing homecare and support to people who are, temporarily or permanently, living with a loss of autonomy. She is forming an English-language co-operative of skilled caregivers available to provide homecare and to match them with people who would benefit from their services.

With help from the regional health agency's committee CRASLA (regional committee for access to services in English), Christina is starting to get the word out to the community that these services are available, and in English to boot. The co-op will ensure that all workers have been screened by the police before going into anyone's home. It will provide a support system for caregivers and their clients, including proper follow-up to make sure that needs are met as they evolve. The caregivers can help each other if one is unavailable for a regular client at any time, assuring a continuity of care.

The co-op will also be a source of information to caregivers and people in the community so that they can keep up with all the developments in what services are available to them in the public sphere as well as in community organizations throughout the region. By working as a group in this way, the English community will be better able to make its presence felt, speaking with one voice on these matters. This will encourage both public and private providers to broaden the range of services and information that they offer in English.

Aside from its role as a central clearing house putting together those in need with caregivers, the co-op will also be well placed to identify and even provide continuing education for caregivers to make sure that their knowledge always stays up-to-date. Workshops on techniques as well as information and support will be available to co-op members allowing them to concentrate on the needs of those in their care.

The co-op will also serve as an information and referral centre for all those groups and organizations out in the community that provide services in English, including the hospital, CLSCs, pharmacies, medical clinics and groups such as the Cancer Support Group and Palliaco for palliative care support.

In creating and developing this co-op, Christina Vincelli has identified a need in the community for the reassurance that comes from services provided in the client's language and the comfort, safety and security that that gives. The co-op can also help distant adult children keep in touch with their parents' situation so that they can more easily participate in the care decisions facing their parents as they lose their independence, allowing them to stay in their own homes rather than to move into institutional settings. But even for those who must move, the co-op can help ease the transition and continue to provide services that aren't available from the residence or long-term care facility.

If you would like more information about joining the co-op either as a caregiver or as a client, contact Christina Vincelli at 819-322-7608 or christinavin@msn.com and she will be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Sheila Eskenazi, President, English Communities Committee of the CSSS des Sommets