

## Meeting Notes for the Montreal Respect Forum

Theme: Programs for veteran women

Date & Location: Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> of November,  
Royal Canadian Legion, NDG Branch.  
5455 Boulevard de Maisonneuve O, Mtl, QC

### Attendance

Steve Gregory, Respect Forum National President  
Gisele Fontaine, Respect Forum Women's Outreach Coordinator  
Terry Telford, Respect Forum Outreach Coordinator  
Derric Bowes-Lyon Respect Forum  
Farah Cader, *Fondation québécoise des Vétérans*  
Gabrielle Rivard, *Fondation québécoise des Vétérans*  
Sandra Villeneuve, *Un cheval pour mieux vivre*  
Claude Dallaire, *Soldats dans la rue*  
Duane Mansveld, *Maison du Bon Père*  
Sylvain Jetté, CAF Transition Group  
Emina Bajramovic, Veterans Affairs  
Chloé Deraiche, *Le Sentier*  
Denis Chisholm, *Le Sentier*  
Etienne Lalonde, *Service de sécurité incendie de Montréal*  
Paulette Cook, Royal Canadian Legion  
Claire Worrell, Royal Canadian Legion  
Debra Viskalis, Royal Canadian Legion  
Sterling Downey, City of Montreal

### Agenda

- Opening Remarks: What is the Respect Forum.
- Introductions of organizations and their representatives.
- Discussion of each organizations women's programs, projects, and priorities.
- Presentation: *Forum de sensibilisation aux réalités des vétéranes.*
- Discussion regarding possibility of creating a women's services map.
- Conclusion and Informal discussion.

### Opening Remarks

The President opened the meeting by welcoming and thanking all the representatives and their respective organizations.

- The President explained the historic impetus towards the creation of the Respect Forum. They explained that, at the time, Quebec's senior military leader highlighted the high number of organizations involved in the veteran's charity space, while bemoaning overlapping mission and absence of coordination: the Respect Forum was conceived

shortly thereafter. In the intervening years, the Respect Forum has seen significant success as a national body for coordination, discussion, and collaboration between a significant number of veteran or veteran-adjacent organizations.

- On an annual basis, the Respect Forum hosts 21 sessions through Canada for organizations with presence in over 60 cities and communities.
- The President reiterated the meeting's goal: discuss dedicated services available for veteran women, and if possible, begin the development of a services map.

#### Introduction of organizations and their representatives

- All participants introduced themselves and the organization represented.

#### Discussion of each organizations women's programs, projects, and priorities

- Organizations presented and discussed their veteran women's specific programs.
- Claude Dallaire (*Soldats dans la Rue*) highlighted his organization's need for familiarity with women specific services and for women volunteers. Though they have relationships with many partner organizations, they nevertheless require a better understanding of the specific needs of veteran women.

#### Presentation: *Forum de sensibilisation aux réalités des vétérans*

Gisele Fontaine presented a familiarization including background and challenges facing veteran women. The presentation covered the following topics.

- Aim: Advance the capacity to share information relating to services for veteran women and therein create links to and in the support community.
- The presentation presented several noteworthy information and statistics:
  - Female CAF members are 3 times more likely to be subject to medical release than their male co-workers. Of these medical releases, approximately 40% are psychological and 40% are physiological. Of the physical medical releases, a significant number are musculoskeletal.
- The presentation elicited many questions and much discussion:
  - Correlation to Era: Claude Dallaire of *Soldats dans la rue* asked if there was any correlation between a veteran's service era and requesting/receiving services from various represented organizations.
  - Identification Challenges: several participants commented that it is generally more difficult to identify need amongst veterans as they have been shaped and take pride in being self-sufficient. A participant asked the represented organization if they systemically or explicitly ask their users if they are veterans. Most represented organizations do not explicitly or systemically ask users if they are veterans.
  - Veterans housing: A participant asked if housing was available specifically for veterans in need. The presenter highlighted housing projects currently in operation or planned near major military/urban areas such as Ottawa, Kingston, etc.

### Discussion regarding possibility of creating a women's services map

Following a break participants continued discussing projects and the possibility of creating a women's services map:

- Sterling Downey (City Councillor) proposed that the map/survey should perhaps be expanded to include services for families, as it is likely that some veteran women are also single parents.
- Denis Chisholm (*Le Sentier*) highlighted alternative therapies and services offered such as music therapy.
- Sandra Villeneuve (*Cheval pour mieux vivre*) presented several observations. Offering services to families and children, Sandra observed that children are extremely receptive to the therapy manifesting a "a need to be heard." Sandra also highlighted that in some cases, victims of harassment were the victims of harassment from other women.
- Farah Cader (*FQV*) underlined the value of alternative therapies. In her practice, she has noticed that veterans seem to get tired of the "face to face."
- Steve Gregory proposed that participants form small teams and brainstorm/list services available for veteran women. Participants noted the following services/service providers:
  - o CRFM
  - o Clinics
  - o Veteran woman specific retreats
  - o Le Sentier
  - o Various psychological services
- Sylvain Jetté (*CAF Transition Group*) expressed the need to delineate between objectives and intention, and therein appreciate the progress that has been made over the past two decades. His perspective is that we all have objectives, but few of us reach all our objectives. It is therefore more productive to live by intention. Twenty years ago, there was significantly less veteran charities, organizations, and services. Though more progress is needed, positive intentions increased and expanded services significantly.
- Duane Mansveld (*Maison Bon Père*) recommended that the Respect Forum or participating organizations work with foodbanks in the Montreal Region. His rationale is that these organizations are the first place a veteran, especially one with a family, will solicit help.

### Conclusion

The meeting concluded with participants agreeing to form a working group to identify all services for the subject group and thereafter develop a services map.