

Amis de la santé mentale Friends for Mental Health

ANNUAL REPORT 2023-2024

THE YEAR 2023-2024 IN NUMBERS

- **696** members have received services
- **380** new service requests
- **137** information calls
- **1 687** counselling sessions
 - **386** attendance at courses and workshops
 - **484** attendance at support groups
- **5 863** people met at our kiosks
 - **15** volunteers
- 1 238 hours of volunteer work

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WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT AND DIRECTOR

In 2023, the various issues of global uncertainty have affected the psycho-social fabric of every community. More than ever, community groups are serving increasingly vulnerable clienteles, and all issues seem to affect mental health. We see families affected as much by severe clinical diagnoses as by occasional situations of anxiety that worsen clients' daily lives. For 43 years, our mission has been to attract and retain the best talent to provide services that support and equip those around a person living with a mental health issue, for the well-being of all.

The Board of Directors remains solid, made up of people who are professional, respectful, committed and generous. The staff, accumulating years of seniority, continues to grow to meet the demand for diversified services. Our most recent survey concluded that 83% of our members are very satisfied and would recommend us. Bravo to a professional, trustworthy and progressive team! We are now aiming to increase our visibility within cultural communities across all age groups and to offer a wider range of services related to more co-morbidities. We want to be known even before someone needs a referral.

We now have the privilege and courage to dare and aim high and far. The Zhubin Foundation has enabled us to acquire a property that will become our new home. More

Micole Vien.

As we come to the end of another project-rich year, I'm filled with immense pride and gratitude for the progress we've made together. This year has presented a unique set of challenges, but it has also been a testament to the resilience, compassion and strength of our team. Our success would not have been possible without the dedication and hard work of our team, volunteers, board members and partners. Your tireless efforts and unwavering commitment to our mission have been the driving force behind our achievements. As we enter a new year, I am full of hope and optimism about the possibilities that lie ahead.

I thank you for your unwavering support and commitment to our shared mission. Together, we will continue to make a difference in the lives of those affected by mental health issues.

MAAA



Nicole Vien President



Isabelle Paquette Executive Director



Who we are

We are a non-profit organization that supports the friends and family of a person living with a mental health issue. We offer psychosocial support, information and training. Since 1981, we have been working to improve the quality of mental health services for our community. In close collaboration with other community stakeholders (professionals, hospitals, CLSCs and other organizations), we aim to raise awareness about the impact of mental health issues on people's lives.

A little history

On October 6, 1981, two mothers met to plan the creation of a support group for parents and friends of people with mental health issues. Their mission was to address the lack of adequate support and services for individuals with mental health issues and their families in the West Island. For many years, the organization was run by parent volunteers.

Forty-two years later, Friends for Mental Health is a well-established non-profit organization with 10 highly qualified staff, an experienced Board of Directors and over 690 people served last year alone!

Friends for Mental Health is the only organization on the West Island that provides services to people who have a loved one living with a mental health issue.



ABOUT US



Mental health issues we help our members with

- Borderline personality disorder
- Schizophrenia and psychosis
- Bipolar disorder
- Obsessive-compulsive disorder
- Depression
- Anxiety disorder
- Comorbidities (mental health issues and addiction)
- Perinatal mental health disorder
- Major undiagnosed disorders

Our mission

Support and equip the entourage of a person living with a mental health problem, for the well-being of all.

Our objectives

- 1. To promote mental health by providing counselling, education programs, support groups and other ancillary and related services to those in the entourage of a person living with a mental health problem.
- 2. To promote mental health by educating and raising public awareness of mental health issues with a view to breaking down the stigma associated with mental health problem through lectures or other public presentations and the distribution of information on this topic.
- 3. To do all things incidental and related to mental health promotion.

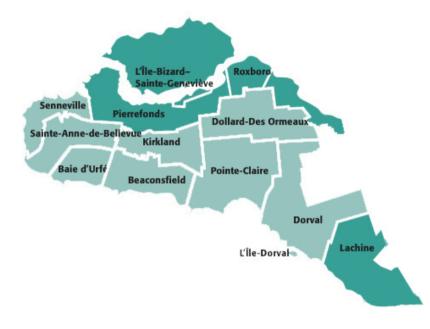
Our values

Authentic humanism: respect for the dignity and autonomy of the individual, with solidarity, authenticity and commitment.

Professionalism: knowledge, know-how and interpersonal skills that allow us to offer high quality services and to distinguish ourselves.

Dynamism: refers to creativity and action, such as to take action, to build, to create, to innovate, to dare, to accomplish, to achieve and to provide leadership.

ABOUT US



Area served

We serve the population of the West Island of Montreal. Approximately 75% of our members live in the region of the Centre intégré universitaire de santé et de services sociaux de l'Ouest-de-l'Île de Montréal (CIUSSS ODIM). We also offer our services to families who do not have access to these services in their region.

> We acknowledge that FMH is located on traditional territory of the Kanien'kehá: ka Nation, which has never been ceded.

Diversity and inclusion

We are committed to being inclusive of our members and the general population. Since 70% of our members are English-speaking and 30% are French-speaking, our services are offered in both languages. Our team includes employees who can speak and/or understand the following languages:

- French
- English
- Spanish
- Arabic
- German

In order to offer services that are better adapted to the reality of our members, they have the opportunity to meet with our counsellors

- in person
- by videoconference
- by telephone
- by text

Our offices are open Monday to Friday from 9:00 am to 4:30 pm. Many of our group activities take place in the evening from 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Board of Directors is democratically elected and is composed of eleven (11) directors, a majority of whom are family members (user members) and a maximum of five (5) resource administrators (members of the community or other organizations).



Nicole Vien President Family member



Dominique Fortin Vice-president Family member



Violaine Lacroix Secretary Family member



James Gregorio Treasurer Resource administrator



André Morris Administrator Resource administrator



Anne-Sophie Leclair Administrator Resource administrator



Martin Griffin Administrator Resource administrator



Florence Bordage Administrator Family member



Cheryl Pratt Administrator Family member



Raphaëlle Petitjean Administrator Family member

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OUR TEAM



Isabelle Paquette Executive Director



Alexandra Bellefeuille Services and Communications Coordinator



Emma Hamilton Administrative Assistant



Moustafa Elrakhawy Clinical Supervisor Ph.D. Psychiatry



Julie Clément Consellor B.A., TRAmd



Jessica Schiff Counsellor M.A. Social Work



Gabriel Coutu Counsellor M.A. Dramatherapy



Véronique Lagrande Counsellor M.A. Art Therapy



Melissa Davidson Family Peer Support Worker



Hope Jaikaransingh Community Agent



Andreea Calian Awareness and Support Agent



Tiffany Schapp Awareness and Support Agent

HUMAN RESOURCES



Personnel policy

To ensure that we always offer the best working conditions to our employees, our personnel policy on working conditions has been revised and updated.

Volunteer policy

A new volunteer policy has been drawn up to clearly define the expectations and interests of Friends of Mental Health and those who wish to become involved in the organization.

Training courses taken by the team

Throughout the year, we offer our employees the possibility of continuing education. A budget is set aside for this purpose. In order to provide optimal assistance to the members of the entourage and to offer services at the cutting edge of the latest advances in mental health, the staff has participated in several training sessions, including:

- Mesures alternatives à la P-38: Comment mieux outiller les familles et les intervenants
- Anti-Racism: Clinical Training for Mental Health Professionals
- Self-compassion and Mindfulness
- La communication interculturelle
- Caring for Burned-Out Caregivers
- Filling the Void on Emptiness and Identity Disturbance in Borderline Personality Disorder
- Acceptance and Commitment Therapy for Caregivers What's It All About?
- Mieux comprendre la réalité des personnes qui entendent des voix
- Promoting Inclusivity for 2SLGBTQIA+ Individuals in our Organizations
- Women in Mind: Best Practices in Trauma-Informed Care
- Walking With Grief: Helping Others Deal with Loss
- How to Serve Muslim Clients : Cultural Safety & Responsiveness
- Status et parcours migratoires avec le Centre social d'aide aux immigrants (CSAI)
- Optimiser ses réseaux sociaux: Facebook et Instagram
- Intentional Interactions: Social Media & Youth

EVALUATION

Offering quality services that meet the needs of our members is paramount to us. In order to evaluate and quantify our customer satisfaction, we sent an anonymous online questionnaire to all our users. We asked them to evaluate all of our services and give us their feedback to ensure that we are providing all of our members with the best services, tailored to their needs. We had 82 respondents.

Here are the results:



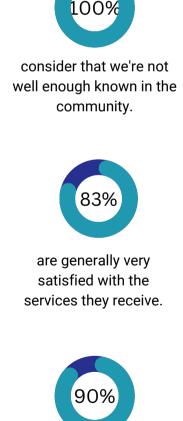
would use services again.



give the organization great credibility.



consider that FMH have a good understanding of its users' challenges.



have recommended our services to someone they know.

66

As a family member and caregiver for a chronically mentally ill loved one, we have sought out many different organizations for help and support. Despite good intentions, most others have not been able to provide much realistic or ongoing support other than FFMH. Here, we found real support for real people.

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Thank you for the support and encouragement! Thank you for giving me quick access to your services when we were in crisis!

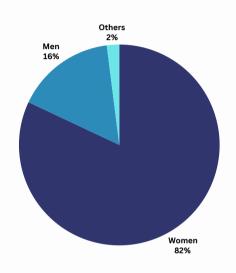
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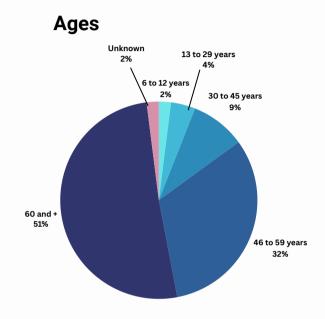
FMH has positively impacted my life in a big way. I would never have found or developed the self-care, boundary setting and new perspective that I have now. It has helped me immensely as I live with a partner with mental health issues.

STATISTICS

Member profile

Gender Identities

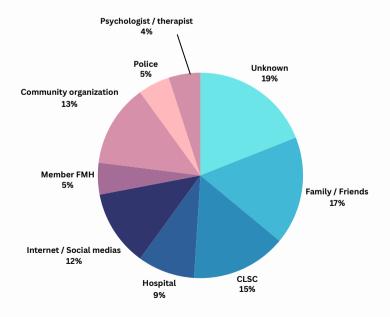




Referral

How do our members find out about FMH?

We receive referrals from many channels, whether it be through word of mouth, the CLSC, hospitals or other community organizations. Our ongoing efforts to maintain and build relationships with our partners and other community stakeholders remain a valuable tool in reaching West Island families.

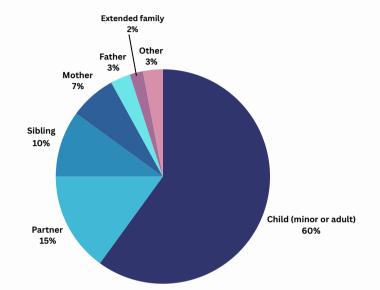


STATISTICS

Family members living with a mental health issue

Who do our members support?

The vast majority of our members accompany their children (minors or adults) living with a mental health issue (60%).

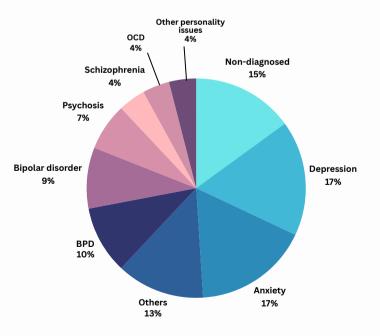


Diagnoses of loved ones living with a mental health issue

Which mental health issues are involved?

Our services are mainly requested by caregivers of loved ones living with anxiety (17%) and depression (17%).

We also noted that among our clients, a significant percentage (15%) have a loved one with no diagnosis. Knowing well that there can be significant barriers to obtaining a diagnosis in some cases, we are pleased to offer the support services that families need, regardless of their loved one's diagnostic status.



Psychosocial interventions

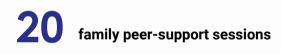
Counselling

Individual or group counselling aims to support the family members of a person living with a mental health issue. This follow-up aims to preserve the emotional and psychosocial balance of the family, thus promoting stability and greater autonomy for the person living with a mental health issue. This allows the accompanying persons to face their situation in a healthy way and to overcome the disorganization that results from a lifestyle centered on the mental health issue of their loved one.



NEW!

This year, we were able to offer our members the services of a family peer-support worker who provides support through her experiential knowledge.





Provisional custody for the purpose of a psychiatric assessment

Throughout the year, we assist our members and West Island residents in preparing to apply for a court order. The main purpose of a court order is to act as a preventative measure. It ensures that a person receives an assessment by trained professionals who can evaluate the level of danger in a given situation. Our counsellors are trained to help people better understand the challenges involved in a court order and to offer sound advice.



1 687 Counselling sessions, art therapy and drama therapy sessions

214 Phone and email interventions

> **30** Court orders

1 931 (1 704 in 2022-2023)

Psychosocial interventions

Art therapy - individual and group

Art therapy involves the creation and exploration of artistic productions with an art therapist. Participants explore the difficulties associated with their loved one's mental health issue, the emotions and feelings they evoke and how to adapt to them using their inner resources. Thematic workshops invite participants to experiment with a wide variety of art materials. In a friendly and relaxing atmosphere, the art therapist presents a variety of creative exercises. The goal is to learn new approaches to understanding and expressing oneself. Art therapy is offered to people of all ages.





Dramatherapy

In January 2023, we added a new type of psychosocial intervention: drama therapy. Dramatherapy is a form of therapy that incorporates dramatic techniques. It is a creative space for goal setting, story telling, problem solving and emotional expression. It is offered to people of all ages.



Counselling for young caregivers

When someone close to them is living with a mental health issue, children and youth often struggle with difficult emotions, questions and guilt. It is important for these children to have a safe space to better understand and express their emotions. This is why Friends for Mental Health offers services adapted to the different realities of youth aged 6 to 29. It is possible for children and youth to participate in art therapy, drama therapy or counselling sessions.





Group activities



Courses offered:

- A Caregiver's Guide to Understanding Borderline Personality Disorder (in French)
- A Caregiver's Guide to Understanding Borderline Personality Disorder (2x)
- Calming and Preventing Crisis Situations (in French) (2x)
- Bipolar Disorder: A Path to Recovery

Workshops offered:

- Emotion Validation Workshop (in French)
- Emotion Validation Workshop
- Preserving Your Mental Health as a Caregiver
- Healthy Limits and boundaries workshop (in French)
- Healthy Limits and Boundaries Workshop

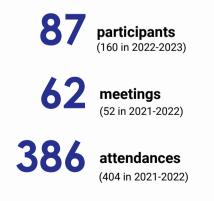
Courses and workshops

Facilitated by our counsellors, our courses and workshops are a great way for members to learn more about different mental health issues, how to better interact with others, and how to take care of themselves in the role of caregiver. They also provide a space for participants to share their experiences with others who are in similar situations.

All of our courses and workshops have been offered online on Zoom.

NEW!

This year, we offered our members two new courses: Understanding anxiety and Comorbidity: substance abuse and mental health issues. These courses have been created by our counsellors, with the needs of our users at heart.



Group activities

Support groups

At Friends for Mental Health, we recognize the importance of peer support. That is why we offer our members various support groups about different mental health issues, facilitated by one of our counsellors. These support groups are a safe and confidential place for people to talk with others who are going through similar situations. Participants learn strategies to better manage the impact of the mental health issues present in their lives, while benefiting from the mutual support of their peers.

Our groups are offered monthly on a ongoing basis using Zoom. We did, however, have the opportunity to resume the adult art therapy groups in person, at our offices.





attendances (244 in 2022-2023)

Support groups offered:

- Borderline Personality Disorder Support Group
- Psychosis and Bipolar Disorder Support Group
- Men's Support Group
- Support Group for Parents of Children Living with Anxiety
- Art Therapy Group for Adults

<u>SERVICES</u>

Group activities



Respite

Having a loved one living with a mental health issue can come with its own set of mixed emotions. As a result, caregivers often experience compassion fatigue. That is why we offer our members respite activities that allow them to take a break from the daily grind and refocus on their needs and happiness. Our respite activities also aim to create a sense of belonging and to allow for exchanges between peers.

NEW!

We offered our members our first mindfulness retreat. We hosted them at OM Vibrations Studio for a day of mindfulness practice in the company of our facilitator, Laurier Chabot.

Activities	Meetings	Participants
Mindfulness workshops	35	170
Mindfulness retreat	1	11
Visit at Project Pace Farm	1	18
Movie night	2	22
Holiday dinner at La Maison Verte	1	59
TOTAL	40	280
Year 2022-2023	19	259

Group activities

Conferences

Over the course of the year, we offer several educational conferences to the general public to raise awareness of mental health challenges. We have been fortunate to have various experts share their knowledge, expertise and experiences with our members and the community. At our conferences, we provide an opportunity for participants to ask our guests questions.

Our conferences have taken place online on Zoom and are open to the general public.



Conference	Participants
Seasonal Affective Disorder: Symptoms, Possible Causes and Treatments - Dr. Claire Han	21
2SLGBTQIA+ Awareness: A Roadmap Towards Inclusion, Connection and Belonging - Dr. Reece Malone	19
Learning how to take care of ourselves! - Pierre-Luc Hardy (in French)	54
Art Therapy Conferences - Samatha Dobbin (3x)	39
Ambiguous Loss and Grief: The Path of Initiation - Clara C. Verhas-Breyne (in French)	51
Perinatal Mental Health: Understanding & Supporting - Clara Blot & Philippe Drouin (in French)	24
TOTAL	208
Year 2022-2023: 5 conferences	2 239

OUTREACH PROGRAMS

Youth Program

Our school-based youth awareness program aims to meet with young people to raise awareness about mental health and contribute to destigmatization. We offer presentations and kiosks at various schools and community organizations. These presentations give participants the opportunity to learn more about the importance of taking care of themselves, the warning signs of a mental health issue, the strategies to adopt to help a loved one living with a mental health issue, and the resources available to them and their loved ones.



Meetings with partners

Throughout the year, our outreach and support officers met with various organizations and associations that work with young people. The aim of these meetings is to forge links with them and to introduce our services to their staff and clients.



Youth program awareness activities	Meetings	Participations
Presentations in schools settings	4	85
Kiosks in schools settings	19	2 799
Presentations in the community	12	97
Kiosks in the community	4	451
TOTAL	39	3 432
Year 2022-2023	21	702

OUTREACH PROGRAMS

Program adapted to cultural communities

This program aims to reduce the stigma associated with mental health and to facilitate access to services for clients from various cultural communities. In order to better reach them, we collaborate with different organizations already established in their communities to offer them presentations on different topics related to mental health. Each presentation we give is adapted to meet the specific needs and characteristics of that particular community. In this way, we aim to increase the number of families who are aware of, and informed about, our service offer and those of our mental health partners.

Cultural communities	Meetings	Participations
Presentations about mental health to cultural communities	12	231
Meetings with organizations working with cultural communities	15	23
Meetings with cultural associations and religious groups	13	21
TOTAL	40	275
Year 2022-2023	14	107

Furthermore, we work to increase our visibility and presence in cultural communities by offering kiosks and activities at various events in which they participate. This year, thanks to the Comité Vivre ensemble, we helped plan two events celebrating cultural diversity in the North West Island: the Human Library Project and the "Apéro autour du monde".





SPECIAL PROJECTS

Strategic planning

With the help of Alternative RH, we were guided through a structured strategic planning process leading to the definition of a vision enabling us to plan our development in a thoughtful way over the next three years.



Participants in strategic planning workshops

Respondents to the online strategic planning survey





Perinatal mental health project

Statistics show that one in seven women and one in ten partners will experience a perinatal mental health problem following the arrival of a newborn. That is why, in 2023, we launched a new project to help members of the entourage of people living with perinatal mental health issues. With the aim of raising awareness of our services for people accompanying a person experiencing post-partum depression or anxiety, we held awareness-raising activities in organizations offering services to new parents.



Texting project

For the first time this year, we offered the public the opportunity to communicate with us by text message. This new, more discreet method of communication, favored by young people, enables them to contact us confidentially. Our launch took place in September 2023.



COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Kiosks

Each year we are invited to participate in several events throughout the region. These events are important to us as they allow us to have a presence in the community and increase our visibility.



information and activity kiosks (8 in 2022-2023)

845 individuals met





Regional guide launch

On June 7, 2023, at our AGM, we celebrated the launch of our brand new regional guide: The Caregivers Ally in Mental Health. Created by our team of counsellors, it includes all the important information you need to know to support a loved one living with a mental health problem. It is distributed free of charge to our members and to professionals from various health organizations and institutions.

Communications

This year we revised our communication tools and channels to ensure that we better reach the community. The following was accomplished:

- We have launched our new website. It's easier to use and now includes a youth zone.
- We changed the format of our news magazine to make it a completely digital e-mail version. Three editions have been sent to over 1 390 people.
- 2023-2024 was the year we expanded our social networks. Through the use of paid posts on Facebook, we were able to increase the number of people following us and extend our reach.

219 813 people have seen our publications on social media

NETWORKING

As a community organization offering services to the family and friends of a person living with a mental health issue, we are a member of the **Confédération des association de proches en santé mentale**. The CAP santé mentale is a provincial non-profit community organization whose mission is to bring

together, represent, support and mobilize organizations working with the loved ones of people living with a mental health issue and to bring the voice of loved ones to the national level. Over the course of the year, we were fortunate to participate in the annual directors' meeting and to attend meetings with other CAP member organizations.

santé mentale

Community organizations and partners:

- CLSC Lac-St-Louis, Pierrefonds and Dorval-Lachine
- Lakeshore Outpatient Psychiatric Clinic
- Douglas Mental Health University Institute
- Aire Ouverte
- Action jeunesse de l'Ouest-de-l'Île
- Centre multi-ressources de Lachine
- Literacy Unlimited
- Carrefour jeunesse emploi
- Projet communautaire Pierrefonds
- Centre famille et ressource
- La Sortie
- Le Versant
- The Teacup 50+ centre

Tables de concertation and comitees:

- Table de concertation en santé mentale de l'Ouestde-l'Île
- Table de concertation enfance-famille-jeunesse de l'Ouest-de-l'Île
- Table de Quartier Sud de l'Ouest-de-l'Île
- Table de Quartier Nord / Comité Vivre ensemble
- Table des aînés de l'Ouest-de-l"Île
- Table des aînés de Lachine-Dorval
- Table de réflexion et d'actions interculturelles de Lachine



Community networking allows us to create links with other professionals in the field and to expand our network of contacts, but also to learn more about the resources available. This year, we organized several meetings with different community groups and sat on various tables and committees.



FINANCIAL REPORT

These financial statements were audited by Benoit Dubord CPA .

Income		2023-2024	2022-2023
CRSSS entraide		253,496\$	208,321\$
CRSSS non-recurrent		30,000\$	55,032\$
Centraide		98,461\$	98,461\$
Fed. Gov. article 25		4,931\$	4,598\$
Municipalities		11,336\$	12,447\$
Réseau avant de craquer		34,240\$	11,095\$
West Island Community Shares		50,000\$	40,000\$
Service agreements		49,764\$	0.00\$
Donation		249,569\$	191,052\$
Membership fees		8,769\$	9,588\$
Interest income		10,979\$	4,751\$
Miscellaneous		1,324\$	3,474\$
	Total	802,869\$	638,819\$

Expenses	2023-2024	2022-2023
Salaries and benefits	528,248\$	396,448\$
Contractual services	69,786\$	38,759\$
Travelling expenses	1,604\$	710\$
Advertising	14,598\$	34,050\$
Volunteer fees	1,200\$	803\$
Dues, conferences, training and documentation	12,259\$	25,951\$
Rent	33,095\$	33,095\$
Insurances	4,548\$	3,074\$
Telecommunications	4,831\$	4,391\$
Office expenses	11,075\$	9,837\$
Professional fees	6,234\$	5,374\$
Bank fees	1,447\$	860\$
Amortization of fixed assets	1,130\$	6,021\$
Meetings and activities	12,290\$	10,556\$
Total	702,345\$	569,929\$

Surplus	100,524\$	68,890\$

The Board resolved to allocate \$132,000 for relocation purposes. The amount in the reserve of \$21,923 was used in 2023-2024 for the virtual training project.

FUNDERS AND DONORS

We would like to thank all of our funders and donors without whom it would be impossible to continue our vital mission to the community.



PRIORITIES FOR ACTION 2024-2025

Moving to a new address

Our new, more spacious and accessible location will enable us to think bigger and seize more opportunities, always with the aim of better supporting you and meeting your needs.

25 Fieldfare, Beaconsfield

Increasing the organization's visibility and notoriety

We are going to make sure our organization is known and accessible to broaden our customer base.

Developing our financial autonomy

We will further develop our financial autonomy to ensure our sustainability and keep our mission alive and thriving.

Updating our service standards

Team workshops will be organized to redefine our service offering, with clear, well-defined standards of achievement.

Positioning ourselves as an employer of choice

We plan to take a number of actions to ensure we have optimal working conditions and policies that make us an employer of choice.



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