

RAPPORT ANNUEL 23'-24'

DES SERVICES ET ACTIVITÉS

*Présenté à l'Assemblée
générale le 17 juin, 2024*



BOUCLIER D'ATHÉNA
SHIELD OF ATHENA
SERVICES FAMILIAUX | FAMILY SERVICES

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THANK YOU

From 1991 the Shield of Athena has been providing services to victims of family violence.

These are dispensed currently at our three points of service, our two centers in Montreal and Laval and our Emergency Shelter, Athena's House. This fall, after 14 years of work, we will be opening our Second Step Resource that will complete our network.

In order to support this magnificent organization, we have many needs that have to be addressed.

It has been quite a few years that we have been complaining of the lack of space in our emergency shelter, Athena's House where, from 2004 it has welcomed thousands of women and children who have been in abusive relationships.

We would like to recognize the wonderful work done by the shelter staff, headed by our coordinator, Maria Kokkoris, throughout all this time.

This year, in addition to the increased needs of more space, wear and tear have also taken their toll, and we have had to begin an extensive renovation and expansion of our house. After 20 years in operation our shelter needs a revamp!

The Shelter is only one aspect of our network that needs our attention. So as to meet with constantly growing needs, we are embarking on a major corporate campaign to raise five million dollars for the organization.

We thank everybody who has helped to date. Our annual GA and our many reports show the depth of the work that this organization has done.

Please keep the faith in us and participate in the Shield's Legacy.

Respectfully,



Melpa Kamateros; Executive Director
Shield of Athena Family Services



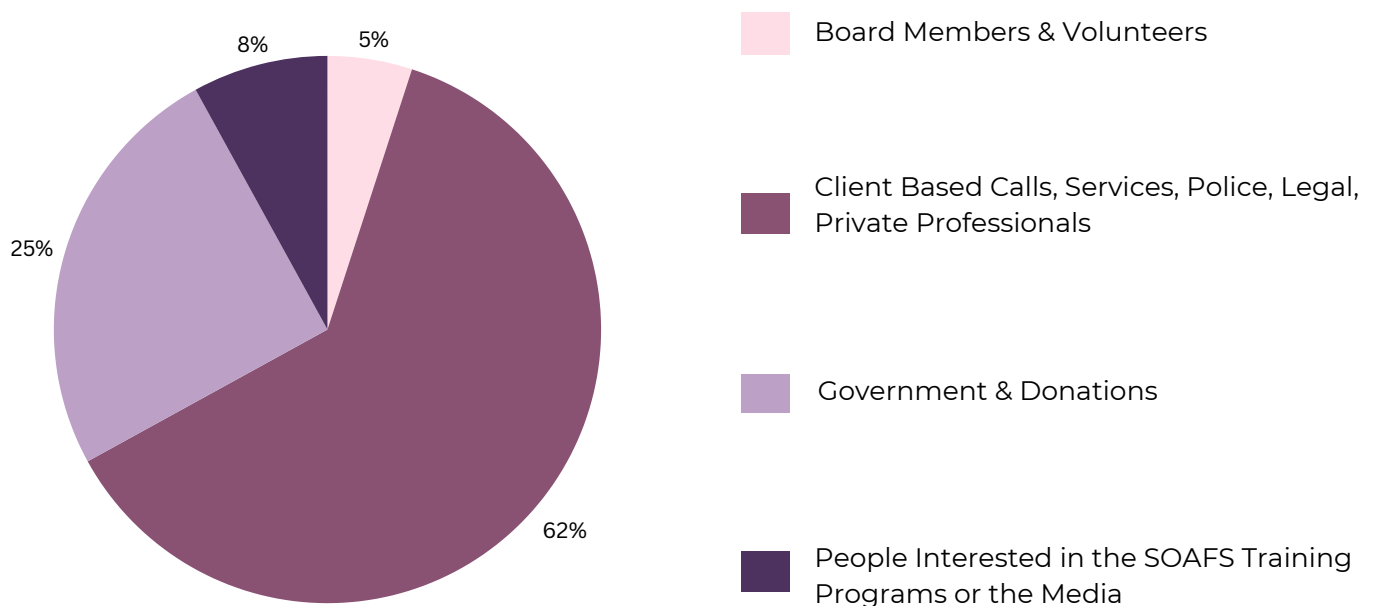
Chris Ann Nakis; President
Shield of Athena Family Services

OVERVIEW

Calls received by our services for the last statistical period

The total number of calls made and received at the Montreal and Laval offices last year was **14,833**.

Of these, 5% were from and to Board members and volunteers; 62% were client-based calls for services and/or activities made by the existing health and social services, community organizations, the police, other resources, and private professionals. Calls for information on the SOAFS training programs or projects by organizations or the media accounted for 8%. Calls from and to the government for project funding, donations, events, and fundraising represented 25% of the total.



Call From Clients at the External

There were a **total of 1,179 calls** made to and received from clients who called us or were referred to us, primarily from the health and social services and SOS Violence conjugale.

From the 268 clients' calls, the languages they spoke were:

- English 25%
- French 26%
- Other 49%

One in every two clients calling or referred to our Montreal or Laval external offices spoke only in their language of origin. Our multilingual cultural intermediaries handled these cases.

Area

According to information taken on 178 of these calls, 23% were from Laval, and the rest were from Montreal. The breakdown is as follows:

- 28% Ahuntsic, St. Laurent, Cartierville
- 4% from the East End
- 8% from Park Extension
- 6% from CDN
- 4% Outremont, Mile End, Plateau
- 2% Verdun, Lasalle, Lachine
- 6% from West Island
- 2% from the South Shore
- 7% Unknown

Client Services

Total Number of Clients

During the last statistical period, 962 people, old and new, long and short term, used our external services in Montreal & Laval. Due to the increased demand for our specialized services and the four-week wait, we had to decrease the number of users from previous periods. The following statistics are based on 916 new clients from whom 778 were short term and 134 became long term files.

Short-Term Files - Clients

From the 782 short-term cases, 96% of them were abuse cases for which we did not open files even though active listening, referrals, and interventions were done. This is mostly because the majority of clients that we deal with are often immigrant women or women who cannot access the resources, have little support and present with severe linguistic barriers. The other 4% were mostly access problems.

From the 50% of the short term cases that had given their age, 40% were between the ages of 20-39; 26% were between 40-49; finally 34% were 50+.

Long-Term Files

The total number of long-term files was 180.

We will be doing this year's analysis on the data received from 134 new long-term files which represents a 25% increase from last year.

Client Profile (Based on 134 New Long-Term Files)

Who uses our services? According to our statistics:

- 100% are women, and 63% of them came from different ethnic backgrounds;
- The largest age group of long-term clients, 48%, at the external centers was between the ages of 19-39; 38% of clients were between 40-49; 13% were 50+;
- 75% of them lived in Montreal and 25% in Laval;
- For the long-term files, 19%, or one in every five, the preferred language of communication was their mother tongue, so we used our Cultural intermediaries within our network; 41% used French and 40% English.
- From the 134 new cases all were victims of conjugal violence.
- For 19 % of clients, their preferred language of communication was their mother tongue. They received linguistically specialized services by our staff at the external centers of Montreal and Laval. The languages that our CI and social workers used in the intervention were: Arabic, Bengali, Dari, English, Farsi, French, Greek, Hindi, Punjabi, Russian, Spanish and Urdu.

Areas Clients Come from (Based on 134 New Cases)

75% were from Montreal and the surrounding suburbs. 38% came from multicultural areas such as Park Extension (18%), Ville St. Laurent (6%), CDN (7%), and (7%) from Mile End. Laval accounted for 25% of the client cases. 16% come from the East end, and the rest, 21% from the South Shore, LaSalle, Verdun, the East end, and the West Island.

Sources of Referrals

This year 78% of our referrals came from the SOS and the existing social services network, including DYP, hospitals and the CSSS; 7% were from word of mouth, from other clients and people within the community who speak their own language; 2% came for follow up by La Maison d'Athéna after their stay at the shelter; 9% came from other community organizations and through legal referrals; 4% from outreach sessions and the Shield of Athena website.

New Long Term Clients (Based on 134 Cases)

This year there was an increase of 25% in the number of new long-term files, up from 107 last year. We would like to note that we closed some files from previous periods so as to make space and prioritize newer and more dangerous cases, reduce the waiting lists, and make sure that all clients could receive the services. We would also like to point out that we need more staff to keep up with the demand.

Ex-Residents

This year, Athena’s House, referred 3 ex-residents to our external services after their stay at the shelter.

Services Given (Based on 134 New Long-Term Files)

There were **3,617 services** provided to long-term clients during the last statistical period by the social workers and child specialists. This represents an **increase of 39%**.

There were services provided to long-term clients during the last statistical period by the social workers. Most of the cases we received were linguistically challenged, multi-problematic, and needed specialized services as well as a concerted inter-sectoral approach. In addition to psycho-social intervention, they also needed to follow-up in immigration and both criminal and civil procedures. Advocacy is also integrated into the multilingual services that are provided by our CI and our social workers.

TYPE	2023-2024
ADVOCACY	1103
INDIVIDUAL	454
ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE	207
LEGAL CLINICS	31
ACCOMPANIMENTS WITH SOCIAL WORKER	380
FAMILY	10
CHILDREN'S SERVICES	24
TELEPHONE	1,215
REFERRAL	177
SUPPORT GROUPS	16
TOTAL	3617

Observation: All services are adapted to the specific linguistic and cultural needs of the clients by the caseworkers and staff at the Shield of Athena at either the Montreal or Laval offices. Despite the digital adaptation during the pandemic there is a 4-week waiting list for clients due to changes in manpower. In order to speed up the procedure we had to also refuse some clients from previous periods who were not presently in danger.

This year's languages used were Arabic, Bengali, Dari, Farsi, Greek, Hindi, Italian, Punjabi, Russian, Spanish, and Urdu. Please note that some of the children's services were also in Spanish and Farsi.

Specialized Services - De-Victimisation Groups

Arab language support group:

- Given in May 2023;
- 5 women participated;
- All were of Arabic descent;
- Total of 5 sessions;
- All sessions were given by Basma, caseworker.

Bengali language support group:

- Given in November and December 2023;
- 5 women participated;
- Total of 4 sessions;
- All sessions were given by Betty Petropoulos, tsp, and Leeza Sultana, IC

Urdu/Hindi language support group:

- Given in November and December 2023;
- 5 women participated;
- Total of 4 sessions;
- These sessions were given by Maria Papadopoulos, tsp., and IC Farrah Naz Malik. As both groups were digital, women participated from both Montreal and Laval.

De-victimisation sessions in Spanish- November 2023

We added one session in Spanish for two women victims of violence.
Facilitated by Maria Papadopoulos, tsp and Irma Alvarez IC.

SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND MOTHERS WHO HAVE BEEN EXPOSED TO VIOLENCE

Victims of violence who have children face additional challenges after separating from their abusive partners. At the Shield of Athena, mothers have the opportunity to learn about the impact of violence on children and to acquire important skills for effecting a healthy parent-child dynamic. Furthermore, the most effective way to help children exposed to violence is to position parents as partners in the therapeutic process.

In conformity with the laws respecting parental authority and decision-making, we cannot offer services to minors without the written authorization of their father. However, due to an article of the Civil Code which came into effect in May 2023, mothers who have experienced domestic violence have been able to consent to services for their children after receiving an attestation from a public servant.

From September 2023 to March 2024, 10 mothers and 8 children received services provided by Francesca Esguerra, MA, DT (Drama therapist).

At the external centers, Montreal & Laval

A total of 96 interventions were provided to mothers and children:

- 50 individual consultations with mothers;
- 26 youth consultations;
- 8 family drama therapy sessions;
- 22 phone calls

Interpreters were used in 5 sessions, allowing for services to be rendered in Spanish and in Farsi.



Play therapy session set-up

CULTURAL INTERMEDIARY SERVICE (CI)

For women victims of conjugal violence who speak only in their language of origin.

In addition to the presence of our multilingual social workers and caseworkers, we also provide linguistic access to women victims of conjugal and family violence through our CULTURAL INTERMEDIARY (CI) SERVICE, established in 2008. The CI Service is designed to help women victims of conjugal and/ or family violence coming from ethnocultural communities to better access the existing services. The cultural Intermediaries speak, read, and write in at least one other language and come from different ethnic backgrounds. The CI also participates in community outreach sessions.

Role of the Cultural Intermediaries (CI)

The CIs accompany the women everywhere: police, court, welfare.... etc. Their mandate is to accompany women victims and their social workers during the various procedures to provide the necessary cultural and linguistic background for intervention. The process becomes less intimidating for the women, and they have the opportunity to develop confidence with both their caseworker and the CI. The victims also feel less isolated because a person of the same cultural background and origin accompanies them in all the different steps needed in the health and legal system.

All of the CIs are always supervised and receive ongoing training on conjugal and family violence. Although most of the services given are done with the social workers, the CIs work with women using external services and with the ex-residents of Athena's House. The intervention used is called a tripartite intervention, which consists of the social worker, the cultural intermediary, and the client working together. This takes 2-3 times longer than a regular intervention. The CIs also provide permanent telephone access for many hours a week so as to assist callers who cannot speak French or English. They also translate outreach and public awareness tools produced by the Shield and participate when required at the outreach sessions.

A total of **181 women** from different ethnic backgrounds, new and from previous periods, long-term and short-term term, benefited from our CI Services during this statistical period, representing **an increase of 43.6%** from the previous period. They include ex-residents and external clients, long-term and short-term, that passed through our network. A total of 2,028 interventions were made in 9 different languages: Arabic, Bengali, Dari, Farsi, Hindi, Punjabi, Russian, Spanish, and Urdu. We also received women referred to us in Laval. The expansion and consolidation of the CI department was initially made possible through funds received by the MSSS*.

This department's ongoing success has challenged the organization in finding funds so as to expand the languages and services that are given. We have recently applied to the MSSS so as to fund these services through a specific program in Laval.

Services Provided Through the CI Program: 2023-2024

	Arabe	Bengali	Espagnol	Hindi	Punjabi	Urdu	Dari	Farsi	Russe	Total
# de femmes	20	32	73	9	16	18	2	6	5	181
Consultations	7	8	24	3	30	4	10			86
Consultations virtuelles		4	7		7		1			19
Accompagnements	6	6			2	2	3			19
Accompagnements téléphoniques et virtuelles	9	22	16	19	13	23	9			111
Appels Téléphoniques	132	425	67	10	78	65		4	5	786
Écoute / information / référence	118	354	58	21	85	127	1	14	4	782
Group de soutien		4	2		4	4				14
Assistance Économique	5	16	2		6	10				39
Clinique juridique individuelle		6				1				7
Complément d'intervention	19	69	5		4					97
Total	296	917	196	53	255	236	47	19	9	2,028

These services have increased from the time of the pandemic when we had to adapt them to our vulnerable clients.

The linguistic and support services of cultural intermediaries either through Zoom Software as videoconference consultations or in person are also available for other shelters when presented with linguistic issues in intervention and only upon request.

Access to this department is coordinated by Hasmik Manucharyan. The CIs are also supervised by social workers.

Observation: This year, we added 3 new languages to our cultural intermediary bank: Tamil, Mandarin, and Romanian.

LINGUISTICALLY SPECIALIZED SERVICES & ACTIVITIES



Art made by one of our clients, during a CI-organized activity for women from the South Asian community.

This year, numerous activities were also held for women and children in Bengali, Farsi, English and Urdu, including:

- Movie lunches where the participants spoke about conjugal violence after viewing a film: June and November 2023;
- Women's Friendship Activity: August 2023;
- Legal sessions, marriage separation & divorce: October 2023;
- 2 Sessions on Healthcare and Mental Health: November 2023;
- Love is Not Always Kind, art and recreational session for women victims and children exposed to violence in the home: February 2024;
- Empowerment activity on International Women's Day: March 2024;
- Legal sessions: November 2023 and March 2024 for the Iranian Community.
- A total of 188 clients participated at these sessions



Clients drawing during a recreational art session for women victims and children exposed to violence, taken on International Women's Day 2024.



Our Montreal staff and local police officers at our annual picnic.

COLLABORATION WITH UNIVERSITIES AND INTERNS

McGill University School of Medicine - Community Health Alliance Project

Presentations done by two McGill Medical students participating in the CHAP program (Community Health Alliance Project). These presentations were done virtually for our clients at the external and the shelter on: how to navigate the Quebec healthcare system, and recognizing mental health issues in relation to conjugal violence.

Université de Montréal - Law

We also had law students from l'Université de Montréal who presented digitally to our shelter clients on issues associated with legal procedures, youth protection, and immigration.



Our law interns with Executive Director Melpa Kamateros

ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE MONTREAL OFFICE

Hellenic Appeal - Distribution of food baskets (December 2023)

Over a period of two days, volunteers distributed Christmas food baskets worth 250\$ each to 75 families. Other clients received cheques valued at 125\$ per family from the *Gazette Christmas Fund*.

Other

Clients also received new clothing donated by Suzy Shier and Alison Sheri; young children were given toys received through *Ginger Petty's Annual Toy Tea*. Many gift cards were donated by local restaurants and businesses for the teenagers.

Clients received gifts for themselves as well as toys and gift cards for teenagers through Caroline Bouchard and a team of volunteers, as well as volunteers from City Church.



Clients selecting clothes donated to us.



Our shelter coordinator, Maria with Yanci, Natasha and Barbara from City Church Montreal donating gifts to the kids at our shelter.



Christmas donations from Carolyn's Community.



Donations from the LDVA Base Daycare..

Spring Activity - April 9th 2023

Easter baskets were delivered by the Hellenic Appeal to 100 families.

Coordinated by Betty Petropoulos, tsp, Director of Social Services and Maria Papadopoulos, tsp, Clinical Supervisor.

NETWORKING

The organization is a member of many local tables and committees on conjugal and family violence, as well as regional health and social services committees in both Montreal and Laval. The Shield has taken an active role in the development of policies and strategies on conjugal violence, particularly in the area of providing services for women and children coming from vulnerable clientele in Quebec.

Due to the opening of the Second Step Resource, we participated as well at some of the meetings for the Alliance des maisons de deuxième étape. Our ED was also co-chair of the Q-HPPC gender based research on the lack of legislation and social housing for women victims of conjugal violence.

A total of 234 hours were dedicated by the SOAFS staff for networking on the following committees and organizations.

RESSOURCE	PARTICIPANTS	
Table de concertation ev VC de Mtl	Maria Kokkoris	Coordo MA
Table sur la violence conjugale et l'agression sexuelle de Laval	Maria Kokkoris	Coordo MA
Alliance des MH de 2ième étape Rencontres spéciales 2ième /tape	Maria Kokkoris/Sierra Aggett	MA Interim
MIFI	Hasmik Manucharyan	Coordo
Regroupement de Francisation	Hasmik Manucharyan	Coordo
Collectif Québécois pour la prévention de l'itinérance CQPI	Melpa Kamateros	DE
CLIS Laval	Melpa Kamateros	DE
Coalition Féministes	Melpa Kamateros	DE
Regroupement des Maisons de l'Île	Maria Kokkoris	Coordo MA
AGIR (Laval)	Maria Kokkoris Betty Petropoulos tsp	Coordo MA DSS
TVCASL Comités	Melpa Kamateros	DE BASF
Cellule d'action Concertée en VC	Maria Kokkoris	Coordo MA
Shelters Canada	Melpa Kamateros	ED
Table de Concertation de Laval	Hasmik Manucharyan	Coordo
Leaf	Melpa Kamateros	ED
Table de quartier de Parc-Extension	Sanovia McPhee	Admin
Table des femmes de Parc-Extension	Hasmik Manucharyan	Coordo

MULTILINGUAL COMMUNITY OUTREACH DEPARTMENT

Our community outreach is a large part of what we do. If victims are not supported by their community or if they are shamed for leaving, they will likely stay in a situation that is very dangerous for themselves and their children.

Social Media and Public Awareness

Our multilingual outreach programs are all available on our YouTube channel. For the past few years, we have been increasing the impact of our social media program on Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn. One of our major campaigns, “Love is Not Always Kind” launched on Valentine's Day 2024.

Our social media was managed by Dannie Le, Isabella Del Grosso, and Maryam Azimi.



Our “Love is Not Always Kind” social media posts, translated in multiple languages.

Campaigns

Women's Day Campaign

Instagram: 1,092 video plays

Reach: 900 people

Love is Not Always Kind (Valentine's Day)

Instagram: 145 people reached

Facebook: 401 people reached

The campaign was reposted by Table de concertation en violence conjugale de Montréal, INÉÉI - PSH Institut National pour l'Équité and l'Égalité et l'Inclusion, Service aux collectivités - UQAM.

Raise a Hand to Stop the Violence

Instagram: 120 people reached

Facebook: 444 people reached

Collaborations

Shield X Alphabet Cafe

The Alphabet Cafe donated some of its profits to the Shield of Athena and tagged us on their social media campaigns.

Instagram: 1.4K reach

Facebook: 1.2K reach via our post

Additional reach through their post: 1.6K

Likes: 1.6K

Shield X Mia Kouppa

The ladies from Mia Kouppa made one of the recipes from our cookbook and made some content to promote it, as well as our organization.

Reach: 1,990

Video plays: 2,652

Shield X Pamela Peganno

Live interview with City News reporter and influencer, Pamela Peganno.

Views: 1,8k

Reach: 3.5k

LinkedIn

Through our consistent publications on LinkedIn, we were able to grow our following to 228 followers. The content was centered around news updates, an in-depth dive into the topic of conjugal violence, as well as posting pictures of major events and donations. In total, we had 5,900 impressions, and our best performing post was viewed 1,449 times.



Our “Raise Your Hand and Say No to Violence” social media posts, translated in multiple languages.

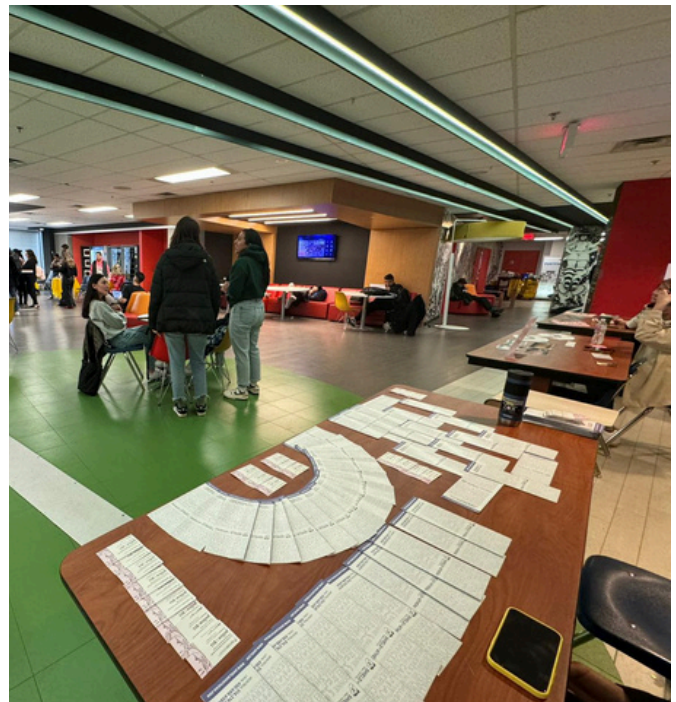
Information Sessions - Montreal

Although we are currently not funded for these sessions, we continue to provide them to the community.

- 27 information sessions were given this year, both in person and remotely;
- Of these 3 were legal, and 4 were medical information sessions;
- The information was offered in English, French, Farsi, Bengali, Punjabi and Urdu;
- A total of 367 participants attended.

Who Were the Sessions Given To?

- 14% were open to the public;
- 10% were held in high schools, colleges or universities;
- 18% were given at community organizations;
- 3% were given to social services;
- 52% were given to our clientele (including legal & medical);
- 3% were given to the government.



Our CI, Maryam Azimi, during the Women's Day Event at Lasalle College, to raise awareness about our services.

Information Sessions - Laval

15 information sessions were also held in Laval, both digitally and in person. 224 individuals participated. The sessions included the following topics: the types of abuse and cycle of violence, myths about conjugal violence, the criminal procedure in conjugal violence cases, immigration, divorce/separation/custody, the ethnocultural perspective of conjugal violence, family patrimony & matrimonial regimes, access issues and perceptions pertaining to gender-based violence, honor-based violence and children exposed to violence.

Who Were the Sessions Given To?

- 67% were held in high schools, adult education centers (french classes);
- 20% were given at community organizations;
- 4% were given to social services.

The outreach sessions were given by Hasmik Manucharyan, Rabiaa Mojbari, Melpa Kamateros, Leeza Sultana and Farrah Malik Naz.

Other Activities - French Courses

In addition to the many activities given to clients, the Shield has been providing French language courses. This year, we increased the number of French courses by adding a group specifically designated for women victims of domestic violence. This course was given remotely to facilitate learning for women with many other challenges.

This year, we had 99 sessions in person and 66 sessions online, including one that was given remotely to women victims who have difficulties in leaving their homes. These were funded by MIFI. Coordinated by Hasmik Manucharyan.

PRESENTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS

The Shield of Athena regularly presents its various multilingual and specialized services.

This past year, the organization's staff gave 6 presentations to 467 students at educational institutions such as McGill University, faculties of social work and medicine, The Max Bell School of Public Policy, Vanier College, École Lucien Pagé, Lasalle College, and Lester B Pearson School.

DATE	ORGANISATION	FACILITATRICE	N. DE SESSIONS	PARTICIPANTS	SUJETS
7 sept.	McGill School of Medicine first year students	Melpa	2	400	Conjugal violence, BASF services offert
8 nov.	McGill School of social work	Melpa	1	10	Présentation aux étudiants de maîtrise de l'école de travail social
8 jan.	Max Bell School of Public Policy	Melpa	1	15	BASF services offerts, violence conjugale
1 juin	Adult Education: Lester B Pearson School	Melpa	1	7	BASF services offerts, violence conjugale
31 mai	École Lucien Pagé	Siran	1	15	BASF services offerts, violence conjugal
4 mars	Collège Vanier	Francesca	1	20	Violence conjugale, BASF services offerts

Presentations given in 2023-2024



Dr. Annick Gauthier with our Executive Director, Melpa Kamateros, and our Head of Social Services, Betty Petropoulos, tsp. giving a lecture for McGill medical students.



Dr. Annick Gauthier with our Executive Director, Melpa Kamateros, and our Head of Social Services, Betty Petropoulos, tsp., and Dr Tara McCarty, MD CM CCFP, BSc, at McGill



Our Executive Director., Melpa Kamateros, giving a presentation at Vanier College



*Outreach session at McGill, Q-HPPC gender based research
Collectif Québécois pour la prévention de l'itinérance*

TRAINING TO PROFESSIONALS

Employee and Intern Training

The total number of hours spent on training interns and employees on the organization's services and interventions was: **1,204 hours**.

ENDROIT	NOMBRE DE PARTICIPANTES	NOMBRE D'HEURES
Interns- McGill Law & Social work	3	176
CHAP -School of medicine U de M Law & Social work	2	42
Concordia	3	264
IC	1	280
Summer	1	14
Personnel	3	63
TOTAL	45	365
	58	1,204

Team Supervision

A total of **1,150 hours** were dedicated to supervising the cultural intermediaries and client cases by the social workers at the shelter and external.

Staff member	Team supervision	# of hours	# of meetings
Clinical supervisors	Supervision of shelter resident cases	700	50
Clinical supervisors	Supervision of cases at external offices	50	50
Hasmik Manucharyan	Supervision of CI	100	50
ED	Supervision of law students	300	50
Total		1,150	200

Time Spent By Executive Director

Meeting	Number	% of MEETINGS
Funding/Project development/services	92	24%
Board /Administration/Training/Supervision & HR.	171	46%
Visibility/Outreach/Networking/ Representation	114	30%
TOTAL	377	100%

The Executive Director participated in 377 meetings, an increase from the previous year. Networking, visibility, and outreach accounted for 30% of her time; 46% was spent on administration, training, supervision, and HR, and 24% of her time was dedicated to project and services development and fundraising. Over a third of the meetings (36%) were dedicated to coordinating the Second Step Resource.

Observation: The number of meetings increased within the past year due to the Second Step Project, the expansion of the organization, and the need for more HR in all areas.

Training to Professionals

Due to the Shield's expertise and specific approach when offering services to victims coming from ethnic communities, 5 trainings were provided to 84 healthcare and other professionals (more specifically CIUSS, MIFI, DPJ, CISR) including federal government employees. The sessions were given by executive director Melpa Kamateros and other employees.

Date	Organization	Presenter	# Of participants
May 10	CIUSSS de l'est de Montréal	Siran, tsp	4
June 2	MIFI-Laval	Melpa, Hasmik, Tiffany	6
June 8	DPJ	Hasmik	25
February 7	Table de concertation en VC et AS	Melpa	13
February 14	Immigration & Refugee Board of Canada	Melpa, Rabiaa CI	36
TOTAL			84

VOLUNTEER IMPLICATION

Volunteers play an integral role in the continued support that we offer our clients and their children and the smooth sailing of our events and fundraisers. Although not up to pre-COVID standards, this year, we had 123 volunteers who gave a total of **1,055 volunteer hours** of their time.

We want to thank everyone who took the initiative and found ways to support our mission and help the women and children access our services. Some of the volunteer work that took place this year was the delivery of food to clients in need, students doing philanthropy projects, fundraising by board members and individuals, and donations of personal hygiene products, toys, and clothing. The participation of people on our fundraising committees and the donation of their professional services are also taken into account.



Members of our staff and volunteers at our Lilac Event at the Palace Convention Center in Laval.

SECOND STEP RESOURCE IN LAVAL



From left to right, board member Angela Pretrogiannis, Chris-Ann Nakis, President and Melpa Kamateros, Executive Director, at the Second Step Ressource Construction site

From 2010, the Shield of Athena Family Services has engaged funds for the purchase and development of a Transition Home, a Second Step resource for women and children victims and exposed to conjugal and or family violence after their stay in a shelter.

The project has received approval from the Table de Concertation en violence conjugale et agressions sexuelles de Laval, La Table en condition Féminine de Laval, the three Laval shelters: Lina, Esther and Prelude, the CIS of Laval and the City of Laval. The technical assistance team that has been working with the SOAFS is Réseau 2000.

In December 2014, the SHQ confirmed the reservation of 17 units for this resource. In May 2016, the organization signed and acquired the property in Laval. The organization received the final approval for the project in November 2020, and we are currently under construction. Estimated delivery time will be Fall 2024. Our partner in this project is Réseau 2000. We are also members of the Alliance des Maisons de Deuxième étape. *Time allocated for this project by the Executive Director amounts to 15% of her overall time. From 2022 as well, she, along with Maria Kokkoris, has participated in 34 construction meetings, which include both on-site and virtual meetings with the engineers and architects involved in the construction.*

The persons responsible for the direction and development of this project are Chris Ann Nakis, President, Melpa Kamateros, Executive Director and the Board of Directors of the Shield of Athena.

“BRICK BY BRICK” campaign for the Shield’s 2nd Step Resource

Our goal of opening our 2nd step resource in Laval will soon be accomplished. We are so proud that it will be 1 of the biggest such shelters in Quebec and will be able to respond to the women’s needs for safe and affordable housing.



"Brick by Brick" campaign

The Brick by Brick campaign is an ongoing fundraiser where individuals and/or businesses can sponsor an apartment using this new resource. A brass plaque at the door will recognize the donor.

We will be furnishing the building in the late summer and early fall of 2024. There is a committee in charge of this aspect of development

SPECIAL EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

2023 Annual Membership Drive



Photos taken during the launch of our membership campaign, hosted by Eramelinda Bocquer.

Launched off by a lovely event that was held at Table 51 in Montreal. All proceeds were dedicated to the expansion of our Emergency Shelter, Athena's House. Present were Her Excellency Katerina Varvarigou, Mary Pagonis from the HBOT, and the Municipal Councilor of Ahuntsic-Cartierville Effie Giannou.

After accepting thousands of women and children from 2004, the places in the shelter were increased from 9-16 so as to accommodate the increased needs that manifested themselves during the pandemic. The Board decided to go ahead and find the funding needed to renovate and create new intervention areas as well as update the House. The capital cost campaign will be 1M\$ over one year and 5\$ million over the space of five years.

Construction at the Shelter

After accepting thousands of women and children from 2004, the places in the shelter were increased from 9-16 so as to accommodate the increased needs that manifested themselves during the pandemic. The Board decided to go ahead and find the funding needed to renovate and create new intervention areas as well as update Athena's House.

The capital cost campaign for the shelter will be 1M\$ over one year and 5\$ million for our network of services over the space of five years.



Construction at the shelter

General Assembly 2023

The annual General Assembly was held in a hybrid format on June 22nd, 2023. A total of 26 people were in attendance: members, non-members, independents, and staff. The Activity Report for the year 2022-2023 was presented, and updates on the Second Step Resource were shared.



Pictures of our Board Members and members at the 2023 General Assembly

Activity for the Days Against Violence

November 25- December 6

Within the context of this year's campaign to raise awareness of conjugal violence, the Shield of Athena produced yet again a series of articles that were translated into many languages. Links were shared on our Facebook and social media that directed readers to these articles.

Lilac Event 2023

A wonderful event that the Shield hosted in November 2023 at the Centre de congrès Le Palace in Laval. The Shield of Athena celebrated 32 years of community service and the construction of our Second Step Resource!



The Laval Mercedes-Benz' team



The paintings for auction at the Lilac Event



Pictures taken throughout the night at the Lilac Event

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Several individuals, groups, foundations, and businesses this year offered their support to The Shield of Athena, and we would like to thank them for their generosity.

Some of these donors were:

- Altru Foundation
- Alphabet Café
- Azrieli Foundation
- CN Railway
- Mr. Stephen Segal & Family
- North Star Academy
- The Montreal Knights Hockey Academy
- Carolyn's toy drive
- Leonardo da Vinci
- Opération père Noël
- Girls hockey espoir
- Glencore Canada
- Empire Life
- Montreal Shoebox Project
- Hellenic Appeal Foundation
- Lyceum of Greek Women
- Bombardier Foundation
- Royal LePage
- Bank of Nova Scotia



Thank you so much to the Alphabet Café for raising \$500 for The Shield of Athena for International Women's day. Melpa Kamateros pictured with co-owner of Alphabet Café, Tony Argiropoulos, with Maria Papadopoulos and Sanovia McPhee.



MONTREAL KNIGHTS vs NORTH STAR ACADEMY hockey fundraiser event for the shelter, with our Shelter Coordinator, Maria Kokkoris



Our Shelter Coordinator Maria, with Giovanna O'Conner from Glencore Canada, who donated items to the shelter



Our Executive Director, Melpa Kamateros, with the Royal Lepage team, and their generous donation.



Our Director of Social Services, tsp., Betty Petropoulos and Clinic Supervisor, Maria Papadopoulos, tsp., with TLA Architects and their donation of \$1,000



Donation of \$10,000 from Empire Life with Cristina Panzera



More pictures from our visit to Alphabet Café

LAVAL ANNUAL REPORT

Clients

In Laval we had a total of **278 cases**, long and short term.

Short-Term Files

Of these new cases, 278 were short-term cases for whom we did not open files. This was because, after the initial interventions that might have included active listening, referral, and consultations, the clients did not come back or take a final decision to leave. From these short-term files:

- 19% did not speak either English or French
- 20% spoke English
- 61% spoke French only
- 93% were abuse cases
- 3% were HBV cases
- 4% were access cases

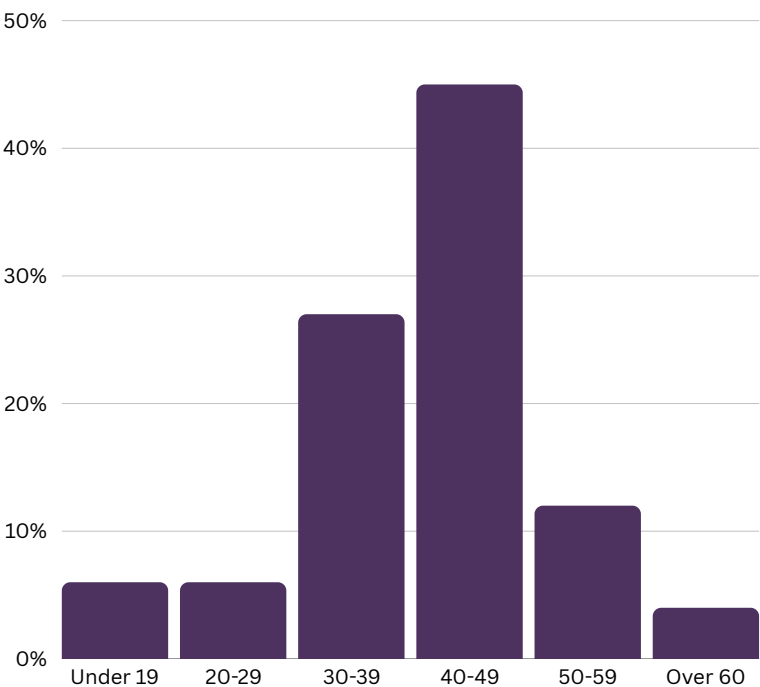
Long-Term Files (Based on 33 New Cases)

We have **33 new cases** that became long term files, representing an **increase of 32%** from last year.

Ages

AGES

Under 19:	6%
20-29:	6%
30-39:	27%
40-49:	45%
50-59:	12%
60 & up:	4%



Preferred Language of New Cases

- 36% spoke English;
- 49% spoke French;
- 15% of these clients spoke neither English nor French.

Observation: 51% of our clients spoke neither English nor French.

Ethnic Origin

- 85% were from different ethnic communities;
- 15% were of English Canadian origin.

Sources of Referral

- 78% of the total referrals came from the CSSS, Youth protection, hospitals, SOS, and the existing social services network;
- 9% were word-of-mouth referrals from one client to another and within communities;
- 10% were from schools, community organizations;
- 3% were from the Shield of Athena website.

Observation: The majority of our referrals were from the existing services of Quebec.

Nature of Problems

93% of the cases were conjugal violence, 4% access and 3% were HBV.

Long-Term Cases

Of the 278 new cases, 33 became long-term files. Although many short-term interventions might have included active listening, referral, and consultations, we did not open files. A few reasons for this were that the clients had not made a final decision to leave, or in the case of women who presented with language barriers, financial dependency, or a lack of support, they could not easily make the decision to leave.

Please note that despite the need to provide more interventions in Laval, there is not enough funding to hire other social workers, and we are always working on a deficit. As such, 45 long-term files, old and new, were serviced in Laval. In 19% of the cases, intervention was done in a language other than English or French. They received the following services.

General Services

Services	2023-2024
Interventions (email)	60
Accompaniments	115
Telephone	227
Advocacy	115
Referrals	-
Individual	71
Youth	4
Family	2
Legal clinics	8
Home visits	-
Support groups	1
Financial Assistance	70
Total	673

Observations on the services

Specialized Services

Linguistic Services Given by the IC in Laval

Although there have been cuts in the initial budget of Laval for the IC, we have been able to maintain these specialized services that facilitate interventions with allophone women and their empowerment process. Despite the fact that the service is not funded, it is offered to 3 Laval shelters when asked: La Maison de Lina, Le Prélude, and La Maison L'Esther. This year, a total of 69 interventions were made, and 17 women benefited from the services. The 6 languages used were Arab, Farsi, Punjabi, Russian, Spanish, and Urdu.

	Arabe	Espagnol	Punjabi	Urdu	Farsi	Russe	Total
# de femmes	5	6		3	2	1	17
Consultations		1		2			3
Consultations Virtuelles		4					4
Accompagnements	1						1
Accompagnements téléphoniques et virtuelles	1			4			5
Appel téléphoniques	3	17	1	6	1	1	29
Écoute/ information/ référence	4		3	13	1	1	22
Assistance Économique			2	2			4
Complément d'intervention			1				1
Total	9	22	7	27	2	2	69

Observation: Women victims who present with linguistic barriers cannot access existing services and need more time for intervention than those who speak either English or French. This is because we use a tripartite intervention that includes social workers, cultural intermediaries, and clients. At times, DPJ and CLSC workers might also be included.

Children's Services

There were 2 parenting sessions; 4 youth consultations and 2 family sessions held in Laval.

Economic Services

Through various activities and despite the presence of Covid, 68 people benefitted from financial assistance this year on two occasions. They included money, gifts for the children and food baskets. These were provided by various businesses, individuals and associations.

Community Outreach

In the last statistical period, there were 15 outreach sessions that were done with community organizations and adult education schools, including Le Centre de formation Les Berges, SCAMA (in arabic) and Bon Pasteur who work mainly with newcomers.

The organization reached 224 individuals through these sessions, and participants came from a background of different ethnicities. Within the context of the "integration" component, legal sessions on the criminal procedures of conjugal violence, immigration, custody and access issues, and perceptions pertaining to gender-based violence and equality were also provided to the participants by the law interns from the University of Montreal.

The people responsible for this outreach were Hasmik Manucharyan, and Rabiaa Mojbari.



PROJECT: SECOND STEP RESOURCE IN LAVAL

Since 2010, the Shield of Athena Family Services has engaged funds for the purchase and development of a Transition Home, a Second Step Resource for women and children victims exposed to conjugal and or family violence after their stay in a shelter.

The project has received the approval of the Table de Concertation de Laval, La Table en condition Feminine de Laval, three shelters, Lina, Esther, and Prelude, the CISS of Laval, and the City of Laval. The technical assistance team that has been working with the SOAFS is Réseau 2000. In December 2015, the SHQ confirmed the reservation of 17 units for this resource. In May 2016, the organization signed and acquired the property in Laval.



Outside of the Second Step Resource

The persons responsible for the direction and development of this project are:

Chris Ann Nakis,
President

Melpa Kamateros,
Executive Director

**and the Board of
Directors of the Shield of
Athena.**



Inside the Second Step Resource

ATHENA'S HOUSE

Annual Report 2023-2024

Message of the Board of Directors regarding our emergency Shelter Athena's House

It has been quite a few years that we have been complaining about the lack of space in our emergency shelter, Athena's House. From 2004, it has welcomed thousands of women and children who have been in abusive relationships. We would like to recognize the wonderful work done by the shelter staff, headed by our coordinator, Maria Kokkoris, throughout this time.

Unfortunately, in addition to the increased need for more space, wear and tear on the shelter has also taken its toll.

The pandemic brought on the possibilities of funding to have more staff and people in the shelter but there are many costs associated with this expansion. After 20 years in operation we need a revamp! Some of the funds necessary for our one million dollar shelter project have been received from government funding but we are also embarking on a major 5 million dollar corporate campaign to fully develop the organization, including our shelter.

We thank everybody who has helped to date. These reports show what it is that they are supporting.

Board of Directors, SOAFS

REPORT OF THE COORDINATOR OF ATHENA'S HOUSE-Maria
Kokkoris

In the past year, we housed 52 women and 52 children, a total of 104 people. The average stay per person was 50 days, an increase of 20% and our occupancy rate was at 90%. We have increased the number of beds from 9 to 16 but at times go up to 22 people if needed. This upgrade was made possible by government funding from the MSSS to reduce the number of murders of women who are victims of conjugal violence.

The length of stay has also increased once again this year compared to last year. This is because women are not finding affordable housing and the severe housing crisis which obliges us to keep them for a longer period of time.

Once again this year, we are continuing to accommodate very vulnerable clientele including women with much larger families, 3 children or more, which obliges us to close rooms that would have been given to single women.

Women and children are once again welcomed into our resource directly through the shelter doors, a welcome change at a time when families are in crisis... With a warm smile.

As mentioned in our report last year, our shelter started major renovations that will make room for more intervention spaces for our workers seeing as our capacity went from 9 to 16 people. Construction began in December 2023 and will be completed in September 2024.

Clients

Ethnic Origins and Languages of Communication

71 % of the women we accommodated this year at La Maison d'Athéna were Canadian citizens, including immigrants and sponsored permanent residents; 15% were refugee claimants or accepted refugees; and 6% had no status at all.

Observation: 31% of our clients were of precarious immigration status, a trend that has been noticeable for several years

Status	Number	%
Canadian citizen	16	31%
Citizen Immigrated	8	15%
Sponsored permanent resident	13	25%
Permanent Resident through refugee status	2	4%
Refugee claimant	8	15%
Accepted Refugee	0	0%
No status	3	6%
Retraction of Sponsorship	0	0%
Visa	2	4%
Total	52	100%

Country of birth	Number	%
Canadian born	16	31%
Born outside of Canada	36	69%
Total	52	100 %

69% of these women were born outside Canada, and 21 different ethno-cultural communities were represented.

Of these 52 women, 12, representing 23%, had severe linguistic barriers and difficulties in communicating in either French or English. The languages they spoke are the following: Bengali (1), Spanish (5), Farsi (1), Arabic (3), Punjabi (1), and LSQ deaf woman (1). The various languages spoken by the caseworkers at la Maison d'Athéna were a great asset that allowed us to be of assistance to the vast majority of these women regardless of their inability to communicate in English or French.

Languages spoken at the shelter included Arabic, Armenian, Creole, Spanish, Greek, Lingala, English, and French. Our trained cultural interpreters at the Montreal office also provided translation to shelter clients in Bengali, Urdu, Dari, Farsi, and Punjabi.

It is important to note, however, that even if the client possessed an adequate knowledge of French or English, it was always much easier for the women to express themselves in their language of origin. If there is a language that is not spoken in-house by a member of our staff, we enlist the services of a translator in order to communicate with the client. These translators are from the “Banque d’Interpretes”. We did not use this service during the last statistical period.

Average Age of our Clients

The ages of the women who stayed at the shelter this year are as follows:

Ages	Number	%
13-17	1	2%
18-25	9	17%
26-30	10	19%
31-35	11	21%
36-40	6	12%
41-50	8	15%
51-60	4	8%
61+	3	6%
Total	52	100%

Observation: Once again this year, younger and younger women are recognizing the issue of conjugal violence and coming to shelters for services on conjugal violence. The largest age group was young women between 18-35, which represents 57% of our residents. This indicates that conjugal violence is still present in society.

Ages	Number
Less than one year old	5
1-4	25
5-8	8
9-12	6
13-15	3
16-18	4
18+	1
Total	52

Observation: 48% of the children at the shelter were between 1-4 years old, necessitating a lot of activities to be done by the specialized workers.

Nature of the Problems

Among the 52 women we accommodated this year, 90% endured violence at the hands of their partners/ex-partners while 10% had experienced violence within a family context.

Number of clients	Type of violence	%	Definition
47	Conjugal violence	90%	Spouses & ex partners
4	Family violence	8%	Parents/In laws
1	CV & FV	2%	Spouse/In laws
0	CV & HBV	0%	-
0	HBV	0%	-
Total:52		100%	

Types of Abuse

We accommodated women who have lived through different types of violence. This year, 81% (42 women) of the shelter residents this year were victims of physical violence, while 60% (31 women) of the women had also experienced economic and/or sexual violence. Psychological and/or verbal violence was present in 87% (45 women) of the cases.

Sources of Referral

The women accommodated this year were referred to our shelter by various organizations and/or individuals. 48% came from the SOS line, 44 % from Quebec's existing social services, including other shelters, CLSCs, hospitals, and community resources; 4% came from the police; and 4% were referred by external clients.

Source	Number	%
SOS Violence Conjugale	25	48%
CLSC	1	2%
Youth protection	6	11%
Other shelters	3	6%
Police	2	4%
Community resources	10	19%
Referred by BASF (external clients)	2	4%
Schools	3	6%
Total	52	100%

Profile of our Clients

The women who used our services were only minimally aware of their rights and of the resources available to them. As per the shelter workers' observations, women were likely to be unaware of their legal status or their legal rights in Canada, primarily as a result of the social isolation they experienced at the hands of their partners. This vulnerable situation puts women at a disadvantage, particularly those women who come from ethno-cultural communities.

Services Offered at the Shelter

- **Individual consultations:** This year, our case workers held 874 individual consultations. Of the 874 consultations, 254, or 29%, were done in a language other than English or French. These languages were Bengali, Spanish, Punjabi, Arabic, Dari, and sign language. The CIs from external services participated in this.
- **Accompaniments:** This year, our caseworkers carried out 141 accompaniments; Of these, 60, or 43%, were done in a language other than English or French. They were done with either a CI or a social worker who spoke the client's language. This presents the vulnerability, primarily linguistic that these clients have in accessing information and services.
- **Telephone consultations:** The shelter staff dealt with 9,734 calls, a 31% increase from last year.
- **Legal information consultations:** Each client is given the opportunity to consult with students from the law faculties of McGill or the Université de Montreal. The law students are not at liberty to give legal advice; they can only share legal information regarding the client's rights. If the clients choose to exercise their rights, we refer them either to legal aid or to a lawyer. This year, the law students had 5 legal clinics. There were 2 legal presentations for the shelter.
- **Info activities:** We offer information activities on the different aspects and dynamics of conjugal violence, as well as other pertinent topics, such as stress management, interpersonal growth, and tools to help cope with the consequences of conjugal and family violence. The duration for a typical session is 1 and a half hours. These activities allow residents to speak about their experiences, in a safe space while breaking isolation in sharing their experience with the other residents. This year, we also included sessions facilitated by McGill Medical Students on two issues: How to navigate the Quebec Health System and Mental Health. There were a total of 11 information sessions on conjugal violence, and a total of 18 different women benefited from these sessions.
- **Economic assistance:** It can happen that our clients arrive at the shelter with little or no personal belongings. We therefore offer them economic assistance that can consist of second-hand and new clothing. Each client (52) who resided at the shelter received a welcome package, including toiletries (toothbrush, toothpaste, soap, shampoo, deodorant, etc.) in addition to the above clothing. Furthermore, upon their departure from the shelter, women were offered essential household items, such as cutlery, plates, and glasses. During and after their stay, their children were also provided with free clothes, diapers, and baby formula. Seven clients were also referred to external services in Montreal for free clothing. A total of 104 women and children were provided with material and economic assistance during the last statistical period. These were provided by different associations and individuals.

- **Demystification of the social services network and the laws:** This is ongoing and is considered a specialized service. Obviously, the 23% of our clientele who had severe language issues benefited from this service since the information was given to them in their language of origin. Women coming from ethnic communities are doubly vulnerable because most of them present severe linguistic and or cultural blocks that may impede them from knowing basic issues regarding their rights and accessing the health and social services network.
- **Advocacy:** This is ongoing and integrated into most of the services that are given, such as accompaniments and consultations with the government. This year, 29% of consultations and 43% of accompaniments were done in a language other than English or French.
- **Follow-up services:** Once a client is ready to leave, their needs are assessed, and they are given information regarding the external services for follow-up for themselves and their children. This may be a follow-up of a series of consultations, support, and economic or legal services. This year, of the clients that were referred to the external services upon their departure from the shelter, 3 became long-term clients and received external services at either Montreal or Laval.

Where do the Women Go After They Leave the Shelter?

The single most important thing for women leaving the shelter is finding secure and affordable housing. We have added this category this year because we find it important to show where women go. As of the past year, this is the breakdown:

Where they go	Number of people	%
Second stage housing: Security, services	11	21%
Independent housing: Rental, no security, expensive	10	19%
Returned to abusive relationship No security	4	8%
Returned home-no security	5	9%
Transferred to another shelter	6 (1 time had run out)	12%
Went to family, friends- no security	8	15%
Left shelter	4	8%
Other	4	8%

The threat of danger for 60% of the women and children leaving the shelter, whether they were going back to abusive relationships or elsewhere where it was not secure, was a very present reality.

Of the 21 % who accessed second steps, only 3 out of the of the clients who didn't speak the language were accepted; in the instance of the 19% who found apartments, they were not secure for their needs as victims of post-separation violence and paid very expensive rents.

Quite simply, women leaving the shelter face high instances of danger, and there are few resources available.

This past year, out of 52 clients, none found social housing.

Activities for Women and Children

Special Activities

Special activities are organized year-round in order to strengthen group cohesion, increase clients' social resources and to put them in connection with life outside the shelter. A total of 58 activities were organized and 35 clients participated (17 adults, 17 youths). Highlights include:

Movie Day (1 time)	5 participants
Visit to park splash pad (2 times)	11 participants
Game day (3 times)	8 participants
Creation of community garden	9 participants
Halloween Trick or Treating	6 participants

Client birthday party (3 times)	9 participants
Thanksgiving potluck	10 participants
Making and installing holiday decorations	5 participants
Creation of family time capsules	9 participants
Cooking group (two times)	5 participants
Spa day	7 participants
Baking and decorating cookies	2 participants
Group art-making or crafting (4 times)	10 participants

Creative Arts Therapies (Drama Therapy and Play Therapy)

During the full statistical period, creative art therapy services were provided at the shelter to both women and children. This year, there were 74 individual drama or therapy sessions (9 with women and 65 with children) and 26 group play or drama therapy sessions; 3 adult groups, 14 youth groups, and 9 parent-child groups.)

Not including special activities facilitated alongside other workers, a total of 100 Creative Arts Therapy interventions took place with 13 adults and 17 youths.

Trainings

Shelter workers participated in the following trainings this year:

- PSL training (9 people, 54 hours)
- Colloque-Rebatir sa confiance (5 people, 35 hours)
- Preventing Homelessness (2 people, 14 hours)
- Peter Jaffee Conference-children exposed to violence (4 people, 8 hours)
- Formation sur le Secret professionnel et la confidentialité (6 people, 42 hours)
- Tech and Gender-based training (2 people, 6 hours)
- Les Enfants vivants en contexte de violence conjugale (3 people, 21 hours)
- Colloque en prévention suicide (2 people, 14 hours)
- AQPS- Repere la personne vulnérable au suicide (2 people, 8 hours)
- Tribunal Spécialisé- La violence ne cesse pas après la rupture (5 people, 12.5 hours)
- Colloque VC explorer les intersections entre la recherche et la pratique (2 people, 6 hours)
- Presentation TCRI (1 person, 1 hour)

Activities and Services for Children and Their Mothers at the Shelter

Since expanding the range of services for mothers and children in 2022, the department has seen incredible growth in both the range of interventions and the number of participants. Services include individual support for mothers and children, youth groups, family interventions, special activities, and respite care. Through our creative arts therapies, we are able to offer Child-Centered Play Therapy and Child-Parent Relational Training. These services are intended to mitigate the impact of conjugal and family violence on children and to promote healthy attachment between parent and child. Workers collaborate with mothers to foster important skills for supporting their child through a challenging period as well as for maintaining a healthy parent-child relationship once they leave the shelter. In addition to promoting healthy child development, the Children's team provides consistency and nurturance for families experiencing instability.

The services & activities for this period are as follows.

Children

Objective

One-on-one consultations with youth allow for interventions to be specifically tailored to each individual's needs. Generally, these sessions provide a safe space for children to express themselves and to experiment with new adaptive behaviors. Not including individual child-centered play therapy sessions conducted by the creative arts therapist, 37 youth consultations took place with 14 participants, marking a 40% increase in participants since the previous year.

Mothers (Parenting Consultations)

Objective

Individual consultations with mothers contribute to an in-depth assessment of a family's needs and equip participants with knowledge and skills necessary for mitigating of violence on children. Not including parent consultations given in conjunction with child-centered play therapy facilitated by the creative arts therapist, 113 parent consultations took place. 29 mothers participated.

Parenting Groups

Objective

Group interventions enable parents to connect over the challenges of providing the best for their children and empower each other as they achieve new insights and skills related to parenting. Group sessions are adapted on a regular basis in order to address salient issues among parent residents. Both the number of parenting groups and the number of participants have more than doubled since the previous year: 19 parenting groups were given to 12 participants.

Youth Groups

Objective

In order to more effectively accommodate the increase in child participation in services, youth groups were introduced as a means of facilitating a healthy sense of connection among youths as well as supporting their social development. Although the presence of caring adults is critical to a child's growth, children become even more empowered when given opportunities to learn from each other. 34 youth groups took place and 25 youths participated.

Respite Care

Objective

In order to more fully support clients as they take the necessary steps towards rebuilding their lives, respite services enable mothers to fulfill responsibilities knowing that their children are cared for. Furthermore, it provides mothers with the space to address their experience of violence without further

exposing their child. 176 respites were given, representing a 74% increase in the service since last year.

Family Consultations

Objective

Interventions including both child and caregiver serve to further address attachment ruptures due to violence and to help ground mothers in their new roles as single-parents. Workers are able to model important skills and provide meaningful encouragement as mothers begin to take on new care-taking strategies. The number of family interventions has almost doubled since last year, with 37 taking place (94% increase).

Special Activities

Objective

Special activities are organized year-round in order to strengthen group cohesion, increase clients' social resources, and put them in connection with life outside the shelter. A total of 58 activities were organized and 35 clients participated (17 adults, 17 youths) . Highlights include:

Movie Day (1 time)	5 participants
Visit to park splash pad (2 times)	11 participants
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Spa day	7 participants
Baking and decorating cookies	2 participants
Group art-making or crafting (4 times)	10 participants

Coordinated by Francesca Esguerra

Food Services

At the Maison d'Athéna we try to provide the resident with as much comfort in the surroundings as possible. The easiest way to make people feel at ease is by providing them with food that is familiar to them and part of their culture.



Our kitchen, and Maria Kokkoris with our housekeeper.

Message from our Shelter Coordinator

Every time new residents come to the shelter their medical history and their cultural and dietary needs are reviewed by our staff. This is very important for women coming from certain religious communities or where there is large-scale vegetarianism or the preference of certain staples. The menus are adapted so as to reflect the cultural, religious and medical realities of the clients and their children.

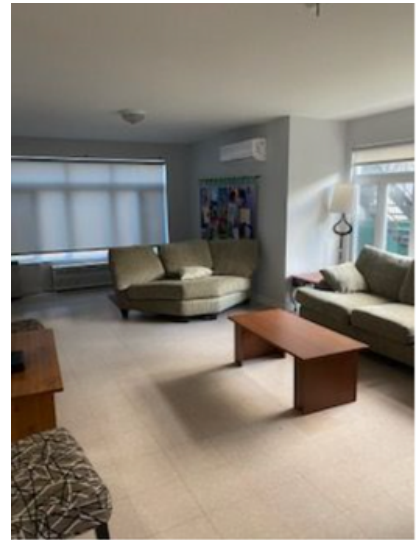
In general, the Canadian Food Guide is applied so as to also try and teach good eating practices for the residents and the children. The staff also involve the women and the children at times in food preparation, so as to create a warm environment for them.

Eating together with the clients also provides the staff with insights on their lives in another setting and promotes bonding with their children. Including the residents in certain aspects of food production also promotes feelings of bonding and belonging.

All necessary precautions are taken so as to promote the necessary level of hygiene that is needed during a community setting such as the one that exists at the shelter. This was particularly true during this pandemic period. The staff and clients were obliged to take more care in terms of social distancing, the wearing of masks, and other measures so as to prevent infection. As our shelter is a small one with community living and one kitchen, this was very difficult. Due to the procedure that was established

whereby we transferred women and children only after their covid tests were analyzed, we have avoided the risk of contamination.

*Maria Kokkoris, Coordinator
Athena's House, La Maison d'Athéna*



Our playroom and dining room

The living space



Christmas at the shelter

BOARD OF DIRECTORS: SHIELD OF ATHENA FAMILY SERVICES

April 1st, 2023 to March 31st, 2024

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Executive Director

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Isabella Del Grosso

Administration and Communications

Marie-Goreth Nduwayo

Sihem Akremi

Arlette Watio

Dannie Le

Social Services

Betty Petropoulos tsp, Social Services Director

Maria Papadopoulos tsp, Clinical Supervisor

Chelsea Ayers, caseworker

Judith Vernus

Athena's House

Maria Kokkoris, Co-ordinator

Evelyne Chéry, int

Yollette Chéry, tsp

Francesca Esguerra, Drama therapist

Maely Doyont, Youth Worker

Sierra Aggett, Tsp

Lea Fhima, int

Lise Vo, int

Emily Saad, Tsp;

Fatima SiDjilali, House manager

Community Outreach

Hasmik Manucharyan

Rabiaa Mojbari

Leeza Sultana

Farrah Naz

Maryam Azimi

Cultural Intermediaries

Farrah Malik Naz

Hasmik Manucharyan

Maryam Azimi

Rabiaa Mojbari

Leeza Sultana

Irma Alvarez

Sanovia McPhee

Legal Interns

Rojan Abrari

Samanta Sharpe

Kendra Magne

OVERVIEW OF STATISTICAL REPORT

April 1st, 2022 to March 31st, 2023

ACTIVITIES & SERVICES	# PEOPLE REACHED	QUANTITY
Clients External & Shelter TOTAL		- External: 958 - Shelter: 104 1,062
Presentations & Training to professionals People affected	551	- Presentations: 6 - Trainings: 5
French classes	165	3 sessions: Fall, Winter, Spring, 2 groups 165 classes
Economic Assistance	75 families 207	- Easter activity- - Christmas activity - Clothing:
Volunteer	123	1055 hours
Employee & Volunteer Training	44	1203 hours
Team supervision	20	1150
Committees/networking		234
Client Activities	188	International women's day session Legal Sessions Health Sessions Café Rencontres
Fundraising/Social		Membership Launch, June 6 Lilac Event , November 2023
Media Programs	40,000 * estimate	Media appearances including: Suburban, Laval News, CBC, Global News, CTV, The Weekly Bangla Mail, Ta nea, The Weekly Bangladesh, CJAD, Kalimera Patridas, Mike FM, Corriere Italiano, Montreal Arabic, Jang Newspaper, Paivand Biweekly Newspaper, The Weekly Vhoreralo, Hafteh, The Meeting Place is Montreal, ICI Television
Virtual Events & Social media campaigns		Total views of the outreach programs on YouTube and Facebook
- Stop the violence campaign, Nov 25-Dec 6 - Love is not always kind campaign, February 2024	564 546	
Reach generated by other Social Media collaborations	10,318	Facebook, Instagram and Linked in
Social Media	62,948 people reached	