

TEMPORARY CLOSURE OF THE RICOCHET CENTER

50 VULNERABLE PEOPLE ON THE STREETS TODAY

Montreal, May 29, 2024 — The Ricochet Center announces the temporary closure of its doors today, Wednesday, May 29, 2024, at 2 p.m. This decision is due to the current lease expiring on May 31, with no possibility of renewal.

“I will say that despite the good faith of all involved, the system is failing in its response to the most vulnerable people. I would add that it has become exceedingly difficult to navigate a system where each structure has its own responsibilities, where communication between these structures is broken, and where each structure blames the other for our collective failure. I'll end by reiterating the resilience and determination of my team, who work tirelessly to knit the threads of a worn social net,” says Tania Charron, Executive Director of Ricochet (Hébergement/Homes).

Reasons for temporary closure

Despite strenuous efforts and the support of Pierrefonds-Roxboro Borough and the City of Montreal, the Ricochet Center has not yet found suitable premises to accommodate its beneficiaries. The other premises available do not meet the standards required to accommodate vulnerable people. Until a temporary location can be found, the Ricochet Center will unfortunately have to close its doors.

Efforts and actions undertaken

Since 2021, the Ricochet Center has been working closely with the borough departments, economic development commissioner and urban planning services to identify options for premises in the area. In 2022, its Board of Directors formed a Capital Assets Committee, which last November found a permanent space requiring major renovations that would take over 6 to 12 months to complete.

In December 2023, Ricochet Center called on CIUSSS de l'Ouest-de-l'Île's community organization team to bring together key partners and create a temporary relocation committee. Despite several approaches in January, February and March 2024, none came to fruition.

From March 28, 2024, a crisis unit comprising Ricochet, the Pierrefonds-Roxboro Borough and the City of Montreal met weekly. At the end of April 2024, a surplus city building was identified, but required unscheduled decontamination. On May 21, 2024, it was confirmed that the contamination was too extensive to allow its use for the Ricochet Center.

Ms. Charron adds, “This situation is painful and beyond us, but our determination remains intact to meet the essential needs of those we accompany.”

Continuing our mission and actions

Despite the temporary closure, Ricochet Center will continue to support its beneficiaries through the following measures:

- Starting June 6, 2024, the team will be present twice a week at Westview Bible Church, which is generously offering space where we can provide our services by appointment:
 - Housing search;
 - Transition to other resources;
 - Psychosocial support;
 - Mailbox service;

- Harm reduction and distribution of prevention material;
- Food and other assistance.
- Starting June 3, the Ricochet shuttle will run twice a day, 7 days a week, covering the West Island and Lachine Borough. Services include:
 - Food assistance;
 - Donations of survival kits including a tent, sleeping bag, waterproof insulating blanket, ground sheet and backpack;
 - Donations of prevention materials.

Search for a new location

The Ricochet Center is confident that it will soon find a new temporary location, thanks to the collaboration of the borough and the city. It remains firmly committed to its mission of supporting people experiencing homelessness and residential instability.

Our commitment

Ricochet Center's commitment to its beneficiaries remains unwavering, even in times of transition. It will continue to make every effort to offer them the support they need.

About Ricochet

Ricochet (Hébergement/Homes) is the only organization offering housing and support solutions for people experiencing residential instability and homelessness in the West Island of Montreal.

With 48 beds permanently available the Ricochet Center not only provides a shelter, but also helps vulnerable people and veterans reintegrate into society by offering them a stable environment, psychosocial support and guidance towards residential stability.

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- Up-to-date Website on the situation: <https://www.ricochetwestisland.com/fermeture-temporaire>

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