



# **Annual Report**

**2024-2025**

# President's address

**Change is not a bad word.**

Dear Members and Friends,

As we gather for this year's Annual General Meeting, I'm reminded that change, though sometimes unexpected or challenging, is often the very thing that fuels growth. Strategy, Spaces, Volunteers, Clients, Coordinators, Board Members, Leaders, Supporters, Deniers, Partners, Health, Life... the list can go on.

Over the past year, our ABOVAS community has embraced change with resilience, creativity, and heart. During this time today that we share together to review our past year, you will see the underlying elements of this as we offer **acknowledgement, acceptance and appreciation.**

As a Team, and if I may say, as the ABOVAS family, we've adapted, evolved, and reimaged how we will continue to serve the greater good of the West Island citizens that need us the most. And in doing so, we've discovered new approaches, forged greater connections, and strengthened our mission in ways we couldn't have predicted.

Over this past year, more than any, we see that change is not something to fear but something to shape, because change is inevitable. It's the growth that is optional. Together, as a collective, we are shaping a brighter, more inclusive, and more impactful future for our community. Let me finish by thanking you ALL for being a vital part of that journey, simply by being here today to show your support for ABOVAS.



With gratitude and hope,  
Kirstin Bennett

# Executive Director's report

Welcome to our Annual General Meeting.

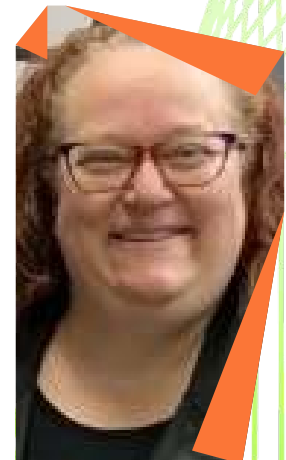
This year's report highlights how ABOVAS continues to deliver exceptional service, completing **2,572 medical accompaniments** and **885 social accompaniments**. A heartfelt thank you to our coordinators, Isabelle (medical) and Monica (social), whose dedication and skillful scheduling made these accomplishments possible. We closed the **2024-2025** fiscal year with a total of **3,457 accompaniments**, a modest but meaningful increase that reflects both community need and our team's unwavering commitment.

Throughout the report, you'll gain insight into the experiences of our clients and volunteers, demonstrating how **ABOVAS provides the CAUSE, and our volunteers create the EFFECT**. I want to extend my deepest thanks to our volunteer companions for their remarkable service to West Island residents facing vulnerability. Your compassion and generosity are the heartbeat of our organization.

This report also showcases how ABOVAS continues to grow under the thoughtful leadership of our Board of Directors. Thank you, Kirstin, Marie-France, Jenny, Paul, René, Anne, France and Robert. Your dedication, work ethic, and support of our mission, staff, clients, and volunteers do not go unnoticed, and are deeply appreciated.

In closing, I hope this report leaves no doubt that **ABOVAS is an essential accompaniment towards health** but also an indispensable resource for the entire West Island community.

Smile! It's contagious!  
Denise Hupé



# A Board committed to ABOVAS' mission

As of March 31st 2025,  
the Board of Directors consisted of:

**Kirstin Bennett, President**

Eldercare Specialist  
Managing Director for Premier Homecare  
Member since March 2019

**Jenny Mazzaferro, Secretary**

Potential client  
Real estate agent for Re/Max  
Member since March 2019

**France Généreux, Treasurer**

Potential client  
Retiree from a private enterprise  
Member since May 2024

**Marie-France Juneau, Administrator**

Potential client  
Executive Director NOVA West Island  
Member since September 2018

**Paul Nadeau, Administrator**

Potential client  
Retiree from Via Rail  
Member since September 2019

**René Fontaine, Administrator**

Potential client  
Volunteer companion/driver  
Retiree from a private enterprise  
Member since November 2022

**Anne Lajoie, Administrator**

Potential client  
Retiree from Community Shares  
Member since March 2024

**Robert Wilson, Administrator**

Potential client  
Retiree from a private enterprise  
Member since June 2024



Thank You!

The Board had six (6) meetings during this past fiscal year.

# The organization's growth and development continues

In 2005, a Pointe-Claire city councilor, a CLSC community organiser, a West Island volunteer and an employee from the West Island CLD with the help from the West Island's Senior Table, got together to discuss an issue that was affecting our community: transportation downtown to radiotherapy appointments for West Island residents. After months of discussions with all the different elected levels, conversations with other non-profits and a lengthy research project, **ABOVAS, a not-for-profit charitable organization, was founded in 2007**. Its mission was to provide a volunteer accompanied transport service to West Island residents in vulnerable situations to their appointments on the island of Montréal. **From 2010 to December 2024**, the head office of the organization was **housed** in the offices of **AVON Canada INC** in Pointe-Claire of which, **we are very grateful**. The staff finished the fiscal year working from their individual homes. We will be moved into our new offices in Dorval on June 1<sup>st</sup> 2025. Everyone will be welcomed for an open house in the fall of 2025. Since its inception, Accompagnement Bénévole de l'Ouest / Volunteer Accompaniment Service (ABOVAS) has offered **over 41 404 accompanied-transport**s. These helped **8 343 West Island residents** get to their important appointments on the island of Montreal.



**53 PER WEEK IN 2024-2025**



**3457 ACCOMPANIMENTS**



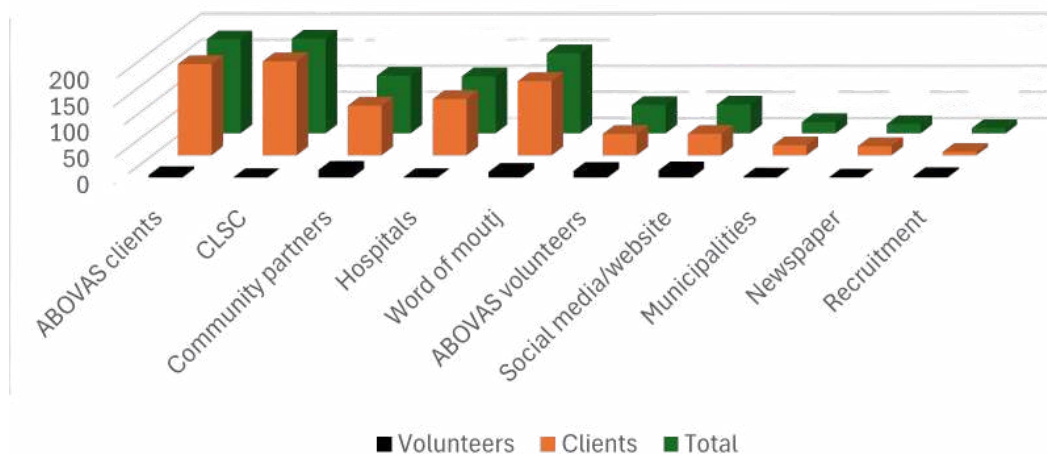
**17 PER WEEK**



The number of new clients that were referred to our service by people who know the service well (**91%**) attests to the high level of service that we offer.

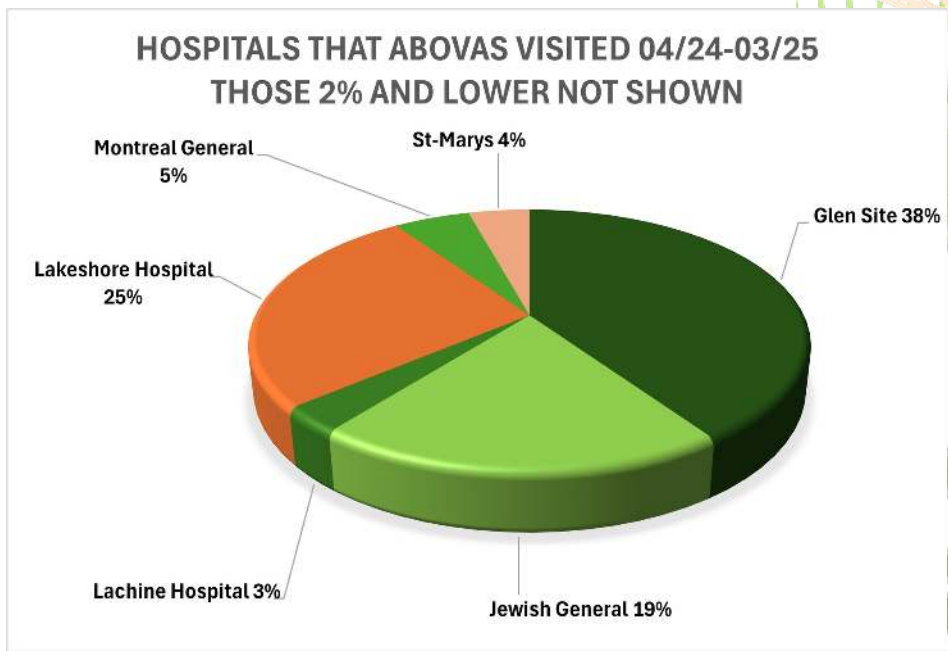
References to our services comes from?

04/24 - 03/25

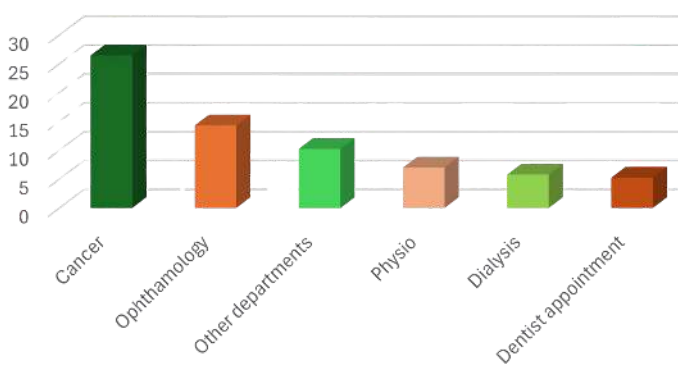


# The road traveled towards health

The **Glen Site** was the destination frequented the most by our clientele of the medical service at **38%**, followed by the **Lakeshore Hospital** at **25%** and the **Jewish Hospital** **19%**.

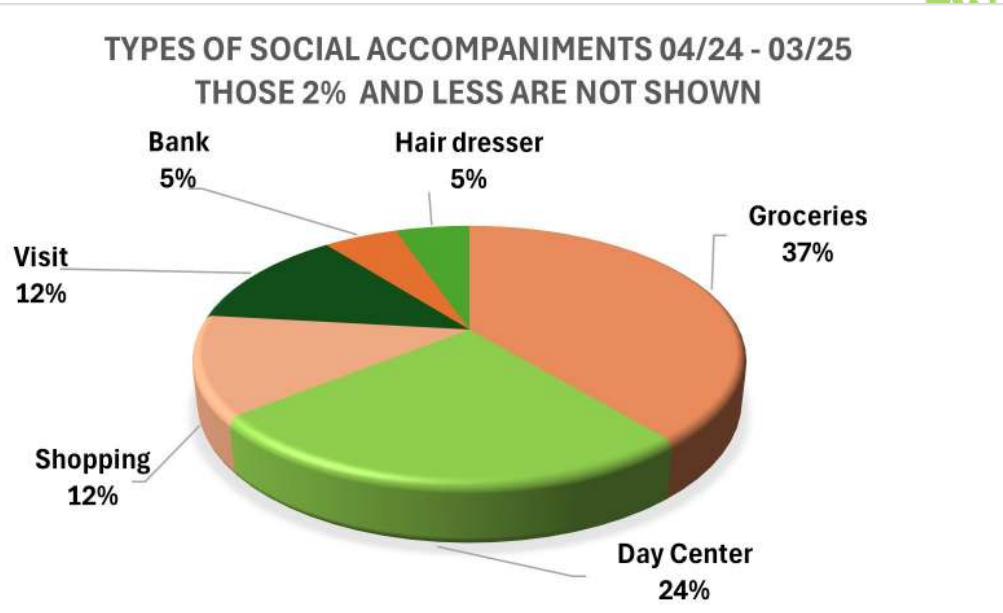


Departments visited by ABOVAS 04/24 - 03/25  
Those 4% and lower not shown



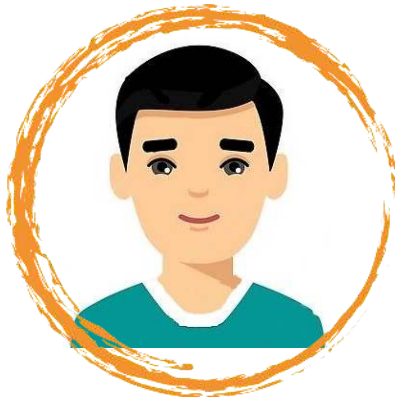
Going to a medical appointment or going through a medical crisis is stressful enough whether it be **cancer** related at **26%**; because of a **visual impairment** at **14%**; or a **physio treatment** at **7%**, the added stress of getting there in our special weather climate with all the multicolored cones blocking the usual roads travelled is something ABOVAS clients don't need to worry about.

As for our social accompaniments, **37%** were for help doing the **groceries**, **24%** for **help attending an adult activity center**, and **12%** for help with general **shopping** and help to go **visit** a loved one in a residence or the hospital.



# Our Volunteers, an essential part of the well-being of our community

Our 60 volunteers are in majority, men, and have an average age of 62 years. The **youngest** being **19 years old** and the **oldest 86 years old**.

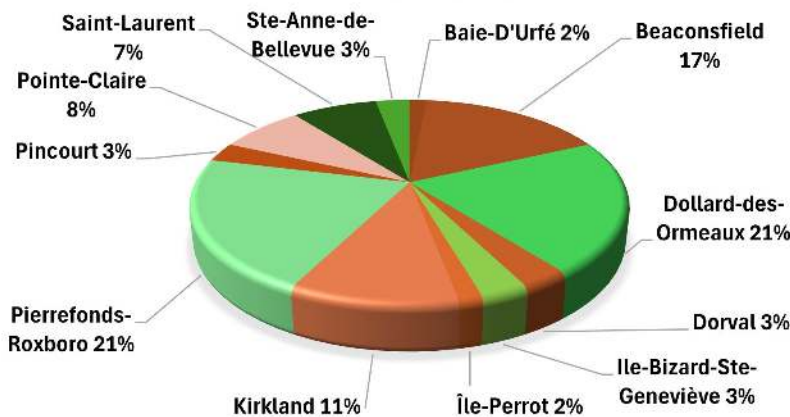


≈ **92 711 KM**  
(Equal to 20 times driving from Mtl to Van.)

≈ **13 006 hours**  
(Equal to 8 fulltime jobs.)



WHERE DO OUR VOLUNTEERS LIVE? 04/24 - 03/25  
NONE LIVE IN SENNEVILLE



The majority of our volunteers live in **Dollard-des-Ormeaux and Pierrefonds/Roxboro at 21%** each. Followed by **Beaconsfield at 17%**. An interesting observation is that **12%** of our volunteers live **outside of our territory** (Saint-Laurent 7%, Pincourt 3% and Île-Perriot 2%).

Some **key issues** our volunteers come across daily is the **commute** and **parking**. Throughout the years getting anywhere east of autoroute 13 has become extremely tedious and we are starting to have less and less volunteers willing to go anywhere past Lachine. To add to this, ever since parking at hospitals has become free for the first 2 hours, finding parking for our volunteers is more and more complicated. These two issues have been brought to the attention of the local MNA's and are subjects that our Board members will be discussing throughout the year to try to find solutions.

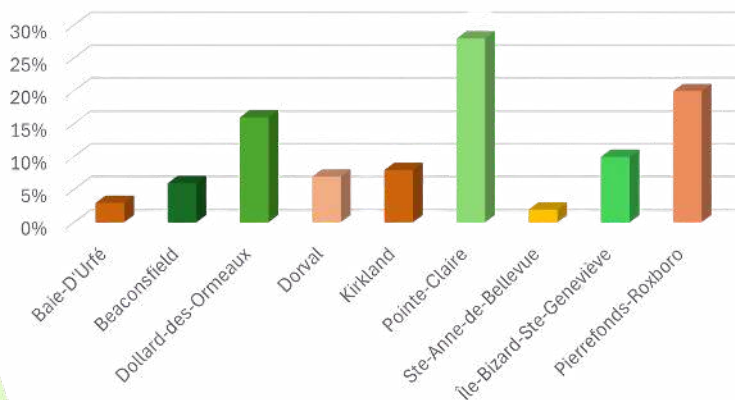
# Our clients, our reason for being, our commitment

Our coordinators,

**Isabelle Leclair** and **Monica Farag** organized the perfect synchronization of the accompaniments and with the help of our dedicated volunteer companion drivers, offered an excellent customer service to our 830 clients. One can estimate that an identical number of people are indirectly beneficiaries of our service (caregiver of the accompanied person). Therefore, this small organization's service benefits close to **1660 people**.

Overall, our clients live in **Pointe-Claire** at **28%**, **Pierrefonds -Roxboro** at **20%**, and in **Dollard-des-Ormeaux** at **16%**.

Clients by City 04/24 - 03/25



An interesting fact about our clients is that **97%** of our clientele is **over the age of 60**.

Our clients are in majority, women, and have an **average age of 80 years**. The **youngest** being **26 years old** and the **oldest 100 years old**.



Once again, this past year, we engaged in **meaningful discussions** with our local CIUSSS and MNAs, highlighting the ongoing **challenges** faced by our **senior** clients, including the lasting impact of prolonged isolation they recently went through, which contributed to significant **deconditioning, increased fear and isolation**. We also emphasized the growing needs of the senior population in the **West Island**, which continues to rise steadily; **by 2036, 1 resident in 5 will be over 65 years old** according to a Santé Publique Montréal online article published in April 2025. This must remain a **priority** in our discussions and a new plan to deal with this **MUST** be implemented. At ABOVAS, we are proud to see that our service has such a positive impact on **our clients, empowering them** to regain their autonomy and we will always have what is best for our clients, volunteers and partners in the forefront of our discussions.

# ABOVAS' real impact in the community

The best way to ascertain the full impact that ABOVAS' services have on the West Island community, is to hear directly from our clients, volunteers and caregivers using our service.

'When you go through a difficult time in your life, you often become angry, irritable and even aggressive. Your volunteers' presence and conversations gave me the strength to get through each treatment. I felt completely safe as they navigated me through the hospital and back home. They were empathetic, made me laugh, and helped me forget what I was going through, even if only for a moment. It is extremely hard to get through cancer, especially when there is no one around to help. What you do helps tremendously and I don't know what I would have done without you.'

**Mr. L., 67 years old  
Pierrefonds/Roxboro client**



'Thank you is what we hear every time we drop off an ABOVAS client back home from the grocery store. The words thank you are taken for granted until someone touches your heart. Such was the case recently at a funeral after the passing of an ABOVAS client, a wonderful person, a mother & grandmother. Such was the case when I introduced myself to her daughters. When someone tells you that you have made a difference in someone's life, when told that you made their mother's life easier in her final years. This is what touches one's heart. This is what makes volunteering for ABOVAS worthwhile & meaningful. My reply to them was, no it is I who thanks' you. I thank you for having met your mother & having had the privilege of making a difference in her life. I thank your mother for adding meaning to my life. And I thank ABOVAS for giving me the privilege of giving back to my community.'

**Ron, 63 yrs old, volunteer from Beaconsfield**

'I felt compelled to share my heartfelt gratitude for the exceptional support my mother received through ABOVAS. At the last minute, I was able to free myself from work to meet up with my mother and your volunteer at the Jewish General Hospital, where I witnessed a moment that deeply moved me. My mother, usually super anxious about her oncology visits, walking arm-in-arm with your volunteer, beaming with a smile I hadn't seen on her face in a very long time. The volunteer's warmth, courtesy, and gentle manner brought her real comfort and reassurance. This experience was a powerful reminder of the dignity and humanity your service brings to those you accompany. Thanks to ABOVAS, my mother felt cared for and not just transported. As a family member, I will be forever grateful. As someone who now understands the true impact of your work, I hope it continues to receive the support it so clearly deserves.'

**Daughter of Mrs. D., 79 years old Pointe-Claire client**



These testimonials are more than words of thanks. They are evidence of the **dignity, safety, and human connection** that ABOVAS provides through its services. They are evidence that our services ease suffering, foster resilience, and **remind people that they are not alone.**

# Financial stability is an asset for the development of a non-profit

(See the Rochon Legault report for detailed information pertaining to our revenues and expenses).

En partenariat avec :

AVON



Fondation J.A. DeSève

From **May 2010 to December 2024** the office of the organization has been housed in the head offices of **AVON Canada** in Pointe-Claire which gave us an intengible financial supprt of which we are grateful. ABOVAS receives continued financial support from the **PSOC** (Programme de Soutien aux Organismes Communautaires) program of the provincial government **41%**, other **donations and funding** at **45%**, and **Community Shares 14%**.

The Canadian postal strike in **December 2024** significantly impacted Canadians. At ABOVAS, **donations dropped by 92%** for the pre-Holiday season, compared to past years, since most of our donors still rely on the postal service to send their donation checks.



# A pasta fundraiser, what a tasty way to spend a Sunday.

On **Sunday**,  
**November 3rd 2024**, at  
**MUNDO Trattoria**, we had our  
 fourth annual pasta meal  
 fundraiser. A day filled with  
 awesome food, great  
 atmosphere, terrific participants,  
 and fantastic raffle prizes. The  
 event raised **14 940\$**.



**Premier**  
 Soutien chez soi  
 Home Care

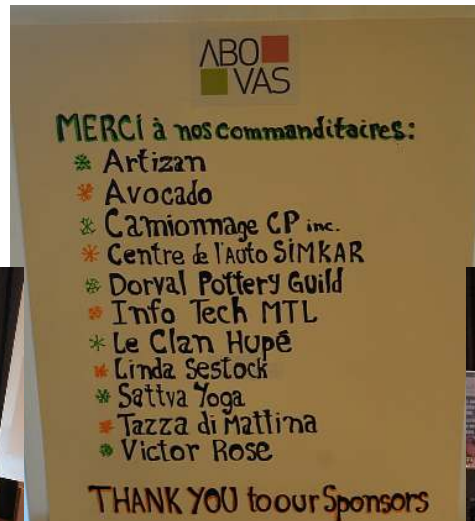


**LIANAS**  
 SENIOR TRANSITION SUPPORT  
 GESTION DE TRANSITION POUR AINÉS

PCJ SPORT PHOTOGRAPHY  
 "Capturing your athletic memories"  
 Kevin J. Raftery  
 Cell: 514-836-6635  
 E-Mail: kraft63@videotron.ca



AVON



**Thank You** to all who participated either  
 by sponsoring, eating or  
 donating.

# Working hand-in-hand with our community ...



WICS  
breakfast

Members of  
the **TQNOIM**  
and **TQSOI**. As well as  
members of **COMACO**.

Pierrefonds/  
Roxboro  
Women's  
Leadership



We are part of the city of  
**Beaconsfield's MADA**  
**committee**, The **Ste-Anne-  
de-Bellevue MADA review**  
**committee** and part of the  
**Pierrefonds/Roxboro**  
**borough's TSUAPR**.



PME MTL  
Ouest de l'île  
25th  
anniversary



We attended numerous  
annual general meetings of  
our community partners like  
WIWC, NOVA, CRC, and  
Volunteer West Island.

CPMH  
Holiday  
Party



Dorval  
Blue's Fest



Member of the **TCAOI** and we  
sit on it's health committee,  
wellness committee and the  
committee against senior  
abuse.

NOVA  
Golf  
tournament



# ... has helped ABOVAS develop into the organization it is today.

# WE have the CAUSE... YOU have the EFFECT!

One of the key points in our recruitment plan was to try and get more people talking about ABOVAS. To do this we contacted all the cities and boroughs in the West Island and asked to participate in as many municipal events as possible.



Beaconsfield summer concerts in the park



Pointe-Claire community day



Brigitte Garceau's Corn Roast in DDO



Pierrefonds /Roxboro Seniors' day



Kirkland family day



Dorval family day

These are a few of the events we participated in and with this added visibility we successfully added **15 new volunteers** to our roster.

With volunteer **recruitment** comes volunteer **retention**. We hosted two volunteer events, one training and one Holiday potluck.



However, even with successful recruitment and retention events, we understand that we cannot stop finding new ways of attracting volunteers, because without them, the ABOVAS' mission can no longer be supported.

# What an eventful year

We started 2024-2025 by working on a new 5-year strategic plan with the help of a human resource firm, MezAairs. This new plan is for 2025 to 2029 and will help ABOVAS develop and grow while still being rooted in our mission of offering accompanied transport.



In May, we found out that we were one of the beneficiaries of the West Island Blue's Festival. A summer of concerts was now in our future starting in Pierrefonds/Roxboro in May, on to Dollard-des-

Ormeaux in July, then to Dorval in August and finally to Pointe-Claire in September. When you think about it, a West Island wide festival giving funds to a West Island wide organization makes for a perfect collaboration.

In June, ABOVAS organised along side other TCAOI members, an event for National day against Senior abuse by holding two free conferences, in Pierrefonds /Roxboro and in Pointe-Claire given by Sandra Watson of the CRC and Julie Dupré from Station 3 of the SPVM.



Between the two locations, 57 participants appreciated the conference 'Dare to act against fraud and theft against seniors.'



In October, ABOVAS received an award from the TDC Foundation, acknowledging the work we do towards the betterment of West Island seniors. We are extremely grateful for the recognition.

And finally, in March 2025, Isabelle Leclair announced that she was starting a new stage in her life; she was retiring from ABOVAS and pursuing her family's maple syrup production close to Quebec City.



To replace her on the medical side, Monica Farag stepped up to become the new medical coordinator and in April 2025 Amanda Wakefield was welcomed into the ABOVAS family as the new social coordinator.



# ABOVAS' future is looking bright.

In 2024-2025, the growing senior population, rising healthcare demands, and increasing social isolation have made access to essential services more challenging than ever. Many of our clients face not only health-related struggles but also mobility barriers and financial constraints that turn routine medical appointments and errands into overwhelming obstacles. Our services ensure that they receive the support they need to maintain their health, dignity, and autonomy.

Caregivers, already burdened by the pressures of an overtaxed healthcare system, find peace of mind knowing their loved ones are accompanied by trusted, compassionate, and dedicated volunteers. Many of our volunteers are retirees who, in turn, find renewed purpose in giving back to their community.

By addressing these challenges, our organization plays a critical role in strengthening the social fabric. When the most vulnerable are supported, emergency services face less strain, caregivers can better manage their responsibilities, and community resources can be distributed more effectively, creating a more resilient, inclusive society for all.

Therefore, ABOVAS will continue to develop and grow within its West Island community, following its issues, varying moods, and changes. We will continue to push hard for the recruitment of new volunteers and investing in and supporting the ones we have. We will continue to help those in need of accompaniment and speak for those that do not have a voice. We will continue to work hand-in-hand with our community partners for the betterment of our community. All our past efforts and future endeavors prove one thing... **ABOVAS clearly is an essential accompaniment towards health.**

