

Words-On-Wheels

Santropol Roulant Client Newsletter

New & Familiar Faces

Fall 2013 Edition



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Cover Photo: Client-member Savithri Shanker at
October's Intergenerational Apple Picking Event 2013

A Welcome from Mayahuel

Hi everybody!

I am the new Meals-On-Wheels Intern at Santropol Roulant. I have already spoken with some of you over the phone. My time at Santropol Roulant has been incredibly active and productive. I am especially fascinated by the fact that there is a big and warm community involved with this organization. There is always a good mix between new and old staff members and new and old volunteers working together.



For this issue, I would like to talk about the new and not-so-new members of our

Thus, to start off I would like to tell you a bit about myself. I have been living in Montreal for about one year now, and I am thrilled to be part of Santropol Roulant's team. I was born and raised in Mexico City. My name is Mayahuel and it is an Aztec name that means, among other things, the goodness of happiness. So, if you come to Santropol Roulant and hear a big hearty laughter, you have found me!

As the Meals-On-Wheels Intern I appreciate the multitasking and dynamic aspects of my work, I have the opportunity to work with you, the clients, volunteers at the kitchen and colleagues at the office. I love the collaborative aspect of working with everybody. I love working with people as I appreciate diversity and uniqueness. I am fascinated by cultures, multiculturalism, stories and the incredible opportunity that we have to learn from each other when we work together towards a common goal.

I have devoted my life to working on interdisciplinary arts and community projects in Latin America, Europe and now here in Canada. I believe that the arts play an important role to connect, communicate, express and create communities. What brought me to the Roulant is my interest in community work. Moreover, food has always played an important role in my life. Growing up seeing my grandmother cooking mole* from scratch by using the metate**, I learned that cooking for others is a way to express love and care. In the preparation process of food there is an incredible opportunity to connect with others, to work together as a team and to use our creativity to combine ingredients, nourishment and flavours. Once food is served and we are around the table, the connection with others keeps unfolding. So, I look forward to connecting with you all soon at Santropol Roulant's intergenerational events!

Mayahuel Tecozautla
mayahuel@santropolroulant.org
514-284-9335

*Mole (Nahuatl word) Generic name for a spiced Mexican sauce made of over 20 different ingredients including chilli peppers and chocolate.

**Metate (Nahuatl word) A mortar, a ground stone tool used for processing grain and seeds.

More New Staff Members!

Eddy Mysliwicz

Community Kitchen Coordinator

eddy@santropolroulant.org

My love of food started with chocolate and pastries while growing up in Paris. Working as a chef in the Provence, a region of France, then on the Canadian west coast, I developed a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of food: I learned about growing it, met farmers, activists and got involved with local markets and fruit gleaning. I was hooked on doing good and eating well! Before moving to Montreal, I learned about Santropol Roulant and thought it'd be fun to volunteer there. Little did I know...I am now the community kitchen coordinator! My role encompasses the production of your meals, organizing kitchen workshops and overseeing the composting systems. The enterprising and dynamic nature of the Roulant, coupled with the energy and diversity of the volunteer base, make it a great place to work.



Meghan Gilmore

Director of Development

meghan@santropolroulant.org

I have been working as the Director of Development since January of this year and I love it because I get to learn something new everyday.

I work closely with the other members of the fundraising team (affectionately known as team Hugs) to put on events like our soccer tournament in the spring, the Froot Cup. Earlier this fall I had the pleasure of working on the Iron Chef event, our annual cook-off competition between professional chefs right outside, among the vegetable plants in our gardens on the McGill campus. It was a beautiful evening, the garden was filled with people and it was a very successful event!

I spend most of my time building relationships with the many foundations with whom we collaborate to tell them about what we have been up to this year, and how their support has an impact on our community. My favourite part about this process is sharing your stories with them, because our clients are at the heart of our work, and the best way to tell our funders how we are doing is to use the kind words that you have shared with us over the year. So if ever you find you have a nice story to tell about Santropol Roulant, even just a few words, I hope you will share it with us.

Greetings from the gardens!

Summer is long gone and Santropol Roulant's urban agriculture team is getting ready to hibernate for the winter. But before cuddling up in wool sweaters, a book in one hand and a warm cup of tea in the other, let's take a look back at our amazing 2013 gardening season.

Spring time was especially rainy this year, which delayed seeding and transplanting in the garden and kept our bees waiting patiently before they could leave their hive. That said, when summer finally arrived, it came in full force, bringing with it warmer weather, an abundant harvest and plenty of new faces on the urban agriculture team! We were thrilled to welcome summer interns Charlotte, Winnie, Zoe, Mike, Eryn, Loïc, Ginny, Greg, Annie-Claude, Émilie, Kabisha, Laurence, Carlo, Naomi and Tassia, not to mention the many dedicated volunteers who got their hands dirty growing the hearty veggies you've no doubt noticed in your meals. The harvests were generous and bountiful, both in our urban gardens and at our peri-urban farm site in the West Island. We also harvested a record amount of honey from our two urban beehives- believe it or not, more than 60kg this season!

The summer wasn't only bountiful in terms of produce; we also hosted several workshops and gardening events. The season started with a bang at the end of June with the annual Happening, where over 300 people gathered to celebrate Santropol Roulant's birthday and the launch of our garden season. In July, we hosted the Intergenerational Summer Brunch at our agriculture site on campus at McGill, where many of you came to share a home-cooked meal and to tour the garden! Finally, we rounded out the season with the Iron Chef competition, where 6 local chefs battled fork and knife to prepare a dish on-site inspired by vegetables harvested live during the event, all in under an hour!

All to say, it's been quite a summer here at Santropol Roulant, in part thanks to you! No doubt the addition of the intergenerational gardening project, where some of you graciously welcomed volunteers into your homes to set up small balcony gardens, added extra spice to our 2013 season! We look forward to gathering your feedback to improve the project for next year.

In the meantime, we're ready for some well-earned rest and relaxation!

Wishing you a wonderful winter and hoping to see you soon,

Noémie Desbiens-Riendeau on behalf The Urban Agriculture Team
noemie@santropolroulant.org



Verity King: A fresh face from England

My name is Verity. I moved to Montreal from England just over a month ago to study neuroscience at McGill University for a year on an exchange program. I moved into an apartment which is just next to Santropol Roulant so I asked my new roommates what it was all about. They explained that they make and deliver food to people who do not have easy access to it for any number of reasons and that they need volunteers to work there. I thought it sounded like something I would like to be involved in and after attending the orientation session, I knew it was for me. I have now done two kitchen shifts at



Santropol Roulant and have found it a great environment in which to work and meet great new people while getting involved in the local community. I hope to try out the other areas they offer to volunteers such as delivering the food and helping at special events and look forward to continuing to be involved in such a great organization.

Matt B: Volunteer for over a decade



TELL US A LITTLE BIT ABOUT YOURSELF.

I am an eight generation Montrealer. My family from my mother's side came to Montreal around 1810 and my family from my father's side came here around 1781. My family is a big mix. I have Jewish, Mexican, French- and English-Canadian people in my family. I studied social science, social work, community development and community work, which is what Santropol Roulant is all about.

INITIALLY, HOW DID YOU HEAR ABOUT THE ROULANT?

It was in 2003 when I passed by the old location and decided to take a chance. When I walked in I had no idea what kind of organization it was. Right after the orientation session, I started doing deliveries several times a week.

I WONDER, AFTER TEN YEARS OF VOLUNTEERING, HAVE YOU DEVELOPED ANY CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS WITH PEOPLE TO WHOM YOU'VE DELIVERED MEALS?

Yes, with several of them. I have talked to clients about all kinds of stuff. We talk about the old days, their work, traveling, their families, about Santropol Roulant and some of the events and activities that they have participated in.

WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED FROM YOUR MANY YEARS OF VOLUNTEERING?

I found out that I can learn from others and I hope that others can learn from me. I have gone through a lot of change here. I have learned how to work with people and understand that everyone is different and everybody has their own personality. I have also learned a lot from conversations with clients. One woman in particular has talked to me about different cultures and how we can bring together different types of people to work for a common goal. We are all the same, but we are all different at the same time. Every volunteer is different but we can share experiences and work together.

WHAT IS THE MOTIVATING FORCE THAT HAS KEPT YOU VOLUNTEERING ALL THESE YEARS?

Santropol Roulant has become part of my life. What keeps me coming is the connection that I have developed with clients and staff throughout the years. I love working in the kitchen; I love bothering Ben, who is the volunteer coordinator [laughs]; I love making people laugh.

WHAT WOULD YOU SAY TO SOMEONE WHO IS NEW TO MONTREAL AND COMING FROM A CULTURE WHERE VOLUNTEERING IS LESS COMMONPLACE?

I would say to that person, “Come to Santropol Roulant to share your culture with us!” I would tell her that she will be contributing to improving the organization by the services that she will offer to our clients. It would be a great opportunity for her to learn about food, bikes, gardening and also about herself. She can also learn about ways to be integrated in the community.

LAST QUESTION, MATT. IF YOU COULD BE ANY FRUIT OR VEGETABLE, WHAT WOULD YOU BE?

I would be a banana because I love them. They are mixed-up and crazy and I am a little bit like that too.

THANK YOU!

This newsletter was put together with the creative energy of Santropol Roulant staff and volunteers.

Writers: Eddy Mysliwicz, Mayahuel Tecozautla, Meghan Gilmore, Noémie Desbiens-Riendeau and Verity King

Editors: Mollie Witenoff and Eddy Mysliwicz

Translators: Carole Levac, Mollie Witenoff and Pier Liné

Interview: Mayahuel Tecozautla

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If you would like to contribute in any way to the next newsletter,
please get in touch with Mayahuel at
mayahuel@santropolroulant.org or 514-284-9335.