

NEWS FROM *LE PONT*... during this time of COVID-1

Diocese of Montreal

Extensive containment and hygiene measures have been put in place at *Le Pont*, as recommended by the government. We have [since] restricted travel [among our staff and residents alike,] and have stopped accepting new families in order to comply with quarantine regulations.

The last three weeks have been a logistical challenge: families felt the need to continue their apartment search, many administrative and food service points have suddenly closed, and the centre's volunteers and interns have been asked to stay home.

After this difficult downturn, we took matters into our own hands and explored creative alternatives to continue operating as a now heavily-modified service. Many food banks and generous donors have been providing us with supplies on a daily basis, which are currently being delivered and distributed directly to families on the premises, according to their needs, in order to avoid outings. Although administrative services are very limited, the centre's manager, interns and volunteers remain available at all times, and at a distance.

More than two weeks of quarantine with our families have passed, and fortunately, no cases of COVID-19 have emerged at the residence. We have, therefore, decided to resume our active work in receiving and protecting asylum seekers by accepting new families at *Le Pont*. Though these families are required to have undergone a strict quarantine in their previous accommodation, we have sufficient rooms and food to meet their lodging needs.

We are very proud to be able to welcome them, and we will resume the search for accommodation for these families as soon as this crisis is over. They are, after all, *not just migrants*, but men and women who, among their vulnerabilities, fears, and needs, have above all, tremendous resilience!