

The Gazette

WEST ISLAND

SECTION F

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TEDD CHURCH, GAZETTE

Marie-Claude Giguère (right) of Helping Seniors with client Helen Arie at the Château Pierrefonds, where Arie now resides.

Array of services help St. Laurent seniors

HAZEL PORTER
The Gazette

Seniors looking to relocate or make their homes more secure might want to review a booklet offered free by a St. Laurent organization.

Marie-Claude Giguère, president and founder of Helping Seniors, an organization that helps seniors and their families with relocation decisions, created the 16-page booklet. It asks key questions such as whether the person wants meals included in the new residence, laundry done or if a parking space is required. Helping Seniors also helps people who wish to make their homes more secure so that they can remain autonomous longer.

Giguère researches the person's needs, whether it is to relocate or remain in the same location, and puts them in touch with the appropriate resources. "I've dealt with a variety of needs. The assessment looks at what will be the proper living environment, and what people can afford," Giguère said.

Helping Seniors then provides the transportation and accompanies the client to different locations.

Marguerite Arie contacted Helping Seniors

when it was time to relocate her step-mother. "She is very, very helpful," Arie said. "She picked up Helen and showed her around. She is patient and very good with seniors."

Giguère said fees for her services are paid mainly by the seniors' residence when a relocation is involved. Fees for other services are paid by the client.

Giguère said she has developed a network of people who work with seniors. Her experience includes five years as a director of activities at two seniors' residences, including Le Wellesley Pointe Claire.

So far she's helped 10 clients to relocate.

For information call (514) 748-7485 or at the Web site www.helping-seniors.com

The Volunteer Bureau in St. Laurent also provides services for seniors, including drives to medical appointments, Meals on Wheels and help for vision-impaired people to write cheques and pay bills. It also offers respite for care-givers.

"We want to improve the quality of life for our seniors," said Diane Deguire, the bureau's executive director.

The bureau was founded in 1979 and has 400

volunteers, who work with children as well, including serving meals at schools to after-school homework programs.

Last year, 79 organizations sought volunteers from the St. Laurent bureau. For information, call (514) 744-5511.

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Seniors on fixed incomes wishing to modify their homes by adding handrails and refitting cabinets may benefit from a maximum grant of \$2,500. It is offered by the Québec Housing Association and is available by making an application through the city of St. Laurent. The same program applies in other municipalities as well.

To be eligible, a person must be 65 years or older with an income of no more than \$18,000, or \$22,000 for two people.

The work must be performed by a licensed contractor or the grant could be reduced. For information in St. Laurent, call (514) 855-6026.

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The CLSC St. Laurent provides home care and a variety of other services for seniors. Call (514) 748-6381. Call the same number for the 24-hour Info-Santé service.