

Still big challenges for 2009-2012

In spite of the distance covered and the good results obtained, a lot of problems still pose challenges to the neighbourhood. Individual and family incomes, the poor quality of housing in the north and east sectors, augmenting and harmonizing athletic activities, insufficient athletic equipment, untapped cultural riches, undeveloped commercial services, citizen security and safety, access to food, lack of public transit, etc. are elements that need mobilization for change to improve the lives of St. Michel residents.

Faithful to our tradition of mobilization and of consultation, VSMS invited the neighbourhood to begin a new planning process to develop what will be the action plan for 2009-2012. Translated in terms of challenges and of opportunities, the picture of the neighbourhood portrait was presented with realism to the participants of the "Grand Rendez-vous" on September 20 2008.

The four main priorities from 2004 were maintained but modified according to how the work has evolved.

Under the priority "revenue" the focus "school perseverance and youth educational success" was added, to recognize the high rate of school leavers and weak graduation rate in the neighbourhood.

In the priority "access to diversified activities and services of quality", two important areas of concentration were added: food and transportation. Access to fresh, quality foods at an accessible cost is a challenge for many, particularly for families with several children. Support for this basic need becomes a prerequisite before other initiatives can be put before the population. Citizens and partners of the neighbourhood put forward the importance of work on this issue and are ready to mobilize around this question.

Because of the special configuration of the St. Michel neighbourhood, east-west transportation has long been difficult; public transit services are not adequate in these directions. Access to effective collective transportation is an important element when it comes to going to school, finding a job, having access to health services. Even better, improvements to encourage active transportation (walking, cycling) could contribute greatly to the quality of life of the residents of the neighbourhood.