



# HOJO CONNECTS YEAR IN REVIEW

## 2015-2016



# Welcome to the 2015-2016 HOJO Annual Report!

This document is designed to give you an overview of our organization and our activities over the previous year. If you are not familiar with HOJO, the Concordia Student Union Off-Campus Housing and Job Bank, we are a service of the CSU and a fee-levy organization. We provide support for students to find and maintain adequate housing and employment. We do this by providing information and resources to students, and by advocating for the needs of students in our wider community. Through this report you will get a better idea of exactly what we do, how we do it, and what we have been up to this year. If you have any questions, want to learn more about our services, or are in need of advice, feel free to drop by our offices any time to speak with our staff!

Our programming is possible because of the wonderful community at Concordia, the CSU, and our dedicated staff.

**Leanne Ashworth**  
Coordinator

and the **Current HOJO Team**  
*Jiao Xie, Jamie Robinson, Kamden Biggart, Yasmine Samri,  
Safrine Mouajou, Jules Johnson & Danxi Huang*

## MISSION & VALUES

HOJO works to empower, educate and support the Concordia community by providing reliable housing and employment information, resources and referrals. We encourage a proactive approach towards finding adequate housing, part-time and summer employment.

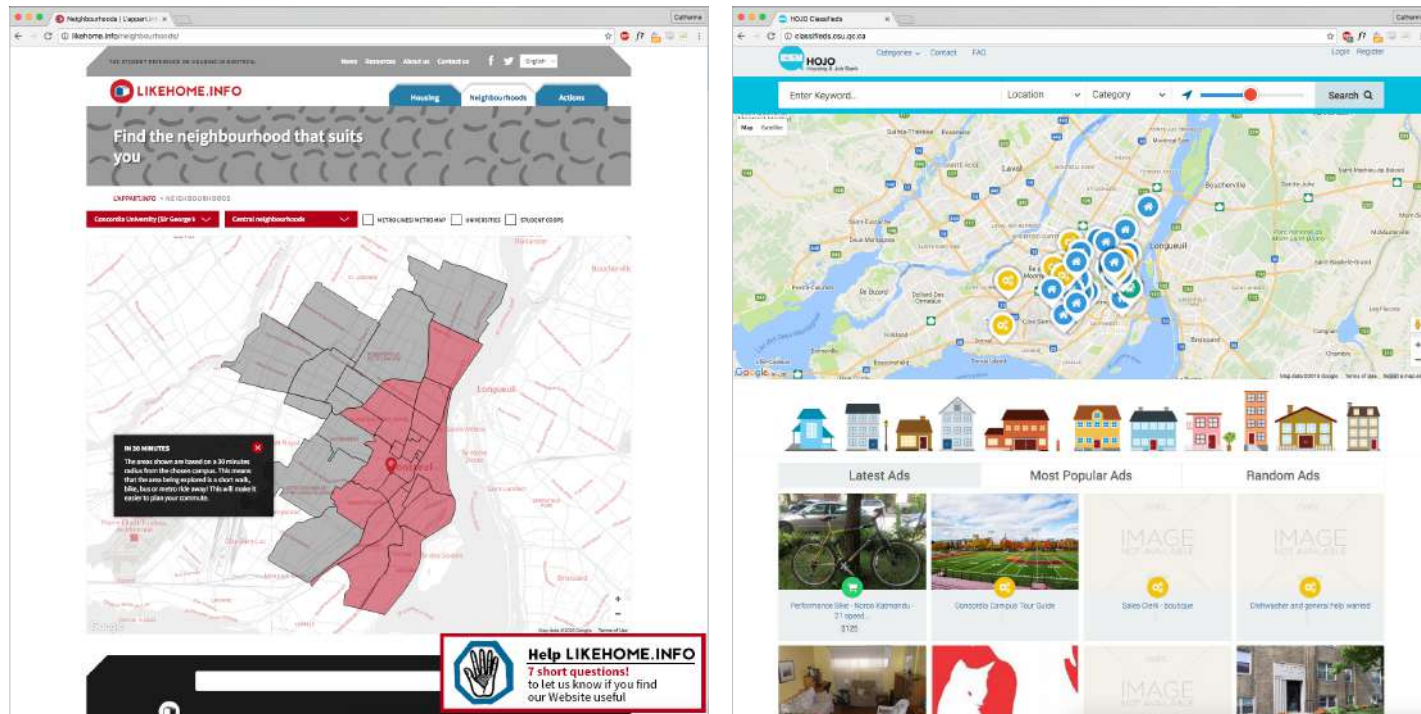
**The CSU Off-Campus Housing & Job Bank is guided by the following core values:**

- We respect the dignity and rights of all beneficiaries of HOJO services.
- We recognize that students have unique needs with respect to their time and budgetary constraints.
- The main means we use to achieve our objectives is our staff; the personalized interaction offered is a major strength in dealing with sometimes difficult situations.
- The transparent exchange of information, ideas, knowledge and values is essential to the achievement of our mission.
- The management of HOJO is done with openness and integrity; we are accountable to the students of Concordia University.
- We believe that continuous improvement enabled by client feedback is essential to maintaining the high quality of our services.
- We ensure the right to confidentiality and privacy with respect to information provided to us by students.
- We recognize that some governmental organizations may have limitations of scope with regards to meeting the unique needs of students in both official languages. Therefore we cater our services with this in mind.
- HOJO is a service that is centered on students' needs. We strive to support students in learning about and exercising their rights as tenants and employees.

# WHAT WE DO AT HOJO

## SERVICES & RESOURCES

Our services are designed to inform and empower students to take charge of their housing and job situations and to know and exercise their rights. We help students to find employment and jobs through our classified website, our likehome information website (for housing), and our referral and information services.



We also provide legal information for students, and especially those facing difficulty with their housing or employment. Housing and job issues are often complex, finding the legislation and procedures relevant to a specific situation can be difficult. Students are often taken advantage of in situations of employment and housing. Landlords and employers are often poorly informed on housing and employment standards. Furthermore, some assume that since students are uninformed or new to the city that they can take advantage. That's where we come in.

## Student Testimonials

*Not long after I started apartment hunting, I found a lease transfer, and it looked pretty ideal. Little did I know, that was the beginning of my three-week nightmare.*

*The thing that touched me the most was how, throughout the whole journey, everyone at the HOJO office was so patient and sympathetic. Being away from home and living in a country that speaks another language, I easily felt insecure. It is nice to know that I can always come to you guys for help and support. I feel like sometimes international students are literally being bullied by these rude landlords and their ridiculous demands, and students are just too vulnerable to protect themselves. Before HOJO helped me understand my legal rights, I was as blind as most international students. I strongly feel the need for your service.*

### – International Student

*HOJO is an extremely helpful service for Concordians. All my friends told me about this office but this was my first visit and I was very satisfied. Thank you for being so supportive.*

### – Arts & Science Student

*Because of HOJO, \$2000 was returned to me from my landlord. I was glad to learn about my rights. Thank you HOJO.*

### – JMSB Student

*\*Student testimonials have been edited for clarity.*

HOJO's primary service is our 'drop-in' information service. We are available 5 days a week by drop in, or by appointment. Our dedicated assistants are well-versed in housing and job legislation and can help students to find the information they need regarding their housing and job situation.

We keep an extensive archive of relevant information and legislation (from the Régie du logement; the Commission des normes, de l'équité, de la santé et de la sécurité du travail; Canadian Mortgage and Housing Association; legal clinics; and other municipal, governmental and non-governmental bodies) to help students access the information most pertinent to their situation.



# KEEPING YOU INFORMED WITH CURRENT INFORMATION

It is essential that the information we provide is correct and up-to date. To ensure this, HOJO assistants dedicate time to researching emerging issues, following the news and local advocacy groups, and reviewing our legal information resources to ensure they are up-to date. This year, we took several measures to improve the quality of the information we provide.

We researched and created information resources on the following emerging issues in housing and employment:

- Relevé 31; the new Revenu Quebec form supplied by landlords to tenants to allow tenants to access their social solidarity tax credits.
- Airbnb legislation; staying current on recent Régie du logement rulings regarding the rights and procedures of tenants wishing to rent out their apartment.
- Rules governing pets in apartments and the rights to keep service animals; in the midst of confusing online rumours about recent Régie du logement rulings on pets, we clarified the rights of tenants with regards to pets and service animals in a new information pamphlet.
- Updating our training procedures and information in regards to the recent merger of the CNT (Commission des normes du travail) and the CSST (Comission de sécurité et santé du travail).
- Conducting research on specific employment issues with regards to student painting companies and the distinction between employees/franchisees/and contract workers.
- We also conducted a thorough information inventory to ensure the accuracy of our information and to identify gaps.



# BRINGING OUR SERVICES TO YOU!

In addition to our core services, we make an effort to reach out to meet the needs of our community through collaborations, community outreach activities, and information campaigns. We do this through:

## OUTREACHING TO THE COMMUNITY THROUGH PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY EVENTS

including orientation, open house, and career fairs, workshops, and campaigns. Through these activities we provide students with the tools to understand and enforce their rights as tenants and employees.

This year we worked to expand our outreach through social media. HOJO joined the LinkedIn and WeChat (Chinese Social Media site) this year, and we greatly expanded our Facebook outreach through a dedicated campaign (see our "Year in Review" for more information).



We also participated in a number of community events and activities, including:

- National Congress on Housing and Homelessness
- CANNEXUS16— National Career Development Conference
- The Living Knowledge Series (at Concordia)
- CSU Internal Discussion on Sexual Assault and Harassment Policy
- Feminist University project from the Simone de Beauvoir Institute
- CBC's Daybreak Radio Program
- Discover Concordia
- Fall & Winter CSU Orientation Events
- Concordia Chinese Students' Association Fall Orientation
- Apartment Hunting Workshops with the International Students Office (Fall & Winter)
- Moving-Out-of-Residence Workshops at both campuses (Winter semester)
- The Social Innovation Challenge (where we showcased employment issues facing International Students)

# BRINGING OUR SERVICES TO YOU!

## PROVIDING SUPPORT FOR ACADEMIC EXPERIENCES & FOSTERING THE EVOLUTION OF KNOWLEDGE

by planning and hosting research internships. This year, with the help of HOJO intern Jasmine Bradet, we conducted a comprehensive survey on Student housing in Montreal. The results of this survey informed our services, and will be shared with the wider Concordia and Montreal Student Housing advocacy community.



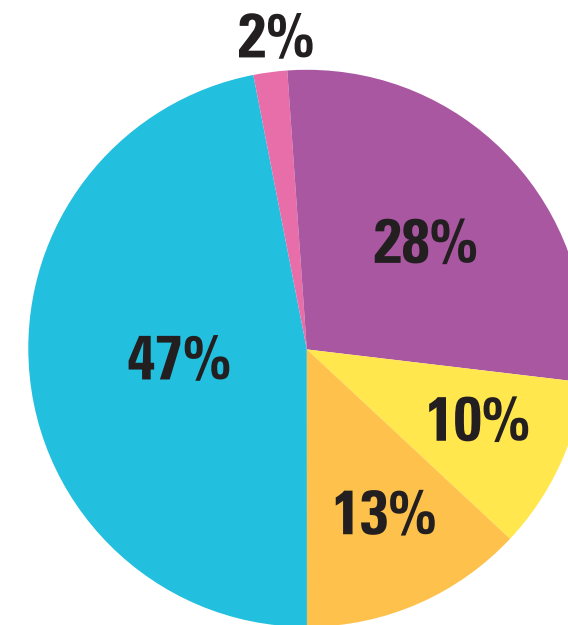
## INFORMING STUDENTS IN AN ACCESSIBLE WAY

HOJO is committed to providing timely and appropriate services for students. Our core information counseling service is available on a drop in basis. We cater to Concordia's diverse population of English, French, and Mandarin speaking students. This includes printing and distributing housing information materials in all three languages. This year we launched our presence on WeChat (a Chinese Social Media site), and also increased our staff capacity to provide service in Mandarin.

## WELCOMING CONCORDIA STUDENTS

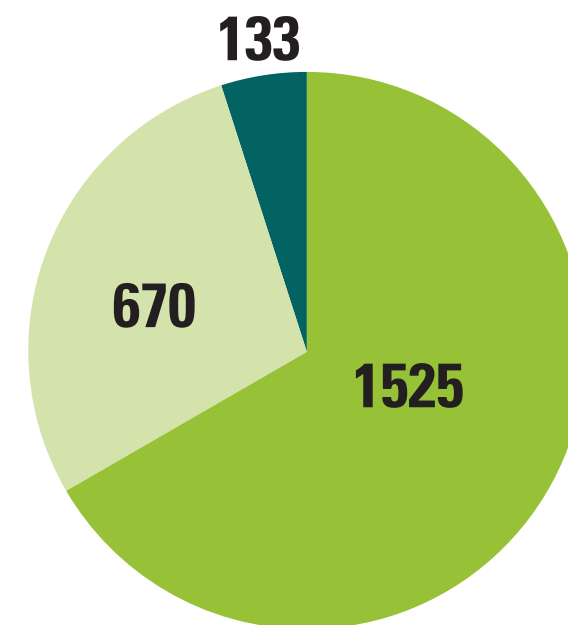
especially those who are new to Montreal and/or renting and finding employment for the first time. Through information campaigns targeted at arriving students, we help them land in Montreal with both feet on the ground. Once again this year we worked directly with the International Student Office, sharing printed materials and co-presenting workshops. We also conducted a popular social media campaign aimed at 'busting' the most common housing and employment myths.

# OUR YEAR IN NUMBERS



**VISITORS BY FACULTY**  
(JUNE 2015-MAY 2016)

- Arts and Science
- JMSB
- Fine Arts
- ENCS
- Independent and Other



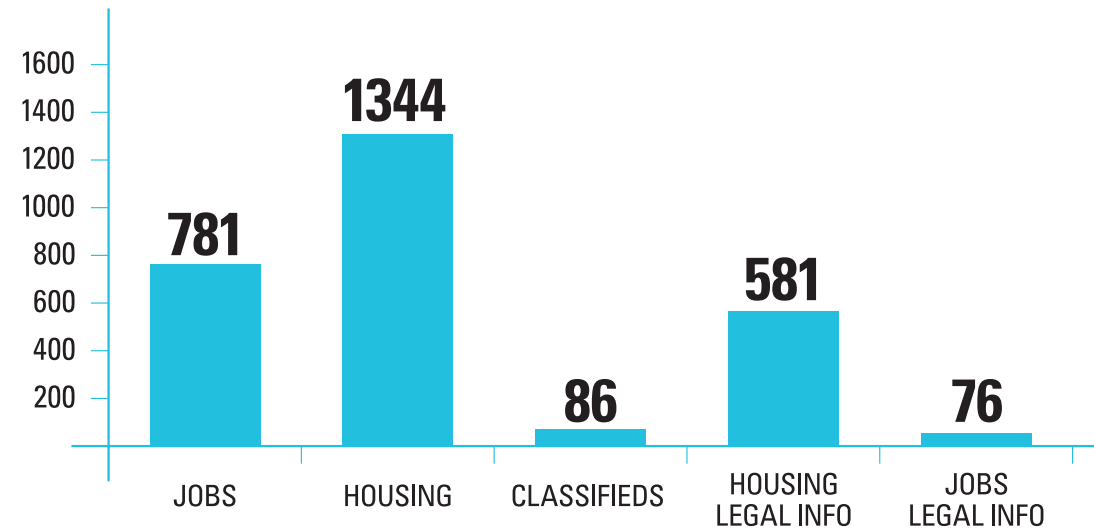
**VISITORS BY EDUCATION LEVEL**  
(JUNE 2015-MAY 2016)

- Undergraduate
- Graduate
- Non-Student

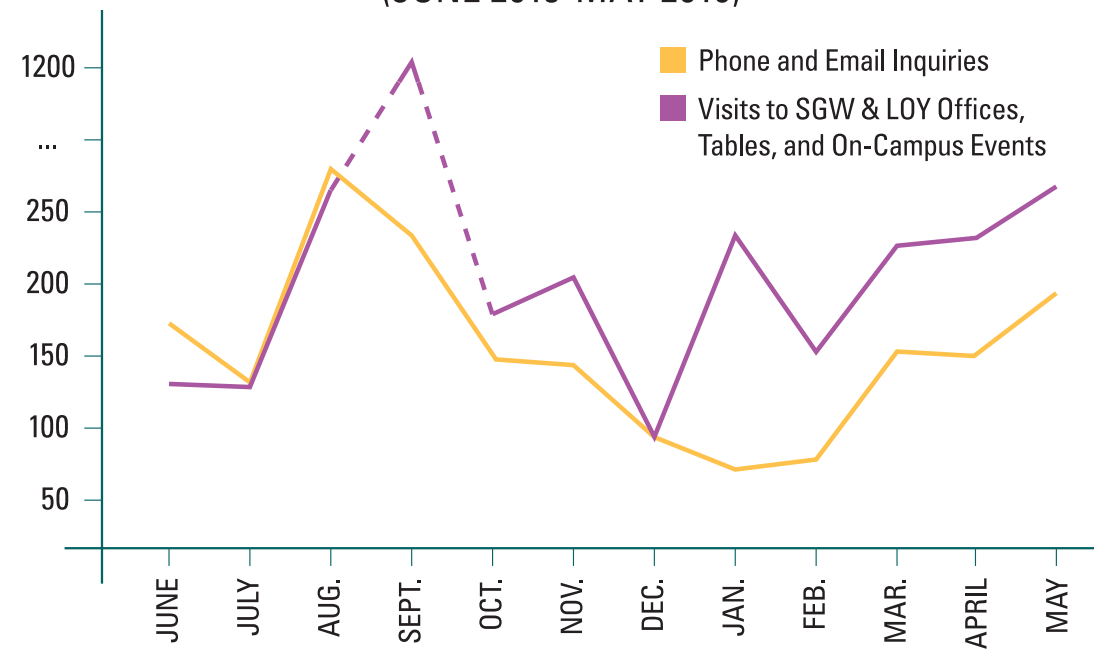


# 2015-2016 IN REVIEW

**NUMBER OF STUDENTS SEEKING INFORMATION BY TYPE**  
(JUNE 2015-MAY 2016 | IN-OFFICE VISITS ONLY)



**STUDENT INFORMATION REQUESTS BY MONTH**  
(JUNE 2015-MAY 2016)



## Social Media

This year we worked hard to increase our social media presence and the quality of information we provide to students via social media platforms.

- We designed and delivered social media friendly information campaigns to ensure students get the right information.
- Our Facebook campaign to promote the “HOJO Housing Survey” helped us to increase our social media presence.
- We reached more Mandarin-speaking students (and prospective students) than ever before with our WeChat campaign.





## HOJO & WeChat

HOJO Joined WeChat to help Chinese-speaking international students to transition smoothly into the Concordia community. This is particularly helpful for students who are studying to meet language requirements to be accepted to other programs. During the language-learning period they struggle to access services which are primarily provided in English.

The lack of primary information upon their arrival in Montreal causes many international students to encounter inconvenience, exploitation, and confusion. In particular, the lack of housing information forces some of them to get involved in homestays.

A homestay is essentially when a student rents out a room as an occupant rather than as a tenant and purchases additional services, often at an inflated price for a short or variable term, in an attempt to mimic a family-type living environment. This type of living arrangement is largely unregulated and can cause many difficulties for newly arrived students.

In early November 2015, a series of complaints made by a language student against his homestay drew our attention to this issue again. Our Mandarin-speaking staff suggested we branch out our social media campaigns to WeChat in order to reach students who might feel more comfortable learning about Quebec housing and employment norms in Mandarin.

### What is WeChat?

Since Facebook is blocked in China, WeChat, a Chinese app created four years ago has taken over the Mandarin-speaking social media world. Today, it has hundreds of millions of active monthly users around the world. HOJO uses WeChat as a way to bridge the gap between new and prospective students from China and crucial information on housing and jobs in Quebec. The WeChat app has the following main advantages:

1. More accesible than websites: It is not only a messaging platform, but also a quicker way to interact with subscribers and provide them with services. Almost any organization or company can create an official account on WeChat.
2. Easy access to information: Students are able to get first-hand housing information before or after their arrival in Montreal by simply scanning our QR code. Each individual official account is similar to a web page. It has the ability to connect users through interactive messaging, thereby making it easy to grow our own audience and to connect perfectly with students' mobile universe.

好消息 Concordia大学校内专注服务的微信平台

蒙城派 Mengchengpai 公众号 开通啦!

- 我们提供
  - 最权威的一手信息
  - 最专业的校内外服务
  - 最全面的租房指导
  - 最新的学生兼职&暑期工作信息
  - 精彩的旅游及生活资讯
- 还有什么，赶快扫码关注我们吧~
- 除了在线上关注我们发布的信息外，是否在线下可以联系到我们呢？

当然！来学校HOJO办公室找我们吧！我们提供中文服务哟！

租房、工作讯息提供方：康考迪亚大学学生会校外租房与工作信息库：CSU-OffCampus Housing And Job Bank (HOJO)  
HOJO官方网站：http://classifieds.csu.qc.ca/  
HOJO旗下租房知识网：租房吧(中英法三语)：http://zufangba.info/

办公室地址：  
Concordia大学校区 Hall building 二楼 H-260(上电梯右手边)  
1455 De Maisonneuve Blvd. West

周一至周五：10AM to 6PM  
周五：11AM to 4PM  
周六、周日：休息

电话：(514) 848-7474 ext.7935  
Email:hojo@csu.qc.ca

欢迎以各种方式前来咨询！我们在这里等你~

## Internal Procedures

We pay attention to even the finest details of how we work, and strive to innovate to deliver the best service possible. This year, we improved HOJO services by:

### Revamping our employee training

HOJO Assistants are trained on internal procedures as well as employment and housing legislation and external procedures for addressing employment and housing issues. This year, we revamped our housing and jobs training with respect to standardizing our training program, updating our jobs training with regards to the recent merger of the CNT and CSST, creating more robust jobs training designed to empower assistants and students to be proactive about employment rights (focusing on situations of exploitation such as unpaid internships, franchise situations, contract work, etc.)



### Switching to the Penelope CRM

Our new customer relations management software (Penelope) allows us to record and track client information in a more comprehensive fashion. Through this we hope to collect better information about the needs of our service users and gain deeper insight in to trends in service users complaints. This system also allows us to facilitate better service by providing clear communication about service users individual needs to the assistants.



### Instituting follow-up & feedback procedures

Instituting follow-up and feedback procedures: this year, with the help of Penelope, we looked at new ways to follow-up with our service users and to collect data about services outcomes and satisfaction. We also created both internal and external feedback surveys to assess the impact of the webtools (HOJO Classifieds) that we implemented in 2015.





# HOJO COMMUNITY





# Thank you!

Our work this year would not have been possible without the amazing contribution of our community, including:

## OUR CURRENT STAFF

Kamden Biggart      Jiao Xie      Danxi Huang  
Yasmine Samri      Safrine Mouajou      Jules Johnson

## OUR OUTGOING STAFF

Anita Lambton      Hannah Brais      Kyle McLoughlin      Micheala Holt      Irmak Bahar

## OUR CSU COMMUNITY

Stephen Brown at the Advocacy Centre, Walter Tom at the Legal Information Clinic, Catherine Lafontaine, Laurence Pilon, Daniel Muñoz Ortiz our graphic design team, the orientation team, IT, the communications team, reception, and the CSU executives.

## CONCORDIA COMMUNITY

In the broader Concordia community, we have been pleased to work with the following departments this year: office of Community Engagement, Concordia International, International Students Office, Concordia Residence Life, the Dean of Students office, Hospitality Concordia, the Simone de Beauvoir Institute, the Welcome Center, the Office of Student Recruitment, Security, Oui Can Help, the Link, the Concordian, Department of Geography, Planning and Environment, the Sexual Assault Resource Center, and the Graduate Students' Association.

## MONTREAL COMMUNITY

Across our city we are delighted to have connected with—and connected students to—the following organizations this year: Project Genesis, RCLALO, UTILE, Arnold Bennett Legal Information Clinic, Westmount Legal Clinic, Youth Employment Services, the Mile End Legal Clinic, Verdun Citizens Action committee, the Greater Montreal Community Justice Center, the NDG Community Council, the Peter McGill Community Council, Au bas de l'échelle, POPIR (Comité logement du St-Henri), Comité logement du Plateau, the Legal Information Clinic at McGill, and the Ville de Montréal city inspectors, amongst others.

