





ANNUAL REPORT

HOJO,

COMMITTED TO BUILDING A KNOWLEDGEABLE COMMUNITY

On the behalf of the entire HOJO team, we would like to welcome you to this year's annual report. This document was designed so we could share a full overview of what our organizations been up to for the past year; looking through it you'll learn about what exciting initiatives we've taken to improve our service as well as what we've continued to do for the Concordia community at large.

Our theme this year is; HOJO, committed to building a knowledgeable community. To us this means strengthening our already solid foundation by reinforcing the pillars we stand on; clear, and frequently updated accessible legal information, accompaniments and support, working hand in hand with our Concordia community as well as empowering tenants and workers through our resources and referrals. All together, we believe this is what HOJO is built on, and this year we're focusing on building atop that base.

The first way HOJO is building is by fully relocating to an office with a more work-positive layout, meaning more staff will be able to work and a separate office for our coordinator will allow us to all to work more efficiently. This relocation will enable our coordinator to work more proficiently on their own separate work, while the rest of the staff can shift between helping community members and working on individual projects. Our capacity to multitask as a service in such a way is what gives HOJO it's strength.

This move, combined with our focus on fortifying our

current resources which aim to empower tenants and workers through educational resources, are what makes this year about building a community that is more aware of their rights as tenants and employees. We hope that through molding that awareness into our spaces, we can foster a society with less illegal practices committed by landlords and employers and wider community support for those fighting for their rights.

HOJO would like to thank you for another fantastic year, Concordia Student Union and Concordia community. Without you we wouldn't have been able to build so much and HOJO hopes to only keep building from here. We appreciate your support, presence and we hope to connect with you again in this new year.

Leanne Ashworth, HOJO Manager Safrine Mouajou, HOJO Assistant Yasmine Samri, HOJO Assistant Cleopatra Boudreau, HOJO Assistant Kamden Biggart, HOJO Assistant Jules Johnson, HOJO Assistant Danxi Huang, HOJO Assistant Hannah Brais, HOJO Assistant



MISSION

AND 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 and 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 through our staff; the personalized interaction offered is essential 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 performed 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 in their organizational scope with regards to meeting the unique needs of students in both official languages. 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

At HOJO we provide students, graduates, friends, neighbours and community members with the information and resources needed to improve their specific housing and job situations. We support the empowerment of tenants and employees with legal information and referrals to accurate resources, enabling their capacity to change the bigger picture of housing and jobs.

Through our services likehome.info that gives accurate and detailed information regarding the multitude of neighbourhoods in Montreal, and our housing and employment classifieds website, we help folks in all stages of housing resolve their issues.

As we provide legal information, this requires precise research and an overall understanding of Quebec housing and employment laws; a service offered to students as well as folks in particular situations. These laws are complex and can be overwhelming, especially to newly arrived residents to Quebec, but both tenants and landlords can be unaware of the proper laws and regulations regarding housing. We're here to alleviate that stress by clearly explaining to individuals their rights and responsibilities while providing the documents that pertain to their particular situation.

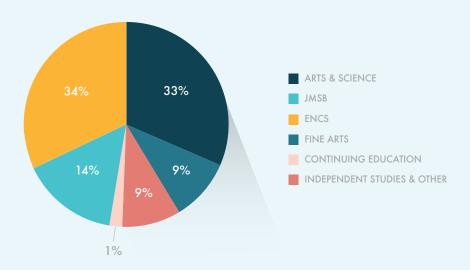
Thanks to all the diverse services within the Concordia community and beyond, we can accurately refer folks to other professional resources, when issues are stretched beyond our areas of expertise.

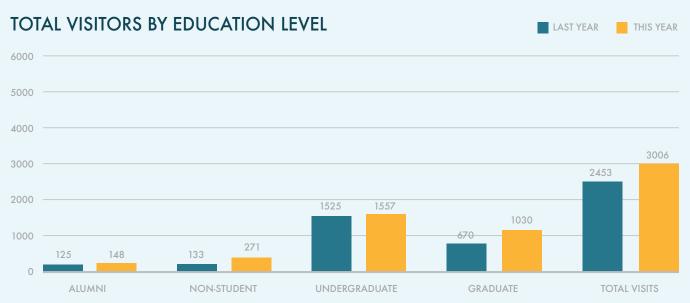
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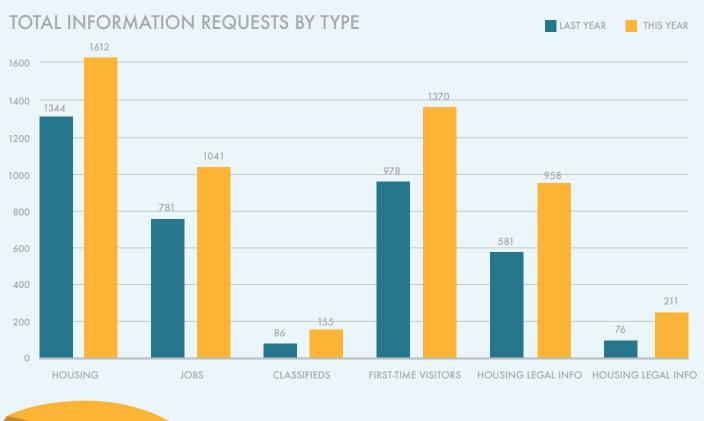
OUR YEAR IN NUMBERS

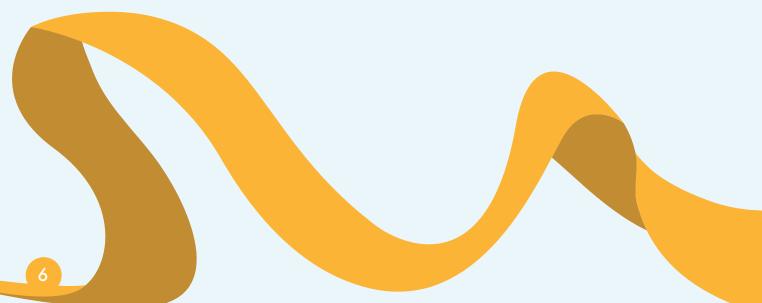
TOTAL VISITORS BY FACULTY





OUR YEAR IN NUMBERS





NEW THIS YEAR

At HOJO our ultimate goal is to reach more people, empowering them to take their housing or employment situations in their own hands because they are capable. In turn, this year, we have focused energy into further structuring the support systems already present at HOJO, as well as seeking other external methods to support our community. Some highlights:

- HOJO staff received a training facilitated by Le Centre de Justice de Proximité du Grand Montréal on navigating the small claims court.
- HOJO staff engaged in a stronger focus on marketing techniques to help spread the word about our service, through a stronger a social media presence leading to our first experience with distributing free and fun promotional material like highlighters, stress balls, magnets and keychains, all with our logo.
- HOJO staff met with editors from Concordia's independent student newspapers to write articles focusing on specific concerns surrounding employment and housing. Amongst the topics covered were illegal deposits on leases, illegal internships, and navigating housing and jobs in Quebec as a transgender person.

- Select HOJO staff members represented the Concordia Student Union as support members on the provisional committee of the CSU housing coop project. Once the building begins occupation, the provisional committee will transition into the co-op's board of directors.
- HOJO will be receiving a fee levy increase beginning fall 2017 of \$0.03 per credit from the undergraduates of Concordia, after a referendum in March.
- HOJO staff identified tabling as an excellent way to do outreach work during all times of the year, so we created a monthly schedule with themes, planning tablings at least 3 times a month in different locations on campus over the last semester.
- Finally, the HOJO received new computers and began
 preparations for our new office space. Our upgraded
 Macbook Pros have made our services like answering
 emails, looking up information and getting back to
 students faster and much easier. Our new office will
 upgrade many other elements of our service as well;
 the capacity for more staff to work simultaneously,
 space for our coordinator to have their own separate
 office as well as a more comfortable, welcoming, and
 work-friendly space.



MARKETING AND OUTREACH

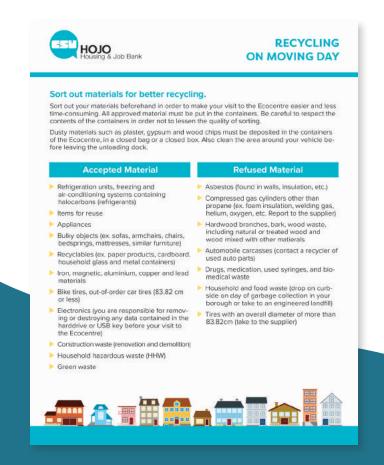
This year, HOJO was very focused on advertising our services to both incoming and existing concordia students. This included buying and distributing merchandise carrying the HOJO logo as well as our location and contact information. We distributed stress balls, keychains, highlighters, magnets and t shirts.

CANADIAN LABOUR CODE

As a service that caters to students in Montreal, Quebec, HOJO keeps up to date with information on the Quebec labour code, under the Commission des normes, de l'équité, de la santé et de la sécurité du travail. This year however, HOJO expanded its knowledge by learning more about the Canadian Labour code. This information has been used in conjunction with the Quebec labour code to provide students with well rounded information.

RECYCLING ON MOVING DAY

Students in Montreal always struggle with where to leave their unwanted belongings when moving out of an apartment. As a result, last year, HOJO created a document titled "Recycling on moving day". This document gives tips on what materials are accepted for recycling as well as what is not accepted. It also gives locations around montreal, where recyclable materials could be dropped off or picked up.



MARKETING AND OUTREACH

MEMBERSHIP WITH THE CANADIAN HOUSING AND RENEWAL ASSOCIATION

The Canadian Housing and renewal association is one that ensures that all Canadians have an affordable and secure place to call home. Their goal is to keep homes affordable, end homelessness, renew communities and support a sustainable housing profession.

Two HOJO staff members were able to attend the 2017 annual CHRA conference from May 2nd to May 4th held in Halifax, and were offered an opportunity to meet other housing professionals, connecting HOJO to a national network of individuals and organizations committed to affordable and quality housing. HOJO's membership with the CHRA lends itself to several benefits:

- Helps us stay in touch with the best housing practices nationally
- Enables us to network with housing professionals
- Allows us to use their online educational resources on housing market practices, as well as to learn tips and tricks for the ensuring the success of the upcoming housing coop project





THIS YEAR: HOJO & THE MEDIA

Within the last year HOJO has appeared in the media discussing various topics - amongst them is a focus on the bedbug problem in Montreal. From appearing in The Link, The Concordian, Le Devoir, The Gazette and Macleans, HOJO is committed to keeping up on relevant topics in the housing and job world, and finding new ways of communicating that information back to the community.

This is also the first year HOJO staff wrote for The Link, which reaches over 40,000 students and 5,000 members of the university faculty and staff weekly! This is an effective way to reach out to students, and this content can be shared on social media.

SOCIAL MEDIA

HOJO is on Facebook, Linkedin and WeChat. We use these websites to keep the public informed through annual campaigns (such as winterizing your apartment), as well as specific campaigns (such as the flooding that affected Quebec this spring). We also keep those who follow us on the diverse platforms updated about general news surrounding employment and housing, relevant to Quebec as well.

LinkedIn

On Linked In we post a wide variety of articles regarding employment in Quebec - specifically regarding discrimination in the workplace, salary differences, etc. This space lets us amass followers, keeping them updated on topics within the world of employment and encouraging them to see us as a resource. In one year, we have gotten 1111 followers.





in f weChat

NEWS

WHAT IS WeChat?

Since Facebook is blocked in China, WeChat, a Chinese app created four years ago has taken over the Mandarinspeaking 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 with crucial information on housing and jobs in Quebec. The WeChat app has the following main advantages:

- More accessible than other 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.
- 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 broaden our audience and to connect better with students' mobile universe.
- We've also created a group on wechat in an effort to maintain efficient and frequent communication with Chinese students and to inform them of updates regarding tenants and workers rights and about events we are hosting throughout the year. We add every Chinese student who reaches out to us for help to this group chat. In this way, we create a virtual platform to encourage Chinese international students to make use of our service and to spread the word to other Chinese students.



413 followers

On average we post 1 newly written Housing and Employment related article per week 70 mandarin HOJO written language articles currently uploaded to our wechat



WELCOMING CONCORDIA STUDENTS

DISCOVER CONCORDIA

Discover Concordia is an event organized by the university with the purpose of helping incoming students get acquainted with services offered by the school. This past year HOJO's participation at Discover Concordia was highly fruitful as we got the opportunity to reach out to a significant amount of students. In addition, students coming into the office often mentioned that they knew about us from Discover concordia.

August 31st, September 1st and 2nd Discover Concordia and Graduates Connect information fair:

August 31st - Arts & Science day- 467 students Sept 1st- Graduate connects -341 students Sept 1st- JMSB day -224 students Sept 2nd - ENCS day -138 students Sept 2nd - Fine Arts day -191 students

A total of 1,361 students attended the fall session

Discover Concordia for Graduate students on January 16th 2017: 57 students

LUNCH AND LEARN

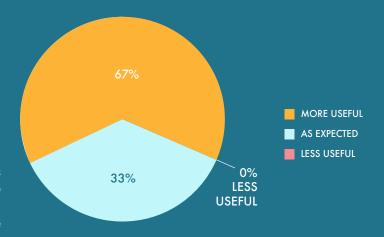
Targeted at arriving students, these HOJO workshops help them land with both feet on the ground. This year we collaborated with the International Student's office, organising and presenting workshops titled "Lunch n' Learn". These workshops, organized in the fall and the winter, are used to inform incoming international students about their rights and responsibilities associated with renting in Montreal. HOJO presented twice in the fall on August 23rd and 31st 2016, and twice in the winter on January 16th and 19th 2017. After the presentations, lunch was served, providing students with the opportunity to interact with each other, as well as to ask housing assistants any additional questions.

Total attendance in our 2 Fall 2016 events: 95 students Total attendance in our 2 Winter 2017 events: 109 students

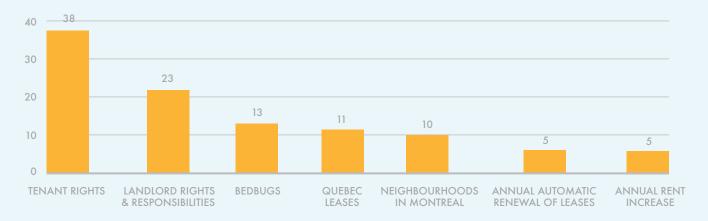
RESIDENCE WORKSHOPS

As we have been doing for years, we have continued giving "moving out of residence" workshops to students at both the Grey Nuns and Loyola residences. These workshops not only help us educate mostly out-of-town students on Quebec housing law specificities like illegal deposits and renewing leases, but they also help us identify the main questions and concerns students have when looking for housing in Quebec. We always receive great feedback from these workshops and appreciate the opportunity to interact with residence students who do not often visit our offices. We held our "Moving out of residence" workshops on February 9th and February 13th 2017. A total of 76 students attended these workshops.

WORKSHOP INFORMATION FEEDBACK



TOPICS STUDENTS FOUND USEFUL



TOPICS STUDENTS WOULD LIKE TO HERE MORE ABOUT



TABLING

This past year, HOJO organized monthly tabling events both at SGW campus and Loyola Campus. This was an opportunity to increase visibility as well as to keep students updated on their housing rights throughout the year. We had themes such as:

- Winterize your apartment
- Rental Increase
- Régie du logement wait times

Tabling with snacks, coffee, and on-hand resources, we introduce many students to HOJO for the first time and answer on-the-spot questions. For those with more complex issues we refer right back to our office.

Number of students reached through tabling this year: 328

INTERNAL

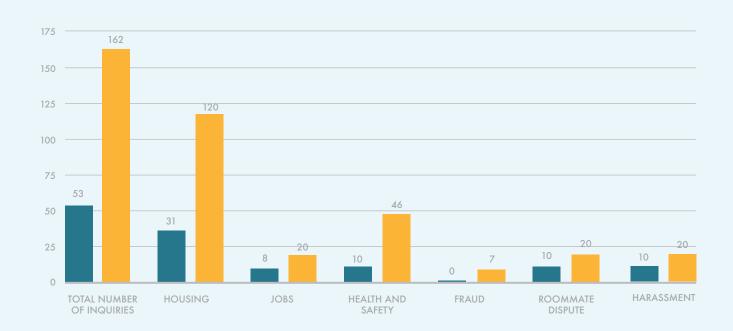
PROCEDURES

PENELOPE

Our file management program, Penelope, has allowed us to keep track of the progress made with visitors with long term inquiries. This software is especially useful with inquiries that involve accompaniments to the Rental Board and CNESST. This new database program allows the HOJO staff to save tenants' confidential information, which ultimately saves time when preparing for a rental board hearing. Penelope has also allowed the HOJO staff to research ongoing issues jointly with the CSU Legal Information Clinic assisting in a structured service to visitors. Overall from July 2016 to July 2017, 142 new inquiries have been created on Penelope by the Hojo staff.

LEGAL INFORMATION







HOJO is known as a legal information clinic specifically for housing. However, from time to time, students come in with situations that involve more than housing complications. In these cases, we attempt to work with other departments at the CSU and/or Concordia University in order to resolve the situation at hand.

LEGAL INFORMATION CLINIC (LIC)

This year, we devised a new procedure for referring students to LIC. For students in need of the LIC, we document our first meeting in Penelope. Next, the HOJO assistant overseeing the student's case sends a request to the coordinator, who in turn sends this request to the LIC coordinator. The LIC coordinator confirms a meeting time and depending on the situation, we will either collaborate with LIC, or send the student directly to their office.

SEXUAL ASSAULT RESOURCE CENTRE (SARC)

While we deal with a number of vulnerable individuals at the HOJO, instances involving sexual violence demand a particularly delicate approach. The fact that someone is able to come forward to address sexual violence in their life is a huge leap and it is important that we treat it as such with full dignity and attentiveness.

Identify if their issue is also related to housing or employment. Like any other student who may be under additional stress, we take our time with the student. Simply telling their story may be very difficult so we practice patience and active listening.

As the Off Campus Housing and Job resource center, we can only help them when it comes to issues pertaining to their lease or employment. At this point, we send an email to SARC in order for them to further assist the individual.

We feel that with the partnership with SARC, we have been of more help and more efficient to those who are in dire situations.

FAQ'S

This year, students and community members alike came into our office seeking a variety of services related to housing and employment issues they have faced. We wanted to share some of the most frequently encountered issues and how we have approached them in the 2017 Montreal context. While we recognize these issues greatly affect students, many Canadian and Quebecois people also fall victim to them.

LEASE APPLICATION FEES

Many students came in this past year asking about retrieving deposits after signing an application for housing they later decided they were not interested in. In Quebec, lease applications are binding agreements, thus, when a credit check has been completed by the landlord and they have received satisfactory results, the prospective tenant is required to sign the lease. When tenants back out of this, both them and the landlord can come to a compromise financially- but many landlords don't explain to prospective-tenants that the application is binding and if the student wants to change their mind, that their deposit is not necessarily refundable. HOJO explains to students how various deposits work, how to transfer or sublet, and how to proceed at the Regie du Logement. Many students don't understand the apartment application process, so we help students understand the necessity of applying for one apartment at a time and of giving out only the bare necessity of their private information.

TOO MUCH INFORMATION

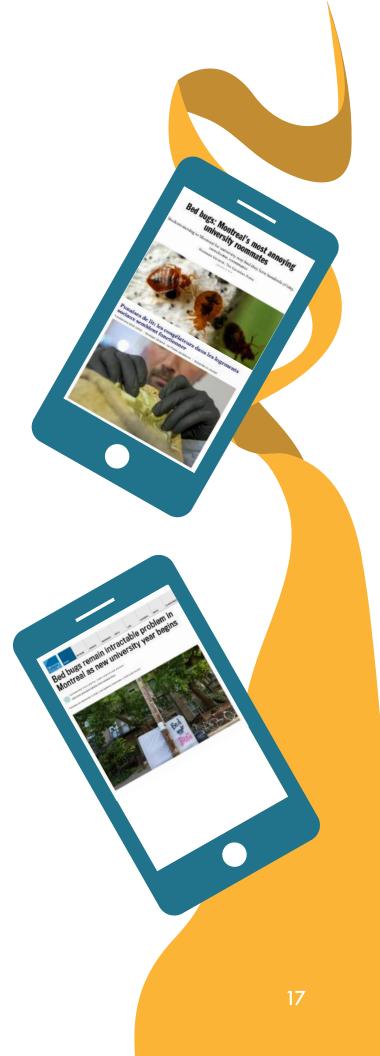
A recurring issue at HOJO is that of prospective tenants giving too much unnecessary private financial information. Though we have had a continual 'too much info' campaign since 2009, the issue of tenants providing too much personal information persists. Amongst the information landlords cannot demand or collect are: credit card numbers, bank account numbers, social insurance numbers, visa or passport, driver's permit, or health insurance numbers. We explain to students what information a landlord can demand as well as help them in having their private information removed from files when they have already given it out.

INTERNET SCAMS

After an increase in individuals coming in to ask questions about appropriate personal information to share on an online job application, we have been made aware of the growing issue of scams present on websites like kijiji.com and craigslist.com. These scams pose as job postings, but upon further inspection demand personal banking information-most of these 'job postings' do not involve an interview- the red flag that generally brings students to our office. We deal with this issue by helping students identify fraudulent postings and by reporting the incident to the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre (CAFC) for them, if they wish. The increased visibility with this issue has helped us to identify fraudulent postings requests on our own classifieds website, as it gains more momentum this year.

TRYING SOMETHING NEW: FIGHTING BEDBUG STIGMA

Bedbugs are an issue we've been dealing with on a weekly basis at HOJO for approximately 6 years. Between landlords not informing tenants that their buildings are infested, not hiring accredited exterminators, and the lack of knowledge on the tenants side about managing these pests-the problem is not under control. At last, this year, the City of Montreal has launched a website resource that specifically outlines how tenants and landlords are to deal with this problem. One issue it does not address is the stigma surrounding having bedbugs and the extreme stress individuals endure throughout their contact with the insects, even after they are gone, many fear their return. In summer 2016 HOJO began a conversation to address the different health issues that people who have bedbugs experience. We met with the director of Campus wellness and support services, as well as representatives from Health services. We have been working on our social media to encourage people to speak to us and to Health services if they require assistance. The aim of this is to build stronger resources for those going through the challenges of bedbugs while studying. As a result we can refer people more efficiently and students can access the support they need in order to deal with bedbugs. We understand bedbugs as an issue that affects people of all social classes and that it cannot be generalized as affecting only certain populations of Montreal- we must all confront this problem as a community.



CHALLENGES

AND NEXT YEAR'S PRIORITIES



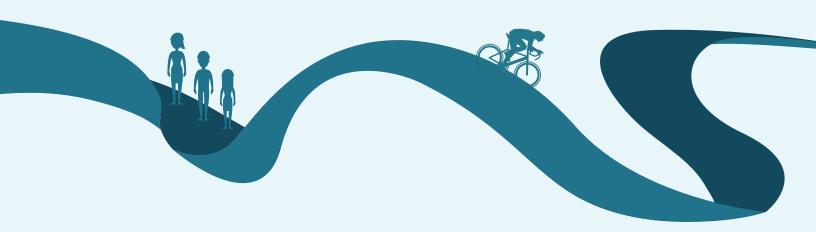
HOJO has several projects to achieve during the upcoming year.

1. HOJO IS MOVING AND LAUNCHING ITS NEW LOGO!

The "Off campus Housing and Job bank" will become the "Off campus Housing and Job resource centre". The reason we decided to change our name was because there have been many questions from students about why the word bank was in our name. Students who were confused told us they associate this word exclusively with financial establishments and no longer relate to it as a synonym for a series of listings- which is what was one of our initial offerings when we began. Although we still offer our classifieds website, we thought the addition of Resource centre to our name would more clearly inform students about what we do in our office. We do the same work this year as in past years however we hope our new name will alleviate some confusion around campus as to what to expect when you visit our office. We offer students resources that they can take advantage of. This continues to include our classifieds website as well.



In fall 2017, We will be relocating to another room, also on the second floor of the Hall building. The new office will be completely revamped and we will have a new logo. Our challenges when it comes to this move will be digitizing all our files, as well as organizing our new office. Due to our rebranding, we also had to change all of our branded material including promotional postcards and informational documents. The new office will have an additional desk space specifically for administrative work, and there will be an additional desk space for another assistant to meet with students.



2. CONNECTING STUDENTS WITH OTHER RESOURCES ON CAMPUS

Another priority for the next year is better connecting students with other resources around campus. Students come in facing housing and employment issues, but very often, these issues are intertwined with other problems. There is opportunity to better inform students about resources for their academic, financial, physical and psychological well-being.

- Health services
- Psychological services
- learning specialists
- center for students with disabilities
- emergency food fund
- & probably so many more things to learn!



3. COOPERATIVE STUDENT HOUSING PROJECT

Since 2014 the CSU has been working with UTILE, to create a housing cooperative for Concordia undergraduate students. This project will prioritize affordability and a sense of community among students and within the community. The coop project has a mission to empower students to through collective management.

The Housing project was initiated by HOJO. The Concordia Student Union (CSU) created a Popular University Student Housing (PUSH) fund dedicated to student housing. This PUSH fund provided 1.8 million dollars worth of funding to UTILE. UTILE in turn, is the developer of this project.

The coop will be built in the Plateau Mont-Royal area on Sherbrooke street east and Papineau. It will have 4 floors with a semi basement, and a total of 149 rooms. Priority will be given to Concordia undergraduate students. Remaining vacancies will be given to Concordia Graduate students, followed by students from other Montreal universities. Lastly CEGEP students will be considered should vacancies not be filled by all other university student applicants.



OUR MOST POPULAR HANDOUTS

- jobs in quebec
- housing in quebec english & mandarin
- price averages per neighbourhood
- basic facts about Releve 31
- temporary accommodations sheet

STUDENT TESTIMONIALS



"I have rented shortly in the Atwater area for two months and paid a deposit of 1000 \$. After the lease expired, the company was refusing to refund my deposit by 50% with all sorts of reasons and their attitude was terrible. I have problems with english. Fortunately, I found HOJO. Danxi spent nearly 2 hours helping me to write my statement after the enthusiastic inquiry and told me how to find the real estate management company address to fight for my rights and interests. Danxi also left her contact information to me so that I can consult her when I have a problem. After Danxi's guidance, the real estate management returned the deposit in full. Thank you so much for helping me. This city will be more beautiful because of you!" - Ava





"HOJO est une organisation très professionnelle avec des qualités humaines excellentes. Toutes les personnes qui y travaillent ont une attitude positive et d'énormes connaissances de la loi. Merci énormement pour votre aide!" - Anon





"Upon arriving to Montreal this past winter, I was scammed by a property management firm and was left without a place to stay even though I had already payed them a large sum of money for the accommodations they promised. I was quite impressed with Kamden and the HOJO team's dedication and effort to help me sort things out and get back on my feet, great team and great experience!" - Pat

THANK YOU!



OUR CSU COMMUNITY:

Walter Tom at the Legal Information Clinic, Daniel Munoz Ortiz and Mairi Watson, our graphic design team, the whole orientation team, Jonathan Ng our IT specialist, Sofia, our 1 woman communications team, all of the receptionists, and of course all of our CSU executives!

OUR CONCORDIA COMMUNITY:

In the broader concordia community, we have been pleased to work with the following departments this year:

Office of Community Development, the International Students Office, 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 Development, the Sexual Assault Resource Center, and the Graduate Students' Association.

MONTREAL COMMUNITY

Across the city, we are delighted to have connected with, and connected our students to, the following organizations this year:

Project Genesis, UTILE, RCLALQ, Arnold Bennett Legal information Clinic, Westmount Legal Clinic, Youth Employment Services, the Mile End Legal information Clinic, Verdun Citizens Action Committee, the Greater Montreal Community Justice Center, the NDG community Council, the Peter McGill Community Council, Au Bas de l'echelle, POPIR (Comité logement du St-Henri), Comité logement du Plateau, the Legal information Clinic at McGill, and the Ville de Montreal City Inspectors, among others.



