

# Joint Effort Newsletter



Summer  
2025  
Edition

In your community



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+ Words of Wisdom + Thank You to Our Supporters

**Arthritis West Island  
Self Help Association**

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Reg'd #: 89055 8893 RR0001



## BRIGHTER DAYS AHEAD

*Source: PAPAA (The Psoriasis and Psoriatic Arthritis Alliance) – Feb 4 2025*

As the days get longer and the evenings brighter, there's more than just a change in the weather to look forward to. For many people dealing with chronic health issues or tiredness, these longer days could bring real benefits. The extra daylight isn't just good for your mood – it could help with energy levels and even improve sleep.

### What's so special about more daylight?

The more natural light we get, the better it is for our bodies and minds. Here's how:

- **Sleep and energy:** More daylight can help reset your internal body clock, so you feel more awake during the day and can sleep better at night. This can be a huge boost if you struggle with energy or sleep problems.
- **Feeling happier:** Sunshine helps your body make serotonin, the “feel-good” hormone. More sunlight can help improve your mood and make you feel more positive.
- **Health benefits:** Spending time outside in the sun also helps your body make vitamin D, which is important for strong bones and a healthy immune system.

### How it helps with chronic health conditions

If you have a long-term health issue, those lighter evenings could make a big difference:

- **More energy:** More daylight means more time for light exposure, which can help beat fatigue. Light therapy has been shown to help people feel less tired, especially if they have conditions like chronic fatigue.
- **Better sleep:** Getting enough natural light during the day can help you sleep better at night. This is really useful for people with conditions like chronic fatigue syndrome, which can make sleep difficult.
- **More movement:** Longer days also mean more time to get outside and be active. Gentle outdoor exercise, like walking or stretching, can help ease symptoms and improve overall health.

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**MEDICAL PARTNERS**  
**Rheumatologists**

Dr. Elizabeth Hazel  
Dr. Mary-Ann Fitzcharles

Dr. Marie Hudson  
Dr. Michael Starr

## WAITING FOR SURGERY:

### A 25-year-old woman is forced to eat soft food for the past 6 months

*Original Source: Florence Lamoureux, Le Journal de Montréal - April 10, 2025 (loose translation)*

A 25-year old woman has been overwhelmed for the past 6 months waiting for a surgery because her jaw is frozen due to arthritis which prevents her from speaking and eating other than purees.

Since October 21, 2024, Audrey Arseneault is desperately waiting for her surgery at the Maisonneuve-Rosemont Hospital; all the while her condition continues to deteriorate.

“I lost 30 pounds due to malnutrition. I eat protein shakes and purees. I have to put everything in a bottle, because the spoon won't fit in my mouth.” she explains via email, and who is an auxiliary nurse at the Ste-Justine Hospital in the surgical unit.

In addition to this strict diet, Ms Arseneault's frozen jaw causes muscular spasms, constant headaches, insomnia, anemia and sleep apnea.

#### It is torture

“I'm overwhelmed. I only exist. Smiling causes pain, I lie down all day and I alternate between cold and hot compresses”, she writes. “I feed myself simply to survive. I cry every day. Unable to express myself is pure torture”.

The young 25-year old woman suffers from severe temporo-mandibular arthritis with ankylosing fibrous and bony structures that grind the joints and tissues.

She already had two surgeries related to this illness in 2021 and at the beginning of 2024. And as a result, her jaw is frozen since last October. A month later, she still had not received a call for a scan and start the process of making her prosthesis to reposition the mandibular which is the only solution for her to hope to be able to speak and eat as before.

“I had to resort to the private sector for my scan which cost me \$430. The making of the prosthesis that will position my jaw forward was finally approved by the public sector on December 5, 2024”, Audrey Arseneault explains.

#### Not a priority case

Called by the Maisonneuve-Rosemont Hospital for a battery of pre-op tests in March, she was surprised to learn that she is not a priority case. Her operation is tentatively scheduled for May 8<sup>th</sup>, but the hospital can cancel at the last minute, which is often the case.

“I'm on pain medication and opioids to help me survive and help me sleep, even if I only manage to sleep 4 to 5 hours nightly. The pain is indescribable”, says this young auxiliary nurse.

Ms Arseneault's hospitalization will also require space in intensive care for at least a few days, before her release.

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#### AWISH IS LOOKING FOR SOMEONE TO HELP US ADD NEW PROGRAMS & SERVICES

Are you able to volunteer some time by coordinating & organizing the addition of new services?

***We need your assistance, in order to see AWISH expand & help the community in new ways!***

You'd connect with others, discuss schedule & location options, confirm details with President/AWISH.

Email [arthritis@awishmontreal.org](mailto:arthritis@awishmontreal.org) and please put Subject as “Services Coordinator”

**THANK YOU – WE APPRECIATE YOUR SUPPORT!**

# Arthritis West Island Self Help Association

## SEASONAL CALENDAR – SUMMER 2025



For more information on programs & activities by AWISH, please contact us

[www.awishmontreal.org](http://www.awishmontreal.org) | 514-631-3288 | [arthritis@awishmontreal.org](mailto:arthritis@awishmontreal.org)



AWISH IS PROUD TO BE ORGANIZING:

### COMMUNITY INFORMATION DAY – ARTHRITIS RENDEZ-VOUS 2025

9:30am – 4:00pm

Sarto-Desnoyers Community Centre

Sunday, September 28 2025

1335 Chem. du Bord-du-Lac-Lakeshore, Dorval

#### COMMUNITY:

Learn about various local organizations dealing with:  
youth/family/senior services & activities + health & wellness

#### ARTHRITIS:

Guest Speakers covering arthritis-related topics  
+ visit our AWISH information booth

FREE  
PUBLIC  
EVENT

FREE  
PARKING

- Numerous community organizations will have information booths
- Private Ask-the-Doctor & Ask-the-Pharmacist booths (*to be confirmed*)
- Guest Speakers (Rheumatologists) presentations, followed by a Q&A
- Raffle prizes

*More information & details available closer to the date!*

**DONATIONS TO AWISH ARE APPRECIATED – THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT**

Visit [www.awishmontreal.org](http://www.awishmontreal.org) & follow our [Facebook Page](#) to stay up to date on events & services!

### AWISH AGM 2025

**Sunday, June 15 2025 – 1:30pm (doors open)**

Sarto-Desnoyers Community Centre  
1335 Chem. Bord-du-Lac-Lakeshore Dorval H9S 2E5

#### SPECIAL PRESENTATION - 2:45pm

*Fibromyalgia: no longer a Cinderella diagnosis*

Guest Speaker: Dr. Mary-Ann Fitzcharles

### AGENDA

1. Call to Order (at 2:00pm)
2. Approval of the Agenda
3. Approval of the Minutes of June 9, 2024
4. Treasurer's Report
5. Appointment of Accountant
6. President's Report
7. Nominating Committee Report and Election of Board Members
8. Question Period
9. Adjournment (coffee break)

### COMMUNITY INFORMATION KIOSKS (1:30pm +)

- AWISH (L'association d'entraide de l'Ouest de l'Île de Montréal / Arthritis West Island Self Help Association)
- CRC (Le Centre de ressources communautaires de l'Ouest-de-l'Île / West Island Community Resource Center)
- Le centre option-prévention T.V.D.S (Toxicomanie, Violence, Délinquance et Santé mentale/Suicide)
- PCSM/CPMH (Perspective Communautaire en Santé Mentale / Community Perspective in Mental Health)
- Fondation Somnolence Canada / Somnolence Canada Foundation
- Inkwell Journaling (Helene Brunet)
- Amis de la santé mentale / Friends for Mental Health

# Arthritis West Island Self Help Association

## SEASONAL CALENDAR – SUMMER 2025



For more information on programs & activities by AWISH, please contact us

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### EXERCISE CLASSES – pre-registration is required



#### DORVAL

Sarto-Desnoyers Community Centre - 1335 Chem. Bord-du-Lac-Lakeshore

##### WEDNESDAY

10:00am – 11:30am

July 2, 9, 16, 23, 30

August 6, 13, 20

8 weeks | \$52 AWISH member | \$60 non-member

#### PIERREFONDS

Gerry-Robertson Community Centre - 9665 Blvd Gouin Ouest

##### TUESDAY \*

10:30am– 12:00pm

June 17, 26

July 3, 8, 15, 22, 29

August 5

##### \* PLEASE NOTE:

All classes are on a Tuesday  
**EXCEPT** June 26<sup>th</sup> and July 3<sup>rd</sup>  
are a **THURSDAY**

8 weeks | \$52 AWISH member | \$60 non-member



Led by certified, professional fitness instructors. Well designed to meet individual needs and abilities.  
Joint and muscle-friendly whole-body exercises, including resistance, aerobics and stretching.

Some services are free for AWISH members, others may require a small fee. **Full session payment is required – no exceptions - prior to start date.** Contact us for cancellation policy, to register & for more information.



**SOCIAL BRUNCHES** are held every 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of each month. Contact the office for more information. We hope you'll join us for a good (pay-your-own) meal & conversations!

Visit [www.awishmontreal.org](http://www.awishmontreal.org) & follow our [Facebook Page](#) to stay up to date on events & services!

### COMMUNITY OUTREACH – AWISH PRESENTATIONS & INFORMATION BOOTH

Either at a public event or a private gathering – contact AWISH to learn more about what we do!

Email [arthritis@awishmontreal.org](mailto:arthritis@awishmontreal.org) and please put Subject as “Community Outreach”

## WAITING FOR SURGERY:

### A 25-year-old woman is forced to eat soft food for the past 6 months

*Original Source: Florence Lamoureux, Le Journal de Montréal - April 10, 2025 (loose translation)*

#### Not the only one waiting

According to the recent healthcare system's performance data, more than 18,000 patients are waiting for ortho-laryngology (ORL) surgery, one-third of them in Montreal. Despite the long waiting lists, there is a slight improvement profiled: the total number of surgeries on the waiting list went from 153,000 to 151,600 in one month.

According to Dr. Francois Marquis, emergency physician at Maisonneuve-Rosemont Hospital, the actual delays are due to poor management and lack of personnel. "A patient that is admitted will require monitoring. I actually have 7 empty beds that are unavailable in Intensive Care, because we lack nurses", regrets Dr. Marquis.

The doctor mentions that this patient may sadly be displaced by a priority case up until she is anesthetized. But he does point out that elective surgical priorities in Intensive Care are a decision made by the operating room team and that this has nothing to do with emergency physicians.

"I fight every day to take in patients", explains Dr. Francois Marquis, who is also Head of Intensive Care at the Maisonneuve-Rosemont Hospital.

#### Serious financial consequences

Ever since she has been on leave, Audrey Arseneault has access only to 75% of her salary. At the beginning she was told that there was a chance she could return to work in April 2025. Actually, she is far from believing a return to work and continues to go into debt.

"I had to pay for my scan, acupuncture, physiotherapy, numerous drugs in private care and they are not covered by the public system as well as dental treatments. I also have my regular bills such as my rent", she explains. Her companion, Nicolas Viau, says that he has never seen his girlfriend in this condition in their eight years of relationship. "Her health is degrading from day to day. She has not stopped losing weight. Audrey is no longer autonomous. She can't lift anything heavy, neither drive or call someone", he explains.

Her sister, Laurie Arseneault, confirms the situation and mentions that her close family is powerless in this kind of situation of watching her sister suffer while waiting each day.

According to Dr. Francois Marquis, this patient proves the inadequacies of the current public health care system. "This young, capable woman could return to work if she could be treated rapidly. As of now, she is losing her quality of life, monopolizing those close to her, her state of health is declining and she will pay for the consequences in the long-term", says sadly the doctor from the Maisonneuve-Rosemont Hospital.

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### AWISH is a non-profit organization that assists those dealing with arthritis and chronic pain in the West Island of Montreal & surrounding areas

**MISSION:** We envision a community where anyone dealing with any form of arthritis can access information and be supported through various services aimed at education & improving quality of life.



AWISH is expanding its reach in the community by adding a **Youth & Young Adults' Initiative Program**, looking to connect with the younger generation and see how we can help them cope with arthritis and/or chronic pain.

If you or someone you know is affected and would like to be kept informed on the progress of our new program and future services offered by AWISH - or if you'd like to offer a service or skill to this new group - please contact AWISH today!





## WORDS OF WISDOM

A wrong turn can take you to the right place!  
 Water your inner self like a plant: soak up a compliment!  
 Laugh at your mistakes. It makes them shrink!  
 Positive thinking is the best makeover there is!



Source: Woman's Worlds - July 7 2024

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## BRIGHTER DAYS AHEAD

Source: PAPAA (The Psoriasis and Psoriatic Arthritis Alliance) – Feb 4 2025

### Making the most of the light

Even if the weather isn't always perfect, there's ways to make the most of natural light:

- **Light boxes:** These devices can mimic sunlight and help if you don't get enough daylight. They can be used any time of the year.
- **Dawn simulators:** These gradually brighten in the morning to wake you up gently, just like the sun would.

So, as the evenings get longer, take advantage of the extra light. It can help you feel better, sleep more soundly, and even give you the energy to enjoy the day. But remember, light is just one piece of the puzzle – it's still important to follow your doctor's advice for managing your health.

The brighter evenings are a sign of hope, showing that small changes in our natural environment can bring big improvements in our lives.

## MANY THANKS TO OUR SUPPORTERS!

It is with their continued support that AWISH is able to better serve the community.

Please contact us today to find out how you can help.

<b>The Dr. J. David &amp; Doris Roger Family Fund</b>  <b>DORVAL</b>  <b>Leah Schwartz estate</b> 		<b>PHARMAPRIX</b> Jardins Dorval Gardens  <b>Pointe-Claire</b>  <b>WITT</b>		<b>Agence de la santé et des services sociaux de Montréal</b> <b>Québec</b>  <b>ACDPN</b> African Canadian Development and Prevention Network		<b>Membres d'AWISH   AWISH Members</b>  <b>Railroaders in the community</b>  <b>Pierrefonds Roxboro</b>  <b>Montréal</b>	
 <b>Gregory Kelley</b> Député/MNA Jacques-Cartier		 <b>Monsef Derraji</b> Député/MNA Nelligan		 <b>Enrico Ciccone</b> Député/MNA Marquette		 <b>Brigitte Garceau</b> Député/MNA Robert-Baldwin	
 <b>CAISSE DE BIENFAISANCE DES EMPLOYÉS ET RETRAITÉS DU CN</b> <b>CN EMPLOYEES' AND PENSIONERS' COMMUNITY FUND</b>		 <b>BEACONSFIELD</b>  <b>PME MTL</b> OUEST-DE-L'ÎLE		 <b>Kiwanis LAKESHORE MONTREAL</b>  <b>VILLE DE CITY OF DOLLARD-DES-ORMEAUX</b>		 <b>MPRESS DESIGN &amp; PRINT</b> <b>Héritage anonyme Anonymous Legacy</b>	

**Joint Effort** is a quarterly publication. All articles, at times translated and edited, are presented for your information and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of AWISH. We recommend you consult your doctor if you have any questions about diagnosis or treatment.