



# *Hillside Tennis Club*

## *Club de Tennis Hillside*

4818 Côte des Neiges  
Montréal, QC H3V 1G2  
T (514) 738-6371  
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[www.hillsidetennis.ca](http://www.hillsidetennis.ca)

Dear fellow Hillside members,

With the holiday season now well behind us and 2019 upon us, we can start to look forward to all the joys of summer and another season of tennis, swimming and dining with friends and family at Hillside. That said, the quiet of winter provides an opportunity to remember and reflect on Hillside's 93rd season.

While the certainty of summer being warmer in Montreal than any other season is assured, the predictability of weather and its impact on Club usage and operations is not. Within the span of the 2018 season, our Club experienced a near record cold start to the season followed by unprecedented heat. The challenges of extreme weather this past year combined with the need to maintain consistent and high standard service to members remains a key preoccupation of your current Board of Directors as we prepare for 2019.

As Hillside continues successfully on its journey to be a relevant and attractive venue for members of different ages and stages of life, 2018 highlighted the importance for all us to be thoughtful and respectful of others. Despite one unfortunate event this summer, day in and day out, the vast majority of our members demonstrate a high standard of courtesy and conduct which uniquely defines our Club culture as a warm and welcoming. To ensure this continues, the Board will be introducing a code of conduct to eliminate any confusion and provide a framework that ensures fellow members, guests, children and staff always enjoy a safe and harmonious environment.

A heartfelt thank you to Michel & Jennifer for their excellent administration in 2018 as Club management raised their game to a new level under tight labour market conditions which made hiring and retaining quality service staff particularly challenging. Despite acutely difficult weather conditions which made kitchen working conditions nearly unbearable, Pascal, his team and the wait staff were unrelenting in maintaining service at the highest standard. Thanks also to Felicia and Andrew who ensured members always received a warm and personalized welcome at every visit.

While there is always room for improvement in service to members, please be assured that your Hillside team is committed to excellence and doing their utmost. Few Clubs are as fortunate to have such an experienced and dedicated team as ours.

### **FACILITIES ENHANCEMENT PROJECT A GO!**

I very pleased to report that the Board has now unanimously authorized construction of the first major upgrade to the Clubhouse facilities in nearly 40 years. Spread over two phases starting in spring 2019 with completion realized in April 2020, members will see significant improvements to allow more frequent and active Club use across all ages and categories throughout the entire season—rain, shine, warm or cold.

By opening day this spring, we aim to have the formal outside dining area rebuilt and a retractable awning installed. In order not to interrupt the 2019 season, the larger and more substantial construction work on the Clubhouse will begin immediately upon closing this coming October. In the meantime, essential preparatory work, such as final selection of a builder, drawing detailed engineering plans, etc. are underway.



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I want to highlight that while the focus of the Facilities Enhancement Project is the Clubhouse and dining areas, we continue to closely monitor the long-term condition of the tennis courts and the length of their remaining useful life. Currently, Craig Duncan and his maintenance team are carefully maintaining the courts to the highest standard. The current condition of the courts remains excellent. In terms of lighting, we recently replaced all court light bulbs this year and have achieved a 20% improvement in illumination.

We recognize that top-notch tennis courts should always be a priority. Once the project is completed in 2020, the next priority for your Board needs to be the courts including further lighting improvements, refurbishment and consideration of the addition of a seventh court in time for the Club's 100th anniversary in 2025.

### Project Funding and Collection of Funds

We have indicated on many occasions that 100% of members will contribute financially to the realization of the Facilities Enhancement Project. For a private Club, this is not only financially responsible, it is only fair. I am pleased to report that through our capital campaign effort and the application of a specified contribution to those members who did not donate (or pledge), we have been able to raise sufficient funds to enable the \$1.4 million project to proceed.

Our Capital Campaign has received generous donations from over 120 members totaling nearly \$800k. Average gifts exceed \$5k per member unit and we have received donations as high as \$50k. As you have seen, we are now collecting funds via the specified contribution and from capital campaign donors. Since Hillside is owned and supported by its members, keeping its facilities up to standard and ensuring its viability is a collective responsibility. I want to thank everyone for their support and generosity.

I encourage you to visit our [website](#) dedicated to the Facilities Enhancement Project for the most up-to-date project plans, strategy and minutes of the special meeting of members held on November 1.

If you are interested in contributing financially to the project at a level above your specified contribution amount, we very much welcome your support. Please keep in mind that every donation reduces long-term financing requirements. **We will continue to offer a lifetime membership for donors who wish to contribute a minimum of \$30k or more towards the project. Subject to certain conditions, these lifetime memberships can be gifted to a family member.** Please contact the Club or write to us at [capitalcampaign@hillsidetennis.ca](mailto:capitalcampaign@hillsidetennis.ca).

Although the Facilities Enhancement Project was a primary preoccupation in 2018, I want to assure you that your Board of Directors and management are continuing their careful monitoring of existing Club operations and facilities.

We are pleased to provide the following reports on a successful Hillside season.



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### **MEMBERSHIP**

Hillside welcomed over 50 new members in 2018, up from last year, while 94 members resigned - a level slightly higher than the long-term average. Demographics and a lack of Club use continue to be major contributors to resignations. While we have little control over demographics, we continue to actively encourage Club use and eagerly seek ways to innovate our service offering to further appeal to members.

We are pleased to report that we are experiencing membership increases across several categories including social, juniors, intermediates, and men's senior playing. In addition, the special group of our longest-standing members, the honorary category, continues to grow.

Of course, the continued trend of member resignations outpacing new member intake is a serious issue that needs to be addressed over the long term. In addition, we need to focus on attracting younger, full-fee playing members, especially women, as well as encouraging family and spousal memberships. These categories are high-revenue contributors and are good demographically for the Club over time.

As a private Club, Hillside's greatest marketing tool for attracting new members is our current membership who can encourage and assist friends & family to join. Therefore, we all need to play a role by promoting the Club, inviting guests, and introducing new member candidates. Furthermore, your help in assisting prospective members with the application process and offering to integrate them into Club life can make difference between joining and not joining. To help make this process easier, we are pleased to introduce the following new membership recruitment incentives for the 2019 season:

1. Proposers and their new members receive a guest pass for each successfully processed application before May 1st;
2. Entrance fees for returning members who reinstate their membership have been reduced;
3. There is no specified contribution related to the Facilities Enhancement Project for newly joining members as their financial contribution is covered by entrance fees.

It now easier than ever to introduce new members and share special times at the Club. Play your part! Be a proposer, help retain or reinstate a member!

Application forms are always available online or contact [jennifer@hillsidetennis.ca](mailto:jennifer@hillsidetennis.ca). Once the application form is complete, the Hillside Board of Directors is available at any time to assist your applicant receive timely approval for membership.

A deep and heartfelt thanks to Susan Chadwick, our Vice-President, for her passionate dedication to our Club's success and relentless pursuit of building an exciting Club culture and inclusive membership experience.



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### **FINANCES**

Total revenue was stable for the year and entrance fees were strong again in 2018. However, as a result of the tight labour market, staffing costs for the food and beverage operations continue to increase, thus negatively impacting profitability.

The Club will post a loss on operations, but strong entrance fees should allow for a small overall net profit. The Club invested approximately \$40,000 for the renovation of the pool decking and fence and spent \$11,500 on caterpillar infestation prevention treatments (which are further explained in the Stewardship report). Operating cash as at November 2018 stands at approximately \$160,000.

While the Club achieved positive financial results in 2018, the long-term decline in total membership count places pressure on Club finances and must be addressed, so that cherished Club services can be fully sustained, and capital reserves continually replenished.

Of note, new member's entrance fees, which were originally designed to finance the Club's capital fund, have over time been re-allocated to fund the Club's ongoing operations. In addition, member's dues have remained at unsustainably low levels for years, thus placing continued pressure to attract new members (and their entrance fees) every season. As the Club makes its transition to the new facility, it will become imperative that annual dues cover annual operation costs and entrance fees finance the capital fund.

In addition, the Club will likely need to undertake necessary capital projects outside of the Facilities Enhancement Project in future years, such as rebuilding the tennis courts, court lighting, and other to-be-determined projects. For these to be completed, with funds to spare, the Club's capital reserves will need to be replenished at a faster rate.

We thank our treasurer Francois Leblanc for his diligent supervision of Club finances and for providing the necessary leadership to proactively address the Club's longer-term financial objectives.

### **TENNIS**

Tennis was certainly alive and well this year with many events from the round robins to The Hillside Cup to women's interclub and everything in-between. A record 45 women participated in the interclub level 1 and level 2 teams. The competition was fierce as they finished 5th and 6th in their respective levels. The Mixed Doubles Club Championship and tennis awards ceremony saw a different format this year as it was held over a weekend (September 21-23) followed by a dedicated casual dinner where champions of all 2018 tournaments received their trophies. The new mixed doubles tournament format and awards ceremony were both very well received and will be repeated next year.

**This past summer we were reminded of how special our Club is when we co-hosted the Steve Stevens Canadian National Seniors Tournament** the week of August 19, 2018. Players in the 35 and over category from all over Canada were treated to our facilities. Observing these players taking in the Club's beautiful surroundings was an enlightening experience; their upbeat reactions reminded us of how lucky we are to be members. The infectious spirit generated carried through to the end of the season.



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The Annual Club Championships were held at the end of the summer and the winners are as follows:

**Women' Open Singles:** Elsa Schlemm  
**Women's Doubles:** Elsa Schlemm & Elise Nesbitt  
**Women's A/B:** Louise Latreille & Alex MacDougall  
**Women's B:** Jenny Jackson  
**Men's Open Singles:** Pail Lenzi  
**Men's Doubles:** John Papageorgio & David Sheridan  
**Men's A/B:** Chris Donato & Paolo Santini  
**Men's B:** Adrian Dunn  
**Mixed Doubles:** Jenny Jackson & Ben McAusland  
**90+Tournament:** Jorge Schwartz & Colin Brown  
**The Hillside Cup:** Andrew de Courcy Ireland

Congratulations to all and thanks to everyone who participated!

**The Lorne Webster Memorial Cup** was played on September 29 & 30. Unfortunately, the Cup remains at The Mount Royal Tennis Club for yet another year.

The newest member of our tennis team was The Red Lobster ball machine. The Red Lobster got quite a work out and proved to be a steady hitting partner when called upon. A huge thank you to Dariusz, André, Casimir and Elsa (junior program) for their unparalleled dedication to making our summer filled with expert tennis instruction, coaching and drills. Year after year, they find new ways to motivate and challenge us to become better tennis players.

*Remember... Tennis is a game that begins with LOVE!*

Thank you to Martha Legge Fitzpatrick for bringing her good judgement and a great working relationship with our tennis staff in order to make continuous and lasting improvements to our tennis program.

### **SOCIAL LIFE**

The 2018 tennis season witnessed some new social initiatives to complement the Hillside's already robust summer social calendar. You know the Club is doing something right when there are waiting lists for some of the staple events! The Facilities Enhancement Project will certainly address these "good problems" by providing a covered outdoor dining deck with larger seating capacity.

A first for the Club, a "Dine & Discuss" evening was introduced to create a stimulating dining format and experience, where guest speaker Dr. Clarence Epstein spoke on the topic of Art in Montreal—a big thank to Dr. Epstein for his time and presentation. The event was a huge success and will be repeated next season on a different subject. In this spirit, we welcome your suggestions for interesting topics and speakers for 2019.



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After a seven-year hiatus, Father's Day Brunch made its way back on the calendar and saw tremendous success as the summer weather started to sizzle. Diner en Blanc came back for a second edition, the warm evening made it for a pleasant outdoor dining experience under a starlit sky. Weather also cooperated for the Ladies' events, and the Opening Luncheon and Fashion Show as well as the monthly Ladies' Nights, were as popular as ever.

A strong demand from malt aficionados paved the way for our first edition of Whiskey Night, where an intimate group of members came to discover the wonderful scotches of Isle of Arran distillery hosted by L'homme qui parle Whisky M. Julien Bourret-Forest.

The Discovery Nights were well attended and Chef Pascal Cormier's return next season heralds more unique tasting menus coming our way!

If you have ideas for our social events, please feel free to reach out to Michel Deslauriers or our Board representative Stylianos Manios whom we thank for bringing an innovative and entrepreneurial spirit to strengthening our Club's social experience.

### **JUNIOR DEVELOPMENT**

The Hillside continued flourishing as a Club enjoyed by multiple generations, where parents, grandparents and grandchildren alike used the Club side by side.

An exciting addition to our line-up of special social events included several Family BBQ and movie nights held in the spring and late summer/early fall. These nights took place on several Fridays with a very casual early buffet dinner format to suit the changing needs of today's families and transforming the Clubhouse into a mini-movie theatre while parents enjoyed the remainder of their evening. This initiative was extremely well received by the new generation of families increasingly using our Club facilities.

A weekend lifeguard took up permanent station at the Hillside on summer weekends, at any special family event and during the camps. This has made the pool safer not just for children but for all Club members. Starting next summer, the Club hopes to hire a facilitator to supervise children during special events like Family BBQs, to ensure the Club continues functioning as a place that all members young and old alike can enjoy.

The Club's junior tennis program continued offering a wide array of clinics and camps to children of different ages and skill levels. In the past, in the event of rain, parents would have to collect children attending the half-day summer camps. This year, children could stay at the Club, making it easier on parents who already had plans for those days.

The Hillside also held several weekend junior tournaments throughout the season which were well attended. Congratulations to all the winners and participants in these wonderful events.



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This year's junior champions are:

	<u>Champions:</u>	<u>Finalists:</u>
<u>Boys 8 &amp; under:</u>	Toby Dunn	Freddy Oldland
<u>Girls 8 &amp; under:</u>	Sabrina Guay	Juliette Leblanc
<u>Girls 10 &amp; Under:</u>	Juliette Leblanc	Zoe Marleau
<u>Boys 10 &amp; Under:</u>	Fraser Dunn	Nico Quinlan
<u>Girls 12 &amp; Under:</u>	Marlo Epstein	Olivia Darlington
<u>Boys 12 &amp; Under:</u>	Conrad Porteous	Aaron Beckerleg
<u>Girls' Open:</u>	Isobel Hamilton	Marlo Epstein
<u>Boys' Open:</u>	Luc Drymer Graham	Conrad Porteous
<u>Girls' Doubles:</u>	Lauren Leonard Olivia Darlington	Marlo Epstein Mila Elman
<u>Mixed Doubles:</u>	Lauren Leonard Lukas Dancik	Marlo Epstein Luc Drymer
<u>Most improved Junior:</u>	<u>Girl:</u> Vera Gaty	<u>Boy:</u> Henry Johnson

Parent & Child Champions: Aaron & Mathew Beckerleg and Conrad & Charles Porteous.

Congratulations to all our juniors! We look forward to another great season next year.

Thank you, Amanda Jelowicki, for passionately advocating the needs of juniors and families, and for initiating valuable improvements to the Junior Program.

### **FACILITIES AND STEWARDSHIP**

Major improvements were undertaken in 2018, namely the complete replacement and enhancement of the pool deck and area. The entire deck around the pool was removed and replaced with deck pressure-treated wood and new fence posts and boards were installed on the walls that Jennifer beautifully decorated with new flower boxes. The new pool area was designed to be integrated in the upcoming work scheduled on the adjacent casual eating area as part of the Facilities Enhancement Project.

All trees on the property suffering from the ash borer bug were treated or cut down and removed in accordance with the City's by-laws and, we now have a very healthy tree population. Furthermore, as per our expert's recommendation, a full-scale treatment of the property's trees was successfully performed, which prevented a reoccurrence of the unfortunate caterpillar outbreak in 2017. The same treatment, but on a smaller scale, will be performed for the upcoming season.

We hope our playing members noticed that replacing the light bulbs of all six tennis courts significantly improved the visibility of games in the evenings.

For 2019, notwithstanding the Facilities Enhancement Project, we will continue to monitor the state of the grounds, Clubhouse and tennis areas to ensure that all necessary work is done to meet our members' standards and to attract new members. A special thanks to Craig Duncan



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and his team for another year of exceptional work and diligence and helping us keep Hillside in the best shape possible.

We thank Jean-Simon Cleroux, who through his steady and diligent handling of multiple, and often complex files, has been instrumental in achieving significant improvements to our facilities.

### MEMBER COMMUNICATIONS

Improving communications with members remained an important focus and, with the move to electronic and paperless communications, numerous tools were used to connect with members. Emailing members remained the main source of communications, and a concerted effort was made to render them punchier and ensure the subject line clearly stated the content.

Hillside's Facebook page featured frequent posts to ensure member were informed and entertained—photos taken at almost all the social events were posted! Many new members joined our FB community; if you have not had a chance to like or follow the Hillside on Facebook, please do so now. That way you will be informed of all the news for our upcoming season even before it starts!

The content in the 2018 Handbook was further streamlined and the list of past presidents as well as contact information for intermediate members was added.

For the coming season, we are also looking at new approaches using social media to appeal to younger generations. Also, longer term, subject to budget considerations, we will revamp of the Club's website and initiate electronic bulletin board communication in the Clubhouse.

Thank you to Jasmin Uhthoff for leading and successfully transitioning Hillside towards a paperless future while still keeping members fully informed of Club news and calendars of activities. Special thanks also for her tireless efforts to keep members informed about developments related to the Facilities Enhancement Project.

The Annual Membership Information Form is enclosed for your completion and return, only if there are changes to your contact, credit card or membership information. Please return it to the attention of Jennifer Chappell by mail or scan/email before February 28, 2019. If you are moving, please ensure that you keep the Club informed. The usual mailing address and telephone number for the Club is active during the winter.

Please note: all changes to membership category **MUST be received by March 15, 2019.**

With another successful season now complete, your Board and Club Management will be working hard to prepare for the 2019 season. In the meantime, please don't hesitate to reach out to us with your ideas and comments.

On behalf of the Board, thank you for your continued support of our Club. We eagerly look forward to seeing you at Hillside in a few months!

Kind regards,

**Charles Porteous,**  
President