



VÉRO & LOUIS FOUNDATION

Q & A

What is the Véro & Louis Foundation's vision?

Currently in Quebec, there are respite homes and intermediary services for autistic adults, but few ongoing services for people with ASD. The Véro & Louis Foundation has therefore set out to innovate and design a lifestyle concept for adults aged 21 and over with autism spectrum disorder. This reproducible concept includes homes, research, integration into communities and, most importantly, develops the residents' self-reliance.

How many residents will live in the first home?

The home can accommodate up to 20 residents. As the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux provides a subsidy for 16 residents for the first home in Varennes, it will accommodate 16 residents during the initial years.

Which clientele will be served?

Residents of the Varennes home will be adults, men and women, aged 21 and over diagnosed with ASD who require daily and lifelong support.

I want to live in the home. How do I register?

The Véro & Louis Foundation is working closely with the CISSS Montérégie Ouest to provide quality services to Montérégie residents. In order to gain access to the CISSS Montérégie Ouest's specialized services (including a housing request) the person must apply to the relevant services (former CLSC) of his or her territory. The person's needs will be assessed, and he or she will then be referred where necessary to specialized services that will analyze their request for residential placement. The persons already known by specialized services must consult their system navigator from the Montérégie-Ouest Integrated Health and Social Services Centre (CISSS de la Montérégie-Ouest). The criteria for the Véro & Louis Home will be determined jointly over the next few months by the CISSS de la Montérégie-Ouest and the Véro & Louis Foundation.

How many people will be affected by this project?

We believe that for each resident of a Véro & Louis Foundation living environment, between 3 and 7 additional people will benefit from it. When considering the 16 to 20 residents who will move into the Varennes home, this adds up to 200 people who will see their lives changed in a profound way.

How will we measure the project's impact?

We are collaborating with research teams from the Université de Montréal and the Université du Québec à Montréal to validate the approach and create a model based on the best practices both in terms of the architecture and the clinical program. Not only will this partnership project allow to experiment an alternative housing model, it will also assess the results of this innovative environment through an applied research protocol. For this purpose, the CISSS de la Montérégie-Ouest will collaborate closely with the teams at all phases of the research project through the involvement of its Directorate for multidisciplinary services and university teaching.

Architecture

In what ways is the living environment architecturally designed to meet the needs of adults with ASD?

1. The Université de Montréal prepared a study report to inform and fuel the design of the first home whose model must be reproducible across Quebec. This report provides design principles illustrated by cases of exemplary precedents from around the world.
2. Subsequently, we created a multidisciplinary group to help establish the daily needs of autistic adults.
3. Finally, the architects drew up the plans for the first home. It was designed to meet the unique sensory needs of adults with ASD. As a result, special attention was given to light, temperature, acoustics and materials. Much thought was given to “living together”:
 - both in the programming of a variety of spaces which allows residents to be together or alone, as needed
 - and in the planning of these spaces, both in terms of scale (the shape of a house rather than an institution) and the way in which they move through the space. For instance, the importance of being able to visualize the course to a final destination and avoid dead ends and surprises.

Is special attention given to the environment through the choice of materials, light, and heating and cooling systems?

The choice of materials, connections to the exterior and mechanical systems have been engineered from an environmental perspective, to meet the needs of persons with autism and for ecological purposes. The selected materials do not emit *VOCs* (volatile organic compounds), solar gains are controlled, the mechanical system is low-velocity to avoid noise and designed to provide individualized temperature control.

Why does the living environment resemble a house rather than a more institutional building?

This is their new living environment, their home. Obviously, the number of occupants (between 16 and 20) was somewhat of a challenge. That is why the architects organized a series of small connecting houses. This creates a balance between individuality and community under one roof.

Why is the living environment divided into 4 houses?

The aim is to control the scale of the building so that it represents a house that the residents will identify as their home. The cluster of 4 houses also allows for progressive sociability between the common areas, the common space reserved for 4 people and their individual rooms. This makes the transitions more predictable and gradual.

What about the safety of residents?

The sensorial and safety needs are defined by the number of residents who are in the same space. Obviously, it's difficult to imagine all the occupants of the home in the same space which would create noise levels and visual stimuli that would be overwhelming for some. The dedicated places for relaxation and activities will help divide the residents naturally within the living environment. Each individual can find the area that best suits his or her mood based on aspects such as dimensions, light and connections to the rest of the house.

To foster sensorial well-being and the development of autonomy, areas such as the dining room which will be used by most residents at the same time, are divided to create smaller groupings. This will allow staff to be more present with the residents and further support daily routines such as preparing breakfast, doing dishes and putting things away.

Administrative

Why set a goal of \$16,900,000 for the major fundraising campaign?

The Véro & Louis Foundation's goal is to innovate by creating a lifestyle concept for adults aged 21 and over with autism spectrum disorder. This reproducible concept includes adapted homes, research, integration into the community and, above all, the development of autonomy among the residents.

The goal is to build 5 homes:

It's estimated that overall construction costs for the first home will be \$4,150,000 including project development. For the other four homes, it's estimated that \$3 million for each will be more than enough.

Finally, the cost of the research protocol with the Université de Montréal to ensure consistency between what is written and real life: \$750,000