

# Westmount High/Dawson student Gerhard wins local Rotary’s 2025 ‘Service above Self’ award

By JENNIFER BALL

Former Westmount High School student Joy Gerhard won the Rotary Club of Westmount’s Service before Self award for 2025.

The award was given to her at the school’s graduation ceremony for the class of 2025, which took place on October 19 of last year. Westmount High is found at 4350 St. Catherine St. near Clarke.

Winning the award came as a surprise to her, Gerhard told the *Independent*. “I’ve been getting recognition [for my] leadership [work] that I did in high school but it’s always kind of shocking to me because I [have] imposter syndrome...

### ‘Happy moment’

“I cannot believe that – the anxious person that I was – was able to get out of my shell and do so many things. I am so grateful that I got the recognition and it was overall a really happy moment for me. I think it was one of my proudest moments.”

Gerhard’s leadership experiences started in her second year of high school at Westmount High when she joined the stu-



Joy Gerhard won the Rotary Club of Westmount’s 2025 Service above Self award. She is now a Dawson College student and was photographed at the entrance to the CEGEP on December 2.

dent council.

“I was not really sure what I was getting myself into, but I ended up loving the student council.

“I loved organizing different events at school and working with my team and brainstorming.”

At Westmount High, “CCQ” refers to the Chambre de commerce du Québec and it is linked to vocational and career-preparation streams. The head of the department is Dr. Sabrina Jafralie, who provided a statement on November 27 – via Karen Allen, who is a guidance counsellor at WHS – as to why Gerhard received the award.

### ‘Future leader’

Gerhard, she said, was a student who had shown “Immense growth, leadership, and potential throughout her time at Westmount High School...”

“I have had the privilege of witnessing her development both personally and academically, and I firmly believe she embodies the qualities of a future leader who is destined to make a profound impact in her chosen field of social work.”

Gerhard is now studying in the social services program at Dawson College and said she chose the field because “I’ve always wanted to build connections with people.”

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### Resilience, cont'd from p. 1

which was set up and is managed by the province’s Ministère de l’Emploi et de la Solidarité Sociale (MESS) as part of the Act to Combat Poverty and Social Exclusion.

### How Westmount acquired control of some provincial funds

“In 2018, the MESS and the ville de Montréal signed a five-year, \$44.75M funding agreement under the FQIS to subsidize local initiatives within the territory of agglomeration [of the island of Montreal].

“In July 2019, the method for determining the distribution of funding (based on several social and economic indices) changed, and a funding envelope of \$39,982 was attributed to Westmount for 2020, 2021 and 2022.

“The funding was renewed in 2023 in the amount of \$39,982...”

“In 2024, a new five-year, \$55M funding agreement was signed and a funding envelope of \$46,779 was attributed to Westmount for 2024, 2025, 2026, 2027 and 2028.

“Until 2025, this annual envelope was managed by the ville de Montréal, but funding decisions were made by Westmount. As of 2025, the funding management is now handled by Westmount.”

### Westmount a longtime supporter of Resilience

Rutishisha explained that in 2019 Westmount council and administration decided that Resilience Montreal was addressing the greatest local need related to poverty and social exclusion in the city and that it should receive its funding envelope.

“It was decided that they would continue to receive the funds as their services were aligned with the requirements and criteria established by MESS.”

Rutishisha said that Resilience can use the funds in the best manner it sees fit to fulfill its mandate; however, it must submit a report that is reviewed by the city of Westmount and the MESS.

He said, “The city of Westmount and the ville de Montréal have a fund management agreement, and the city of Westmount and Résilience Montréal have a

### Registration, cont'd from p. 1

are pickleball, tennis, recreational hockey, belly dancing, ballroom dancing, tai chi, total body workout, singing, boot camp and skating instruction. Listed as a new program for adults this year is co-ed recreational softball for those aged 18 and over taking place from May 1 to June 19.

### Activities geared to seniors

Programs specifically for seniors include low-intensity and gentle movement. Some are offered over video link.

### Indoor swimming

Special indoor swimming at the Westmount YMCA is also offered by the city at specific times also listed in the recreational program.

It is also explained that “persons with disabilities” who register for an activity “may have a companion attend with them at no cost, for which details may be obtained from the office at the Westmount recreation centre.”