



Hostelling International Canada
Québec-Ontario Region

ANNUAL REPORT 2011-2012



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HI-CANADA QUÉBEC-ONTARIO

MISSION

The St. Lawrence Youth Hostel Association, also known as HI-Canada Québec-Ontario Region, is a social enterprise whose goal is "to help all, especially the young, gain a greater understanding of peoples, places and cultures through hostelling and travel."

VISION

HI-Canada Québec-Ontario will be known as the most dynamic community of travellers on its territory, and as a social enterprise, it will be a leader of an accommodation network accessible to youth, first and foremost. It will be grounded in its community and will be based on its members, volunteers and staff.

VALUES

The greater social good, management autonomy, democracy, primacy of the people, respect, pride, solidarity, accessibility and sustainable development.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

THE END OF ONE CYCLE, AND THE BEGINNING OF ANOTHER...

2012 was the third and final year of our Association's 2010-2012 Strategic Development Plan. Last fall, the management team and the Board of Directors proceeded to evaluate where we stood in terms of reaching our goals. The estimated results are mixed.

On the positive side, a number of our strategic orientations have been achieved with resounding success: we have become a dynamic component of HI-Canada; we have positioned ourselves as a leader in youth tourism within our territory; and we have been recognized by the Government of Québec as a national leisure organization. By adopting a sustainable development policy as well as an accessibility policy for people with disabilities, we have laid the groundwork for deeply rooted sustainable actions.

Furthermore, we strengthened our relations with our affiliated hostels and promoted our network as a community of travellers. Finally, we successfully integrated the former Ontario East Region into the structure of our organization.

However, due to the harsh economic realities in some of our key markets over the past few years (United States, Europe, etc.) and the strong competition among hostels—especially in Montréal—we did not achieve all of our operational objectives. While we greatly optimized our accounting information, we did not succeed in generating a sizeable liquidity reserve, and we have not yet met our financial goals. Increasing the supply of accommodations on our territory has yet to be achieved and will remain part of our strategic orientations going forward.

Based on these conclusions, last December we established the broad strokes of the 2013-2015 Strategic Development Plan, which is a continuation of the previous plan. We are optimistic that the new objectives can be reached, while we remain aware that challenges may still arise, given the uncertain economic context. The new strategic plan revolves around five main themes:

1. Visibility, communication and marketing: to strive to raise the profile of Hostelling International and develop new markets;

2. The HI accommodation offer in Québec and Ontario: to plan a strategic development of new hostels on our territory, focusing on quality rather than quantity, and to increase the profitability of our operations by consolidating our products and services;

3. Membership development: to expand the membership advantages and encourage the involvement of active members in the association

4. Sustainable development and accessibility to a greater number of people: to adopt concrete measures in line with our new policies in these areas, ensuring that the longevity of our network is reinforced by our environmentally responsible initiatives.

5. HI-Canada partnership: to collaborate with the national office in the realization of common strategic objectives, as well as seek to clarify the distribution of responsibility and the organization's decision-making processes

Time to pass the baton

It goes without saying that a lot of work remains to be done. Nevertheless, I am confident that our organization has all the potential and resources necessary to tackle the upcoming challenges. As for me, this will be my last President's Report. After serving 22 years on the Board of Directors, a good number of which I've spent as President, I will not be renewing my mandate this year. I believe that when the time comes, it is important to make way for new leadership. My years on the Board of the AASL have been incredibly stimulating, thanks in large part to the strong bonds that have formed among Board members, between Board members and the management team, as well as with all employees. I have always been proud to tell people I was the president of an association which, owing to the great contributions of everyone, has become a true social economy enterprise—one that is often cited as an example, no less.

A big thanks to everybody!



Louis Jolin,
President



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

THE YEAR OF OUR 75TH ANNIVERSARY!

The St. Lawrence Youth Hostels (SLYH) Association will celebrate its 75th anniversary in 2013, and what an adventure it's been since its foundation in 1938! In its first 20 years, accommodations consisted in families' homes and all of the association's activities were carried out by volunteers who believed that discovering places, cultures and people would enrich youth.

The year 1957 was a major turning point for the SLYH with the hiring of its first professional and the acquisition of two youth hostels. But it was in the 1990s and the 2000s that the association really began to develop at a rapid rate with the purchase of the Mont-Tremblant hostel in 1999, followed by the Toronto and Niagara Falls hostels in 2005.



In 2007, the SLYH became an official region of Hostelling International Canada once again, a status it had lost in the 1970s. This time its territory was to include Québec and the Great Lakes region. Then, in 2011, it took over the former Ontario East Region, so that it now covers the whole of the two provinces.

Today, St. Lawrence Youth Hostels has more than 80 employees and 9 volunteers who are responsible for running and developing the Hostelling International movement in Canada's two largest provinces.

In 75 years, the SLYH has passed through many stages of development: from simple administrative division of the Canadian Hostelling Association (CHA), it incorporated in 1967, and then went on to become a CHA region, a charity association, an affiliated HI-Canada youth hostel, and finally a social economy enterprise. And today, it is once again a region of Hostelling International Canada.

Who knows what the face of the association will be tomorrow? One thing for sure is that it will remain a major player in youth tourism, because regardless of hard times, it remains resilient and able to adapt to change.

TWO MAJOR PROJECTS IN 2012

HI-Montréal St-Antoine

In last year's report I highlighted the importance of being prudent in our choices without being a prisoner to fear. We were presented with a unique opportunity and—based on the previous summer's occupancy—we seized it: a one-year lease on a disused hotel just a few steps from our Mackay Street hostel. And that is how the HI-Montréal St-Antoine summer hostel was born.

Unfortunately, our two properties lost a lot of money due to the student strike and the opening of two new hostels—for a total of 21 in the city. Despite this pitfall, we are now armed with a better understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the Montréal market.

A full year in Ottawa

The year 2012 was the first full year since the integration of former Ontario East Region. Strategies implemented to improve HI-Ottawa's finances have proven successful. With a \$115,000 surplus, the hostel achieved its best financial year since its opening.

We had as many overnights as the previous year, but the opening of a new hostel in Montréal in the midst of an unfavourable tourism situation affected our financial results.

Let's wish ourselves a happy 75th anniversary, an enriched membership, and a prosperous association.

The year 2013 also marks the 80th anniversary of the Hostelling International movement in Canada. Happy 80th anniversary HI-Canada!

Enjoy your reading,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Jacques Perreault". The signature is stylized with a large, flowing 'J' and a long, sweeping underline.

Jacques Perreault,
Executive Director

OUR HOSTELS HIGHLIGHTS

The St. Lawrence Youth Hostels Association, better known under the name of Hostelling International Canada, Québec-Ontario Region, is a not-for-profit organization made up of 15 youth hostels. Five of these are the property of the Association: HI-Montréal, HI-Mont-Tremblant, HI-Toronto, HI-Ottawa, and HI-Niagara Falls. The other 10 are affiliated to the network and managed by individuals or associations who take the Hostelling International mission to heart.

Our Association has close to 12,000 members and is proud to contribute to the education of youth by bringing people together through travel. In order to meet travellers' needs and provide an unforgettable experience, our hostels are always looking to improve and diversify their offering through small and large-scale projects. All of these upgrades are made possible thanks to our revenue surpluses, which are entirely reinvested in the Association to benefit our guests and staff.

HI-MONTRÉAL



HI-Montréal invested a lot of time and energy in getting its sister hostel, HI-Montréal St-Antoine, ready for opening. That didn't stop it from giving its walls a fresh coat of paint, though! Following the advice of an interior designer, the bedrooms now have a more modern and relaxing feel, and the common rooms are more vibrant. The hostel purchased new beds and doubled its supply of pillows for the increased comfort of its guests.

HI-MONT-TREMBLANT



After much hard work, the hostel was awarded official Quality Customer Service Certification from the Bureau de normalisation du Québec in August 2012. This certification, along with the Hostelling International's HI-Quality program, demonstrates that the hostel is always seeking to improve and offer high quality services to its guests, so as to exceed their expectations.

HI-NIAGARA FALLS



This year the common areas underwent an extreme makeover to maximize their use. The kitchen floor was redone, new sinks were added, and storage spaces and the island were enlarged. New tables and chairs were built for the dining room, thus doubling its seating capacity.

HI-OTTAWA



This year, HI-Ottawa upgraded its inner courtyard by extending the patio, adding two stages and sprucing up the entrance to its bar, Mugshots, to attract more people. Thanks to improved promotional efforts at the local level, sales and events hosted at Mugshots increased dramatically. Guests can now enjoy the local Ottawa arts culture on-site and in jail!

HI-TORONTO



To facilitate the booking process, HI-Toronto implemented RoomMaster.net, a real-time reservation system. The hostel also introduced weekend rates and reduced its number of private rooms from 14 to 3 during peak season, which resulted in a record-breaking 5,000 overnights in one month! HI-Toronto won three awards this year: Best Staff from Hostelworld, Best Hostel in North America from HostelBookers and Best Alternative Accommodation from TripAdvisor.

HI-MONTRÉAL ST-ANTOINE



In April 2012, the St. Lawrence Youth Hostels opened a second Hostelling International hostel in a rented building on St-Antoine Street West, just a few steps from the main address on Mackay Street. This new property, named HI-Montréal St-Antoine, was designed to welcome travellers in times when HI-Montréal was fully booked.

With energy, creativity and efficiency, the HI-Montréal team established a quality accommodation, worthy of HI standards. However, it took time before all these efforts paid off. It wasn't until July and August that travellers came in greater numbers to the HI-Montréal St-Antoine hostel.

Despite great satisfaction of its guests, the hostel could not make up for its losses at the start of the season. Many factors beyond management's control influenced the fate of the hostel's future, including a greater range in the city's accommodation offering coupled with a decrease in tourists visiting Montréal.

Next year, the energy and efforts of the HI-Montréal team will be devoted to maintaining and guaranteeing a superior quality experience at a single address: 1030 Mackay Street.

ACTIVITIES PROGRAM

The hostels of the Québec-Ontario Region are not simply a place to stay. Much more, they offer a wide range of activities that allow travellers to discover the main tourist attractions (of course) and above all, the local culture, as well as places and events that are off the beaten track. These activities are unique opportunities to meet and interact with people, and they are the very foundation of our hostels' unique dynamics.



HI-MONTRÉAL

The sunset photo walk on Sainte-Hélène island is the newest addition to the hostel's highly popular program that includes pub crawls, a Mount Royal and poutine walk, and bike tours, just to name a few.

HI-MONT-TREMBLANT

The hot and dry summer was perfect for swimming and canoeing on Lake Moore right behind the hostel. The hostel also offers more than affordable ski packages for snow and speed lovers.



HI-NIAGARA FALLS

This year, the hostel set up a whole new program to entice those travellers who'd mainly come to see the falls into extending their stay. The region has a great deal to offer, and the most popular activity was without question the bike tour to the picturesque village of Niagara-on-the-Lake with stops at the vineyards en route. The hostel's weekly festive BBQs also drew many people!

HI-OTTAWA

The Karaoke Hip Hop and Open Mic nights at Mugshots, the hostel's bar, were a big success this year, drawing both hostellers and local crowds alike. Indeed, Mugshots is becoming a big player on Ottawa's music scene. The Karaoke Hip Hop Night was even featured on the CTV morning show and attracted a lot of local media attention.



HI-TORONTO

The hostel hired a programming coordinator who established an impressive activities program that was much appreciated. It would not have been possible without the army of volunteers she recruited to run the highly varied activities—there are up to four a day! Activities include pub crawls, a graffiti tour, a scavenger hunt on Toronto Island, baseball games, a visit to the Steam Whistle Brewery, parties at the hostel, festivals, movie nights, and the list goes on...



THE HOSTELS STATISTICS



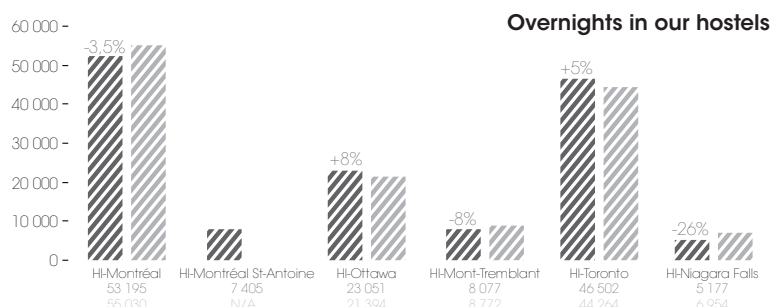
OVERNIGHTS

203 745

Overnights in the Québec-Ontario Region

1 35 002

Overnights in the association's hostels



OUR TRAVELLERS

33%

Canadian travellers in the Québec-Ontario region.

47%

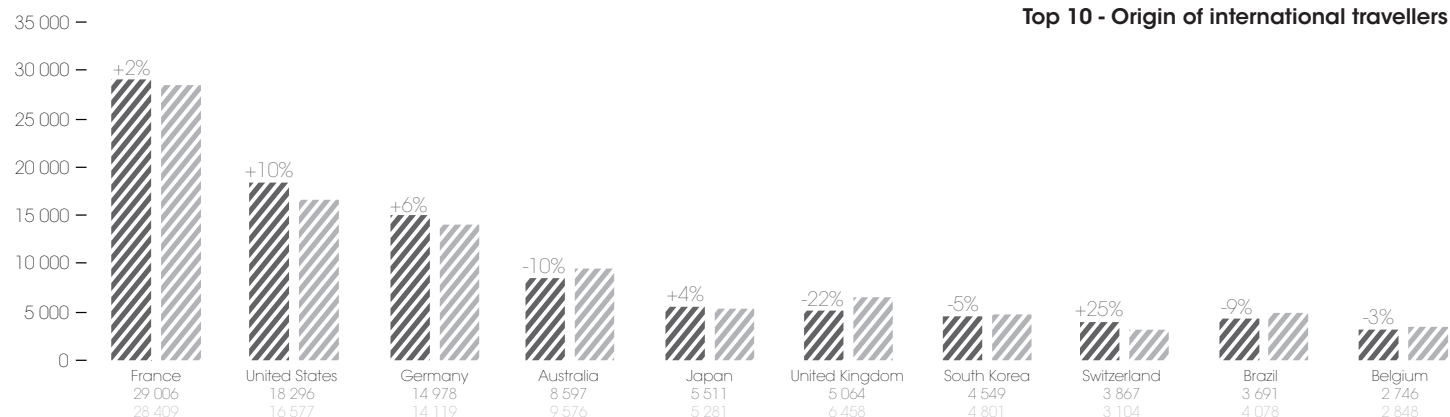
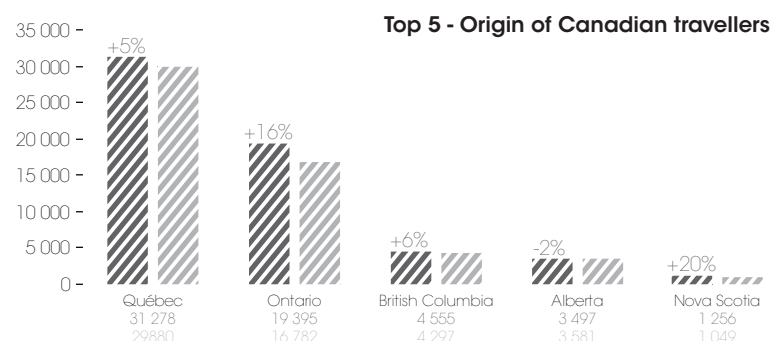
Proportion of Canadian travellers from Québec

10 000

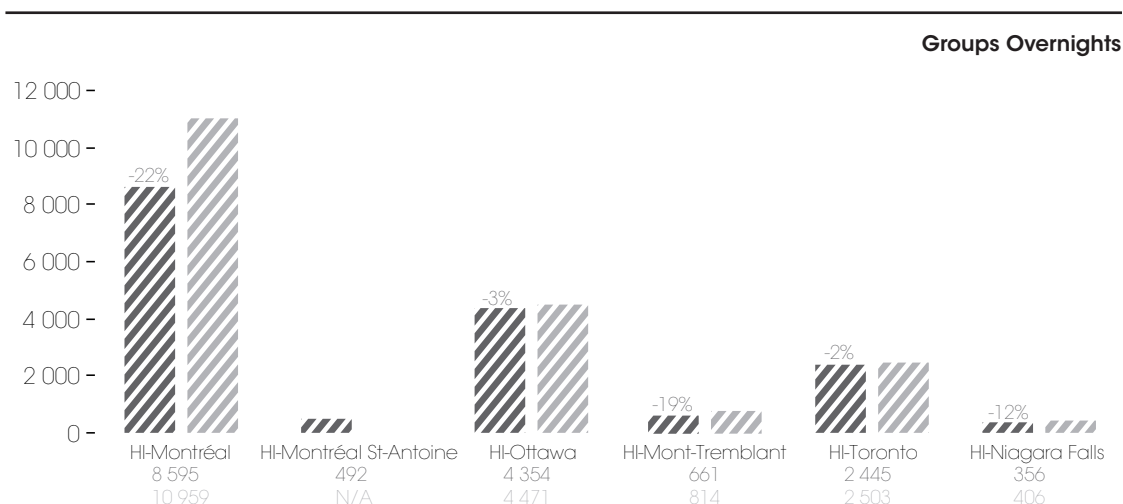
Rise of overnights by Canadians compared to last year.

67%

International travellers in the Québec-Ontario region.



GROUPS



Two hostels joined the group service in 2012:

HI-Ottawa in December 2011

HI-Montréal St-Antoine between May and October 2012

Compared to the previous year, the group occupancy rate remained relatively stable, with the exception of HI-Montréal, which saw a drop of more than 2,000 overnights.

ONLINE PRESENCE

This year was marked by the launch of our new national website, hihostels.ca. With improved navigation and better user experience, it aims at providing a more direct access to each hostel's profile page. Each hostel, except for Ottawa, also has its own individual address: hostellingmontreal.com, hostellingtremblant.com, hostellingtoronto.com and hostellingniagara.com. Traffic on these websites experienced a significant drop, which will require targeted efforts in the year to come.

Third-party websites, such as hostelworld.com and hostelbookers.com, are also increasingly used by all our hostels as booking platforms. As of this year, HI-Montréal, HI-Toronto, HI-Ottawa and HI-Niagara Falls additionally joined booking.com, one of the fastest growing reservation websites. All these websites have reached a commendable position on search engines, which was felt by a growth in the bookings they generated.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Each hostel now interacts with new and previous travellers via their own Facebook page. These are managed by the activity coordinator of each hostel, creating a greater synergy between the travellers and the events happening at the hostel. Our Facebook communities bring together close to 9,000 fans with whom we exchange on a daily basis.

	Website traffic (unique visitors)	
	2011	2012
hihostels.ca	742 330	682 405
hostellingmontreal.com	72 548	68 689
hostellingtoronto.com	54 475	45 156
hostellingniagara.com	11 396	10 907
hostellingtremblant.com	19 142	19 460

MEMBERS & PARTNERSHIPS

NEWSLETTER: NOMAD

Thanks to our newsletter, NOMAD, we are able to keep in touch with our members on a regular basis. Its design was revised in fall 2011 with the goal of providing more information and making it a travel reference for our members. Throughout the year, four editions, each featuring a special destination, were sent to its 16,000 subscribers in Québec and Ontario.

PARTNERSHIPS AND VISIBILITY

This past year, we renewed several partnerships with organizations that share our values: Magazine Géotourisme, Piknic Electronik/Igloofest, MUTEK, Fantasia, Osheaga, Pop Montréal, Les Aventuriers voyageurs, and PVTistes.net, to name a few. For the first time, we took part in the Montréal Bicycle Show, where we distributed 500 HI maps of Canada and 450 promotional bags. Our challenge for the coming year: increase our promotional activities in Ontario.

CAMPUS PRESENCE

Students being one of our most important target markets, we maintained our presence at tourism fairs on various campuses, including Collège Ahuntsic and Concordia and McGill universities.

TRAVEL TALKS

Three travel talks were organized in Montréal with the aim of strengthening our community of travellers. These events were well attended and generated a lot of enthusiasm. This confirmed their relevance and has encouraged us to expand our calendar of talks to be offered in the upcoming year—in both Ontario and Québec.

NEW PARTNER: GALLAND LAURENTIDES

At the beginning of June, a new partnership was formed with Galland Laurentides, whereby the intercity bus company now offers a 25% discount to HI members on roundtrip tickets between Montréal and Mont-Tremblant. Access to HI-Mont-Tremblant has been made easier and affordable, thereby increasing the value of an HI membership.

NEW POINT OF SALE: COOP UQAM

As of spring 2012, the Jasmin bookstore of Coop UQAM became a point of sale for HI membership cards. This new point of sale is an indispensable asset to be able to reach this very important population of young people.

Active Members on September 30th 2012					
Adult	Life	Junior	Group	TOTAL	Variation
8 633	1 861	1 233	176	11 903	- 12%

Membership Cards Sales between October 1st 2011 and September 30th 2012

Adult	Life	Internat.	TOTAL	Variation adult	Variation internat.
3 986	111	4 550	8 647	+ 4,9%	+ 8,9%

13%

Proportion of members who bought their membership card or renewed online

COMMUNITY LINKS

HI-TORONTO

This past year, the hostel instituted «Let the world come to your class,» an educational program for school students in the city of Toronto. The program describes what hostelling is all about and shows youth that hostels are fun, safe and culturally enriching places. The program includes a tour of the facility, a question period with employees and travellers, lunch, and a multimedia art project.

HI-OTTAWA

The hostel got creative and welcomed two new events into its splendid courtyard: Cirque Bizarre – Festival for the Fabulous, and the Arboretum music festival. Both events were huge successes that allowed Ottawans to discover HI-Ottawa!

HI-NIAGARA FALLS

A partnership with the Ontario Firefighters' Association led to the creation of a training session at the hostel with firefighters, inspectors and volunteers.

HI-MONTRÉAL

In December 2011, HI-Montréal offered a day of volunteering at Moisson Montréal to prepare food baskets for distribution to needy families at Christmas.

HI-MONT-TREMBLANT

The hostel got involved in organizing the 2012 Ironman sporting event by recruiting volunteers for the event and offering accommodation to some of them.

INVOLVEMENT OF THE ADMINISTRATION

ON VARIOUS BOARDS OF DIRECTORS, COMMITTEES AND ROUND TABLE MEETINGS

OITS-Americas

Jacques Perreault - President

OITS

Louis Jolin - Coordinator of Alliance on Training and Research on Social and Responsible Tourism

Fondation Tourisme jeunesse

Jacques Perreault - President of the Board of Directors

CÉSÎM

Jacques Perreault - Tourism Sector Representative

CCHM

Isabelle Boyer - Board member

Kéroul

Louis Jolin - Advisory Committee

RESO Investments

Jacques Perreault - Social Economy Representative on the Funding Application Analysis and Recommendation Committee

Chantier de l'économie sociale

Louis Jolin - International Committee of the International Forum on Social Economy

IN HOSTELLING INTERNATIONAL CANADA

The St. Lawrence Youth Hostels Association represents HI-Canada in Québec and Ontario. As such, it is involved in several of the organization's committees at the national level:

The President's Forum

Louis Jolin, President et Benoît Legault, Vice-President

Council of Executive Directors

Jacques Perreault

Committee on Membership

Marie-Eve Lavoie and Jacques Perreault

Committee on the website development of HI-C

Gaël Chartrand

Comité Quality Assurance Standards

Vincent Bérubé and Isabelle Boyer

WE ARE ALSO MEMBERS OF OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

Tourisme Toronto / Tourisme Ottawa / Tourisme Montréal / Tourisme Laurentides / Tourisme Mont-Tremblant (Chambre de commerce de Mont-Tremblant) / L'Association hôtelière du Grand Toronto / La Chambre de commerce de Niagara Falls / Regroupement économique et social du Sud-Ouest (RESO) / Culture Montréal / Regroupement Loisir et Sport du Québec / Conseil Québécois du loisir

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT POLICY

In April 2012, the St. Lawrence Youth Hostels adopted a sustainable development policy that is rooted in the sustainable development policies and practices of Hostelling International, Hostelling International-Canada, and the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC), all of which are founded on the three pillars of sustainable development linked to human activities: society, economy and environment.

COMMUNITY ORIENTATION

Foster learning about the world around us by facilitating enriching interactions through our offer of accommodations and complementary services, as well as by deepening important and dynamic ties within and throughout our surrounding communities.

RESPONSIBILITY

Evaluate and continuously improve upon our social, economic and environmental practices in order to raise awareness, educate and encourage our community of travellers, members, partners and employees to embrace responsible approaches. The results of our activities must also be communicated transparently.

NETWORK LONGEVITY

Anticipate change and adapt to ensure our future viability, by relying on the considerable expertise that our network possesses in several areas of sustainable development.

HI-MONTRÉAL

The hostel implemented composting, a pilot project that has now become a well-established part of the routine of both travellers and staff. A partnership was also established with Cadet Roussell Farm to use HI-Montréal as a drop-off point for organic vegetable baskets to be collected by residents of the community.

HI-NIAGARA FALLS

Reusable grocery bags are now available for travellers to do their grocery shopping. No more disposable plastic bags at HI-Niagara Falls!

HI-OTTAWA

HI-Ottawa also began a composting regimen in June. In addition, major environmental audits were carried out on the historic building to assess its energy consumption and energy loss, so that remedial actions can be planned accordingly.

HI-TORONTO

The "Let the world come to your class" program opened the hostel to the local community by giving a taste for travel and discovering to elementary school children. The hostel also implemented a system of clothing exchange between travellers (an Australian will probably not need his winter coat once he returns home) and the Cavern Bar & Bistro procured as much supplies as possible from local suppliers to reduce the carbon footprint of its food.

HI-MONT-TREMBLANT

This year, HI-Mont-Tremblant created a vegetable and herb garden, which allowed travellers to cook with fresh ingredients. The hostel also installed a clothesline to take advantage of the warm summer days and save energy!

OUR TEAMS

A heartfelt thanks to our nearly 100 employees, interns and volunteers, who contributed to the success of this past year. A special mention is deserved to a select few, for whom 2011-2012 marked an important milestone in their contribution to the hostelling movement:

CHRISTINE HAYHURST

25 ans - Accounting

BENJAMIN TANG

10 ans - HI-Ottawa

GREG BROCKMANN

15 ans - Manager HI-Ottawa

We'd also like to take this opportunity to express our profound appreciation for Louis Jolin, President of our Association, who after 22 years on the Board of Directors, striving to promote youth tourism and our mission, has decided not to renew his mandate this year.

Thank you, Louis, for your passion and your vision!

AFFILIATED HOSTELS

The Québec-Ontario region represents 10 affiliated hostels who take the network's mission to heart.

68 743

Overnights of affiliated hostels in 2011-2012

HI-SOUTH ALGONQUIN

(Maynooth, ON)

HI-ESPRIT RAFTING

(Davidson, QC)

HI-LA TUQUE

HI-TROIS-RIVIÈRES

HI-QUÉBEC

HI-RIVIÈRE-DU-LOUP

64 511

Overnights of affiliated hostels in 2010-2011

HI-SEA SHACK

(Ste-Anne-des-Monts, QC)

HI-GRIFFON AVENTURE

(Anse-au-Griffon, QC)

HI-PETITE-NATION

(St-André-Avellin, QC)

HI-ÎLES-DE-LA-MADELEINE



GASPÉSIE HAS THE WIND IN ITS SAILS!

The 2011-2012 year was a busy one for both Gaspésie hostels.

HI-Sea Shack has much to celebrate: the hostel was crowned Company of the Year by the Chamber of Commerce of the Haute-Gaspésie. It also completely renovated its main building to provide a new living room with windows, a new indoor bar called La Cale, and a new and bigger hot tub!

HI-Griffon Aventure opened its new bar this year, called The Barbar, which was a hot spot throughout the summer, holding concerts given by local artists. A new kitchen cabinet was also installed in each cottage to enhance visitor comfort. And to cap it off, HI-Griffon Aventure signed partnerships with some 10 local businesses!