



HI CANADA

ANNUAL REPORT

2019-2020

ST. LAWRENCE YOUTH HOSTELS ASSOCIATION
Hostelling International Canada – Québec and Ontario Region



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EXECUTIVE BOARD

FEB 2019 TO FEB 2020

PETER HARRISON, Chair A
Vice President, Canada
CPCS

BRUNO BUSSIÈRES, Officer A
Research Adviser
École de technologie supérieure

VINCENT BÉRUBÉ, Vice-President C
Manager
HI Rivière-Du-Loup

MARIE-CLAUDE RACINE, Officer A
Director of Communications and Marketing
Estérel Resort

CHARLÈNE BARON, Treasurer A
Director
Montréal CAA - Québec Travel Center

SOPHIE GODIN, Officer A
Layer
Sarrazin + Plourde

JACQUES PERREAU, Secretary B
Executive Director
St. Lawrence Youth Hostels Association
HI Canada – Québec and Ontario Region
Youth Travel Foundation

GABRIELA SAUTER, Officer A
Senior Project Manager
Infrastructure Ontario

GABRIELLE CARON, Officer B
Experience Curator
HI Montréal

The Association recognizes two (2) categories of members:

The **first category**, including the full members, is divided in to three (3) classes “ A ”, “ B ”, “ C ”.

- Class “ A ” members are holders of the individual membership card of the Hostelling International Canada Youth Hostels who reside within the territory of Québec or Ontario.
- Class “ B ” members are person who work as permanent employees of the Association.
- Class “ C ” members are composed of one delegate per youth hostel affiliated by memorandum of understanding.

The **second category** includes non-voting service members, such as group card holders or junior card.

MISSION

“To build a community of conscious travellers who share a greater understanding of people, places and cultures.”

VISION

Create a more tolerant, peaceful world, left better than it was found.

VALUES

Open-mindedness

We welcome people and ideas from all places. We believe everyone should be free to express their point of view. We encourage the sharing of knowledge, experience and beliefs.

Togetherness

We believe experiences are better lived when shared with others in friendship and understanding. We believe in collaboration and the power of the collective: all for one and one for all.

Mindfulness

We're on a mission to leave the world better than found. We raise consciousness about a better way of travelling, to being thankful and respectful of the people and the places that make each moment unique and memorable.





CHAIRMAN’S MESSAGE

We began the year by completing our four-year strategic plan for fulfilling our mission of building a community of conscious travelers who share a greater understanding of people, places and cultures.

Over the past four years, we have concentrated on four pillars of our strategic plan:

- Improving the guest experience;
- Creating a sense of belonging to the HI brand in our communities;
- Ensuring the financial viability of our association;
- Taking advantage of opportunities that favour development.

The association began focusing more actively on the plans for the expansion of HI Toronto, while also continuing to support our network of affiliated youth hostels in Québec and Ontario and investing in improving the guest experience in our 3 hostels.

In the spring of 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic drastically altered our immediate priorities, with the travel and tourism industries among the worst-hit sectors. The association has, for the time being, managed to weather the crisis, in large part thanks to our talented and devoted staff and to the leadership in place at the time.

We are pleased to have been able to support our local communities during the crisis by continuing to provide accommodation to those who have needed it and who continue to need it today. Although we currently expect the effects of COVID to last for a number of months if not years, we believe that the association has now risen to its greatest challenge and will be able to continue fulfilling its mission as the pandemic gradually eases.



This year there were 13 board meetings as well as a number of sub-committee meetings. I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to the members of the Board of Directors for all the volunteer hours they devoted to our association during this most unusual year. I would also like to thank our Canadian and international partners, as well as all our staff and affiliates, without whom we could simply not carry out our mission.

Peter Harrison

Chairman of the Board of Directors



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



It is with pride that we hereby present the 2019-2020 Annual Report for the St-Lawrence Youth Hostels. I say pride, because despite the pandemic which has heavily impacted our operations for more than half of the past year, our association remains active.

PILOT PROJECT POSTPONED

The 2019-2020 financial year began with a lower surplus than the previous two years. To put a stop to this decline, we launched a pilot project and created the position of Revenue Manager. Within a short period of time, revenues increased, and the situation picked up. Although initially planned to last for a year from mid-January onwards, the pilot project was in fact brought to an abrupt halt by the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, which forced our association to cease operations at all three hostels at the end of March 2020. They were only allowed to reopen three months later, and during the closure we knew neither how long our activities would be suspended, nor the impact this would have on our finances. We were in the middle of renovation projects in our hostels, were preparing to move our regional office, and had over \$ 275,000 in client deposits needing to be reimbursed. With 68% of visitors to our hostels coming from outside of Canada, when the pandemic led to Canadian borders closing, our financial reserve rapidly diminished. We needed to find new revenue streams and we set to the task immediately.

FINANCIAL MEASURES AND REORGANIZATION

Despite the attractive offers of government support, we were only able to qualify for the 75% wage subsidy. This help was beneficial and allowed us to protect key staff members who were essential for the process of reopening the hostels.

Within six weeks, among other things, we rented our building to the City of Toronto as a shelter for the homeless, reorganized our finances by re-amortizing our mortgages, and we obtained a new loan on the Toronto hostel. We were also granted a 6-month moratorium on capital payments on various mortgage loans. The 6-month break from regional contributions to the national budget was also, without question, very timely.

During the time the hostels were closed, 75 of our colleagues were temporarily laid off and 24 remained in post to ensure our association's survival. We were thus able to secure our buildings, to communicate with our members and our human resources department spent time advising employees on their benefits to make sure no one lost out. We also managed the wage subsidies and other administrative duties. This is, in short, how we remained resilient during the first wave of the pandemic.

REOPENING

The hostel reopening in July 2020 was short-lived; at the end of the financial year, a government decree obliged us to close the Montréal hostel once again. Ontario's restrictions being different from those of Québec, however, HI Ottawa Jail was able to remain open.

This second wave of the pandemic will have its share of impacts on our association in the coming year, but we can already guarantee that we will work as hard, if not harder, to carry out our mission and to rise to the challenges that await us.

HI CANADA

On another note, life within the HI Canada partnership continues even during the pandemic.

In my Executive Director's Message from last year, I wrote, "The alignment of operations at HI Canada continues to guide the work of our teams and to obtain a more concrete response for young travellers in relation to their expectations of us. I cannot say as much about the alignment of governance, which has still not occurred, even though our region submitted a request about this matter to members of the Canadian federation in 2015. This non-alignment of governance is starting to affect the alignment of operations, which was undertaken nearly four years ago." At the moment of writing this year's message, in October 2020, I can report that the national level did launch an initiative to create a new, two-region association model, in preparation for the possible merger of the Atlantic (HIC – ATL) and Pacific and Mountain Regions (HIC – PM). Our request was simple; that the two remaining regions have parity when it comes to decision-making and in the selection of the Board of Directors for the national level, despite not being the same size.

We understand that a merger of these final two remaining members of HI Canada – when there have been 12 members in the past – is difficult to achieve, since their corporate cultures are quite different. Aligned governance would have been welcomed, but that is now old history. We do, however, all share the same desire to offer high quality accommodation to young travelers and HI Members, and to build a community of conscious travelers. This year will tell whether the new, two-member association model will take shape and create new momentum within this rather tired federation.

Lastly, I would like to offer my thanks to all board members and operations teams whose contributions go to making our association a positive place to live and work, despite the challenging times we are currently experiencing.

Thank you!

Jacques Perreault

Executive Director



HI CANADA - QUÉBEC AND ONTARIO REGION

How to compare 2019-2020 to previous years? This year's results are completely disproportionate. In the past, to justify fluctuations in overnight stays in our hostels, we would spend time analyzing a number of factors which contribute to people choosing, or not, our hostels: the exchange rate, important international events, marketing initiatives, the political situation and so on. This year, the analysis is very straightforward: COVID-19 is the one and only cause of decline in overnight stays.

If it hadn't been for the virus, the odds are that in 2019-2020 we would have had an excellent occupation rate. The total overnight stays for the entire region during the first five months of the year showed a 5.6% increase on 2018-2019 figures. Unfortunately, however, the pandemic and associated travel restrictions and health measures drastically impacted our hostels' performance from the moment it broke out. In March 2020, our overnight stays dropped by 56.4%, and continued to plummet to almost 100% in April and May.

It is important to note that in Ontario, youth hostels have been able to remain in operation throughout the pandemic. In Québec, however, establishments classified as Youth Hostels by the CITQ were forced by the provincial government to cease all activity between March 23rd and June 25th, 2020.

During the 2nd trimester, hostels in large urban centres** performed better than regional hostels (an 11% decrease in overnight stays as opposed to a 28% decrease). This difference can be explained by travelers who had to go through the larger airport cities on their way back home as borders gradually closed. On another note, HI regional hostels in Québec and Ontario performed proportionately better than hostels in large urban centre for the 4th trimester (a 56.7% decrease in overnight stays versus an 86% decrease). This is due to the fact that travelers and holidaymakers stayed away from large cities over the summer, preferring the wide-open spaces and nature of our regional areas.

* Excluding, for comparison purposes, the 651 overnights of HI Mont-Tremblant made in October 2018 before it was sold in the fall of 2018

** HI Montréal, HI Québec, HI Ottawa Jail et HI Toronto

VARIATION OF OVERNIGHT STAYS COMPARED TO 2018 -2019 FOR THE QUÉBEC AND ONTARIO REGION

1 st trimester*	2 nd trimester	3 rd trimester	4 th trimester	TOTAL
3,6%	-12,20%	-99,10%	-79,80%	-58,50%

DECREASE IN OVERNIGHT STAYS FOR EACH PROPERTY HOSTEL

HI Montréal	HI Ottawa Jail	HI Toronto
↓ 56,5%	↓ 51,7%	↓ 60,7%

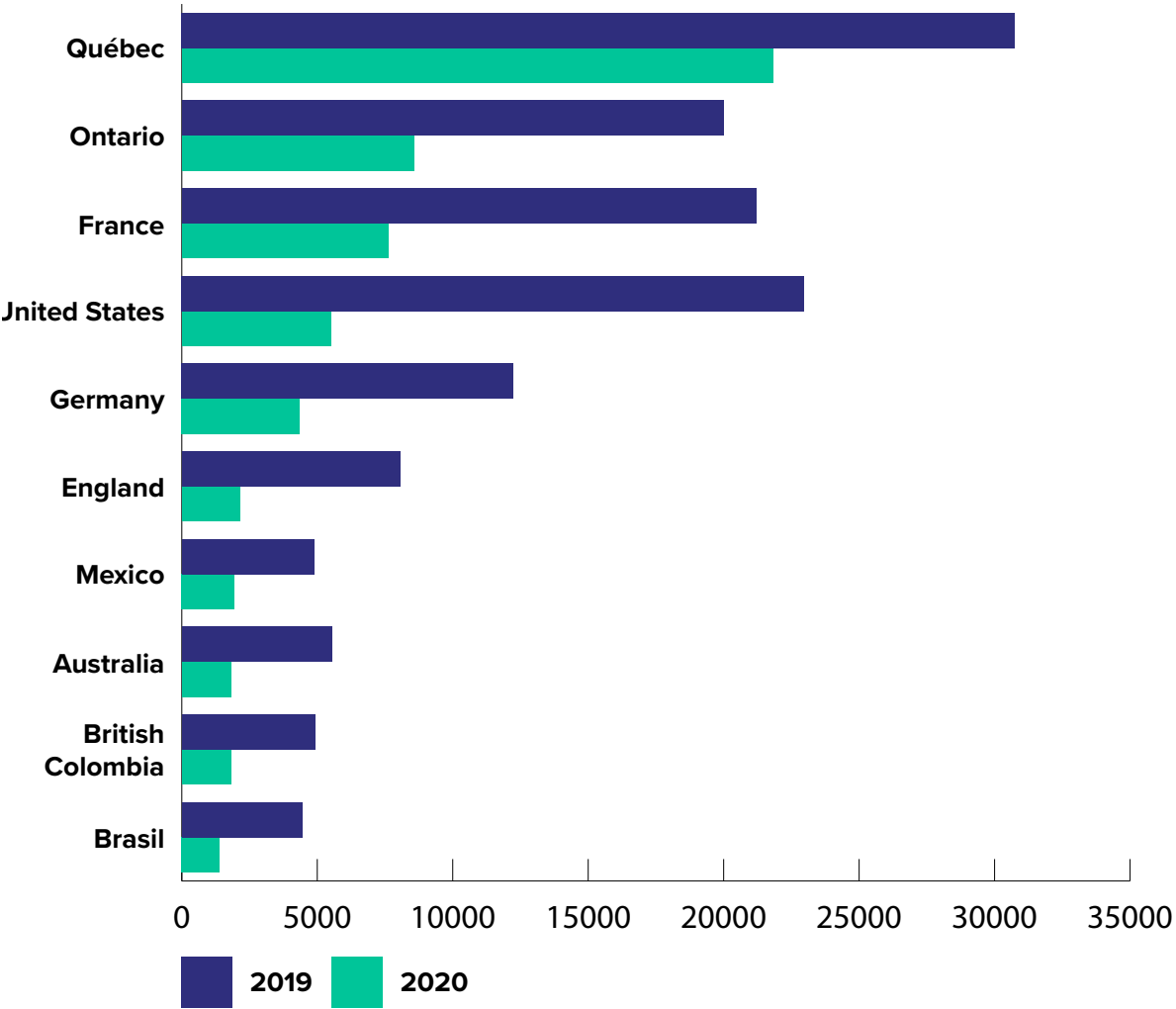
Groups

Each year, group stays represent approximately 20% of overnight stays for the region's three association-owned hostels (HI Montréal, HI Toronto and HI Ottawa Jail). This year, these three properties only achieved 4535 group overnight stays, a 70% decrease on 2018-2019 figures. Several groups chose to postpone their stay to a later date, representing a total of

1360 group overnight stays. The association had to reimburse booking deposits for groups who were unable to change the date of their stay, leading to nearly \$150,000 in group booking deposits being refunded during this financial year.

Top 10 Markets

The region's top 10 markets remain unchanged from last year, with the exception of certain countries whose ranking is different this year.



Canadian Members

ON SEPTEMBER 30TH FOR THE QUÉBEC AND ONTARIO REGION

	2019	2020
Adult	2933	1469
Lifetime	2667	2710
Group	83	54
Junior	771	666
TOTAL	6454	4899





PROPERTY HOSTELS

2019-2020 will go down in the annals of the association; never have we experienced a health crisis like this affecting our industry in such a substantial way. While the first two trimesters of the year showed growth in overnight stays, the final two trimesters reported not just a mere slow-down, but a dramatic plunge in overnight stays. Even the SARS crisis at its peak in March 2003 only caused a 13% drop in overnight stays, which at the time was considered to be catastrophic.

In spite of everything, though, let this not detract from the fact that the association’s youth hostels carried out a number of renovation and other projects before being abruptly stopped in their tracks last March.

Online Reputation

The association uses Review Pro to analyze HI Montréal, HI Ottawa Jail and HI Toronto hostels’ online reputations. For the last financial year, the three hostels obtained an average index of 83.7%*, a drop of 2.3 points from the previous year. This performance is to be celebrated bearing in mind the current circumstances.

HI MONTRÉAL: 88,9% +0,2

HI OTTAWA JAIL: 81,8% +2,5

HI TORONTO: 80,4% +4,2

* Including the periods of closure

Improvements to facilities and other projects

HI MONTRÉAL

- Six of the hostel’s 52 rooms were completely refurbished.
- A coworking space was also set up to provide our community of nomadic workers with a suitable working environment.
- A collaboration between the hostel management and a team of local cabinetmakers led to the design of a new type of bed. The new beds are built into self-supporting, wooden cubes and equipped with a reading lamp, electrical socket (with integrated USB port), storage net and curtain. These revamped beds are cheaper, more ecological and targeted to the specific needs of our guests.
- A new reservation and bed management platform (GuestCentrix) was installed in December 2019.



HI OTTAWA

- The hostel’s most-used bathrooms – those on floors 4, 6 and 8 – were totally refurbished in line with the prison’s aesthetics and colours. To our knowledge, these bathrooms had not received an investment of this magnitude since the early 1990’s.
- The cells on level 8 were brightened up with a fresh coat of paint.
- The team had the time to start, but not complete, the kitchen refurbishment project. The contractor was able to take out all the old appliances and counters and put in the new plumbing and lighting installations before the pandemic brought the project to a halt.
- A new laundry room for travelers was created.
- The luggage storage area was given an overhaul.
- An agreement was reached with the City of Ottawa to allow better management of access to our property between our building and the neighbouring SAW gallery.

HI TORONTO

- Twelve rooms were given an upgrade using a standardized colour code; white with a hint of yellow, as well as letters painted on the wall above the bed to facilitate travelers finding the right bed quickly.
- New warm, lightweight duvets were added to all rooms.
- New, more efficient and standardized signage, also more consistent with our brand image, has been put up throughout the hostel.
- Hostel security has been improved by replacing the previous magnetic keycard system with a new contact-less RFID system. This means that travelers no longer need to come to reception to reset their keycard, and each card now has a longer lifetime.
- Free breakfast with table service has been replaced by a buffet-style breakfast.



Programming

Before the health crisis broke out, our hostels’ activity programming was going well. A number of popular activities from previous years were fine-tuned and kept in the programming, while other new ones were added.

HI MONTRÉAL

- Community meals were increased in regularity from once to twice a week, with the most popular recipes being enriched with the use of local and seasonal products.
- Since large, organized groups were sometimes hard to integrate into regular activity programming, dedicated karaoke evenings were organized for them.

HI OTTAWA

- The hostel continued to offer and improve on the historical visit of the prison. More than 40% of all hostel clients participated in this visit during the first two trimesters. The guided tour of the prison was welcomed by guests at a time when many other of the city’s attractions were closed.

HI TORONTO

- Volunteers from Germany, Scotland, Australia, and South America contributed to organizing activities at the hostel. They organized guided tours of different areas of the city, such as Kensington Market, the Distillery District and Graffiti Alley, all of which were greatly appreciated by guests.
- Volunteers also helped travelers over the Christmas period to forget that they were far from home by organizing a Christmas feast and a much-appreciated, Canadian-style Christmas celebration.

Unfortunately, the health and safety precautions required by the pandemic brought an end to the hostels’ Spring-Summer activity programming.

Team Spirit

It was a heartbreaking experience for our teams to see their hostels empty almost overnight. As an example, HI Toronto went from full capacity to less than ten guests in under a week. With borders closed and flights canceled, most travelers had to scramble to find a return flight, as did several international volunteer staff members.

Right from the beginning of the pandemic, our teams in all departments demonstrated impressive adaptability. They were trained in new hygiene standards and on the strict protocols to follow during health emergencies. They placed the health of their colleagues and guest travelers at the centre of their professional concerns.

Above and beyond the numerous temporary lay-offs – challenging from a personal standpoint yet unfortunately necessary – the association experienced a few other changes within its teams.

HI MONTRÉAL

- When the Hostel Manager took a few months’ parental leave, other team members played musical chairs. Even though temporary in nature, this reshuffle brought a breath of fresh air to the departments involved, not to mention a whirlwind of innovative new ideas that are very promising for the organization going forward.
- The francization program for hostel employees has been renewed for a second year. Particularly popular with housekeeping team members from immigrant backgrounds, the program has enjoyed regular participation and keen interest. The programme’s impact is undeniable: participants make real progress and their pride in their improved French is tangible!

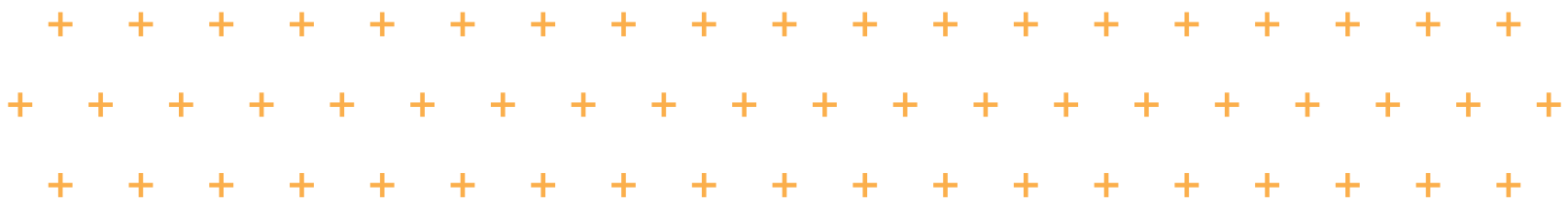
HI OTTAWA

- The HI Ottawa Jail Assistant Manager was transferred to the association’s new position of Revenue Manager. This pilot project will be evaluated during the winter of 2021.
- A former hostel employee who went on to complete a master’s degree in criminology offered volunteer hours to take travelers on guided tours of the prison.

HI TORONTO

- The Hostel Manager took on the role of Community Outreach Coordinator, while the Assistant Manager became Hostel Manager.
- Since the hostel is being rented out by the City of Toronto for a few more months, all hostel staff were laid off permanently in September 2020.
- The one exception to this is the Community Outreach Coordinator, formerly Hostel Manager, who has stayed on to liaise with the City of Toronto, our building renter since May 2020.

During the time our hostels were temporarily closed during the pandemic, staff teams worked at reduced capacity to maintain a presence in the hostels.





Temporary Closure

The direct consequences of the crisis, such as border closures and restrictions on interregional travel, stripped our hostels of their travelers, both international and local.

On March 19th 2020, HI Ottawa Jail closed its doors temporarily, unable to attain a sufficiently profitable occupation rate. HI Toronto followed in its footsteps four days later on March 23rd, the same day that HI Montréal temporarily ceased its activities, forced by a provincial decree stating that all non-essential businesses had to close.

Ontario youth hostels were not on the list of non-essential accommodation which had to close during the lock-down in that province.

Number of days of closure

HI MONTRÉAL

100 days

March 23rd to June 30th 2020 incl.

HI OTTAWA

102 days

March 19th through June 28th, 2020 incl.

HI TORONTO

192 days +

March 23rd through Sept 30th, 2020 incl.*

* The period of closure continues beyond September 30th, which is the final day of the financial year covered by this annual report

Revenue Management 2020: A Tale of Opposites

The second quarter of the fiscal year saw the creation of the Hostel Revenue Manager position to oversee rate and yield policies for HI Ottawa Jail and HI Toronto. The original strategy was to focus on maximizing occupancy in dorms using competitive pricing and products that set us apart from the competition. The addition of extra co-ed 10- and 14-bed dormitory products in Toronto allowed the hostel to move very comfortably and dynamically in either price direction based on demand. Private room rates were increased to align more competitively with similar budget hotels in the downtown core.

HI Ottawa Jail introduced more co-ed 8-bed dormitory rooms, which also allowed for ease of movement along the price line. The demand in Ottawa during the first quarter was still quite high, which resulted in our Single Jail Cell (niche product) being aggressively priced and still falling well below any other

private option in the city. The combination of maximizing dormitory rooms for our target demographic, and pricing our private rooms to attract a wide variety of guests from across the market, allowed HI Ottawa Jail to thrive in the fall, and for Toronto to show very strong promise heading into the spring.

However, with the restrictions put in place for COVID-19, that strategy was re-evaluated; our remaining hostels that re-opened in the summer put a greater emphasis on the private room option. HI Montréal adapted to the situation by creating a Single Private Room that saw great success with an over 90% occupancy rate for the room type through July, August, and September. HI Ottawa Jail's large inventory of private cells also filled the need for guests to physically distance at an affordable price point.



Reopening

HI Ottawa Jail reopened at the end of June 2020 for the summer season. The same was possible for HI Montréal, the provincial government having lifted the obligatory shutdown of Québec youth hostels on June 25th.

In collaboration with the head office, the teams on the ground devised a solid action plan which met and exceeded the required health standards, as they had done during the first wave of the pandemic. All staff members were then asked to formally commit to respecting and upholding the rules and other safety procedures in place.

The hostels also continued to adapt to the new context by changing their offering, making more private accommodation available and reducing the common areas. Their priority was ensuring peace of mind and health; after all, community is also about taking care of each other and taking some distance. We are happy to report that these measures have been successful, with not a single case of COVID-19 being reported in any of our establishments.

For its part, HI Toronto met a different fate; it was able to reach out and help the City of Toronto which was urgently looking for places to shelter a growing, vulnerable clientele. On April 30th, 2020, the city rented the entire HI Toronto building for a 3-month period, giving the team in place but a few days to empty it of its contents. These initial three months have since been extended and at the moment of writing, the lease has been prolonged until January 1st, 2021. The association is very proud to be able to collaborate with the city's efforts to help the most needy in society at this time of pandemic.

The HI Montréal, HI Ottawa Jail and HI Toronto hostel management teams would like to thank each and every staff member for their unconditional efforts during the crisis and commends their resilience and team spirit.

The association still plans to sell HI Toronto and to find another larger building in which to implement the hostel expansion project.



MARKETING

Branding and communications

LAUNCH OF A NATIONAL BRAND TEMPLATE MANAGER

In January, a new brand template manager called Marvia was launched across the network. This platform, recommended by our colleagues at StayOkay, offers a variety of branded templates that can be used for printed or digital assets. The objective is to increase brand consistency across the country, while providing our teams with an easy-to-use internal tool.

SIGNAGE AND SAFETY MEASURES COMMUNICATIONS

In preparation for the reopening of our hostels in the summer of 2020, the marketing team produced new communication pieces to inform guests of the improved safety measures in place at our hostels. Our website was updated to communicate these measures, while new posters were produced to inform in-house guests of what we were doing, and what they should be doing, to ensure the safety of other guests and our teams. Finally, our hostel email communications were also updated.

All of our safety measures can be found here:
hihostels.ca/staysafe

NEW NATIONAL GRAPHIC DESIGNER

In February, the Pacific Mountain and Québec and Ontario regional associations hired a national graphic designer as a joint resource. This new position aims to strengthen the brand's visual identity and ensure consistency across the country.

“IT’S ON US” PROMO

In the summer of 2020, HI Ottawa Jail benefited greatly from a promotion launched by Ottawa Tourism. This promotion offered a \$100 Visa gift card or a \$100 discount on arrival for any stay of two nights or more. This offer was redeemed more than 200 times.

Website and Digital Platforms

NEW BOOKING ENGINE FOR HI MONTRÉAL

Following the implementation of GuestCentrix, HI Montréal migrated to a new booking platform that provides a better user experience and new features such as the use of promotional codes, package deals and private-to-dorm functionality. This new platform is part of our efforts to drive more bookings on our website rather than on OTAs.

NATIONAL WEBSITE

The hihostels.ca website experienced a significant drop in traffic due to the closure of the majority of hostels in the spring of 2020. This was accompanied by a drop in demand caused by travel bans and border closures. Search engines generated 44% of the website's traffic, while social networks generated 13% of the traffic, a 40% increase over last year.

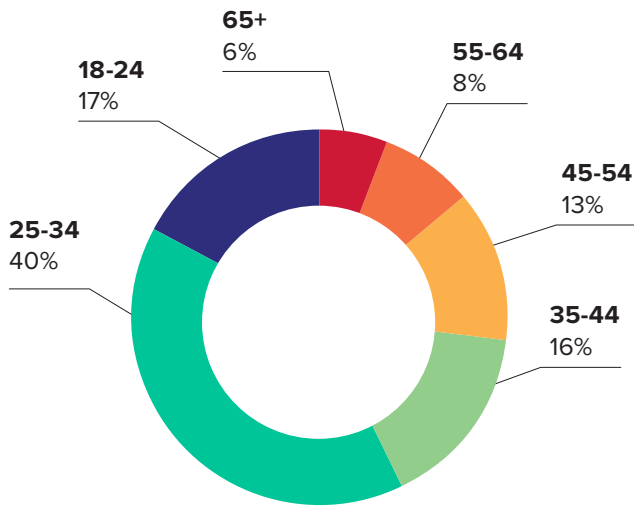
HIHOSTELS.CA WEBSITE

520,000 users + (+29%)

713,000 sessions + (+32%)

1,475,000 page views + (+39%)

USER DEMOGRAPHICS



MAGAZINE AND CONTENT STRATEGIES

In light of the pandemic, we have had to adapt the editorial strategy of our magazine, newsletters and social networks to encourage travelers to stay at home first, and then to reassure them about staying in hostels. While the travel industry was on pause, it was important to remain relevant and to continue to interact with our community. Thanks to strong social advertising early in the year, we saw a 24% increase in users of the magazine as well as an increase in engagement with our content.

MAGAZINE HI CANADA

11,000+ users / month (+ 24%)

16,000+ page views / month (+ 8%)

43% of traffic generated by search engines

38% of the traffic generated by social media

MEDIA CONTENT

The marketing team worked with the Canadian digital content platform Narcity and the Québec digital content platform Urbania to promote hostelling to a young Canadian clientele. The article [Hommage aux rencontres improbables dans les auberges de jeunesse](#) highlighted the social dimension of hostels and was accompanied by a contest on Urbania's platforms. The Narcity article [Staying At Hostels While You Travel Is An Amazing Way To Experience Canada](#) promoted the perks of choosing hostels as an accommodation type in Canada. In total, the two articles recorded more than 12,000 page views.

In the spring, several media outlets reached out to find out how hostels were adapting their operations to cope with the pandemic. The HI Canada network was thus mentioned in articles from [La Presse](#), [Le Devoir](#) and [MC Globetrotteuse](#).

HUMAN RESOURCES

Our Employee Community in Figures

129 employees were on the payroll for the 2019-2020 financial year +114

40 employees worked for the association as of September 30th +80

22 volunteers and 1 intern at HI Montréal

5 volunteers at HI Toronto

SENIORITY

Average years of service in 2020 = 7 years and 7 months

Average years of service in 2019 = 2 years and 7 months

5-year increase due to many layoffs due to the pandemic.

Number of Employees per Establishment

	Sept. 2019	Sept. 2020
HI Montréal	38	16
HI Ottawa	24	12
HI Toronto	46	1
Head office	11	11
Membership	1	0
TOTAL	120	40

Hostelling Movement

HI Canada—Québec and Ontario Region would like to recognize and thank all employees working in the Canadian hostelling movement. We would like to take the opportunity to recognize the following people for their long-term involvement and contribution to the mission of Hostelling International.

CONTRIBUTION TO THE HOSTELLING MOVEMENT IN 2019-2020:

Philippe Messier – Front Desk Agent – HI Montréal: 5 years

Sara Hini – Front Desk Agent – HI Montréal: 5 years

Jeffrey Delgado – Revenue Manager – Regional Office: 5 years

Bruno Bussi res – Board Member: 5 years

Ga l Chartrand – Marketing Director: 15 years

Joyce Turton – Chief Accountant: 20 years

Isabelle Boyer – Deputy Executive Director: 20 years

Desmond Tibby – Community Outreach Coordinator – HI Toronto: 20 years

Nicolas Lemaire – Hostel Manager – HI Montr al: 20 years

Vincent B rub  – Board Member: 30 years

A World-Wide Pandemic That Shook the Industry

Last winter found the human resources department working on two major projects; they were getting ready for the second edition of **HI Connect** (a work experience initiative in HI hostels internationally) and the first edition of the region’s **Supervisor Training**. Faced with the growing global health challenges, however, everything was put on hold. While the training program was due to begin at the end of March 2020, in the end it was the temporary closures of the HI Montr al and HI Ottawa Jail hostels which were announced instead. 77% of our staff were then temporarily laid off in a period of less than two weeks.

Various government programs enabled those who had lost their jobs to receive at least some basic pay during the crisis. Communication became more important than ever and a monthly newsletter was set up during the height of the pandemic to stay in touch with staff temporarily laid off.

Goodbye!

A year such as this brings with it its share of reflection. Various hostel members decided to leave the organization despite having worked with us for a considerable number of years. We wish them all the best and hope that we have been a first-rate employer on their personal and professional journey.

Ar lis Aranda,
Group Services Agent - Regional Office: 15 years

Gabrielle de la Durantaye,
Assistant Manager – HI Montr al: 14 years

As the city continued to lease the building housing the HI Toronto hostel, the association had to collectively lay off 33 employees, losing outstanding colleagues. Some had been with us for many years. Genny was let go during the HI Toronto hostel’s wave of collective redundancy. Indeed, all 33 employees had to be laid off when the City of Toronto extended its lease of our building.

Genilzangela Xavier,
Housekeeping Supervisor - HI Toronto: 6 years

We thank them all for contributing to the success of HI Toronto during their time with the organization.





AFFILIATED HOSTELS

The pandemic affected every single hostel in the country, though there were fortunately no permanent closures among the HI Canada network of affiliated hostels in Québec and Ontario.

For some hostels who normally start their summer season in May or June, the lifting on June 25th of the government decree obliging the closure of youth hostels in Québec came late. Hostels were able to benefit from local travelers visiting during the summer and those with the dual certification of campsite and youth hostel, were entitled to open sooner. Nonetheless, the damage was done. To add to this, physical distancing and health restrictions forced hostels to reduce the number of beds available for reservation. This reduction in their overall offering impacted their revenues at a normally very lucrative time of year.

The association would like to thank all affiliated hostels for respecting government requirements and their commitments to the association during this extremely difficult time, and for continuing to proudly represent the HI Canada brand and the mission it upholds.

Sharing Our Experience

St. Lawrence Youth Hostels Inc. worked in collaboration with the Corporation de l'industrie touristique du Québec (CITQ) to develop and approve the tourist industry's COVID-19 health and security plan for the youth hostels sector.

The association is proud to have contributed its expertise to making its sector safer during the pandemic. It would like to thank Vincent Bérubé (HI Rivière-du-Loup) and Simon Jacobs (HI Québec) for their sustained efforts in this project.

We can't help feeling bitter, however, that this official guide – that we demanded right from the start of the pandemic – didn't allow youth hostels to reopen sooner during the first wave of government-imposed closures. Indeed, the government remained unresponsive to our arguments that youth hostels don't offer just shared rooms and that they provide an equally safe environment as do hotels, which have been allowed to remain open uninterrupted during the pandemic.

Affiliated Hostels in Québec and Ontario 2019-2020

QUÉBEC

HI L'Anse-au-Griffon, Griffon Aventure

HI La Malbaie, Auberge de jeunesse La Malbaie

HI Québec, Auberge internationale de Québec

HI Rivière-du-Loup, Auberge internationale de Rivière-du-Loup

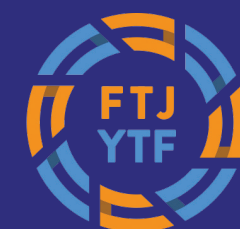
HI Sainte-Anne-des-Monts, Sea Shack

HI Trois-Rivières, Auberge internationale de Trois-Rivières

ONTARIO

HI Maynooth, The Arlington

HI Niagara Falls



FONDATION **TOURISME JEUNESSE**
YOUTH TRAVEL FOUNDATION

YOUTH TRAVEL FOUNDATION

A proud partner of HI Canada – Québec and Ontario Region, the Youth Travel Foundation (YTF), whose mission is to promote the education and personal development of young adults through travel, deemed that it was not the appropriate time to promote travel in these times of global health crisis. For obvious safety reasons, the foundation therefore had to temporarily put its activities on hold.

OUR INVOLVEMENT

INVOLVEMENT IN BOARDS OF DIRECTORS, COMMITTEES AND ROUND TABLES

Some members of the Board of Directors and senior management of HI Canada – Québec and Ontario Region also work as volunteers on different boards, committees and round tables.

Conseil d'économie sociale de l'île de Montréal CÉSÎM:
Nicolas Lemaire – Tourism Sector Representative

Corporation de l'Industrie touristique du Québec (CITQ):
Vincent Bérubé – Youth Hostel Representative at the CITQ.

Youth Travel Foundation:
Bruno Bussi res – Chairman of the Board of Directors,
Marie-Claude Racine, Gabriela Sauter

International Social Tourism Organization (ISTO) – Americas
Vincent B rub  – Officer

INVOLVEMENT WITHIN HI CANADA

HI Canada – Qu bec and Ontario region is involved in various committees at the national level.

The Presidents Forum:
Peter Harrison, Vincent B rub 

Council of Executive Directors:
Jacques Perreault oversees 5 sectors for the executive council: national budget, coordination and alignment, marketing and branding and international relations and strategic partnership.

Quality Assurance Standards Committee:
Vincent B rub  and Isabelle Boyer

WE ARE ALSO MEMBERS OF OTHER ORGANIZATIONS:

- Alliance Touristique du Qu bec
- Tourism Toronto
- Tourisme Montr al
- Greater Toronto Hotel Association
- Regroupement Loisir et Sport du Qu bec
- Conseil Qu b cois du Loisir
- Heritage Ottawa
- Tourism Ottawa

