

## BSR Group building most CSL projects

# Six years in the making, development firm going strong

BY ISAAC OLSON

Ronen Basal grew up in Côte St. Luc. He has always called it home and now he is playing a key role in developing the city as director of BSR Group – an NDG-based company located at 6138 Côte St. Luc Rd., just east of Beaconsfield Ave.

Six years ago, BSR Group went from buying real estate throughout Montreal to constructing apartment complexes and homes across the island. When property prices started shooting up, construction began.

“We started with homes,” said Basal, noting those homes went in next door to the Quartier Cavendish near the corner of Cavendish Blvd. and Kildare Rd. “And we started with townhouses at the Parkhaven Courtyard.”

The new neighbourhood along the Park Place, Jubilee Rd. and The Avenue next door to Quartier Cavendish has changed the face of the city with million-dollar homes cropping up. A large, 90-unit apartment building is currently under construc-

tion there as well. Parkhaven Courtyard is a similar story, located at the corner of Kildare Rd. and Parkhaven Ave. where the developer has built 50 townhouses with three to four bedrooms each.

These projects are just the tip of the iceberg as the company has developments in NDG, Hampstead and across the island.

“We started with three employees and now we employ over 200,” said Basal. “Very successful.”

The 90-unit apartment building on The Avenue, directly across from the Quartier Cavendish, will include an indoor pool, Shabbat elevator, 24-hour security guard, appliances, ground floor commercial and more. It will be an upper-scale apartment complex, he said, that will likely attract many older people looking to downsize from their single-family homes. This is a demographic, he explained, that no longer wants all the hassle that comes with property ownership. They are looking for something more temporary.

With senior homes closing in the area, this apartment complex could be an alter-



Crews move earth near the Côte St. Luc Aquatic and Community Centre. Starting in April, crews will begin building an apartment tower here on Parkhaven Ave.

native for some, he said. While it may not have assisted living, it is in close proximity to all the services found at the mall next door, he noted. Residents won't need a car, he said, as they get all they need in the area.

Parkhaven Courtyard will be getting a 150-unit building and construction on that will begin in April.

That facility, noted Basal, won't have a pool because it is next door to the Aquatic Community Centre. The high-end apartments will have large family rooms, 24-hour surveillance, a Shabbat elevator and more.

“We just finished a few projects on Côte St. Luc Rd.,” he added, including one right in front of the Côte St. Luc Shopping Centre. Another with 59 rental units is going up where Bernie's Auto used to be at the corner of Montclair Ave. In fact, BSR Group's headquarters is located in a build-

ing that it developed after the previous structure burned several years ago.

“I grew up in Côte St. Luc and lived there all my life, since the age of seven when we came from Israel. Côte St. Luc is a home for me. It's where my synagogue is. It's where my kids go to school. It's where my friends are.”

Basal admits that the company heads and city politicians don't always agree, but there is a willingness to discuss issues and find compromises.

“We have a good relationship with the city councillors and mayor, which encourages us to build,” said Basal. The company builds across Montreal, but it concentrates on Côte St. Luc because, he said, “We used to be the people in two- and three-bedroom apartments. We know the market. We know what people want and we feel, knowing the market inside out, we know the demand.”

## Solomon Schechter launches kindness exhibit



Solomon Schechter Academy students with project head and teacher Darla Lang and principal Steven Erdelyi in Shaare Zion Congregation's Weisman-Stotland Hall on February 8.

Elementary students from Solomon Schechter Academy were proudly showing off their most recent project on February 8 and 9.

The English-language art exhibit entitled “Follow Our Footsteps” brought 400 students from grades 1 through 6 into a single exhibition focused on learning to be kind to those around them.

Grades 1 and 2 classes learned about the importance of spreading kindness within the school. Grade 3 students visited se-

niors at NDG and Côte St. Luc residences. Grade 4 students visited with Summit School's special needs students. Grade 5 students engaged in discussions about the heroes who have touched them in their lives while grade 6 students prepared to work for various community organizations such as the Chai Life Line, Share the Warmth and others.

The exhibition included artwork, presentations and writing on the various subjects and activities the students focused on.

## There's still time to apply for summer jobs

Every summer, Côte St. Luc has a list of vacancies that need to be temporarily filled in the Parks and Recreation department. While the deadline for some of those jobs expired on February 3, there are still plenty of spots left for those looking to make a few extra bucks this season, but the application deadline is February 24.

For day camps, the city is still accepting applications for senior counsellor, junior counsellor and specialised instructor positions that may include arts and crafts, cooking or sports. Parks and facilities attendants are still needed in the park chalets, to manage pedal boats and public tennis courts. Minor league baseball umpires and scorekeepers spots are still open and the tennis club could use an attendant.

To learn more about these positions and how to apply, visit the city's website (CoteSaintLuc.org).