

## **New marché targets different market**

[On the corner of Iberville and Ontario Sts., a neighbourhood initiative seeks to provide quality produce - and a fresh look at eating inexpensively and healthfully](#)

BRETT BUNDALE, The Gazette, le 29 juin 2008

A new market was launched in one of Montreal's poorest neighbourhoods yesterday with the aim of increasing access to fresh food, not making profits.

The Frontenac public market, on the corner of Iberville St. and Ontario St. E., is devoted to offering affordable, locally grown food as well as promoting healthy eating and lifestyle habits through educational workshops .

"This is a low revenue area but residents don't have access to affordable, fresh food," said Elaine Groulx, chairperson of the public consultation on local food security.

Seventy-three per cent of businesses that sell food in the area are dépanneurs. There's an IGA down the street, but it's expensive and the fruit and vegetables are not good quality." Although the market is just getting on its feet, every Saturday until October residents can attend workshops on healthy eating or just stroll through the market to see what's in season.

The market is supported by the Ville-Marie borough and several community organizations, including the community economic development corporation of Centre-Sud and the Jeanne-Mance health and social services centre.

Community organizers hope the market will be embraced by residents of the community and will expand in future years. They also hope to get more agricultural producers who live close to Montreal involved in the project.

"Most of the vendors come from the South Shore or just on the outskirts of Montreal," Groulx said.

Laurie-Anne Riendeau, 17, has a fruit and vegetable kiosk at the Frontenac market that she started with the support of her parents as a summer job. She sells fruits and vegetables grown near her home in Ste. Clotilde, in the Montérégie region of Quebec.

"People have a lot of questions about rural Quebec and how agriculture works," Riendeau said. "Sometimes I have to explain what certain vegetables are, like these," she said, pointing to a fresh bunch of leeks. "I give them tips on the best way to cook them too." Often people assume the price of food in markets is cheaper than supermarkets because you avoid the "middle man" and buy directly from the producer. But an investigation by the non-profit consumer magazine Protégez-Vous found that wasn't always the case.

Fruits and vegetables at the Atwater market were more expensive than in small fruit stores and supermarkets, the 2005 investigation found.

In addition, because markets often sell fruits and vegetables in baskets at fixed prices, it's hard to compare with supermarkets, where the price is based on weight.

But the Frontenac public market hopes to change that by educating vendors on the reality of the neighbourhood and asking them to set their prices accordingly, Groulx said.

Riendeau said she is keeping the prices of her fruits and vegetables low. "I know this is not the Atwater market. Some people come here with only a few coins in their hands. I'll often give people a special price if they buy a few things." Cafe Touski, a neighbourhood coffee shop and cooperative, sells coffee and baked goods at the market. In between pouring cups of coffee, Martin Mantha said the café is so far just breaking even.