

## ARCHIVING THE PRESENT

*History never looks like history when you are living through it.*  
- John Gardner

When we speak of history, we have a tendency to forget that it isn't just something in the distant past, that in fact, history goes right up to yesterday. We tend to forget that today will be history by the time tomorrow comes. Archiving the Present was a workshop created with the goal of documenting what it means to be in the Westmount community today, in 2014. After all, it is from our present that we understand our past.

I asked community members to think about their everyday experiences in the community – the kinds of things that we forget to record because they feel routine. We talked about the daily experience of being a part of Westmount, about neighbours and neighbourhood. And then, we turned that discussion into images. Participants took photographs of their community, and returned with new perspectives to share, and to write about. From a single photograph, each writer wove a piece of their community's present.

They wrote about urban renewal, about houses going up, and houses coming down. They wrote about the trees that abide. They considered every type of resident – from children, to birds, to dogs. They wrote about life in a front yard community, and the alternate world of the alley. They shared the perspectives of both long-term community members and newcomers, about play, parks, past, and future. After all, the present is wrapped up in all of those. Through these photographs and stories, Westmount's community reveals something of what it means to experience the neighbourhood today, in all its comforts and contradictions. Will you explore Westmount through laneway, the front yard, or the trajectory of a boomerang? Take these archives and make them a part of your present.

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