



Marginal and Proud Of It

Raymond Viger

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About the author:

Raymond Viger has had multiple careers: aviator, biochemist, journalist, author, community social worker. He has published 20 books in French and English, some of which have become best-sellers and classics. A man with a heart and profound values, he founded the publishing house Éditions TNT to ensure that future generations have an outlet for their writing as well as to transmit his desire to protect and enrich Quebec culture. Mr. Viger is part of the province's ministry of education Artiste à l'école program (Artist at School), which promotes the presence of writers in Quebec schools, to encourage the interest of young people in literature.

About the book:

Imagine a veteran social worker, a suicide crisis intervener, deciding to set up a youth social organization in the heart of Canada's poorest, most crime-ridden neighborhood, Hochelaga-Maisonneuve, 32 years ago. This part of Montreal was controlled by a biker gang, and full of dispossessed youth who weren't necessarily looking for a way out of their misery.

This is a story of a community association that would come to be a model for others in the genre. The Journal de la Rue and the Café Graffiti still exist today; its founder, the author, is still questioning society's priorities and helping youth get involved in creative projects rather than crime.

The boom is an unvarnished chronicle of the group's good times and bad times. There are also comments by past and recent administrators. The book explores the author's motivation to work with youth – the events and reflections that led him to that point. As well, it explores his intervention philosophy, since adopted by a wide range of actors in the milieu. The book covers the founding of the world's first francophone street newspaper, also a part of the web of organizations that have grown out of the author's efforts.

Early in the author's social work, he finds it necessary to set up premises. He goes over the hows and whys of carrying out such an operation. Indeed, this book is an invaluable "how to" for all those working for social organizations, as well as for anyone wanting to work with marginalized youth. The more you work with the marginalized, we are told, the more marginalized you become – which is okay by the author.

An invaluable social document: required reading for all those undertaking street social work – and for anyone with an interest in the marginalized street youth of our society.

Available in French and English.

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