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QCGN to Pay Tribute to Four Remarkable Community Leaders at 10th Anniversary Community Awards Gala

John Rae, Murielle Parkes & Olga Melikoff, and Hayley Campbell to be honoured

MONTREAL, September 24, 2018 – Four inspirational leaders of the English-speaking community are being celebrated by the Quebec Community Groups Network, with this year’s 10th anniversary of its Community Awards. Murielle Parkes and Olga Melikoff, known to many as the mothers of French immersion, and businessman John Rae are being honoured with QCGN’s 10th annual Sheila and Victor Goldbloom Community Service Award. Hayley Campbell has been chosen for the fourth annual Young Quebecers Leading the Way Award.

“The leadership, vision and other qualities provided by these award winners have provided an enduring positive impact across our Community of Communities,” QCGN President Geoffrey Chambers said. “As with every QCGN award winner, their individual dedication, persistence and hard work has served to sustain, strengthen and empower us all.”

Olga Melikoff and **Murielle Parkes** were the movers and shakers behind the parent-driven experiment in bilingual education. Immersion blossomed into an iconic feature of the English-language public education system in Quebec, and then expanded throughout the rest of Canada. Some fifty years ago, Melikoff, Parkes and the late Valerie Neale were leaders of a parent group that established Canada's first French immersion program at the former Margaret Pendlebury Elementary School in the Montreal suburb of St. Lambert. This formidable trio of stay-at-home mothers recognized during the Quiet Revolution that Quebec was changing, and that English-language public education needed to change with it. In September of 1965, the St. Lambert Parents for Bilingual Education welcomed the creation of a pioneer French immersion kindergarten class of 26 students. This initiative ultimately changed the face of English-language public education across Canada. It has also helped forge linguistic duality into a defining characteristic of our nation.

Over the past four decades, **John Rae** has proven a quiet benefactor for Quebec’s English-speaking community. He has operated primarily behind the scenes, supporting a wide variety of educational, medical, cultural and community philanthropic endeavours. Exhibiting a natural ability to bring people together for a cause, Rae has generously provided time, energy, experience, business acumen and financial support for the benefit of hundreds of community organizations and individuals. Despite the rigorous demands of a career at Power Corporation, Rae has demonstrated exceptional commitment to a variety of community causes. These include the McGill University Foundation, where he served as Chair of the Best Care for Life Campaign which raised some \$300 million in support of teaching hospitals to foster

collaboration and innovation for the benefit of thousands of patients, their families and our community. He and his wife, Phyllis, have also lent their prestige and time to other local causes as diverse as the Montreal Heart Institute, the Centaur Theatre and the Montreal Jubilation Gospel Choir.

Beginning at a young age, community service has been an important value for **Hayley Campbell**, winner of this year's Young Quebecers Leading the Way Award. Her active involvement has ranged from Scouts and Girl Guides to presiding at the Alpha Phi fraternity at Bishop's University. Her long and impressive history of active leadership and involvement within and outside her community has also encompassed Quebec 4-H, the Pontiac County Women's Institute and a dynamic role at the Shawville Fair. Among other honours, Hayley was accepted to the Alpha Phi Leadership Fellows Program for her leadership promise and was selected by the Federated Women's Institutes of Canada as a delegate to the International Peace Gardens Scholarship for young women interested in leadership, inspiring others and positive social change.

Launched in 2009, the Sheila and Victor Goldbloom Distinguished Community Service Award recognizes individuals who have gone above and beyond in contributing to the vitality and reputation of the English-speaking community and who have built bridges of understanding between Quebecers of diverse backgrounds. The Young Quebecers Leading the Way Award was created in 2015 by QCGN, the Fondation Notre Home Foundation and CBC Quebec to acknowledge and celebrate the outstanding achievements of English-speaking Quebecers under the age of 30.

Our winners have been invited to receive their awards at a community celebration Thursday, Nov. 1, 2018, at Montreal's prestigious St-James Club. Entertainment will be provided by the incomparable Bowser and Blue. Co-sponsored by the Fondation Notre Home Foundation, the evening will be emceed by Sean Henry, weekend anchor at CBC News Montreal. Details and tickets at <https://qcgnc.ca/2018-community-awards>.

The Quebec Community Groups Network (www.qcgnc.ca) is a not-for-profit organization bringing together 57 English-language community organizations across Quebec. As a centre of evidence-based expertise and collective action it identifies, explores and addresses strategic issues affecting the development and vitality of the English-speaking community of Quebec and encourages dialogue and collaboration among its member organizations, individuals, community groups, institutions and leaders.

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