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Working
Together

Travaillons
Ensemble

*From the QCGN bubble to yours,
wishing you a Happy Holiday season and a
Safe and Healthy 2021!*

*La bulle du QCGN souhaite à votre bulle beaucoup
de bonheur pour la période des fêtes. Que 2021
vous apporte santé et sécurité!*



Please note that our QCGN workplaces, virtual and otherwise, will be closed for the holidays from 5 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 18 till Monday, Jan. 4, inclusive. We will be back to work on Tuesday, Jan. 5.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

LOOKING AHEAD QCGN FACES CHALLENGES, NEW AND OLD

By Marlene Jennings
QCGN President

It has been a little more than a month since I was elected as president of the Quebec Community Groups Network and we have been very busy.

I am inspired by the support I have received and pleased to be leading the Network at this critical time in its 25-year history. I want to congratulate incoming members of the Board of Directors and thank them for stepping up to serve our community. Together, with the staff of the QCGN, we form a great team!

I also want to take this opportunity to thank two people for their longstanding contributions to the QCGN and our community. The first is Past QCGN President **Geoffrey Chambers**, whose strong advocacy for our minority community's rights are well known. I also want to thank outgoing Vice-President **Gerald Cutting**, President of Townshippers' Association, who has shown leadership, wisdom and grace with a quiet but strong, unwavering voice.

As I noted in my recent op-ed in **The Montreal Gazette** (read [here](#)), expectations of the QCGN are fundamentally

a more effective community advocate that will meet the challenges faced by English-speaking Quebecers, while collaborating with organizations and individuals Quebecers to identify priorities and strategies to address them.

Looking ahead, one of QCGN's main priorities is to strengthen our relations with our membership and the broader community. This involves engaging and re-engaging with all elements of our community to ensure a modern QCGN truly represents the interests of English-speaking Quebecers. We must create new partnerships and collaborations and find ways to build bridges with community's institutions and be in synch with institutional leaders with whom we share many common goals. The process of reinventing our organization must include engaging with young English-speaking Quebecers to ensure they are more involved. We must also reach out to our Francophone neighbours.



Language fervour rekindled

After years of relative peace on the language front, the French language debate has intensified over the last few months. We are going to have to work hard to build support for our positions and ensure that our rights are fully respected. The support of our community is critical to our success. We must work together to ensure Quebec's English-speaking community remains strong and vital for generations to come.

The QCGN, and the stakeholders we work with, are committed to supporting and defending Francophones in Quebec and Canada. We appreciate that the French language is vulnerable and needs support in Quebec and elsewhere in Canada. But enhancing French does not mean suppressing or diminishing Quebec's English-speaking minority. The promotion and protection of French must be done, as is stated in the Charter of the French Language, "...in a spirit of fairness and open-mindedness, respectful of the institutions of the English-speaking community of Québec, and respectful of the ethnic minorities, whose valuable contribution to the development of Québec it readily acknowledges."

As an open, modern, and progressive society, Quebec has a responsibility to respect its linguistic minority community and other minorities. English-speaking Quebec is not an extension of the English-speaking majority in Canada. We are proud Quebecers and Canadians with deep roots in, and attachment, to Quebec.

Our community has changed immensely in recent decades. We are more ethnically, racially, and culturally diverse. As a Black woman born and raised in Quebec, my election as President of the main advocacy organization representing English-speaking Quebecers is clear evidence of this fact. While we are more educated on average, members of our community have lower levels of income and higher levels of unemployment than our French-speaking counterparts.

A significant majority of English-speaking Quebecers are bilingual; we are proud to be Canada's most bilingual group of English speakers. The bilingualism rate among our young people exceeds 75 per cent. Our parents and our schools recognize that being able to speak French is not negotiable.

Serve and Advocate

The Quebec Community Groups Network exists to serve and advocate strongly for the English-speaking community of Quebec so that our institutions and culture will continue to thrive and contribute to Quebec society. Our Network and our partners have worked and will continue to work hard to ensure the full integration of English-speaking Quebecers. We are also determined to protect our language rights, including our right to manage and control the institutions that our community has built over generations, and that today serve all Quebecers.

Elsewhere in Canada, we can and must strengthen the understanding of Quebec's unique character and concerns. Meanwhile the QCGN is a vigorous defender of Francophone minority communities outside Quebec, working with them to ensure official language minority communities have all they need not just to survive, but to thrive. We intervene in support of our Francophone partners in cases that affect the official language rights of Canadians. Most recently we were intervenors in the *Conseil scolaire francophone de la Colombie-Britannique v. British Columbia* court case. We are also intervening in *Fédération des francophones de la Colombie-Britannique (FFCB) v. Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC)*.

QCGN is committed to: "Protecting, supporting, and enhancing the linguistic rights of Canadians to flourish in our two official languages, and ensuring a united Canada whose two official languages, English and French, have equality of status and equal rights and privileges as to their use in all institutions of the Parliament and Government of Canada."

legislation to delegate powers to Quebec. Trudeau confirmed that he intends to use a modernized version of the federal Official Languages Act as the vehicle to govern the use of French in federally regulated sectors in Quebec such as transportation, banking, and telecommunications.

But QCGN remains concerned that imposing obligations on Quebec businesses could go down the dangerous path of asymmetry, undermining linguistic duality as a fundamental Canadian value. We maintain that any form of asymmetry would give legitimacy to the nationalist/separatist claim that Canada has only one linguistic minority, and that would undoubtedly have a negative impact on both French and English minority language communities.

The Government of Canada ought to recognize that the vitality of linguistic minority communities, including English-speaking Quebec, is at risk. QCGN calls upon the federal government to exercise strong leadership in protecting and promoting linguistic minorities all across Canada and to maintain linguistic duality as a pillar of our Canadian identity. To accomplish this, the only reasonable course is to extend the Official Languages Act to all federal undertakings across Canada, ensuring the equality of language rights and obligations in all areas of federal jurisdiction.

At our best, Quebec and all of Canada are an example to the world, showing how two linguistic communities can live together in mutual respect, co-operation, and prosperity. That is the vision the QCGN upholds.

Read QCGN's [Statement on the French Language](#).

QCGN at House Standing Committee on Official Languages



Last week our Director General **Sylvia Martin-Laforge** and I appeared before the House Standing Committee on Official Languages (LANG) to present QCGN's views and concerns on the **Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on the Government's Ability to Deliver Information in Both Official Languages**. We conveyed our disappointment in the Government of Quebec for failing to distribute an English version of a COVID-19 self-care guide in a timely manner. To our knowledge, the provincial government has not ensured a policy or standard of service that guarantees an appropriate response in English during future public health crises or other emergencies. We also expressed disappointment with the federal government for not communicating pandemic information through our community newspapers. We prefaced our remarks, by noting that Premier François Legault addressed Quebecers in both French and English during his

pandemic press briefings. We also expressed our gratitude to federal civil servants who assisted organizations from our community adjust their projects and programs at the onset of the pandemic. This marked the third meeting on the topic as the committee looks to wrap up its study before the holidays. For our full remarks, click [here](#). To watch the whole LANG session, watch [here](#).

Secretariat Releases Final Report

On December 10, the **Secretariat for Relations with English-speaking Quebecers** released its final report on the 2019 consultation it held with organizations serving English-speaking Quebecers. (Read the executive summary below.) We did not learn much new from the report that summarizes longstanding issues for our community such as the pressing need for more funding for community organizations providing support and services to English-speaking Quebecers as well as the need for all Quebecers to have access to French-language training. While **Christopher Skeete**, the parliamentary secretary to the Premier for Relations with English-speaking Quebecers, noted in a **press release** that "Quebecers must be given the ability to fulfill themselves in French", his party has yet to back a private members bill by Liberal opposition MNA **Gregory Kelley** to give all Quebecers free French language training. Last weekend, Skeete told **The Gazette** that he is confident the CAQ government will start offering free or low-cost French courses to non-immigrant English speakers across the province next fall.

QCGNers, English-speaking Quebecers, inducted into Order of Canada

We were pleased to see members of our community and our QCGN family as well as language rights activists honoured.

Canada. Past President **Linda Leith** becomes an Officer of the Order for her work connecting the country's Anglophone and Francophone communities, and for fostering creativity and intercultural understanding through a literary festival. Other English-speaking Quebecers named to the Order include **Ella Amir**, rewarded for her contributions to the field of mental health and for advocating on behalf of families and caregivers; **Elizabeth Langley**, for her sustained mentorship of aspiring dancers and her lifelong devotion to the arts; **Elliot Lifson**, for his leadership and mentorship in the apparel industry, for his commitment to Canada's economic growth, and for his community involvement. Also inducted into the Order was former Quebec City area resident **Glenn O'Farrell**, who was honoured for his vision for education and for his leadership in communications, having positioned a media outlet as a global symbol of French language and culture. Acadian activists **Michel Doucet** becomes a member for dedicating his life to ensuring respect for French as an official language and for advocating for language rights; and **Lorio Roy**, for his ongoing commitment to improving post-secondary education and for his dedication to the Acadian community. Read coverage in [The Montreal Gazette](#).



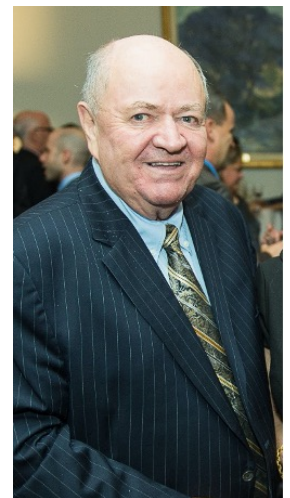
Birthday Honours for Sheila Goldbloom Who Turned 95



I was pleased recently to extend best birthday wishes to **Sheila Goldbloom** who turned 95 on November 30. We thanked Mrs. Goldbloom for being a friend and supporter of the QCGN and Quebec's English-speaking community and acknowledged her wisdom and advice over the years. We also thanked her for being the matron of our community awards and told her how sad we were that the pandemic prevented us from seeing her this fall as we were forced to cancel our annual community celebration. "Despite the distance imposed by COVID-19, we thank you for another year of being an exceptional friend and mentor. You deserve all the cake, love, hugs, and happiness today. We hope you have a happy, healthy, and exceptional, birthday!" View our video greeting [here](#).

QCGN Mourns Death of Father John Walsh

In November, the QCGN bid a sad but fond farewell to **Father John Walsh**, who passed away at the age of 78 after suffering a sudden heart attack. One of Montreal's best-known – and beloved – Catholic priests, Walsh spent decades as a parish priest at St. Monica's in Notre-Dame-de-Grace and St. John Brébeuf Parish in LaSalle, which was his last parish before retiring in 2010. Walsh was especially well known for his work with Montreal's homeless at **Nazareth House**, an organization that celebrated the opening of a new shelter named John's House in his honour just a couple of days before his death. The home will house young adults who suffer from mental health disorders and are at a higher risk of homelessness. In 2017, he was inducted into the Order of Canada. For his work as an interfaith leader, community activist, and all around bridge builder between Quebecers and various communities, Father Walsh was honoured in 2012 with the **Sheila and Victor Goldbloom Distinguished Community Service Award**. "I contributed here and there and then when I look back and I realize that my life is more full than I thought it was. I just can't thank God enough for all that's happened," he said upon winning the award. "In the end it's all about community – the community on your street, the wider linguistic, cultural and spiritual communities – working together." Due to COVID-19 measures and Father Walsh's long involvement in inter-religious dialogue, an interfaith memorial service was **live streamed** on Saturday Nov. 14. Read our feature on Father Walsh [here](#). Also read media tributes in [The Montreal Gazette](#), [Global Montreal](#), and [CTV Montreal](#). Also view this feature interview with Global Montreal's **Jamie Orchard** as he marked his 50th anniversary in the priesthood with the release of his autobiography entitled, '*God is Calling, Don't leave him on Hold.*'



LOOKING AHEAD QCGN FACES CHALLENGES, NEW AND OLD

By Frances Ravensbergen

For the Secretariat for Relations with English-speaking Quebecers

The QCGN is reprinting the Executive Summary of BUILDING BRIDGES – the final report of the 2019 Consultation with Organizations Serving English-speaking Communities on the Priorities and Orientations of the

By In the fall of 2019, the Secretariat for Relations with English-speaking Quebecers consulted with its community and institutional stakeholders in a series of 11 sessions. Overall, more than three hundred community leaders representing more than 140 organizations and institutions participated in the consultation, which gave them an opportunity to provide input on priorities and orientations for the Secretariat,

Main observations voiced by the representatives who participated in the different regional and sectoral meetings:

- Support for access to government services, specifically health services, is an important priority for English-speaking Quebecers.
- There is a pressing need to improve access to government funding for non-profit organizations serving the English-speaking communities.
- Stakeholders also strongly voiced their desire to be recognized and included in Quebec society, including a desire to improve French language skills.
- Concern was expressed about transparency of Canada-Quebec funding transfers, particularly in the areas of education and employability and about the low participation of English speakers in Quebec's public service.
- Specific challenges were identified for health & social services, education, employment, arts & culture and heritage as well as for municipalities, the community sector and other areas.

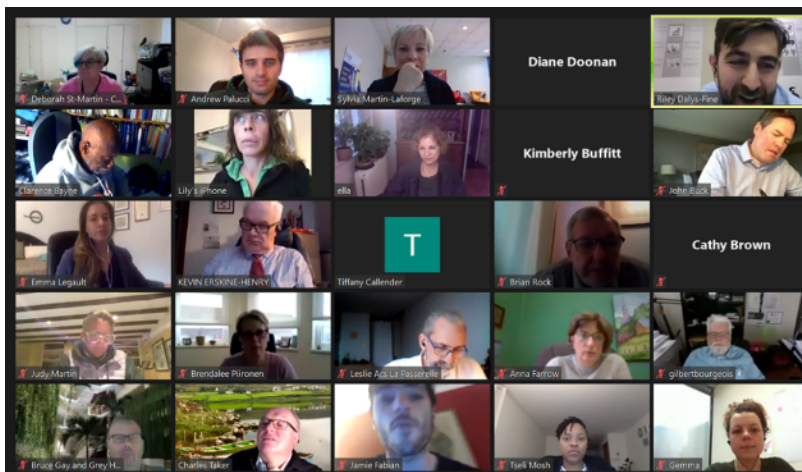
Consultation participants expressed support for the work of the Secretariat to date, wanting to see it build bridges between the English-speaking communities and the Government of Quebec and for the Secretariat itself to be accorded a more permanent status within government. There is a desire to see the Secretariat fund capacity-building within the organizations of the English-speaking communities.

By way of follow-up to the consultation, the Secretariat has begun preparing for bilateral briefings with key departments to follow up on the findings of the consultation and will participate actively in the work towards a new *Plan d'action gouvernemental sur l'action communautaire* (MTESS). Requests were also submitted for consideration for the 2020 budget. Read the QCGN's report on the consultations, **Vision, Vitality, and Viability**.

WORK CONTINUES ON DEVELOPMENT OF STRATEGIC COMMUNITY GROWTH PLAN

By Riley Dalys-Fine

QCGN Manager, Community Outreach & Engagement



Following delays imposed by COVID-19, the QCGN has resumed activities this summer related to our work on a Strategic Community Growth Plan.

"This work resumed in Fall 2019 with broad community research on the evolving challenges facing English-speaking Quebec, as well as consultations on the leadership our network needs to work together in identifying and defending common needs," explained Sylvia Martin-Laforge, Director General of the QCGN. "Our goal for the end of 2021 is to have in place a community development plan representative of the full range of voices

comprising the English-speaking community."

The *Working Together for a More Vital Community Forum*, originally scheduled for the end of March, was held on September 30, 2020. The was followed by the *Facing Common Challenges for a More Vital Community Consultation* on December 1.

"By checking in with stakeholders at regular intervals, the QCGN hopes to foster an ongoing dialogue through which all members of the community can take collective ownership of the planning process," said Martin-Laforge.

Where the September forum provided an opportunity for community leaders to review findings from research related to the

"While the community and its needs continue to evolve, concerns about advocacy and representation, sustaining community leadership, and supporting our organizations and institutions are as prevalent as they were when the QCGN was first formed in 1995," commented Martin-Laforge.

Bound by a common language

"English-speaking Quebec is a "community of multiple identities, bound by a common language," Martin Laforge noted in her closing remarks to the December consultation. "The Community Growth Plan is about putting Quebec's English-speaking community in the drivers' seat with respect to managing its own growth and working with stakeholders to support our common priorities."

Significant opportunities for community growth come on the heels of the 2018-2023 Official Languages Roadmap, and more recently through new spending announced by Minister Freeland as part of the government stimulus plan, she said.



Ensuring equitable access to these opportunities for all English-speaking Quebecers requires a shared understanding of community vitality. This will be the primary outcome of the community development plan which will result from this dialogue.

Having successfully deployed these two virtual events, the QCGN looks forward to facilitating a number of sector-specific roundtable discussions where community stakeholders will be invited to exchange on matters of interest to them and to their communities.

These community roundtables will meet through January and February to develop evidence-based recommendations on how public policy can better support community vitality. A community forum will be organized in March to allow community members to review these recommendations, provide feedback and continue to participate in our dialogue process.

Do not hesitate to reach out to Sylvia.Martin-Laforge@qcgnc.ca; Sabrina.Taran@qcgnc.ca, the QCGN's Director of Strategic Community Initiatives; or [Riley Dalys-Fine](mailto:Riley.Dalys-Fine@qcgnc.ca).

COMMUNITY INNOVATION FUND PROJECT MOVING FULL SPEED AHEAD

By **Bonnie Zehavi**

Community Innovation Fund Project Manager

Despite initial delays and ongoing challenges due to COVID-19, the **Community Innovation Fund** 2.0 has been moving at full speed over the last few months with 10 exciting projects to help Quebec's English-speaking communities put social innovation in action to address the needs of vulnerable English-speaking Quebecers.

In a variety of creative and original ways, the projects address the needs of a diverse community of English-speaking youth and seniors through innovative and grassroots-led initiatives that seek to reduce isolation, promote inclusion, and improve the socioeconomic reality of our community's most vulnerable members.





Black Youth Network's DestaNation Tech, a 2.0 version of the DestaTech project launched in the first round of the CIF, which ran from 2016 to 2019. DestaNation Tech offers English-speaking Black youth the opportunity to obtain training in a variety of tech skills that include data services, website development, digital marketing, and graphic design. The programs are currently being offered online, and participants also receive individualized, holistic support from the

DESTA team to address any social stressors, mental health issues, or other challenges that serve as obstacles to their success. The project is also partnering with businesses and industry professionals to match participants with internships and paid employment opportunities.

Valuable learning experiences

With a variety of collectives offering trade mentorships at **Bâtiment 7** in Pointe St Charles, at-risk English-speaking youth in the community are obtaining valuable paid learning experiences while finding safe space and community with **Press Start Youth Co-op's** employability project. Hands-on learning opportunities include apprenticeships in trades such as auto mechanics, landscaping, screen printing, and bike repair.



To combat social isolation, projects like **Gay and Grey's** outreach initiative has been actively expanding its reach within the English-speaking LGBTQ2I senior community in Montreal and surrounding areas. With particular focus on connecting with lesbian and transgender seniors, Gay and Grey is using CIF support to combat ageism and isolation in the English-speaking LGBTQ2I community by offering programs, activities, and

intergenerational socialization, and by creating partnerships to provide caregiving support, most notably for seniors who face extreme, multi-layered isolation after losing a partner.

An exciting aspect of the CIF 2.0 is the Community of Practice sessions offered to CIF recipient organizations. In partnership with the **Centre for Community Organizations (COCO's)** **Juniper Belshaw**, CIF Project Manager **Bonnie Zehavi** has facilitated the first three of eight CIF Community of Practice (CoP) gatherings, which took place in September, October, and November. The CoP sessions cover topics identified by the recipients through a needs assessment that was conducted at the launch of the CIF and offer information, support, and knowledge exchange in areas of capacity building and professional development.

Self-care for community leaders

Highlights of the CoP gatherings over the fall season include a panel on anti-racist and anti-oppressive practices in outreach to marginalized communities, and radical self-care for helpers: how to practice self-care as a community leader. In January 2021, the CIF recipients will receive a "part two" session on the theme of anti-oppression, this time focusing on organizational HR policies and practices that provide holistic and equitable support to staff members.

Organizations sharing the \$1.1 million funding include Camp Weredale, the Committee for Anglophone Social Action (CASA), the Côte-des-Neiges Black Community Association (CDNBCA), DESTA Black Youth Network, Gay and Grey Montreal, the Museum of Jewish Montreal, the Press Start Youth Coop, Project 10, Suspicious Fish, and The Depot. For details of each project visit the **CIF page** of the QCGN website and stay tuned for more updates and project profiles in upcoming issues of the Network News.

Financed by the Government of Canada's Social Development Partnerships Program – Children and Families Component and managed by the QCGN, the Community Innovation Fund was designed to help Quebec's English-speaking communities put social innovation into action.

COVID-19 LEADS TO SPIKE IN MENTAL DISTRESS ESPECIALLY AMONG ANGLOPHONES

By Michael Udy

QCGN Director of Access to Health and Social Services

research projects have drawn attention to the increase of psychosocial distress due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It is not yet clear how this increase affects members of the English-speaking community, nor how the measures announced to date will benefit them.

Research led from the University of Sherbrooke has documented overall higher rates of generalized anxiety and major depression in Quebec's adult population. These symptoms, including thoughts about death and suicide, are particularly high in four sub-groups including English speakers, whose rates of symptoms are close to double those of francophones, depending on the symptom.

Dr. Méli^sa G^én^ér^eu^x, lead on the University of Sherbrooke project, presented preliminary results of her study during a QCGN hosted on-line Community Conversation about research projects that shed light on different aspects of the English-speaking community on December 3.

The research indicates higher rates of generalized anxiety and major depression in, among others, Quebec's English-speaking adult population. In her **presentation** (see slide 10), she indicates that English-speaking Quebecers perceive a higher level of threat to self/family; have suffered more financial losses and are more likely than other segments of the population to have had an experience with the coronavirus. Anglophones are also more suspicious of authorities, get more information about the pandemic online, and more often adhere to false beliefs about COVID-19.

Research from Laval University also reports rates of psychological distress among working adults at levels 70 per cent higher than pre-pandemic levels. Rates are even higher among those working in the health and social service sector, and lowest in organizations that give high priority to psychological health, and among workers who consider themselves 'high performers'.

Mental Health Investments

The Coalition Avenir Québec (CAQ) government has announced significant investments over the last two years:

- February 2019: \$90 million for early detection and diagnosis of youth with special needs.
- July 2019 and July 2020: a total of \$155 million to reduce youth protection waiting lists, reinforce services and support workers.
- May 2020: an injection of 320 posts that reduced the mental health waiting list from 28,000 to 16,000, and centralized management of the list.
- During 2020: \$1.4 million to increase the capacity of the Téléjeunes hotline during the pandemic.
- November 2020: an injection of \$100 million into public institutions and community organizations to reduce the current waiting list of 16,000 by increased services and creation of a 380 person 'sentinel' program to detect and promote early intervention.

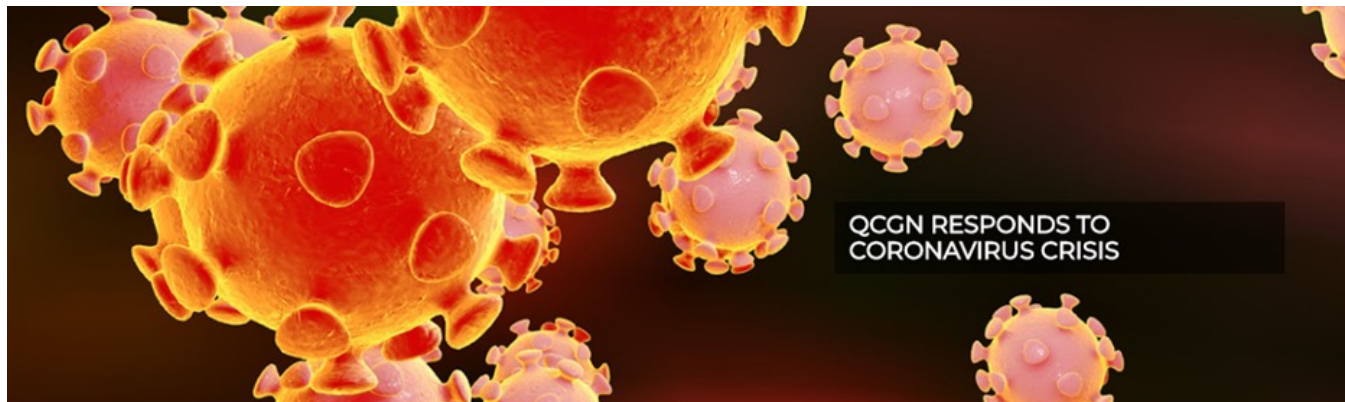
Government action in these areas is necessary and welcome. For members of the English-speaking community, it is unclear to what extent these increased services are accessible in English since there were no announcements in this regard, and this data is not tracked by the Ministry of Health and Social Services.

It is widely recognized that successful intervention in mental health must be in the language the person speaks and understands. QCGN with its collaborators is giving close scrutiny to this. For English-speaking individuals and community organizations in different regions, we suggest four sources to find out how these measures help people in your community:

- The local CISSS or CIUSSS responsible for your region. Ask for the person responsible for access to service in English.
- The Regional Access Committee in the CISSS or CIUSSS. The person responsible for access to services in English can put you in touch.
- Community organizations in your region that advocate for the English-speaking community. They will also be able to connect you to the person at the CISSS or CIUSSS and the Regional Access Committee.
- Your local MNA, regardless of what party they represent.

Further to her participation in our research conference, Dr. G^én^ér^eu^x shared this recent **publication** (in French) on strengthening the adaptation capacities of individuals and communities in the context of a pandemic: the key role of the feeling of coherence. You can also find more information and resources about mental health on QCGN's **Coronavirus Resource Hub**.

THROUGH THE PANDEMIC



The year 2020 will have been forever marked as the year of COVID-19.

Early in the pandemic, the Quebec Community Groups Network reached out to members and community stakeholders to get a handle on their needs during this public health emergency to assist us in responding with policies and programs to help them pilot through the pandemic.

During this unprecedented public health crisis, we heard loud and clear that it is essential to members of our linguistic minority community that they have access to quality information in their language. They also sought safe opportunities to network during times of social distancing. In response, QCGN created– the Coronavirus Response Hub – an online information tool that provides access to reliable information in English about COVID-19 as well as links to government programs, resources and online tools.

Over the past eight months, this frequently updated hub has provided links to an extensive inventory of federal, provincial, and municipal government COVID-19 assistance programs and measures as well as hundreds of community resources and online tools.

QCGN organized a half dozen COVID-related online events and facilitated access to dozens of webinars by partners and stakeholders that are effectively pivoting to new and innovative models of delivering services to English-speaking Quebecers during the pandemic. QCGN-hosted events included a town hall with the Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages, **Mélanie Joly**, and another with three Quebec MPs during which members got the opportunity to learn about federal government programming and convey concerns related to continuity of funding, delays to existing service standards, and obtain direction on managing carry-over funding from the last fiscal year unspent as a result of the pandemic.

As the second wave of the pandemic is upon us, QCGN's Coronavirus Response Hub and other communications tools are continually updated to ensure English-speaking Quebecers have access to the latest news, information, and relevant instructions, in English, that they require to ensure their health and safety.

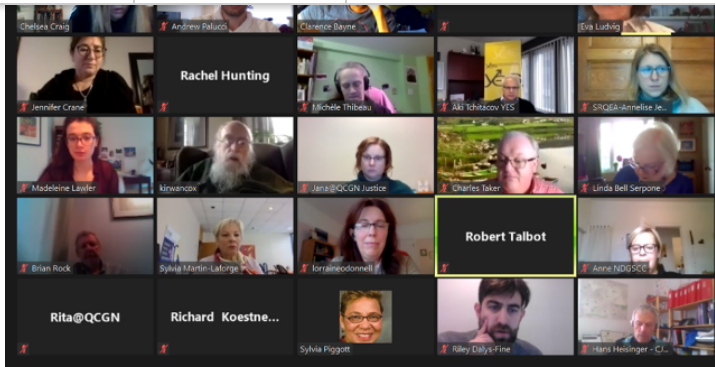
We encourage you to visit our [Coronavirus Response Hub](#). If you need information that you cannot find in the hub, or if you have resources to share, please contact us at coronavirus.response@qcgnc.ca.

QCGN HOSTS SERIES OF CONVERSATIONS ABOUT OUR COMMUNITY

On December 3, the QCGN hosted the first of a series of three Community Conversations as part of our Secretariat for Relations with English-speaking Quebecers/Concordia University partnership project.

Our first event: *Community Conversation: Research Agenda for Quebec's English-speaking Community*, showcased research specific to the English-speaking community of Quebec. This included the aforementioned research by **Dr. Mélissa Généreux** on the psychosocial impact of COVID-19 on Quebecers, with a special focus on minority populations.

We also heard from **John Davids**, Project Researcher for **Black in Quebec** who presented research conducted thus far regarding Quebec's English-speaking Black community and discussed some of the collaborative work the project is undertaking; **Robert J. Talbot**, Manager of Research at the **Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages** (OCOL),



the federal public service; and **Kirwan Cox**, Executive Director of the **Quebec English-language Production Council**, who presented research related to the volume of Canadian content film and TV production produced here in English in Quebec.

Finally, we heard from **Lorraine O'Donnell**, Research Associate at the **Quebec English-Speaking Communities Research Network (QUESCREN)**, who talked about research and knowledge mobilization activities, QUESCREN'S online bibliography, and a planned community group knowledge database.

Our Community Conversations series is scheduled to continue on **Thursday, January 21, 2021** with a discussion about English-speaking Quebecers and municipal affairs. The final Community Conversation will take place on **Thursday, January 28, 2021** with a focus on *Information Strategies for English-speaking Quebecers*. For more information about our Community Conversations, contact Jennifer Crane at jennifer.crane@qcg.ca.

LAWYER JULIUS GREY SUPPORTS ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR ENGLISH-SPEAKING QUEBECERS

By Jana Shoemaker

QCGN Director of Access to Health and Social Services

Access to justice gives people a voice to exercise their rights and oppose discrimination. Julius Grey's promotion of access to justice is seen in his track record of language rights cases, such as the hearings on Bill 21, Quebec's controversial ban on religious symbols for some members of the public service.

Widely known for his work in human rights, Grey is legal counsel to the QCGN on the Bill 21 challenge currently being heard in the Quebec Superior Court and he brings obvious dedication to both justice and Quebec.

"Any language right protection cannot be separated from the cultural aspect of language," Grey said in his submissions to Superior Court. Bill 21 is an affront to the multicultural nature of the English-speaking community in Quebec and discriminates against the distinct religious beliefs found within the community, he argued. The laws force religious minorities to choose between their Charter-protected freedoms of expression and religion, and their right to work and participate in provincial institutions.

Through Grey, the QCGN brought to the trial the perspective of Quebec's English-speaking minority and the many religious beliefs that are found within that minority. As a religiously, racially, and culturally diverse community, English-speaking Quebec has a unique perspective that Grey brought to the trial thanks to the donation of his pro bono legal services. The time and resources required to intervene in a Court proceeding are immense. It was thanks to Grey's generous donation of his expertise and time that the QCGN was able to advocate on behalf of its members.

Grey recently told me that the law is morally objectionable because it requires conformity. While he sees nothing wrong with a common culture in Quebec, he said that Bill 21 is not the right way to promote it. Recalling his Grade 5 geography teacher who was a PEI native, Grey said that his education in Canadian geography was enriched by her experiences and the details she could bring to her lessons. A diverse public service, it follows, creates a more informed and engaged population.

Taking his own experiences to his submissions to the Quebec Superior Court on December 1, 2020, Grey spoke



culture of Quebec's English-speaking community by removing its multicultural nature.

By giving a voice to the community, Grey has furthered QCGN's mission to support the development and vitality of Quebec's English-speaking minority and promoted access to justice in Quebec.

QCGN supports access to justice through multiple projects, including the Access to Justice in English Quebec Initiative which works to engage the justice system to improve access to justice for the English-speaking communities in Quebec.

Funded by Justice Canada, the project is developing an in-depth understanding of the justice system in Quebec in targeted areas with the collaboration of subject-matter experts and stakeholders. The 2020-2021 project is focused on English-language services in Correctional Service Canada institutions in Quebec.

2020 MARION PHELPS AWARDS GOES TO MARY DUCHARME OF THE HEMMINGFORD ARCHIVES

Submitted by Matthew Farfan

Quebec Anglophone Heritage Network



QAHN President Grant Myers (2nd from right) paid a visit to the Hemmingford Archives in October to present Mary Ducharme (seated) with the 2020 Marion Phelps Award.

The Marion Phelps Award is presented annually by the **Quebec Anglophone Heritage Network** (QAHN) in recognition of outstanding long-term contributions by an individual to the preservation and promotion of Anglophone heritage in the province of Quebec. This year, QAHN is pleased to present this prestigious award to **Mary Ducharme** of the **Hemmingford Archives**.

Mary Ducharme has had a lengthy career both teaching and volunteering for various community groups, first in Nova Scotia and, since 2001, in Hemmingford, Que. Among her volunteer accomplishments, she headed the Hemmingford Archives from 2005 to 2018 and was active in Heritage Hemmingford while it was operating.

Despite currently dealing with health challenges, Mary continues to conduct research and write for the Hemmingford Archives. Mary has written profusely on heritage-related topics and prepared two books published by the Archives – *Images of Hemmingford* (2010) and *Voices of Hemmingford* (2015).

One of Mary's most important achievements was in leading the move of Hemmingford Archives to a larger, more modern location. This was attained through a great deal of active local fundraising and lobbying.

"QAHN is delighted to be able to honour you for your remarkable and ongoing contributions to the archives and to the preservation of history and heritage in this part of Quebec," said QAHN President Grant Myers, who presented Mary with the award. "We could not think of a more worthy recipient for this award."

Quebec's English-speaking communities. QAHN strives to advance the knowledge of the history, heritage and culture of those communities by informing, inspiring and connecting people through its activities and services. Membership in QAHN is open to individuals, families and organizations. Our current institutional membership numbers over 100.

TYNDALE ST-GEORGES AND FAMILY TIES NEW CARLISLE SELECTED AS CBC CHARITIES THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

QCGN member organizations **Tyndale St-Georges Community Centre** and **Family Ties New Carlisle** have been selected as CBC Quebec's charities this holiday season.

This year, CBC Quebec decided to highlight one Montreal-based charity and one located outside the city. During the month of December, CBC will be working with two charities to showcase stories of people in our communities who are making a difference for its "Make the Season Kind" campaign.



About Family Ties New Carlisle

Family Ties is based in New Carlisle, in the Gaspé region. It provides information, education, and intervention for the English-speaking families of the area, including support for families with special needs.



Over the past 24 years, Family Ties has become firmly rooted in the community it serves. People of all ages take part in the various programs, volunteer their time, make donations and, as members, take part in the democratic life of the organization. Throughout the pandemic, the organization has continued to offer practical and emotional support to local residents.

"Since the COVID-19 crisis began, we have been working even harder to support English-speakers living in and around New Carlisle in any way we can," Family Ties executive director Heather MacWhirter told the CBC.

"Being featured on CBC will allow people from across the province to learn about our organization and understand the needs of the families we serve", she says.

For more on Family Ties, including an extended interview CBC Breakaway's guest host Peter Tardif who speaks with project coordinator Carolyn Taylor, click [here](#).

About Tyndale St-Georges Community Centre

For over 90 years, Tyndale St-Georges Community Centre has offered empowering, supportive programs and services to the community of Little Burgundy in South-West Montreal. As one of the few English Community Centres in Montreal, it is always working on improving services and developing stronger partnerships with community members and organizations.

Since 1927, Tyndale St-Georges Community Centre has provided empowering educational programming for residents of Little Burgundy from birth through adulthood. Programs range from early literacy programs to life skills training for adults. Their aim is to ensure that each member of the community has the opportunity and skills needed to realize their potential.

"Being selected as one of CBC's charities is an absolute privilege and honour", says Shauna Joyce, the centre's executive director told CBC. "It has been a challenging year for many people and we want the Little Burgundy community to know that, more than ever, we are here".



Centre communautaire
Tyndale St-Georges
Community Centre

In the fall, Tyndale St-Georges Community Centre announced its 125K Matching Gift Campaign to help recoup the lost revenue from fundraising events canceled because of the Coronavirus pandemic. The funds raised will help support all in-person and virtual programs at Tyndale St-Georges Community Centre for young families, school-age children, teens, young adults, and Little Burgundy's elders. Click [here](#) to donate.

worn by Catherine O'Hara in the Season 5 finale of Schitt's Creek. O'Hara portrays family matriarch Moira Rose on the Emmy-award winning CBC Television series.

Full details and all stories on the CBC's Make the Season Kind campaign at this [link](#).

SAINT COLUMBA HOUSE LAUNCHES END OF YEAR APPEAL

Submitted by Saint Columba House

This has been a challenging year for all of us. The future is uncertain and the needs of whom we serve are increasing. Even in this time of crisis, we are hopeful. We have been privileged to see acts of kindness, generosity of spirit and unprecedented help. Because in time of difficulty, love overcomes all. Love brings hope.

Poverty, food insecurity and social isolation are mounting issues that have been heightened with the COVID-19 crisis. Throughout the pandemic, our organization has remained on the front lines of essential service delivery. We, like many, have had to learn to adapt, organize quickly and transform our services to meet mounting needs.

In late November, **Saint Columba House** launched its Year End appeal. This year, in support of COVID-19 relief, we are looking to raise \$35,000 dollars in four weeks!

In response to COVID-19, we have moved critical programming on-line, moved our Community Lunch to a pick-up and food delivery model and incurred increases in cleaning costs for in-house programming. Help Saint Columba House reach its goal and ensure that adaptations for COVID-19 can continue. To ensure that we continue to respect Public Health guidelines, we have incurred added costs with personal protective equipment for staff and volunteers. We require masks, protective gloves, visors, sanitizer, hand soap and extra janitorial services to continue to offer essential services.

Our food security programs are now a pickup and home delivery model. All food now must be packaged, labelled, and placed in bags. We have incurred additional staffing, transportation, and recyclable container costs to allow this adjustment.

Currently, our health care system is inundated with requests for mental health services. Wait times are long and poverty makes those suffering the most vulnerable. We have adapted to provide wellness workshops and will be introducing online programming for adults and seniors with over 100 hours of needed workshops to build community and alleviate loneliness. Did you know that in Point Saint Charles?

- 28.6 per cent of all residents live with low income after taxes compared to 21.3 per cent for the island of Montreal.
- 50 per cent of seniors who live in Point Saint Charles live with low income.
- In 2018, the number of people utilizing food banks and meal services grew to 10,390 in the southwest borough of Montreal representing 13.30 per cent of the population (Moisson Food Report, 2018)
- 48 per cent of all families are single parent families with no support.

What can you do to help? Donate today and help us raise \$35,000 dollars towards our COVID-19 relief fund. Your donation will allow us to: continue to feed at-risk children, youth, adults and seniors in our community with food pick up & delivery service; purchase personal protective equipment for our volunteers and staff; and provide online programming to break social isolation for adults and seniors.

We made such a difference this spring in raising \$25,000 dollars toward our COVID-19 relief. As little as \$30 dollars can feed an at-risk child, youth, adult or senior 20 hot, nutritious meal.

Will you help us again this year and support our COVID-19 relief fund? Click [here](#) to donate today.

KATIE LOWRY WINS PROVINCIAL YOUTH AWARD

The QCGN congratulates Katie Lowry from **Phelps Helps** who was awarded the prestigious Youth Recognition Prize from the **Secrétariat à la jeunesse** and presented by Premier François Legault. View Katie's interview with the secretariat team and learn more about her work. Katie, who is currently on maternity leave, was recognized for her work in building and developing Phelps Helps educational and career programming as well as helping young people in the Stanstead area on their journey to autonomy and fulfilling careers. Her understanding of the Stanstead



allowed Phelps to grow from a single high school tutoring initiative to offering **six bilingual educational and career programs**. Read more about the prize [here](#). Katie was interviewed on CBC's Breakaway. Click [here](#) to listen!

Phelps Aide Phelps Helps was founded in 2012 to expressly combat the unacceptably high drop-out rates in the Stanstead area of Quebec. Since inception, the organization has grown organically from a single high school tutoring program to six individual free-of-charge programs

providing educational and career support. Phelps serves Stanstead area community members between the ages of eight and 30 with a continuum of services, prioritizing those facing numerous barriers to attaining an education and employment.

ASSOCIATION FOR CANADIAN STUDIES RECEIVES PRESTIGIOUS AWARD

Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, our longtime stakeholder organization, the **Association for Canadian Studies** (ACS), has used its expertise and drawn on a wide network of collaborators to inform and support Canadians as the country battles the impacts of the virus in this unprecedented period. In honour of its work, the ACS has been awarded the **Mirabelli-Glossop 2020 Prize** from the **Vanier Institute of the Family**. This award, presented to ACS President & CEO **Jack Jedwab**, recognizes the leadership that the organization has shown in creating the **COVID-19 Social Impacts Network** (in partnership with the Vanier Institute), providing timely research and survey data to those who study, serve and support families in Canada. The Association for Canadian Studies was also honoured to be a recipient of the **Mariam Assefa Fund** from **World Education Services** (WES) to enable it to undertake a three-year study aimed at identifying innovative solutions and greater capacity in the immigrant services sector. "The Association for Canadian Studies is excited to work with the WES Mariam Assefa Fund to explore new avenues for collaboration in the immigrant-serving sector, especially as we collectively confront the economic and social ramifications of the global pandemic on newcomers and all Canadians," Jedwab said.



CHUCK CHILDS WINS 2020 SENTINEL AWARD

The **Conseil québécois du théâtre** has honoured **Chuck Childs**, General Manager of the **Centaur Theatre**. The Sentinel Awards highlight the indispensable contribution of cultural workers to the development of Quebec's theatrical art. Involved with Centaur Theatre since 1978 as Production Director and then as General Manager, Chuck has supervised over one hundred productions on two stages, including one international tour and three national tours. Chuck has taught at the National Theatre School of Canada for over 20 years as well as at Concordia and McGill Universities. In other capacities, he has served on the boards of directors of several cultural organizations and has helped to ensure the recognition and support of the English cultural community and bringing together the French and English-speaking artistic milieus. "In the current situation of the pandemic, this contribution has been and remains crucial and the Conseil québécois du théâtre wants to take this opportunity to salute all those people who continue to keep this amazing theatrical machine running until things see better days and beyond," states the council in a press release. "Chuck brings immense joy, passion and experience to every moment of his work in the theatre. He also believes that theatre matters, and that belief has fuelled his devotion to keeping Centaur Theatre alive and well and living into the 21st century," said **Eda Holmes**, Centaur

postponed due to the pandemic.



Thank you for reading our regular newsletter. For up-to-date news about the Quebec Community Groups Network you can visit our website at www.qcgn.ca or follow us on Facebook and/or Twitter.

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