



2017
YOUNG QUEBECERS
LEADING THE WAY
LES JEUNES QUÉBÉCOIS
AUX COMMANDES

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For immediate release

Bilingual Young Quebecers Leading the Way to Canada's Future

Montreal – March 10, 2017 – This year marks the 150th anniversary of Confederation. What does that mean to Quebec's youth? What are the hot issues for youth with regards to Canadian identity, social issues, the environment, the economy, Canada's role in the world? How do they see the future of this country and their role in it?

Interesting discussions and lively debates on these themes are anticipated as dozens of youth aged 15 to 25 descend upon the National Capital Region this weekend for the third and final Young Quebecers Leading the Way forum from March 10 to 12.

On Saturday, more than 80 bilingual youths from six regions of the province will interact with a dozen notable workshops leaders including prominent politicians like NDP leader Thomas Mulcair and Native MP Romeo Saganash; well-informed journalists including CBC national reporter/producer Nick Gamache; National Observer managing editor Mike de Souza; and Canadian Press Bureau Chief Heather Scofield; as well as other experts including former diplomat Todd Kuiuak and Christopher Neal, a former communications consultant with the Canadian International Development Agency and the World Bank,

Remaining on theme, presenters will also include a number of prominent youth leaders including Elyse Tremblay-Longchamps, vice-president of the Fédération étudiante collégiale du Québec (FECQ) who was recently named as a member of the Prime Minister's Youth Council. Co-leading the workshop on Canadian Identity are NDP Youth Critic Anne-Minh Thu Quach and Dafina Savic, a Roma rights activist who is also the Human Rights Coordinator at the Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre. Savic was last year's winner of the Young Quebecers Leading the Way Award and will participate in the launch for the call for nominations for this year's award at noon on Saturday.

The two-day forum kicks off with a keynote speech delivered by Désirée McGraw, the first female president of BC's Pearson College. McGraw, who is passionate about the civic engagement of young Canadians, is the former executive director and president of the Jeanne Sauvé Foundation and the Sauvé Scholars Foundation, whose mission is to connect, engage and empower a new generation of public leadership in Canada and around the world to address key global challenges. A co-founder of the Canadian branch of Al Gore's Climate Project, she was a youth activist in the '80s when the arms race was at its peak.

The event will wrap up on Parliament Hill Sunday after lunch with a closing ceremony where participants will present youth declaration on their vision of Canada over the next 50 years, that they spent the weekend researching and writing. Both the federal and provincial parliamentary youth secretaries, Peter Schiefke and Karine Vallières, will be on hand to comment on their work.

“We are excited about this year’s lineup of speakers and presenters and look forward to seeing how our participants will be inspired to declare their vision of Canada’s future,” commented project leader Lianne Gamelin, explaining that over the past two months participating youths attended regional workshops run by six youth coordinators.

Most of them of travelled to Ottawa/Gatineau by train courtesy of Via Rail, who along with the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages and CBC Quebec, are the project’s main sponsors. The weekend’s ceremonies are being emceed by CBC Quebec’s roving reporter Marika Wheeler, who travels across the province telling people’s stories to listeners.

Young Quebecers Leading the Way is a three-year project launched by the Quebec Community Groups Network to include young Quebecers in the lead up to Canada’s sesquicentennial. Funded by the Department of Canadian Heritage’s Youth Take Charge program, the QCGN has organized three annual forums in partnership with the Institut du Nouveau Monde (INM) and the Association for Canadian Studies (ACS).

The first forum, which looked at Canada’s past, was held in Quebec City in 2015. The second, which focused on present-day Canada, was held last year at Concordia University. This year, youths have travelled to the nation’s capital region to wrap it up. More detail about Young Quebecers Leading the Way on the QCGN website at <http://youthleadingway150.org/>

The Quebec Community Groups Network is a not-for-profit organization bringing together 51 English-language community organizations across Quebec. A centre of evidence-based expertise and collective action, QCGN identifies, explores and addresses strategic issues affecting the development and vitality of the English-speaking community of Quebec. It also encourages dialogue and collaboration among its member organizations, individuals, community groups, institutions and leaders.

Source: Lianne Gamelin, QCGN Youth Coordinator

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