

Tuesday, March 10, 2026 at 7:47:52 AM Eastern Daylight Time

Subject: THE ACCENT: Volume 1, Number 1 2026
Date: Tuesday, March 3, 2026 at 4:03:39 PM Eastern Standard Time
From: TALQ <info+talq.ca@em.yapla.org>
To: Jonathan Patton <jonathan.patton@concordia.ca>

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Taking
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Quebec

THE ACCENT



2026 - Volume 1, No 1.

We are barely into the third month of 2026, and we have undergone harsh weather patterns, political leadership changes, and closer to home intensive work to mobilize our community on issues of critical importance. You will read about TALQ's efforts in our newly named newsletter – ***The Accent***. We hope you will enjoy the look and content!



STRATEGIC VISION

BY EVA LUDVIG

For my part I would like to share a couple of updates.

You may have noticed in early February that in the [Gazette](#) and some regional papers including the [Brome County News](#) and the [West Quebec Post](#), TALQ signaled a concern that **Kelly Burke**, the nominee to become Canada's next official languages commissioner, demonstrated a lack of knowledge about the community and the issues it faces in her testimony to both the Official Languages Senate and House Committees. In fact, in response to a question by MP Anthony Housefather she was hesitant to say whether she would support the Quebec anglophone community in its legal challenge against the Legault government's bid to abolish English school boards. Last week it was confirmed by Prime Minister **Mark Carney**, that Ms. Burke is now the Commissioner of Official Languages, succeeding **Raymond Théberge**.

We have congratulated Commissioner Burke and clearly outlined our expectations. TALQ looks forward to meeting to discuss the practical challenges facing our community in Quebec and to work constructively toward solutions. The implementation of the modernized of the Official Languages Act remains of concern to TALQ and we will strive to ensure measurable and desirable outcomes of English-speaking Quebecers.

Secondly, over the past four years, it has been my privilege to help guide the organization

through meaningful change to ensure TALQ is well positioned to represent and steward the voice of our growing membership and an increasingly diverse English-speaking community. Our 30th anniversary has been a valuable moment to reflect on this progress. While not without challenges, these changes have strengthened both our organization and our community.

In keeping with best practices, the board has amended portions of our by-laws to modify how our four officers—President, Vice-President, Treasurer, and Secretary—are selected. These changes, which were approved unanimously last week by our members during a special meeting, mean that at next year’s AGM, members will vote only once to elect the Board of Directors. The Board will then appoint its officers from among its membership, which will streamline the AGM process with a single ballot, simplify participation for members, and strengthen collective accountability within the Board.

These changes position TALQ for continued growth and will ultimately help build a stronger community. I look forward to sharing more in the months ahead.

OPERATIONAL INSIGHTS

BY SYLVIA MARTIN-LAFORGE

As TALQ marks its 30th anniversary and continues building on our rebrand, we are taking thoughtful steps to ensure our communications reflect the role we play within our community. As leaders in public awareness, advocacy and representation, it is important that we share not only our positions, but the work behind them.

It’s been a busy year so far, as TALQ has appeared before the National Assembly on Bill 1 and before the Senate Committee on Official Languages regarding Part VII. These moments matter. They are part of our ongoing responsibility to ensure that our community’s voice is present where decisions are being made. Keeping you informed about these efforts is central to our mandate.

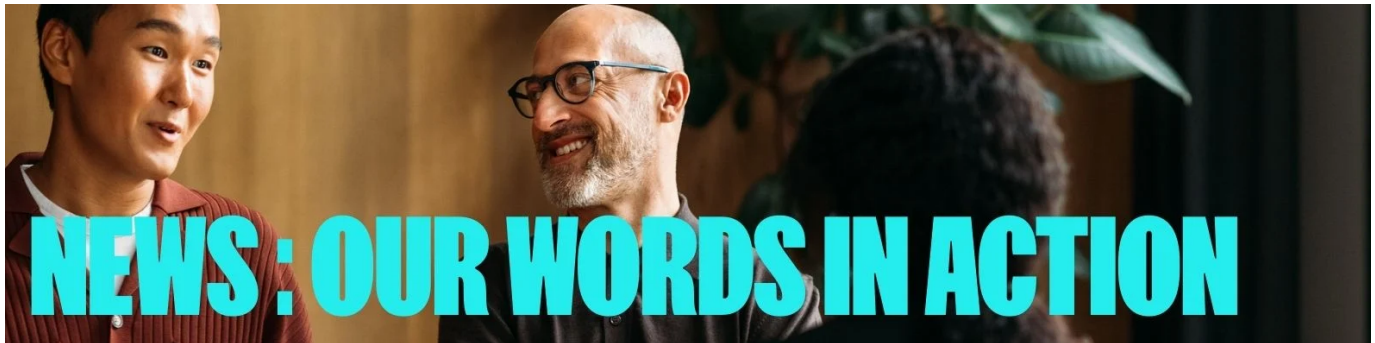
In response to feedback, we introduced **TALQ Updates** — timely, factual bulletins that provide clear information about our recent activities and positions. These updates are meant to keep you aware of developments as they happen. We have also added **TALQ’s Take** to the **Daily Briefing**, offering a brief perspective on issues in the news we believe deserve particular attention. And, in spring of last year, when we launched our new brand, we introduced a **revamped website**, which is easier to navigate through a simpler format and streamlined content. We invite you to take a look for yourself.

Today, we are pleased to introduce **The Accent**, a monthly newsletter focused on subjects that may not be urgent but are no less important. Different from the weekly updates of the past, The Accent brings together stories, insights and developments from and by TALQ’s staff as well as from across our network in a format that allows for greater reflection and connection.

Thank you, as always, for your engagement and support.

As we continue refining this approach, we invite you [to complete a short survey](#) so we can gather insight on your preferences, optimize

content and customize our style to reflect your priorities. Your feedback will help ensure that our communications remain aligned with our mandate and responsive to the needs of the community we serve.



TALQ APPEARANCES BEFORE PARLIAMENTARY AND NATIONAL ASSEMBLY COMMITTEES

TALQ has continued its advocacy efforts at both the federal and provincial levels, appearing before multiple parliamentary committees to advance the rights and vitality of Quebec's English-speaking community. You may remember that in mid-November we invited our members to assist in a webinar lead by Marion Sandilands and Logan Stack. That presentation, along with an overview of the Bill, our Brief and our Presentation to the National Assembly can be found on the [landing page of our website](#). There you will also find a tab on Part VII which includes an overview as well as our brief and presentation at the Senate.





On February 9, TALQ appeared before the **Standing Senate Committee on Official Languages (OLLO)** regarding the draft regulations under Part VII of the Official Languages Act, followed by an appearance before the **House of Commons Standing Committee on Official Languages (LANG)** on February 24.

Across both presentations, TALQ stressed the importance of ensuring that the implementation of Part VII delivers tangible, measurable benefits for official-language minority communities and maintains clear federal accountability in Quebec's distinct policy environment.





At the provincial level, TALQ appeared on February 17 before the **Commission des institutions at the National Assembly** to present its concerns regarding Bill 1. TALQ underscored the broader governance and rights implications of the proposed legislation, particularly for minority communities, and emphasized the need for legislative clarity and institutional safeguards.



TALQ will continue to engage proactively with parliamentarians and policymakers at both levels of government, ensuring that the perspectives and priorities of Quebec’s English-speaking community remain clearly articulated and meaningfully reflected as these legislative and regulatory processes move forward.



PART VII OF THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ACT: WHAT THE PROPOSED REGULATIONS MEAN FOR OUR COMMUNITY

Part VII of the Official Languages Act requires the federal government to take “positive measures” to support official language minority communities. For English-speaking Quebec, that means Ottawa has a legal duty to help strengthen the vitality of our community.

Added in 1988, Part VII was meant to reinforce Canada’s commitment to linguistic duality. For us, it is not symbolic. It is the statutory tool that requires federal institutions to consider our needs in policy decisions, funding programs, and intergovernmental agreements. It shapes how Ottawa negotiates with Quebec in sectors such as health and education, and it guides direct

investments in community organizations that provide services and build capacity.

The difficulty has always been implementation. For years, Part VII functioned more as a statement of principle than as a clear, enforceable regime. Parliament strengthened it in 2005 and again in 2023, but key concepts such as “community vitality” and “positive measures” remain undefined. The law emphasizes what government must consider, not what it must ultimately achieve.

The 2023 modernization required the development of regulations under Part VII. Regulations are legally binding rules adopted by Cabinet to explain how a statute must be applied in practice. They do not change the Act itself, but they clarify how departments are expected to comply.

Treasury Board has consulted stakeholders, including TALQ, over the past two years. Draft regulations are now before Parliament and are being studied by the House and Senate Standing Committees on Official Languages. TALQ has [filed a brief](#) and appeared before both committees to present the perspective of English-speaking Quebec. (Details on this appearance are noted above)

The proposed regulations focus squarely on process. Federal institutions must examine how their decisions could affect official language minority communities. They must identify potential impacts, consider possible measures, consult where appropriate, and document their analysis. These steps apply when programs are created, renewed, modified, or ended. That is a meaningful improvement. It promotes consistency across departments and makes clear that minority language impacts cannot be ignored.

But the limits are equally important.

The regulations do not require specific outcomes. They do not guarantee funding, redesign of programs, or protection of particular institutions. Most notably, they do not require that federal–provincial agreements include binding linguistic clauses to safeguard minority communities. When Ottawa transfers funds to Quebec, the regulations do not compel the inclusion of enforceable language commitments within those agreements. Nor do they guarantee transparency about how funds are used once transferred. There is no obligation to publicly explain how Part VII analysis influenced the final agreement, which measures were proposed but not adopted, or how results will be tracked.

This gap matters. Many of the most significant federal investments affecting English-speaking Quebec — in health, education, and workforce development — flow through intergovernmental arrangements. If those agreements lack clear language protections and reporting requirements, it becomes difficult to assess whether Part VII obligations are being fulfilled in substance.

The regulations strengthen procedural discipline within federal institutions. They do not eliminate discretion in how commitments are expressed or omitted in binding agreements. For our community, that distinction is critical.

As TALQ has noted in its brief to Parliament, the regulations reflect ongoing structural

challenges in the Act itself, which is scheduled for review in 2033. The evolution of Part VII continues.

BILL 1 SNAPSHOT: TWO CONCERNING IMPACTS IT WILL HAVE ON THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING COMMUNITY OF QUEBEC

Bill 1 has faced broad opposition. Here we highlight two specific impacts that the bill would have on Quebec's English-speaking community. Both were discussed by many of the over 200 organizations and individuals who were invited to present during the ongoing consultations at the National Assembly.

One of the most concerning Bill 1 provisions for the English-speaking community is the proposed restriction on using public funds to contest certain laws. In practice, this means that ministries, municipalities, school boards, universities would not be allowed to use public money to challenge laws declared to protect Quebec's nation or autonomy. Yet, school boards, in particular, have been instrumental in defending the education rights of English-speaking Quebecers, rights which are the bedrock of our community's vitality.

Many organizations have been critical of these restrictions during the consultations. QESBA underscored that past litigation under s. 23 of the Canadian Charter demonstrates how publicly funded institutions safeguard minority rights. [INSERT LINK TO THEM HERE?] Me Julius Grey argued that preventing publicly funded bodies from public funds renders access to justice theoretical rather than realistic, since individuals rarely possess the resources to mount complex constitutional challenges. Even some nationalist-leaning groups signaled discomfort: the Mouvement national des Québécoises et des Québécois described this provision as an "irritant" that is not necessary to achieving the bill's objectives.

A second concerning aspect of Bill 1 is its restrictions on collaboration with the federal government. Again, several of the over 200 organizations who have appeared at the National Assembly expressed concern about the impact on access to services; services which are already under pressure. [CHSSN](#) noted that limiting partnerships and funding arrangements could undermine access to health and social services in English, particularly given the English-speaking community's higher levels of poverty and vulnerability. [RAWQ](#) highlighted that restricting such collaboration could destabilize funding for health care, education and infrastructure, especially in regional communities.

Overall, these provisions risk undermining the rights and services of the English-speaking community. TALQ [presented its concerns](#) to the National Assembly on February 17, 2026, and will continue to monitor developments.

Elena Kennedy,
Access to Justice Project Manager and Senior Legal Researcher



CANADA INVESTS 7 MILLION DOLLARS IN EASTERN TOWNSHIPS EMPLOYABILITY INITIATIVE

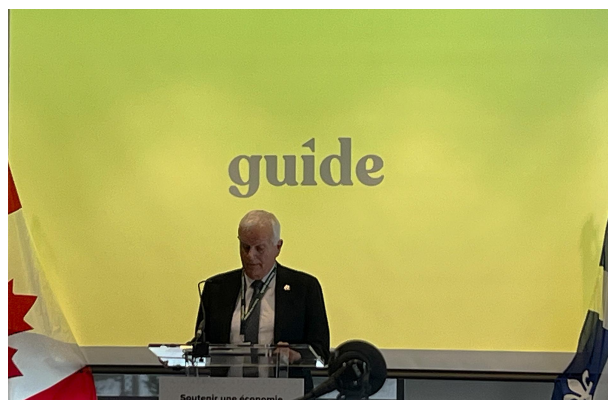
We would like to congratulate our member organization, the Townshippers' Association, on the launch of its new employability initiative, "Guide". Our Director of Community Engagement and Strategic Alliances, **Riley Dalys-Fine**, was in Sherbrooke on Friday February 20th to join the Townshippers in celebrating this new initiative, which is funded by a 7-million-dollar investment over 5 years from Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) through the Enabling Fund for Official Language Minority Communities (EF-OLMC).

Townshippers' Association (TA) is non-profit organization located in Sherbrooke, Quebec, with a territory that spans the administrative region of Estrie. TA's main goals include supporting the interests of the English-speaking community in the Eastern Townships, keeping the culture and identity of this community strong, and encouraging English speakers to take part in their local communities and Quebec society. With this new initiative, TA hopes to reach 1,800 English speakers throughout their region by collaborating closely with local partners, and provide them with personalized guidance and resources to help them move forward in their career journeys. You can learn more about TA [here](#).

The launch event, held at the Quartier général de l'entrepreneuriat Promutuel Assurance, was well-attended and brought together regional leaders in the business, education, and community sectors as well as at all levels of government – including Sherbrooke Member of Parliament **Elisabeth Brière**, Richmond MNA André Bachand, and Quebec Liberal Leader **Charles Milliard**. **Anna Gainey**, MP for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Westmount and Secretary of State (Children and Youth) announced the funding, recognizing our community's historic contributions to both the Canadian and Quebec economies, and to Quebec's unique cultural fabric. Secretary Gainey was joined by **Annie Koutrakis**, Member of Parliament for Vimy and Parliamentary Secretary for the Minister of Jobs and Families, who acknowledged employment disparities between English and French-speaking communities in Quebec in her remarks, as well as **Marianne Dandurand**, Member of Parliament for Stanstead-Compton, who saluted the Guide program as a prime example of multiple communities coming together to pursue common objectives in her opening statement.

All of these sentiments ring true for TALQ, which has for years supported our partners across Quebec in calling attention to our community's unique employment challenges which can only be met through actions led by the community.

The launch of *Guide* represents just one of the many positive outcomes of these collective actions as one of a number of initiatives supported through the new Employment Assistance Services (EAS) stream of the EF-OLMC program, part of the Government of Canada [Action Plan for Official Languages 2023-2028 – Protection-Promotion-Collaboration](#). With nearly half of the \$208 million in funding allocated to this stream being invested here in Quebec, TALQ looks forward to being able to share more news concerning exciting initiatives like this one in the months to come. We expect also to play an active role in supporting the work of any of these initiatives where there's a commitment to collaboration, so that we can all benefit from these investments to advance our common priorities.





Top left to bottom right: Riley Dalys-Fine & Denis Kotsoros (TA's Executive Director), Marianne Dandurand, Don Warnholtz (TA's President), Jennifer Humblet (TA's Workforce Employment and Economic Development Manager), Riley & Annie Koutrakis.



BILL 1 HEARINGS: ENGLISH-SPEAKING COMMUNITY OUT IN FULL FORCE

Hearings at the National Assembly on Bill 1 concluded on February 19, and TALQ would like to take a moment to acknowledge the many members of Quebec's English-speaking community who took the time to be heard over the last few months. Last year, TALQ undertook efforts to mobilize our community through a public awareness campaign to inform English speakers of the risks inherent to this bill and to call attention to its potential impacts on the vitality of our community. As part of this process, TALQ analyzed and shared our insights with our members, partners, and stakeholders as a way of empowering the community to participate as fully as possible in this critical discussion.

Through our efforts, we contributed to a markedly high number of English-speaking stakeholders taking part in the hearings. Over a dozen English-speaking groups participated - including six of our community group members: The **English Parents' Committee Association (EPCA)**, **HEAR Quebec**, the **Quebec Federation of Home and School Associations (QFHSA)**, **Regional Association of West Quebecers (RAWQ)**, **Seniors Action Quebec (SAQ)**, and **Townshippers' Association (TA)**. Our partners who represent community interests in specific sectors of activity such as the **Regional Development Network (RDN)**, the **Community Health and Social Services Network (CHSSN)**, **English Language Arts Network (ELAN)**, **Quebec English Schoolboards Association (QESBA)**, and **Community Economic Development and Employability Corporation (CEDEC)** also participated, speaking to common themes while also speaking in-depth to the threat this legislation poses to their respective sectors. It was encouraging to see such a broad range of voices from our community actively participate in the discussion and clearly affirm our shared position that this legislation undermines minority rights.

While TALQ remains concerned about the numerous flaws that are inherent to Bill 1, the combined impact of many voices speaking to our shared challenges is about much more than identifying and responding to these problems. It establishes Quebec's English-speaking community as a force capable of convening across regions of Quebec and sectors of activity, to articulate a common vision of our place in Quebec's society. Regardless of what happens next with Bill 1, this capacity for collective action will become more important in the months ahead.

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS: QAHN VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION AWARDS

Volunteers are at the heart of **QAHN's heritage network**. Their dedication, skills, and

enthusiasm strengthen our organizations and help us achieve meaningful impact across Quebec. For the past two years, QAHN has celebrated outstanding contributions at an annual Awards Ceremony, bringing together heritage leaders and newcomers to recognize excellence and reconnect as a community.

QAHN is once again inviting member organizations to nominate volunteers who are making a difference in preserving and promoting Anglophone heritage in Quebec. Awards recognize exceptional contributions by individuals, organizations, or groups, and each includes a monetary prize.

Award Categories:

Marion Phelps Award (Individual)

<https://qahn.org/marion-phelps-award>

Richard Evans Award (Organization or Group)

<https://qahn.org/richard-evans-award>

Young Volunteer Award (Individual aged 16–30)

<https://qahn.org/young-volunteer-award>

Nominations close April 1, 2026, with an awards ceremony will be held in Montreal in June. Additional details will be shared in the coming months. For more information, contact QAHN at home@qahn.org or call (819) 564-9595





LITERACY QUEBEC BOARD OF DIRECTORS APPOINTS FAYE SILUK AS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

TALQ would like to extend a warm welcome to **Faye Siluk**, who has recently taken on the role of Executive Director of **Literacy Quebec** – a TALQ community group member organization. As Executive Director of the organization, which celebrated its 45th anniversary this year, Faye will lead a provincewide network of more than a dozen community-based literacy groups that serve as a key voice for practitioners and the communities they support across Quebec.

With experience across the education system, corporate, and community sectors, Faye brings broad expertise to the role at a pivotal time.

Since 2021, TALQ has partnered with Literacy Quebec as fiduciary for the Community Empowerment Literacy Initiative (CELI), distributing over \$1 million—funded by Employment and Social Development Canada—to community groups delivering literacy and essential skills training. Through this collaboration, we’ve gained deeper insight into the challenges facing English speakers with low literacy, as well as the dedicated leaders and volunteers who support them.

As economic pressures, digital literacy demands, and the needs of older learners grow, organizations like Literacy Quebec play a vital role in advancing English-speaking Quebecers’ right to accessible literacy services that support success in work and life.

For decades, Literacy Quebec has helped drive meaningful change and strengthen the vitality of English-speaking Quebec through its leadership and advocacy. TALQ is proud to count the organization among its members and to join its Board and President Wendy Seys in welcoming Faye’s collaborative, relationship-based approach. We look forward to meeting Faye and continuing our partnership in support of Quebec’s English-speaking community.

SENIORS ACTION QUEBEC HAS A USEFUL YOUTUBE CHANNEL OPEN TO ALL

Seniors Action Quebec is expanding access to trusted, expert-led information through its

YouTube channel, offering educational videos that address issues impacting seniors across the province.

Recent sessions include *Fraud Awareness: Contacting the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre* with **Jeffrey Horncastle** and *Fraud & Scam Prevention Resources from the Canadian Bankers Association* with **Andrew Dickson**. These presentations provide practical guidance to help seniors recognize, prevent, and respond to fraud and scams.

Beyond fraud prevention, the channel features subject matter experts speaking on vital topics such as legal rights, housing, health issues, and personal empowerment. All videos are free, closed-captioned in English, and designed to provide clear, reliable information seniors can use with confidence. New content is added weekly, with programming shaped by community interest and feedback. Knowledge is power — and these resources are accessible anytime, from the comfort of home.

Seniors, caregivers, and community members are encouraged to visit and [subscribe to the Seniors Action Quebec YouTube channel](#) to stay informed, learn practical strategies, and access trustworthy guidance on the issues that matter most.



A ROADMAP TO ECONOMIC PROSPERITY IN QUEBEC: PROSPÈREQ

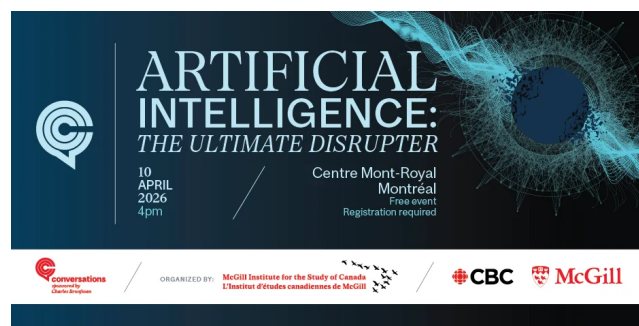
Our Director of Community Engagement and Strategic Alliances, **Riley Dalys-Fine**, along with our Manager of Member Relations and Community Mobilization **Maggie Severs** were pleased to be on hand at the **Community Economic Development and Employability Corporation (CEDEC)**'s *ProspèreQ Working Forum* last week in Brossard. There, they joined public, private, and civil society sector leaders from across the province to review and validate CEDEC's work to identify economic development opportunities to build enterprises, expand trade, and create jobs.

At TALQ, we recognize that a community's economic prosperity is critical to its overall vitality. We also agree that Quebec's English-speaking community is well-positioned to contribute to the overall economic prosperity of the province. We were pleased to see, through our exchanges at the ProspèreQ Forum, that many leaders from both linguistic communities not only share this position, but are ready to work together to leverage opportunities to do so.

ProspèreQ was a great example of how our community can mobilize like-minded partners to collectively advance initiatives that support shared goals and the vitality of an inclusive Quebec economy. As **John Buck**, CEDEC President and CEO remarked, "collaboration is no longer optional, it is foundational." Participating in this event allowed TALQ to connect with partners working in various sectors of the economy who collaborate every day so that English speakers can participate fully in Quebec's economy. Through CEDEC's leadership, these discussions will grow into meaningful action with measurable results over the coming months. TALQ looks forward to working closely with CEDEC to realize these shared objectives, and we will have more to say in our next newsletter.



Riley Dalys-Fine, John Buck & MP Anna Gainey



Sponsored by Charles Bronfman and Hosted by the McGill Institute for the Study of Canada

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE: THE ULTIMATE DISRUPTER

The McGill Institute for the Study of Canada (MISC) invites you to *Artificial Intelligence: The Ultimate Disrupter*, a timely panel discussion examining AI's role in the ongoing tension between rapid technological innovation and the political and social frameworks that seek to regulate it.

Moderated by award-winning foreign correspondent **Nahlah Ayed**, host of *IDEAS* on CBC Radio One, the panel features:

Yoshua Bengio, Professor at Université de Montréal; Co-President and Scientific Director of LawZero; Founder and Scientific Advisor of Mila

Cory Doctorow, writer, activist, journalist, and author of the international bestseller *Enshittification*

Astra Taylor, filmmaker, writer, organizer, and 2023 CBC Massey Lecturer

Date: Friday, April 10, 2026

Time: 4:00–5:30 p.m.

Location: Théâtre Symposia, Mont Royal Center, 2200 Mansfield Street, Montreal

Cost: Free and open to the public ([advance registration required](#))

Getting there: Metro Peel (underground access) | Bus 24 Sherbrooke

Parking: Underground parking (\$10), entrance at 2055 Metcalfe Street

Accessibility: Wheelchair accessible; the event will be held in English, with simultaneous interpretation into French available.



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Canada

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