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# SEMAJI

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Official Newsletter of the BCRC

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## Minister Kathleen Weil Announces Grants for English-Speaking Quebecers; For the Black Community the Proof of the “Puden” in the Serving and Eating

WRITTEN BY DR. CLARENCE BAYNE;  
EDITED BY ASHLIE BIENVENU

After years of negotiating (The Table des Concertations, 1991; The Black Community Forum, Val Morin, 1992), protests (the Sir George Computer Crisis, 1968; Anthony Griffin, November 11 1987; Freddy Villeneuve, 2008), task forces (Yolande James Task Force), cultural briefs (BTW at the Liza Frulla-Hébert, Roland Arpin, Policy on Culture and the Arts, Quebec City, 1991 Villeneuve), and several unplanned selections of community organizations for project funding, the Quebec Government, under the Couillard Liberals, has put in place a structure that is part of the Government policy and decision making system. The new structure gives the English-speaking Black communities hope that they will be able to participate fully in the social, cultural, economic processes of the Quebec society. It also gives hope that Blacks will ultimately cease to be seen as immigrant problems that represent elements of Bernier’s “extreme multiculturalism”, and CAQ’s unwilling, and ungrateful, assimilation that threatens Canadian and Quebec values, harmony and democracy will cease. The Government has, under pressure from a diversified English-speaking voice, created the Secretariat for Relations with English-Speaking Quebecers. It will be responsible for ensuring that the concerns of English-Speaking Quebecers are taken into account in government orientations and decisions in collaboration with government ministries and bodies.

Quotation: QUÉBEC CITY, Nov. 24, 2017

"The Secretariat for relations with English-speaking Quebecers will act as a link between the government and the English-speaking community throughout Québec. It will act as a facilitator to enable the government to better serve the community. The creation of the Secretariat is a historic gesture of which I am very proud."

Kathleen Weil, Minister responsible for Access to Information and the Reform of Democratic Institutions and Minister responsible for Relations with English-Speaking Quebecers

Highlights:

In addition to the responsibilities of various government ministries and bodies towards English-speaking Quebecers, the Secretariat for relations with English-speaking Quebecers has a mandate to:

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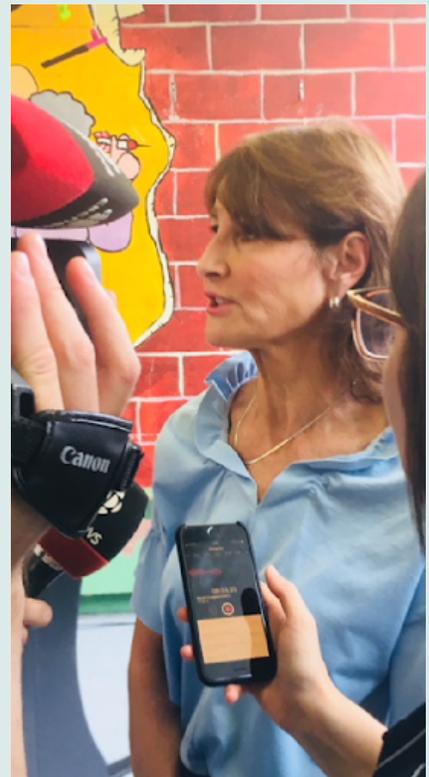
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1. Ensure liaisons with sectoral, regional and provincial groups that represent English-speaking Quebecers.
2. Ensure that the concerns of English-speaking Quebecers are taken into consideration in the development of government policy direction and decisions, and in matters of access to government programmes and their application in conjunction with the concerned ministries and agencies.
3. Make available relevant statistics to document issues facing English-speaking Quebecers.
4. Interact with the federal government on issues, agreements, programs or policies that may have a direct or indirect impact on English-speaking Quebecers in collaboration with the Secrétariat du Québec aux Relations Canadiennes and other ministries and bodies concerned.
5. Advise the government, ministries and bodies on relations with English-speaking Quebecers regarding the provision of services and issues, agreements, programs and policies that may have a direct or indirect impact on the community.

The Proof of the Puden is in the eating.

The Black Community Resource Center's mission, since its creation in 1995, has been to strengthen and support organizations in the English-speaking Black Community of Quebec. It has, with the support of a networks of partners and the Black Community Forum, collaborated with the Quebec Community Groups Network (56 English speaking organization across Quebec) to ensure that the Black English-speaking community was heard; that our situation was seen and understood to be unique in the English-speaking community. Have they heard us? Are they listening? The answer to the first question is yes.

We have been vocal and articulate. We have been invited to the consultations, and several of us from different sector agencies participated. In particular, the Black Community Resource Center and the Black Community Forum have insisted that the Black community not be treated as mere enclaves of the White English-speaking Community. That has been respected, in the sense that the Secretariat for Relations with English-Speaking Quebecers has had several meetings with the Black Community Forum as distinct from us being at a table with 50 or more non-Black English-speaking organizations. Do they understand that our priorities differ in significant ways from the mainstream larger minority group of which we are a part? Yes. They do. In the same way that they understand that the needs of the "Town-shippers" are different to those of the suburban English-speaking communities.

To the second question. There can be no question about it, there is a heightened level of awareness within the government about our needs and differences, and our priorities and urgencies. We draw this conclusion from the fact that the English Black community has been given a special place at the Table. While we have access to all the services available to English-speaking Quebecers, we will be given the capacity to know when the "puden is being served" and the means to get to the table. Hopefully not as Lazarus. There is a clear commitment to creating the capacity of the BCRC to work with the Secretariat to ensure that the Black Community Organizations get there in a timely and effective manner. There is also a clear commitment to the organizations that get there through the assistance of

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**OUR FUNDERS:**

**BLACK STUDIES CENTER**

**CANADIAN HERITAGE,  
OFFICIAL LANGUAGES**

**MINISTÈRE DE LA SANTÉ  
ET DES  
SERVICES SOCIAUX**

**THE BCRC**

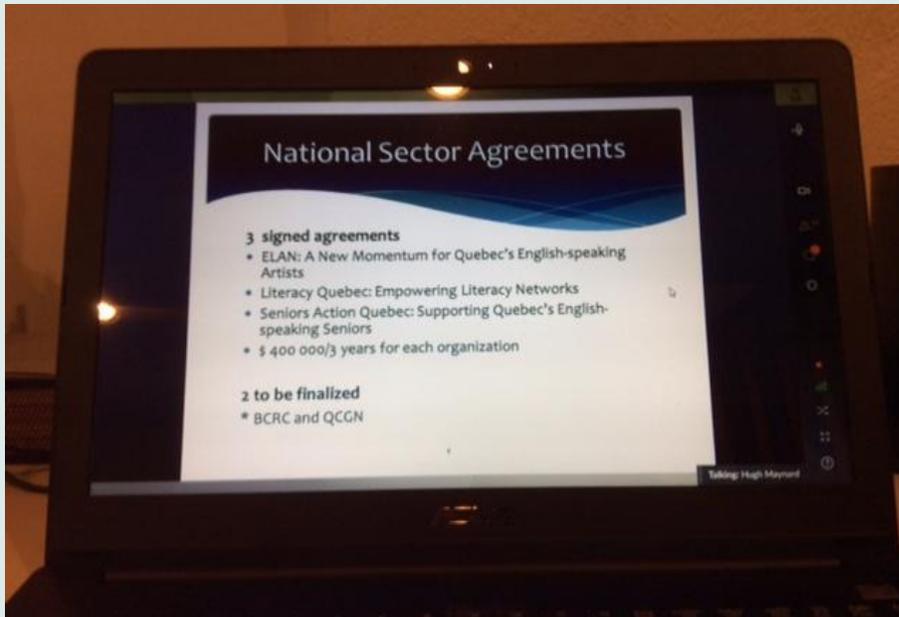
THE BLACK COMMUNITY RESOURCE CENTRE (BCRC) TAKES A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO MEETING THE NEEDS OF ENGLISH-SPEAKING YOUTH. WE REFER TO THIS APPROACH AS THE "HOLISTIC PROJECT." IN ADOPTING THIS APPROACH TO COMMUNITY SERVICE, WE RECOGNIZE THAT YOUTH HAVE MANY NEEDS (E.G., SOCIO-CULTURAL, EDUCATIONAL, AND ECONOMIC, ETC.) THAT MUST BE ADDRESSED IN ORDER FOR YOUTH TO ACHIEVE THEIR MAXIMUM POTENTIAL IN OUR SOCIETY.

a clear commitment to the organizations that get there through the assistance of the Secretariat and the BCRC, or independently, that they have the best chance possible.

Here is what the Minister Kathleen Weil had to say at the announcements made at Verdun (666 Woodland Avenue, Monday, 14 August 2018):

“The Secretariat will be working with the Black Community Resource Centre to increase the capacity of organizations serving English-speaking Blacks to interact effectively with the Government of Quebec and with other organizations serving the interests of the broader English-speaking communities”.

This was reaffirmed at an online “Exchange session” held by the Minister 3PM the same day. See the slide captured from the session by Sylvia Piggott, representing the BASF. The slide names the organizations funded, and notes that the BCRC contribution agreement is being processed. This is supposed to increase the capacity of the BCRC to work with the Secretariat, help increase the capacity of the English-speaking Black community organizations, whose missions are in conformity with the mandate of the Secretariat, improve communication within the Black community and between the community, the Government of Quebec and other agencies serving the English community, help to solve community and relationship problems, and assist the Black organizations by keeping them briefed on key issues, announcements, sources of funding, on a daily and weekly basis. In general, acting to ensure that the English-speaking Black Community participate fully in the Quebec society and economy.



Central to this is working with the secretariat to develop and track the social economy index measuring the subjective and objective wellbeing of the English-speaking Black Community.

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Priority Projects that the BCRC will be taking to the Table on behalf of key Forum organizations and partners:

1. The Queensland family and Youth intervention project of the QBBE including the BCRC "House of Kings and Queensproject".
2. The Creative Tourism economic project based on Black art, culture and histories. (This project is partially being implemented through the initiatives of the Union United Church as a pilot.)
3. Black Employment and Retention Strategy: Stop the Brain Drain project of the BCRC and BASF
4. The Community Archive and heritage preservation project of the BSC currently being initiated in collaboration with the BTW, QBBE, and under consideration and evaluation by ConcordiaLibrary and Archive (acquisitions and displays).
5. Support to the Black History Month Round Table for the Pan-Black identity Events website.
6. Several community based programs conducted by community organizations and aimed at strengthening the Black Family; health and mental health.
7. Support for the workshops, publications of reports, and annual meetings of the network of the Black Community Forum.
8. Development of a human development index and database for the English-speaking Black Community.
9. Creation of a cultural strategy and a history of contributions. Development of a community Toponomy Committee.
10. Support for the Economic Development workshops in entrepreneurship and Black Community projects of ICED, John Molson School of Business.
11. Support for the cultural activities of Westcan, the Carifesta, Festivals of English-speaking Black groups, Black Theatre Workshop (Arts Mentorship and School Tours); Kola and Logas Readings; and access to maintenance of facilities.
12. Funding of research and publication.

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# Project Announcement

By Living History: 100 Years of History, Culture and Heritage Team

When we understand our history, we understand our place in the world. Our sense of self is reinforced through the stories we attach to our history. As a result, losing one's history can be akin to losing one's sense of self. Black immigrants have made significant cultural, artistic and social contributions to present-day Montreal. However, this history is often overlooked and rarely told.

The BCRC's "Living History: 100 Years of Black History, Culture and Heritage" Project will give 15 Black youth the opportunity to participate in a research internship collecting oral histories from Montreal's Black English-speaking community. Building on the work of the BCRC's previous project "Standing on their Shoulders," "Living History" will trace the influence of Black Montrealers beyond Little Burgundy and highlight significant peoples, events and organizations of the 20th century. With the support of Canadian Heritage, the project will culminate in the creation of 15 "memoryscapes" or sound walks that invite the listener to experience the hidden history of a place by listening to the memories of its past and present inhabitants.

"Living History: 100 Years of Black History, Culture and Heritage" seeks to preserve the heritage and sustain the vitality of Montreal's Black community. By bringing the hidden history of Black Montreal to light, it will foster a greater sense of belonging and attachment to the city and province. The memoryscapes will be launched in the summer of 2020 and be made available on the BCRC's website for listening.

Are you interested in becoming one of the BCRC's research interns? Do you have memories that you are willing to share? Please contact the Living History team at [livinghistory@bcrcmontreal.com](mailto:livinghistory@bcrcmontreal.com)

Find us on facebook: [www.facebook.com/livinghistorybcrc](http://www.facebook.com/livinghistorybcrc)

We would love our community to be involved in our research process. In order to do this, we will be featuring a few articles, containing our research, in future Semaji issues. So, make sure to look for those in the upcoming issues!



Canadian  
Heritage

Patrimoine  
canadien

*Special thanks to our partners: Quebec Anglophone Heritage Network, Black Theatre Workshop, UNIA, Youth in Motion, Concordia University's John Molson School of Business, Black History Month*





The Henry F. Hall Building during the Sir George Williams Crisis February, 1969



Jackie Robinson playing for the Montreal Royals in the 1946-1947 season



Sign of the former Negro Community Centre which served the community from 1926-1989  
The building was torn down in 2014

# HAND IN HAND: EMPOWERING GENERATIONS SENIORS PROJECT

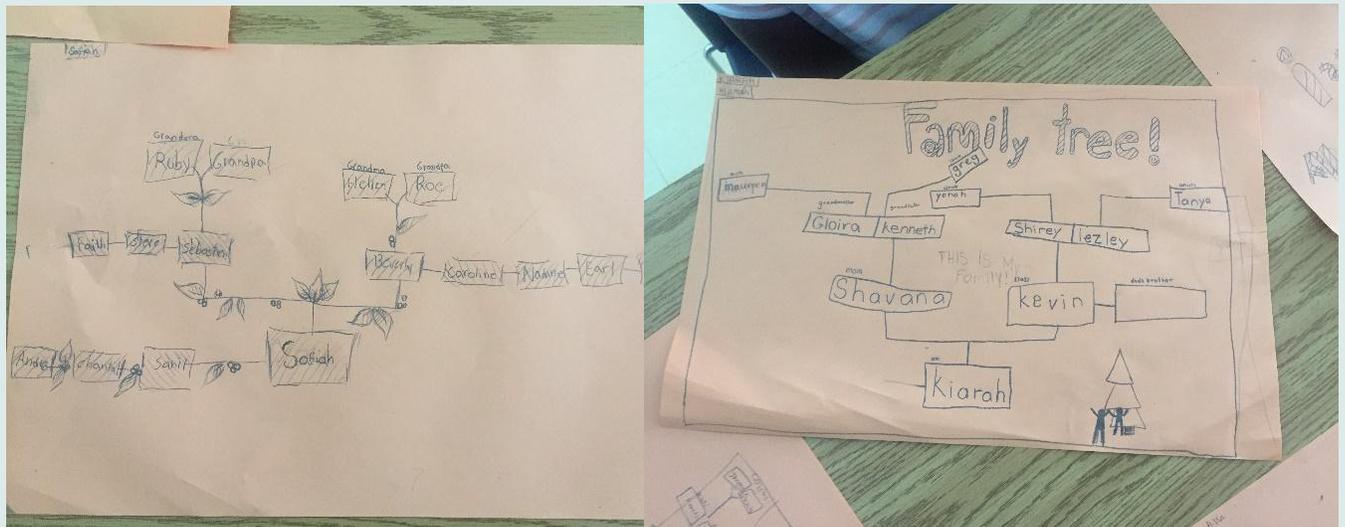
WRITTEN BY ASHLIE BIENVENU

Our new project, Hand in Hand: Empowering Generations, has conducted engaging workshops, over the past few months, involving storytelling and cultural cooking. These workshops have been quite a success and have contributed to an inter generational sharing of knowledge.

In the storytelling activity, we had a workshop on oral history and, later, a discussion, where seniors spoke about what life was like in their youth, their experiences in Montreal, and, in some cases, the journey they took to get to Montreal. The youth were incredibly engaged, and had many questions for the seniors. The seniors and youth also attended a workshop on genealogy, in which youth and seniors created family trees, and learned the method, and resources, for finding information and family documents online.

In the Cultural Cooking activity, youth and seniors were presented with different cultural dishes. The youth had fun getting their hands dirty, while the seniors stood by to offer assistance and advice. While waiting for the dish to cook, one of our seniors taught the youth about table etiquette, and how to properly set a table. The youth and seniors then sat down, at their properly set table, to eat the food that they had made together. It was a day filled with fun, learning, and connection.

In the near future, we will be conducting our Technology Awareness workshops, in which the youth will guide seniors through the world of social media and technology, and, at the same time, the youth will gain an understanding of the financial abuse that seniors oftentimes face.



Family trees made by the youths



One of our seniors teaching the youth about table etiquette



A sample of the Italian meatballs made by the youth, and the recipe they copied down



The youth and seniors gather together around their creation



Youth making another, batch while the meatballs cook in the oven

# COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE BCRC PRESENTS LIVING HISTORY: 100 YEARS OF HISTORY, CULTURE AND HERITAGE



Please join us for an opportunity to learn about this history project and how you can contribute. We want your support, comments and ideas!

## COMMUNITY FORUM

October 24, 2018 - 5:00 P.M. - 7 P.M.

UNIA 2471 Notre-Dame, Montreal

H3J1N9

Light snack will be served.



HOW DO I SUBMIT ARTICLES TO BE SUBMITTED TO  
THE SEMAJI NEWSLETTER?

ARTICLES FOR  
SUBMISSION ARE ACCEPTED 30 DAYS PRIOR TO  
PUBLICATION. ISSUES ARE PUBLISHED EVERY FIRST OF THE MONTH. EMAIL  
COMMUNICATIONS@BCRCMONTREAL.COM. IF YOU ARE SUBMITTING  
PHOTOS PLEASE SEND A JPEG WITH CREDIT.

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