

English-speaking community needs formal presence in provincial government, say QCGN members

For Immediate Release

MONTREAL, June 15, 2013 – The Quebec Community Groups Network (QCGN) ended its annual meeting in Montreal this weekend with a new Board of Directors, a renewed Strategic Plan and a consensus that Quebec’s English-speaking community needs formal representation in the provincial government.

“We did not discuss what form that representation should take – perhaps a dedicated minister, a commissioner or an ombudsman – but our members were clear that our community needs a government body that is designated to advise the provincial government on the development of strategies, priorities and programs for English-speaking Quebecers,” said QCGN President Dan Lamoureux. His comments followed a presentation on how the federal government and several provinces and territories have ensured such representation for their minority communities.

During a debate that launched the day on Saturday, social psychologist Richard Bourhis, remarked that institutions of the English-speaking community were in decline and that, for the sake of social cohesion, the dominant French majority in Quebec needs to find ways to support its minority communities. Later, Bourhis argued that a dedicated bureaucracy would show real support for the English-speaking community.

“A presence in the provincial government could propose policies and programs that support the vitality of Quebec’s English-speaking minority,” said QCGN Director General Sylvia Martin-Laforge, noting that an inside presence would have the potential to build a better government understanding of the needs and challenges of the English-speaking community and dispel some of the myths that surround it.

On Saturday, the QCGN acclaimed a handful of new Board members **Anne McCracken Fitzpatrick**, a former Associate Academic Dean at Marianopolis College; **Lisa Montgomery**, a graduate student in Public policy and Public Administration; **Juan-Carlos Quintana**, a Project Development Officer at the ACCESS Adult Education and Career Training Center of Riverside School Board; **Kate Shingler**, Managing Editor of Global Montreal's evening newscast; and **Richard Tardif**, Executive Director of the Quebec Community Newspaper Association.

Returning to the Board with President Dan Lamoureux, who begins his second year at the helm of the organization, are new **Vice-President James Shea**, Treasurer **Joseph Rabinovitch** and **Secretary Walter Duszara**. Also back on board are **Brian A. Garneau** from Voice of English-speaking Quebec in Quebec City; **Cheryl Gosselin** from Townshippers' Association in the Eastern Townships; **Clara Ann Labadie** from Coasters' Association on the Lower North Shore, youth representative **Matthew Rosenberg**, a commercial real estate agent; **Irene Tschernomor**, C.E.O. of Montreal's Queen Elizabeth Health Complex.

The Quebec Community Groups Network (www.qcgn.ca) is a not-for-profit organization bringing together 41 English-language community organizations across Quebec. Its mission is to identify, explore and address strategic issues affecting the development and vitality of English-speaking Quebec and to encourage dialogue and collaboration among its member organizations, individuals, community groups, institutions and leaders.

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