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## **Press Release**

### **English-speaking Seniors Unite to Create Provincial Voice**

**Tuesday, November 19, 2013** - English-speaking seniors, community partners, government officials from all government levels as well as the Commissioner of Official Languages gathered in Montreal today for the official launch of Seniors Action Quebec, a new provincial network for English-speaking seniors that plans to provide a provincial voice that will influence program and policy change to address the needs of Quebec's English-speaking seniors.

"There are many issues confronting all seniors in Quebec, and especially English-speaking seniors who are uniquely affected because they are less bilingual than younger generations and the fact that many of their children have moved away to pursue job opportunities or education," said Seniors Action Quebec President David Cassidy. "This removes a major source of support for English-speaking seniors and means they must rely upon friends or government services to meet their needs."

Cassidy said Seniors Action Quebec is indebted to the Commissioner of Official languages of Canada Graham Fraser who chose Tuesday's launch to release his study *Enjoying Your Senior Years in Your Own Language, Culture and Community: Federal support from key institutions and a portrait of English-speaking seniors in Quebec*. "This report provides us with an evidence base on the English-speaking seniors in Quebec that will be invaluable to our organization as we move forward," Cassidy said.

Priorities for Seniors Action Quebec include:

- Developing seniors' leadership across the province;
- Encouraging governments at all levels to work in partnership with seniors to ensure that policies and programs address the needs and challenges facing seniors;
- Working with municipal authorities to create "age friendly cities" and promote a healthy active lifestyle;
- Working with partners to create programs that will better meet the needs of English-speaking seniors;
- Improving access to information to help English-speaking seniors have a better quality of life in their own communities;
- Celebrating the contributions of English-speaking seniors and organizations working on their behalf.

“We encourage seniors to actively participate. We must take charge of our own future for our benefit and the benefit of all Quebecers,” said Ruth Pelletier, vice-president of Seniors Action Quebec.

### **A little history**

Seniors Action Quebec traces its origin back to 2007 when the Quebec Community Groups Network (QCGN) presented a brief to a provincial consultation on the Living Conditions of Quebec Seniors. The brief stated that English-speaking seniors needed a voice. In the aftermath of the consultation the QCGN applied for and received federal grant from the New Horizons for Seniors program and a provincial grant from the Soutien aux initiatives visant le respect des aînés program to bring seniors together and discuss their needs and challenges. From that a group of committed volunteers joined together to create a voice for English-speaking seniors.

A fledgling Seniors Action Quebec was born in the spring of 2012 and announced at a Community Priority Setting Conference in Montreal. The group formed a Steering Committee that reflected the regions of Quebec and created a structure, constitution and bylaws to realize its future. In September of 2012, Seniors Action Quebec elected its first Executive and proceeded to form partnerships with various organizations including the Fédération des aînés et aînées francophones du Canada, the Fédération de L'Âge d'Or du Québec (FADOQ), CCS Community Services as well as the Community Economic Development and Employability Corporation (CEDEC). In 2013, Seniors Action Quebec joined the QCGN, the Community Health and Social Services Network (CHSSN) and the Montreal Council of Women.

### **Source:**

David Cassidy, President, Seniors Action Quebec

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