



ENGLISH-SPEAKING QUEBECERS THE REAL WINNERS IN FIRST EVER TELEVISED ENGLISH LEADERS' DEBATE



By Geoffrey Chambers
QCGN President

The countdown to next Monday's general election in Quebec has begun and the English electorate is being courted more than ever before. Last Monday's first-ever English-language televised leaders debate was a watershed moment and evidence of a heightened willingness across Quebec's political class to reach out to English-speaking Quebecers in their own language. It also signalled acknowledgement by all parties that none can afford to ignore our community of more than one million. It's the first time the English-speaking community has received such attention. While welcome, and gratefully acknowledged, it is also long overdue. Too often, English-speaking Quebecers have been forced to rely on volunteers and agencies run on a shoestring for services elsewhere provided in French by government agencies and public sector staff. It is not sustainable, and it is not acceptable. Read QCGN's op-ed in [The Montreal Gazette](#). Also read The Gazette's [editorial](#).



I wholeheartedly agree with media commentators and other pundits who opined that the real winners in last week's historic televised English-language leaders debate were English-speaking Quebecers. Members of our community who tuned in to the debate were listening closely for commitments on a variety of issues including access to quality health care and social services in English, the future of our school boards and what a future Quebec government plans to do to stem the exodus of our young graduates. QCGN was pleased that, when asked if they'd keep the [Secretariat for Relations with English-speaking Quebecers](#), the leaders of the four major parties said yes. Unfortunately, **Coalition Action Québec leader François Legault** commented in the post-debate scrums that "I think it's mostly smoke and mirrors" but that that he's open to keeping it "if it's useful." While not perfect, the secretariat is a hard-won and essential device to open up the operations of the provincial government to our English-speaking community. It must to be a channel for much greater policy input into government ministries as well as an agent acting to open up the civil service to participation and employment of members of our community. We want our politicians to envisage a Secretariat that has the responsibility to ensure government policies, program and services meet the needs of Quebec's English-speaking minority community and ensure its full development. We need a Secretariat that makes certain that English-speaking Quebecers are served more adequately by the government and its institutions in their own language, not one that strives to replace our active community leadership. Watch the final debate theme on "Anglo relations" and closing remarks [here](#) and the post-debate scrums [here](#). See coverage of the debate on [CTV Montreal](#) and [CBC Montreal](#) and the results of the media team's fact checking [here](#). Also read this opinion by [Global Montreal](#) news director **Karen Macdonald**.

QCGN's Election Agenda for English-speaking Quebecers

In 27 ridings, more than 20 per cent of voters are English-speaking, and they represent more than 10 per cent of the voters in another 19 ridings. In many of these ridings, the number of English-speaking voters is larger than the margin of victory in the last general election. These voters can make the difference, especially in close races. Many of those races will be decided by the way the party leaders address the issues vital to our community. Long before the election writ was dropped on August 17, QCGN launched its election campaign with the publication of our [Election Issues](#) webpage. After reaching out to member groups and stakeholder organizations representing English-speaking Quebecers over the summer our webpage includes the issues of concern to Quebecers across various regions and sectors. Broken down into 16 themes, the webpage includes issues that concern our community from Education and Health Care to Regional Community Development and Arts, Culture and Heritage. Our Elections Committee strongly encourages members of our community to use our fully bilingual documents to share the critical concerns of our community with your local candidates to get them to commit to positive change for English-speaking Quebecers. You can download it in [English](#) or [French](#), or download it off the QCGN [webpage](#). QCGN also reactivated our [Vote it Up Facebook](#) page to share news and information about the election from our community's perspective. And, to engage young English-speaking voters, we have re-energized our Vote it Up [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#) accounts. We encourage you to use the hashtags [#AnglosVote](#) and [#Qc2018](#). Our community can really make a difference as we head to the polls in October. **Let's be heard.**

Meeting with Mélanie Joly



A midsummer's cabinet shuffle created some mild confusion about the role of [Mélanie Joly](#), who became **Minister of Tourism, Official Languages and La Francophonie**. Later in August, **Prime Minister Justin Trudeau** published Joly's official [mandate letter](#) which offers some clarification on her new role. The letter directs Minister Joly to continue to implement the Action Plan for Official Languages; to begin an examination towards modernizing the Official Languages Act; to prepare celebrations for the 50th anniversary of the Official Languages Act; to establish a free, online service for learning and retaining English and French as second languages; and, to work with the President of the Treasury Board and Minister of Digital Government to ensure that all federal services are delivered in full compliance with the Official Languages Act. During the shuffle, longtime Quebec [MP Pablo Rodriguez](#) became Minister of **Canadian Heritage**. Implementation of the Action Plan was the subject of our discussion with Minister Joly as we updated her on the progress of the [Priority Setting Steering Committee](#) and its consultation related to the new \$5 million fund contained in the [Action Plan for Official Languages 2018-2023: Investing in Our Future](#). (see details below). We also discussed modernizing the Official Languages Act as well as the need to strengthen the representation of English-speaking Quebec in the national official languages' discussion.

English-speaking MP from Quebec on Language Committee

Our long held concern about the lack of English-speaking representative on the [House of Commons Official Languages Committee](#) was finally addressed last week as [St-Laurent MP Emmanuella Lambropoulos](#) was named to the committee along with [St-Jean MP Jean R. Rioux](#), whose riding is home to 3,600 English-speaking Quebecers mainly living on the military base there. The committee, known in parliamentary circles as LANG, is chaired by **Brome-Missisquoi Liberal MP Denis Paradis**. The vice-chairs are **Alupa Clarke** (Conservative) and **François Choquette** (NDP). Still on the committee are **René Arsenault**, **Mona Fortier**, **Darrell Samson**, **Sylvie Boucher** and **Bernard Généreux**. [Royal Fundy MP Alaina Lockhart](#), who was appointed as the new Parliamentary Secretary for Official Languages this summer, sits on the committee as a non-voting member.

Community Receives \$7 Million in Funding



On Tuesday, August 14, **Minister Kathleen Weil** announced \$6.9 million from the [Secretariat for Relations with English-speaking Quebecers](#) to provide funding for organizations that provide services to English-speaking communities. The provincial funding, which was previously announced in the budget in March, aims to help organizations fulfill their missions, expand the territories they cover, and the diversify their activities. The lion's share of the money will be channelled through [Community Health and Social Services Network](#) (CHSSN), which is receiving \$5.7 million over the next three years to support the community development priorities of more than two dozen local and regional organizations it coordinates as part of the [Networking and Partnership Initiative](#). Three other groups—the [English Language Art Network](#) (ELAN), [Seniors Action Quebec](#) (SAQ) and [Literacy Quebec](#)—will each receive \$400,000 over the next three years to maintain their services, to expand their operations in the regions, and to strengthen links with various levels of government. Agreements with two other groups, including the QCGN, were not yet concluded when the announcement came two days before the provincial elections was called. QCGN is still awaiting funding that was pledged for program and policy work around recruitment in the public service, examining the offer of services in the various ministries; as well as community development planning and development activities. Because community development and advocacy go hand in hand, the QCGN asked the Minister to establish a joint engagement committee of the QCGN and the CHSSN to further community development objectives. Minister Weil said the Secretariat is committed to establishing and supporting such as committee to support information sharing and facilitate cooperation in the English-speaking community; to identify and discuss current and future development priorities important to English-speaking Quebecers; and to provide a forum for sharing information, ideas, and activities which contribute to the vitality of English-speaking Quebec. In addition, the Secretariat also announced a call for projects for the [Strengthen Community Vitality – Renforcer la vitalité des communautés](#) was launched for the total budget of \$9 million over the next three years. Click [here](#) for details on the support program, a Q & A section, the application form for funding and the normative framework. See [government release](#) (French only). See coverage in [The Montreal Gazette](#), on [CTV Montreal](#) on [Global Montreal](#), on CBC and on [CJAD News](#). Also view coverage CTV Montreal's interview with [Minister Weil](#). While the QCGN welcomed the new funding, it regretted the fact that there was no community-based process to identify what the overall needs of Quebec's English-speaking community are, how to address them effectively, and, more importantly, to create a platform to advocate for badly needed additional funding. Read our [press release](#) and view my interview with [CTV Montreal's Maya Johnson](#).

Provincial Access Committee Named

Almost drowned out in reports of the of funding announcement was long-awaited news of the appointment of 11 committed community leaders to the Provincial Committee for the Provision of Health and Social Services in the English Language. Announced via press release on Tuesday afternoon from the offices of **Health Minister Gaétan Barrette** and **Kathleen Weil, the Minister Responsible for Relations with English-speaking Quebecers**, the creation of a new committee is the result of years of hard advocacy by **QCGN's Health and Social Services Committee** and its chair, **Eric Maldoff** that began

meaningful involvement in the preparation of access plans for the provision of services in English. Over the past three years, the QCGN in partnership with the **Community Health and Social Services Network** (CHSSN) worked with Health Minister Barrette and the government of Quebec to revise and update the regulation governing this advisory committee which is mandated it to advise the Minister of Health on the accessibility and quality of health and social services for English-speaking Quebecers. In April, Minister Barrette announced a revamped regulation confers responsibility on the QCGN and the CHSSN for recruiting and proposing committee members to the Minister of Health ensuring that members of the provincial access committee are more representative of Quebec's English-speaking community. The new process led to a strong committee made up of English-speaking Quebecers who will be able to advocate forcefully in favour of the real and pressing need for English-speaking Quebecers to have proper access to health and social services in our own language. Read the government's [press release](#) (French only). Read QCGN's [press release](#).

2017-2018 Annual Report

The electronic version of the [QCGN's Annual Report](#) is available online.

PRINCIPLES AND PRIORITIES SET FOR NEW ACTION PLAN FUNDS



During QCGN's annual meeting on June 15-16, our Network and Community celebrated the federal government's recently released Action Plan for Official Languages which delivered on our Network request for a dedicated development fund for community organizations working with vulnerable English-speaking minority communities in Quebec.

The federal government's [Action Plan for Official Languages – 2018-2023: Investing in Our Future](#) increased funding available for organizations serving English-speaking Quebec and established a \$5-million development fund to help our community organizations find sustainable ways to deliver services to English speakers in various regions and sectors. The new \$5 million fund is over and above a boost to baseline funding for official language minority organizations across Canada which increases the Cooperation with the Community Sector – Development of Official Languages fund in Quebec by \$1.24 million over the next five years.



As English-speaking Quebec's official interlocutor with the Federal Department of **Canadian Heritage**, the QCGN was asked to identify core principles and priorities of action for the

At the annual general meeting, the QCGN's [Priority Setting Steering Committee](#) (PSSC) was tasked with leading the consultation process to come up with community funding priorities for the additional resources. **QCGN Vice-President Gerald Cutting**, along with QCGN Board members **Sharleen Sullivan** and **Christopher Neal**, were appointed to the PSSC on June 16 and they have been hard at work identifying a group of community individuals with the broadest possible expertise to help lead this process.

The PSSC identified three individuals from the QCGN Network and three stakeholders from the community at large who were willing to dedicate much of their summer to this vital exercise. Representing the Network are **Michael Udy** ([Seniors Action Quebec](#)), who has expertise about seniors, vulnerable youth, and health and social services institutions; **Guy Rodgers** ([English Language Arts Network](#)), who has expertise in Arts, Culture and Heritage; and **Mario Clarke** ([Youth Employment Services](#)) who has expertise in youth, employment, and entrepreneurship, will represent the Network on the committee.

The PSSC also co-opted three members from the community: **Tiffany Callendar** from the [Côte-des-Neiges Black Community Association Inc.](#), who has wide knowledge of vulnerable communities on the Island of Montreal; **John Buck**, CEO of the [Community Economic Development and Employability Corporation](#) (CEDEC); and **Marlene Jennings**, former Liberal MP. Additionally, the committee called upon a number of community and other resources,

Over the summer, some 67 community sector organizations took the time to complete a survey and participate in a series of five focus groups. The PSSC then held a sense-making session to interpret data collected through its broad community consultation. A handful of community experts including longtime PSSC chair **Walter Duszara** were invited to join the exercise.

Last week, PSSC chair Gerald Cutting submitted the [Report of the Priority Setting Steering Committee related to the 2018 Community Consultation](#). This report reflects the principles and priorities of action set by the English-speaking Community of Quebec related to additional funding.

"We invite all supporting stakeholders at all levels of government to take special note of this report's contents, which are broad in scope, ambitious in scale, and dependent on collaboration between the community sector and public partners," said Cutting.

"Our Committee, which has been serving English-speaking Quebec since 2011, is far from finished its work," he added. "We are now looking at ways to ensure the community has a greater say in how public money is distributed, and how we can most effectively manage the growth of our community sector to service the needs of English-speaking communities across Quebec. As always, we will not be able to complete this work without the community's active input, so stay tuned!"

QCGN HIRES DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Lynda Giffen, who joined the QCGN as its new director of community development and engagement this week, brings a decade and a half of experience in community development and engagement to Quebec's English-speaking community.

Last week Lynda said a bittersweet and heartfelt goodbye to the Sandy Hill Community Health Centre in Ottawa where she led advocacy, health equity, social justice, and community development initiatives within the public health sector that aimed to improve the social determinants of health.

But Lynda is excited to join the QCGN and looks forward to engaging with the challenges

"I have spent 15 years advocating for all sorts of communities, but never my own," said the fluently bilingual former resident of Pointe Claire and Morin Heights in the Laurentians as she began work on Monday.

"We are thrilled to have Lynda onboard," commented **QCGN Director General Sylvia Martin-Laforge**. "She is lively and energetic and will be a definite asset to our dedicated team here at the QCGN."

Since receiving her Master of Education in Community Learning and Development from the University of Glasgow in Scotland, Lynda has been involved with a wide range of collegiate, government, public health, community arts, and community justice organizations.

Over her career, Lynda has been invited to deliver seminars and lectures on community development for Carleton University, for the United Way Speakers Bureau, and for the Alliance for Healthier Communities of Ontario. Lynda has led the creation of numerous community development initiatives, including government information campaigns in England, community arts projects both in Canada and in Scotland. She also facilitates community justice, social change theatre, and popular education workshops.

Lynda has led the creation of numerous community development initiatives, including government information campaigns in England, community arts projects both in Canada and in Scotland, award-winning youth educational initiatives across the City of Glasgow, grassroots advocacy campaigns, social equity projects with Ottawa's Coalition of Community Health and Resource Centres (in a variety of areas such as access to healthy food, right to housing, transportation, urban planning and more) and the creation of guiding principles for community development for the City of Ottawa.



A strong believer in the inextricable link between advocacy and community development, Lynda is an advocate of value-based, anti-discriminatory practice, human rights, and in delivering social change grounded in equity, health and well-being.

QCGN is also pleased to welcome **Andrew Palucci** aboard our team as our policy intern. Andrew comes to us from the masters of public policy and public administration program at Concordia University and we are excited to have him here as our first official intern.

Andrew will be helping the QCGN to develop policy, liaise with the federal government and provide a youth perspective for English-speaking Quebecers. He is working closely with Stephen Thompson, our director of government relations, policy and research.

QCGN TO PAY TRIBUTE TO FOUR REMARKABLE LEADERS AT 10TH ANNIVERSARY COMMUNITY AWARDS GALA



By Rita Legault
QCGN Director of Communications

Olga Melikoff and Murielle Parkes were the movers and shakers behind the parent-driven experiment in bilingual education. Immersion blossomed into an iconic feature of the English-language public education system in Quebec, and then expanded throughout the rest of Canada.

Some 50 years ago, Melikoff, Parkes and the late Valerie Neale were leaders of a parent group that established Canada's first French immersion program at the former Margaret Pendlebury Elementary School in the Montreal suburb of St. Lambert.

This formidable trio of stay-at-home mothers recognized during the Quiet Revolution that Quebec was changing, and that English-language public education needed to change with it. Working with bilingualism experts Wallace Lambert and Richard Tucker in 1965-66, the St. Lambert Parents for Bilingual Education created a pioneering French immersion class of 26 students.

This initiative ultimately changed the face of English-language public education across Canada. It has also helped forge linguistic duality into a defining characteristic of our nation.

Over the past four decades, **John Rae** has proven a quiet benefactor for Quebec's English-speaking community. He has operated primarily behind the scenes, supporting a wide

Exhibiting a natural ability to bring people together for a cause, Rae has generously provided time, energy, experience, business acumen and financial support for the benefit of hundreds of community organizations and individuals.

Despite the rigorous demands of a career at Power Corporation, Rae has demonstrated exceptional commitment to a variety of community causes. These include the McGill University Foundation, where he served as chair of the Best Care for Life Campaign which raised some \$300 million in support of teaching hospitals to foster collaboration and innovation for the benefit of thousands of patients, their families and our community.

Rae and his wife, Phyllis, have also lent their prestige and time to other local causes as diverse as the Montreal Heart Institute, the Centaur Theatre and the Montreal Jubilation Gospel Choir.

Beginning at a young age, community service has been an important value for **Hayley Campbell**, winner of this year's Young Quebecers Leading the Way Award. Her active involvement has ranged from Scouts and Girl Guides to presiding at the Alpha Phi fraternity at Bishop's University.

Her long and impressive history of active leadership and involvement within and outside her community has also encompassed Quebec 4-H, the Pontiac County Women's Institute and a dynamic role at the Shawville Fair.

Among other honours, Hayley was accepted to the Alpha Phi Leadership Fellows Program for her leadership promise and was selected by the Federated Women's Institutes of Canada as a delegate to the International Peace Gardens Scholarship for young women interested in leadership, inspiring others and positive social change.

Launched in 2009, the **Sheila and Victor Goldbloom Community Service Award** recognizes individuals who have gone above and beyond in contributing to the vitality and reputation of the English-speaking community and who have built bridges of understanding between Quebecers of diverse backgrounds. The **Young Quebecers Leading the Way Award** was created in 2015 by QCGN, the Fondation Notre Home Foundation and CBC Quebec to acknowledge and celebrate the outstanding achievements of English-speaking Quebecers under the age of 30.

Our winners have been invited to receive their awards at a community celebration Thursday, Nov. 1, 2018, at Montreal's prestigious St-James Club. Entertainment will be provided by the incomparable **Bowser and Blue**. Co-sponsored by the Fondation Notre Home Foundation, the evening will be emceed by **Sean Henry**, weekend anchor at CBC News Montreal. Details and tickets at <http://qcgnc.ca/community-awards/>.



INNOVATIVE PROJECTS ASSIST MONTREAL AREA SENIORS WITH COMPUTER SKILLS AND TRANSPORT

By Irwin Block

For English speaking seniors, lacking computer skills can be a major handicap in using social

Community Innovation Fund

Fonds d'innovation pour la communauté

demographic often live alone, with family members having moved away, transport and accompaniment to medical appointments is another need.

Two projects targeting these areas, and found to be innovative and sustainable, are among 10 programs in Quebec sharing in a \$1 million

Community Innovation Fund, provided by the federal government's Social Partnership Development Program and managed by the Quebec Community Groups Network.

NEW HOPE HELPS SENIORS UPGRADE THEIR COMPUTER SKILLS

The **New Hope Senior Citizen's Centre** in Notre-Dame-de-Grâce is using its \$87,840 grant over two years to hold classes that help seniors upgrade their computer skills and, in that way, break isolation.

The classes have proven to be popular and well attended. They fit well into the social reality of the area because NDG has one of the highest concentrations of English-speaking seniors in Quebec, an estimated 41 per cent of whom live alone.

Amel Tisier, program coordinator at the centre, says the grant was used to lease laptops, tablets, and digital cameras, and then to hire **Gabriel Velasco** to teach.

Spreading the word was easy and interest was high among those who use its programs, including the Rendez-Vous series New Hope runs with the NDG YMCA.

"A lot of people had been asking about computer programs. They have their grandkids who are using devices when they come around," Tisier said. "A lot of family members have left the province and they want to use Skype and send emails."

In addition, many seniors want help to use increasingly complex smartphones to stay connected with loved ones.

To ensure the classes were successful, the program recruited volunteers to provide one-on-one help. Lessons are 90 minutes long on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The students practice for 90 minutes — with the help of volunteers.

Participation had to be limited to 33 students, most of whom are in the 55-plus demographic. There are two intermediate level classes and one for beginners. The program is free for members of New Hope. Membership costs \$24.

"It's accomplishing more than we had anticipated," Tisier said. "There is a liveliness that comes with being in a classroom setting, with people learning things that are helping change their lives, and that brings the students together. There is a lot of joy in the classroom, and it's good for self-esteem, encouraging and hopeful. They can see progress after six weeks."

Barbara Ann Howard said she enrolled in the program to learn to send emails and improve



"I could receive emails, but I couldn't send back to my family, who are all over the world. The training we get is excellent. We get individualized help and the teacher is terrific."

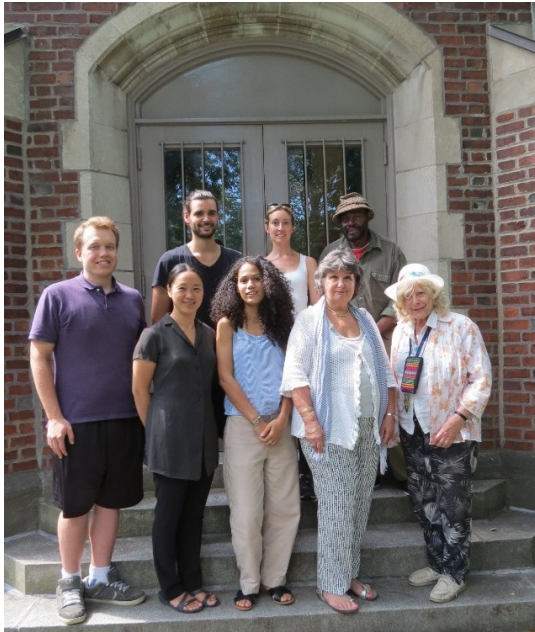
Nicole Wernhart joined as an intermediate, wanting to upgrade her iPad skills.

"I needed to brush up on a lot of things, and it's been very useful. If you're confused about something, you get help right away," she observed.

Instructor **Gabriel Valesco** says the word is getting out in the community, which is why there are now three classes instead of two. The students themselves decide what they want to learn.

"We just decided that we will be learning about video chatting, to make it easier to have conversation with friends and family who live far away."

NDG SENIOR CITIZENS COUNCIL HELPS LOW-INCOME SENIORS TO COMBAT ISOLATION



Getting to medical appointments is a challenging and necessary part of life for seniors, especially members of the English-speaking community who, along with financial and mobility issues, may be dealing with dementia.

The **NDG Senior Citizens Council**, in its 42 years of work to assist low-income area seniors and combat isolation, had been using volunteers to transport people in the 50-plus demographic at no cost, provided they receive the old age supplement.

But several years ago, the group realized it could do a lot more, and in April 2017, thanks to its grant of \$119,200 over two years, added full accompaniment for seniors receiving medical attention with another goal of engaging newcomers.

The project involves hiring recently arrived immigrants as drivers to accompany and assist seniors. The response was immediate and positive. New immigrants, such as Zaid, from Syria, were eager to contribute to their new city and increase their employability by adding this work to their C.V. Often they also help clients navigate the healthcare network.

"A lot of the low-income seniors in our area don't have family and many are isolated so when it comes to having to get to doctors' appointments, they can't go alone," explained **Shari Polowin**, the council's director of development.

The new immigrant workers benefited from the integration, practicing their English or French, and becoming more accustomed to Canada.

"The seniors feel like they're helping the new immigrants, and the new immigrants are helping the seniors – a beautiful combination," added Polowin.

Action Transport coordinator **Anne Mackay** explained that when she came on board four years ago, she was overseeing medical transport to medical appointments for about 150 people. Volunteer drivers were paid a minimal stipend, to cover expenses. All had driver's

Thanks to the funding, the number receiving help with medical transport has more than doubled and drivers' stipend has slightly increased, although it remains below the minimum wage in Quebec, which is \$12 an hour.

In the first year of the program, drivers made 1,314 trips for seniors, and three-quarters of the seniors were given free taxi chits for the return home. A total of 319 seniors were accompanied on their visits and driven home.

In a letter to the council, Action Transport user Yvonne Weiss described the program as "a godsend." **Kathy Jukes** wrote from Vancouver to express gratitude for the help given to her mom in Montreal, **Julie Ramanoski**, who is 92, has health issues, uses a walker, and is hard of hearing.

"All she could talk about was her accompaniment, a young man named Zaïd, who she said, never left her side," Ramanoski wrote. "He was kind, considerate and knew the Jewish General Hospital very well. He even apologized for making her walk some distance, which was absolutely unavoidable. She needed the walk anyway."

This is the third in a series of articles about projects that were funded under the Community Innovation Fund. For further information about the CIF please contact [Christine Boyle](#) at 514-868-9044, ext. 257.

ELAN THRILLED WITH \$7.5 MILLION INVESTMENT IN ARTS AND CULTURE FOR OFFICIAL LANGUAGE MINORITY SCHOOLS

The **English-language Arts Network**, aka ELAN Quebec, is thrilled to be receiving support from the Government of Canada's new fund for Official Language Minority Community schools that will fund artistic and cultural activities in 1,000 official language minority schools throughout the country.

As she celebrated Franco-Ontarian Day on Tuesday, **Official Languages Minister Mélanie Joly** announced that students at official-language minority schools across Canada will be able to enjoy a variety of artistic and cultural activities thanks to an investment of up to \$7.5 million starting in 2019–20.

"Our government recognizes how important it is for students in official-language minority communities to be able to enjoy culturally enriching experiences that make them proud of their language and their culture," said Joly. "We are proud to implement this program, which will not only increase the number of activities offered, but also immerse students at official-language minority schools in the cultural life of their community. Canada's two official languages are deeply rooted in our history and are key elements of our Canadian identity."



Thanks to this investment, more than 4,000 cultural activities will take place over the next four years, Joly said, noting that in addition to contributing to the vitality of the community, these activities will allow students to learn more about their culture, thereby helping them build their sense of identity in their first official language. Read the minister's [release](#).

community and cultural organizations: ELAN and the **Federation culturelle canadienne-française** (FCCF), their French-language counterpart outside Quebec.

“Providing students in Quebec schools with opportunities to explore their identity through the arts contributes to developing creativity and a sense of belonging,” said **Christie Huff**, ELAN’s **ACE (Arts, Communities, Education) Initiative** project manager.

“Artistic and cultural activities in education are a key building block of community vitality in Quebec’s official language minority,” added **ELAN president Bettina Forget**. “Through these micro-grants, Minister Joly has made an important investment in this vitality.”

ELAN will distribute micro-grants in Quebec to community-based organizations, along with official language minority schools. A transparent, simple, and accessible application process will be developed with Canadian Heritage and the FCCF, and in consultation with ELAN’s community and education partners.

GOVERNMENT OF CANADA TO HOLD SPEED STAFFING RECRUITMENT EVENT

Under Part VI the **Official Languages Act**, the Government of Canada is committed to ensuring that the composition of the work-force of federal institutions reflects the presence of our community, which represents 13.7 per cent of Quebec’s total population.

While some institutions meet or exceed this representation, others do not. The QCGN is working with our federal partners to ensure better compliance with Part VI of the Act and increase the number of English-speaking Quebecers employed by federal institutions located here in Quebec.

Last March, the QCGN, along with several other English-speaking organizations, like **Youth Employment Services**, and post-secondary education institutions, took part in a consultation with the **Quebec Federal Council**’s official languages’ committee to explore ways to increase the participation of English-speaking Quebecers in the federal public service in Quebec.

The Quebec Federal Council is a standing committee of the senior leaders of federal institutions operating in Quebec. One of the obstacles to recruiting English-speaking Quebecers was the amount of time it takes to make an offer of employment to prospective individuals. As a result, the Public Service Commission proposed a pilot project using technique of “Speed Staffing” in Quebec.

The time between an application for a federal government job and the beginning of the hiring process can range from four to six months following the usual process. This fast-track process will reduce that to four weeks.

“We are very pleased that this speed staffing initiative has been given the green light and will begin next week,” said **QCGN Director-General Sylvia Martin-Laforge**.

The Public Service Commission will be holding an accelerated recruitment event in **Montreal on Saturday, November 3**. Individuals invited to the event who successfully complete an interview, will be given a conditional offer of employment on the spot.

A wide range of jobs will be up for grabs from entry level administrative assistants to technical and computer engineers. Other jobs will include mid-level jobs in accounting, finance, auditors, agents, human resources and fiscal evasion investigators. Jobs are available in the Montreal area and throughout the province.

Most of the positions require fluency in both official languages. Some candidates take themselves out of the running because they fear their second-language skills are not good enough. If you want to see if your skills meet the mark, you can take this public service **self-assessment** test online.

Here are the critical dates:

October 2 – 9: The jobs will be posted on the **Government of Canada Jobs site**. It is highly recommended that individuals interested in employment with the federal government create an account on this website right away (prior to the jobs being posted).

November 3: Accelerated recruitment interviews.

Stay tuned to QCGN's Twitter feed and Facebook page for updated information

OCTOBER FORUM AT CONCORDIA TO OFFER INSIGHTS AND STRATEGIES FOR ENGLISH-LANGUAGE COMMUNITY VITALITY THROUGH EDUCATION

Submitted by the Quebec English-Speaking Communities Research Network Quebec

How should education contribute to the vitality of Quebec's English-speaking minority community? This will be discussed by dozens of researchers, practitioners, community stakeholders and policy makers who will gather at Concordia University for a three-day conference in October.

The *Minority Community Vitality through Education* forum takes place at Concordia University on October 28-30. It examines the state of Quebec's English-speaking minority, a community that has been present in Quebec for more than 250 years.

"Educational institutions are the cornerstone of our community and essential to the transmission of the language and unique culture of English-speaking Quebec," said **Dr. Chedly Belkhodja**, co-director of the **Quebec English-Speaking Communities Research Network** (QUESCREN) and a professor at Concordia University. "This diverse community, which is increasingly bilingual and integrated into Quebec society, is committed to continuing excellence in its educational institutions and to taking steps to ensure its vitality."

Research reveals that the challenges facing English-speaking communities include employment, education, health, culture, access to municipal and provincial services, outmigration and more. Through panels, workshops and discussions, this forum aims to address these challenges and bring forward solutions.

"The overall goal is to encourage mobilization around the development of a healthy and sustainable English-language educational offer, from pre-K to university, that leads to student retention, access to good jobs in Quebec and a strong sense of identity and belonging," said **Dr. Richard Schmid**, forum program committee member and professor, Concordia University.

"This forum presents an historic opportunity for researchers, community and institutional leaders and government officials to consider the crucial role that education plays in community vitality," said **William Floch, Assistant Secretary of the Secretariat for Relations with English-speaking Quebecers**. "By considering the links between education and community networks and across sectors such as health and social services, arts, culture and heritage and employability, participants will be able to share their experiences and perspectives and contribute to the well-being of English-speaking Quebecers."

The conference is being organized by the **Inter-Level Educational Table** (ILET), which brings together representatives of Quebec's English-language educational institutions and associations, along with community groups and the public sector. ILET is a key initiative of QUESCREN a collaborative network of researchers, stakeholders, and educational and other institutions. Established in 2008 and housed at Concordia University's School of Community and Public Affairs, QUESCREN aims to improve how Quebec's English-speaking communities are understood and to promote their vitality.

University, the Canadian Institute for Research on Linguistic Minorities, Via Rail, Bishop's University and the Quebec Community Groups Network are also providing support for the Forum.

The conference program, speaker list and registration page may be viewed [here](#).

PROMOTING DIGITAL LITERACY AND ADVANCING EQUALITY AT THE ATWATER LIBRARY

Submitted by the **Atwater Library** and **Computer Centre**

The **Atwater Library** is working with community groups and schools to engage people in using digital technology productively and creatively, and to advance equality.



"190 years after the Atwater Library's founding as the Montreal Mechanics' Institution, we are more active than ever in the community," commented **Lynn Verge**, executive director of the Atwater Library and Computer Centre. "We've moved with the times and emphasize useful ways of fulfilling our educational and social mission."

In the early 1980s, the Library established a computer centre in its building on Atwater Avenue near the Atwater Metro station, and started welcoming the public for Internet access, computer use and training. Today the computer centre has 12 up-to-date stations that serve a diversity of people. Regular users include longtime residents who enjoy the building's atmosphere and refugee claimants staying at the Y Residence next door who need to fill out and submit government forms.

The training roster now includes group sessions in an eight-station classroom and private instruction wherever it suits the clients. The most popular offerings are Introduction to Excel and iPads and iPhones - Tips and Tricks.

Starting in 2007 with pilot funding from Canadian Heritage, the library has been collaborating with community partners on digital literacy training and digital media production. Under the banner **Digital Literacy Project**, the Library has partnered with more than 60 groups and schools and through them, approximately 4,500 individuals ranging in age from six to 96.

Digital Literacy Project activities depend on project funding. Currently, with support from Concordia University researchers, the Library is engaging seniors in making videos and podcasts that tell stories of people and places in the vicinity.



During the last school year, with funding from **RECLAIM Literacy**, the Library's staff worked with students at **James Lyng High School**. In 2017, with funding to celebrate the 150th anniversary of Confederation, the Library and several partner groups helped 150 Montrealers each make a 150-second video about aspects of being Canadian. The 150 videos are on the

Over the past several years, the Atwater Library has conducted important projects funded by Status of Women Canada, which harnessed the talents of girls and young women to devise strategies for overcoming barriers to their economic self-sufficiency and for eliminating gender-based cyberbullying. Those activities led to a current major project addressing the problem of rape culture on college campuses. Three community leaders — **Dr. Shanly Dixon, Dr. Eileen Kerwin-Jones, and Brenda Lamb** — are promoting this project at a national level through a pan-Canadian network of 150 women leaders working on a variety of related projects.

For more information, please contact Community Development Librarian [Eric Craven](mailto:eric@atwaterlibrary.ca) at eric@atwaterlibrary.ca.

VEQ FALL FEST BRINGS COMMUNITY TOGETHER

By Shirley Nadeau
Quebec Chronicle Telegraph



Voice of English-speaking Quebec's annual Fall Fest is always a much-anticipated event for the members

of Quebec City's English-speaking community. Once again this year, Mother Nature smiled down on those who gathered at St. Vincent Elementary School's gymnasium and playground on a bright, sunny Saturday, Sept. 15.

While adults visited information tables at the community group and business showcase in the gymnasium, children bounced around on inflatable castles and slides outside.

There was also a Kids' Zone where youngsters could have their faces painted or do some colouring themselves. The Code Mobile demonstrations attracted many young people who could learn basic coding and practice on laptops. The hit, though, had to be the Be Active Québec zone, where kids could whip up their own smoothies in a blender attached to the back wheel of a stationary bicycle. Quebec High School students barbecued hot dogs and served drinks and other snacks throughout the day.

Entertainment was provided on a stage set up just outside the gymnasium. The first group to perform were the **Shannon Irish Dancers**, who kicked up their heels to the delight of those gathered around.

A beautifully costumed group of dancers from **Studio Danse Mirage** gave a demonstration of bharatanatyam and bhangra dances from India.

Members of the **Quebec Art Company** surprised everyone with a "flash mob" performance of excerpts from their hugely successful spring production of Jesus Christ Superstar. Director **Peter Black** spoke about upcoming plays, A Streetcar Named Desire in late November and Noises Off in the spring. And after hinting that the next musical, in fall 2019, would be Fiddler On the Roof, the cast of Jesus Christ Superstar burst out singing "Sunrise, Sunset!" Another troupe of beautifully dressed dancers from the group **Communauté Indonésienne**

The final stage presentation was storytime, much appreciated by tired youngsters and their parents.

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