

CHSSN COMMUNITY NetLink

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Higher Levels of Early Childhood Vulnerability



For many years now, CHSSN has been documenting levels of poverty and social isolation among English-speaking Quebecers in communities across Quebec that are higher than those found in the majority community. This information has informed and shaped CHSSN's programming.

With a growing emphasis on accessibility of health and social services for families with young children, the *Institut de la statistique du Québec* (ISQ) was contracted by CHSSN to analyse data from the comprehensive *Enquête québécoise sur le développement des enfants à la maternelle 2017* (EQDEM) on the basis of principal home language for insights into the situation of English-speaking children aged 0-5.

The ISQ delivered its report in July. The results are sobering. The ISQ analysis reports that "...children having English... as their mother tongue are proportionally more likely to be vulnerable across all five developmental categories."

"I anticipated that we would see high levels of vulnerability among these children," said Jennifer Johnson, Executive Director of CHSSN, "but we were genuinely shocked to see that the numbers of vulnerable English-speaking children were sometimes as much as three times greater than French-speaking children in the same region of Quebec."

The ISQ evaluation of the EQDEM found that one quarter (25.6%) of francophone children could be characterized as vulnerable in at least one of the key indicators used in the study compared to 36.5% of English-speaking children - that's almost 50% greater. These higher rates of vulnerability varied yet were present in all regions, urban and rural.

"These results have underlined for us the need for more investment in health and social services and specialized educational resources for the children in our communities and their families," said Johnson. "We're working closely with government and with foundation partners, in particular the André and Lucie Chagnon Foundation, to implement solutions that reflect local priorities and harness local resources."

CHSSN is sponsoring two events in November in Quebec City and Montreal to inform public sector partners about the important results of the ISQ analysis. [N](#)




First Census Profiles of English-speaking Children Aged 0-5

CHSSN has produced a rich new database on English-speaking children in Quebec for local communities and government service planners.

Using data from the 2016 Canadian census, CHSSN demographers have developed regional profiles of local children aged 0-5 years using a variety of significant indicators of family income and family structure that reveal vulnerable populations likely in need of more attention by community and public system support programs.

Data “dashboards” have been created for quick insights into the situation of local families with young children as well as demographic profiles of English-speaking children for all health and social services administrative regions across Quebec.

The profiles are available at chssn.org in the online documentation centre. 



“Baby Book Bag” launch, initiative of the Jeffery Hale Community Partners in Quebec City.

BRIGHT BEGINNINGS – Starting Strong

Bright Beginnings is a new program for English-speaking children 0 to 17 years old and their families that is being implemented by CHSSN and its NPI network across Quebec. The families who will be the focus of this effort face barriers related to language and culture.



Moms and babies at the “Baby Book Bag” launch.

The program is designed to address the risk factors associated with their situation and will encourage partnership between English-speaking community groups and the public systems’s service providers. It’s sponsored by the Lucie and André Chagnon Foundation, which provided 5- year funding of \$3.8 million to support anglophone children and youth in their education success.

Since last May, Bright Beginnings has been deployed in 18 local communities and five province-wide projects are currently being developed.

NPIs IN ACTION

NPIs have been hard at work using the Bright Beginnings adapted approach to support English-speaking children and their families in their local communities. Through collaborative partnerships with French language organizations, NPIs are representing, consulting and reaching out to English children, youth and families.


“It’s great to see the diversity of projects based on the needs of each community,” said Anne-Marie Cech, CHSSN’s Program Manager for Bright Beginnings. “The emerging provincial projects will also benefit our communities by supporting the hard work they are doing on the ground.”

As an example, collaborative projects with the *Regroupement pour la valorisation de la paternité (RVP)* and the *Association Québécoise des centres de la petite enfance (AQCPPE)* will provide translated tools to parents and outreach workers as well as workshops. The RVP has created a new “Anglophone” position for their PAPPa program which provides support to organizations wishing to adapt their practices to fathers’ realities.

FIRST EARLY CHILDHOOD SYMPOSIUM IN 2020

On February 11 - 12, 2020, CHSSN in collaboration with the LCEEQ, LEARN, Literacy Quebec, the Ministry of Education, and the Secretariat for Relations with English-speaking Quebecers will hold a first early childhood symposium for English-speaking Quebec.

This event will bring together leaders, community organizers, and experts in the field to spark networking, knowledge sharing, and collaboration opportunities in early childhood initiatives.

The objective of the project is to increase collaborative practices among educational institutions, community organizations, and public institutions with the aim of providing a forum for sharing best practices on early childhood development. 

ADAPTING SUCCESSFUL Models to the Needs of English-speaking Quebecers



Ian Williams from Agape with Chantal Roby, coordinator and animator for *J'avance*.

“J'avance is a great program with practical benefits that are immediately felt,” enthused Ian Williams, staff social worker with the Laval English-speaking community organization Agape. “We’re scaling up quickly and hope to have at least four of these sessions every year for people struggling with anxiety challenges.”

The English language version of *J'avance* in Laval is a textbook example of CHSSN’s core strategy of “Adaptation” that improves access to health and social services by bringing community and public system partners together to adapt already existing services in French to the needs of a local English-speaking clientele.

“It’s win-win,” explained Jennifer Johnson, Executive Director at CHSSN. “The community ends up getting better services from the public partner while the local CIUSSS-CISSL, CLSC, or Service Centre is able to connect with people they’re mandated to serve and who need their support.”

“We knew that members of our community would benefit from access to programming for anxiety disorders,” said Williams. “We’ve worked closely with our local CISSL for a number of years and it was a contact there, Guy Guilbault, who suggested that the Revivre group’s *“J'avance”* program, already used for a francophone clientele in Laval, might be a good fit.”

Agape worked with the CISSL de Laval to put together a proposal to adapt *J'avance* for English-speaking clients that was then supported financially by CHSSN with funding from Health Canada with the approval of the *Ministère de la Santé et Services sociaux*.

The result was a weekly, two-month-long series of workshops on self-management.

“The first session was almost immediately over-subscribed,” remembered Williams. “With this program, we now have the capacity to help literally hundreds of people over the life of the project.”

Williams attributes a big part of this immediate success to Agape’s close involvement with numerous English-speaking community organizations in the Laval area as well as with local English language media.

“It’s exciting to see this success in a community like Laval,” said Johnson, “and doubly exciting because the experience and resources resulting from this partnership are transferable to other regions where English-speaking populations could benefit from excellent support programming for people with anxiety disorders.”



Partnering to Understand Needs and Perceptions

A careful assessment of population health needs is an important first step towards successfully adapting programs and services in the English-language.

In Montreal, three NPIs were asked by CIUSSS du Centre-Sud-de-l’Île-de-Montréal to lead a series of a dozen focus groups across its territory, with each NPI consulting its client base to determine just where and how the lack of accessibility to services in English needs to be addressed.

“Florente Démosthène, *Conseillère-cadre au partenariat et diversité*, at the CIUSSS, sought our expertise, recognizing our connectedness in the communities we serve,” explained Vaughan Roche, Executive Director of Collective Community Services (CSS). “We chose to focus on the situation of seniors and of families with young children.”

Roche and Riley Dalys-Fine, CSS Manager of Network and Community Social Health, organized four focus groups in Verdun and Lasalle.

“Unsurprisingly,” said Dalys-Fine, “we found access challenges for both populations in both communities. Of particular concern to us is the situation of immigrant families where parents have difficulty accessing information or services in both French and English.”

The East End Network for English-language Services (REISA) also talked to seniors and young families but used the focus group process to reengage with parents of children with special needs and to reinforce connections with people needing addiction treatment services. REISA serves a large territory that includes Montreal North, Saint-Léonard, and Rivière-des-Prairies - that’s two CIUSSSs and 14 CLSC territories - with about 160,000 English-speaking residents.

“For families with children aged 0-5,” reported Fatiha Gatre Guimiri, Executive Director of REISA, “we discovered complete, total, absolute lack of services in English.”

More positively, REISA documented perceptions of improved services for seniors compared with the results of focus groups it ran before it began working with the CIUSSSs several years ago and also further evidence that the new English-language Special Needs Clinic opened at the Centre of Dreams and Hopes is desperately needed.

“It’s wonderful to hear that seniors feel they are getting better services,” said Gatre Guimiri. “The system is more aware of their presence here and more responsive to their needs but more importantly, the seniors are no longer shy to ask for help.”

The African Canadian Development and Prevention Network (ACDPN) was the third partner in the focus group effort bringing its expertise working with visible minority families and youth to the process.

“It’s essential to build up a knowledge base,” observed Roche from CSS, “but now there’s an expectation to deliver solutions. Better access is a big job and at this point we need more investment in community-based resources in addition to the public system’s efforts to meet the needs of English-speaking people in our neighbourhoods.”

A FOCUS on MENTAL HEALTH for ARC



Volunteers and residents from Our Harbour at ARC.

The Assistance and Referral Centre (ARC), a CHSSN NPI partner based in Greenfield Park on the South Shore of Montreal, is opening its doors to local English-speaking organizations, with a particular focus on mental health.

The group Impatient meets at ARC to offer a craft activity for their clientele.

Our Harbour hosts a monthly cooking class for their residents that's led by volunteers.

Ami Quebec (South Shore Chapter) hosts its evening meetings at ARC's Community Resource Centre.

And ARC itself has added a Mental Health café drop-in to its programming.

Created in November 2011, ARC's mission is to facilitate access to health and social services for the English-speaking community of Montérégie Centre. ■



New CHSSN-CROP Survey Digs Deep

The results of a new CHSSN-CROP survey have been analyzed for insights into how to continue to improve access to health and social services in the English language in communities across Quebec.

"This is an ongoing knowledge development effort at CHSSN," said Jennifer Johnson, Executive Director of CHSSN. "This time, however, we delved more deeply into access questions as well as trying to gauge satisfaction levels for the first time."

The survey asked about the general availability of a variety of services as well as new, more qualitative questions about access issues like local wait times and availability of translation services. The results have produced a more detailed profile of English-speaking people's ability to get services in their language and the importance of the language dimension of service delivery to them.

"The results of this survey are more statistically robust," said Johnson. "In some regions with very small English-speaking populations, we moved to a focus group approach. In regions where we did polling, we increased our sample size. Both measures give us better information, especially for service delivery planning purposes."

Survey responses continue to be analyzed by CHSSN with results to be released for the province as a whole as well as for local communities throughout the fall and winter. ■

Youth 4 Youth: Building Shared Identity to Combat Isolation and Exclusion



Shae-Lynn Roberts and Edward Lai from the Y4Y Board of Directors focus on the Lower North Shore.

CHSSN's newest organizational member group is, without a doubt, also its youngest in terms of its members' average age.

Youth 4 Youth Quebec (or "Y4Y" as they commonly call themselves) got its start at the Bishop's University Youth Forum event when a small group of young people from across the province began working together on the challenges they saw their peers struggling to overcome as English-speaking youth in Quebec.

"We realized there was a sense of political exclusion for English-speaking youth," remembered Malcolm Lewis-Richmond, Y4Y President. "YES Montreal agreed to incubate our group and helped us develop structures and access funding that is allowing us to work on creating a stronger identity for our community as English-speaking Quebec that respects regional and cultural identities as well."

Since its formal launch in September 2018, Y4Y has already published two policy briefs and a "Gap Analysis" that found that English-speaking youth experience persistent challenges in employability, as measured by higher rates of unemployment and underemployment than French-speaking youth with

many leaving the province as a result. Proficiency in both official languages has been identified as a main reason for this exodus of English-speaking youth. Other factors such as perceived job and educational opportunities and sense of affiliation with the province also play a role.

NetLink caught up with Lewis-Richmond just as he was boarding the ferry for the Lower North Shore to attend a youth event in Blanc-Sablon.

"The best way to build a province-wide, shared identity is to work together to tackle issues of inclusion and integration," he said. "Y4Y is committed to doing that." ■

NPIs Involved in New Regional Access Plans



The dynamic Montérégie Access team, involving the three Montérégie NPIs, recently met to kick off a planning process for their regional access plan.

In addition to NPI direct representation on CISSS/CIUSSS boards of directors, these community health and social service networks have also become active over the past few months in supporting the development of new regional health and social services access plans.

Last fall NPIs were asked to provide a list of organizations that would nominate individuals to the local committees that would develop these plans. Once committee members were selected, NPIs got busy supporting them.

"I organized a training session for new members to provide a general orientation on access committees, to explain the structure and governance of the health system, and to describe our rights to health and social services in the English-

language," said Danielle Lanyi, Executive Director of Connexions Resource Centre, to take just one example of local NPIs' involvement with newly appointed access plan committee members.

Other NPIs have given similar support by organizing informal training sessions using the MSSS's Guide to the Development of Access Programs for Health and Social Services in the English Language. NPIs have also been informing committees on the health and social service priorities of their region using research and documentation provided by CHSSN. These knowledge products and the Guide, can be found online at chssn.org in the document centre.

Debbie Ford-Caron, President of the recently established English Community

Organization of Saguenay-Lac Saint-Jean (ECO-02) observed that, "apart from the Bagotville Military Family Resource Centre, our CIUSSS did not have access to an English community organization or an NPI to survey the needs and issues of the English-speaking community. They are very excited to be working with us and we are looking forward to collaborating with them".

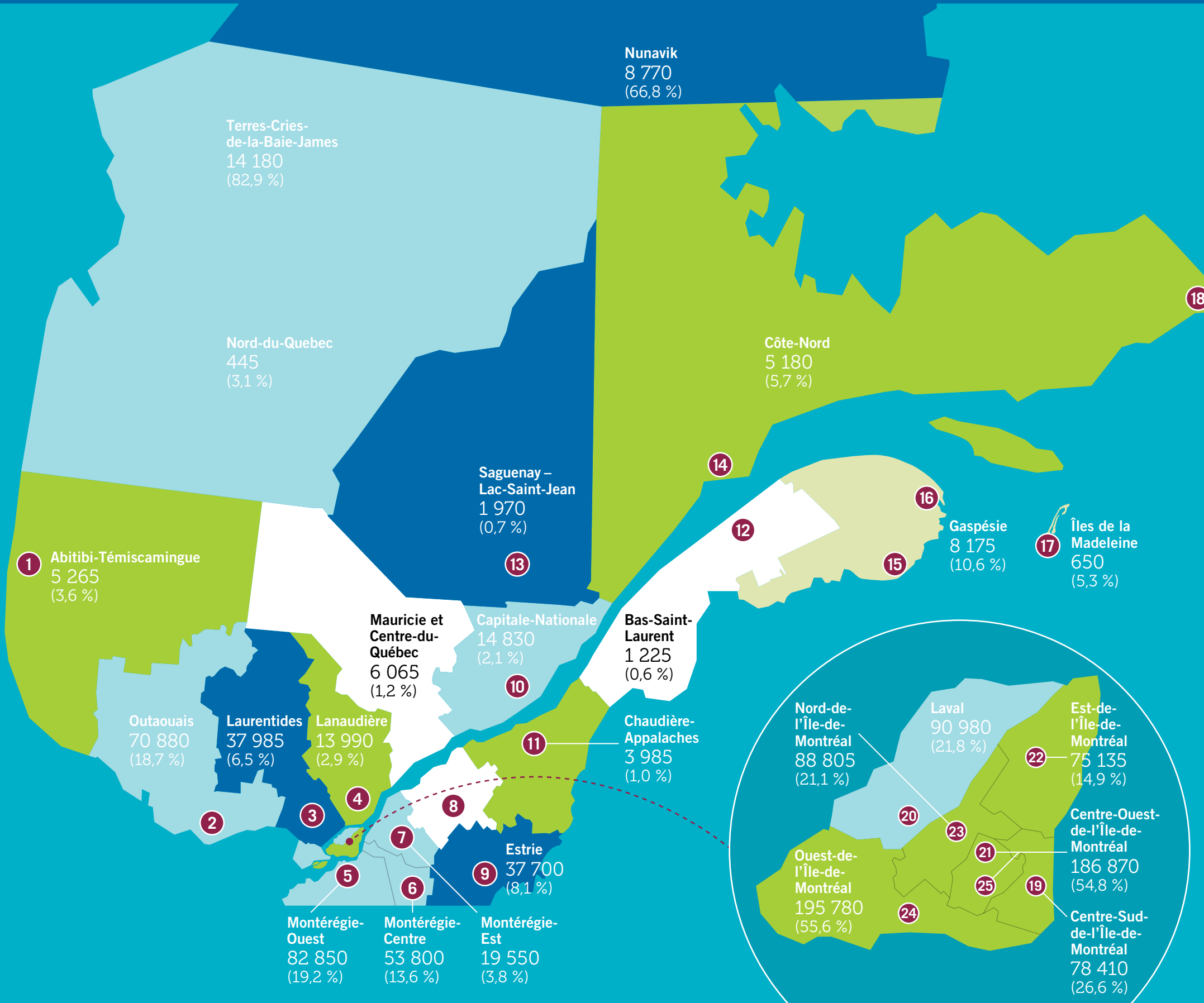
NPIs met in October to discuss their continued leadership in supporting regional access committees and received newly-released CHSSN-CROP survey data regarding access to health and social services. The survey results will greatly inform regional access committees as they continue to build plans that address local priorities. ■

THE TEAM GETS BIGGER!

CHSSN has three new staff; Anne-Marie Cech (left) was hired as Project Manager for the new funding program Bright Beginnings; Nathalie Lokoka (middle) is the Project Coordinator for both the ERCC and Adaptation initiatives; and Jenn Cooke (right) has joined the CHSSN team as the Regional Development Officer for Montreal. They all bring a wealth of experience and diversity to the dynamic team at the CHSSN. ■



Anne-Marie Cech, Nathalie Lokoka, and Jenn Cooke.



Population
1 103 475
2016 Census of Canada
Recensement du Canada, 2016

13,7 %
of Quebec
du Québec

**The CHSSN
NPI* Network** | **Le réseau
NPI* du CHSSN**

- 1 Abitibi-Témiscamingue**
Neighbours Regional Association
- 2 Outaouais**
Connexions Resource Centre
- 3 Laurentides**
4 Korners Family Resource Center
- 4 Lanaudière**
English Community Organization of Lanaudière (ECOL)
- 5 Montérégie-Ouest**
Montérégie West Community Network (MWCN)
- 6 Montérégie-Centre**
Assistance and Referral Centre (ARC)
- * 7 Montérégie-Est**
Monteregie East Partnership for the English-Speaking Community (MEPEC)
- 8 Mauricie et Centre-du-Québec**
Centre for Access to Services in English (CASE)
- 9 Estrie**
Townshippers' – Eastern Townships Partner for Health and Social Sevices – Estrie and ME
- 10 Capitale-Nationale**
Jeffery Hale Community Partners
- 11 Chaudière-Appalaches**
Megantic English-speaking Community Development Corp. (MCDC)
- 12 Bas-Saint-Laurent**
Heritage Lower Saint Lawrence
- * 13 Saguenay – Lac-Saint-Jean**
English Community Organization of Saguenay – Lac-Saint-Jean
- 14 Côte-Nord**
North Shore Community Association (NSCA)
- 15 Gaspésie**
Committee for Anglophone Social Action (CASA)
- 16 Gaspésie**
Vision Gaspé-Percé Now (VGPN)
- 17 Îles de la Madeleine**
Council for Anglophone Magdalen Islanders (CAMI)
- 18 Côte-Nord**
Coasters Association (LNSCH)
- 19 Centre-Sud-de-l'Île-de-Montréal**
Collective Community Services (CCS)
- 20 Laval**
AGAPE – The Youth & Parents AGAPE Association Inc.
- 21 Centre-Ouest-de-l'Île-de-Montréal**
African Canadian Development & Prevention Network (ACDPN)
- 22 Est-de-l'Île-de-Montréal**
East Island Network for English-language Services (REISA)
- * 23 Nord-de-l'Île-de-Montréal**
East Island Network for English-language Services (REISA)
- * 24 Ouest-de-l'Île-de-Montréal**
African Canadian Development & Prevention Network (ACDPN)
- * 25 Centre-Ouest-de-l'Île-Montréal**
NDG Senior Citizens' Council (NDGSCC)

* Network in development.