

For immediate release

Quebec Community Groups Network celebrates 20th anniversary

Montreal – June 12, 2015 - The Quebec Community Groups Network celebrated 20 years of leadership as a strong voice of Quebec’s English-speaking community as its representatives from across the province gathered Friday in Montreal. As part of the anniversary celebrations, the QCGN inducted Ann Marie Powell from the Megantic English-speaking Community Development Corporation (MCDC) as a new honorary member, and launched the Young Quebecers Leading the Way award to celebrate up-and-coming community leaders who do just that.

A past QCGN board member, Powell has worked tirelessly for her community, both locally and provincially, donating her time and many talents to a variety of ventures from the Irish Heritage Committee in her home town of Ste-Agathe de Lotbinière to the provincial boards of the Community Health and Social Service Network (CHSSN) and the Community Economic Development and Employability Corporation (CEDEC). She also sits on both the local and provincial Committees for Access to Health and Social Services in English.

“Ann Marie has been very active in her local community, her regional community as well as at the provincial level,” said QCGN Board Secretary Walter Duszara as he presented Powell with a Certificate of Honorary Membership. “She is also a busy wife, mother and grandmother. And yet, she has found the energy and time to not only participate on various committees and in numerous organizations, but to participate actively, intelligently, responsibly and with great dedication. She was not just there; she was a generator of new ideas, a clarifier of positions, an advocate for innovation, a mediator of conflicting viewpoints--in a word, a leader.”

At its annual general meeting, the QCGN welcomed a new board of directors composed of new and familiar faces. QCGN President Dan Lamoureux and Duszara are halfway through their two-year terms and were not up for reelection. They are rejoined on the Executive Committee by Vice-President James Shea from the Outaouais, and Treasurer Joe Rabinovitch from Montreal who were re-elected to those positions. Also re-elected were Irene Tschernomor and Kate Shingler from Montreal, Juan Carlos Quintana from the West Island and Cheryl Gosselin from the Eastern Townships. New to the board are Sovita Chander from Quebec City, Stella Kennedy from the Gaspé,

Clarence Baynes from the Black Community Resource Centre, Montrealers Ted Goloff and Geoffrey Chambers, as well as Mathew Larventz, who at 23, is QCGN's youngest ever director.

"At the meeting members were all in favour of the creation of a new standing committee on health and social services which will inform the English-speaking community as well as its organizations and institutions of the changes brought about by the government's recent reforms that caused much upheaval in our health and social service network," said Lamoureux, recalling the advice of former MNA Clifford Lincoln when Bill 10 was passed. "He told us the new statutes provide plenty of room for our community to engage, but he warned the onus is on us to get involved. Rights are not meaningful unless you exercise them, he advised."

"As a result of the strong Network we have built over the past two decades, and our proactive stance on a wide variety of issues, together we achieved significant advances for our community. That was the case for Bill 10 and we certainly hope it will be the case in the current upheaval our educational institutions are facing," said QCGN Director General Sylvia Martin-Laforge. "Increasingly, the role of our Network is to gather the whole story, make sense of the facts and figures, and argue convincingly against myth and ideology."

"Looking back it has been an eventful year for QCGN and the English-speaking community of Quebec. But the QCGN does not intend to stop advocating for the vitality of English-speaking communities," said Lamoureux, noting that one of the QCGN's chief objectives in the coming year will be to convince Quebec's government that it needs a permanent structure to better understand and advocate for the needs of the English-speaking minority."

The Quebec Community Groups Network (www.qcgn.ca) is a not-for-profit organization bringing together more than 40 English-language community organizations across Quebec. As a centre of evidence-based expertise and collective action it identifies, explores and addresses strategic issues affecting the development and vitality of the English-speaking community of Quebec and encourages dialogue and collaboration among its member organizations, individuals, community groups, institutions and leaders.

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