



## Press release

### **ACDPN proposes Roadmap for Access to Prevention Services for Black English-speaking Families**

#### **For immediate release**

**Montreal, July 18, 2013** - Black English-speaking families often in Montreal are often denied appropriate services and increasing access to prevention resources would reduce the numbers of Black youth who are overrepresented in the provincial Youth Protection System, said the African-Canadian Development and Prevention Network (ACDPN) in a roundtable discussion at Concordia University on Thursday.

The roundtable described a focus group report that highlighted the major challenges facing Black English-speaking families, their experiences with public services, and a portrait of the disparities facing Blacks in education, employment, income, and social determinants of health.

“Having the status of a “double minority” – linguistic and racial - the Black English speaking community of Montreal has historically been marginalized and excluded from opportunities afforded to others,” said Leith Hamilton, noting the proposed amendments to Bill 14 limiting the rights of “cultural communities”, and the impact on limiting access to public social services, were highlighted as examples of the marginalization and exclusion of the English-speaking Black community.

During the roundtable, ACDPN made public a Roadmap on Policy and Program Reforms to Increase Access to Prevention Services for Black English-speaking Families. The Roadmap describes measures to adapt existing services to improve outcomes for Black families and implement best practices in child welfare to strengthen Black families and reduce the over-representation of Black youth in the Provincial Youth Protection system.

The proposed Roadmap includes the following elements:

1. A community consultation to be held on October 5, 2013 which would involve a broad cross-section of the Black community as a call to action and mobilization of support for the change efforts
2. A request to the Provincial government to respond to the call of action by creating an inter-ministerial Task Force to promote reforms emerging from these forums and identified through broad based community consultation
3. A summit on Black families in February 2014 and co-sponsored by AKA to disseminate information about best practices which strengthen Black families and their neighbourhoods

4. A collaboration with Batshaw Children and Family Center and CSSS Cavendish on a pilot project in fall 2013 to coordinate efforts to improve outcomes for Black families through differential intervention approaches in Côte-des-Neiges, Notre Dame de Grace and the West Island to improve outcomes for Black families at risk.
5. Concordia University, which hosted Thursday's roundtable, will be taking the leadership in exploring a university-community engagement partnership to increase the capacity of the Black community to participate effectively in reforms.

On hand for the roundtable was the Alpha Kappa Alpha (AKA) Sorority which provided advice, support, and strategic social development tools to a Black English-speaking community often ignored, marginalized, and excluded from public policy decisions impacting on its future vitality. AKA provided successful examples of Black community partnerships with child welfare and universities involved in scholar-based community engagement.

*Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Incorporated ([www.alpha1908.com](http://www.alpha1908.com)) is the oldest Greek-lettered organization established by African-American college-educated women. AKA has dedicated itself to improving the quality of life for citizens worldwide and promoting peace. The African-Canadian Development and Prevention Network (ACDPN) delivers best practice family strengthening programs to high risk families from NDG and Little Burgundy.*

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