

**For immediate release**

## **QCGN Set to Champion English-speaking Quebecers**

**Montreal – June 16, 2018** – Galvanized following an upbeat two-day meeting, members of the Quebec Community Groups Network emerged energized and ready to defend Quebec’s English-speaking community on both the federal and provincial fronts.

On the federal front, the hot topic was the new *Action Plan for Official Languages 2018–2023: Investing in Our Future* – Ottawa’s multi-million-dollar investment strategy to support official language minority communities, including English-speaking Quebec. The plan will provide an additional \$57.37 million over five years to Canadian Heritage to boost core funding for official language minority organizations as well as a new dedicated fund of \$5.3 million over five years for Quebec’s English-speaking communities.

“We will work strategically and cooperatively with our members and community stakeholders to ensure our Community of Communities obtains the maximum benefit from these new funds,” said newly elected QCGN President Geoffrey Chambers. The Priority Setting Steering Committee (PSSC) of the QCGN Board is the mandated mechanism to lead the identification of priorities for distribution of additional funding earmarked for English-speaking Quebec, he said.

QCGN Vice-President Gerald Cutting, President of Townshippers’ Association, was named to chair the nine-member committee, which will consult QCGN members and other community sector groups to identify and put forward priorities to Canadian Heritage and other federal partners.

Closer to home, Chambers said the QCGN will strive to ensure the survival of — and maximize the spinoffs from — Quebec’s new Secretariat for Relations with English-speaking Quebecers. The network will also push other provincial priorities, including the creation of access plans that guarantee health and social services to English-speaking Quebecers in our own language.

More than 100 members and stakeholders from across many sectors and many regions of Quebec gathered for the 23rd annual meeting. “We discussed and fine-tuned our strategy, identifying the core electoral issues we will raise with all parties during the upcoming provincial election campaign,” Chambers said.

On hand Saturday, Kathleen Weil, Quebec’s first-ever Minister Responsible for Relations with English-speaking Quebecers, congratulated QCGN for its efforts and successes of the past year. D’Arcy McGee MNA David Birnbaum noted that QCGN has come a long way in the past few years. Up for re-election in the fall, both vowed to continue their active support of the community.

Canada's new Commissioner of Official Languages, Raymond Th  berge, and Jean Johnson, President of the F  d  ration des communaut  s francophone et acadiennes (FCFA), applauded strengthening ties between Canada's French and English official language minority communities. "We are firm allies. We all gain by working together," Chambers affirmed.

Th  berge pledged to defend Canada's official language minority communities with equal fervor. "I am the Commissioner of both official languages and I will defend the English-speaking community of Quebec with as much energy and resolve as I defend French communities outside Quebec."

During the Annual General Meeting, members gave an affectionate sendoff to President James Shea, who stepped down after six years, two of them at the helm. The QCGN also bid fond farewells to longtime board members Walter Duszara and Juan-Carlos Quintana.

Geoffrey Chambers was acclaimed QCGN President. He is joined by new vice-president Gerald Cutting; Secretary Eva Ludvig; and new board members Chad Bean from the Eastern Townships; Maureen Kiely from Montreal; Sharleen Sullivan from Rouyn-Noranda; as well as Christopher Neal from Montreal. Treasurer Joe Rabinovitch and Directors Mary-Ellen Beaulieu, Stella Briand-Kennedy, Dr. Clarence Bayne, Linton Garner, Eric Maldoff, and Elise Moser were not up for reelection and remain on the board.

The Quebec Community Groups Network is a not-for-profit organization bringing together 58 English-language community organizations across Quebec. A centre of evidence-based expertise and collective action, QCGN identifies, explores and addresses strategic issues affecting the development and vitality of the English-speaking community of Quebec. It also encourages dialogue and collaboration among its member organizations, individuals, community groups, institutions and leaders.

**For further information:**

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