



FEBRUARY & MARCH 2023



# MONTÉRÉGIE

WEST COMMUNITY NETWORK



## A word from Pauline



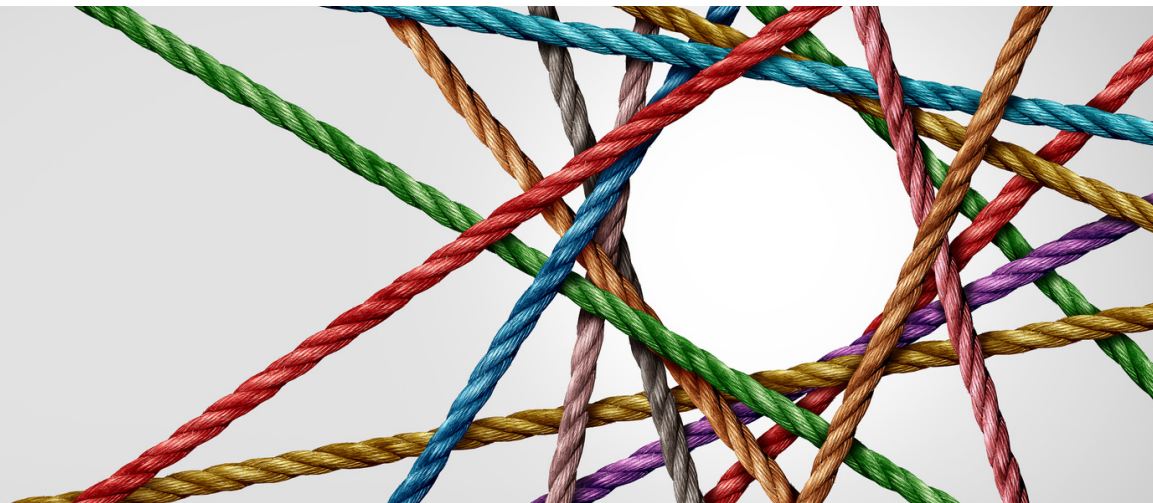
Dear Community Members,

## **OUR WORLD HAS CHANGED AND WE HAVE LEARNED THE IMPORTANCE OF REMAINING CONNECTED**

Thank you to everyone for your continued support. We are encouraged by the many community partnerships we have been able to make in recent months. It is evident that these community organizations are equally encouraged as they too want to reach the English-speaking community. Our partnership table is a venue we have to be able to present our members with the many services that are here in our community and are not known. These community organizations also offer services in English, and we want our members to be empowered by the knowledge and resources that are available to them.

We take pride in the work that our team is available to accomplish each day as we stand in the gap within our communities. We want all of you to have a sense of belonging as a minority English-speaking community within Quebec. We want to be seen as an organization whose main goal is to empower our community members with the resources that are needed to encourage healthy living, a resource to our educational system in support of mental wellness to our teachers as well as students. Should you be looking for services within the Montérégie West please do not hesitate to contact one of our offices. We are always available to help you navigate the health and social service system in your community. There are many activities that are designed to help you remain active and give you purpose. Many of our community members have made friends this past year and have been successful in creating activities together, such as lunch or supper meetings, additional walking groups and check-in phone calls. Your motivation and energy is contagious and you have helped many get through another year of riding the wave of change. Our world has changed, and we have learned to be resilient. We are not alone, and we will embrace the changes together.

Pauline Wiedow - Executive Director



## **BUILDING VALUABLE RELATIONSHIPS THROUGH NPI – Network Partnership Initiative**

From Jan 16 to Jan 19, CHSSN – Community Health & Social Services Network hosted a 3-day retreat in Quebec City. MWCN had the opportunity to participate in valuable workshops with numerous organizations not only facing the same challenges that we all experience, but also an opportunity to come up with solutions in navigating those challenges. Through these exercises, we were able to exchange ideas and discover tools and methods that are working for each organization in the different regions throughout the province.

Also present from the Provincial Government were members from the Secrétariat aux relations avec les Québécois d'expression anglaise who had an opportunity to view the valuable work that we are all doing within our communities. Through numerous presentations, organizations were able to showcase many of their programs that are successful in their regions using slideshows, videos, testimonials, and data collection, all of which is essential for continued funding.

Pauline Wiedow, our Executive Director, also had the honor of presenting on the subject of 'The Effects of Language as a Barrier on Access to Care and Well-being for English-speaking Families in Quebec', highlighting the importance of working together by building and maintaining relationships between the CISSS and NPI's along with partners to improve access to services. Pauline also emphasized the instrumental relationship that Montérégie West has with both the Montérégie East and Montérégie Centre that we proudly call 'The Montérégie Way'.

As our conference was coming to a close, it was apparent how essential it is to have connections through partnership, and having the tools and support to navigate the current climate of issues and difficulties that are occurring in our Health Care sector today.



And of course, it was not only important to continue building our partnerships and make these invaluable connections during our 3-day visit, but to also leave with newfound friendships!

Lorie Marcotte  
Coordinator of Community Development  
Pincourt

## Remember the little things

Over the last few years, we have learned many new things. How to socially distance to keep ourselves and each other safe; how to wear a mask, and about the importance of our mental health and wellbeing. However, one thing we have also learned is to remember not to take the little things for granted. Being able to go out for a late-night stroll, or visit an old friend, shop for “non-essential” items, and sending kids to school. At Christmas time, and during holidays, most of us receive cards, and gifts, we see family, and make time for friends whom we haven’t seen during the hustle and bustle of the rest of the year. Covid brought many new realities to these simple musings.

Among the most overlooked were some of our isolated elderly. Many do not receive visits regularly from family and friends, as many of us get caught up by the rush of the day to day. The most vulnerable are the elders within our communities, people who ask for so little and expect even less. To help break the isolation and to remind them that they are not forgotten, and to put a smile on the seniors' faces in our local CHSLDs and Residences, MWCN reached out to our schools in the New Frontiers School Board. We asked if the staff would be willing to have their students create Christmas cards. The classes could make them during their art periods, or teachers could ask students to bring them from home. As usual, the schools responded with a tremendous outpouring of support. MWCN collected 886 cards from eight different schools.

This initiative was created through our Huntingdon office and the entire team could not get over the generosity of our local youth and school staff. Each card was unique and held a special message. Some were French, some were English, and some were bilingual; a true representation of what our kids are exposed to in their classrooms everyday. The feedback was tremendous. The teachers thought it was a wonderful intergenerational activity. One Ethics teacher commented that the project even opened some good dialogue and conversation from the students about the realities of the current world. As I walked through the corridors of one of the participating elementary schools, several of the teachers commented, saying it was a great idea, thanking us for taking on something so important. That is exactly what this project was, a small thing, something many of us take for granted, a Christmas card; but then again, so very important to the seniors receiving them. A reminder that we do care, and we want to keep being reminded of the importance of the little things that make a difference. These are our families and our friends and community members who all have a story to tell and a question needing an answer. A reminder to slow down and take the time to be in the moment.

From the MWCN to all our community members, families, and friends, remember to pause, like we did on March 13, 2020. We all stopped, we suddenly had time on our hands, but we could not visit our seniors, and our loved ones were isolated.

We now have a fresh look at the importance of being together, enjoying the generations and the traditions and cultures they represent. To learn more about our activities please visit our website at [mwcnc.ca](http://mwcnc.ca)

Debra Wright  
Project Coordinator, Huntingdon





The Star Program, an initiative of the Regional Health and Social Services Partnership Table (RHSSPT)\*; is a program that highlights individuals who demonstrate support for the Montérégie English-speaking community.

We start by asking our community members to nominate an employee or a volunteer at a community or public organization who stands out for having made a special effort to improve the health and well-being of Montérégie's English-speaking community members.

In 2022, we were honoured to have 17 selected candidates who received a certificate of congratulations. The candidates were:

Helen Auge, Roger Petroff, Audrey-Anne Woolmer, Catherine Rolland, Sabrina Clermont, Frank Cholette, Caroline Ménard, Tina Morin, Julie Leblanc, Kelly Neil, Andréanne Paquette, Alexandra Falcone, Lyssa Geiger, Elena Zambellas, Audrey Dumouchel, Chris Paul Robinson, Audrey Fragapane

In addition, they were eligible for a \$50 gift card draw, and the winner was: Frank Cholette.

Congratulations to all the winners! We thank you all for your dedicated work and continued contribution to our community.

*\* RHSSPT's mission is to identify common challenges and opportunities in the access or delivery of health and social services in the Montérégie with a focus on seniors and caregivers, youth and families, mental health, and cultural communities.*



# **“Let us meet each other with a smile, a smile is the beauty of the soul”**

*Lailah Gifty Akita*

Members of the MWCN Huntingdon Center enjoyed a fun filled Christmas tea in December. The event was held at the Huntingdon United Church, wow, what a way to close out the year! The afternoon was shared with 50 happy smiling faces. In true MWCN fashion we had our volunteer dynamic duo of Chantal and Wendy share their talents in crafting, those interested worked on a Christmas craft prepared by Chantal. Students from the PAB program at CVCEC in Ormstown, prepared a Christmas themed bingo game along with prizes, we all love prizes right!! For the first time we invited those interested in participating in a cookie exchange to bring a dozen cookies with them and in turn they went home with 12 new cookies, what a hit this was.

December 12th was a special date for MWCN, this day was the end of the raffle for the quilt. We were very fortunate to have a stunning quilt donated to us by the local Quiltvators. Several of the ladies attended the tea, member Janice Knowles pulled the winning ticket, Brenda Larocque a member from the Huntingdon area was the winner. Thank you so much to everyone who purchased tickets, and a heartfelt thank you to the Quiltvators for the generous donation. Your hard work will be visible for many years to come. The quilt fundraiser collected \$1,935 for MWCN and will be very well used to increase our services to the English-speaking community within the Montérégie West.

Lastly, we had singing, all kinds of singing karaoke at its best. Many hidden talents came to be shared with us. It was indeed a fantastic day. We are so grateful for our members, our community partners and our MWCN team members; together we build stronger communities. We welcomed many new members in 2022, this event allowed many new faces to be exposed to a larger gathering of people. Here are a couple of comments shared with us.

“I just want to thank you for making me feel so welcome in Huntingdon, I am really enjoying so many of the activities offered “Merry Christmas.

“I just wanted to tell you how much I enjoyed the tea this afternoon. It certainly helped give all of us some extra Christmas spirit. Thank you for creating such a lovely afternoon.”

At MWCN we have so many great programs and we are always building new programs, activities and learning opportunities for our members, we look forward to another great year ahead!!

Nora Donnelly, Outreach Coordinator, Huntingdon



# EMPLOYABILITY SERVICES

# WHAT'S NEW?



## BILINGUAL CONVERSATION GROUP (ESPRESSO-DISCUSSION)

Employment counseling service "P.S Jeunesse" has been joining us at our Pincourt office weekly on Mondays, to offer a free French Conversation practice group. Employment counselors are joined by Francophone individuals who are hoping to improve their English language skills. The group works together to practice their second language through various discussion topics. The group currently takes place on Mondays at 11 am!



## MIXED MEDIA ARTS PROGRAM AT CVR

MWCN has partnered with LOVE (Leave Out Violence) to offer a weekly Mixed Media Arts program with 3 classes at CVRHS. MWCN representatives, Laura & Tina are the on-site facilitators who assist LOVE program manager, Cedric (who leads the program through Zoom) in various workshops using mediums such as creative writing, photography arts, and discussion to tackle difficult subjects and work on interpersonal communication skills.



## NFSB CONTINUING EDUCATION WORKFORCE READY WORKSHOPS

MWCN's Employability Services and the New Frontiers School Board's Continuing Education Department has been working with professionals to offer workforce ready workshops for a group of students at CVR and the Huntingdon Adult Education and Community Centre (HAEC). With funding from a government grant, this project has been able to equip students with a "toolkit" of tips, tricks and tangible tools to help them succeed in the workforce. This 5 session workshop series targets topics such as time-management, productivity, work-ethic, communication, teamwork, interview-skills, Professionalism, workplace style and more! Students learn from professionals and practice the new skills through hands-on interactive activities that address common workplace challenges in a fun and relatable way. So far, students have had presentations from an executive life coach on soft-skills and a presentation on workplace style by a marketing and branding. Workshops on self-care, interview skills, and marketing your strengths are still to come!



## UPCOMING WORKSHOPS AT NOVA CAREER CENTRE

We will also be offering a condensed version of the Workforce Ready Workshops in a LUNCH & LEARN format for NOVA students! The lunch-hour workshops will be open to all current NOVA students who register-up to 15 students in each! Participants will leave each session with a workbook on the topic and tangible tools to help them excel in the workforce. Workshops are totally free and include lunch! These workshops will be offered once a week from March 30th - April 26th during lunch hour. Stay tuned for more info!



Laura Bustamante - Employability Coordinator



## Come together to Embrace Equity in celebration of International Women's Day!

MWCN is pleased to invite you to join us on Saturday, March 11th from 10am - 2pm at OLPH, 284 Molson, Chateauguay.

Guest speakers, entertainment, door prizes, and a light brunch await you! Registration is required by Monday, March 6th - \$5 per person.  
email: [info@mwcn.ca](mailto:info@mwcn.ca)



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### Download Our App

Download our App and stay up to date with everything we've got going on



[www.mwcn.ca](http://www.mwcn.ca)



We are delighted to invite you to download our brand-new Mobile Application, available on both Apple Store for IOS devices, and Google Play for Android. While the app is in the beta version, it is a great opportunity for us to better connect and communicate with our community members.

### MONTÉRIÉGIE WEST COMMUNITY NETWORK Our Offices in Five Regional County Municipalities

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