

[Network News June 2019](#)[View this email in browser](#)

Working
Together

Travaillons
Ensemble



More than 100 members and stakeholders took part in the 24th annual meeting of the Quebec Community Groups Network on June 15-16.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Geoffrey Chambers
QCGN President

It has been many months since our last edition of Network News and there is much to update you on. Much of QCGN's advocacy activities of the last months were the subject of panels and discussions during our recent annual meeting where we debated threats by the Coalition Avenir Québec government to abolish our democratically-elected school boards; new legislation that forbids many members of our minority community from wearing religious symbols at work (Bill 21); and various obstacles that impede our access to health and social services in our language. And of course, much of the table talks centered around the Toronto Raptors – the first ever Canadian team to be crowned champions of the National Basketball Association (NBA). Their ascension to the NBA finals and their ultimate victory led to one of the greatest displays of Canadian unity in recent history, but I digress.



Meeting with Prime Minister Trudeau



On Monday we received a last-minute invitation to meet with **Prime Minister Justin Trudeau** while he was in Montreal for a Liberal fundraiser. While it was a short, informal meeting we got a chance to raise several substantive issues that have an impact on Quebec's English-speaking community. It was a warm and friendly meeting as we thanked the Prime Minister for his leadership on the Official Languages file and he expressed his appreciation of the QCGN and the work we do. We also

discussed the modernization of the Official Languages Act and that we appreciated the commitment of Official Languages Minister Mélanie Joly to greater transparency and accountability of the provinces with regards to federal transfers of responsibilities and funds – especially those resources destined to support official languages communities. Our delegation included QCGN Director General **Sylvia Martin-Laforge**, who left with several bring forwards with the PMO staff, as well as former MP **Marlene Jennings**, who co-chairs our Access to Justice Committee. That project, which was announced in the spring by Justice Minister **David Lametti**, will be described later in this newsletter. Also on hand with us was **Chelsea Craig**, who was recently elected vice-president of the Liberal Party of Canada (Quebec).

Quebec is Our Home

Under the theme ***Quebec is my Home: Inclusion and Rights for English-speaking Quebecers***, the QCGN held its 24th

annual Members Convention on June 14 and 15 at Concordia University in Montreal. The convention was launched by the Commissioner of Official Languages **Raymond Thérberge**, who noted it was trying times for Official Language communities in Canada. I invite you to read excerpts of his opening address further below. We also discussed the modernization of the Official Languages Act with Senators

René Cormier and **Joan Fraser** and

held a wine and cheese tribute to **Sheila Goldbloom** ahead of her milestone book launch:

Opening Doors. Throughout the two-day meeting, which discussed the provincial government's agenda which represents an attack on our community's fundamental rights. As the **Coalition Avenir Québec** invoked closure to pass Bill 21, we talked about how this will threaten the jobs of many in our community. We also discussed how the CAQ government plans to abolish our democratically elected school board, and how access to health and social services in our own language is being delayed in a bureaucratic morass. There were several takeaways from our discussions. Official language minority rights are central to the fabric of our country and are protected in our constitution as well as the Canadian and Quebec charters. School boards are critical to the vitality of our community. Often our schools are the heart of community life. When a school disappears, it is a body blow to our community. We need to fight to keep our school boards while being open to changes designed to increase voter participation. On each of these files QCGN is working with stakeholder groups to defend and promote our rights. We have faced these kinds of challenges in the past, and as a community we have rallied and faced them head-on. Please read our [press release](#). You can also read our [Annual Report](#).



elected and re-elected to QCGN's Board of Directors. New to the board are **Cheryl Henry-Leggo** from the Gaspé; **Edward Sweeney** from Quebec City; and **Guy Rodgers** from the arts sector. Re-elected for another two-year terms were **Eric Maldoff**, **Mary Ellen Beaulieu**, and **Clarence Bayne**. They will be joining me, vice-president **Gerald Cutting**, secretary **Eva Ludvig** as well as directors **Christopher Neal**, **Sharleen Sullivan**, **Maureen Kiely**, and **Chad Bean**. I wish to welcome the new members our team and thank departing directors **Stella Kennedy**, **Elise Moser** and **Linton Garner** for their dedication and hard work.

QCGN Joins Forces with Neighbouring Linguistic Minorities

After working with neighbouring linguistic minority communities over the past year, we announced a coalition with **l'Assemblée de la francophonie de l'Ontario** (AFO) and the **Société de l'Acadie du Nouveau Brunswick** (SANB) to work together on common issues – particularly ahead of the fall federal election. Our three communities of 1.9 million people represent 89 per cent of all Canadians living in official language minority communities. All Canadians living as official language minorities must work together to protect and advance language rights and come to each other's aid when necessary. Our fates, like our rights, are tightly wound together. The **Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne** (FCFA) du Canada, which represents all francophone Canadians living outside Quebec, will join the group as an observer. The MOU will be signed in Ottawa the day after Canada Day. In the meantime, please watch these videos from AFO President **Carol Jolin** and SANB President **Robert Melanson**.

Community Innovation Fund a Success



During the Annual Meeting, QCGN members also celebrated the success of the 10 **Community Innovation Fund** (CIF) projects with the release of our **Innovation in Action** video and booklet. Launched by **Marc Miller**, MP for Ville-Marie-Le Sud-Ouest-Île-des-Soeurs, the documentary demonstrates how the CIF projects transformed the lives of individual English-speaking Quebecers and the booklet describes

how Quebec's English-speaking community used the fund to test and implement innovative projects that address social issues more effectively. Financed by the Government of Canada, the Community Innovation Fund injected a total of \$1 million into our community over the past three years. It targeted the particular needs of English-speaking youth, seniors and newcomers. Almost 2,000 vulnerable seniors, youth and newcomers received new services to help them find jobs, fight isolation, or learn new skills. Our partners implemented projects in urban, rural, and isolated communities across Quebec that have concretely improved the prospects of vulnerable English-speaking Quebecers and provide a remarkable array of approaches our communities can use to strengthen the vitality of English-speaking Quebec. Each project, in its own way, transformed social innovation into action helping to improve job skills and maintain the basic socio-economic security of English-speaking Quebecers. All these initiatives have proven truly transformative for those eager to work and contribute, but who – as members of our linguistic minority – found themselves hindered by various forms of isolation. A core goal of the fund – that all these projects be sustained into the future – was realized. Administered by the QCGN, the Fund is part of the Social Partnership Initiative in Official Language Minority Communities, which is in turn a component of the Roadmap for Canada's Official Languages 2013-2018: Education, Immigration, Communities. You can also view the videos and read our success stories on the updated **Community Innovation Fund page** on the QCGN website.

Support Your Democratically Elected School Boards

The Coalition Avenir Québec government has made it abundantly clear that it has every intention of abolishing our school boards and school board elections and replace them with

our community's response to any legislation which could abolish or diminish the responsibilities of democratically elected school boards. **APPELE-Québec** – the

Alliance for the Promotion of Public English-language Education in Québec

– is a broadly-based, Quebec-wide community coalition to promote the continued existence of English school

boards, to ensure they are governed by commissioners who are democratically elected by the English-speaking community at large. APPELE-Québec has the support of a wide range of community leaders including parents, educators, and political representatives from all levels who have signed a **Statement in Support of Democratically Elected School Boards in Quebec**. APPELE-Québec is chaired by former MNA and Minister **Geoffrey Kelley** and co-

chaired by former Senator and respected journalist **Joan Fraser** and **Kevin Shaar**, a lawyer with two children enrolled in the Western Quebec School Board. Read APPELE-Québec's **press release** and see coverage in **The Montreal Gazette** and CTV Montreal. Also read the opinion piece by **QESBA President Dan Lamoureux** below. The QCGN anticipates that a wide range of community organizations will join this alliance, especially as the government



prepares to table a bill in the fall. If your organization would like to join this movement, please send your resolutions to appelequebec@gmail.com. We hope that all organizations representing English-speaking Quebecers become supporting members of the Alliance working to save these cornerstone institutions that are essential to the fabric of our Community of Communities. Our minority community has constitutional rights. Help us protect them! For more information about APPELE-Québec, go to www.appelequebec.org

Poll Confirms English-Speaking Quebecers Support School Boards

It came as no surprise that English-speaking Quebecers overwhelmingly support elected school boards and are opposed to the Coalition Avenir Québec government's proposal to replace them with service centres. That was the findings of a **Léger Marketing** poll commissioned by APPELE-Québec and partially paid for by the Quebec Community Groups Network. Respondents said they are very committed to protecting the rights of their community. An overwhelming majority of respondents (90 per cent) said their minority language education rights are very important to them, and 87 per cent think that school boards should remain independent from the government in order to protect these rights. Eighty-four per cent agree that the population at large should be able to vote in school board elections when it is a question of protecting the rights of English-speaking Quebecers to control and manage their educational facilities. Read APPELE-Québec's **press release** and consult **poll results**. Also see coverage in **The Montreal Gazette**, **Le Devoir**, and on **Global Montreal**.

English-speaking Quebecers Opposed to Secularism Law

Over the past few months Bill 21 has been the subject of much divisive debate in Quebec. Despite the Coalition Avenir Québec's repeated claims that many English-speaking Quebecers support its new secularism legislation, results of a poll commissioned by the Association of Canadian Studies and the QCGN found that a significant majority of English-speaking Quebecers don't support restrictions on religious symbols worn by public officials and believe the bill's provisions violate the Quebec Charter of Rights. The Quebec Community Groups Network commissioned an oversample of 379 English-speaking Quebecers to better understand how language factored into responses. Read our **press release** and consult our **poll results**. Also see coverage of the poll in **The Montreal Gazette**, on **CTV Montreal**, on **Global Montreal** and in **Le Devoir**.



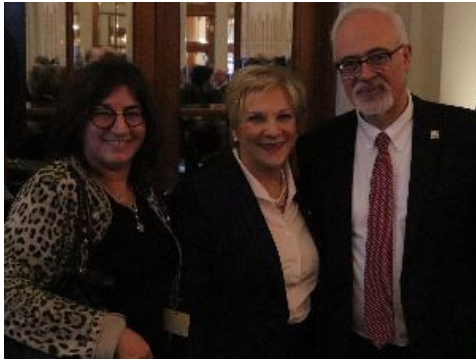
In September, the Official Languages Act turns 50. Over the past few months Official Languages Minister **Mélanie Joly** has been crisscrossing the country to hear from Official Language Minority Communities on how they see the future of the act. Minister Joly's review looked at several issues including slower increases in the Francophone population relative to that of Canadians who speak English as their first official language; the stagnating rate of bilingualism outside Quebec; and the disruptive effects of new technology on the ways Canadians communicate. This included stops in Hemingford, Sherbrooke and Laval where QCGN and other community stakeholders expressed their desire to see a modernized act that is clearer, stronger and that enshrines substantive equality for English and French. Our message was simple; English is one of Canada's two official languages and should be treated as such in Quebec. There should be a guarantee for equity in services and greater capacity and consultation provided to ensure the community can voice their concerns at the national level. The tour wrapped up with The Symposium on the 50th anniversary of the Official Languages Act at the National Arts Centre in Ottawa on May 27 and 28. At the symposium I joined **Jean Johnson**, president of the **Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne du Canada** (FCFA) for a panel to discuss services to linguistic minority communities. Our joint message was that official languages in Canada have stagnated or regressed in recent years, and the modernization of the act is an opportunity to renew our commitment to linguistic minorities. On another panel, our Director General, **Sylvia Martin-Laforge** raised concerns over mechanisms in the act that support official language minority communities. She suggested stronger and more precise legislative provisions are needed, particularly around Part VII which obliges federal government departments and agencies to support the development and vitality of our communities. Finally, in another panel, board member Chad Bean discussed how English-speaking youth in Quebec face many of the same problems as French-speaking youth outside Quebec. Bean urged more to be done to retain English-speaking youth in Quebec. Minister Joly, who will be issuing a final report on the input from the cross-country tour, seemed to hear our issues. She mentioned how French and English are at the heart of our Canadian identity and that she will do what she can to ensure both languages are protected and promoted, not just for linguistic minority communities, but for all Canadians.

Release of OCOL Annual Report

Modernization was a main concern of the Commissioner of Official Languages **Raymond Théberge** who released his **Annual Report** and **Recommendations for Modernizing the Official Languages Act** in May. QCGN, which met with Commissioner Théberge ahead of the tabling of his reports to Parliament, supported his call for a more effective Official Languages



Act that would further the vitality of linguistic minorities and direct federal institutions to comply with their obligations to the Canadian public. The QCGN welcomed Théberge's call for more clarity and definitions of Part VII of the act, which sets out the obligation of federal departments and institutions to support the vitality of official language minority communities; and Part VI, which commits the Government of Canada to ensure that English- and French-speaking Canadians have equal opportunities for employment and advancement in federal institutions. However, we were somewhat disappointed that Commissioner Théberge limited his suggestions to enhancing existing rights. QCGN and our sister organization in French Canada, the **Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne** (FCFA) du Canada, go much further in seeking fundamental changes that would expand the application of the act and reinforce our rights. We believe now is the time for bold thought. It is critical that the Commissioner's voice on modernization be heard, so his input can be part of the national effort to update the act as we head into a fall federal election. Read our **press release**. You can also consult the QCGN's brief on modernization **here** and the FCFA's brief **here**.



The QCGN held its annual MNA event in Quebec City on April 17. Ministers, MNAs and staff from all parties attended the "Cocktail Dinatoire" at Le Parlementaire. The objective of the annual event is to demystify our communities with our representatives in Quebec City. To this end, a Power Point presentation was on continual loop, providing attendees with vital facts and statistics about Quebec's English-speaking communities. Among the issues discussed were Bill 21 and its impacts on minority communities as well as the issue of school board reform. The ambiance was convivial and regular attendees at similar National Assembly events commented that QCGN's menu was the best of the reception season to date!

NO JUSTICE FOR ENGLISH-SPEAKING QUEBECERS WITHOUT ACCESS



project, as well as other important issues related to minority rights and access to justice of the English-speaking community in Quebec.

Access to Justice Committee co-chairs **Bruce McNiven** and **Marlene Jennings** outlined the objectives of the project and provided a progress report, a summary of our short term objectives, and an overview of the steps we are taking to address privacy and data collection concerns within the framework of our proposed online platform.

We discussed the obligations of the justice system to organize itself to respect citizen rights and provide access to justice in English. We noted that a lack of access to services in English has impacts on many English speakers – especially the more vulnerable, such as lower income and less educated members of the community, as well as youth and seniors.

Concrete examples of access to justice issues for English-speaking Quebecers include the lack of services and information in English; as well as the inadequate quality of English materials, including poorly crafted legislation and regulations in English. We also discussed the absence of appropriate justice system guidance and directions in English for policies, programs, directives, and procedures.

QCGN discussed the Justice Department-funded Community Forum, which identified three specific areas of concern: Youth; Senior and Administrative tribunals. The exploratory research developed a people first approach, which is the organizing principle around which improving access to justice in English must be developed. However, the linguistic variable is neither acknowledged nor integrated within this approach.

Three work groups have been set up to tackle each priority and identify improvement targets in each area, including for example, the equal treatment of requests by youth and their families regarding the access to certificates of eligibility to receive education in English in Quebec.

QCGN's Access to Justice Project also aims to establish an online presence that will act as a hub for directing individuals to established sources of information related to access to justice; fill in information gaps regarding access to justice in English; and enable English-speaking communities across Quebec to share information about access to justice in English and mobilize collective efforts to address gaps. It will also gather and analyze relevant data from multiple sources about the issue.

During our exchange with Minister Lametti and his staff, we noted issues with the Court Challenges Program; imperfect translations of Superior Court rulings and statutes from French to English; and the need to expand the pool of bilingual court clerks and stenographers. We also asked for his support to further expand our capacity to promote the rights of the English-speaking community in Quebec by opening further avenues of funding and policy design.

Also on hand for our meeting with Minister Lametti were **Eric Maldoff**, the chair of our Health and Social Services Committee, jurists **Mathew Aronson** and **Jonathan Nuss**, our Director General **Sylvia Martin-Laforge**; QCGN's new Director for Access to Justice **Juan Pinto**; and our Director of Government Relations, Policy and Research **Stephen Thompson**.

Read the Minister's [press release](#).

QCGN SEEKS NOMINATIONS FOR 2019 COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP AWARDS

The Quebec Community Groups Network is welcoming nominations for its community awards that were established to honour individuals who contribute to strengthening the English-speaking community and to building bridges between Quebecers of different backgrounds.



gone above and beyond in contributing to the vitality of English-speaking Quebec?

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

The Sheila and Victor Goldbloom Distinguished Community Service Award was initiated by the Quebec Community Groups Network to celebrate individuals who have dedicated their lives to ensuring English-speaking Quebec remains a vibrant community within the province and Canada.

Winners will be recognized during an awards dinner on November 6, 2019 at Montreal's St. James Club.

Deadline for nominations is August 31, 2019. Full details on the QCGN website at www.qcgn.ca/awards/nominate
Send nominations to:

The Sheila and Victor Goldbloom
Distinguished Community Service Award
1819 René-Lévesque West, Bureau 400
Montréal (QC), H3H 2P5
or by email to: info@qcgn.ca

**QC
GN** Quebec
Community
Groups
Network
www.qcgn.ca

Goldbloom Award

Candidates for the Sheila and Victor Goldbloom Community Service Award must have demonstrated leadership and commitment as a volunteer or as a professional in their chosen field of endeavour. Their contributions can be in any and all regions of Quebec, and in any field from business to academia; from youth to seniors; from health and social services to arts and culture; and any other area such as heritage, the environment, and sports. The guiding principle is that these individuals have provided strong and effective leadership and succeeded in improving the quality of life of English-speaking Quebecers and the broader society. Click [here](#) for details on how to nominate someone.

**YOUNG QUEBECERS
LEADING THE WAY
AWARD**

Do You know an Exceptional Youth
Creating Innovative Change in Your
Community?

Nominate them for a
Young Quebecers
Leading the Way
Award

Deadline: August 31, 2019
Full details and nomination form at:
www.qcgn.ca/awards/youth

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www.qcgn.ca

**FONDATION
Notre Home
FOUNDATION**

Young Quebecers Leading the Way Award

In 2015, the QCGN joined with CBC Quebec and the newly created Fondation Notre Home Foundation to create a new award to recognize and celebrate young English-speaking Quebecers engaged in initiatives that create positive change in our communities. The main objective of our Young Quebecers Leading the Way Award is to celebrate the leadership and innovative thinking of engaged English-speaking Quebecers aged 30 and under. Click [here](#) for details on how to nominate someone.

Recipients of QCGN's Community Leadership Awards will be invited to receive their awards at a community recognition ceremony on November 6 at the St. James Club in Montreal. Save the date!

PROTECTING ENGLISH RIGHTS MEANS KEEPING OUR SCHOOL BOARDS

By **Dan Lamoureux**

**President of the Quebec English
School Board Association**

This opinion piece by Dan Lamoureux was originally published in The Montreal Gazette on December 3, 2018.

"We are proud to protect your historical rights and we will continue to do just that." These reassuring words, addressed to the English-speaking community, were pronounced by Premier François Legault in his inaugural speech in the Quebec National Assembly. Later in that same speech, he reiterated his government's intention to abolish elected school boards governed by democratically elected school commissioners. These two goals are antithetical — the second threatens the first.

The intention to abolish elected school boards is a radical change to an education system that is the envy of many OECD countries.

This is not the time to plunge Quebec into what will surely be a lengthy, divisive and legal debate on structures. Legault's speech also contained the welcome news that education will be his government's top priority. Indeed, we should all be focussing on what really matters, working together to improve services to students and student success.

There are many positive reasons to maintain democratically elected school boards in Quebec. At under five per cent, the administrative costs associated with running school boards compare very favourably with every other level of administration. They are, in a territory as large and diverse as ours, a necessary regional level of local governance. It is inconceivable that our school and adult centres could be run centrally out of Quebec City. It is equally inconceivable that our educational system can be completely decentralized to 3,500 individual schools and adult centres.

In our network, elected school boards have an 86 per cent student success rate. They also represent, in many cases, the only link between local communities and their schools. Having recently visited both the Eastern Shores School Board in the Gaspé and the Central Quebec School Board in Quebec City, I can attest to the essential role English schools play in the scores of communities throughout Quebec.

It is unclear how transforming school boards into "service centres," run by government of Quebec employees and with a high degree of centralized control, will either save any money or streamline the decision-making process in our education network. What is clear is that abolishing school board elections and eliminating elected school commissioners is an erosion of local democracy and of the constitutional rights of the English-speaking minority under Section 23 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms to control and manage our educational institutions.

The government apparently intends to argue that the participation of some parents, teachers, administrators and co-opted community members in "service centres" respects the constitutional rights of the English-speaking community.

Jurisprudence on the interpretation of Charter rights in general and on Section 23 in particular is clear — these rights must be interpreted broadly and they cover the minority language community at large, not just individuals, such as parents, who have a direct role in our education system. Abolishing school board elections and the position of school commissioners eliminates the participation of Quebecers who have both an interest and stake in our system and who pay school taxes, in the process of controlling and managing our educational institutions. It is the QESBA's view that anything short of local school boards



This position is reinforced by both legal jurisprudence and legislative precedence. In Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and the Yukon, governments eliminated the school boards of the English majority but maintained the French school boards, precisely in order to comply with the educational rights of the French-speaking minority — in other words, to be fully Charter compliant.

If Legault's government wants to "protect the historical rights" of our community, it must respect established jurisprudence and Canadian legislative precedence. They must maintain democratically elected English school boards. Anything less contradicts his own words and our society's foundational value of protecting minority language rights.

Dan Lamoureux is president of the Quebec English School Boards Association and a past president of the Quebec Community Groups Network.

ABOUT SCHOOLS, SCHOOL BOARDS AND LINGUISTIC DUALITY

By Raymond Théberge
Commissioner of Official Languages

The Commissioner of Official Languages gave the opening address at the annual general meeting of the Quebec Community Groups Network on June 14. Here is an edited version of his speaking notes.



As Commissioner of Official Languages, I have a mandate to ensure that official language minority communities not only survive, but thrive, and to oversee compliance with the Official Languages Act. I believe the act is a lifeline for all official language minority communities, and that includes Quebec's English-speaking communities.

In 2018 and 2019, official language minority communities across Canada experienced many setbacks due to various budget cuts and government decisions that weakened the status of our official languages, despite the fact that the Official Languages Act has been around for five decades.

Obviously, I am dismayed and disappointed by this turn of events. I never thought I'd have to make public statements about language rights setbacks in 2019, just as the act is celebrating its 50th anniversary.

For instance, the elimination of the Office of the Commissioner of French Language Services in Ontario and the cuts in legal translation in Manitoba last year; provincial cuts in second-language learning a couple of weeks ago; and, closer to home, the apparent decision of the Quebec Minister of Education to invoke special executive powers in the Education Act to force the transfer of schools of the English language minority to a French-language school board; and of course, the impending legislation to abolish school boards and school board elections in their current form.

Communities are built around their schools. These situations are sensitive, and in my view, are best resolved through consultation and dialogue. Governments at both the federal and provincial level must take special care to consult with their official language minority communities and move prudently when proposing major policy changes.

Which brings us to the school boards. This is an issue that may well have important national repercussions, and it is one that I am following closely.

When other provincial and territorial governments moved to abolish school boards in Yukon, PEI and Nova Scotia, they ended up eliminating the boards for their majority communities, but they kept them for their minority communities.

The Supreme Court of Canada's seminal decision in the Mahe case was handed down before the dawn of the information age. There was no Google, let alone Survey Monkey. The notion that school board elections, with their paper ballots and ballot boxes and returning officers,

this will end, I can assure you of my support.

The best solutions usually result from open dialogue. Therefore, I am encouraging the government of Quebec to consult with the community and to consider all the consequences that a decision of this magnitude could have on the future of the province's English-speaking communities.

Linguistic duality lies at the heart of the Canadian value of inclusiveness. It has helped show that difference and diversity are not weaknesses, but strengths on which we need to build.

In order for linguistic duality to be meaningful and to be something that brings us together, Canada's official languages must claim their rightful place. And in order to maintain their rightful place, we need to support our official language minority communities across Canada. What lies at the very heart of those communities? Schools.

In my view, the increasingly accepted view that schools and school boards have a certain responsibility in terms of community development and, more importantly, identity construction is a sign of growing political maturity and policy sophistication.

I'd just like to take a minute to thank you all for your work and for QCGN's commitment to Quebec's English-speaking communities. You play an important role in Canadian society, and we must never lose sight of the social contract that unites us.

In 2019, the Official Languages Act will be looking toward the future, and it's clear that the future belongs to our youth. The last major overhaul of the act took place long before the Internet, social media and the birth of today's younger generations — the famous millennials and the new Gen Z. Now more than ever, young people are demanding respect for Canada's linguistic duality. They imagine a country where it will be normal to live in English and French; they believe that the federal government needs to lead the way in making this idea a reality; and they have a genuine desire to learn about each other's cultures.

Our unity is fragile, however. Lack of vigilance has led to complacency, which has in turn led to the erosion of language rights. The less we talk about it, the more erosion will occur. But Canada needs to work on its own advancement as a nation. The recent actions of some governments are alarming, yet the greatest threat to Canada's linguistic duality is indifference.

Linguistic duality is not just for Francophones, nor is it just for Anglophones in Quebec. It's a valuable asset that belongs to all Canadians.

Read the Commissioner full [speech](#).

HOME AND SCHOOL: A HISTORY OF ACHIEVEMENT, YESTERDAY AND TODAY

Submitted by the Quebec Federation of Home and School Associations

The **Quebec Federation of Home and School Associations** (QFHSA) held its 75th annual general meeting and awards banquet on May 4 under the theme **A History of Achievement: Yesterday and Today**.

Established in 1944, QFHSA has encouraged and supported parental involvement in education in Québec for over 75 years. As a social movement, Home and School began in 1919 in Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue, when the first Home and School association was established at Macdonald High School.

QFHSA delegates discussed Bill 21. They heard from guest speakers **Fo Niemi**, Executive Director of the Center for Research-Action on Race Relations and **Fariha Naqvi-Mohamed**, blogger, journalist, influencer and founder of [CanadianMomEh.com](#).

In 2014, the QFHSA presented a statement to the Committee on Institutions on Bill 60, opposing the Quebec Charter of Values. In 2015, the delegates at the annual general meeting adopted a resolution on Diversity and Inclusion.

During the evening's awards banquet, QFHSA honoured special educators and outstanding Home and School volunteers.

The **Gordon Paterson Award**, established in 1973, to honour outstanding educators who believe in parental involvement went to **Dion Joseph**, principal at Pierre Elliot Trudeau Elementary School in Vaudreuil-Dorion, Que.

Larocque and to the members of the **St. John Fisher Elementary School social action team**.

The **Unsung Hero** and **Golden Torch awards** were also presented to deserving Home and School volunteers.

Une Soirée à Paris Tyndale St-Georges' annual dinner-auction



*Une Soirée à Paris Tyndale St-Georges' annual dinner-auction, which took place May 16 at the très chic St-James Theatre in Old Montreal, was a huge success. The Tyndale St-Georges team of staff and volunteers sincerely thanks participants and donors who helped raise more than \$125,000 for support programs and services for families in Little Burgundy. Learn more about **Tyndale St-Georges Community Centre** which has been offering empowering, supportive programs and services to its community for more than 90 years. Tyndale is always working on improving its services, developing stronger partnerships with community members and organizations, and expanding upon its rich history. Visit the **Tyndale St-Georges Foundation** to find out more about how you can support their work.*

HIGHLIGHTING THE HIDDEN HISTORIES OF BLACK MONTREAL

Submitted by the Black Community Resource Centre

When we understand our history, we understand our place in the world; our sense of self is reinforced through the stories we attach to our history. As a result, losing one's history can be akin to losing one's sense of self. Black immigrants have made significant cultural, artistic and social contributions to present-day Montreal. However, this history is often overlooked and rarely told. By uncovering these hidden histories, we not only affirm the place of Blacks in Montreal's history, but also preserve our stories for future generations.

With the support of Canadian Heritage, the BCRC's *Living History: 100 Years of Black History, Culture and Heritage* project is highlighting the hidden histories of English-speaking Black Montreal. Living History builds upon the BCRC's previous project, **Standing on their Shoulders**, and will highlight sites, individuals, organizations and events of significance to Montreal's English-speaking Black community.

Fifteen Black youth have volunteered as researchers for the project and have received training in oral history, archival research and audio production. As a result, each youth will



Black community of Montreal. A memoryscape is a sound-walk that invites the listener to experience the hidden history of a place by listening to the memories of its past and present inhabitants.

Living History: 100 Years of Black History, Culture and Heritage will also create an oral history archive containing over 30 interviews with English-speaking Black Montrealers. This archive will provide researchers with new source

materials helping to revitalize the historical work on Blacks in Montreal. Collecting these oral histories and making them accessible to both the public and researchers, will help to spread the history of Black English-speaking Montreal while also making it possible for new histories to be written. If you are interested in being a part of *Living History: 100 Years of Black History, Culture and Heritage* please contact the project team by email at livinghistory@bcrctmontreal.com or by phone at (514) 342-2247 ext. 106.



We hope to interview as many people as possible and value the variety of perspectives that different community members can bring. No memory is too big or too small and your participation will help pass on and preserve our stories for future generations.

To stay up to date with the Living History: 100 Years of Black History, Culture and Heritage project please like our [Facebook page](#) and subscribe to the BCRC's newsletter [Semaji](#).

Thank you for reading our regular newsletter. For up-to-date news about the Quebec Community Groups Network you can visit our website at www.qcgn.ca or follow us on Facebook and/or Twitter.

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