

Action Centre Activity Report

April 2021 - March 2022

Live a life beyond the limits...

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Table of Contents

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS.....	3
MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	4
PRESENTATION OF THE ACTION CENTRE.....	6
Action Centre - Mission.....	6
Action Centre - Values	6
Living Life without Limits	6
Members.....	6
Action Centre's beneficiaries in 2021- 2022.....	6
OUR MEMBERS	7
PROGRAMS AND SERVICES	8
New Recreational Therapeutic Service	8
Socio-Professional Integration Program_PAAS Action:	8
New Virtual Programming- Connexions Project.....	8
Weekly program 2021-2022.....	9
Social Activities	11
INTERNS AND VOLUNTEERS	12
Interns.....	12
Volunteers	12
STRATEGIC PLAN 2021-2022 - Progress Report	13
Governance and Ethics Committee (Chair of the Committee: Benita Goldin)	13
Human Resources Committee (Chair of the Committee: Keith Hardie).....	13
Programming Committee (Chair of the Committee: Suzanne Cloutier)	13
Visibility Committee (Chair of the Committee: Benita Goldin)	14
Building and Facilities Committee (Chair of the Committee: Arik Azoulay).....	14
Financing Committee (Chair of the Committee: Keith Hardie)	14
AKNOWLEDGMENT	15
ACTION CENTRE TEAM.....	16
2021-2022 IN PICTURES.....	17
TESTIMONIALS	18
TRIBUTE	19

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Dear Friends of the Action Centre,

What a year!

We were closed, we hired a new Executive Director, we renovated, we reopened, we offered in-person and online programming, we went on outings, and so much more. In these trying pandemic times, we tried as best as we could to normalize the delivery of programs and activities. I am so proud of our members for their resilience. I am grateful to our staff for helping members pivot to and from online programming and making the Action Centre a warm, comfortable place regardless of the platform for getting together.

To our new Executive Director Mojgan Yazdani, I extend a sincere thank you for your tireless and unwavering devotion to the Action Centre. We are very fortunate to have you at the helm and appreciate your commitment to transforming the Action Centre into the exemplary community day program that it has become.

To my fellow board members, thank you for your commitment and level of implication in the ongoing work of our board. To our funders and partners MSSS, Altergo, Habilitas Foundation, Emploi Quebec, Employment and Social Development Canada and school boards, thank you very much for believing in our members and our vision for the Action Centre. Your support allows us to provide innovative programming, social engagement, and a second home for our members.

Thank you everyone!

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Benita Goldin". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Benita Goldin
Chair, Board of Directors
Action Centre

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



As the new Executive Director, my first year at the Action Centre was tinged with exciting projects, enriching moments, and unforeseen challenges. I would like to share some of the more exciting things that we worked on this past year:

In-person programming

Although building a solid digital community was one of Action Centre's responses to the pandemic, a strong need to be more present for those who could not join our virtual community arose in 2021. We had to revise our programming, and we came up with some quick and effective options in early summer 2021 by combining in-person and online activities while keeping our members empowered, happy, connected, and most importantly, safe.

This process went relatively smoothly, thanks to our members, who showed remarkable adaptability and commitment, and to our staff, who continued to offer services adapted to the needs of our members.

New Support Service

Action Centre initiated a new Recreational Therapeutic service in 2021. This service fosters greater member involvement by engaging them in meaningful recreation and leisure activities and increasing their overall well-being.

Space improvement and accessibility

To provide our members with a more accessible, friendly, and hospitable environment, we completed a major renovation project for our office in 2021. The main activity room was completely renovated with more accessible facilities and improved lighting.

Reopening the Centre

After much planning, we were thrilled to be among the few organizations that reopened their doors and welcomed back their members in fall 2021.

Numerous members, some community partners, and funders attended our reopening ceremony on November 15. Our members were excited to experience the warm and welcoming feeling of reconnecting with their peer group at the Centre.

Focusing on Innovation

Despite its significant challenges, the extraordinary circumstances of the pandemic have created spaces for us to reimagine how we can best serve our members in the face of so much uncertainty. We use what we have learned to create more inclusive, accessible, adaptive, and innovative services.

In the light of the need for the above qualities, Action Centre initiated the "Connexions" project, funded by Aronson Fund-Habilitas, last November. The project's main objective is to engage adults with physical disabilities in meaningful interactions through virtual programs. This project is only in its infancy, and we look forward to seeing it develop and bring more connections!

Thank You !

As Executive Director, I am grateful for the incredible people who helped us over the past year, contributed to the achievement of Action Centre's mission, and placed their trust in us. I would like to warmly thank our members, who didn't cease to live an active life, regardless of limiting social and personal challenges, stayed positive, showed enthusiasm, and created momentums. You proved that no matter the circumstances, you thrive on living your life beyond the limits and bond beyond the boundaries, big applause!

I am grateful to Action Centre's Board of Directors for their extraordinary commitment to providing governance and support and their determination to carry out our mission ; to our staff members and teachers who consistently provide exceptional service and have demonstrated outstanding commitment and perseverance.

Finally, many thanks to our donors, partners, and funders. You sustain our work and ensure we can continue supporting those community members who need us most.

Therefore, with pride, we present to you this annual report, which highlights the contribution of the above mentioned individuals. I wish you a good reading!

Sincerely,



Mojgan Yazdani
Executive Director

PRESENTATION OF THE ACTION CENTRE

Action Centre - Mission

Our mission is to provide a safe, welcoming environment for physically disabled adults so that they can access and participate in a variety of educational, social, cultural and recreational programs in a community setting. It also focuses on raising public awareness about physically disabled adults' needs, rights and the Action Centre's philosophy of living a life without limits.

Action Centre - Values

Action Centre members, staff, the board of directors and partners all contribute to the Centre's success. Our work together is reflected in organizational values that emphasize the following:

- Respect for everyone's contribution
- Commitment and teamwork
- Responsibility
- Initiative
- Diversity and inclusiveness
- Independence
- Active participation

Living Life without Limits

Action Centre firmly believes that everyone with physical disabilities can live without limits and has the right to the opportunity to thrive in a safe environment where respect, support and encouragement prevail. The Action Centre's services have a direct and indirect daily impact on a significant number of adults in and around Montreal.

Members

We are a community centre that participants should become a member of. Members have free access to all structured activities and can benefit from reduced fees on certain programs and activities.

To be eligible, participants must be twenty-one years of age or older and meet the following criteria:

- Have a physical disability
- Want to participate in the Centre's programs and activities
- Pay a yearly \$25 membership fee
- Comply with the Centre's code of conduct

Action Centre's beneficiaries in 2021- 2022

- 112 **members** who participated daily in our educational and recreational activities, online and in-person.
- Numerous **caregivers** who benefited from respite care.
- Countless **health and social services professionals** who rely on our services and see them as valuable resources for adults with multiple physical disabilities.

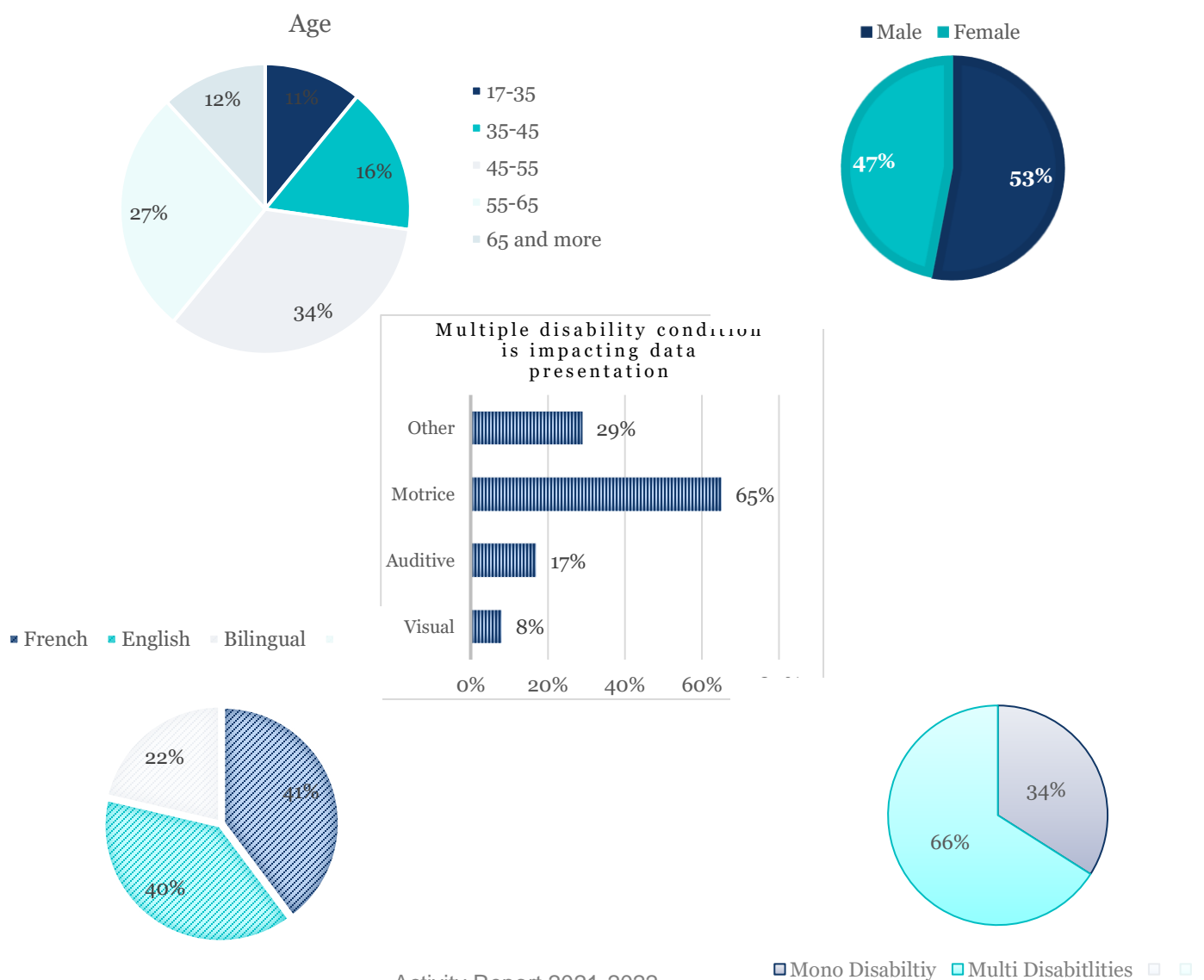
- **5 vocational program participants** who developed valuable work and social skills by participating in Centre's socio-professional integration program (PAAS Action).
- **Summer job students** who received mentorship while gaining valuable job experience
- **Interns and researchers** from various institutions with different specialties who carried out their projects and gained unique experience.
- The Centre also offers a suitable atmosphere to get involve many **volunteers**.

OUR MEMBERS

In 2021-2022, we focused on welcoming back our members to the Centre while still running our online programs. It is to note that the pandemic has had restrictive impacts on our in-person activities as well as new memberships.

Currently, 112 registered members actively participate in our programs.

The following graphs give an overview of our members' demographics (age, gender, types of disabilities, and their spoken language).



Our services are primarily intended for adults with physical disabilities. The Action Centre has always referred candidates who do not meet our criteria to other relevant resources using platforms such as L'Accompagnateur¹.

In 2021-2022, the Centre welcomed 112 active members (already registered); 5 new members and redirected 21 membership requests not admitted for reasons related to our mission to other community resources.

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

The Centre reopened its door and welcomed back its members in November 2021. Members, community partners, and donors well attended a reopening ceremony. Since the reopening, all our activities have taken place online and in-person, respecting public health sanitary measures and maximizing our effort to combat social isolation caused by the pandemic.

New Recreational Therapeutic Service

To facilitate members' participation in programs and activities, Action Centre initiated a new Recreational Therapeutic service in September 2021. The service intends to maintain and improve the participants' physical, cognitive, social, and emotional functioning and includes group and individual interventions. It also provides qualitative and quantitative assessment tools to evaluate, improve and create new programs.

Socio-Professional Integration Program_PAAS Action:

Despite the pandemic, Action Centre continued to offer the "Social assistance and support program" (PAAS Action) - Emploi Québec. This program helps a group of our members (5 members) with their professional integration while supporting them to improve and develop new skills. The participants get employed in different work platforms such as administrative, cash management, general support, and maintenance.

During this project, the participants are also accompanied and supervised by specialized teachers who help them accomplish the tasks related to their work platform.

New Virtual Programming- Connexions Project

Action Centre initiated new virtual programming, the Connexions project, in the fall of 2021. The project is subsidized by David Matthew Aronson Fund through Habilitas Foundation and offers engaging social, leisure, cultural, instructional, and informative virtual activities to physically challenged individuals. Reducing Social Isolation as one of the significant risks to the overall well-being of the mentioned population is the project's main objective.

¹ <https://laccompagnateur.org>

Weekly program 2021-2022

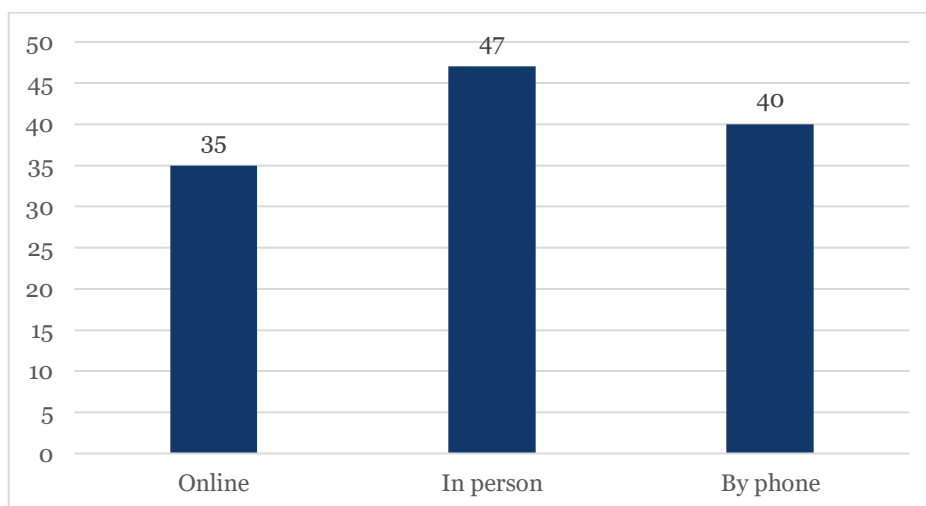
Like the previous one, this year was a year of unprecedented challenges! The Centre has maximized its resources to keep its doors open while offering a series of stimulating and fulfilling activities. Indeed, the Centre's programming committee, in collaboration with the two school boards, Centre de Services Scolaire de Montréal (CSSDM) and Lester B Pearson, respectfully represented by CREP and PACC, succeeded in developing a weekly program consisting of diversified activities spread over the four axes: education, art and creativity, health and well-being, and community participation.

The program contains more than 20 activities (Table 1) facilitated in person, remotely, and hybrid.

Lots of engaging projects were completed throughout the year, namely, newsletters, exciting interviews with interesting characters, creative arts, physical well-being, and much more. Action Centre's Story Time project, an inter-generational and entrepreneurial project in collaboration with LaSalle Elementary Junior to raise awareness about individuals with physical disabilities, won the challenge at the regional and provincial levels.

At the same time, 40 to 50 members who could not come to the Centre and were not tech-savvy were reached by telephone once a week. This telephone support continues the psychosocial support project we adopted in 2020, and its objective is to keep our members connected to their community and reduce their isolation.

The following table shows the distribution of members according to their participation means in receiving support (online, face-to-face, and by telephone):

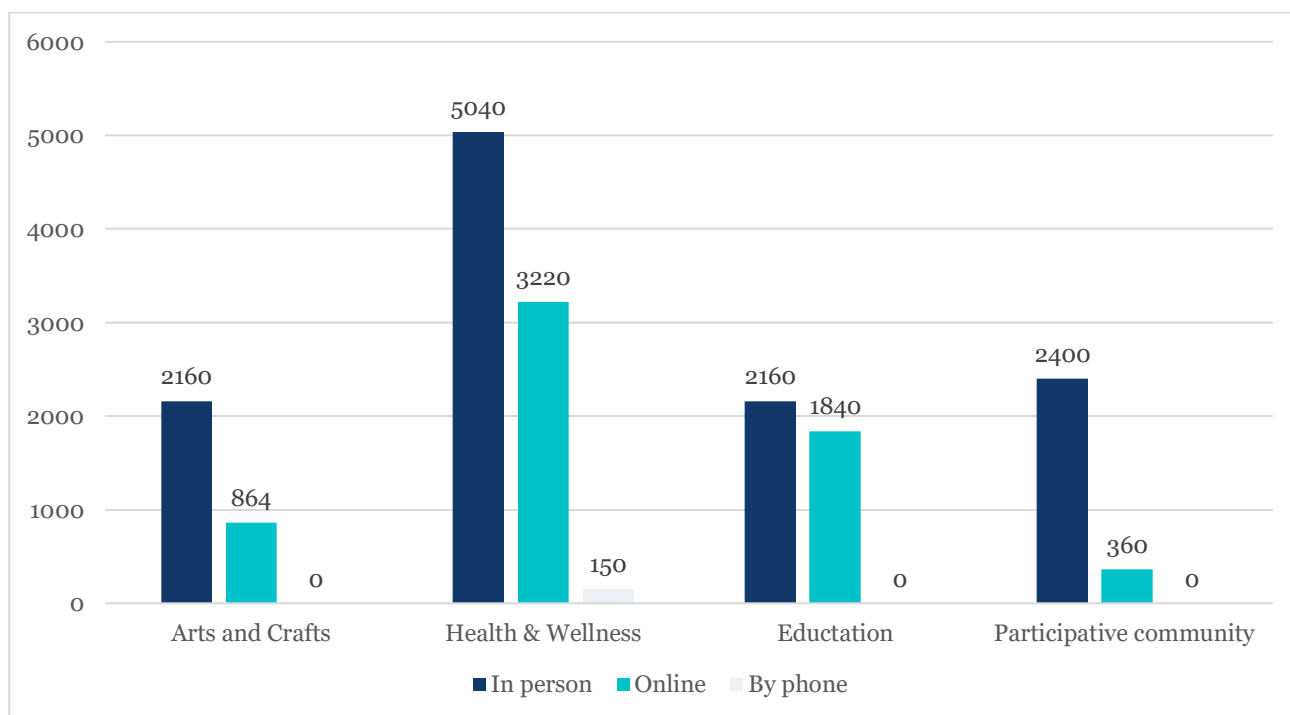


Member participation has fluctuated due to several lockdowns and public health restrictions. As a result, the Centre did not have stability regarding in-person participation until February 2022. The average daily participation increased gradually to 21 members per day at the Centre and 20 members for outings and social activities organized each Friday.

Heure/ Hours	Lundi/ Monday	Mardi/ Tuesday	Mercredi/ Wednesday	Jeudi/ Thursday	Vendredi/ Friday
9:30 à/ to 11:30	Natation/ Swimming (En présentiel/ In person)	Journal "ActionRéaction" (CREP)	All-Art appreciation (PACC)	Danse/ Exercises (CREP)	OUTINGS (En présentiel/ In person)
	Connaissance de soi (CREP)	Travel Club (PACC)	Exercices de mémoire (CREP)	Dream Job (PACC)	
11:30 à/to 13:00	PAUSE / BREAK				
13:00 à/ to 15:00	Musique du Monde (CREP)	Connaissances Générales (CREP)	Bricolage (CREP)	Arts Plastiques (CREP)	
	Internet Explorer (PACC)	Movement & Music (PACC)	Conversations (PACC)	Bowling Group (E / F) (AC/ PACC) (En présentiel/ In person)	

The total number of participation hours in activities, including online, face-to-face, and by telephone, amounts to 18,194.

The following table presents members' participation hours according to the nature of the activity and the animation method:



Social Activities

Despite the constraints resulting from the pandemic, the Centre continued organizing activities to reduce the impacts of social isolation. Since July 2021, the Centre has offered various social activities while respecting Public Health measures, including hiking and visits to the parks, shopping malls, museums, and city attractions, as well as indoor parties at the Centre. The following diagram illustrates the 3600 hours of social activities in 2021-2022. The Centre has doubled its Friday social activities from two to four times per month, allowing more members to participate.

This year, we offered our members around 40 social activities, mainly in person when possible. Our members also appreciated attending our first in-person Holiday Party since the pandemic started. Due to sanitary restrictions, we held the party on two days with limited participation numbers.

<p>April 2021</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Social Board Games -Thematic evenings: (Easter and Spring Online dance) 	<p>May 2021</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Virtual visit to Museums: Louvre Museum Capitoline Museum 	<p>June 2021</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Online Summer Dance -Online Bingo -Online Quiz
<p>July 2021</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -4 outdoor activities at « parc des Rapides De Lasalle » 	<p>August 2021</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -4 outdoor activities at « parc des Rapides De Lasalle » 	<p>September 2021</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Corn roast Party -Beaver Lake- Mont Royal -Shopping & Lunch
<p>October 2021</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Place Vertu -Sculpture Garden -Shopping & Lunch -Museum of Fine Arts 	<p>November 2021</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Centre 's Reopening Ceremony -Oasis, IMAX -Carrefour Angrignon, - PlaceVersailles 	<p>December 2021</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Galerie d'Anjou -Holiday Party (2 days) -Complexe Desjardins
<p>January 2022</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Online Bingo Tournaments 	<p>February 2022</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Shopping & Lunch -Cosmodôme -St-Valentine Party 	<p>March 2022</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Sugar Shack -Biodôme -Spring Dance -Shopping & Lunch

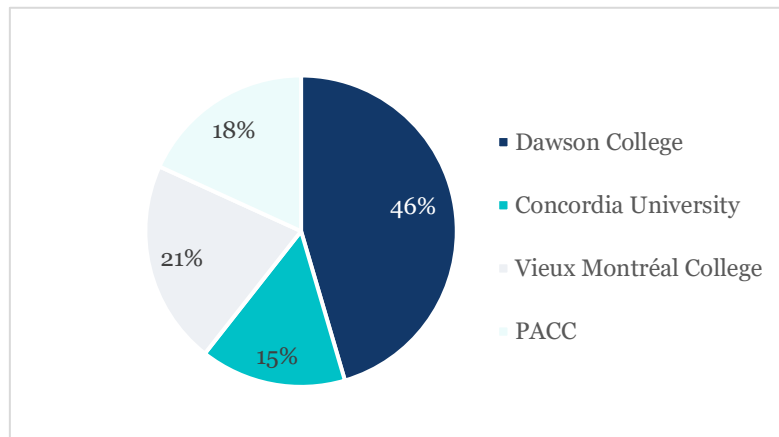
INTERNS AND VOLUNTEERS

Interns

The Action Centre continued to offer favorable learning, integration, and sharing opportunities to external individuals such as interns and volunteers.

This year, the number of trainees was lower than in previous years due to the pandemic. Indeed, 11 trainees from four educational institutions benefited from a rich and rewarding learning experience at the Centre.

The following graph shows the distribution of trainees according to their educational institution:



Volunteers

Although volunteering opportunities have been significantly affected by the pandemic, as a non-profit organization, we rely on our volunteer board of directors to drive changes and achieve our mission. Last year, Action Centre benefited from about 500 hours of their valuable time contribution to leadership, governance, and providing support.

We will reconnect with YMCA and the Trajet for possible volunteering collaboration when the health restrictions allow us.

STRATEGIC PLAN 2021-2022 - Progress Report

Action Centre's Board of Directors continued to implement and monitor the execution of the strategic plan FY3 in 2021-2022. While this report does not detail everything that has been undertaken to advance the strategic plan, it offers highlights and insights into the future direction the strategic plan is leading us.

Governance and Ethics Committee (Chair of the Committee: Benita Goldin)

Bringing on enthusiastic and highly skilled board members and recruiting a new Executive Director was the year's focus. The committee also continued to oversee Board Committees' performance and ethics in the workplace.

Human Resources Committee (Chair of the Committee: Keith Hardie)

The committee began an in-depth review of the organization's HR policies and procedures. It developed and recommended revised permanent workplace policies and policies in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic. This latter was crucial as the organization had to make significant decisions to maintain and improve service delivery while complying with public health directives.

Programming Committee (Chair of the Committee: Suzanne Cloutier)

The focus was on developing new adapted programs and activities for our members. As a solid need for providing well-structured in-person programming in a safe environment arose, the Program Committee, in collaboration with "Centre de ressources éducatives et pédagogiques" (CREP) and Lester B. Pearson Continuing Education (PACC), developed the Centre's hybrid programming model. It was adopted in November 2021 and continues to the present day. The hybrid format was a vital tool in combating our members' social isolation, intensified by the pandemic.

The Committee also focused on defining and implementing a process by which objectives and indicators for each of the four service hubs Education, Art and Creativity, Health and Well-being, and Community Participation, are developed and evaluated. The qualitative and quantitative results are being used to improve and create new programs.

Pillars	Activities
Health and Well-Being	Key Ideas, Relaxation and Fun, Conversation, Music Exercise, Food, Relaxation, Singing and Dancing, Slice of Life, Zumba, Book/Cinema Circle, Self-Knowledge Awesome Canadians
Education	Media Works, Internet Explorers, Travel Club, Go on an Adventure, Zoo-Action, Worldwide Sports, General knowledge and Memory Exercises
Community	Online games, Human relations, Dream Jobs, Trivi'action, AC Telephone, PAAS-Action, AC Conference and the Newspaper ActionRéaction, Swimming, Bowling, Conversations, Boccia
Art and Creativity	All-Art Exploration (or Artistic Adventures), Drawing, Arts & Crafts, World Music

Pillars	Goals
Health and Well-being	Cardio and muscular improvement; increased circulation and oxygenation of the brain; reducing pain, stress, depression and promoting happiness
Education	Promotion of cognitive abilities, curiosity, manual dexterity, self-esteem and self-confidence
Community	Promotion of social inclusion, community engagement and participation, communication skills, independence, connection, relaxation, joy and reduction of social isolation
Art and Creativity	The promotion of imagination, creativity, resourcefulness, assertiveness, self-esteem and self-confidence

Visibility Committee (Chair of the Committee: Benita Goldin)

The Visibility Committee focused on redoing the website and increasing the Centre's presence on social media platforms. Additional emphasis was placed on being more present in the larger community by increasing involvement with our community partners and the CIUSSS.

Building and Facilities Committee (Chair of the Committee: Arik Azoulay)

The Committee oversaw the Centre's remodeling to offer our members a more adapted, safe, and welcoming environment, particularly as they transitioned to in-person programming. Another preoccupation of the Committee was the end of the Action Centre's lease in July 2022. The Facilities Committee intensified its efforts to identify and pursue potential space options to decrease rental costs while maximizing an appropriate space for our programming and activities.

Financing Committee (Chair of the Committee: Keith Hardie)

The Financing Committee focused on identifying and pursuing new opportunities to obtain ongoing or project-based financing. This was especially crucial as the pandemic-related emergency assistance subsidies were ending. Different proposals were prepared and submitted at municipal, provincial, and federal levels.

The Committee also worked closely with our philanthropic partner to identify potential sources of financing from other foundations and donors.

AKNOWLEDGMENT

The Centre is deeply grateful to all its partners for their direct and indirect involvement in carrying out its global mission. Our partners provide us with financial, human, material and, informational resources:

- AlterGo
- Montreal Volunteer Bureau
- CIUSSS de l'ouest de Montréal
- CIUSSS du Centre-Sud-de-l'île-de-Montréal
- Educational Institutions: Concordia University, Dawson and Vieux Montreal Colleges, PACC
- School Boards: LBSP, CSSDM
- The Canadian Red Cross
- Déphy Montréal

- Employment and Social Development Canada
- Emploi Québec
- Desjardins Foundation
- Foundation of Greater Montreal
- Habilitas Foundation
- L'Institut National pour l'Équité, l'Égalité et l'Inclusion des personnes en situation de handicap (INÉÉI — PSH)
- Borough of LaSalle
- Moisson Montréal
- Nutri-Centre
- RIOCM
- Service Canada
- Table de Développement Social de LaSalle
- YMCA
- And more ...

ACTION CENTRE TEAM

Board of Directors on March 31, 2022

Benita Goldin	President (community sector)
Suzanne Cloutier	Vice President (public sector — retired)
Cody Aginas	Treasurer (public sector)
Cindy McKay	Secretary (community — participant)

Administrators

Arik Azoulay	(private sector)
Keith Hardie	(public sector — retired)
Lisa Westaway	(public sector)
Nigel Bicknell	(community — participant)
Theodora Brinckman	Representative of the Habilitas Foundation (private sector)

Management and Operations Team 2021–2022

Mojgan Yazdani	Executive Director
Amine Rachi	Program Coordinator
Gabriela Hidalgo	Recreational Therapist

Personal Support Workers

Abdellah Elouazzani
Asmae Elhamdani
Mélissa Goudreau

Attendants

Jessica Aubé
Julie Pun

Teachers:

Andrea Pinto (PACC)
Denise Curie (PACC)
Jean Claude Mousteli
Maryse Peyskens (CREP)

PAAS-Action Team

Cindy Patricia McKay
Daniel Miville
Francis Lefebvre
Melissa Lemeline
Natasha Zielinski
Neville Blair

Volunteers and Trainees

2021-2022 IN PICTURES



TESTIMONIALS

**Melissa L.
Member**

The Centre helped me get up, and to have more confidence in myself daily. It gave me a new purpose and is undoubtedly a stepping stone to tomorrow.

Coming to the Action Centre or logging on to its Zoom is like my oxygen. I can't imagine my life without the ACTION CENTRE...

**Denise L.
Member**

**Melissa G., Asmae E., Abdellah E.E
Personal Support Workers**

The Action Centre is where we work with hearts and enthusiasm. We are a family HERE!!

The Centre did not leave me alone during the pandemic. I actively participated in online activities and returned to the Centre to continue the PAAS-Action program. I am happy!

**Francis L.
Member**

**Maryse P.
Teacher, CREP**

The Action Centre is a welcoming place where everyone can learn, sing, create, move and socialize, with confidence and freedom! As a teacher, I am proud to be part of a beautiful family!

**Denise C.
Teacher, PACC**

The Centre managed to adapt quickly to the Covid-19 pandemic. More tailored hybrid programming and a positive and effective response from staff to keep the connection with members active all helped through a challenging year.

My experience at Action Centre was a wonderful exploration of a great community, and I learned many things. Thank you to the members and employees for their welcoming approach.

**Alicia C. Intern,
College, Vieux de Montréal**

TRIBUTE

With great sadness, the Centre lost two dear members:

Mrs. Maria Mustillo

Ms. Jennifer Leisk

Dear Maria and Jennifer,
We miss you; you will always be remembered by all your friends at Action Centre.

On behalf of all the members and the staff, we offer our most sincere condolences to their families.