

Action Centre Activity Report

April 2022 - March 2023

Live life beyond the limits...

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June 19, 2023

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Message From the President of The Board of Directors And the Executive Director



Dear Action Centre Members, Family Members, and Partners,

Today, we are reflecting upon the year that concluded in March 2023, a year of challenge and change!

Last year was unprecedentedly challenging for the Action Centre and its members, primarily due to our relocation. After much consideration and evaluation of various options, in January 2023, Action Centre moved to its new location in Ville Saint-Laurent. Our new spacious and adapted site offers many advantages, amenities, and resources, enabling us to better serve our members.

While the relocation process has been complex and challenging, we have worked hard to ensure a seamless transition and ceaseless programming, taking into consideration the impact on our members, staff, and volunteers. Finally, we welcomed our members to the new site on April 3, 2023. The day marked the beginning of a new chapter in Action Centre's history, and we were proud to see our members in great numbers. Today, we are pleased to say that our organization has risen to this challenge, thanks to our members' confidence, the continued support of our board of directors and funding partners, and the tireless efforts of our dedicated team.

Support of our primary funding partner, Habilitas Foundation, also enabled us to improve our organizational infrastructure by investing in new technology and equipment to enhance our operations and improve the client experience.

Last year also marked many more significant accomplishments. Our regular four pillars programming continued to make meaningful impacts on the lives of those we serve.

Moreover, we have made substantial strides in expanding our services, laying the foundation for a more vital, resilient organization. We launched our Virtual Programming, "the Connexions Project," in October 2022, which has helped more than 30 members to connect beyond boundaries. This program is offered through an interactive platform and provides a variety of Engaging, Entertaining and Educational experiences.

Offering thousands of hours of respite service to caregivers of adults with physical disabilities each year has been integral to our programming since the beginning. In 2022 we established a collaborative Caregiver Support Project, "Relais Bienveillant / CareConnect", funded by "L'appui pour les proches accidents". As we remain committed to providing quality services to



adults with physical disabilities, this new project will enable us to offer a comprehensive support service to their caregivers in partnership with our collaborative partner organizations.

Action Centre is proudly committed to empowering individuals with physical disabilities and advocacy efforts. Some of our numerous advocacy initiatives included community integration and intergenerational projects to challenge the stigma around the disability, inviting guest speakers who also live with a physical disability to offer unique insights into the challenges faced by people with physical disabilities and the effective strategies to address them, offering focused programming during the international accessibility week, implementing new programs to empower our members to build self-confidence, effective self-expression and self-advocacy and, still many more.

We have achieved great success in different aspects and intend to leverage that success for a more profound and far-ranging impact in the years to come. Looking ahead, we are excited about the opportunities that lie ahead. Our enhanced capabilities position us for continued success and future growth. We will continue to evolve and adapt our services to meet the changing needs of those we serve.

It has been a privilege to assume the role of the President of the Board of Directors and Executive Director at Action Centre and work with extraordinary individuals and community partners. Without their support, we would not have been able to achieve all we have. We want to thank our members for their incredible resilience and enthusiasm; our Board of Directors for their remarkable contributions and leadership; our funding and collaborative partners for their steady, loyal, and generous willingness to invest in our mission; and our staff, teachers, and volunteers for their passion and hard work. We would like to thank Habilitas Foundation, our principal funding partner, for believing in Action Centre, supporting its mission, and making our vision a reality; thank you for your invaluable support and continued commitment to our organization. Together, we will continue positively impacting the lives of those who need us.

This annual report highlights our success over the past year and the contribution of all the individuals and community partners mentioned above.

We wish you a good reading!

Sincerely,

Mojgan Yazdani
Executive Director

Benita Goldin
Chair, Action Centre Board of Directors

Action Centre - Overview

WE BELIEVE IN LIVING LIFE BEYOND LIMITS!

Action Centre services have a direct and indirect daily impact on a significant number of adults with physical disabilities and their caregivers in and around Montreal. We strongly believe that individuals with physical disabilities have the right to live beyond limits and thrive in a safe environment where respect, support and encouragement prevail.

Our Mission

Action Centre's mission is to provide a safe and welcoming environment for adults, 21 to 65 years old, with physical disabilities to access and participate in various educational, well-being, social and recreational programs. It also focuses on raising public awareness about the needs and rights of adults with physical disabilities and the Action Centre's philosophy of living a life beyond limits.

Our Values

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

Action Centre's beneficiaries in 2022- 2023

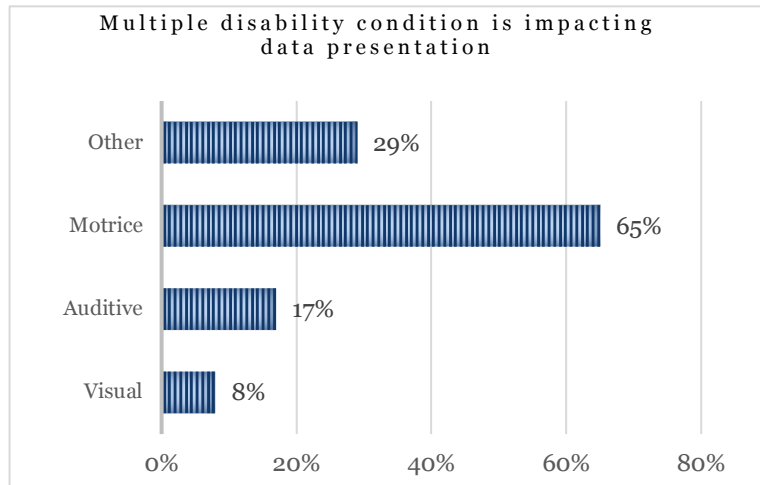
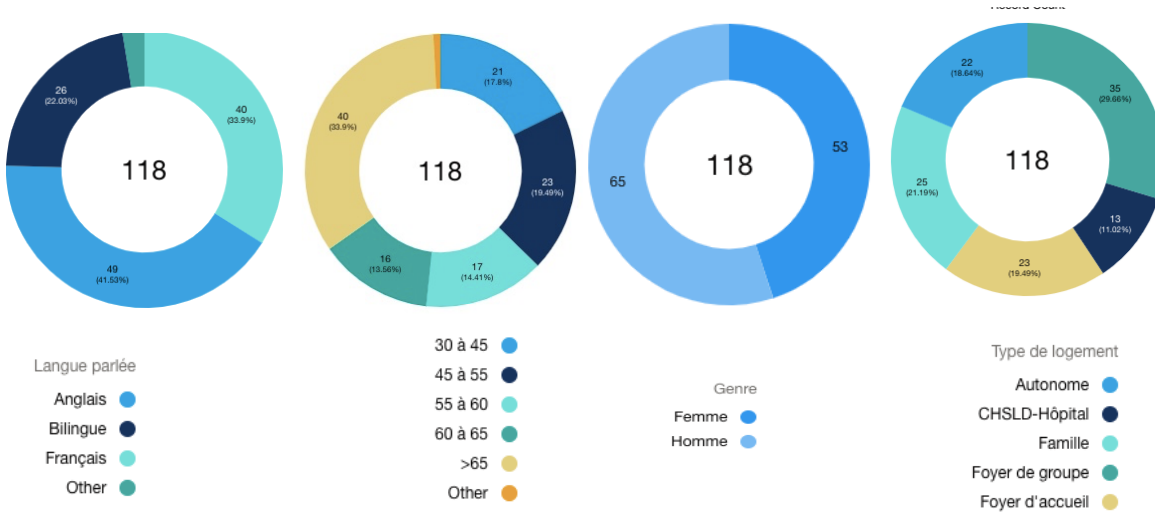
- 118 **members** who regularly participated in our **in-person** educational, recreational, well-being and social activities.
- 30 **members** who are regular participants of Action Centre's **virtual** programming "**Connexions.**"
- Great number of **caregivers** who benefited from our respite service to attend to their own personal, professional, and social needs.
- Numerous **health and social services professionals** who rely on our services as valuable resources for adults with physical disabilities.
- **Vocational program participants** who developed valuable personal, work, and social skills by participating in our socio-professional integration program (PAAS Action).
- **Canada Summer Job students** who received mentorship while gaining valuable professional experience
- **Interns and researchers** from various educational institutions who carried out their projects at Action Centre, learned and thrived.
- The Centre also offered a suitable and rewarding environment to get involve many **volunteers.**

OUR MEMBERS

Participation at Action Centre’s programs is membership based. Members benefit from free access to all structured activities and reduced fees on certain programs and activities.

In 2022-2023, **118** registered members with different types of physical disabilities regularly participated in our four pillars and respite programs.

The following graphs give overviews of members' demographics (age, gender, disability type, residential status, and language).



OUR PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

On-Site Programming

Despite all the challenges related to the pandemic restrictions still in place for part of the year and the Centre's relocation, our regular four pillars programming has made meaningful impacts on the lives of those we serve through **36 844 hours** of direct services to individuals with physical disabilities. This unique program is designed to enrich the lives of participants by focusing on four key areas: Education, Well-being, Social, and Recreational activities to empower participants and promote holistic development through the following components:



The **Education** pillar focuses on promoting lifelong learning and personal growth.

Participants can access various educational opportunities, such as vocational training, skill-building workshops, computer literacy classes, discussion groups, cultural projects, etc. The program fosters a positive learning environment that encourages curiosity, intellectual stimulation, and the acquisition of practical knowledge. In 2022, **9 400 hours** of educational programming have been provided through:

- Conversation/ Discussion groups
- Journal writing work shop
- World history course
- Internet Explorer work shops
- Entrepreneurial study (New)
-



The **Well-being** pillar prioritizes physical, emotional, and mental health through:

- Music and movements
- Stress management techniques and yoga
- Boccia
- Nutrition and cooking workshops
- Swimming,
- Mindfulness (Guided Meditation)





The program aims to enhance overall well-being, boost self-confidence, and foster a healthy lifestyle. In 2022-2023, Action Centre provide **9 316 hours** programming with this objective in mind.



The **Social** Pillar emphasizes the importance of socialization, community engagement, and building meaningful relationships. Participating in social activities, group outings, community events, and volunteer initiatives facilitates the development of social skills, promotes inclusivity, and creates a sense of belonging among participants. The following activities are only some to name:

- Social Games
- Speak up (New)
- Cultural excursions
- Thematic social events and parties
-



Our members benefited from **9,130 hours** of social activities over the last year.



The **Recreational** Pillar encourages participants to explore their interests, discover new hobbies, and engage in recreational activities through a wide range of options such as:

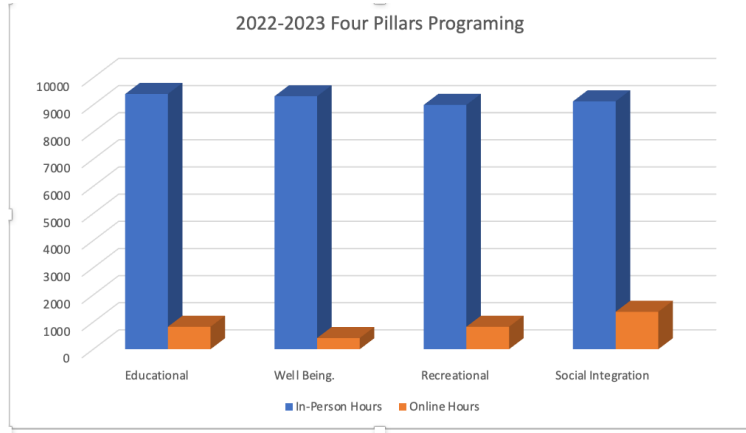
- Arts and Crafts
- Dramatic Art
- Music Appreciation
- AC Choir
- Travel Club
- Bowling
- ...





The program promotes creativity, self-expression, and enjoyment, fostering a sense of fulfillment and joy. Last year, we dedicated **8 998 hours** of our programming to recreational pillar.

Action Centre On-site and Virtual Four Pillars Programming

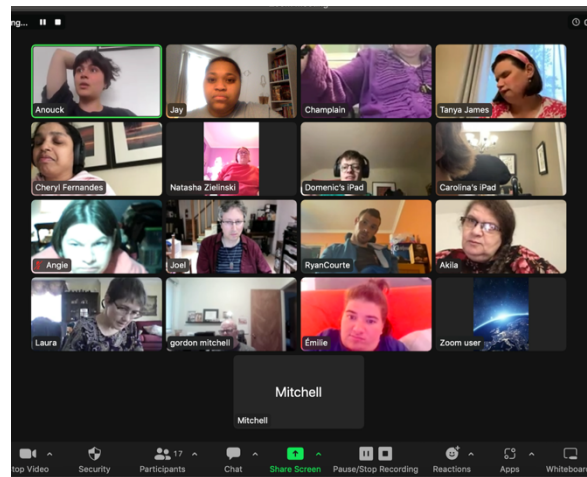


Action Centre Virtual Program: Connexions (NEW)

Action Centre initiated a new virtual programming, the Connexions, in the fall of 2021. The program offers Engaging, Entertaining, and Educational virtual activities to physically challenged individuals. Reducing Social Isolation as one of the significant risks to the overall well-being of this clientele is the project's main objective. It also aims to offer highly stimulating activities to increase accessibility beyond physical barriers through flexible schedule, convenience, customized platform, and adaptive technologies and resources.

The program, sponsored by **The David Aronson Memorial Fund** through Habilitas Foundation and in collaboration with Camp Massawippi, successfully brought 30 members together who enthusiastically meet multiple times a week, benefit from regular informative seminars, and get to know like-minded new people who also share similar life experience and challenges. This vibrant group is now very proud and happy about the community they built in 2022 and is still yet to grow!

Since its official launch in October 2022, the program has offered **3 450 hours** of virtual programming, including 1 656 hours of stimulating educational activities (such as scientific facts, art & cultural activities), **414 hours** of well-being activities, and **1 380 hours** of social activities (social game nights, current event discussions, etc.), six monthly seminars



on different topics (Depression, Nutrition, etc.), seven special topic series (Relationships, etc.) and many more.

The project also provided **200 hours** of volunteer opportunity and community involvement to specialized guest speakers, discussion group co-animators, and workshop facilitators.

Action Centre Telephone Support Project:

Our telephone support service, adopted in 2020, remains accessible psychosocial support to reach out to those who cannot participate in on-site or online activities with the objective of reducing their social isolation. We have provided **920 hours** of telephone support in 2022-2023.

Some of Action Centre Innovative Projects in 2022-2023:

- Art Exhibition
- Feathered Delights – Birdie cookies sale
- Action-Redaction: Summer and Winter editions
- Voices of Inspiration: Segoya's Visit
- The Inclusive Connections Project: Creating Kahoot for 5th-grade Primary School students
- Empowering Letters: Writing Motivational letters to Primary School students
- Expressive Threads: T-shirt-making workshop
- Bridging Generations: Organizing an Intergeneration Social event for LaSalle Primary School
- Overcoming Depression – Seminar
- Nutrition Boost– Seminar
- Building Strong Connections- Discussion series
- Helping Our Planet, One Step at a Time (International Earth Day)





Action Centre Respite Program (Caregivers Support Program)

As a leading provider of comprehensive services for adults with physical disabilities, we also offered a valuable respite program to support caregivers who tirelessly care for their loved ones by providing **11 900 hours** of respite service. Action Centre respite program aims to alleviate caregiver burnout, provide a much-deserved break while the individual with a physical disability is provided with professional care and support, and ensure the continued quality care for individuals with physical disabilities. The program is facilitated by Our compassionate staff, who possess the necessary skills to provide personalized care and support and ensuring the safety and well-being of participants.

In 2022, Action Centre decided to expand its respite program by joining “ L’appui pour les proches accidents” to establish a new partnership and to develop a more comprehensive support service for caregivers starting in April 2023. This collaboration aims to create a robust and accessible caregiver support system by combining expertise and resources. In partnership with three other organizations, we are developing a range of services designed to address the unique challenges faced by caregivers of adults with physical disabilities and provide them with the assistance they need.

Socio-Professional Integration Program _ PAAS Action

Action Centre, a passionate advocate for the inclusion of individuals with physical disabilities, continued to run its Socio-Professional Integration Program throughout the year. This comprehensive program, in partnership with Emploi Quebec, is designed to empower adults with physical disabilities by offering vocational training tailored to participants' specific needs and interests. Four (4) participants acquired practical skills such as computer literacy, administrative tasks, snack bar registration, and maintenance tasks through hands-on training. The program focuses not only on professional skills but also on personal development through mentorship and shadowing.

The Socio-Professional Integration Program profoundly impacts the lives of the participants who have successfully obtained work skills, pursued their passions, and developed the skills required to thrive both personally and professionally.



Excursions and Thematic Events

This year, we offered our members **67 social activities** including **18 thematic Events** and **49 outings**. Our thematic Events included Halloween Party, Holiday Party, Summer Closure Event, Spring Dance Party et etc. Excursions provided visits to Montreal's cultural events and sites.



INTERNS AND VOLUNTEERS

Interns

The Action Centre continued to offer favorable learning, integration, and sharing opportunities to external individuals such as interns and volunteers. Eight (**8**) **trainees** from five educational institutions (Dawson college, Cegep Vieux Montreal, CDI College, CSM and CSQ) benefited from a rich and rewarding learning experience at the Centre.

Volunteers

In 2022, we resumed our volunteer program and welcomed dedicated individuals and corporate volunteers throughout the year. Also, our devoted board of directors continued to generously donate their time, energy, and expertise to achieve our mission and contribute to the organization's leadership and governance. Last year, Action Centre benefited from **1 135** invaluable **volunteer hours** provided by the above enthusiastic individuals.

STRATEGIC PLAN - Progress Report

Action Centre's Board of Directors continued to implement and monitor the execution of the strategic plan. 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)

Throughout the year, the Committee conducted a comprehensive review of the board's composition, skills, and expertise to ensure alignment with the organization's strategic goals and needs. This involved assessing the board's diversity and expertise in key areas and implementing a targeted recruitment strategy to attract talents with relevant skills.

Board evaluation and development, policy development and compliance, governance best practices, and board engagement were also actively sought by the Committee.

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

Throughout the year, the Committee has been diligently working to ensure our human capital's effective management and development.

The Committee played a vital role in developing and implementing our performance evaluation system. Working closely with the Executive Director to establish performance goals, define key performance indicators, and guide performance improvement plans was part of the Committee's contribution in 2022.

The Committee also initiated a review of our organization's compensation and benefits structure to ensure competitiveness, fairness, and alignment with industry standards. Making recommendations in managing various HR challenges also was a crucial role of the Committee in 2022.

Programming Committee (Chair of the Committee: Suzanne Cloutier)


The Programming Committee worked collaboratively with the staff and the two school boards to develop and enhance Action Centre's programs and services to ensure that our programs were comprehensive, innovative, and aligned with best practices in the field.

The committee played a pivotal role in designing new programs and refining existing ones to meet our target audience's evolving needs and preferences. Ensuring the quality and effectiveness of our programs is a core focus of the Programming Committee.

Visibility Committee (Chair of the Committee: Benita Goldin)

Last year, the Visibility Committee worked collaboratively to develop a comprehensive strategic communications plan to enhance the visibility of our organization. The plan incorporated various communication channels, including traditional media, digital platforms, social media, and community outreach.

Recognizing the importance of digital platforms, the Visibility Committee focused on expanding our organization's online presence leveraging platforms such as Facebook, and Instagram to



engage with our target audience, share success stories, and raise awareness about our organization.

The committee also actively sought opportunities for community engagement and collaboration. They established partnerships with local organizations, and community leaders to increase visibility and promote our organization's work. 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 Facilities Committee notably played a crucial role in the Action Centre's relocation process. The Committee's dedicated work and expertise ensured a smooth transition and the successful establishment of our new facilities.

The Committee conducted thorough research and analysis to identify potential new locations. They assessed various factors such as accessibility, proximity to resources and services, transportation and space layout, accessibility features, infrastructure, and the potential for future expansion or customization. They recommended a new facility in Ville Saint Laurent that best aligned with our requirements. The Committee collaborated with the landlord, architects, and contractors to plan the layout and design of the space. They ensured the facility would be fully accessible, compliant with relevant regulations, and conducive to our programs and services. The Committee prioritized the adaptation and enhancement of the new facility to meet the specific needs of individuals with physical disabilities to create an environment that promotes our client's independence, safety, and comfort.

The Facilities Committee's dedication, expertise, and attention to detail were vital in ensuring a successful relocation of our organization. Their efforts have resulted in a new facility that is not only physically accessible but also designed to create an inclusive and supportive environment for adults with physical disabilities.

Their work has laid the foundation for our organization's continued growth and impact now and in the future.

Financing Committee (Chair of the Committee: Keith Hardie)

The Financing Committee focused on identifying and pursuing new opportunities for ongoing or project-based financing. Different proposals were prepared and submitted at municipal, provincial, and federal levels. This was especially crucial as the organization decided to expand its program and services and expand the population it serves.

The Committee also worked closely with our philanthropic partner, Habilitas Foundation, to identify new strategies and potential sources of financing.

Finance Committee (Chair of the Committee: Christine Boyle)

2022-2023 was an extremely crucial year in Action Centre's financial decisions toward its visions and expansion. The committee reviewed financial projections, assessed funding requirements, and provided guidance on resource allocation. They actively participated in budget planning meetings, ensuring that financial resources were aligned with the organization's strategic goals and priorities, relocation, and expansion plan. They conducted a financial analysis to assess the feasibility of new initiatives, including potential costs and revenue projections, and provided recommendations on financial strategies to support the expansion.

Maintaining strong financial controls and mitigating risks to ensure compliance with best practices and regulatory requirements were other parts of the Finance Committee's work. The committee also conducted regular risk assessments and implemented measures to safeguard the organization's assets and financial integrity. The committee provided guidance on revenue generation strategies and assisted in cultivating relationships with key stakeholders.

Also, as a regular practice, the Finance Committee oversaw the preparation and review of financial statements, ensuring accuracy, transparency, and compliance with accounting standards. The committee regularly presented financial reports to the board of directors, providing a comprehensive overview of the organization's financial performance.

AKNOWLEDGMENT

The Centre is deeply grateful to all its community partners for their direct and indirect involvement in its mission. In 2022 the following community partners provide us with invaluable financial support, human, material, and informational resources (in alphabetical order):

- AlterGo
- Borough of LaSalle
- CIUSSS de l'ouest de Montréal
- CIUSSS du Centre-Sud-de-l'île-de-Montréal
- Déphy Montréal
- Desjardins Foundation
- Educational Institutions: Concordia University, Dawson and Vieux Montreal Colleges, CSM, CDI, CSQ
- Emploi Québec
- Employment and Social Development Canada
- Habilitas Foundation
- L'Institut National pour l'Équité, l'Égalité et l'Inclusion des personnes en situation de handicap (INÉÉI — PSH)
- Moisson Montréal
- Montreal Volunteer Bureau
- RIOCM
- School Boards: LBSP(PAAC) , CSSDM (CREP)
- Table de Développement Social de LaSalle
- And more ...

ACTION CENTRE TEAM

Board of Directors on March 31, 2023

Benita Goldin	President (Community Sector)
Suzanne Cloutier	Vice President (Public sector — Retired)
Christine Boyle	Treasurer (Public Sector - Retired)
Nigel Bicknell	Secretary (Community — Participant Member)

Administrators

Arik Azoulay	(Private Sector)
Keith Hardie	(Public sector — Retired)
Lisa Westaway	(Public Sector)
Theodora Brinckman	Representative of the Habilitas Foundation (Private Sector)

Management and Operations Team 2022-2023

Mojgan Yazdani	Executive Director
Amine Rachi	Former Program Coordinator
Polly Tsonis	Virtual Program Coordinator
Shubham Soni	Recreational Animator
Julie Pun	Recreational Technician
Ethan Myer	Audio-Visual Technician
Connexions Project staff	
Abdellah Elouazzani	Caregiver Staff
Mélissa Goudreau	Caregiver Staff
Ibtissam Nedjar	Caregiver Staff

Teachers

Denise Curie (PACC)
Maryse Peyskens (CREP)
Claude Bertrand (CREP)

PAAS-Action Team

Cindy McKay
Francis Lefebvre
Melissa Lemelin
Sébastien Leduc

And Volunteers and Trainees

TESTIMONIALS



Joel E.

The Action Centre allows me to socialize with my friends and gives me the opportunity to meet new people. The new centre is a great location. It is well equipped, the layout of the rooms is well thought of, and the bathrooms are spacious.

Naureen G.:

There are many interesting members that I have met here, and I was able to develop friendships. I love the art activity because it allows me to put my mind at ease, it is a peaceful activity. The new centre is a great location, it is spacious, we have the possibility to move around freely.

Francis L.:

I adore the new centre; it is bigger and a fun place to be! All of the programs are interesting and engaging. The staff are very kind and helpful to the members.



Fahad B.:

I love this centre! It helps me with not being lonely, all my friends and the staff are so kind to me. If the centre did not exist, I would be at home with no resources. I am grateful for the Action Centre.



Colin Jamieson, Teacher, EMSB:

The Action Centre provides a safe & welcoming space for everyone needing a place to socialize. Since my first day working here, I have been welcomed with open arms and have made wonderful relationships with both the staff and volunteers. With a welcoming staff and support

Maryse P. Teacher, CREP

Our activities take place in a structured and rigorous pedagogical context, but at the same time in a warm, friendly, and fun atmosphere.

All (members) are highly motivated to achieve their personal goals, and it's only through hard work and impressive perseverance that they succeed. It's a great pleasure to accompany them on their journey and, above all, to see them blossom daily. With CREP, we think big, we see far.