



*Happy Holidays!*

The members of the Board of Directors and the ABC Center team wish you a holiday season filled with joy, happiness, serenity and pleasant surprises. May this new year be full of success, health and prosperity and may all your wishes come true!

## Let's make young people aware of volunteering at an early age

Every year, the ABC Center team visits schools in Saint-Laurent and the surrounding area to talk to students in grades 5 and 6, as well as students in secondary 1. We visit children as early as primary school, because the earlier we raise awareness, the sooner they will become engaged citizens. What we learn in our youth often guides us for life. We are always accompanied by a volunteer who shares his or her experience with the students. There is nothing more interesting than hearing the life stories of a volunteer, the activities that exist and the many benefits of giving your time, sometimes per year. We educate students about altruism and generosity in order to introduce the next generation to volunteering. The students always have a thousand questions and their eyes are full of stars when they learn that everyone can volunteer in the areas they are already passionate about at a young age, such as sports, the environment, education or health.



## Annual toy collection of the ABC Center

As it does every year, ABC Center organizes the collection and distribution of toys for children in the community. This year, more than 1,100 toys were distributed to the Henri-Beaulieu and Enfant-Soleil schools in the borough of Saint-Laurent and more than 700 toys were distributed in the Christmas baskets of the Saint-Laurent winter food aid.

Every year, this collection is a great success with community members who are very sensitive to the cause and who wish to help their fellow citizens. During the month of November and early December, volunteers met at the ABC Center to sort, clean and pack all the



toy donations we received.

The toys arrived at the ABC Center thanks to the precious help of the Laurentian population, but also of the Friperie Boîte aux Trésors as well as the employees of Bombardier Saint-Laurent and the company Excelpro. In total, more than 1,800 toys were distributed this year! Thank you to everyone for donating every year and for helping solidarity grow in the borough!

## Make a donation

If you feel like it, you can make a donation at any time to ABC Center, in the amount of your choice and against a tax receipt. Any help is welcome and will allow us to continue our mission.

**We thank you for your generosity!**

## A community fridge for Laurentians

Our community fridge, the ABC fridge, is celebrating its sixth month. A new project always brings its share of questions and adjustments. Obviously, the fridge has never been closed for a single day since the first fruit was put inside. Every day, more and more people use it. In the beginning, a few curious and shy people came to look at what was inside. One thing led to another, and the donations became more and more important and the beneficiaries more and more numerous. And since then? Every week, citizens bring in their donations, whether it is a small bag of apples from the garden, eggs or a large bag of various vegetables. The fridge is replenished every day by volunteers from the ABC Center who check the freshness of the food and sort the donations left over from the previous day. We can see its impact, as each day the food is collected little by little, throughout the



day. The fridge is now equipped with its winter coat and we will ensure the continuity of the service during the cold season. A real success of which we are very proud!

**DID YOU KNOW THAT WE HAVE A MOBILE APPLICATION FOR VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES?**

**CALL 514-744-5511, EXT. 222 TO REGISTER BY EMAIL [BENEVOLE@CENTREABC.ORG](mailto:BENEVOLE@CENTREABC.ORG)**

# Integration into Quebec society through volunteering

I am originally from Syria and I have been living in Quebec for two and a half years. There, I was an elementary school teacher and a music teacher. I chose to volunteer with ABC Center and the experience took my breath away. I met great people who supported me, believed in me, nurtured me, paved my way and encouraged me in my pursuit. The ABC Center has welcomed me as a volunteer to help the community in various activities. I feel very appreciative to be able to give people a hand to support them. It has encouraged me to want to learn more about Quebec and its system and how society is built, how things are done and how they work. I have been assigned to different positions, I have learned unique skills and tactics that are effectively deployed for different situations. Volunteering takes a lot of stamina, it's a great exploration. You get to know a new culture, a new climate and new people. You are quick to learn, there is this desire to co-exist. We all want to live peacefully and responsibly to be part of the society that invests in us and gives us a push to move forward. Volunteering has defined me as a person, I have been able to leave my mark and it has allowed me to gain my position in this new country. As a newcomer, you have to interact



and live responsibly and peacefully to be part of the society you have immigrated to. I looked for ways to learn about all the possibilities to become aware of how the system works: the most logical thing was to learn and try, to give my time. When you volunteer, you get to know yourself, while acquiring new skills and learning from a new culture, meeting people from different backgrounds, which gives you the privilege to invest in yourself and develop your good name and sense of integrity. Volunteering for me is about spending my time in a constructive way. It's a wonderful setting for giving and receiving good vibes. You exchange a smile, a word of thanks and it's a magical bond between you and the community you live and share with.

I like to actively invest in my day, it's the best way for me not to feel isolated. Volunteering has been the link between me and the Quebec I needed to get to know. I am very lucky that fate has allowed me to integrate into Canadian and Quebec society. I really feel supported as a human being by volunteering. Your involvement will pay off, it is always positive for your integration. You will be rewarded in ways you can't even imagine. It will define you as a person who rises to challenges with flying colours. If you volunteer, you can only be a winner. It is the greatest reward, you are giving light to those who need it most. I feel so much gratitude for this country that it is the least I can do.

*Houida Kourani*

**FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK, INSTAGRAM AND LINKEDIN!**



Centreabc



Centre d'action bénévole et communautaire Saint-Laurent  
Web : [www.centreabc.org](http://www.centreabc.org)

# Ambassadors for Voluntary Action

On Friday, December 3<sup>rd</sup>, a tribute evening was held by videoconference. The event was attended by 94 members of the selection committee, elected officials from Saint-Laurent, representatives of community organizations, families and friends of the Ambassadors, former Ambassadors from previous years and their fellow volunteers.

**ABC Center had the great pleasure of announcing the names of the five Ambassadors for Volunteerism and the 2021-2022 Laurentian Corporate Citizen: André Belliveau, Lise Gélinas, Aaya Hamid, Nader Kobeissi, George Emile Quinn and Novatek International - Hope for Dementia**

The corporate citizen and the five recipients chosen this year by the selection committee have truly distinguished themselves by their exceptional civic commitment and their great contribution to the Laurentian community.

A trophy, along with gift certificates, were presented to the winners to thank them for their volunteer efforts this year. These behind-the-scenes volunteers have put their hearts into ensuring the well-being of their fellow citizens, as well as making our community shine. They have all been incredibly generous with their time and energy for the well-being of those in need. This is why the Ambassadors deserve our admiration, our recognition and our immense gratitude.

For its part, Novatek International-Hope for Dementia has chosen to do its part by dedicating time to support the Laurentian community in this time of need. This company has set an example this year, proving to all Laurentians that, regardless of the crisis, a major company can stand out through local actions and improve the quality of life of citizens by showing generosity.



André Belliveau



Lise Gélinas



Aaya Hamid



Nader Kobeissi



George Quinn

## The ABC for Seniors

Since the beginning of 2021, we have implemented the ABC service for seniors. We have programmed a platform on a tablet that allows seniors to fight isolation while having access to services such as movies, music, games, discussion forums, news, health tips, access to the video conference room and even an SOS button. Seniors who have the tablet have been trained and can also order senior services from the Center ABC through the tablet. This is quite a change for people who have never had the opportunity to use computer equipment before! This innovative project, which has



never been done before in Quebec, is essential today, so that each generation can embrace the digital revolution and find its way around. Seniors are thus assured of the continuity of their services, no matter what happens.