

A clean bill of health for the Société de gestion du Fonds pour la promotion des saines habitudes de vie and Québec en Forme

\$24 million that is well invested and an avid interest that is much in evidence

Montreal, November 20, 2008 – In an announcement appropriately coinciding with World Children’s Day, Dr. Alain Poirier, the president of the Société de gestion du Fonds pour la promotion des saines habitudes de vie, today provided the details about the first projects that will be benefiting from Fund investments.

The five promotional projects, which have received a combined \$6,391,525 in funding, have different themes. They include: «*A revised and improved food supply in various living environments*»; «*Enhancing active mobility and a physically active lifestyle*»; «*Advertising directed at children and adolescents*» and «*The use of zoning to improve the food environment*».

Dr. Poirier, who congratulated the promoters for the initiative aimed at improving the well-being of youngsters, cited the 4th and 7th principles in the Declaration of the Rights of the Child adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1959. The principles state: “The child shall be entitled to develop and grow in health; the child shall have the right to adequate nutrition, housing, recreation and medical services; the child shall have full opportunity for play and recreation, which should be directed to the same purposes as education.

PROJECTS THAT SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES

Five organizations - Le Centre d’Écologie urbaine de Montréal, Vélo Québec, Extenso, Équilibre, groupe d’action sur le poids and l’Association pour la santé publique du Québec – have been delegated to implement the first Promotion of a Healthy Lifestyle projects arising from the Fund. The projects being supported strive to foster healthy nutrition and an active lifestyle, promote social standards that favour these healthy lifestyle practices, sustain innovation and provide knowledge and information in this field to young Quebecers, from newborns to 17 year olds.

Jean-Marc Chouinard, the chairman of Québec en Forme, acknowledged the outstanding response the Fund has received in the province of Quebec. While 75% of the money is devoted to mobilization projects in the local communities, every region in the province took the initiative to submit action plan. «*Less than a year after the call for the submission of projects, it can definitely be termed a success. The number of projects being developed totally justifies the creation of the Fund and reaffirms its relevancy,*” remarked Mr. Chouinard.

Concern for the welfare of youngsters was the impetus behind the program. An awareness of the negative impact of poor eating habits and a lack of physical activity among youth prompted activists in many Quebec communities to swing into action. These areas abound with activities, spurred by a philosophy that puts the children's overall well-being and development at the forefront of their efforts on the children's behalf. Communities combine their expertise, abilities and resources to improve the lifestyle of young people.

In January 2009, Québec en Forme expects to be able to count on the involvement of more than 1,400 partnering organizations, including some 500 municipalities and 700 schools, targeting in excess of 300,000 youngsters, especially those in underprivileged areas. The extent of the funding and accompanying support is determined by the nature of the various environments. By extending its support predominately to human resources, it means close to 1,000 new people working with youth and communities. In 2008, the 34 active organizations and community groups, plus 36 waiting for approval received \$17.5 million in funding. By June 2009, Québec en Forme expect to reach a total of 98 groups and partners, and target more than 575,000 youngsters for an investment totalizing \$ 32.5 million.

The support afforded these mobilized areas to encourage the well-being of Quebec youth, especially those in underprivileged sectors, serves as a lever for local communities that work within a dynamic partnership structure. Today's announcement ties in nicely with World Children's Day, which is of keen interest to the many Quebec communities that band together for the occasion.

ABOUT THE SOCIÉTÉ DE GESTION DU FONDS

Last year, the Quebec government announced the creation of a fund to support its 2006-2012 Action Plan « Invest in the future » to foster a healthy lifestyle and prevent weight problems among youth. In this context, a partnership was established which would see the joint contribution of \$20 million a year by the Quebec government and the Fondation Lucie et André Chagnon. Over a period of 10 years, a total of \$400 million will be distributed, and the Fund Management Board will oversee that the program objectives are fulfilled.

ABOUT QUÉBEC EN FORME

Founded in January 2002 following a partnership agreement between the Fondation Lucie et André Chagnon and the Government of Quebec, Québec en Forme's mandate is to support and contribute, through the mobilization of projects in local communities, to the adopting and maintaining of healthy nutrition and a physically active lifestyle among young Quebecers, from newborns to the age of 17.

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