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Semer l'espoir et le rêve

Awakening hopes and dreams

**Press Release
For immediate release**

Two inner-city music programs join forces to celebrate Canada's 150th birthday and show how they are using music as an "instrument" for change

Montreal, May 31, 2017 — **Share the Warmth** and the **Garage à musique du Dr. Julien**, two non-profit organizations working in Point Saint-Charles and Hochelaga-Maisonneuve respectively, have partnered up to show how music can dramatically change the life trajectory of some of Montreal's most underprivileged youth. Now, with a grant from the Foundation of Greater Montreal, the programs will show off the musicians' work with two end-of-year concerts held on June 2 in Point Saint-Charles and June 12 in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve. This joint initiative, aptly called *Communautés de concerts*, evokes the spirit of inclusivity and diversity promoted by the 150th festivities.

"We initiated the partnership with the Garage à musique so that children from different neighbourhoods and cultural backgrounds can work together, collaborate, and share their passion for music," explains Nadège Wary, Share the Warmth's Music Program Coordinator. "We developed part of our curriculum with the Garage à musique, and the children from each program will perform in both communities."

The aim of the partnership was to build bridges and foster relationships between two different communities, which share a similar socio-economic profile. Historically, Point Saint-Charles and Hochelaga-Maisonneuve are working-class neighbourhoods, and both continue to face many challenges. For example, 37% of the population of Point Saint-Charles lives below the poverty line. The aim of both music programs is to offer children from lower income families the opportunity to learn to play an instrument in the context of a positive peer group, while setting them up for a happy and successful future.

"We believe all children and youth should have access to musical education and be able to reap its many benefits, regardless of their financial situation," says Ms. Wary. "We want to show children that music is a universal language that transcends cultural and linguistic barriers and brings communities together."

Communautés de concert does just that. Not only does it celebrate this spirit of inclusivity and diversity, two cornerstones of Canadian society, but it shows how music can play an important role in building self-confidence, learning respect and teamwork, and developing perseverance. The use of music as a tool for healthy development, social change, and inclusion is nothing new. In fact, Share the Warmth adopted the El Sistema approach in 2013, a method developed by Dr. José Abreu in 1975 for underprivileged youth in some of Venezuela's poorest neighbourhoods. The backbone of the El Sistema approach is to prepare children for participation in orchestral ensembles, which Dr. Abreu viewed as a mirror of society. As such, music education focuses on group learning, intensive ensemble participation, peer teaching, and a commitment to keeping music fun. The goal of the program is not only to provide a place for children to learn and grow, but also to teach them social skills that will serve them throughout their lives.

This initiative is made possible by the Community Fund for Canada's 150th, a collaboration between Share the Warmth and the Garage à musique du Dr. Julien, the Government of Canada, and extraordinary leaders from coast to coast to coast.

About Share the Warmth

Since its founding in 1989, Share the Warmth has been awakening hopes and dreams through excellence in programming aimed at the overall development and success of youth, access to healthy food, and work training. Share the Warmth offers support programs to residents of the Sud-Ouest and Verdun boroughs, including a food bank, which helps 1,400 people every month, 430 of whom are children.

For more information on Share the Warmth please visit their website at <http://www.sharethewarmth.ca>

About the Garage à musique du Dr. Julien

Founded in 2009 in the neighbourhood of Hochelaga-Maisonneuve, this centre is the Fondation's first specialized community social paediatrics centre. Founded and run by Hélène (Sioui) Trudel, Garage à musique provides free support services to children and youth in order to reduce the negative impacts of difficult living conditions on their development.

For more information on the Garage à musique, please visit their website at <http://www.fondationdrjulien.org/>

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