



For immediate release

Press Release

YMCA Peace Week 2009 YWCA Montreal Leadership Department Honoured

Montreal, Friday November 13, 2009 – The YWCA Montreal Leadership Department received the 2009 Peace Medal in the Local Initiative Category for its Youth and Sexualization project.

Each year, during Peace Week held in the third week of November, the YMCA of Québec awards the efforts of individuals and groups who work at the local, national or international level to find solutions to violence, discrimination and injustice.

Created in 2005, the Youth and Sexualization project has reached more than 5,000 people involved in the lives of girls. Its training programs address community workers, teachers, parents and other concerned parties, sensitizing them to the sexualisation phenomenon and equipping them to deal with the repercussions in their communities. This training and mobilization project contributes to the development and improvement of intervention practices and encourages the active and responsible participation of members of society. In addition, the project has developed prevention workshops especially created for girls and young women aged 10 to 19 years old.

The Leadership Department has also collaborated in the production of a documentary film entitled *Sexy Inc.: Our children Under Influence* (Sophie Bissonette, NFB), which has received the prestigious UNICEF Prize at NHK'S 2008 Japan Prize Contest.

In addition to developing a facilitator's kit and a guide for parents of preteen girls, the Youth and Sexualization projet held an international conference last May whose theme was Youth, Media and Sexualization.

Today, the Leadership Department continues its work to counter and prevent sexualization. Its efforts are focused on training community and educational workers, facilitating mobilization workshops, participating at different consultation tables as well as continuing its collaboration with Sophie Bissonette to create a follow up film to *Sexy Inc.*

The mission of the YWCA Leadership programming is to promote and encourage the development of leadership capacities among girls and women. The YWCA conceives of leadership as a dynamic ensemble of knowledge, skills and abilities that encourage both personal growth and participation in collective life.

For 135 years, the YWCA Montreal has contributed to improving the lives of women and girls by increasing their self-esteem and autonomy, encouraging their personal growth and preventing all forms of violence through various programs adapted to their real needs.

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Source : Ms. Lilia Goldfarb
Head of Leadership Services
YWCA Montreal
514-866-9941, extension 429
lgoldfarb@ydesfemmesmtl.org
www.ydesfemmesmtl.org