

PRESS RELEASE
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Rebuild for women and with them: The Montreal YWCA unveils its 2023 Plan for the Future in response to Montreal's unrelenting issues of inequality, violence and social exclusion

The Women's Y Foundation launches the public phase of its \$10 million fundraising campaign and invites Montreal's business and philanthropic community to generously contribute towards helping Montreal's women and girls. National Bank confirms its commitment of \$1 million in support of the project.

"In 2020, Montreal's women, girls and gender-diverse persons found themselves in the epicentre of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Montreal YWCA noticed that the inequalities already being experienced by many women were worsening considerably. This is why we have chosen to launch our Plan for the Future and our fundraising campaign. We are responding and now, more than ever, we want to make a difference and rebuild a better future, for them and with them."

Mélanie Thivierge, CEO of Montreal YWCA

"We share the YWCA and its Foundation's vision for the future. We would like to invite Montreal's business and philanthropic community to unite in generosity, to join those thinking ahead. You will help make it possible for the YWCA to provide even greater accessibility and innovation in its services to the community for the decades to come. To help drive the YWCA's social impact, get involved right away."

The co-chairs of the Y Foundation's major fundraising campaign:
Laurent Ferreira, Chief Operations Officer, National Bank;
Helen Antoniou, Executive Coach and Author

Montreal, February 24, 2021. - Today, at the height of the pandemic, the [Montreal YWCA](#) unveils its 2023 Plan for the Future, sending a strong signal demonstrating its resilience and its commitment towards all women, girls and gender-diverse persons. The mainstay of this Plan for the Future is to upgrade programming offered by the Montreal YWCA, so that it can better adapt to emerging needs in the decades to come. At the same time, the Y Foundation is also launching the public phase of its major fundraising campaign, under the co-presidency of **Helen Antoniou** and **Laurent Ferreira**, who will be actively participating in the campaign with the goal of collecting \$10 million to support the roll-out of the 2023 Plan for the Future and encouraging Montreal's business and philanthropic community to join the movement. National Bank has set the standard, confirming, effective immediately, that it has committed one million dollars in support of the project.

"We are very proud to support the Montreal YWCA. For the past 145 years, they have helped girls, women, and their families. We have made great strides, but there is still much to accomplish. Contributing to this fundraising campaign is a great way to support their work. I would like to invite the members of the business community to come together in generous solidarity to make a difference in the lives of our mothers, daughters, sisters, neighbours, friends or colleagues who might one day find themselves in a vulnerable situation and need the help of a YWCA," states **Laurent Ferreira**, fundraising campaign co-chair and Chief Operations Officer of National Bank.

Upgrades to programs

"Today, our Plan for the Future, which we have named "Rebuild," is ready to take flight, and it will be phased in by 2023. This moment represents a beacon of hope and a period of preparation that requires, now more than ever, flexibility and relevance. The YWCA is taking a decisive step for Montreal's women, girls and gender-diverse persons, in order to provide them with a YWCA that meets their evolving needs, and to contribute towards marking Montreal a more inclusive, egalitarian and non-violent society," says **Louise Poirier**, Chair of the board of directors of the YWCA Montreal.

In conjunction with its current activities, the Montreal YWCA is preparing a new set of services for its 2023 Plan for the Future, which will include:

- **A transformed transitional residence** where everything will be put in place to provide women, their children or caregivers the time they need get re-established. This residence will be able to house almost twice as many women (\pm 60 units), including family units, and will provide psychosocial support 24-7. Beside the residence, the YWCA will build more than thirty (30) permanent units for low-income or middle-income women.
- **An updated “Passport to employment”**: Everything needed for women wishing to return to work, change careers or improve their professional situation, regardless of their current employment status. Multi-platform employability services with longer service hours directed at more lucrative future job sectors and offering one-on-one, customized support.
- **An all-new “360 support hub”** where women, girls and gender-diverse persons can meet resource personnel and benefit from drop-in, counselling and referral services for all key aspects of their life: work, health, sexuality, violence, relationships, legal help, etc.

“Now, more than ever, we have to upgrade our services, because many Montreal women and girls are experiencing situations of vulnerability that have worsened because of the pandemic. We need to think of low-income, older, single-parent women, women who are caregivers, immigrants, black, racialized, indigenous or in a violent or itinerant situation,” states Isabelle Lajeunesse, Executive Director of the Women’s Y Foundation. “It is through all the elements of the 2023 Plan for the Future that the Montreal YWCA hopes to break the cycle of inequality faced by women and improve their participation in society, allowing them to do so at their fullest potential. From this perspective, the Foundation is a key ally in ensuring the financial support and visibility of the organization.”

Fundraising campaign: An urgent appeal to the Montreal business community

To allow the YWCA to make upgrades to its programs, the organization needs to raise approximately **10 million dollars**. The Women’s Y Foundation is launching its major fundraising campaign to mobilize all Montreal stakeholders, and has appealed to public figures from the business world who have generously decided to act as campaign co-chairs.

“We believe that the future of Montreal, its population, its businesses, is founded on a society that is equitable with respect to diversity and inclusion, making it an example to cities around the world. This is why it is essential to support the YWCA’s Plan for the Future,” states Helen Antoniou, executive coach, author, and fundraising campaign co-chair. “We would like to invite you to generously contribute towards this major fundraising campaign, to provide the YWCA with the means to transform the future of Montreal’s women and girls.”

Destination: A Montreal district undergoing a complete revitalization

The result of a long thought process, and supported by the Montreal YWCA and its Foundation’s boards of directors, this major future project also has the full support of the City of Montreal and the provincial and federal governments. It will come to life in the same district where the YWCA first came to be: Ville-Marie. In 2023, the Montreal YWCA’s activities will roll out in a district currently undergoing a complete revitalization, an area that is inclusive and diverse, with a density at a human scale, and that promotes interaction. It will be integrated into a responsible construction project that shares the same values: Esplanade Cartier, a PRÉVEL project, located at the foot of the Jacques-Cartier bridge. This bright, open, welcoming new space will be distributed through two buildings; one will be residential, and the other will house all programs and services.

“For several years now, Prével has been actively contributing towards the creation of inclusive environments that promote human interactions. Prével’s consistent collaboration with different community organizations is at the heart of our activities. The social, cultural and demographic diversity is integral to the values we hold dear, and in this regard, it is an honour for us to house the YWCA at the heart of the Esplanade Cartier; an organization that pursues a mission that is essential to our community and to the women of Montreal,” says Laurence Vincent, Prével’s president.

About the Montreal YWCA

For more than 145 years, the Montreal YWCA has worked to foster long-lasting and positive change to prevent violence in the lives of women and girls, in addition to promoting equality and social and gender inclusion. The organization develops and offers innovative, relevant programs and services that respond to the evolution of social issues and to current needs. In this way, it contributes towards building a better future for women, girls and their families in a society that is egalitarian, inclusive, and non-violent.

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For more information about the YWCA 2023 Plan for the Future, videos in which the campaign co-chairs talk about the Plan, and a fact sheet on the current situation of Montreal women and girls: rebatirpourlesfemmes.org

For more information or to request an interview:

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