

LOCAL NEWS

Pushed back

This year's edition of Montréal en Lumière had previously been scheduled to take place from February 18 to 28. Organizers have announced it has been moved to March 4 to 28, with Nuit Blanche on March 13. It is still uncertain whether the event will be strictly virtual or not.

New exhibition in Dorval Language. Anglo groups share grant updates

History. The Dorval Museum will be exploring the history of a garment that is deeply embedded in Quebec's heritage with its latest temporary exhibition, *The Arrow Sash at Your Fingertips*.



DANIEL SUCAR
dsucar@metromedia.ca

"The arrow sash is a key symbol in Canadian and Metis culture," said Sara Giguère, cultural officer for the City of Dorval. "It still carries great Museum of Local History and Heritage importance to this day, as we can see by the fact that we still wear it for special occasions."

These days, the sash can be found nearly everywhere, from the racks of major department stores to the seasonal markets of the Old Port. It is typically made of wool that is intricately finger-woven into a colourful lengthwise zigzag pattern.

Along with the red toque and long coat, it has established itself as an integral part of traditional Canadian clothing. In recent years, it has even experienced a renaissance in local pop culture after being worn by the Bonhomme Carnaval during Quebec's annual Winter Carnival.

But while most people can recognize the sash, there are very few who are keenly aware of its place in Quebec history – something that Giguère is hoping will change thanks to the museum's new exhibition.



The arrow sash is typically made of wool that is intricately finger-woven into a zigzag pattern.
/COURTESY - DORVAL MUSEUM OF LOCAL HISTORY AND HERITAGE

"Part of our mandate is to highlight interesting facts about our history that you might not know about," the cultural officer explained. "And this is definitely one of them."

The exhibition traces the origins of the sash, including its first appearance in New France during the 17th century. It also delves into how the garment gained international recognition after being worn by travellers in the 1700s, and how it eventually went on to define the uniforms of the Montreal Snowshoe Club.

To bring the presentation together, Giguère and her team consulted heavily with the archivists and historians of the Marius Barbeau Centre, a Montreal group dedicated to the preservation of Quebec arts and culture.

"It's very important to me that the museum continues

«The pandemic might have altered plans for the museum but, as the crisis has shown us, we'll always find a way.»

Sara Giguère, Cultural officer

to offer quality exhibits, especially with everything going on," Giguère said. "Our goal is more important than ever, and we want to keep bringing history and knowledge into peoples' lives, in any way we can."

Virtual Tour

While the museum is allowed to open following the easing of some health restrictions, the exhibition will still be offered virtually, in the form of interactive photographs, texts, and videos. The online

presentation will be made available on Dorval's official website as of February 11.

The museum will also be launching a virtual workshop on its YouTube channel, where viewers can learn how to create their own arrow sash at home.

"At the end of the day, I can't recreate the feeling of being in a museum, and touching some of the artifacts," Giguère noted. "But I can bring the content into peoples' homes – and that's exactly what I'm trying to do."

Located in the former coach house part of the Forest and Stream Club, the Dorval museum boasts a collection of nearly 1,200 artifacts. Open since 2002, it aims to highlight the various events and people who featured prominently in the city's history, from colonization to the present day.

Two years ago, the Secrétariat aux relations avec les Québécois d'expression anglaise invested \$950,000 in grants to five local English-speaking community groups. These groups reconvened during a press conference last Thursday to share their project achievements and highlights, and provide details on how exactly the grant money was spent.

"This is a celebration of all the initiatives being launched in order to improve the lives of anglophones throughout the province," said William Floch, a representative of the secretariat. "We're eager to spread the word and to let people know there are exciting new programs being developed every day."

The Quebec English-Speaking Communities Research Network (QUESCREEN) was one of the organizations who received the fellowship. The group, whose goal is to "promote the vitality of anglophone communities," used the money to fund research dedicated to English representation in Quebec's public services.

In the end, the network found that the proportion of English speakers who hold jobs in the province's public services has hovered around one per cent since the early 1970s.

"The grant allowed us to deepen our understanding of the anglophone community and its relationship with the government," explained research coordinator Lorraine O'Donnell.

Added Floch: "Thanks to O'Donnell's team, we were able to shine a spotlight on the absence of English groups

in Quebec's social economy."

QUESCREEN also used the money to host conferences, create peer-reviewed publications, produce short films, and attend educational forum – including the upcoming ILET Forum on Education scheduled for this November.

Other Groups

Meanwhile, the Quebec Community Groups Network (QCGN) opted to utilize its allotted grant money to dive deeper into the communication between anglophones and their municipalities. According to director general Sylvia Martin-Laforge, the organization invested in research on how to improve English services at the municipal level.

"Municipalities play an important role when it comes to the everyday lives of Quebecers," she said. "We have to ensure that municipal leaders are representing the needs and values of the English-speaking community."

But not all the groups who received the grants chose to hone their focus on research. The English Language Arts Network (ELAN) chose to fund artistic activities – including dance, music, film, and literary and visual arts – in anglophone schools.

"Our goal was to bring families and community together through art-based learning," said consultant Christie Huff.

At the end of the event, Floch reiterated his secretariat's commitment to the English community, and promised that the projects presented were "just the beginning" of new services being offered throughout the province.

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Françoise Girouard
Directrice de compte
T. 438 349-4124
C. fgirouard@metromedia.ca

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