

Gazette

Monday, Dec. 2nd, 2024
Issue 09

The Western Québec School Board is committed to developing lifelong learners who actively contribute to society and are well prepared for the future.



Our Students, Our Community, Our Future!

A Message from George



Photo by Fatima Sow

Dear WQSB Staff,

As we approach the holiday season, I find myself immersed in the spirit of gratitude.

Being afforded the opportunity to visit schools and centres, or simply to walk through the halls of the board office, I am beyond moved as I witness the initiatives, events, and acts of kindness that permeate throughout our board.

Collectively and individually, you give so much to our students; please know that your efforts and commitment do not go unnoticed, and they are immensely appreciated.

I encourage all of you to take a moment to reflect on the positive impact you've made and to acknowledge the efforts of your colleagues. Whether it's a kind word, a thank-you note, or a simple gesture, let's spread appreciation throughout our board.

Wishing all of you a great lead up to the holidays!

Fatima Sow

This Year's Remembrance Day in our Schools

A day marked with ceremonies, Remembrance Day is observed every year on November 11th including a two-minute silence at 11:00 AM, as a symbol of respect for the fallen.

It's a time to honour those who have served in Canada's military, whether in times of war, conflict, or peacekeeping. It's a day to reflect on the courage, sacrifice, and dedication of generations of Canadians who have fought to protect our freedoms and uphold peace both at home and around the world.

On Monday, November 11, 2024, schools across Western Québec participated in assemblies to honour Canadian veterans and those who served in military conflicts.

These events held on Remembrance Day, provided an opportunity for students to reflect on the sacrifices made by Canadian soldiers, both in past and present wars.

As we remember, we celebrate their legacy and reaffirm our commitment to preserving the peace they worked so hard to achieve.

[Click to read more & see gallery!](#)

Spotlight

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Human Resources

Part II - Navigating Teaching Authorizations: Additional Resources

The HR team is dedicated to helping staff navigate the process of obtaining the required authorizations to teach in Québec. Here's a brief overview of the process and additional resources:

When hiring for teaching positions, candidates who hold a teaching license must be prioritized. When no formally qualified candidates are available for a teaching position, the board is obligated to request an engagement "tolerance".

This allows individuals to teach under specific conditions. Fast-track programs are available for those with an engagement tolerance, helping to move towards full teaching authorization.

For staff in training, provisional authorization offers another option. This authorization allows our staff members to teach while working towards obtaining a brevet (permanent teaching license).



Key Resources for Staff for [Becoming a Teacher](#)

- Provisional Authorization [provisional authorization request](#)
- International Teaching Diplomas [take the quiz](#)
- Questions? For all questions related to teaching authorizations, submit them here: titularisation@education.gouv.qc.ca. Questions may be submitted in English and French!

We're Here to Help

HR maintains ongoing communication with the Ministry to support staff throughout the certification process. Our people make Western Quebec!

Stuart Gray and Lisa Diner

Did you know?



LEARN (Leading English Education and Resource Network) Quebec (learnquebec.ca) actively seeks to build or strengthen (strategic) relationships among schools, school boards, post-secondary institutions, and community organizations across Quebec.

Vision: To be an innovative and collaborative force for the English-speaking educational community of Quebec.

Mission: To meet the lifelong learning needs of the English-speaking community of Quebec and contribute to student success and community vitality.

LEARN supports teachers with their [Pedagogical Services Team](#) that develops and shares pedagogical resources and provides professional learning opportunities for educators in the English community. One of these services is to develop tools and support the pedagogical integration of [educational technologies](#) through our provincial Anglophone RÉCIT.

Student support from LEARN is provided by the [Virtual Campus Team](#) which is responsible for LEARN Tutoring, Virtual Summer School, development of subject-specific resources, and technical and administrative support for online learning.

The [Provincial Resources Team](#) offers continuous professional development to Community Development Agents, Principals and Teachers in schools belonging to the Community Learning Centres (CLC), network, to contribute to the vitality of English-speaking communities in Québec.

LEARN also publishes pedagogical articles and podcasts of interest to educators, administrators, and the community found here: educators.learnquebec.ca/professional-learning/our-publications

Heili Hall

Safer Workspaces: Your Occupational Health and Safety Representative



As the new Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) representative at WQSB, Heidi Hall works with staff members in our schools, centres and board office to ensure safe environments for everyone.

Her responsibilities include conducting inspections, making recommendations, reviewing and examining incident reports, creating

a prevention plan with the OHS committee, submitting complaints to CNESSST when needed and accompanying them on their visits.

A key focus of the role is building a culture in which safety is everyone's responsibility. For Ms. Hall, it is about creating a proactive approach. To accomplish this aim, she points to incident reporting as one of the most important tools we have.

She shares, "When staff members submit incident reports, it helps to identify risks early and to take corrective actions before minor issues become bigger problems."

Ms. Hall is working to ensure all staff members understand the importance of the reports and feel empowered to take part in maintaining a safe school. "By working together, we can address concerns quickly and create a safer environment for all. Together, we can keep our schools safe."

For any information or support, feel free to reach out to Heidi Hall at ohsrep@wqsb.qc.ca

Lori Morisson

Hadley & Philemon Wright

Hadley Junior High and Philemon Wright High School came together for a heartfelt Remembrance Day ceremony, honouring the sacrifices of those who have served and continue to serve in the armed forces. Our school band set the tone with a moving rendition of O Canada, filling the gymnasium with pride and solemnity.

Two senior PWHS students Aisha Nyerere and Kiera Voisard recited the poignant poem In Flanders Fields and shared thoughtful words about the importance of honouring our past to learn for the future, encouraging all of us to reflect on how we can contribute to a better world.

We were privileged to welcome an honoured guest speaker, Lieutenant Colonel Neil Rodriguez, an engineer with the Canadian Armed Forces, who shared his experiences and insights, inspiring us all with his dedication and service.



Hadley and PWHS cadets laid a wreath at our school's cenotaph, a gesture of remembrance and respect. Together, our school community creates space to reflect on the importance of this day and the enduring impact of their sacrifices.

Carolynne Ball

Symmes Jr - D'Arcy McGee High School

On November 11th, Symmes - D'Arcy McGee High School hosted a poignant Remembrance Day assembly, bringing together students, staff, and guests in a powerful tribute to those who have served in the Armed Forces.



The assembly featured stirring performances by the D'Arcy McGee Concert Band, whose music resonated deeply throughout the event, evoking both solemnity and pride.

A special address was given by Major John Price, whose service and insights brought a personal and profound perspective on the importance of remembrance. His words encouraged reflection on the sacrifices made by those who have fought for peace and freedom.



The ceremony also included the participation of student cadets, who displayed exemplary discipline and respect while assisting in the organization of the event and taking part in the solemn procession. Their commitment to honouring the fallen underscored the significance of remembering those who have served and continue to protect our freedoms.

The assembly was a moving reminder of the courage and sacrifice of Canadian veterans, and an opportunity for the school community to unite in remembrance of the past, while reflecting on the importance of peace and service in the present day."

Cathy Nugent

Onslow Elementary School

The photos of our master of ceremonies. In the image featuring the peace doves, you will see messages reflecting the students' interpretations of peace from both the Grade 1-2 and 2-3 classes.

Regarding Remembrance Day, the entire school body, teachers, staff, administration and visitors gathered in the 5-6 classrooms.

The cycle three class organized a solemn and meaningful ceremony for the entire school. The students each had a role in creating a wreath to lay on behalf of their class.



We were privileged to hear heartfelt speeches, listen to poetry readings, view a video tribute, and observe a moment of silence in honour of this important occasion.

CP: Peace is:
 CL: Peace smells like a new day,
 AL: Like wind,
 BS: Like a fresh grown flower.

BL: Peace sounds like birds humming,
 GM: Like dolphins,
 BS: Like wind blowing in the trees,
 EE: Like music.

BW: Peace tastes like water,
 CL: Like air.

EE: Peace feels cozy,
 CL: Peace feels like home.

LL: Peace is quiet.
 CP: Peace is happy.

Teacher, Mr. Birch

Greater Gatineau School



On November 11, Greater Gatineau School held its annual Remembrance Day ceremony. The gymnasium was colourfully decorated with a variety of poppy art. The stage was set with 'Remember' in large letters as the backdrop.

Everyone stood quietly as military and Legion members paraded into the gym to a musical rendition of "In Flanders Fields," led by a group of students who were wearing their Scout uniforms.

After beginning with our national anthem, and words from our guest speaker, Major Mathieu Dubois, everyone stood silently for the Last Post, Minute of Silence, The Lament and Reveille.

Student representatives from each class placed a wreath in Remembrance, a longstanding tradition at GGS. The Junior Choir sang "Peace in My Fingers" and a student read "High Flight" in honour of the RCAF's 100th anniversary.

Members of the Royal Canadian Legion were in attendance as always and were recognized for the 70th anniversary of their branch in Gatineau. Lest we forget.



Brooke and Bailey - Students

Grade 6 students at Buckingham Elementary School

The assembly was held in the gymnasium. The Principal and Ms. Quilty started by introducing us as the M.C's and then they introduced the special guest, new Ward 6 Commissioner, Andrew Cornforth.

We started the ceremony by playing a video of soldiers going to war and some returning home. It was very impactful!

We then got everyone to stand up to sing O' Canada to remember the Lost Ones and the Purple Hearts. We then called up classes, one by one, to read poems. Some of the poems were In "Flanders Fields", "Why Wear a Poppy?", and "Prayers for Children".

After that, everyone stood up for "The Last Post" and a minute of silence. We asked them to think about the soldiers who were in the war and those who lost their lives to protect our country. We then called up two people from each class to place the class wreath on the stage.

Each wreath was dedicated to a group of people who served or currently serve.



It was a great ceremony, and we think everyone learned something important.

Across the Board!

Queen Elizabeth School - by Alana Albert



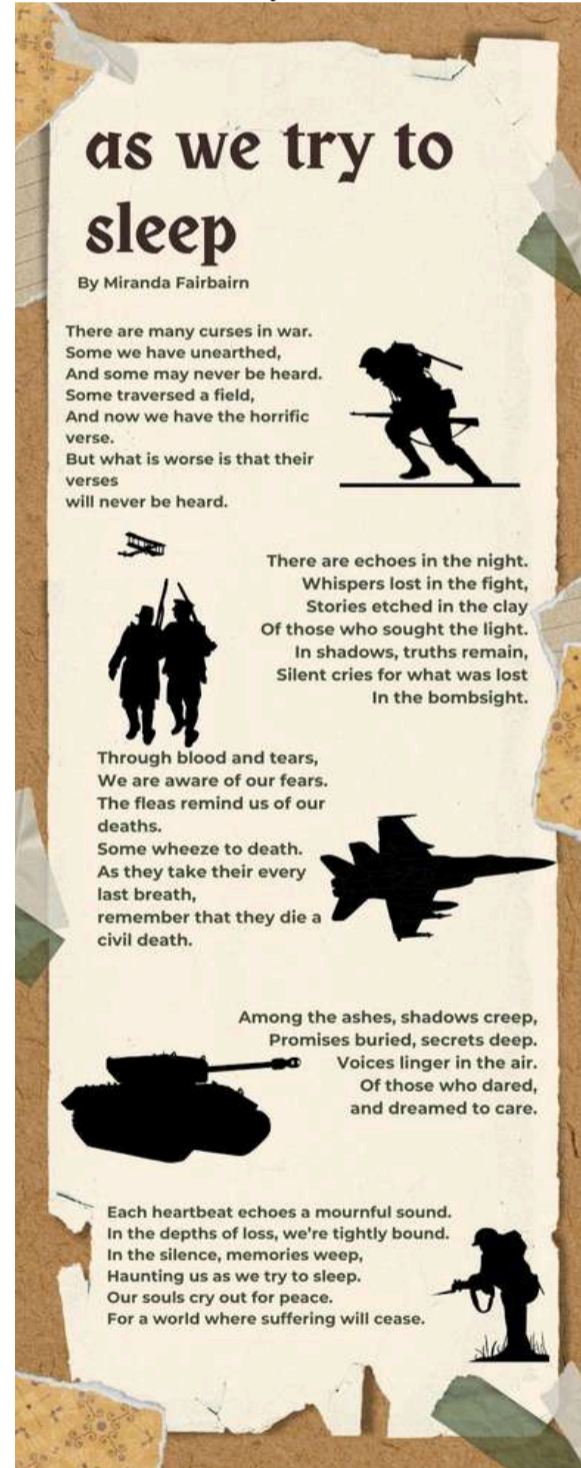
Buckingham Elementary School - by Brooke and Bailey



Golden Valley School - by Stephanie Frigon



St. Mike's - by Nadine Reason



Wakefield Elementary School - by Julie Fram-Greig



South Hull Elementary School - by Fatima Sow



McDowell Elementary School - by Bessie Tsatoumas



St. John School - by Lorianne Bertrand



Frankie Vermette

Teepee Ceremony at G.Theberge

On November 13th, 2024, G. Theberge School had a memorable moment with the raising of our Teepee donated by the educational department of Kebaowek First Nation.



This teepee was filled with art created by students of both G.Theberge School and Ecole Gilber Theberge.

Our art teacher, Joanne Abbott dedicated hours of her own time to create this mural of culture and love. Members of Kebaowek First Nation served Bannok and Tea to share with all.

We had a water song led by Verna Polson as well as a prayer read by Noella Robinson, a survivor of residential schools.

We are so thankful for everything our community has to offer. Both Mayors of Kipawa and Temiscaming were present.

Erica Tomkinson, Kelly Connolly & Elvis Heri Masudi

Highlight Quebec Addiction Awareness Week

Addictions and Substance use presents itself in many ways in the lives of our students, staff and communities.

Addictions Awareness Week is an important time for our school community to come together and reflect on the impact of substance use and addictive behaviours.

It reinforces the significance of educating students, teachers, and staff about the realities of addiction.

It reduces stigma and promotes open conversations about mental health and well-being.

This week is not just a moment in time but a continued message throughout the year, reminding us of the importance of building a culture of connection, caring, and understanding within our schools.

For students, Addictions Awareness Week highlights the value of strong relationships with trusted adults and peers as the foundation of prevention.

This year's theme in Quebec and with our partners at CISSSO for the week is "asking for help and support", which highlights the value in these trusted relationships as a foundation.

By fostering connection, we equip students to navigate challenges, resist peer pressure, and build resilience. DARTs (Drug Awareness Resource Team) activities, discussions, and workshops provide opportunities to explore the risks of substance use and discover healthier ways to cope with stress.

Beyond this week, the consistent presence of caring adults in schools—teachers, coaches, and all staff—serves as the most effective prevention for children and youth.



For educators and all staff, this week is a celebration of the meaningful role you already play as our Partners in Prevention alongside our community partners, families, parents and caregivers.

For educators and all staff, this week is a celebration of the meaningful role you already play as our Partners in Prevention alongside our community partners, families, parents and caregivers.

Your daily interactions, whether through teaching, mentoring, or simply offering a listening ear, make a profound difference in students' lives.

Addictions Awareness Week reinforces the importance of continuing this work all year long, as every moment of connection strengthens our collective effort to support student well-being.

Together, we are creating a safe and compassionate environment where students feel valued and empowered to make healthy choices.

Thank you all so much for prioritizing connection and care, as this is the biggest and best protective factor and opportunity for prevention.

You are already doing it; we see it every day when you welcome us into your school communities.

Peace and love this holiday season and always,



Sean Stewart, RSE

“Try the Tech Day at WQCC”

Aylmer – Over 150 students from WQSB and OCSB school boards recently had the opportunity to explore the exciting world of welding at a local trade show.

The event, hosted by the Western Quebec Career Center, showcased the latest welding technologies from industry leaders such as ESAB, Lincoln Electric, Miller, Linde, Vision Industrielle, Fein, Iron Workers Local 765, Canaweld, FSH Welding, and Twin Equipment.



After a delicious BBQ lunch, a raffle was held with exciting prizes like welding helmets and grinders. This engaging event sparked interest in welding careers and provided valuable insights into the industry.



Students had the chance to try their hand at welding, virtual welding, drilling, and ironworking. A highlight of the event was a plasma cutting table that created personalized souvenirs for participants.



Mireille Desjardins

Highlighting the Approche Signature Workshop



On October 25, several French Second Language teachers participated in a training session led by FSL consultant Mireille Desjardins at the school board focused on the Approche Signature tools and strategies.

In teams, participants built towers with marshmallows and spaghetti noodles, illustrating the importance of a strong foundation in literacy as well as a safe, enjoyable, and motivating classroom environment.

During this training, teachers learned about the different elements of the Signature approach and how it meets the diverse needs of students. This approach, which immerses students in authentic and meaningful learning, helps to develop the three competencies of the French as a Second Language program, allowing each student to progress in speaking, reading and writing.

The teachers also explored several literacy activities to motivate and help students develop their French skills in fun and effective ways. Teachers left the session brimming with enthusiasm to implement new ideas to support and encourage their students. Bravo!

I would like to congratulate each participant for their motivation and desire to offer a rich and stimulating learning environment for their students! Well done!

Nancy Peterson

Activities at Pontiac Continuing Education Centre: The Case of the Unfortunate Director

Disaster struck the Pontiac Continuing Education Centre on the 31st of October this year when the Centre Director's body was found slumped on her desk.

Deb Stephens, the Director, had been poisoned and she was clutching a note demanding that her killer be found.

This incident sparked a wave of activity from the students as they went about solving this murder mystery.

The students had a list of suspects, all played by teachers, to question and to rule out. Would it be Conrad, the newspaper reporter?

What about the snake loving prompter Ghoul D. Stage Whisperer, the prompter?



At the end of the day the guilty party, Kandi Jolie, played by Tanya Gabie, was put in handcuffs and made to face the consequences of her actions.

As a side note Deb was back at her desk on Monday.



So, what happened at PCEC on Halloween?

This year the students at Pontiac Continuing Education Centre were looking for something different to do on Halloween so some of them suggested a murder mystery as an activity.

It was a great idea, and all the staff wholeheartedly supported the activity, and they totally embraced their alter egos.

I am sure that this might not be the last 'crime' that happens at PCEC.



Or did Robert Fitzgerald, the actor, have a reason for looking so suspicious?

The students also needed to use their critical thinking skills to build their case once they had found the clues that were hidden throughout the building.

Don't worry, justice was served, and the students were able to successfully identify the murderer.

Alana Albert

Kissing the Donkey at Queen Elizabeth Elementary School

Principal Alana Albert had to kiss Daisy the Donkey after promising students to do so if they raised enough money for Terry Fox.



Lord Aylmer Jim Howard Touch Football Tournament

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Eugene Contreras

WQSB Community Spirit

On Thursday, November 7th, Lord Aylmer School held its traditional Jim Howard Memorial Football tournament. One of the chief organizers, Eugene Contreras provided the following comments and photos capturing the day.

We had 7 schools attending – Lord Aylmer, Eardley, South Hull, PETES, Greater Gatineau, Chelsea and Wakefield. Each school brought 2 mixed teams and we had a great day of friendly competition with no championship format, so no 1st/2nd/3rd place, although I think most coaches would agree that South Hull was the powerhouse this year.

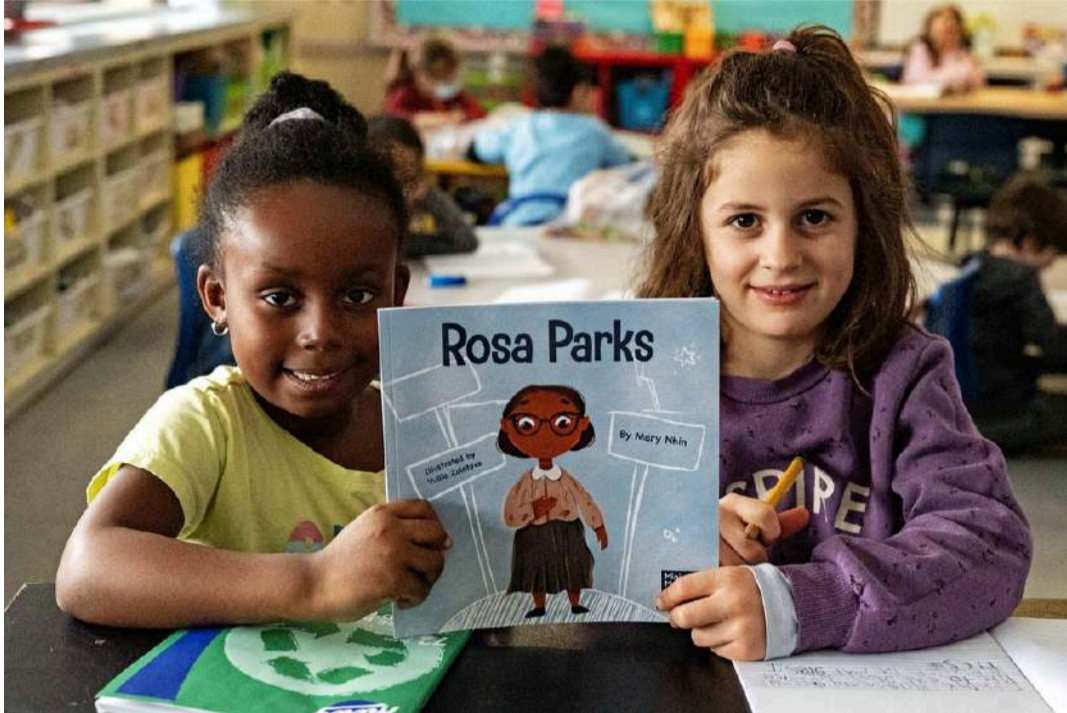
Lord Aylmer has been hosting this tournament since before I started teaching PHE here 15 years ago, and starting in 2022 the WQSB Elementary PHE teachers decided to name it in honour of Jim Howard, who had been a great supporter of sport in the Board before he passed away from cancer.

As usual, 14 student referees from D'Arcy McGee did a fantastic job keeping the games fair and fun for all.



The Western Quebec School Board community wishes to thank our many dedicated tournament organizers and coaches for making days like this possible for our students.

Erin Millar

Book Lists**List for Human Rights Days**

I believe that picture books are for everyone, no matter how old we are. This month's book list was inspired by a series of picture books by Alain F. Serres: *I Have the Right to Be a Child**, *I Have the Right to Save My Planet**, and *I Have the Right to Culture**.

Picture Books

Check out this [Story Explorer](#) from Amnesty International: "This piece of classroom origami will help young people explore human rights themes in fiction with questions designed to promote discussion and critical thinking."

- *We All Play**, by Julie Flett
- *Journey*, by Aaron Becker
 - This is the first book in a series of wordless picture books that, at their heart, tell the story of a child's imagination
- *Mary Wears What She Wants*, by Keith Negley
- *Fry Bread: A Native American Family Story*, by Kevin Noble Maillard
- *Under My Hijab*, by Hena Khan
- *One World**, by Nicola Davies
- *Here We Are**, by Oliver Jeffers
- *Shizue's Path*, by Mark Sakamoto

YA Fiction

- *The Poet X**, by Elizabeth Acevedo
- *If You Come Softly*, by Jacqueline Woodson
- *We Are Not Free**, by Traci Chee
- *Anger is a Gift*, by Mark Oshiro
- *Dry**, by Neal Shusterman
- *On the Come Up*, by Angie Thomas
- *Love, Hate & Other Filters*, by Samira Ahmed
- *Children of Blood and Bone**, by Toni Adeyemi

Middle Grade Fiction

- *Prairie Lotus*, by Linda Sue Park
- *No Fixed Address**, by Susin Nielsen
- *The Night Diary*, by Veera Hiranandani
- *Refugee**, by Alan Gratz
- *Escape from Aleppo*, by N.H. Senzai
- *Two Degrees*, by Alan Gratz
- *Consider the Octopus*, by Nora Raleigh Baskin and Gae Polisner
- *Dress Coded*, by Carrie Firestone

These titles provided the framework for this book list, created in recognition of [Human Rights Day](#), observed each year on December 10th.

The books included explore themes of protecting our planet, celebrating diverse cultures, and embracing some of the experiences of childhood.

These titles serve as a solid start to a list that could, and should, go on over many pages, and as they highlight the enduring importance of these topics, they also offer inspiration and understanding for readers of all ages.

Many of these authors have other titles that also embrace the broad theme of human rights, so I hope you'll check out what else they have to offer as well.

*indicates the title is also available in French

Non-Fiction Picture Books

- *Every Child a Song*, by Nicola Davies
 - "...introduces young readers to the universal rights that every child is entitled to under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child."
- *Nibi's Water Song**, by Sunshine Tenasco
- *Malala's Magic Pencil**, by Malala Yousafzai
- *Grandfather Gandhi*, by Arun Gandhi and Bethany Hegedus
- *Dreams of Freedom*, by Amnesty International
- *I Am Not a Label*, by Cerrie Burnell
- *Brave Girl: Clara and the Shirtwaist Makers' Strike of 1909*, by Michelle Markel
- *World Kitchen: A Children's Cookbook**, by Abigail Wheatley

Non-Fiction

- *Born a Girl: It Takes Courage**, by Alice Dusstour
- *We are Displaced**, by Malala Yousafzai
- *Rolling Warrior: The Incredible, Sometimes Awkward, True Story of a Rebel Girl on Wheels Who Helped Spark a Revolution*, by Judith Heumann with Kristen Joiner
- *The Witness Blanket*, by Carey Newman and Kirstie Hudson
- *Rise Up and Sing!: Power, Protest, and Activism in Music*, by Andrea Warner
- *People Who Said No: Courage Against Oppression*, by Laura Scandiffio
- *A Bigger Picture: My Fight to Bring a New African Voice to the Climate Crisis**, by Vanessa Nakate
- *Stay up: racism, resistance, and reclaiming Black freedom*, by Khodi Dill

Graphic Novels

- *Girl Rebels*, by Laurent Hopman – coming in 2025!
 - Already available in French as *Nées rebelles: jeunes filles au poing levé*
- *Thirst*, by Varsha Bajaj
- *When Stars Are Scattered*, by Victoria Jamieson and Omar Mohamed
- *Pashmina*, by Nidhi Chanami
- *Displacement**, by Kiku Hughes
- *Stealing Home*, by J. Torres
- *The Magic Fish*, by Trung Le Nguyen
- *Homebody*, by Theo Parish

Lee Randall

Virtual Library Spotlight – BANQ



[The Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec](#), Québec's provincial library, offers many online resources through a free virtual membership for all Québec residents.

These resources include English e-books and audiobooks (using Sora and Libby), French e-books (using Pret Numerique), audiovisual archives (LaVoute.tv), and so much more. Fill out this [form](#) to subscribe.

Found in the WQSB Time Capsule



A product of the WQSB education system, this young lad would grow up to play a crucial role in the school board, serving first in buildings, then in finance and currently in human resources. The main task assigned to him is extremely important: to ensure our WQSB employees remain employees, rather than volunteers . . .

Outside work, he is a dedicated family man who is very involved in local sports programs as a hockey coach.

Exceptionally committed to serving our employees, he is a credit to our organization.

Gazette Editions

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THANK YOU!

We extend our gratitude to our contributors this month

George Singfield, Fatima Sow, Claudia Loschmann, Stuart Grey, Lisa Diner, Stephanie Frigon, Cathy Nugent, Erica Tomkinson, Kelly Connolly & Elvis Heri Masudi, Heili Hall, Lori Morisson, Carolynne Ball, Mr. Birch, Brooke et Bailey, Nadine Reason, Julie Fram-Greig, Bessie Tsatoumas, Lorianne Bertrand, Sean Stewart, Mireille Desjardins, Alana Albert, Frankie Vermette, Nancy Peterson, Eugene Contreras, Erin Millar and Lee Randall.

Gazette created by Fatima Sow

[Have a WQSB story to share? Reach out to our team!](#)