

World March of Women campaigns affected by new regulations

By Reann Fournier
Special to The Record

A campaign was launched in March related to Marche Mondiale des Femmes, or World March of Women, organized by a large group of women representing 24 different partner organizations in the area. With the activities and campaigns, the groups also released a list of five demands to target and work toward overcoming. Due to pandemic restrictions and public health and safety rules, these activities have had to be postponed, causing the campaign to be extended by one more year.

Marianita Hamel, the communications agent for ConcertAction Femmes Estrie, the roundtable group that has been facilitating the planning for activities, said that during the now extended year, there will be target dates in order to highlight each one of their five demands unveiled in March. "For example, Oct. 17 2020, will be the target date for our demand on the fight against poverty among women, and Dec. 6, which is the day of commemoration for the victims of the Polytechnic massacre, we will talk about our claim in connection with the fight against violence against women," said Hamel. "Other dates for our remaining demands concerning migrant women, indigenous women, and climate justice are to be determined."

Due to the many restrictions placed on several regions of Quebec, any in-person events that had been planned

were cancelled or postponed, including the grand march in Terrebonne scheduled for mid-October. This does not, however, mean that there is no work to be done. "Women's groups are creative," said Hamel. "They are still looking at the development of popular education tools that are on theme with the 5 demands."

For each demand, the local groups are continuing their action. In terms of the fight against poverty and violence against women, the groups are advocating for change daily. In terms of climate change and the environment, the groups are involved in the Unitary Committee for the Environment in Estrie, which brings together groups from the community and promotes consultation from various groups.

Hamel also described the actions being taken regarding indigenous women. "Our committee wanted to establish a link with the Council of Abenakis of Odanak," she said. "Our attention was drawn to two commemorations taking place on the 4th October in honour of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls and the commemoration of the victims of Roger's massacre."

According to Hamel, specific committee members and groups operating under the World March of Women umbrella are more directly involved with the demand concerning migrant women, including the Intercultural Meeting of Estrie Families (RIFE) and the Federation of Cultural Communities of Estrie (FCCE).

Hamel added that, as a grassroots



COURTESY

movement, the World Women's March could not exist without education by and for women. "There are many areas for pages in our history to improve," said Hamel. "We need to recognize that it is often the winners that tell the stories. If we were to begin decolonizing education, I am certain that it could help to undo many prejudices against communities of people, especially those that are so closely tied to the oppression of women."

ConcertAction Femmes Estrie is still actively encouraging the many women's groups in the area to organize actions in their regional and local communities for the set dates. While marches and in-person events are not the best avenue, there is still opportunity to reach your community

through virtual means according to Hamel. "There will be a broadcast of regional and local activities that will take place on social networks on the 17th," said Hamel. "If you are able to take creative action within your own bubble, send photos, post them, to highlight the demand for the fight against women's poverty."

Hamel added that, though times are trying, there must be continuous advocacy for the five demands outlined by the World March of Women. "In the context of a pandemic, social injustices are exacerbated, and many people fall victim to different types of inequalities," she said. "One thing that does not change is the importance of the demands put forward by the movement."

Municipality of Potton prepares to launch "Connexion Potton"



THE SCOOP

MABLE HASTINGS

In the coming weeks, the Municipality of Potton will launch "Connexion Potton," a project to modernize the communication between administration and residents. The service will target Potton residents who have a cell phone or email address. Residents who do not have a cell phone or email address will receive information as they always have via Potton in Brief, mail outs and through the Municipal website at www.potton.ca

For those with a cell phone or email contact that they are willing to share with the Municipality, Connexion Potton is expected to benefit and improve their communication in a variety of beneficial ways; improved Public Safety warnings and response being just one of them.

"By providing mobile phone numbers and some basic information about their households, residents will be alerted more quickly to public safety threats and first responders arriving on scene with information that could make a difference," stated the new Director of Fire and Civil Security Services, James Bouthillier. "This will be especially important when a disaster hits us or if someone has a particular need in their home."

The service will improve other areas of communication for the Municipality as well including faster administrative communications.

"I'm not sure that people realize that we handle some 200 phone calls a week and are literally hand-stuffing envelopes and sending them by Canada Post. Adopting email is going to make communication more efficient,

cheaper and more economically friendly," said Maggie Covey who is in charge of citizen services at the municipal reception desk.

For the Municipal Council members and the Mayor, it is hoped that this initiative will provide some transparency and better outreach about public affairs.

"We've noticed that things at council go better when residents are on the same page-something that's difficult with paper documents and Canada Post, explained Municipal Councillor, Jason Ball. "Over time, Connexion Potton is going to make it easier for us to inform citizens with facts about public affairs that matter. This will be a very beneficial tool to both the citizens and the council," he added.

Out going Mayor, Jacques Marcoux also feels that the service will improve the feedback from Potton residents.

"One of the most important benefits of Connexion Potton," stated Mr. Marcoux "is that it will make surveys possible. These will help citizens provide feedback and contribute to better decisions by council."

The hope is that once the project

launches shortly that residents will sign up immediately seeing its benefits and making the initiative a reality. For those who may have questions or concerns about the "Connexion Potton" project, you are asked not to contact the town hall directly but rather to consult the Connexion Potton pages on www.potton.ca website where you will find answers to most questions and resources for additional help.



MABLE HASTINGS

Potton Municipal Councillor, Jason Ball... "Connexion Potton will strengthen communication for the betterment of all.