

NETWORK FALL GATHERING REPORT

Thursday, October 31, 2013

Holiday Inn Select Hotel
99 Viger Street West, Montreal

ADOPTED ON FEBRUARY 24, 2014



ATTENDANCE

See the list of participants in the appendix.

AGENDA

1. Word of Welcome and Opening Prayer
2. Songs of Welcome by the *Buffalo Hat Singers* Drumming Group
3. Adoption of the Agenda and of the Spring Gathering Report
4. Steering Committee Update: Youth Working Committee Presentation
5. Adoption of the Nominations and Elections Process for the Present Gathering
6. Presentation on the ODENA Research Alliance Survey
7. Presentation on the Cabot Square Project: Strategy for Community Safety and Improved Well-Being
8. Nominations, Presentations and Opening of the Elections Process
9. Highlights of the NETWORK's Achievements and Action Plans
10. Community Announcements
11. Closing Prayer

1. WORD OF WELCOME AND OPENING PRAYER

The Co-Chair, Nakuset, welcomed the participants. She stated that this is the fifteenth Gathering of the NETWORK and declared the meeting open at 9:25am.

She invited Mike Standup to deliver the opening prayer.

2. SONGS OF WELCOME BY THE *BUFFALO HAT SINGERS* DRUMMING GROUP

Nakuset thanked Mike Standup. She introduced the *Buffalo Hat Singers* drumming group and invited them to perform some songs of welcome.

3. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND OF THE SPRING GATHERING REPORT

Nakuset read the proposed agenda and mentioned some changes. Thus, item 5 concerning the revisions to the Strategic Plan 2012-2017 will not be addressed. Instead, the item pertaining to the presentation on the ODENA Research Alliance survey was added.

She pointed out the presence of the information booths of the Working Committees and invited the participants to visit them. She also mentioned that a Halloween activity will be held after lunch.

Resolution

It was moved by Paige Isaac and seconded by Carrie Martin:
THAT THE AGENDA BE APPROVED WITH THE MODIFICATIONS AND ADDITIONS.

Adopted by consensus.

The spring Gathering report gave rise to the following comments and corrections:

- Page 5 – ODENA
The second sentence states that “Rolando has already had the opportunity to present the ODENA project to the NETWORK...” A question was raised as to when this first presentation took place. Natasha Dawn Latter will verify the information and will include a clarification in the final report.
- Page 6 – Health Working Committee
In the third paragraph, it is mentioned that two clinics already exist, one in Val-d’Or and the other in La Tuque. But it seems that the latter is not yet operational. David Sioui, Communications Consultant at the *Regroupement des Centres d’amitié autochtones du Québec (RCAAQ)*, explained that the organization is working on establishing the Acokan (meaning “bridge”) clinic which will be implemented in La Tuque. A seminar will be held in February 2014, and the clinic should be inaugurated in September 2014. A mini-newsletter will soon be published in order to disseminate information about the project.

Resolution

It was moved by Sylvain Vollant and seconded by Lorraine Harrilal:
THAT THE SPRING GATHERING REPORT 2013 BE ADOPTED WITH THE CORRECTION AND ADDITION.

Adopted by consensus.

4. STEERING COMMITTEE UPDATE: YOUTH WORKING COMMITTEE PRESENTATION

Nakuset informed the assembly that the Youth Committee began its activities approximately a month ago. She invited the two Co-Representatives of the Working Committee to present the work accomplished.

Bérénice Mollen-Dupuis is an Innu from Mingan. She works for the Ka Mamukanit project which is intended for youth. Sylvain Vollant is a street outreach worker for the *PACT de rue* organization.

The Committee held its first meeting two weeks ago. The members are currently working on structuring the Committee. They hope to have adopted its objectives by January 2014. The first meeting was attended by 15 youth from different backgrounds. Anyone who wants to become involved in the Committee may do so because there are no restrictions for membership in terms of age. However, to be a Representative or an Alternate, one must be between 16 and 35 years of age and be Aboriginal.

Sophie-Claude Miller and Alexandre Nequado act as Alternates.

Guy Lacroix wished to know the concerns expressed by the youth. One of the main concerns is related to ways to get youth off of the street. Here, it is not as much a question of homelessness but of the idea of creating a gathering place that would allow the youth to meet and to become involved in the Aboriginal community. However, vigilance must be exercised because the age differences are relatively significant

and one cannot satisfy all the members in the same way. The possibility of including youth who are under the age of 16 is being examined. Other ideas have emerged and it is now a matter of structuring the Committee.

Is the Committee bilingual? For now, the majority speak and understand French but there are a few English-speaking persons. The Committee is thus bilingual because the members express themselves in their respective languages and everyone understands the two languages. Many nations are represented: Inuit, Innu, and Nations from western Canada. There is not really any gender equity, but several young men are involved.

Nakuset concluded by saying that the Steering Committee warmly welcomes the Youth Working Committee members who can count on the support of the NETWORK.

5. PRESENTATION ON THE ODENA RESEARCH ALLIANCE SURVEY

David Sioui, Communications Consultant at the RCAAQ, was invited to give a presentation about the provincial tour conducted by the ODENA Research Alliance. A bilingual information leaflet is available.

He mentioned that the tour is going well. To date, 850 persons have been interviewed across Quebec. In the coming weeks, the research team wants to focus on Montreal because it is estimated that the Aboriginal community is made up of 25,000 persons.

The survey is based on a questionnaire that aims to gain an understanding of the lives of Aboriginal people, highlight the aspirations of the community members and thus provide a detailed picture of the urban Aboriginal people of Quebec.

The study is currently underway at the Montreal Native Community Development Centre. Rolando Labrana remains on-site to gather the questionnaire responses. Promotion is carried out by email, telephone and Facebook. David Sioui invited the members of the assembly to also disseminate the information within their respective networks. Indeed, it is important to reach a critical mass of Aboriginal persons who can complete the questionnaire. There is compensation in the form of a *Pharmaprix* voucher of \$20.00.

To participate in the survey, one may telephone the Montreal Native Community Development Centre at telephone number 514-331-6587 or send an email to Rolando Labrana (<mailto:rolando.labrana@ucs.inrs.ca>).

It was mentioned that the data collection must be completed by December 2013; this is why the team is focusing on Montreal. At the moment, about one hundred persons are needed to complete the sample. Once these persons are reached, the team will have achieved its objective of 1,000 respondents.

Some data have already been made public. They can be found at the following website: <http://www.odena.ca>.

6. UPDATE ON THE NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS PROCESS

Natasha Dawn Latter, who is the Interim NETWORK Coordinator replacing Ramélia Chamichian during her maternity leave, explained that the elections that were supposed to be held at the present Gathering for the Co-Chair positions were postponed to the next Gathering. For the moment, Nakuset is acting as Interim Co-Chair. She has sent in a letter of candidacy which is available on the NETWORK's website and in the newsletter of March 2013. Francine Buckell, who was Co-Chair, has withdrawn.

A document describing the nominations and elections process has been included in the meeting kit and persons who are not in attendance today have received it by email. Natasha reminded the participants of the rules concerning eligibility and the deadlines.

7. PRESENTATION ON THE CABOT SQUARE PROJECT: STRATEGY FOR COMMUNITY SAFETY AND IMPROVED WELL-BEING

Nakuset invited Marla Williams and Allison Reid to present the Cabot Square project relating to the Strategy for Community Safety and Improved Well-Being.

The project began in January 2013 with a distribution of questionnaires followed by an analysis leading to the development of a strategy. Today's presentation will deal with the strategy and the final stages. The PDFs of the presentation are available in both languages on the NETWORK website¹.

As a reminder, the objectives are:

- Improve the quality of life of the Aboriginal population;
- Respond to the closing of Cabot Square and minimize the impacts of displacement;
- Improve co-existence and consolidate a range of services to the target population;
- Showcase Montreal as an example of a city that promotes coordination and cooperation of local actors.

The Cabot Square project is the result of a grassroots initiative, meaning of a variety of organizations working on the ground. The goal is to maximize the existing services and to build links between partners to eliminate duplication and gaps in service delivery. It also aims to address major provincial and federal concerns based on a holistic approach in order to resolve social issues (ex.: housing and social services). Statistical data also show a rapid growth of the Aboriginal population in Canada – 20.1% between 2006 and 2011 compared with 5.2% for the general population. In Montreal, the Aboriginal population increased by 68% between 2006 and 2011, from 17,870 to 26,285. Montreal experienced the sharpest Aboriginal population growth of all Canadian cities.

However, Aboriginals who settle in Montreal face many obstacles, including the loss of cultural markers, discrimination, language barriers and difficulty in finding a job. Homelessness is very present among Aboriginals, especially the Inuit, which also leads to a high rate of incarcerations and offenses (6,000 in 2010). The Aboriginal population, especially the women and children, suffer severe discrimination and, therefore, great vulnerability.

Cabot Square is located in the Peter-McGill district in the Ville-Marie borough, the most densely populated of Montreal. For the past twenty years, it has been a place to gather and to build closer ties for the Inuit and First Nations populations, as well as for persons of Caribbean and Latino origins. The Cabot Square regulars are not necessarily homeless. They consider the place as a “home” where they can be with people they know and be close to various services, mainly medical and social services. The target population of Cabot Square consists of 30 to 50 persons, homeless or not, who regularly frequent the Square and its surroundings, and who are highly vulnerable. On another level, the Aboriginal people who frequent Cabot Square may benefit from various provincial, municipal and community programs and strategies (see the list in the presentation document). The strategy that should result from the project will be designed in such a manner as to be complementary to existing interventions.

¹ In French: [http://www.reseautlnetwork.com/dnn/Portals/0/Cabot Square documents/Apprendre du Square Cabot.pdf](http://www.reseautlnetwork.com/dnn/Portals/0/Cabot%20Square%20documents/Apprendre%20du%20Square%20Cabot.pdf).

In English: [http://www.reseautlnetwork.com/eng/Portals/5/Learning from Cabot Square Developing the Community Safety and Wellbeing Strategy ENG \(2\).pdf](http://www.reseautlnetwork.com/eng/Portals/5/Learning%20from%20Cabot%20Square%20Developing%20the%20Community%20Safety%20and%20Wellbeing%20Strategy%20ENG%20(2).pdf)

The project team also conducted an inventory of best practices from a dozen case studies, mostly from western Canada where the Aboriginal population is higher, and where, as a result, the services intended for them are more developed. They relate to various initiatives in the areas of housing, health and community centres. The example of *Community Mobilization Prince Albert* (in northern Saskatchewan) was selected for illustration purposes. The case studies are combined in a document which is also available for viewing.

A consultation was also held in February 2013 with four target groups:

- Target population;
- Expert organizations;
- Community groups; and
- General public.

The aim of the consultation was to draw a portrait for Cabot Square and to identify potential solutions to the problems. They were circumscribed within five issues which, in July 2013, led to the development of the strategy. This resulted in an action plan. Certain measures have already been implemented. About forty organizations were called upon, in eight focus groups, to determine the solutions to put forward in the short, medium and long-term, taking into account the closing of the Square. This exercise resulted in 70 solutions that were put to a vote. Four or five of them emerged and formed the frame for the development of the strategy. These are:

- Coordinate front-line support services;
- Offer a gathering place to the target population;
- Improve health services;
- Improve housing services;
- Improve communications and raise public awareness.

In conclusion, the project coordinators stated that all the documents mentioned in the presentation are available upon request.

8. HIGHLIGHTS OF THE NETWORK'S ACHIEVEMENTS AND ACTION PLANS

▪ Health Committee

Rossel Bérard said that activities slow down during the summer. Nevertheless, the Committee continued discussions with various partners concerning the implementation of an Aboriginal holistic centre, particularly with the CLSC Côte-des-Neiges Health Village initiative which already has a solid structure related to the health sector. In fact, the Committee has come to the conclusion that the establishment of a holistic centre must be carried out in connection with other existing organizations. Discussions are also underway with the Montreal Native Community Development Centre and the *Regroupement des Centres d'amitié autochtones du Québec*. The discussions deal with such topics as the Minowé Clinic in Val-d'Or, the one scheduled to open in La Tuque in September 2014, and the third clinic that is in the planning stages.

This being said, some concrete actions were carried out during the summer:

- The Sweat Lodge at the Botanical Garden was widely used during the Truth and Reconciliation Commission sessions, which showed the benefits of having such a site in Montreal. It has been in existence for several years and its importance is becoming increasingly known. For its part, the Health Committee noted the active role it can play in the coordination of events.
- Regarding the Cabot Square project, it includes a component relating to health and the Committee participates in discussions surrounding the planning of health-related aspects.
- The Committee actively promotes *Lemon Cree*, a company created by Theresa Ducharme. The schedule of workshops is available at the Committee's booth.
- This past spring, the Committee submitted a proposal to *the Agence de santé et des services sociaux* to obtain its support in the creation of the holistic health centre.

Nakuset invited the Committee members to rise so that the assembly would know who they are. She congratulated them for their excellent work.

▪ Arts • Culture Committee

Odile Joannette delivered the PowerPoint presentation on the First Peoples Arts and Cultural Centre which was prepared by the ad hoc committee of the Art • Culture Committee and she outlined the overall progress of the project.

- Coordination structure: This project has become a transversal priority in the NETWORK's strategic plan. The ad hoc committee that holds this file recently established an executive committee composed of four members who meet every Wednesday with all partners and contractors. The Executive Committee also has the mandate of establishing a non-profit organization (NPO) that will take charge of the CENTRE and of constituting a board of directors that would include, in particular, management and honorary members.
- Mission: The "Contemporary Expressions and Living Traditions" CENTRE is now officially recognized as a First Peoples legacy as part of the 375th anniversary celebrations of Montreal and it appears as such on the 375th anniversary website. *It will eventually serve as a space for expression, encounters and intergenerational, intercultural and international exchanges. A testimony of the Aboriginal presence in Greater Montreal, it will prioritize a cultural programming affirming the linguistic and artistic diversity of the First Peoples of Quebec, Canada and elsewhere².*

It will be able to host a range of activities: exhibitions, workshops, symposiums, performances, school visits, day camps, traditional activities, talking circles, creative residencies, tourist information, festivals, etc. It is also expected that there will be extramural programming. A graphic signature will soon be designed to provide the CENTRE with a temporary image that can be used by all members of the ad hoc committee in their respective programming in order to highlight the partnership with the forthcoming CENTRE.

- Target audience: Within five years, the CENTRE should reach 17% of the potential cultural market of Montreal, namely 53,234 admissions per year. According to consultants met, these estimates are very conservative; they consider, in fact, that patronage could reach twice that number. Target audiences include: Aboriginals of Quebec, Canada and elsewhere, the Montreal population, tourists, schools, and culture enthusiasts in general.

² <http://www.375mtl.com/fr/projets-et-legs-du-375e/>.

- Sites considered: Several sites were considered in the feasibility study³. A meeting was recently held with representatives of the City of Montreal, and the preferred site at the moment is Viger Square. In terms of a plan B, the Olympic complex is also considered.

The surveys conducted showed the importance of the presence of water among the criteria to be used, which also represents a constraint. This is why the architectural design must take this aspect into account. Other criteria include: historical relevance, access by metro, contact with nature, wide visibility, potential in terms of identity, and ease in establishing partnerships.

- Construction criteria: The feasibility study determined that construction would amount to \$20 million. However, reflection must continue with regard to this evaluation as it too is considered to be conservative. Also, in terms of sustainable development, the aim is to ensure LEED Gold standards. An architecture competition will be launched in early 2014. The sound equipment installed at the CENTRE will be international in scope.
- Comparable projects: The Planetarium, the *Musée des Beaux-Arts*, the new hall of the Symphony Orchestra, the Cree Cultural Centre, the *Maison du Festival Rio Tinto* and the Campbelltown Arts Centre (Australia), from which the CENTRE draws inspiration because it shares the same mission, which is to be a place where there is a mix of cultures and generations.
- Significant support: At the launch of the feasibility study in November 2012, Quebec Premier Pauline Marois stated that the CENTRE was one of her three priorities for 2017 and she reiterated this commitment at the Chiefs' Table of the Assembly of First Nations of Quebec and Labrador during the Summit on Resources on December 3, 2012; the *ministère des Affaires municipales, des Régions et de l'Occupation du territoire (MAMROT)* granted \$25,000.00 for the development of the business plan and marketing plan that will be submitted on March 31, 2014; the *Secrétariat aux Affaires autochtones* granted \$35,000.00 towards the continuity and needs of the Committee; a meeting is scheduled to take place this week with the *ministère de la Culture et des Communications* in order to ensure that funds would be rapidly granted so as to be able to hire an executive director; Canadian Heritage, through its Cultural Spaces Fund, supports the technical preparatory studies conducted prior to the construction; the AFNQL, through the Human Resources Development Commission, granted \$25,000.00 to ensure the coordination, which will allow the Committee to sign, in the coming weeks, the contract for the advancement of the functional and technical program; the City of Montreal authorizes the choice of the site, and the latter will likely be known after the elections; in addition, the City has officially registered the CENTRE as a legacy and Odile Joannette sits on the Board of Directors of the Society for the Celebration of Montreal's 375th Anniversary.
- Timeline:
 - Now: secure the funding and confirm the site;
 - Late November 2013, hire contractors for the preliminary work (environmental studies, business plan, marketing plan and fundraising plan);
 - Mid-December 2013: constitute the NPO and submit an application to Revenue Canada to be recognized as a charitable organization; the Committee is working with Aboriginal lawyers of the BCF law firm who provide advice on taxation in order to determine whether it is relevant to also create a foundation;
 - January and February 2014: recruit an executive director and a construction manager; the Committee has begun receiving tenders from construction managers who have coordinated similar projects, as well as recommendations in that regard, but it is awaiting funds to proceed;
 - 2014-2017: prepare the programming;
 - September 2017: official opening and holding of the International Conference on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples marking the 10th anniversary of the United Nations Declaration; a meeting is

³ The summary of the feasibility study is available on the NETWORK's website.

scheduled for next week with Rigoberta Menchú to invite her to collaborate in the realization of this project.

In conclusion, the CENTRE project will also benefit all communities as they will have a cultural showcase in Montreal.

Questions and comments

Has there been any reflection as to the name of the CENTRE? The Committee wishes to conduct a consultation so that the name will be a collective choice reflecting the various cultures and languages. The choice of a name is a project in itself.

Is the CENTRE primarily a cultural venue or is it also a place where the Aboriginal community can meet on a daily basis? The CENTRE will be an open space that offers large spaces where people can gather as well as easy access for the Montreal community in a spirit of building bridges between Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals. The Campbell town Cultural Institute operates in this manner.

If the Viger site is selected, it is a gathering place for the excluded. Has the CENTRE, in its reflection, taken marginalized populations into account? Indeed, marginalization is often part of Aboriginal reality in cities, and this reality is an integral part of the reflection. The Committee is working with the Ville-Marie borough to ensure that the façade is welcoming and open and that the tourism does not lead to inaccessibility. Once again, the objective is to build bridges and not exclusion. For the moment, the plan is to establish support committees. To this end, the governance structure is quite unique and it is somewhat frightening to some financial partners. An honorary committee represents all the communities, and support committees represent all of the important components (culture, integration, etc.). It is an Aboriginal governance structure that takes the needs of the entire community into account.

Concerning exhibitions, will there be partnerships with other museums for the purpose of exchanges? In terms of contemporary art, one may also think of the Cabot Square regulars, some of whom do sculpting, and thus homeless persons could be integrated. The CENTRE does not want to compete with museums. The goal is to work in partnership with them in order to increase the number of exhibitions that circulate. However, the construction criteria do not include the temperature standards that are specific to museums. Regarding the Cabot Square sculptures, they could indeed be part of the homelessness programming. The permanent exhibition that represents all the Nations will be held in the agora. On the one hand, it is a question of disseminating what already exists. On the other, it is also a question of supporting artists in their creations, helping them secure funding and disseminating their work.

▪ **Social Services Committee**

Nakuset presented the activity report as Representative of the Social Services Working Committee. The Committee is sub-divided into three:

- The Social Services Subcommittee itself: focuses on youth protection and on Aboriginal children requiring foster home placement; it may be re-named *iohahi :o*, meaning “the good path” in Mohawk, but this choice requires consensus;
- Homelessness Subcommittee;
- Justice Subcommittee.

The Social Services Subcommittee has completed the Cultural Manual for Foster and Adoptive Parents of Aboriginal Children and all the copies have already been distributed. The next step consists of establishing a support group similar to that of Big Brothers and Big Sisters. Frequently, the Native Women’s Shelter of Montreal or the Rising Sun Childcare Centre receive calls from social workers seeking persons who are able to play such a role with Aboriginal children, very upset to have been separated from their parents and needing to talk. Nakuset invited persons who are interested in playing such a role to enter their name on the list available at the Committee’s booth.

Among its other projects, the Committee is working towards creating a home that could accommodate six children and that would be supervised by a “house mother” who permanently resides at the home. The home could be used to accommodate children of a same family so that they will not be separated and sent to different foster homes if they have to be placed. The Committee is working on this file with Cathy Carroll.

Guy Lacroix then presented the achievements of the Homelessness Subcommittee. As a priority, it supports the “Aboriginal House” project driven by *Projets autochtones du Québec*. It also wants to support projects emanating from the NETWORK, such as the Cabot Square project.

The Committee has approximately twenty regular members. The Women’s Centre of Montreal has recently joined as well as the McConnell Family Foundation. The Committee hopes that these collaborations will help in the fight against Aboriginal homelessness and he invited the participants who are concerned about the issue to join.

Patricia Eshkibok presented the work accomplished by the Justice Subcommittee. The Justice Subcommittee oversees two initiatives:

- Cabot Square;
- Justpeace Project.

At the end of 2012, the subcommittee received funds from the Department of Justice to undertake the preliminary steps of this project that aims to implement a justice program for the Montreal Aboriginal community. The work was carried out between January and May 2013 and consisted of the following:

- Identify and consult social, para-judicial and judicial workers in order to draw an overall portrait of the reality and obstacles encountered by Aboriginals who are faced with the criminal justice system;
- Gather creative solutions in view of improving the services so that they will take the cultural factor into account;
- Conduct a review of best practices in Canada and determine whether they can be applied in Montreal;
- Develop scenarios in order to better meet the needs of the members of the Aboriginal community by offering culturally-adapted services;

- Establish priorities in terms of intervention based on the needs identified as well as the required protocols.

The results obtained during this phase of development were presented to the members of the Justice Subcommittee and they selected one of the four scenarios submitted. At the present time, the subcommittee is implementing a board of directors mandated to hire a coordinator and to develop the program.

The report presented is available on the NETWORK's website (in English only).

▪ **Employability, Training and Education Committee**

Paige Isaac is the Committee Representative. She announced that the Committee is also seeking a new name because the name is too long. A call may be launched to the community in order to obtain recommendations. One of the suggestions is "Career Circle". The word *career* is comprehensive in scope, but some feel that it may be restrictive by being perceived as referring primarily to employment.

The Committee continues to work on its current projects and does not have any new initiatives to announce. It updated the Reference Guide, of which copies are available at the Committee's booth. It opened a position and those interested have until tomorrow to apply by sending their application to Dolorès André at the Urban Centre of Human Resources Development Commission. The position consists of supporting the Committee in the implementation of its transversal priorities, mainly the planning of the annual fair "Mamu! Ensemble! Together!" which is scheduled to be held on March 21, 2014. However, the Committee recently learned that the main funder of the event will not be renewing its participation this year. It is therefore seeking funding for the fair, which will be its fourth or fifth edition. It may be necessary to change the date that was scheduled. Nevertheless, the Committee intends to continue with preparations and hopes to find funding by then. Paige Isaac invited the NETWORK members to inform her if they have any suggestions on the matter.

The Committee is seeking new ideas for the Mamu fair. It wishes to expand its ties with the community and to be more attentive to the needs of the participants. So far, it has invited employers and education and training institutions. But it wishes to know if the participants have other expectations with regard to the Mamu fair. The person hired will have the mandate of conducting a needs analysis.

Paige Isaac invited the members of the NETWORK to let her know of job postings and special events, and the Committee will ensure the dissemination of these postings. In addition, it wishes to recruit new members and to expand its links.

Marjolaine Thernish, Project Manager for Ka Mamukanit, then presented the achievements resulting from the socio-professional integration initiative. The first cohort was welcomed in 2011, and three other cohorts followed. To date, sixty Aboriginal youth have benefitted from the program. A fifth cohort was to start in September 2013 but the program is awaiting a funding confirmation from its main funders. A funding application has also been submitted for a sixth cohort. Initially, the Ka Mamukanit program was a pilot project, and it must still demonstrate that it meets the needs of the Aboriginal community of Montreal. The program has a Facebook page.

- **Communications Committee**

Nakuset announced that the Communications Working Committee is currently inactive. She extended an invitation to those who wish to work on re-launching the Committee.

9. COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **Exploratory Walks**

Simone Nicole wished to share an experience relating to community art that began in Melbourne in 1995. It consists of organizing exploratory walks in certain districts, including the business district, and which are meaningful to Aboriginal people. This is to revive history and certain emblematic aspects from an Aboriginal perspective. Through the project, for the first time, Aboriginals were able to talk about places that were important to them and to have it recognized that certain areas had a history before the arrival of the Europeans. As a result, this helped to establish a dialogue and a reflection on the possibility of enriching the sites by installing works of art that would testify to the Aboriginal presence.

She wished that such an experience could be carried out in Montreal. She said that she is thinking of Cabot Square in particular, which undoubtedly has different meanings for the different people who frequent the park. She mentioned that she has documentation that she can share and that she is willing to organize activities, but she would like such a project to be driven by the community. Working groups could look at selecting works of art that could be installed at Cabot Square and at developing an educational project. Homeless persons could be called on to work on such a community project.

- **Homelessness Subcommittee**

Guy Lacroix announced that the next meeting of the Homelessness Subcommittee will be held at the Batshaw Centre, Room 172, on November 19, 2013 at 1:30pm. He thanked Garnett Forbes for her hospitality.

- **Book Donations**

Alexandra Pronovost from the organization *Ex aequo*, informed the assembly that one of the organization's activities is to tour parks with a pickup truck to distribute books and thus be in contact with the homeless population. The organization accepts book donations but it receives requests for books in Aboriginal languages. They are very difficult to find; this is why she is calling on the NETWORK.

10. CLOSING PRAYER

Natasha thanked the participants and invited Mike Standup to deliver the closing prayer.

Mike Standup said he was pleased to see both old and new faces and he wished everyone a safe return. The meeting was declared closed at 3:30pm.