

# PROMISING INITIATIVES TO MOBILIZE THE LOCAL COMMUNITY IN A POST-DISASTER LANDSCAPE

BY THE PUBLIC HEALTH DIRECTION OF THE CENTRE INTÉGRÉ UNIVERSITAIRE DE SANTÉ ET DE SERVICES SOCIAUX DE  
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# LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

<b>AREQ :</b>	Association des retraitées et retraités de l'éducation et des autres services publics du Québec
<b>CACP :</b>	Commission des arts, de la culture et du patrimoine
<b>CDC :</b>	Corporation de développement communautaire
<b>CHUS :</b>	Centre hospitalier universitaire de Sherbrooke
<b>CIUSSS :</b>	Centre intégré universitaire de santé et de services sociaux
<b>CPE :</b>	Centre de la petite enfance
<b>CSSS :</b>	Centre de santé et de services sociaux
<b>DSPublique :</b>	Direction de santé publique
<b>ESPE :</b>	Enquête de santé populationnelle estrienne
<b>FADOQ :</b>	Fédération de l'Âge d'Or du Québec
<b>MAMOT :</b>	Ministère des Affaires municipales et de l'Occupation du territoire
<b>MRC :</b>	Municipalité régionale du comté
<b>MSSS :</b>	Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux
<b>RCM :</b>	Regional county municipality
<b>RLS :</b>	Réseau local de service
<b>SAT :</b>	Systèmes alimentaires territorialisés
<b>TPL :</b>	Théâtre des petites lanternes
<b>UQAC :</b>	Université du Québec à Chicoutimi



# BACKGROUND

On July 6, 2013, a train carrying 72 cars of oil derailed in downtown Lac-Mégantic in the Estrie region of Quebec, Canada. The derailment triggered a major fire and a series of explosions. This disaster resulted in 47 deaths, the destruction of 44 buildings, the evacuation of 2000 citizens (i.e. a third of the local population), and an unparalleled oil spill (i.e. 6,000,000 liters of crude oil spilt into the environment). This tragic event had a major impact in human, environmental and economic terms.

Over the first three years, the Direction de santé publique (DSPublique – Public Health Direction) de l'Estrie has undertaken several actions, including the monitoring of physical and mental health consequences. Four Community-based surveys were conducted one, two, three and five years after the disaster, respectively, by the DSPublique and Université du Québec à Chicoutimi (UQAC), among a large sample of adults living in Lac-Mégantic and surrounding areas. A fifth survey was conducted in 2017 by UQAC among people aged 10 to 25 years from the same community. The findings showed persistent and widespread health needs, but also strengths and abilities which should not to be underestimated.

The recovery is a critical period for developing and sharing a common vision of a healthy and resilient community. The health and social services network, through the involvement of public health organization, is a key actor in contributing to this holistic approach to health. This disaster becomes an occasion to implement innovative, synergistic strategies maximizing the positive impact of the actions taken. Throughout the long process of recovery, several opportunities arise to support community development. These opportunities must be taken to enable collaborative work and to broaden and become well anchored in the community.

At the beginning of 2016, the DSPublique intensified its work with the community. A multi-sectoral action plan was developed to increase community resilience and promote health and well-being.

This action plan pursues the following objectives:

1. Maintain and adapt psychosocial services to individual and community needs;
2. Stay connected with the community;
3. Foster resident involvement.

In June 2016, the Ministère de la santé et des services sociaux (MSSS) and the Canadian Red Cross announced substantial investments that would provide adequate resources to sustain the adopted action plan.

This document aims to share a few concrete initiatives that, for the most part, arose from this action plan, all of which have contributed greatly to empower citizens and mobilize the community of Lac-Mégantic and surrounding areas (also referred to as MRC du Granit).

## THE OUTREACH TEAM

One component of the action plan was the creation of a permanent community outreach team in Lac-Mégantic, in summer 2016. This multidisciplinary team, located outside formal clinical settings (i.e. in downtown Lac-Mégantic), aims to bring psychosocial services closer to the population. It is composed of four full-time professionals, including two social workers, one social work technician and one community organizer. The Outreach Team is working closely with another community organizer, two health promotion officers and a doctor in public health. This great team is called “Extended Outreach Team”. The following principles guide the entire approach: global health, prevention, scientific rigour, strength-based approach, empowerment, collaboration, and inclusion.

Citizen participation and community development are at the heart of the Outreach Team approach. A wide range of services are offered, from daily interactions with citizens and local organizations (in the form of psychosocial support, response to service requests, early detection and response to emerging needs, etc.) to involvement into various initiatives arising from the action plan. We have chosen to describe 16 key initiatives to mobilize the local community in the post-disaster landscape. These initiatives have been developed and implemented over the first six years following the disaster, by at least one member of the Outreach Team and many other local partners.



In the picture, from left to right: Emmy Boulanger, Cindy Stewart, Magalie Bellavance, Catherine Bouffard, Marie-Claude Maillet and Chantale Clusiauxt.

# INITIATIVE #1

## GREAT WORD HARVEST

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### CONTEXT

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The first few months following the Lac-Mégantic tragedy were focused on several interventions, mainly characterized by the implementation of measures to meet the population's most urgent needs. While benefiting from front-line financial, material and psychological support, the population quickly found itself in the sinuous and unavoidable phase of recovery linked to the events of July 6, 2013, in Lac-Mégantic.

Shaken by a disaster that affected them on a human, social, environmental, economical and commercial level, the people, families and organizations of Lac-Mégantic and MRC du Granit, struggling with an overlay of grieving, would be faced with the challenge of finding the means by which they could best regain their bearings and balance.

It is therefore guided by the willingness, starting in 2014, to support and contribute to this great movement of individual and collective resilience that the Centre de santé et services sociaux (CSSS) and the Corporation de développement communautaire (CDC) du Granit have joined forces to propose constructive and structuring projects.

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### PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

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The purpose of this Grande cuillette des mots du Granit <sup>1</sup> (<http://www.english.petiteslanternes.org/productions>) is to promote dialogue and social cohesion through a writing process fostered by the citizens of MRC du Granit. More specifically, the project can be described as follows:

- A collective journey on the timeline;
- A journey through stories from the past, present and future on the universal theme of landmarks;
- A theatrical experience in the heart of the people's lives, where over 400 residents of all ages and throughout MRC du Granit area became those who will inspire its story.

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### MANAGERS AND PARTNERS

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- Managers (Steering Committee): CDC of Granit, CSSS of Granit, Hauts-Cantons School Board, MRC du Granit, City of Lac-Mégantic, Carrefour Jeunesse Emploi of Granit, Mégantic Cultural Committee;
- Partners: Théâtre des Petites Lanternes (TPL), Marvayus, financial partners and numerous people and organizations from MRC du Granit.

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<sup>1</sup> Great Word Harvest

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## ACTIONS

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- February 2014: First discussions between the TPL and the organizations responsible for the project, CDC and CSSS;
- April to August 2014: Development of the project and implementation of the Carnet de parole (Word Book);
- September to mid-October 2014: Networking, tool design and preparation of the Grande cuillette des mots (Great word Harvest);
- Mid-October 2014 to September 2015: Collection and reception of the Carnets de parole, summarization, artistic lines, auditions, drafting, co-creation, scenography, pre-production, production, show and summary.

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## OUTCOMES

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This project helped reach numerous citizens:

- Approximately 1000 residents throughout the MRC du Granit participated or collaborated in the various stages of the project: project steering, recruitment, facilitation and participation in the various writing workshops, recruitment, facilitation and participation in the lantern-making workshops, wafer design, singers, photographers, volunteers and community organizations;
- More than 1000 people attended the 4 performances planned as part of the project;
- Play performed in other regions of Quebec;
- Distribution to the 20 municipalities of the MRC du Granit of the lanterns made during the workshops held in their respective community;
- Exhibition of lanterns that contributed to the theatre design in a meaningful place in Lac-Mégantic, as a gesture of solidarity of other municipalities towards the City of Lac-Mégantic and the 47 victims of the disaster.

Many impacts have been observed:

- Project complementary to the efforts made in other activity sectors;
- Channeling of constructive energies;
- Liberating effects;
- Unifying, inclusive, mobilizing and meaningful event;
- Social cohesion and civic participation;
- Sense of contribution to the recovery;
- Sense of pride and accomplishment.

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## BUDGET

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The total budget is almost \$200,000. Funding sources are the following:

- CSSS/Red Cross = \$30,000;
- MSSS/CDC = \$12,000;
- Ministère de la Culture et des Communications/MRC du Granit = \$12,000;
- Fondation Béati = \$24,000;
- Pacte rural/MRC du Granit = \$28,000;
- Plan d'action gouvernemental pour la solidarité et l'inclusion sociale = \$76,000;
- Comité d'aide aux sinistrés = \$8,000.



# INITIATIVE #2

## COLLECTIVE REFLECTION DAY

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### CONTEXT

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Since July 6, 2013, numerous partners have invested intensively to help the community. These efforts have, of course, helped to move the community through different stages of recovery. Here are some examples of good moves made during the first two years following the event:

- Shuttle (public transport) to get out of isolation and create links;
- Conferences to increase better understanding;
- The Musi-Café summer concerts to gather and share good times;
- Deploying a psychosocial recovery team to meet increased needs;
- The last walk to the downtown area (before demolition) to facilitate the transition and get through the mourning process;
- The Grande cueillette des mots du Granit to allow the expression of the experience and to better understand (see [Initiative #1](#)).

At that time, however, there was no formal coordinating mechanism to ensure a common understanding of the needs of the community and the linkage between different actions.

At the same time, on February 4, 2016, the CIUSSS de l'Estrie – CHUS presented the results of the second edition of the Enquête de santé populationnelle estrienne (ESPE – Estrie Population Health Survey) on the impacts of the Lac-Mégantic tragedy. This survey conducted in the fall of 2015 among 800 adults living in the Granit and 800 living elsewhere in Estrie, has shown that various global and psychological health problems were more common in Lac-Mégantic than elsewhere in Granit or Estrie. There was very little improvement and sometimes even a deterioration in health status compared to what was observed one year after the tragedy. In addition to these major findings, some observations were made to the effect that:

- Two in three (67%) citizens had moderate or severe post-traumatic stress signs in Lac-Mégantic;
- Anxiety disorders were twice as frequent in Lac-Mégantic as elsewhere in Estrie (14% versus 7%);
- One in eight (13%) did not feel safe in their neighborhood and this proportion had increased in Lac-Mégantic since 2014;
- Despite the high proportion of people affected by the tragedy in Lac-Mégantic, the consultation of psychologists or social workers has halved since 2014.

Given the magnitude of the tragedy, it was therefore necessary to take a step back to understand and situate ourselves in relation to the normal process of community recovery. It is in this context that the idea of organizing a collective reflection day emerged, bringing together local actors to discuss possible solutions for the health and well-being of the community.

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## PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

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The purpose of holding a collective reflection day is to work together to take ownership of the recovery and reverse the cycle. More specifically, we aim to:

- Take a step back to understand and situate ourselves in relation to the normal process of community recovery;
- To be inspired by the experience the community had so far and build on its apprenticeship while learning other experiences, other knowledge;
- Develop together a common vision of solutions in order to transmit a clear, coherent and positive message to the community.

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## MANAGERS AND PARTNERS

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- Managers: CIUSSS de l'Estrie – CHUS, RLS du Granit (formerly the CSSS du Granit);
- Partners: CDC du Granit, City of Lac-Mégantic, UQAC (all members of the working committee).

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## ACTIONS

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February 2016: Dissemination of the ESPE results and announcement of an amount of \$125,000 jointly awarded by the MSSS and the CIUSSS de l'Estrie—CHUS to support community mobilization projects aimed at promoting the recovery of the population.

March 2016: Formation of a working committee responsible for organizing a collective reflection day; two preparation meetings for this day; holding of the reflection day and for the follow-up meeting to take stock of the day.

The reflection day, which brought together some fifty key players (decision makers, professionals, citizens and experts), was divided into two parts:

Morning: Conference on resilience and lessons learned from other experiences.

- Work in subgroups:
  - Highlights, interventions and initiatives implemented by social workers and other partners;
  - Identifying benefits at the individual and community level.
- Work in a large group:
  - Constructing a timeline;
  - Recognizing the progress made;
  - Identifying the features common to the actions that created the effect.

Afternoon: Conference on the levers of long-term recovery.

- Work in subgroups:
  - List of activities with potential for the future;
  - Prioritizing an intervention;
  - Identifying community strengths to respond.
- Work in a large group:
  - Common vision of the desired future;
  - Identifying three priorities for action and a research priority;
  - Follow-up and conditions of success.

April 2016:

- Drafting of the “Plan for the Recovery and Development of a Healthy Community in Lac-Mégantic and the MRC du Granit”. The Table des partenaires has been designated as the strategic forum to support the plan alignment, while the CIUSSS de l’Estrie—CHUS must orchestrate its implementation. Citizen engagement is at the heart of the process;
- Request for additional funding from the MSSS to form a team whose mission is to provide community development support and psychosocial support adapted to the needs, by meeting people directly in their living environment.

May and June 2016: Granting of allocations by the MSSS and the Red Cross so that the Outreach Team is formed.

August 2016: Creation of the Outreach Team and beginning of its activities.

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## OUTCOMES

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Several positive outcomes of the collective reflection day were observed:

- Mobilization of the participants who greatly appreciated the activity;
- Many promising ideas launched by citizens and local partners;
- Three priorities for action: 1) maintaining psychosocial resources and bringing them closer to the field, 2) a positive campaign based on the strengths of the community and 3) a place conducive to discussions (see [Initiative #3](#));
- A research priority selected: A Photovoice project (see [Initiative #4](#));
- Drafting of an action plan from the tracks proposed during the reflection day and subsequent discussions of the Table des partenaires du Granit;
- Obtaining recurrent financial support of \$250,000 from the MSSS dedicated to the operation of the core Outreach Team (three full-time resources);
- Obtaining financial support from the Red Cross dedicated to the operation of the extended Outreach Team (three part-time resources) for a period of two to three years, as required;
- Organization of a second collective reflection day in 2017, this time focused on the needs of young people (see [Initiative #11](#)).

*“Building a project together is really motivating. Especially since everyone feels involved: from citizens to elected officials. It was a very inspiring day! ”*

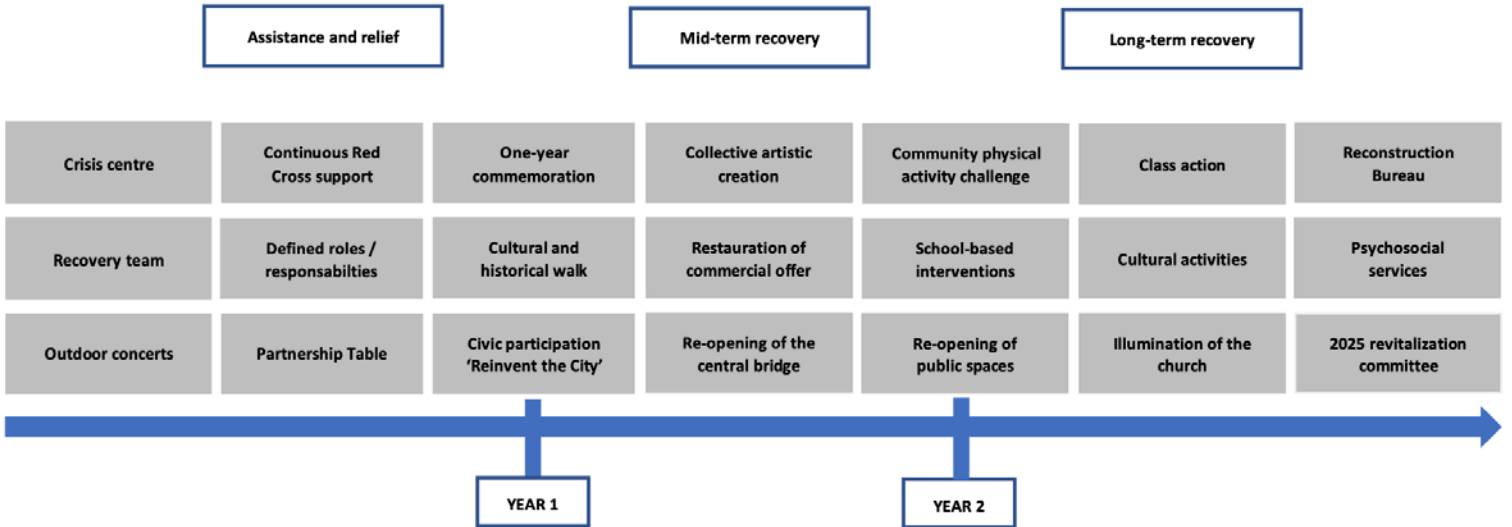
*- A participant of the collective reflection day*

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## BUDGET

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Fees for organizing the day.



# INITIATIVE #3

## GATHERING SPACE

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### CONTEXT

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If there is one common wish in the Lac-Mégantic community, it is the desire to relaunch and move towards the future. The various leaders are all working to make this wish come true. The contribution of community members is essential for long-term recovery to take its course. Their involvement must be encouraged, so that each person feels as though he or she is useful, has his or her rightful place and that the community requires his or her participation.

The first gathering space (i.e. community garden) has become an activity site that allows everyone to get involved in the recovery process. The community garden, as well as other indoor and outdoor spaces at the train station, are inclusive sites fostering relationships and participation. They become a reason to create a social activity space.

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### PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

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The purpose of this project is to encourage civic participation and mobilization. More specifically, we aim to:

- Implement a lively and available site;
- Strengthen social and intergenerational relations;
- Develop social integration activities tailored to people's realities;
- Organize lively discussion meetings and cultural activities followed by a discussion period;
- Organize informal and ad hoc meetings;
- Provide the population of MRC du Granit with a place for consultation and civic participation;
- Participate in rebuilding the City of Lac-Mégantic with the actors concerned.

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### MANAGERS AND PARTNERS

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- Manager: The Outreach Team;
- Partners: Reconstruction Bureau (<http://reconstruction-lac-megantic.ca/>), Accorderie du Granit (<http://accorderie.ca/english/>) and citizens.

## ACTIONS AND OUTCOMES

Actions	Outcomes	Deadline
Implement a community garden	Evolution of the community's appropriation of the space.	July 2016
Offer gathering activities	Diversity of activities (e.g. animated Tuesdays at the station, barbecues, open air cinema) and the members participating.	September 2017
Create a discussion site	Implementation by the citizens and animation of an inclusive site fostering connections (see <a href="#">Initiative #12</a> ).	Summer 2018
Expand collective gardens by joining various international movements	Integration of the <a href="#">Incredible Edible</a> Movement which aims to promote participatory urban agriculture and shared abundance. Integration of the Lac-Mégantic <a href="#">Cittaslow</a> Movement, a well-being accreditation that recognizes the contribution of gardens to the vitalization of the community and healthy way of life. Sharing of knowledge between citizens.	Summer 2019

## BUDGET

- \$47,000, non-recurring costs (funding source : MSSS);
- \$5,000 \$ to \$10,000 on an annual basis (recurring costs) for the organization of various activities and events (funding source: Red Cross and others).





# INITIATIVE #4

## PHOTOVOICE

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### CONTEXT

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In March 2016, several partners of Lac-Mégantic and surrounding areas came together for a day of reflection on the community needs following the 2013 tragedy (see [Initiative #2](#)). The need to initiate a positive campaign to highlight the strengths of the community was then put forward.

The positive campaign aims to improve citizens' pride by demonstrating, through concrete examples, what the region has to offer in a positive way. It also aims to stimulate the emergence of an ambassador fibre among the local population so that it can help attract people to settle in the region and meet part of the labour needs.

The Photovoice project arose from a proposal made by Professor Tracey O'Sullivan at University of Ottawa. The project was included in the positive campaign supported by the Table des partenaires du Granit. The Photovoice method is a participatory approach that allows participants to get involved in research that impacts their life or that is important to them.

A Photovoice group (approximately 8-10 people) meets monthly for about 6 months. Each month, the members identify a theme and the participants take photos that are meaningful to them, always related to the theme chosen. The photos are then presented to the group and discussed. After about 6 months, the group prepares an exhibit during which the photos are displayed or pooled. The community is then invited to discuss the themes selected. The exhibit is open to the entire community. Invitations are sent to community actors and decision makers. This meeting allows participants to discuss with other community members with different roles and share their respective ideas and experiences.

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### PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

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The purpose of this project is to give a voice to citizens of MRC du Granit so that they can express their view on a positive public relations campaign. The project also allows people to share their different experiences to support the recovery of the community over the long term. More specifically, this is an opportunity for citizens of MRC du Granit to:

- Explain the aspects that make their community an attractive place to call home;
- Identify the aspects that support resilience within their community;
- Describe their perception of Lac-Mégantic and communicate their vision for their community in the future;
- Create a digital photo and story gallery describing the impact of the positive public relations campaign on the resilience of the community.

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## MANAGERS AND PARTNERS

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- Managers and Co-Managers: Ottawa University, DSPublique de l'Estrie and Université de Sherbrooke;
- Partners: The Outreach Team, Table des partenaires du Granit.

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## ACTIONS

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- February and March 2017:
  - Promotion of the project and recruitment of participants.
- March to June 2017:
  - Implementation of the project, monthly group meetings (3 groups);
  - Analysis of the meeting content by the Ottawa University team.
- June to September 2017:
  - Unification of the groups and pooling of the pictures and themes discussed;
  - Construction and planning of the exhibit.
- September 2017:
  - Opening of the exhibit entitled "Entre la mémoire et l'espoir : turbulence, résilience, renaissance". The different community actors and general public are invited to learn more about the work accomplished and developments made over the last few months (approximately 200 visitors);
  - The exhibit moves to the Ottawa Parliament, with the support of Mr. Luc Berthold, Mégantic l'Érable Federal Member of Parliament. This action allows participants to share their messages of hope and resilience with the federal political class, including Prime Minister Justin Trudeau.
- October 2017:
  - Project assessment with the participants who wish to continue to support the Photovoice message;
  - Reflection initiated on the legacy wanted for the community.

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## OUTCOMES

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The Photovoice project ended up having individual, group and collective impacts. Indeed, participants mentioned having experienced positive personal development through the project. Use of media to express emotions fostered introspection and self-understanding.

The three groups developed their own dynamics. Camaraderie and strong respect developed among participants. The groups fostered discussions among people from different social backgrounds presenting different ideologies.

The exhibit seems to have had a positive impact on people of MRC du Granit. Many positive and touching comments were heard during the launch held in Lac-Mégantic. Following the two exhibits, the participants and visitors showed great pride and a sense of belonging to the community. Out-of-town visitors and political leaders gained a fresh look at the community (i.e. its strengths), with a clear message that Lac-Mégantic is much more than a tragedy.

*"We could express our sadness, our emotions openly because we were welcomed, without criticism.*

*At first it was quite emotional, but over the meetings, this overflow was transformed into something lighter. It did me good. It made a big difference."*

*- A participant of the Photovoice project*

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## BUDGET

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\$25,000, non-recurring costs (funding source : MSSS)



# INITIATIVE #5

## GREETERS



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### CONTEXT

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The tourist contribution is a source of wealth for the region. At the same time, these visits can become a source of stress for individuals who experience them on a daily basis especially during the summer period. Visitors try to understand and question the merchants, restaurant owners and service providers in different ways. The contribution of local citizens helps to meet the high demand. Furthermore, it consolidates individuals' need to identify to the region. The approach therefore proposes to work on social determinants of health: personal and social skills as well as the living environment of the local community.

Drawn from an international approach (<http://globalgreetwork.info/>), the Greeters of Lac-Mégantic are volunteers who wish to share the love and enthusiasm they have for their city, in the pure hospitable way of Lac-Mégantic citizens. The Greeter accompanies the visitors on a walk through the city for a few hours and makes them see it under a unique angle, that of a lover. This is certainly a rewarding experience that families, couples, friends and even single travellers are invited to live in a serene environment.

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### PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

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The purpose of this project is to give local citizens the opportunity to contribute to the revival of the community. More specifically, these projects aims to:

- Give people an opportunity to meet and build a bridge between the past, present and future;
- Highlight the resources of our community: people and themes;
- Have a good experience;
- Help rebuild our community's image.

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### MANAGERS AND PARTNERS

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- Manager: The Outreach Team;
- Project team: Citizens, Accorderie du Granit (<http://accorderie.ca/english/>), Reconstruction Bureau (<http://reconstruction-lac-megantic.ca/>), City of Lac-Mégantic, Société de développement économique du Granit, Commerce Lac-Mégantic;
- Partner: Canadian Red Cross.

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## ACTIONS AND OUTCOMES

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<b>Actions</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Deadline</b>
Inform potential partners	Evolution of the perception of the role of the body or individual as co-builders.	January 2017
Build a project team	Evolution of the constitution of the partners involved in the start-up committee.	February 2017
Develop a local network	Development of ties between underutilized existing resources.	June 2017
Monitor the Greeters experience	Development of a sense of identity.	Throughout the project

Here are a few project impacts that have been observed so far:

- A real exchange between the visitor and Greeter;
- The Greeter receives as much as he or she gives;
- “It feels good.”

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## BUDGET

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\$4,000, non-recurring costs (funding sources: MSSS and Red Cross).



# INITIATIVE #6

## MEMORIAL SITE

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### CONTEXT

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When creating a reminiscence space, both the purpose and process contribute to the healing processes of individuals and the community.

For a successful outcome, it is important to build on the community's strengths and assets. The citizens are best placed to identify these strengths and assets as well as potential solutions. The full participation of citizens is thus critical to the creative process, and their contribution benefits at all stages.

For a process to be successful, it is essential to rely on the civic participation principle, which is an important health determinant in itself. After a difficult experience, an adaptation process is inevitable. People adapt more positively if they succeed in giving meaning to the event and their lives, and if they are given the chance to find balance between what happened before and what is happening now.

Creating a memorial site therefore requires an approach that:

- Values civic participation;
- Values the citizens' potential solutions;
- Is inclusive from the start and throughout the project;
- Is transparent with clear benchmarks.

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### PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

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The purpose of this project is to foster the development of a sense of belonging from citizens toward the permanent memorial site that is created. More specifically, we aim to develop and implement an approach encouraging the civic participation of all Lac-Mégantic citizens interested in contributing to this memorial site, which is an important recovery stage.

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### MANAGERS AND PARTNERS

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- Co-Managers: Reconstruction Bureau (<http://reconstruction-lac-megantic.ca/>) and the Outreach Team;
- Partners:
  - Architecture students participating in the Ateliers du Lac (Lac-Mégantic Workshops): their inspirational images used as a starting point for the development of this project;
  - City of Lac-Mégantic: presentation to the Standing Committee, open dialogue with the Project Co-Managers.

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## ACTIONS

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- June 2017 :
  - Information session and interaction with the population;
  - Project outline: Why a memorial site? Why and how to consult the citizens? Project milestones?;
  - Discussion period to collect information on the citizens' expectations, concerns and suggestions regarding the consultation process.
- June to July 2017:
  - Possibility for the citizens to communicate their ideas in various ways, namely by discussing with the Outreach Team.
- July 2017:
  - Second public meeting to discuss with the population, with the students of the Ateliers du Lac present;
  - Ateliers du Lac as part of which the students are mandated to:
    - Summarize and analyze the wishes of the population regarding the memorial site to identify the main values;
    - Generate ideas for the memorial site based on the consultation;
    - Integrate the experience of people elsewhere in the world.
  - Formal and informal discussions between the students and the population (students under the tent at the station, presence during popular gatherings, matching between actors and the Outreach Team);
  - Information session with the population to share the findings that emerged from Ateliers du Lac.
- Fall 2017:
  - Establishment of a Working Committee composed of the Reconstruction Bureau, the Outreach Team, an elected official and a first responder representative.
- July 6, 2018:
  - Presentation of the evolution of the project to the population, on the occasion of the 5th anniversary of the tragedy, by the inauguration of a temporary memorial site inviting the population and visitors to make a symbolic gesture as a sign of reappropriation of this space.
- November 2018:
  - Presentation of the plans in order to collect the perceptions and comments of citizens, in the form of 5 to 7.
- June 2019:
  - Validation of the progress of the Committee's work with a group of citizens. It is important to allow people to feed the process and give them the opportunity to provide feedback throughout the process.

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## OUTCOMES

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- Through the Working Committee, reinforcement of open dialogue between the population and the Project Co-Managers;
- Fostering of the empowerment of the community through involvement with recollection work and the execution of the project;
- Development of a sense of belonging to the permanent memorial site by the community citizens;
- Facilitation of the healing process and long-term recovery of the community by supporting social and civic participation, and fostering the creation of social links;

- Video describing the citizen participation process shared on YouTube ([https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=17&v=ggaaFfpVpbU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=17&v=ggaaFfpVpbU));
- Creation of a temporary memorial site allowing the realisation of the population's wishes in the face of this place.

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## BUDGET

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- No turnover costs for the Working Committee;
- Voluntary participation of different representatives.



# INITIATIVE #7

## WALKING CUBE



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### CONTEXT

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This project began in September 2017 in line with animated Tuesdays, held throughout most of that summer at the train station (see [Initiative #3](#)). The project is based on many principles of the Outreach Team, including the promotion of overall health and an inclusive approach. Walking is indeed a physical activity that is accessible to all. It is safe, free, and beneficial for one's physical and mental health.

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### PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

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The purpose of this project is to start a long-term walking club. Inspired by the initiative of the Grand défi Pierre Lavoie (<https://www.legdpl.com/en/>), the idea of the “walking cube” is to walk for 45 minutes as a group. Through fun challenges, the Grand défi Pierre Lavoie aims to encourage people to adopt healthy life habits. The “walking cube” derives its name from the energy cubes, where each 15-minute session of physical activity corresponds to an energy cube. Each session earns one cube. The more active you are, the more cubes you accumulate.

Establishing a walking club in this form is an opportunity to create an accessible and free health-friendly environment, which helps people to adopt a physically active lifestyle. In addition, each walk is followed by a health capsule on various topics. The weekly animation of such health capsules aims to raise awareness and inform individuals, to help them adopt healthy behaviours, make better food choices and have an active lifestyle.

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### MANAGERS AND PARTNERS

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- Managers: Health Promotion Officer (kinesiologist) of the Outreach Team;
- Partners: A kinesiologist from the private sector in the MRC du Granit, citizens, local organizations (Fédération de l'Âge d'Or du Québec (FADOQ), Viactive, Association des retraitées et retraités de l'éducation et des autres services publics du Québec (AREQ), etc.)

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### ACTIONS

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- Offer of a 45-minute walk time slot per week, on Tuesday evenings;
- Gathering point for departure at the station (in line with animated Tuesdays at the heritage station, in summer 2017);
- A walking route that is accessible, realistic and varied;
- At the end of each session, a health capsule on a variety of topics and sometimes with handouts, is given by the health promotion officer. Here are some examples of health capsules:
  - Teaching the 4-4-8 breathing technique;
  - Teaching tips and exercises to improve postural balance;
  - The importance of laughing every day;
  - Tasting recipes;
  - Sporting challenges;
  - Experimenting the Tabta training method;
  - Posture for winter shovelling.

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## OUTCOMES

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- Participation of between 10 and 20 walkers in average, each week. It is a mix of regular participants and new ones recruited through social media or by word of mouth.
- Creation of a new gathering place in front of the station.
- Breaking isolation. Several participants regularly point out that they would not walk alone and that joining the group to walk is what motivates them the most to come.
- Physical activity benefits are frequently named by participants, such as feeling more relaxed after walking, having a better sleep, being in a better mood (because they talked with people, they laughed, etc.).
- Rediscovering the city by walking, reappropriation of the area.
- Discovering new walking paths and cycling routes.

*"Congratulations to the team, this is a real group therapy!"*

*- A participant of the walking club*

A few comments from participants:

- "The walking club gives me the boost of motivation to go out for a walk on winter nights."
- "This walking club, in this format, arrives at the right time in my life. I needed that."
- "Congratulations to the team, it's a real group therapy."
- "We're really an awesome gang! We laugh as much as we walk!"
- "If it were not for the walking club, I wouldn't be walking tonight."
- "It's motivating to know that we are meeting people to walk."
- "It's really fun to see that there is life at the train station, when we arrive for the walking club, that there's action here, that something's happening."
- "You did me so much good tonight. I had a pit in my stomach all day today, and now, it's gone. I feel much better."

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## BUDGET

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No budget required to run this activity.



**VENEZ MARCHER 3 CUBES ÉNERGIE  
AVEC CLUB DE MARCHE DES M & M.**

**RENDEZ-VOUS HEBDOMADAIRES GRATUITS**  
Tous les mardis à 19h à 19h45  
et tous les jeudis à 15h45 à 16h30

**POINT DE RASSEMBLEMENT**  
Gare patrimoniale du centre-ville, Lac-Mégantic

Informations : 819 583-1227 ou 819 583-2572 poste 2553  
kinesiologieir.ca





# INITIATIVE #8

## CONCERTO

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### CONTEXT

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A few months before the Lac-Mégantic tragedy, some organizations were considering the idea of a study project on general and social housing in MRC du Granit, thus reflecting the concerns and needs.

The events that occurred in Lac-Mégantic on July 6, 2013, only emphasized the need to acquire such a tool, which is why they focused their approach on this municipality first.

Led by a local multisectoral committee with a team of researchers from the Observatoire Estrien en Développement des Communautés (<http://www.oedc.qc.ca/>), the project has evolved with the loss of 110 housing units in the downtown area as well as the willingness of citizens participating in the great public consultation called “[Réinventer la ville](#)” (Reinventing the City) to see the emergence of a new inhabited and vibrant downtown area.

It is thus through consultation culture collaboration rooted inside the community that Concerto ([www.leconcerto.com](http://www.leconcerto.com)), originally CHIC 2, will meet various needs through a multi-purpose building located in the rebuilt downtown area.

Originally, this building was intended for:

- 13 social and affordable housing units for singles, and low-income families living in the MRC du Granit;
- A 42-place daycare centre offering both regular and atypical hours for families and workers;
- A daycare centre for one-time activities or appointments;
- An indoor park for 0 to 12-year-old children and their families;
- Outreach Team.

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### PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

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More than a building, Concerto is a project that will contribute to the rebirth of a populated and lively city centre. With this project, we specifically intend to:

- Promote cooperation between several partners, increase services provided to the population, and contribute noticeably to several restoration efforts deployed for the city centre as a whole;
- Create a dynamic environment conducive to social, community, economic, educational and recreational activities, which will stimulate opportunities and benefits for the MRC du Granit.

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## MANAGERS AND PARTNERS

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- Managers (Steering Committee): Corporation en développement communautaire (CDC) du Granit, CHIC du Granit, CIUSSS de l'Estrie – CHUS (RLS du Granit), Constellation 0-5 ans du Granit and Centre de la petite enfance Sous les étoiles;
- Partners: Entraide Habitat Estrie, Granit Action, Business Community Committee, Reconstruction Bureau, City of Lac-Mégantic, Member of the Legislative Assembly.

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## ACTIONS AND OUTCOMES

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The Concerto project was launched in 2014, after the MRC du Granit general and social housing study was completed. Its participants saw their efforts materialize in 2018.

- Public tendering period: January/February 2018;
- Tender opening: March 2018;
- Signing of contract with the contractor: May 2018;
- Rental space and housing occupancy: January 2019.

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## BUDGET

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We chose a multilateral financial package, based on a fundraising campaign. We have raised more than one million dollars from several sources:

- Citizens = \$25,000;
- Corporations = almost \$200,000;
- Philanthropic donations = \$700,000;
- Local assistance funding = \$250,000.



# INITIATIVE #9

## LESSONS LEARNED

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### CONTEXT

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Following the broadcast of the program “Enquête” in March 2017 (<http://ici.radio-canada.ca/tele/enquete/2016-2017/segments/reportage/18515/enquete-lac-megantic-firme-avocat-victime>), the Outreach Team brought together the people concerned and invited the Barreau du Québec to come and answer their questions. This TV program did indeed destabilize many citizens in Lac-Mégantic and the surrounding area, revealing that in the wake of the tragedy in Lac-Mégantic, American lawyers were on site to recruit the families of victims wishing to sue the American companies involved in the disaster. Still according to this TV program, nearly half of the money to which the families were entitled apparently went directly to these American lawyers. During the meeting with the Barreau du Québec, we noticed that many participants had concrete ideas to improve the practices of the Barreau du Québec and other bodies.

So, the idea behind this project is to collect the statement of people who experienced the tragedy through one-on-one and/or group interviews and to identify overriding themes. This initiative will provide a voice and bring together people who wish to contribute in this way, naming what could be changed or improved as a way of managing future disasters. Through their experience, citizens can thus make recommendations to the different bodies with which they interacted during the rail tragedy of July 2013 but also during the months and years that followed it.

All this led to the writing of a document pooling post-sinister good practices, according to the perspectives of citizens with a unique field expertise in the matter. This document could then be submitted to the bodies concerned, upon approval from the group.

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### PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

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The purpose of this project is to give citizens a different opportunity to contribute following the tragedy. More specifically, we aim to:

- Give everyone an opportunity to meet;
- Recognize the experience that people have lived;
- Contribute to the improvement of methods in a tragedy context.

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### MANAGERS AND PARTNERS

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- Manager: The Outreach Team;
- Partners: Citizens.

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## ACTIONS AND OUTCOMES

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<b>Actions</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Deadline</b>
Build the interview chart	Development of a tool that can be shared, based on the CHAMPSS Functional Capabilities Framework ( <a href="http://enrichproject.ca/CHAMPSS_June_2014.pdf">http://enrichproject.ca/CHAMPSS_June_2014.pdf</a> ).	Fall 2017
Recruit participants	A positive response to the invitation and recruitment of citizens that would not have been reached otherwise.	Fall 2017
Conduct interviews	Lively discussions about the tragedy to change the way things are done. Sense of contribution, having one's experience recognized.	Winter 2018 to winter 2019
Pool emerging themes	Synthesis of stories for collective learning from the citizens' varied experiences.	Spring 2019
Provide the document to participants and invite them to a meeting to discuss the actions to be taken from now	Validation of emerging themes, additions or modifications. Gathering of participants, building relationships and sense of contribution. Decision regarding the deliverable (format and dissemination).	Fall 2019*
Draft disseminate a document	Sharing lessons learned with key stakeholders (if wanted).	Winter 2020*

\*At the time this document was created (November 2019), this action had not yet been undertaken.

Here are a few project impacts that have been observed so far:

- “It’s crazy how it is liberating”;
- “Thanks, it allows me to better understand”;
- “We walked through this. We can clearly help others”;
- “It feels good to talk about it again, we’re a little embarrassed sometimes to want to talk about that night”.

Despite all that this tragedy has brought to the citizens’ lives, the people met during the interviews appreciate having a time to talk about the tragedy, often more clearly, emotionally, but always in a constructive spirit. The citizens we met hope that this tragedy can serve to improve and, above all, protect other victims, with the ultimate goal of improving practices and ensuring that the relevant bodies take into account or draw on the lessons learned. It is a way for them to contribute to the recovery of their community and to make sense of this unfortunate event.

In short, it is a precious time granted to them, a “permission” to discuss the tragedy again.

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## BUDGET

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Minimal budget (design, printing and dissemination of final deliverable).



# INITIATIVE #10

## SOCIAL ACCEPTABILITY

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### CONTEXT

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All community actors must remember the fragility of a population living in a post-disaster context. The documentation shows that it is normal to experience symptoms related to post-traumatic stress even ten years after such a traumatic event.

When it was announced that a major tourism project, led by a private developer, would transform the parc des Vétérans (Veterans Park), citizens directly affected had very strong reactions that went beyond simply making a stand. The park is right in the city centre, in-between a residential area and Mégantic Lake's shore. Most of the residents in the area have been highly exposed to the tragedy and its consequences. Accordingly, this park is a powerful symbol of the region and its resilience for some members in the community.

Following the presentation of this project and the publication of a series of articles in reaction to this announcement in the local newspaper, the Outreach Team was challenged in a direct and indirect way by some citizens who were experiencing a strong discomfort with the situation.

The reactions to this project are a reminder of the fragility of the local population. Symptoms related to post-traumatic stress disorder have been identified: anxiety, insomnia, nightmares, feelings of anger, etc. The perceived lack of information and consultation surrounding this project has revived some people's sense of helplessness and psychological injury related to the tragedy.

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### PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

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The Outreach Team wants to connect all citizens affected by the announcement of an economic development project to break the isolation, reduce suffering and provide support.

We pursued two specific objectives to meet these needs:

- Implement a process to promote power reappropriation;
- Make public health recommendations addressed to interested parties.

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### MANAGERS AND PARTNERS

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- Manager : The Outreach Team;
- Partners : City of Lac-Mégantic and citizens.

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### ACTIONS

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In December 2017, common elements were identified during a first meeting with the affected citizens:

- The need to learn about and understand this project. The sense of impotence and anxiety were fuelled by the vagueness surrounding the project;
- The need to speak (to survive and not collapse) and to feel heard.

The following actions were subsequently implemented:

- Citizen meetings led by the Outreach Team;
- Opportunity to meet with the municipal personnel involved in order to facilitate communication between the stakeholders;
- Presentations, to the concerned parties, concerning best practices for citizen participation, economic development and project social acceptability within the very delicate context of a healing community.

Throughout the entire process, the outreach Team strives to stay neutral, objective and non-partisan. Their recommendations are based on the best scientific evidence available.

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## OUTCOMES

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Several impacts stem from this approach, in particular:

- Less individual suffering by pooling everybody's strengths together;
- Creation of communication channels between citizens and municipal leaders;
- Reduced sense of helplessness through empowerment mechanism sessions supported and coached by the Outreach Team;
- Greater knowledge of all aspects linked to the economic development of a community recovering from a tragedy.

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## BUDGET

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This project does not require a budget, thus no funds have been allocated.



# INITIATIVE #11

## YOUTH CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

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### CONTEXT

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Of the many actions undertaken by the Outreach Team, active citizenship is the preferred approach. This observation leads to the conclusion that we must make room for young people. It is important that opportunities for engagement and participation be provided within the community. We observe that young people are involved within the school system. Also, according to the school actors consulted, there is a desire to promote this participation outside of those walls.

Since implementing the “[Réinventer la ville](#)” (Reinvent the City) movement, young people have been participating in consultations for the Espace Jeunesse (Youth Space) project. There is now a skate park idea in development, and a committee has been formed to bring the project to completion. This could become a starting point to increase youth participation and have it become part of the local culture. It is an important aspect to keep in mind for the future of this project as well as for the various projects already in action.

Moreover, a recent study on young people aged 10 to 25 in the Lac-Mégantic community, led by Professor Danielle Maltais (UQAC), shows that there is considerable vulnerability and silent suffering among them. Many responders have also reported feeling isolated and little invested in their community (<http://www.uqac.ca/chairetrauma/impacts-sur-les-jeunes-de-10-a-25-ans/>).

We know that young people are the future of Lac-Mégantic’s community; they are tomorrow’ driving force. Therefore, it is imperative not only for them, but for the community as a whole, that they become an integral part of our solutions.

Four great wishes emerged from the initial reflection:

- Youth presence in community areas;
- Actual roles and responsibilities entrusted to young people in their community;
- Greater sense of belonging to a community for all youth;
- Development of a feeling of personal effectiveness among young people so the community as a whole can feel it too.

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### PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

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The goal of this project is to promote and support youth citizen participation in the MRC du Granit. We specifically intend to:

- Implement policies created by and for young people;
- Launch a collaborative construction process with relevant stakeholders in order to support youth involvement;
- Develop a culture of active citizenship among young people;
- Present a community empowerment approach designed to teach and coach young people to become active citizens.

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## MANAGERS AND PARTNERS

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- Manager: The Outreach Team;
- Partners: Hauts-Cantons School Board, Red Cross and youth stakeholders in the community.

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## ACTIONS AND OUTCOMES

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Actions	Outcomes	Deadline
Analyze the data collected during the study on young people aged 10 to 25 from Lac-Mégantic and review the literature	<p>Deepening of our understanding of the various needs of MRC du Granit's youth groups (high and low risk).</p> <p>Deepening our understanding of different approaches that can be used to promote youth involvement in a post-disaster environment.</p>	January 2018
Hold half a day of collective reflection to allow community stakeholders to meet and talk about solutions to promote health and well-being for young people	<p>Stakeholder mobilization (youth, parents, advocates and community leaders)</p> <p>Goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take a step back to position ourselves and understand the normal long-term healing process of a community;</li> <li>• Rely on our achievements and the knowledge gained through experience, to then start building from them as well as find fortification in evidence-based information relevant to our community.</li> </ul> <p>Formulation of a common vision comprised of potential solutions worth pursuing or implementing.</p>	February 2018
Establish a committee composed of partners and young people from the community	Participation of several partners (Maison des jeunes, Carrefour Jeunesse Emploi, Constellation du Granit, Outreach Team, school board psychoeducator) to set up a gathering place to meet the needs of a diversity of young people.	Spring 2018
Mobilize young people by quickly obtaining small successes	Holding a first event by and for young people organized by the young people involved in the committee with the support of adults present at the committee. About thirty young people of high-school age and CEGEP participated. The event was a success and a second one took place later.	Summer 2018

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Deadline</b>
Implement promising projects (by and for youth)	Accountability of the members of the committee who are given the task of identifying the needs of their peers and developing initiatives to meet them (with financial support). Expansion and diversification of the number of young people participating on the committee called <i>Comité participation citoyenne jeunesse (CPCJ)</i> . Creation of an event to promote the CPCJ.	Fall 2019
Promote supportive environments	Development of conditions (social, economic and physical) promoting healthy life habits, a balanced lifestyle and the well-being of young people.	Winter 2020*
Make the CPCJ committee known to local political authorities	Development and recognition of the legitimacy of the CPCJ committee within the community. Collective reflection on the creation of a local youth policy.	Winter 2020*

\*At the time this document was created (November 2019), this action had not yet been undertaken.

Here are some proofs of young people's appreciation of this initiative:

- “At the beginning of the evening, I did not think I would have as much fun.”
- “The responsibilities were not too heavy.”
- “We were happy with the presence of adults. It made us feel secure.”
- “Being part of the CPCJ committee allows us to learn perseverance and to have a second option.”
- “It makes everything more feasible, easier than before to organize activities.”
- “It’s a great preparation for the job market.”

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## BUDGET

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A budget of \$25,000 ensures the implementation and sustainability of the project. It was granted as a financial support tool to promote youth citizen participation through various initiatives designed and launched by and for young people in the community.

The Outreach Team is in charge of overseeing all aspects of the project.



# Soirée FMR

Pour et par les jeunes

Mardi 17 juillet 2018

Place Éphémère  
(devant la gare)

Dès 15 h 30  
Accueil

16 h à 18 h  
Ping-pong (Initiation et conseils)

17 h à 19h  
Hot-dogs gratuits (2 coupons par personne)

19 h  
Tournoi de ping-pong

20 h  
Feu de camp avec guimauves et band

Musique par Thomas Levesque



Bar à bonbons (\$)    Surprises à venir et musique d'ambiance    Panier de basket  
Popcorn (\$)    Prix de participation    Jeux extérieurs

# INITIATIVE #12

## EPHEMERAL PLACE

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### CONTEXT

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After a first summer in downtown Lac-Mégantic, it is clear that the population is struggling to reclaim this new place full of meaning and without any familiar landmarks. The loss of the city center is synonymous with lost landmarks, but also loss of gathering places that, at present, have not been recreated. At the same time, various Outreach Team meetings with individuals and groups, both formal and informal, reveal a desire among citizens to get involved and to revitalize their living environment.

A thematic day on community-based intervention organized as part of the Journées annuelles de santé publique 2017 (<https://www.inspq.qc.ca/jasp/miser-sur-l-intervention-de-proximite-pour-agir-aupres-des-populations>), has inspired this initiative. In particular, we learned that places éphémères (ephemeral places) are animated places created by citizens of the territory concerned. These places allow involvement and gathering while bringing a community to meet some of its needs. They are also an opportunity to experiment with concepts or ideas since they are temporary installations.

In order to meet the desired objectives of creating an ephemeral place in Lac-Mégantic, it was determined that its location should be in the heart of the city, in a space promoting social activities, networking and gatherings. The idea here is to bring positive experiences to the city center that was largely destroyed during the 2013 rail tragedy

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### PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

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The purpose of this project is to promote the reappropriation of a territory through citizen involvement. More specifically, we aim to:

- Create a new gathering place on the territory under reconstruction;
- Promote the creation of social bonds;
- Encourage and support the involvement of citizens of all ages and all walks of life.

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### MANAGERS AND PARTNERS

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- In charge: The Outreach team;
- In partnership with: City of Lac-Mégantic (field loan and logistical support); Red Cross and committee composed of partners and citizens.

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## ACTIONS

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- February 2018:
  - Presentation of the project to the municipal council and (demander l'obtention de l'accès...) request for access to land in the downtown area for the summer of 2018;
- March to May 2018:
  - Tour of community organizations to present the project to professionals and users to mobilize citizens;
- May 2018:
  - Citizen meetings;
- June 2018:
  - Establishment of a committee to make Place éphémère a reality. The committee is composed of the Outreach Team, an Intro-travail mobilization officer, a Youth Center professional and three citizens. The committee remains an open group. Anyone interested in getting involved can join it;
  - Launch of the Place éphémère activities with animation, every Tuesday evening, provided by the Place éphémère Committee.
- Summer 2018:
  - Offering free and varied activities to citizens every Tuesday evening in the form of 5 to 7 with musicians, barbecues, outdoor film screening with popcorn, outdoor games for young and old, meeting of the Cercle des fermières and discover their creations, evening by and for the youths (ping-pong, campfire with marshmallows, candy bar), laughter yoga, intergenerational karaoke, etc. ([www.facebook.com/PlaceEphemereLacMegantic/](http://www.facebook.com/PlaceEphemereLacMegantic/))
- February to May 2019:
  - Visiting the partners to explain once again Place éphémère. Through this visit, we invite partners and citizens to get involved in Place éphémère by proposing activities, contributing to the organization of events, etc. We make the mandate of the committee known, to support the various initiatives of the community and facilitate citizen involvement.
- June to August 2019:
  - Assisted animation every Tuesday evenings at the Place éphémère by the committee, with a wide variety of activities: outdoor cinema, karaoke, music evenings, etc.
- July 2019:
  - Relocation of Place éphémère for a music evening in a field located in the Fatima sector. This activity has made it possible to reach new people and to make our wish better known that the citizens get involved in the animation of the community. It is clear from this evening that the team must continue its efforts to promote a better understanding of its mandate and to bring citizens to a real contribution.
- Throughout the 2019 summer (not only on Tuesday evenings):
  - Promoting the use of Place éphémère by citizens and organizations. For instance, someone offered a free Zumba®/Pound® night at Place Ephémère. The Centre des femmes (women Centre) used the place for their Femmes au tambour activity, as well as for self-reflection activity. The Maison des jeunes disco was also held at the Place éphémère, which led the youth to take up more space in the community. Finally, the [Leucan Shaved Head Challenge](#) was held in August 2019 at Place éphémère.

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## OUTCOMES

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Several benefits were observed in the creation of the Place éphémère:

- The tour of the organizations made it possible to create a real link with citizens in addition to strengthening the links with community organizations;
- Citizen participation in the committee makes the project human and accessible: it is the heart of the project. This allows the citizens concerned to have a real involvement in the social reconstruction of their community in addition to fostering a sense of belonging and pride in their downtown area;
- The activities hosted by the committee every Tuesday evening to make the place lively and inviting. Participation in activities is more than satisfactory, ranging from 30 to over 100 citizens;
- The installation of outdoor furniture, a basketball basket and other play equipment promotes social interaction and continuous play in the downtown area. However, efforts must be pursued to promote good neighbourliness with the Concerto residents (see [Initiative #8](#)).

The Lac-Mégantic Place éphémère therefore addresses psychosocial issues stemming from the July 2013 railway tragedy and supports the long-term recovery of the Lac-Mégantic community.

Some lessons can also be learned from this valuable and fruitful experience. First, it is important to clarify at the outset the functioning of a committee responsible for the Place éphémère, as well as the mandate and roles of each of its members. The implementation of the programming and the animation of the activities must rest on the whole of the members. Even if it assumes leadership in the project, the Outreach Team must ensure that responsibilities are shared within the community since citizen involvement in the process of social reconstruction is just as, if not more important than what results from it (i.e. the creation of an ephemeral place). Secondly, the planning of such a project as well as the mobilization and involvement of partners and citizens require many discussions. Sufficient preparation time allows everyone to be truly involved. It is therefore essential to plan a few months in advance the creation of an ephemeral place. Finally, several strategies foster participation in the activities offered. The appearance of the premises is an important factor that should not be overlooked. Painting the furniture in bright colors and making the place vibrant encourages citizens to stop by. The use of social networks, such as the creation of a Facebook page, also makes it possible to better reach the local population and to inform them in real time of the programming offered. Finally, we must remain vigilant not to offer programming to citizens. Citizens should not wait for programming (i.e., “I receive, wait for offers”), but help them develop their power to act using the participation venues available to them.

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## BUDGET

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The Outreach Team is investing human and material resources in this project, as land reclamation is a central issue in the context of post-disaster recovery. For the summer of 2018 and the summer of 2019, a budget of \$10,000 from the Red Cross Fund has been mobilized in order to concretize and animate the place.

**30 juillet**

**18h30**

**YOGA DU RIRE**



**31 juillet**

**20h30**

**CINÉMA PLEIN AIR**



**1 août**

**18h30**

**KARAOKÉ  
INTERGÉNÉRATIONNEL**



## Place Éphémère - Juin 2019

DIMANCHE	LUNDI	MARDI	MERCREDI	JEUDI	VENREDI	SAMEDI
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14 <b>Le Concerto</b> 5 à 7 Portes ouvertes	15
16	17	18	19	20	21 Jasente et Pirovettes 9h30 à 12h00	22 Disco ado 12-17 ans Pointe jeunesse du Granit
23	24	25 Ouverture officielle de la Place Éphémère 18h30	26	27	28	29
30						

f Place Éphémère Lac-Mégantic \*La progr

## Place Éphémère - Juillet 2019

DIMANCHE	LUNDI	MARDI	MERCREDI	JEUDI	VENREDI	SAMEDI
	1	2 Cinéma plein air 20h00 Pointe jeunesse du Granit	3	4	5	6
7	8	9 Soirée Karaoké 18h30	10 Femmes au tambour du Centre des femmes 13h30-15h00	11	12 11h00-14h00 Party d'été de COUP POUCE	13
14	15 Zumba pound 18h00 à 20h15	16 Soirée en chanson ! Terrain de la banque nationale 18h30	17	18	19	20
21	22	23 Cinéma plein air 20h45 COMMERCE LAC-MÉGANTIC	24	25	26	27
28	29	30 Jeux libres 18h30	31			

f Place Éphémère Lac-Mégantic \*La progr

## Place Éphémère - Août 2019

DIMANCHE	LUNDI	MARDI	MERCREDI	JEUDI	VENREDI	SAMEDI
				1	2	3
4 10h30 - 11h30 Songe d'été en musique 13h30 - 15h30 Détâtes rasées	5	6 LM a du talent à revendre 18h30	7 Femmes au tambour du Centre des femmes 13h30-15h00	8	9	10 Diner-Potluck interculturel 11h30
11	12	13 Cinéma plein air 20h45	14 Apprendre sur soi par les contes 18h30-20h00	15	16	17
18	19	20 Bricolage Ojos de dios 18h30	21	22	23	24
25	26	27 Party de la rentrée 5 à 7	28 Femmes au tambour du Centre des femmes 13h30-15h00	29	30	

f Place Éphémère Lac-Mégantic \*La programmation est sujette à changements sans préavis.

# INITIATIVE #13

## WEDNESDAYS IN GOOD COMPANY

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### CONTEXT

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Social isolation is a reality in Lac-Mégantic and the surrounding areas. Although summer is a busy period for Place éphémère (see [Initiative #12](#)), we find that during the rest of the year, some days of the week are more difficult to live for these socially isolated individuals, especially since there is little or no entertainment or activities to do on weekday evenings. Fortunately, on Tuesday nights, there is the *Cube de marche* (see [Initiative #7](#)). Thursday and Friday evenings, stores and shops close later, offering a place to spend time. However, Wednesdays are days when there is little or no activity available and people get more bored. Many people feel lonely. Restaurants, bars and movies are paying activities, making them difficult to access for some of the population suffering from poverty. Through simple and accessible activities, we aim to be more inclusive.

In addition, several studies recommend adapting health care and front line social services to reach men and meet their needs. Indeed, men:

- Would be unlikely to consult a family doctor;
- When they do, it will often be a last resort, or even a crisis;
- Represent  $\frac{3}{4}$  of suicides;
- Would often adopt risky behaviours and poor lifestyle habits.

In order to improve the health and well-being of the male population, we must better reach them through promotion and prevention strategies, by adapting services and better identifying the men in difficulty.

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### PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

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The purpose of this project is to break social isolation in the Granit community, especially among men. More specifically, the objectives are to:

- Create pretexts for meeting people;
- Create meaningful links between individuals;
- Reduce social isolation among the population of Lac-Mégantic and surrounding areas;
- Screen individuals with greater psychosocial needs and refer them as needed;
- Link individuals with similar interests;
- Provide a gathering place where citizens can occupy the space.

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### MANAGERS AND PARTNERS

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- Managers: Social worker and social work technician from the Outreach team;
- Partners: Citizens.

## ACTIONS AND OUTCOMES

On Wednesdays in Good Company, we want to offer a meeting place for people living in social isolation. We are therefore seeking to break the isolation by connecting individuals with similar interests, often in relation to the proposed activity, or simply by getting together over a coffee. The concept is simple, flexible and scalable to meet emerging needs and various clienteles reached.

Actions	Outcomes	Deadline
Provide a diverse and accessible indoor and outdoor venue * (i.e., well located, open to all, without registration and free of charge)	People experiencing social isolation have access to a space to spend time, meet people, break isolation and meet psychosocial workers in an informal setting. Although citizens of all ages and social groups are invited to share and occupy the space, middle-aged men, often from more disadvantaged backgrounds, are more likely to be attracted by the activities.	From October 2018 to May 2019, every Wednesday evening (break during the summer to make way for Place Éphémère)
Give citizens the responsibility to determine the program of activities	Citizens feel that the activity and the place belong to them. Fostering a feeling of belonging. Citizens are involved in their own way, according to their wishes, which promotes citizen participation.	From November 2018
Publicize programming through social media publications and poster printing	Recruitment of additional participants and promotion of citizen participation (approximately 5 to 10 participants in each activity, with new “recruits” on a regular basis).	Throughout the year

\* Among the thirty activities offered from October 2018 to May 2019, there are card games, board games, bingo, DIY, colouring, decoration, creation of special event cards, and karaoke.

Here are some observations showing the effects of this project so far:

- A man mentions on the evening of an activity: “It’s fun to have something organized tonight. It allows me to do something other than go to the bar.” The next day, the same person said that he usually has trouble sleeping and that night, following the colouring activity, he had no trouble falling asleep.
- A colouring activity attracted several young people from the Maison des jeunes. The evening was pleasant, some young people coloured, others played card games. We have observed young people occupying the downtown area, which is very much in line with the Comité participation citoyenne jeunesse (see [Initiative #11](#)), who wants young people to occupy more public space.
- At a Halloween decorating event, we had the chance to connect people of all ages, cultures and economic classes. French students were present, users of a community organization, elderly ladies attending the Centre des femmes, and girls and young women were present. Some of them dared to go towards the unknown, to experience something they had never done in their lives.
- During an activity, some men talked together about their experiences, their marriage and divorce, their personal difficulties. Outside the group, a man was colouring and listening. At the end of the evening, we validated with that man if he enjoyed his evening, he answered that he likes to listen to the other men’s story, it allowed him to think and learn. At the end of the activity, one of the men thanked us for putting him at ease, and to have allowed him to have a good time and to open up to others. This man admitted having no one to talk to during the day.

Several lessons emerge from this experience:

- Competitive activities do not foster social interactions because participants focus on their performance and hope to win.
- Artistic activities are more popular than other types of activity, attracting around fifteen participants each time.
- The activities offered during the holiday season are not very popular. Consideration should be given to not scheduling activities during this time of year.
- More and more men are reached by Good Company Wednesdays. Men who participate have a lot to say, they have a great need to vent. This sometimes requires adjustments to the planned formula in order to take the time to talk with them (active listening) and to foster the creation of links between them.
- Many of the men reached by the activities are struggling with some difficulties, creating a heavy climate, which encourages other citizens to refrain from coming. Over time, for this reason, we are losing the sense of the initiative that was meant to be inclusive and accessible to all.

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## BUDGET

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- Coffee offered by a local private business;
- Purchase of food = about \$50;
- Purchase of equipment for activities, most of which was provided in the form of donations or loans = approximately \$50;
- Printing of a hundred posters in colour = negligible costs.



Les Mercredis en bonne compagnie présentent...

## CRÉATION DE DÉCORATIONS DE NOËL

**12 décembre 2018**

18h00 à 20h00

Matériel fourni sur place

Activité gratuite

Bienvenue à tous !

5480, rue de la Gare, Lac-Mégantic



# INITIATIVE #14

## EMERGENCY PLAN REVISION

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### CONTEXT

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The City of Lac-Mégantic has been and is still a highly sought-after instance, since the tragedy of July 6, 2013. The employees and managers of the City of Lac-Mégantic represent a portion of the community that has been very exposed to the disaster of 2013. They were indeed pivotal people, as much for the emergency response as for the communications to the population, because of their knowledge and their proximity to the community. They had to be very adaptable and accept work overload, while being citizens themselves impacted by the tragedy. Organizational and individual health within this municipality is therefore worrisome: it must be considered.

Beyond the immediate response to the tragedy, the City of Lac-Mégantic is a pillar organization in a context of physical, economic and social reconstruction following this event. The state of health of its staff is obviously a condition for success of this reconstruction. Since the employees are involved in the reconstruction project, it is hoped that it will be beneficial, and not deleterious, for them.

The City of Lac-Mégantic must also update its emergency plan following the 2013 tragedy. In order to involve employees and managers in the process of carrying out this project, the City asks the collaboration of the Outreach Team. We want to deploy a participatory and inclusive approach when revising the City's emergency plan.

The Outreach Team sees here an opportunity for the staff to speak about their experience (both as an employee and as a citizen), to contribute to the city's learning in terms of emergency planning and to close a loop in relation to the tragedy of 2013. In other words, we must recognize and take advantage of this unique expertise that has developed over the last five years among the staff of the City of Lac-Mégantic. In addition, it is a good time to publicize and offer access to psychosocial services for those who express the need for it.

In collaboration with those responsible for reviewing the emergency plan, the Outreach Team is mandated to organize and hold a group meeting and to ensure that the process remains beneficial to the community participants throughout the project. The team wants a real contribution from all the individuals involved in the process. The City is very open to the idea that revising this emergency plan will allow the contribution of the employees and managers of the City of Lac-Mégantic. This project will also explore the results of the Estrie Population Health Surveys (ESPE) in connection with the tragedy and psychopedagogy related to the symptoms of post-traumatic stress in order to normalize and demystify the demand for help.

The context is ideal because, to achieve this kind of exercise, there must be some distance from the tragic event. The revision of the emergency plan therefore becomes a pretext for the Outreach Team to check the condition of the people, normalize the symptoms present and offer the services in line with the needs expressed. This process can even inspire the municipality for future projects where citizen involvement will be restorative in a post-tragedy context.

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## PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

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The purpose of this project is to update the City of Lac-Mégantic's emergency plan by involving the City's staff, in a perspective of real contribution. The primary objectives of the project are:

- To provide employees and managers with a venue to discuss the July 6, 2013, event and its impact;
- Enable a real contribution from city employees and managers (so that their experience and expertise serve);
- Ensure that the process of updating the City's emergency plan is beneficial to individuals;
- Ensure that the process is reflected in the deliverable, so that the revised emergency plan reflects the City's employees and managers and takes into account their expertise.

The project also has secondary objectives:

- Build on the data collection approach developed under the Lessons Learned project (from a citizen perspective) (see [Initiative #9](#));
- Demystify and standardize psychosocial needs with municipal employees and managers;
- Inform about available resources and facilitate access to psychosocial assistance as needed by municipal employees and managers;
- Strengthen the links between the Outreach Team and the municipality;
- Demonstrate that making room for employees in the decision-making process is beneficial for everyone, even though it may add to the process.

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## MANAGERS AND PARTNERS

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The people involved in this project are the Outreach Team and the Direction générale de la Ville de Lac-Mégantic.

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## ACTIONS AND OUTCOMES

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The project is divided into major stages, including clarifying the mandate of the Outreach Team, planning of the animation, organizing the activity, holding of the activity in the form of a large group (17 participants) and synthesizing the data. The topics discussed in the focus group are based on the CHAMPSS framework, which describes the resilience of communities according to the functional abilities approach. It should be noted that two members of the Outreach Team participate in the activity, as a facilitator and observer respectively. The observer is responsible for 1) analyzing the content of the focus group using his personal notes and 2) synthesizing it by identifying the main lessons learned and the recommendations of the municipal employees and managers.

In a more detailed way, here are the main actions that are performed.

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Deadline</b>
Promote citizen participation in an inclusive way	Meaning of real contribution by municipal employees and managers.	Winter 2019

Actions	Outcomes	Deadline
Give a space for discussing issues related to the 2013 tragedy	A focus group for municipal employees and managers to share their stories, make sense of the event and close a loop. This is the first time municipal representatives have had the opportunity to share their experience with each other about in relation to the 2013 events. Normalization of new and recurrent symptoms. Screening for psychosocial issues and offering services as needed.	Winter 2019
Strengthen partnerships and the driving forces of the community	Recognizing the world's unique expertise of municipal employees and managers.	Winter 2019
Draw from experiences	Collecting, analyzing and synthesizing data. This work is integrated in the synthesis resulting from the project "Lessons learned (from a citizen perspective)". Integrating into the City's emergency plan the apprenticeships appointed by municipal employees and managers.	To be determined

Here are some quotes showing the effects of this project:

- "It's the first time we talk about it, we never took the time to do it";
- "Interesting to hear others, it helps to understand and realize that everyone has put their strengths to work."

The risks and issues to be considered in this project are as follows:

- The process is not taken seriously;
- The steps of this project cause an overload of work for the people concerned and the people involved in it;
- There is a weakening of the links between the Outreach Team and the city staff;
- The people targeted and involved have expectations that are too high in relation to the time allowed to complete this project;
- The results obtained by this approach do not match the expected results;
- The content of the exchanges is not taken into account during the revision of the emergency plan;
- The initial contract does not meet the expectations of the City's staff and the general management.

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## BUDGET

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- Logistical aspects during the focus group assumed by the City of Lac-Mégantic;
- All other required resources are assumed by the Outreach Team.

# INITIATIVE #15

## TERRITORIALIZED FOOD SYSTEM

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### CONTEXT

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While the community of Lac-Mégantic is in a recovery phase following the tragedy of July 6, 2013, food initiatives are emerging to promote the link between citizens. This is particularly the case for collective gardens and the Frigo Free Go, meeting and exchange venues that emerged in the years following the 2013 event. For the instigators of these initiatives, the feeling of contribution to a community project is a real lever for recovery.

Concerns related to food security, the fight against food waste, the environment and economic development are very present in Lac-Mégantic. The use of territorialized food systems (TFS) creates a common thread between food-related initiatives and other initiatives in the community.

TFSs are defined by reducing distances between different stages of the food chain. They aim at promoting local products, rooting agriculture and local know-how in its own territory, reducing the ecological footprint of food production, developing niche products and preserving quality local jobs<sup>2</sup>. TFSs therefore cover the entire food chain, from seed to the consumer's plate to composting.

TFSs are divided into five types of actions: 1) service production, 2) processing, 3) marketing, 4) agricultural and seed production, and 5) food consumption. Actions lead to various types of externalities, namely social, educational, cultural and environmental externalities.

As part of the TFS components, the management of residual organic materials is not, however, part of the objectives of this initiative. Our goals are more in the areas of access to food and the fight against food waste.

Food security is a social determinant of health and well-being upon which we must act. Many requests for food are made by young adults in the Lac-Mégantic community, including vocational training centres and adult schools. The requests concern access to food, but also the development of knowledge about nutrition.

While responding to a basic need, food security interventions also serve as a pretext to build more community connections. Through this approach, we adopt a vision of sustainable development, which considers both economic and environmental as social aspects over the long term. Several projects, which have emerged in the MRC du Granit in food security and that respect this vision, have been grouped within the TFS's global approach.

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<sup>2</sup> RESOLIS. (2016) TERRITORIALIZED FOOD SYSTEM IN QUEBEC: 100 local initiatives for a responsible and sustainable nutrition. [On line], [https://www.chaire-diversite-alimentaire.ulaval.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/resolis\\_journal\\_fevrier\\_quebec\\_CS4.pdf](https://www.chaire-diversite-alimentaire.ulaval.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/resolis_journal_fevrier_quebec_CS4.pdf)

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## PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

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The goal of this project is to ensure the food security of the Granit population, for all social classes, by offering a variety of local foods while promoting a sustainable and local food cycle. More specifically, we aim to:

- Counteract food waste;
- Offer the community a varied diet;
- Develop the knowledge of partners and citizens;
- Promote the autonomy of citizens to make better food choices;
- Promote local and neighbourhood purchase;
- Promote communication and mutual assistance between the various partners, both private and public;
- To perpetuate the TFS of Granit by looking for new partners.

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## MANAGERS AND PARTNERS

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- Managers: The Outreach Team, through its involvement in the various committees.
- Partners: Collective Kitchens, the Centre d'action bénévole (food bank), restaurants, grocery stores, producers, the public market, processors, Écocentre Lac-Mégantic (composting), Centre de tri Valoris sorting centre (waste), the City of Lac-Mégantic, craftsmen and citizens.

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## ACTIONS

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With or without the support of the Outreach Team, several projects have emerged in the MRC du Granit in recent years. Driven by a desire to promote food security, social cohesion, the protection of the environment and the local economy, these actions are all interwoven into the TFS du Granit. Here are a few:

- In 2016:
  - A collective garden project was launched at the Lac-Mégantic marina.
- In 2017:
  - A collective refrigerator inspired by the Frigo Free go movement (<https://www.facebook.com/FrigoFreeGo/>) is established at the Gare de Lac-Mégantic. In addition to addressing the fight against food waste, this project is intended to be an additional resource in the fight against hunger in the community. The aim is to raise awareness of resource sharing.
- In 2018:
  - 140 fruit trees were planted at the polyvalente Montignac.
  - The Incredible Edible movement is deployed (<https://www.incredibleedible.org.uk/>) which demonstrates the interest in local agriculture and the promotion of local products. It also serves as a pretext for meetings between citizens, around gardening and food.
  - The City of Lac-Mégantic signs the energy transition pact and invites other Quebec municipalities to do the same.
- In 2019:
  - Cooking groups, aimed at learning and empowerment, are organized. All of this is overseen by the nutritionist and the social worker, youth component, of the Outreach team;
  - Granit TFS mapping takes place. This is also carried out by the Outreach team;
  - Cooking workshops are offered by the Marché Public at the Gare de Lac-Mégantic;

- An insect tasting activity takes place at Cégep de Lac-Mégantic. The goal is to discover this little-known protein, which has been gaining popularity in recent years and to raise young people's interest in nutrition;
- A first meeting is held between actors of the Granit community (the Outreach Team, Coup de pouce, l'Ensoleillée, le Centre d'action bénévole du Granit, CDC du Granit, adult schools, Constellation du Granit) and CDC de Nicolet-Yamaska for the presentation of the Carotte Joyeuse project (<https://carottejoyeuse.ca/>). Following these discussions, the Granit actors wish to implement a project similar in their community;
- Community gardens (plot rental) have been set up in Courcelles.

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## OUTCOMES

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Here are the current benefits:

- Food access for low-income people;
- Learning about growing fruits and vegetables;
- Increase in local purchasing;
- Mutual aid and solidarity.

Here are the desired long-term benefits:

- Diversification and intensification of TFS-related projects (e.g., planting of fruit trees and edible flower beds in downtown Lac-Mégantic (town planning);
- Improvement of community knowledge on healthy eating.

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## BUDGET

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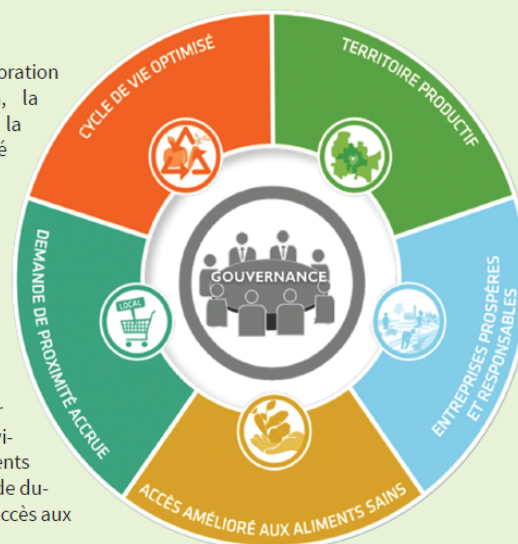
The financial resources necessary for the implementation of the various projects overlapping in the TFSs are mainly granted by the local organizations which have implemented them. To reduce the costs of these actions, the Outreach team and all its partners rely on donations and sponsorships. However, a certain budget, drawn from the Outreach Team's funds, is necessary for the proper functioning of certain projects. Here is an estimate:

- Purchase of land, compost, sowing, etc. = approximately \$280;
- Purchase of food for activities [learning, nutrition] in the various environments = approximately \$155;
- Purchase of food for Place Éphémère 2019 = approximately \$300.

## DES SYSTÈMES ALIMENTAIRES DURABLES POUR DES TERRITOIRES NOURRICIERS

Un système alimentaire durable est un réseau de collaboration territorial qui intègre la production, la transformation, la distribution, la consommation de produits alimentaires et la gestion des matières résiduelles, dans le but d'accroître la santé environnementale, économique et sociale de la collectivité. Il comprend les acteurs, les activités et les infrastructures impliqués dans la sécurité alimentaire d'une population et repose sur une gouvernance alimentaire de proximité.

Un système alimentaire durable s'intéresse aux interactions et aux synergies possibles entre les différents maillons et secteurs du système alimentaire au sein d'un territoire donné. Il préconise de mettre en place une action coordonnée et intersectorielle à l'échelle d'un territoire afin de renforcer la dynamique locale des acteurs et l'engagement des collectivités. Dans ce type de système, la nourriture est un des instruments dont disposent les collectivités pour atteindre leurs objectifs de durabilité et la planification des milieux de vie tient compte de l'accès aux aliments.



Le diagramme ci-contre présente les ingrédients à réunir pour renforcer la vocation nourricière du territoire. Un tableau synthèse des stratégies associées se retrouve en annexe de ce document. Source : Vivre en Ville, 2014.



# INITIATIVE #16

## ART AND HEALTH

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### CONTEXT

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Arts are a significant determinant of the well-being, healing and rehabilitation of individuals and communities. Arts are a means of healing, in particular by making it possible to express what is difficult to express in words, by increasing self-confidence, by fostering the creation of new bonds, by putting order in people's lives, by creating a living memory of events, by making it possible to give to others and by creating a caring community.

At the MRC du Granit, after the railway tragedy of July 6, 2013, several artistic initiatives have been developed to promote the community resilience:

- In 2015:
  - The Grande cueillette des mots du Granit (see [Initiative #1](#)) has helped promote dialogue and social cohesion by putting forward a writing process nurtured by citizens.
- In 2016:
  - The screening of the film *Demain à la gare patrimoniale de Lac-Mégantic* brought together 70 community members and made them aware of the importance of taking action now to avoid an irreversible environmental disaster.
- In 2017:
  - The Photovoice project (see [Initiative #4](#)) made it possible to give citizens a voice, to share various experiences, to name the elements that make the community attractive and to identify the aspects supporting resilience in the community.
- From 2016 to 2019:
  - Through art, the Arts et Métiers [Red Cross] project has helped break social isolation of seniors with decreasing autonomy. This project is now being undertaken by the *Centre d'action bénévole* [CAB] du Granit, in order to continue to offer citizens the opportunity to express themselves.
- In 2018:
  - The workshop show *L'écho de l'écume* (<https://www.lescheminserrants.com/spectacle-a-venir>), "*Les chemins errants*", was offered, under the stars, to children at the early childhood centre (CPE). The workshop, uniting different forms of visual art [painting, theatre, music], aimed at promoting the creative process in children.
  - The installation of a public piano on the Papineau promenades and in front of the heritage train station also created a place of exchange and expression, in addition to helping to bring life to downtown Lac-Mégantic.
  - The City of Lac-Mégantic stands out particularly in terms of art and culture through its sculpture route *Le Marcheur d'Étoiles*, a route bringing together 48 monumental sculptures scattered throughout the downtown area.
  - The Lac-Mégantic's *Commission des arts, de la culture et du patrimoine* (CACP) works on the *Musée à ciel ouvert*, which contains photos of the Lac-Mégantic railway history displayed outside the heritage train station.
  - The *Parc des vétérans* comes alive every Thursday evening in summer 2018 with the free *Entre chien et loup* concert series. This activity brings the population together around music.

This non-exhaustive list is first and foremost a reflection of the dynamism experienced at the MRC du Granit in terms of artistic or cultural initiatives that can have a beneficial effect on the health and well-being of the local population.

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## PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

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The purpose of this initiative is to promote a more systematic use of art and culture in strategies to improve the health and well-being of the Granit community. More specifically, the objectives are to:

- Better understand what is being done here and elsewhere in art and health;
- Promote the vision that art and culture, in all their forms, have a positive impact on health and well-being.

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## MANAGERS AND PARTNERS

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Managers: The Outreach Team and City of Lac-Mégantic.

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## ACTIONS AND OUTCOMES

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Actions	Benefits	Schedules
Promote artistic and cultural activities at Place éphémère [e.g.: creation of a collective and intercultural artistic work] (see <a href="#">Initiative #12</a> )	Exchange and meeting situations between citizens and cultural and artistic circles. Contribute to the revitalization of the territory and to social development. Creation of links between the cultural object and the people. Meeting places between artists and citizens from different cultures.	2018-2019
Encourage the inclusion of different art forms on Wednesdays in good company [e.g., DIY workshops] (see <a href="#">Initiative #13</a> )	Exchanges facilitated between participants. Reduced social isolation. Art as a tool for promotion and mutual aid.	2018-2019
Hold a vernissage as part of the fight against tobacco use among young people	Citizen youth participation and creation of a feeling of pride. Promotion of healthy lifestyles.	February 2019
Contribute to the deployment of the <a href="#">Festival du cinéma du monde sur la route à Lac-Mégantic</a>	Through the use of the seventh art, creation encounters between people of immigrant background and the citizens of Lac-Mégantic. Fight against prejudice and discrimination of all kinds [xenophobia, Islamophobia, racism]. Information and awareness about other cultures. Creation of a dialogue about immigration.	May 2019

Actions	Benefits	Schedules
Support the vision that art and culture are valuable tools for social reconstruction and not only physical and economic reconstruction (e.g., risks associated with the exhibition of certain works in the Musée à ciel ouvert).	Awareness among decision makers about the potential benefits of art and culture.	Ongoing

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## BUDGET

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Budget integrated with the one provided for the operation of the Place éphémère.

# CONCLUSION

Many lessons have been identified from this unique and informative experience. First, long-term monitoring of both physical and psychological consequences through health surveys is essential. Such surveys serve as powerful tools for health promotion initiatives and advocacy on behalf of the local population. In fact, population health surveys were so helpful in terms of recognizing the full scope of local issues and needs at the community level that we recommend its use for any future major events. Such community-based studies support priority setting (e.g. targeting most at-risk populations) and promote risk-informed decision making.

Second, we learned that the voices of various groups who are disproportionately at high-risk should be heard, in order to take in account their specific needs and capacities. It is important to take time to listen and learn from citizens, and consider all members of the community as assets rather than victims. One way to better hear these voices is to offer flexible services that reach isolated people in the community where they live.

Third, no matter what the extent of the problems observed on in the field, public health must seek a balance between a deficit-based approach and an approach focusing on strengths and resources of the community. An understanding and mastery of these two approaches is therefore required for teams working in a psychosocial recovery context.

Fourth, public health practitioners, academics and leaders must collaborate closely with local organizations and citizen groups. This is fundamental for a successful recovery.

Fifth, the social reconstruction is as, if not more, important as the physical and economic reconstruction. One thing is clear: both the process and the goal contribute to the social reconstruction of the population. Putting citizens at the heart of all considerations provides more opportunities to make sense out of a chaotic situation and to contribute to the recovery of the community. Citizen participation is especially critical under complex circumstances, where economic and political considerations may tend to take precedence over citizens' interest.

Finally, we truly believe that public health organizations should capitalize on existing knowledge, to develop and apply strategies and interventions in a post-disaster context. As part of their recovery operations, they should also build knowledge by sharing experiences and lessons learned.

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## L'AUBE ENFIN

*D'un bel hier, un demain peut-être  
Dès aujourd'hui, l'idée de l'idée  
Celle du commencement  
Celle du pas en avant*

*Les pieds dans l'eau  
Des étoiles dans les yeux  
Quelque part entre ciel et terre  
Dans un écrin de verdure  
Du monde debout*

*Soudés dans l'épreuve  
Des hommes et des femmes  
La tête et le coeur  
Tournées vers la suite des choses  
De la nuit, espérer la lumière  
Du jour, puiser la force vive de la vie*

*Se donner la chance d'être  
Avant d'avoir été*

*- Paul, engaged citizen  
of Lac-Mégantic*





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