

# Opération Sac à Dos by Regroupement Partage

*Back-to-school will cost 4.5% more than last year*  
*A heavy burden for the budget of the 24% of Montreal families living below the poverty line*

MONTREAL, PQ, CANADA, August 17, 2016 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Nearly one quarter of Montreal families with children under the age of 18 live below the poverty line. Children from lower-income households are three to four times more likely to face academic delays and twice as likely to experience learning difficulties. They are also more likely to drop out: nearly 1 Montreal student in 3 will not finish secondary school, and in some districts more deeply affected by poverty, it's nearly 1 student in 2.

To help these thousands of children in need, on August 25, [Regroupement Partage](#) will call on the generosity of the public and the business community as part of Opération Sac à Dos. This 8th annual fundraising event aims to collect \$45,000 to buy school supplies and food items to allow 4,500 children from lower-income households to walk into their classrooms with their heads held high and to start the year with all they need to build their future. The fundraising will take place in the Radisson, Square-Victoria and Jean-Talon Metro stations and in various places around the city, such as Victoria Square, Philips Square and on Jean-Talon (corner of Christophe-Colomb). Donations can also be made online at [www.magasinpartage.org](http://www.magasinpartage.org) or by phone at 514-383-2460.

The needs are even greater for back-to-school 2016

“Poverty statistics for Montreal are



**13 500**

people helped by Opération Sac à Dos in 2016



**4500 children**

will receive a backpack, school supplies and an insulated lunch bag



**Value of nearly \$500,000**

given in school supplies, backpacks, lunch bags, food, other products, and transit passes



**Between \$120 and \$360**

value of a backpack given to a child and help provided to their family



**17**

Magasins-Partage

Source: Regroupement Partage

Statistics Poverty Regroupement Partage Opération Sac à Dos



**Regroupement Partage**

Regroupement Partage Logo

*Opération*  
**SAC À DOS**

Opération Sac à Dos Logo

appalling, but real, and this year Regroupement Partage expects an increased demand for supplies and food during its Opération Sac à Dos campaign, since it will cost an average of 4.5% more to equip children for the new school year. That's a difficult increase for all families, but impossible for the 24% of families with children who are below the poverty line," says Sylvie Rochette, cofounder and executive director of Regroupement Partage.

"Every year, I hope to be able to tell you that poverty has decreased in Montreal, but it never happens. Poverty is three times more prevalent here than in the rest of Québec. Montreal families are worse off financially, and of the people who use food banks each month, many are children. This is unacceptable!

We have to ask ourselves: Is it normal for there to be more poor children in Montreal than last year? The answer is no!" exclaims Isabelle Maréchal, co-ambassador of Regroupement Partage and spokesperson for Opération Sac à Dos.

That is why Opération Sac à Dos is so important. From now to the end of August, the organization representing 17 Magasins-Partage will allow some 4,500 children to get a backpack, school supplies and an insulated lunch bag. The families of these children can also choose food items, especially for breakfast and the lunch bag. In total, Opération Sac à Dos by Regroupement Partage will help 13,500 people (parents and children) to make ends meet for back-to-school. "Last year, a value of \$500,000 in school supplies, backpacks, lunch bags, food, other products and transit passes was distributed. Each filled backpack given to a child and the assistance given to his or her family ranged from \$120 to \$360. This has a major impact on the lives of these children, giving them confidence as they start a new school year, and even more, giving them the chance to succeed," says Patrick de Bellefeuille, announcer at Météomédia and spokesperson for Opération Sac à Dos.

### Poverty that costs Montrealers and Quebecers dearly

Compared to someone who drops out, a young person who graduates from secondary school will earn \$184,000 more over their working life. "This is a lack of earning power that costs Quebecers \$1.9 billion per year. It's a shortfall that we cannot allow ourselves, in Montreal, or elsewhere in Québec. It was from the perspective of social inclusion and the fight against poverty that we launched the Politique de l'enfant to promote student retention and healthy eating in June 2016," says Monique Vallée, member of the executive committee and person responsible for social and community development as well as for homelessness in the City of Montreal. "Opération Sac à Dos fits perfectly within the views of the Policy, and we encourage the public to participate enthusiastically, for we all benefit."

Martine St-Clair, co-ambassador of Regroupement Partage, remembers with emotion her own childhood, when her mother found ingenious ways to prepare meals for her eight children, three times a day. "She managed to feed our bodies and our hearts, so we could follow our dreams. Not everyone has the opportunities I had. Too many Montreal children can't follow their dreams today, because they lack the resources. It is inconceivable that still to this day, children around the world lack food and are dying of hunger."

### Children from lower-income households are seriously affected

- 70% of immigrants arriving in Québec live in the metro area: more than one student in four in Montreal's public schools was born outside Canada. One in 10 for Québec as a whole.
- In Montreal, more than 146,230 people, including 33,860 children (23% of recipients), use food banks every month.
- Children from lower-income households are more likely than other children to not eat breakfast, to not be physically active, and to have low self-esteem.
- Children from lower-income households are:
  - three to four times more likely to face academic delays

- twice as likely to experience learning difficulties

The 8th annual Opération Sac à Dos by Regroupement Partage is made possible through the ongoing support of several major partners, including the STM, MétéoMédia, COGECO, the Léger Foundation, the Canadian Tire Jumpstart Foundation, the J.A. DeSève Foundation and the City of Montreal. Donations can be made online at [www.magasinpartage.org](http://www.magasinpartage.org) or by phone at 514-383-2460.

#### About Regroupement Partage

Opération Sac à Dos is an initiative of Regroupement Partage. Since its founding 20 years ago, Regroupement has given \$11.5 million in food and other products to 372,082 Montrealers in need. The Magasins-Partage help nearly 27,500 people every year in 20 Montreal neighbourhoods at back-to-school time and at Christmas.

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