



NEWS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE PUBLICATION

**The TD-Blue Metropolis Children's Festival and Education Programs
April 24 – May 2 ... and all year long!**

REACHING KIDS AND THEIR FAMILIES IN A THOUSAND WAYS!

Montreal, April 7, 2021 – We've got some wonderful guests lined up for our Festive Weekends April 24-25 and May 1-2: **Marie-Andrée Arsenault**, winner of the 2020 Harry Black Award; **Erin Bow**, winner of the 2019 Governor General's Award, English-language; **Jacques Goldstyn**, winner of the 2020 TD Award; **Amélie Dumoulin**, finalist for the 2020 TD Award; **Geneviève Guilbault**, **Virginia Pésémapéo Bordeleau** and **Jan Thornhill**, all celebrated authors in their own right.

Each author in turn will present one of their popular works, online, on the Blue Met's website. This selection of lively readings will bring to an end the 2020-2021 Festival's programming, though a few events might yet be held in person, in libraries, until June 1.

A responsive program in 2020-2021

From the start of the pandemic, the TD-Blue Metropolis Festival changed its approach to reach kids and families where they were. Beginning in autumn, we offered thematic activities to fit each season and give users an opportunity for fun and discovery. Authors' videos, story time podcasts presented by real actors, quizzes, reading suggestions, a writing contest at Halloween, during the Holidays and school break, earned the approval of kids, teens and their parents.

These online activities were so popular they'll be kept on the program next year, when we finally go back to organizing authors' tours, shows and guided activities in libraries, schools, hospitals, and special needs facilities in the Greater Montreal area.

Promoting self-esteem and inclusion in the very young

For the 4th year in a row, in 2020-2021, Blue Metropolis organized **two Childcare Days in CPEs and daycares**. The first day, in November, featured stories designed to build self-esteem in small children. Close to 120 CPEs and daycares throughout Quebec participated.

The second Childcare Day, focuses on the theme of inclusion and will take place this coming **April 16**.

Less anxiety for teens and dreams about Prom night

The pandemic has upended our lives. Teenagers haven't gone unscathed. Reading and writing can express all those churning emotions and free the imagination.

We asked two authors for original short stories that could help: **Stéphanie Deslauriers** is an author, psychoeducator and a columnist on Télé-Québec's *Format familial*; **Monique Polak** is a Cegep teacher and author. The stories were recorded as podcasts, in two versions, and narrated by the authors and young actors. The stories touch on issues that have troubled teens since March 2020: worrying about Mom who's a nurse, or about Grandma in the nursing home; headaches with remote learning, or being separated from a sweetheart.

At the beginning of May, **Nadine Descheneaux, Lori Weber, Emmanuel Lauzon** and **Monique Polak** will further enrich our digital library. They'll produce more short stories on "My Dream Prom," centering on that all-important rite of passage, the Senior prom.

When love and recipes bring us together!

In 2020-2021, Blue Metropolis launched two educational programs inspired by the sudden importance of life online and at home in lockdown.

It's Complicated had students from the Polyvalente Deux-Montagnes and Beaconsfield High School address the issue of forbidden love, so ubiquitous in literature. Under the guidance of **Rachel McCrum** and **Jonathan Lamy**, and with the help of actors **Tara Sky** and **Charles Buckell**, the teenagers drafted poems in their second language and were introduced to the art of videopoetry.

The Secret is in the Sauce had journalist and author **Monique Polak** crisscross Quebec with photographer **Monique Dykstra** to collect traditional recipes and anecdotes on the pleasure of eating. They came back with twenty-one recipes served up by Indigenous elders and English-speaking seniors from immigrant communities. The recipes have been brought together in a lovely book that will be distributed free of charge and officially launched in several immigrant communities in Montreal.

Education's critical role in the development of our youth

As Sylvie Demers makes clear, for nearly 15 years, the partnership between TD and the Blue Metropolis Foundation has been based on a shared passion and common values:

At TD Bank Group, we believe that education is crucial to the development of our young people, and that books are the essential tools that open doors to a future of possibilities and success. We are determined to support programs that give children and teens confidence in what they can achieve, and in their ability to reach their full potential. We are pleased to work with partners like Blue Metropolis who create an environment of learning, mentoring, and sharing for young people.

**Sylvie Demers, First Vice President, Quebec Region
Chair, Quebec market, TD Bank Group**

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MERCI AUX PARTENAIRES MAJEURS DE LA PROGRAMMATION POUR ENFANTS ET À CEUX DE NOS PROGRAMMES ÉDUCATIFS 2020-2021
THANKS TO THE PRINCIPAL PARTNERS OF OUR YOUTH SECTOR AND 2020-2021 EDUCATIONAL AND SOCIAL PROGRAMS

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