



REACHING EACH AND EVERY ONE

# Success Story

## Inclusion is a game-winner from near downtown Montréal

**IT IS IN THE BUSTLING BOROUGH OF** Côte-des-Neiges–Notre-Dame-de-Grâce in Montréal where a group of passionate volunteers is working tirelessly towards promoting the benefits of sport and an active life to children in the area's primary schools.

Loisirs Sportifs CDN-NDG, which organizes sport and recreational activities in the area, is behind this inspirational initiative and has been running interscholastic competitive soccer and basketball leagues for children aged between 9 and 12 since the early 2000s. This has had a lasting, positive effect on the lives of the participants.



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This project is funded by  
the Government of Canada



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### Going beyond sport

Around 20 primary schools in the borough take part in the basketball league set up by Loisirs Sportifs. Students in grades 5 and 6 compete in two divisions (A or B), attend 14 weekly practices and play an exciting 10-game schedule, which in total amount to around 40 hours of court time. This creates a genuine sporting environment where children can push themselves and make their overall experience unforgettable.

Inclusion still remains the main selling point of the league, which is open to all youths, independent of gender, nationality or financial circumstance-. Plying in the league is free thanks to a grant from the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association (CPRA) initiative, Reaching Each and Every One. More than 55% of all registrants are youths from diverse equity-deserving groups. They come every year for the exceptional opportunity to take part in sport, form bonds and develop essential life skills.

### CPRA plays a critical role

Grants, such as Reaching Each and Every One, often play a critical role towards holding events that would be impossible to hold otherwise. Loisirs Sportifs has undoubtedly benefitted from the financial support of CPRA. It was able to recruit a team of 14 qualified coaches who received compulsory training in teaching participants essential sporting values, namely respect, ethical behaviour, team spirit, tolerance and the fun of being active.

The financial support also went towards getting four qualified referees and scorekeepers, and purchasing essential sports equipment, such as balls, cones and numbered jerseys.

Overall, the interscholastic league was able to run special events, competitions and Olympiads to further foster youth participation and the feeling of team belonging.

### Long-term positive effects

Nathanael Dinku is today the coordinator of the interscholastic basketball league at Loisirs Sportifs. Dinku himself benefitted from the opportunities offered to him by the organization, first as a player, then as a coach for a number of years. He took on the opportunity of making a difference once the coordinator position opened up. For Dinku, getting involved is a way to share his passion with the youths from all walks of life and inspire them get into competitive sports.

This example is only one of many. Countless children who have played in the interscholastic basketball league went on to do well in the sport at the high school, college and even university levels. Some stood out by leaving their mark in the collective sports imagination, passing the baton on to the next cohort.

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