

Centre de ressources

connexions

Resource Centre



ANNUAL
REPORT
2022 / 2023



MISSION

Connexions Resource Centre promotes the health, social wellbeing, and vitality of the English-speaking community through empowerment, participation and collaboration within the Outaouais.



VISION

A strong, inclusive, healthy English-speaking community; recognized, interconnected, and contributing to the vitality of the Outaouais.



VALUES

Compassion: We serve with kindness and care.

Integrity: We hold ourselves and each other to high ethical standards

Accountability: We are responsible to each other, our community, and those who support us.

Collaboration: We work with our community and partners to fulfill our mission.

Resourcefulness: We adapt, innovate, and strive for excellence.

Inclusion: We create spaces of belonging where everyone is treated with respect and dignity.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Cary O'Brien
President

Sheilagh Murphy
Vice-President

Rose Regimbald
Treasurer

Katie Gunn
Director

Stephanie Dugdale
Director

Reverend Susan Lewis
Director

Ruth Williams
Director



CURRENT STAFF

Danielle Lanyi
Executive Director

Natalie Filiou
Director of Communications & Operations

Diane Wheatley
Regional Seniors' Coordinator

Michèle Gagnon
Communications Coordinator &
Creative Workshop Facilitator

Angela Mugisha
Communications Officer

MaCayla Nesbitt-Batten
Mental Health Project Coordinator

Krishnan Sundaram
Community Health & Wellness Facilitator

Sébastien Lafontaine
Regional Coordinator - Early Childhood,
Youth and Families

Marquis Bureau
Coordinator for Caregivers of Seniors

Paul Brown
Community Engagement & Outreach
Coordinator – MRC des-Collines

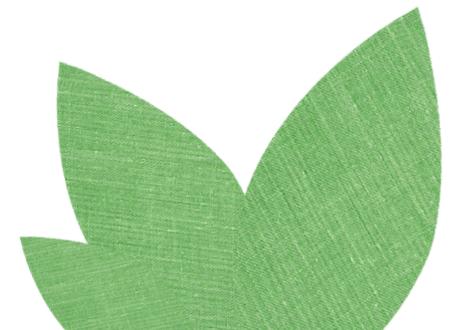


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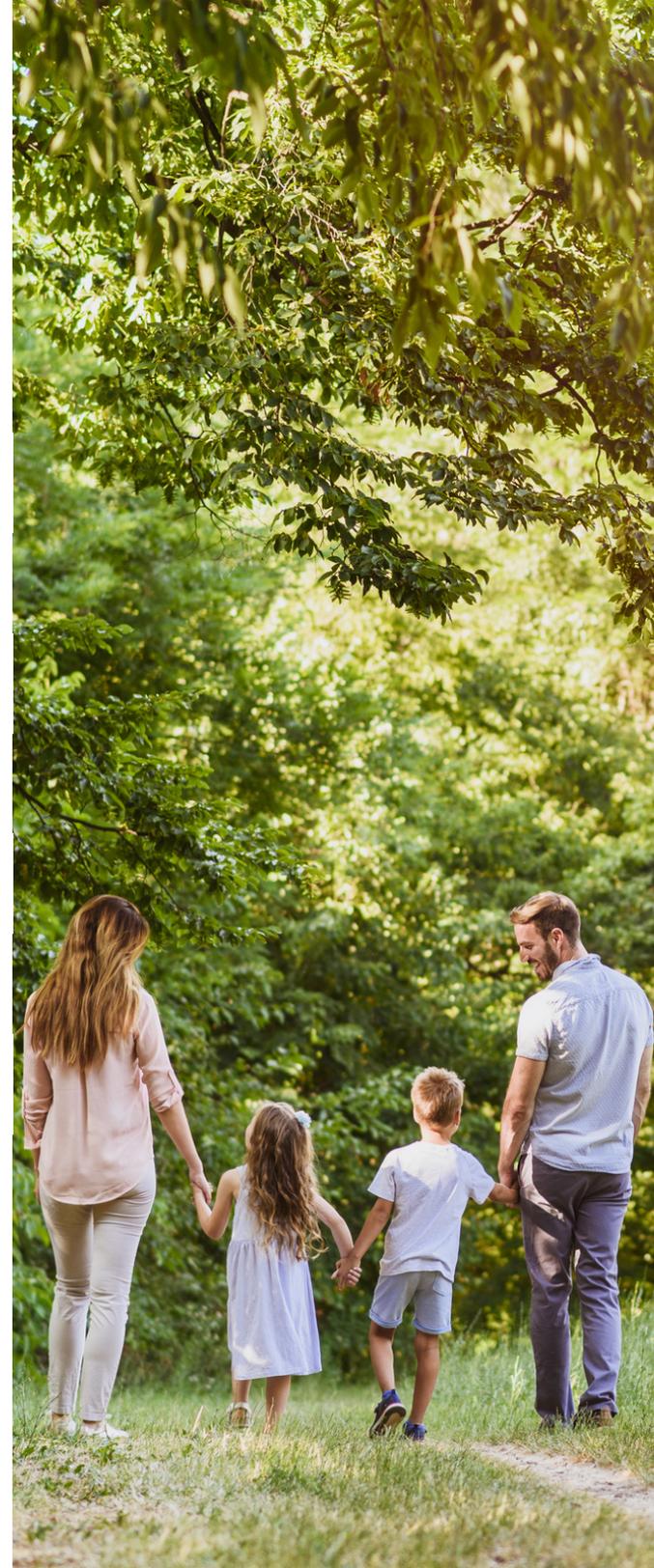
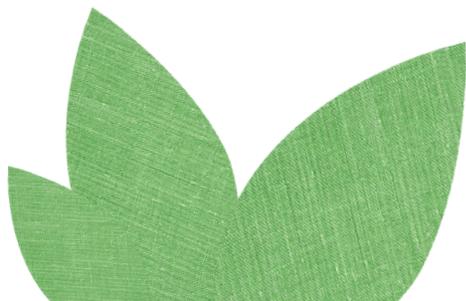
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Message from the President

I am pleased to present the 2022 – 2023 Connexions' Annual Report which highlights the organization's many accomplishments. This year has been another very busy one for the team at Connexions. We have returned to offering in-person workshops and staff are back working in the office.

Connexions continues to expand its offerings as we respond to the needs of the Outaouais English-speaking community. Part of this expansion will see the opening of a new satellite office in Wakefield that will give us the opportunity to expand our mandate into new sectors of activity, such as employment, culture, and youth development.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I would like to express my gratitude to our staff and partners. Connexions continues to grow, and our success is attributed to the hard work and efforts of our team.

Cary O'Brien

President



Message from the Executive Director

I'm very pleased to share our Annual Report that highlights our successes. Our seniors and caregivers have benefitted from activities that help keep them active and feel valued. The Speech and Language Community program has helped parents and children access much needed support while waiting for services from the public system. New to this year is the training of our Community Wellness Facilitator who now offers a support group for men with violent behaviours. Mental health is an important issue and offering our Mental Health and Wellness Check-Ins has helped people access resources that promote mental health and wellbeing, as well as information on existing public and community services in the region. These are but a few of our initiatives, and it has been a challenge to choose which ones to mention!

As always, partnerships are the cornerstone of our success. I would like to thank the CISSS de l'Outaouais for their ongoing collaboration, the Western Québec School Board and Heritage College. A thank you as well to the Secretariat for relations with English-speaking Quebecers whose support helped us enhance our organizational capacity, and expand our reach and mandate. I'm very grateful to all of our funders and partners who have supported us to meet the needs of our community.

As always, I'm truly grateful for the dedication of our Board, staff, members and volunteers. As a result of your ongoing commitment, Connexions contributed to supporting the vitality of our diverse English-speaking community in the Outaouais. We look forward to continuing to inspire change, together.

Danielle Lanyi

Executive Director

Partnerships

Connexions received funding and partnered with the following organizations to develop and enhance its programs and outreach activities. Diverse funding ensured that a wide range of needs and age groups within the English-speaking community were addressed.



Representation

Connexions participated on several local and regional committees to represent the needs of the English-speaking community. These committees focus on a variety of topics such as early childhood development, elder abuse, social development, healthy lifestyles, and seniors and caregivers.

Centre intégré de santé et de services sociaux de l'Outaouais

- Comités Aire Ouverte
- Comité territorial du RLS des Collines
- Comité territorial du RLS de Pontiac
- Comité régionale des dépendances

Table de développement sociale des Collines

Table de développement sociale du Pontiac

Comité Hull en Santé

Corporation de développement communautaire du Pontiac (CDCP)

Partenaires du secteur Aylmer

Concertation pour des saines habitudes de vie en Outaouais (Comité 0-5)

Table Éducation Outaouais

Table nationale contre la maltraitance des aînés

Table régionale contre la mailtraitance des aînés

Table SAPA des aînés de Gatineau

Building Stronger AND Healthier Families



Connexions continues to work with its partners to further its ongoing commitment to making a positive impact on the overall physical, mental and emotional well-being of children and their families by developing and delivering evidence-based programming. For parents and those professionals who work with children, this has culminated in numerous projects and activities that promote positive parenting, improve the understanding of children's health and behaviour, and offer opportunities for continuous learning.

Family-Centered Approach to Early Identification

Connexions' series of Parent-Child Dyad Workshops and Speech Language Webinars facilitated by Speech Language Therapists (SLPs) continued to offer hands-on support for families whose child, aged 0-5, may have a speech, language or communication delay or disability.

We are especially thankful to the CISSS de l'Outaouais for partnering with us by referring families to our workshops and webinars.

Speech Language Kits

As part of the Parent-Child Dyad Workshops, Connexions developed 40 kits with fun and educational activities.

Pictured top leaf: Children reading storybook from the Kit.



37

Webinars & Workshops



161

Parents & caregivers



25

Children

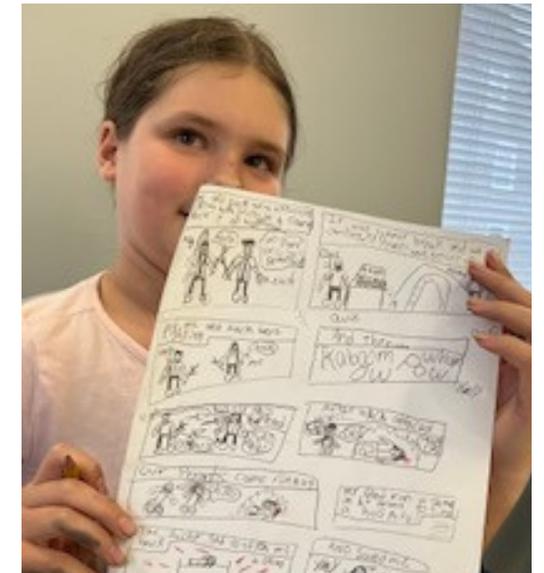
Empowering Families Through Parent-Implemented Interventions

Connexions organized a number of informational sessions for parents, caregivers, school staff and professionals who work with kids.

This included two webinars on online safety, a legal information session on divorce and separation, webinars on children and big emotions, and a virtual series on teens and their mental health.

We also partnered with the Troubles d'apprentissage et TDAH Outaouais to organize webinars for families with children with a developmental coordination disorder (DCD) and Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

We also offered fun activities for the whole family including a Write your Story with Comics, two baby massage classes, and a hybrid series of five prenatal classes.



One of the Write your Story with Comics participants proudly displayed her work.



18

Get-Togethers



123

Parents & caregivers



140

Children



The Itsy Bitsy Tots Playgroup

We were thrilled to relaunch our *Itsy Bitsy Tots Playgroup* for parents and their children aged 0-5 after a two-year COVID hiatus. The playgroup allows tots to explore, discover and play while having creative fun with music, stories, movement and crafts.

Our playgroup program, made possible through a partnership with Cégep Heritage College, provides a social-support network for English-speaking parents of young children that includes health promotion activities and information.

Special thanks to our playgroup guests: Speech Language Pathologist (SLP) from the Cabinet d'Orthophonie Jessica Bélisle Macquart; Ferme SolAil.; Massage Therapist from Sage Nature; and Yoga Instructor from hOMe Wakefield Wellness Centre.



Living Without Violence for Men & Fathers

In partnership with Accroc and Donne-toi une chance, Connexions offered a series of 41 virtual classes designed to help men understand the root cause of their anger.





Ensuring a **Successful Start** to School

School Transition Kits

Connexions produced 1,000 School Transition Kits for English-speaking parents of the Outaouais to help them prepare their child for the transition from home or daycare to school, thereby promoting school success.

Connexions collaborated with the Western Quebec School Board (WQSB) to develop the Kits with funding provided by Centraide Outaouais.



1,073

Kits & Back-to-School Bags



17

WQSB Schools



14

Partners



Let's Play & Talk Kits

Thanks to funding from the Tables de développement sociales du Pontiac, and des Collines, as well as Hull en Santé, Connexions produced 28 Let's Play & Talk Kits with fun learning activities for children 3-5 years old to support parent & child play, language development and literacy.

The Kits are available to parents thanks to the support of 13 community partners.



BACK-TO-SCHOOL BAGS

Thanks to Connexions' long-time volunteers, Cary and Susan O'Brien, 45 Back-to-School Bags were produced and delivered to four schools in the WQSB.

Pictured right: Cary, President of Connexions' Board of Directors and Samantha Halpin, Principal at Eardley Elementary School



A Continued Commitment to Connecting Youth

Connexions continued to offer programming to youth aged 6 to 25. Our aim this year was connecting with youth directly at the schools. A special thank you to the school staff throughout the Western Québec School Board (WQSB), the Western Quebec Career Centre (WQCC) and the McGill University - Satellite Faculty of Medicine for partnering with us. We are truly grateful to be part of your school community!

School Health & Career Fairs

Connexions joined a number of school-organized Health & Career Fairs to connect with students and their families. These included:

- Health & Wellbeing Forum @ Hull Adult Education Centre (HAEC);
- Journée des Organismes Partenaires de l'Enseignement (JOPE) @ McGill University - Satellite Faculty of Medicine;
- International Day Against Homophobia & Transphobia @ Pontiac High School;
- Wellbeing & Career Fair @ St Michael's High School;
- Health & Wellness Expo @ Western Québec Career Centre (WQCC);
- Career Fair @ D'Arcy High School;
- Student Wellness Fair @ Pontiac Adult Education Centre (PCEC); and
- PETE's Walk for Autism.



Communications Coordinator & Creative Workshop Facilitator, Michèle Gagnon, joined the Carrefour Jeunesse Emploi Pontiac at Pontiac High School for International Day Against Homophobia & Transphobia.



Director of Communications & Operations, Natalie Filiou, chatted with students at the JOPE about Connexions' services and Bursary Program for students studying in a health & social services field.



16

Fairs, Forums,
Art Workshops,
Presentations,
Lunch & Learns



1,100+

Students
Reached



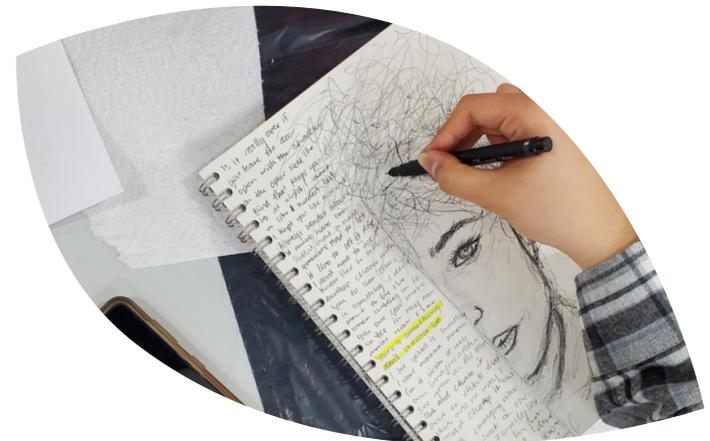
100+

Sensory &
Info Kits
Distributed

Art Workshops for Wellbeing

Connexions offered three art workshops to help 46 participants connect, learn relaxation strategies, reflect and tap into the mood boosting power of creative self-expression. These included:

- Art for Wellness @ the WQCC; and
- Vent Art @ the HAEC & the PCEC.



Promoting Careers in Health & Social Services

This initiative included four presentations and Lunch & Learn sessions at the PCEC, the WQCC and Heritage College to over 70 students.

• • • A CONTINUED COMMITMENT TO CONNECTING WITH YOUTH

Pontiac Pride Community Festival

The first Pride Festival in the MRC Pontiac was held in June 2022 and Connexions was there every step of the way to lend a hand in the organization of this special day celebrating diversity, inclusivity and love!

The family-friendly fun day welcomed 150 participants and included a dance party, workshops, performances by drag artist and 2SLGBTQIA+ performers, lots of outdoor fun, and of course, plenty of rainbows!

A special thank you to our partners and collaborators, including:

- Pontiac Pride,
- Youth 4 Youth Québec,
- la Table de développement sociale du Pontiac, and
- les Maisons des Jeunes du Pontiac.



Peer Support Groups

In partnership with Hadley Junior High School and Philemon Wright High School, Connexions' staff participated in setting-up a peer support group.

Through the weekly get-togethers, 93 students found a safe space to recharge and connect during their lunch break.

Pictured (top leaf): Connexions' Heritage College Intern from the Special Care Counselling Program, Chelsea Chislett-Rowell; High School Guidance Counselor, Katie Clow; and Connexions' Mental Health Project Coordinator, MaCayla Nesbitt-Batten



Mental Health Influencer Internship

Connexions launched an exciting new project as part of our initiative to promote youth mental health. We employed eight youth aged 15 to 29 to plan and facilitate youth centered activities and events that support and promote well-being and to create video content to help promote services and share information through our social media platforms.

Meet our Youth Mental Health Influencer Interns!



8

Youth Interns



96

Videos Produced



1

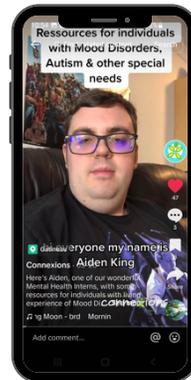
New TikTok Account, @connexionsrc



Rhianna Roper-Holton



Kassandra Ouimet



Aiden King



Danica Bertrand



Zoe Coombs



Hannah Boehm



Marianne Vallée



Julia Lemay



Pictured above: 16 youth participated in the The Art Thing, art journaling workshop organized by our interns to promote mental health

Real Talk Webinars

We hosted a series of four webinars with a Sex & Relationship Educator for Teens. This series was a great opportunity for youth to ask questions and learn in an inclusive, safe space.

The topics covered were: Consent, Gender Identity & Expression, Healthy Relationships, and Sexual orientation

Responding to the Needs of Our Seniors AND Caregivers

Connexions continues to remain committed to listening to and responding to the concerns of older adults and caregivers of seniors; providing them with plain language legal information to help them make informed decisions; connecting them with public and community services; and offering activities that reduce social isolation, promote healthy living and mental wellbeing.

Outreach to Vulnerable Seniors through the Initiative de travail de milieu auprès des aînés vulnérables (ITMAV)

Our Seniors' Outreach Worker reached some of the most vulnerable seniors in the Aylmer area of the City of Gatineau. We were able to outreach to over 150 vulnerable seniors, offer support to 301 individuals who had difficulty finding information on available health and social services, and accompany 107 vulnerable seniors.



28

Outreach Activities



150+

Vulnerable Seniors Reached During Activities



301

Referrals Completed



107

Individuals Accompanied



Participants at the Connexions kiosks held at Le rendez-vous avec les aînés enjoyed mini-putting with Krish, Community Health and Wellness Facilitator.

Kiosks & Presentations

Connexions disseminated information to over 150 participants during our presentations, one-on-one chats, and at various outreach activities within the community. These have included:

- Presentations at the Monastère Chartwell, Château Symmes, L'Initial and the Galleries d'Aylmer;
- Presentation at the Centre alimentaire Aylmer (Aylmer Food Bank);
- Presentations during Connexions activities for our 55+ population in Aylmer; and
- Connecting with participants at *Le rendez-vous avec les aînés* Kiosk (Aylmer).

Staying Active, Socially Engaged & Healthy

Connexions offered 85 virtual and in-person activities and educational programs under the Seniors Wellness Program at St Mark's Church in Aylmer and at our Shawville satellite office.

The goal of our Seniors' Wellness program is to improve the health and well-being of English-speaking seniors, inform them of available health and social services, and decrease social isolation through purposeful programming. Our activities this year included:

- 45 virtual yoga, stretching and groove dancing classes offered to 390 participants who joined us from their homes.
- Computer, Tablet, iPad and Smartphone workshops and one-on-one classes offered at our Gatineau (Aylmer) and Shawville Satellite offices. We are especially thankful to the Western Québec Literacy Council (WQLC) for partnering with us to offer 20 sessions to 91 seniors.
- Art Workshops that allowed seniors to tell their own stories through various mixed media.
- Through our partnership with the Table de développement sociale du Pontiac, we offered a Cooking Healthy on a Budget series and a Harvest Canning series at our Shawville Satellite Office. We also offered cooking workshops at St Mark's Church in Aylmer.
- Jog your Mind workshops, Walk & Talks and a Couponing Master Class.



Providing Plain-Language Legal Information

To protect the rights and safeguard the well-being of our clientele, Connexions offered plain language information and resources through its referral service.

Thanks to a partnership with the Centre de justice de proximité de l'Outaouais (CJPO) three webinars were provided to 30 seniors and caregivers on Wills & Power of Attorney, Protection Mandates and Rental Housing Law in Québec.



Participants had a great time cutting ingredients during our Harvest Canning workshop series at our Satellite Office in Shawville. A thank you to the Jardin Éducatif du Pontiac, Star Born Farms, Ferme Vallée Farm who contributed to the bounty of ingredients at the workshops by donating some of their locally grown vegetables. A special thank you as well to the Anglican Parish of West Québec for providing a space to hold these and other workshops.

• • • RESPONDING TO THE NEEDS OF OUR SENIORS & CAREGIVERS

Community Health Education Program (CHEP) Webinars

The Community Health Education Program (CHEP) continues to offer a wide range of programming.

Nine webinars were held and included topics on Age-Related Hearing Loss, Coping with Chronic Pain, Eating Well to Both Prevent and Live with Diabetes; Incontinence and Pelvic Floor Rehabilitation; and Stroke Prevention, Management & Care.



9

Webinars



38

Participants



4

Kiosks & Presentations



300+

Participants

Helping Caregivers Identify as Carers

Connexions offered senior caregivers webinars on a wide range of topics around self-care and mental well-being, as well as art workshops and information sessions on financial literacy and income taxes.



27

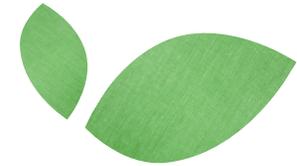
Activities



54

Participants

Activities also included workshops with the Société Alzheimer Outaouais; Caregivers' Circle Support Groups for our English and French-speaking community; and a Mindfulness & Support Strategy series led by a psychotherapist.



Kiosks & Presentations

Connexions disseminated information to over 300 participants during four kiosks and presentations at the following senior events:

- Bristol Senior Symposium Presentation;
- Kiosk at Vieactive senior's event (Pontiac);
- Le rendez-vous avec les aînés (Aylmer); and
- Seniors Fair - Table des aînés et retraités du Pontiac (TARP) Kiosk for Seniors.



Pontiac seniors tried out our Jog your Mind game for a chance to win Connexions prizes at the VieActive senior's event.

Community-Centered Initiatives



Connexions continued to organize new activities and webinars for the English-speaking community on a wide range of topics including mental wellbeing and self-care. Some of our programming included a two-part Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) Training through the Mental Health Commission of Canada and Mental Health & Wellbeing Check-Ins wherein our Mental Health Project Coordinator offered individuals a listening ear and information on available health & social services within the Outaouais.

Focus Groups to **Connect & Better Understand** the Needs of our Community

Thanks to funding from the Secretariat for relations with English-Speaking Quebecers (SRQEA), Connexions hosted four focus groups in various municipalities of the MRC des Collines to find out their perception and satisfaction on accessing services. Connexions will be providing a full report in the coming year. Stay tuned!

The SRQEA also supported Connexions to enhance its organizational capacity. This year, the Board of Directors updated its mission, vision and values, and by-laws.



Attracting Bilingual Health & Social Services Students to the Outaouais Region

McGill University's Health & Social Services Community Bursary Program aims to improve access to health & social services in English by supporting bilingual students in their post-secondary studies and encouraging them to work within the Outaouais health & social services system.

PROGRAMS OF STUDY HAVE INCLUDED

Pharmacotherapy, Speech & Language Pathology, Nursing, Immunology & Microbiology, Community Health, Audiology, Social Work, Doctor of Medicine.

Since 2011

 **32**
Scholarships

 **31**
Students

 **\$221,250**
Total Investment

Congratulations to our 2022 Bursary Recipient

Connexions awarded \$2,500 through the Health and Social Services Community Bursary Program to support a student in completing their studies in the field of health and social services.

Congratulations to **Vahid Kalani**
(Nursing at Cégep Heritage College)



Thanking Our Community AND Student Volunteers

We are truly thankful to our community and student volunteers for donating so much of their time and energy. Their unwavering commitment to our organization, and by extension to the Outaouais community, allows Connexions to better serve the region's English-speaking population. A special thank you to our amazing volunteers!



Margaret, Brice and Nat lent a helping hand putting together our School Transition Kits.



DJ Erika Energy and Matthew volunteered at the Pontiac Pride Youth & Community Festival in the Pontiac.



Madison and Emma created 20 infographics on various health and wellbeing topics for our online community as part of our weekly #WellnessWednesday on our social media pages. Madison also created 18 Quick Stat Visuals and two infographics using stats gathered from the Community Health and Social Services Network (CHSSN).



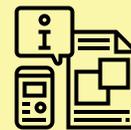
50+

Student & Community Volunteers



1,500+

Volunteer Hours



69

Infographics & Videos Created

Nutrition & Mental Wellbeing Resources from our Volunteer Students

We welcomed six volunteer students in the Nutrition Sciences program from the University of Ottawa during their fall to winter sessions. The students created 13 infographics and four healthy eating videos.

We also welcomed two student volunteers from Ottawa University who created seven videos and five infographics on reading tips for families, how to make a sensory toy and more.



Timely Referrals Provide Critical Support

The English-speaking community continues to turn to Connexions for information on health and social services.

Connexions saw a significant increase in inquiries due in large part to growing knowledge of our non-profit from our online presence and increase in our in-person outreach activities.

We received
847
inquires


59%

compared to 532 last year

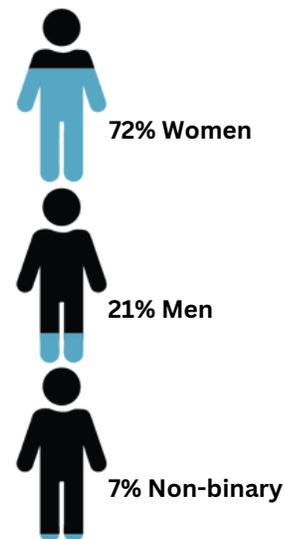
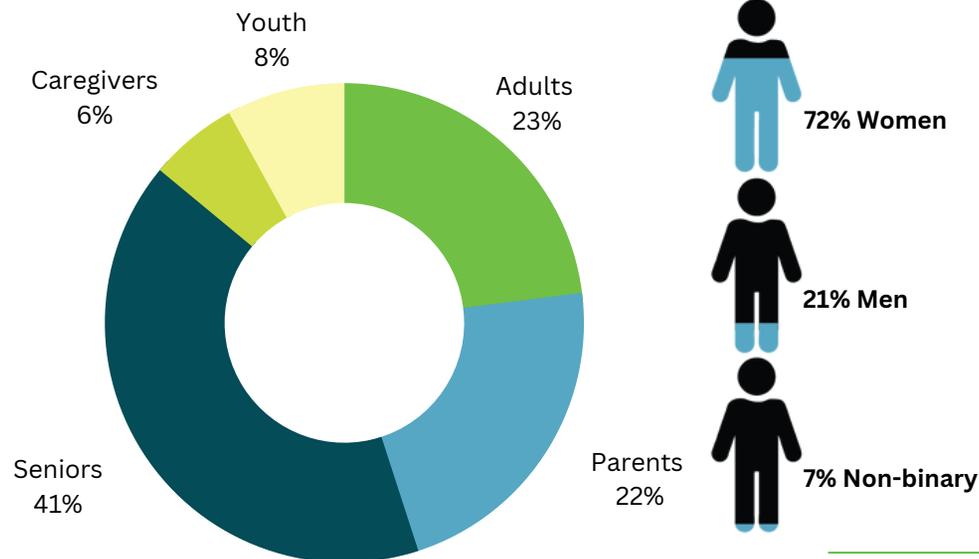
Where do our Inquirers Reside?



- Over half of inquiries were from residents of Gatineau (71%), followed by the Pontiac (14%), the Collines-de-l'Outaouais (1%), and Vallée-de-la-Gatineau (1%).
- Inquiries from outside of our region (12%) are made by individuals moving to the Outaouais and by organizations or institutions looking for information to serve their Québec clients.

Who Is Reaching Out?

- An increase in **parents** (from 13% to 23%);
- The greatest increase can be observed in the number of **seniors** who made contact (from 26% last year to 42% this year);
- While **caregivers of seniors** saw a slight increase (3% to 6%);
- 9% of those reaching out were **youth**.



Women continue to contact Connexions more than **men**.

7% of people who reached out to Connexions identify as **non-binary**.

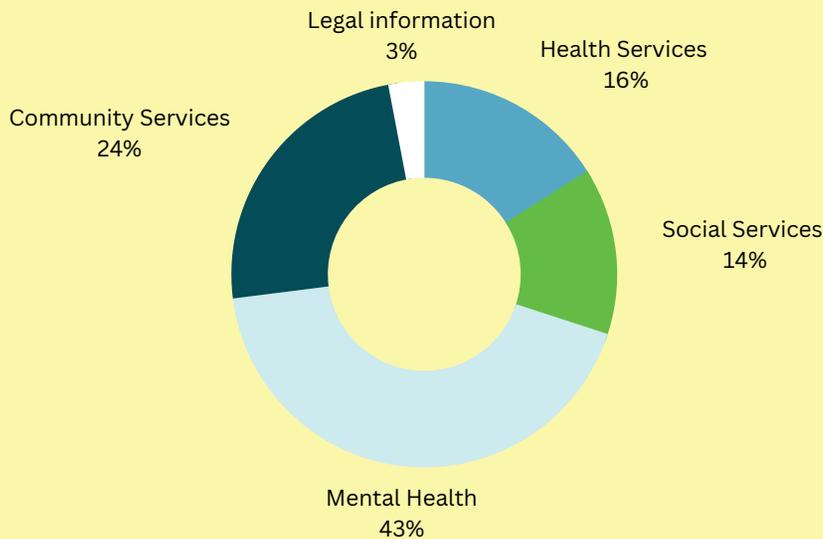
How & Why Are People Reaching Out?

PEOPLE FIND CONNEXIONS MOST OFTEN VIA

 **52%**
Received in-person through office drop-ins and outreach activities

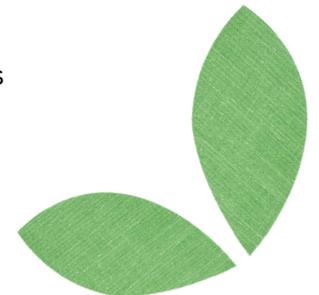
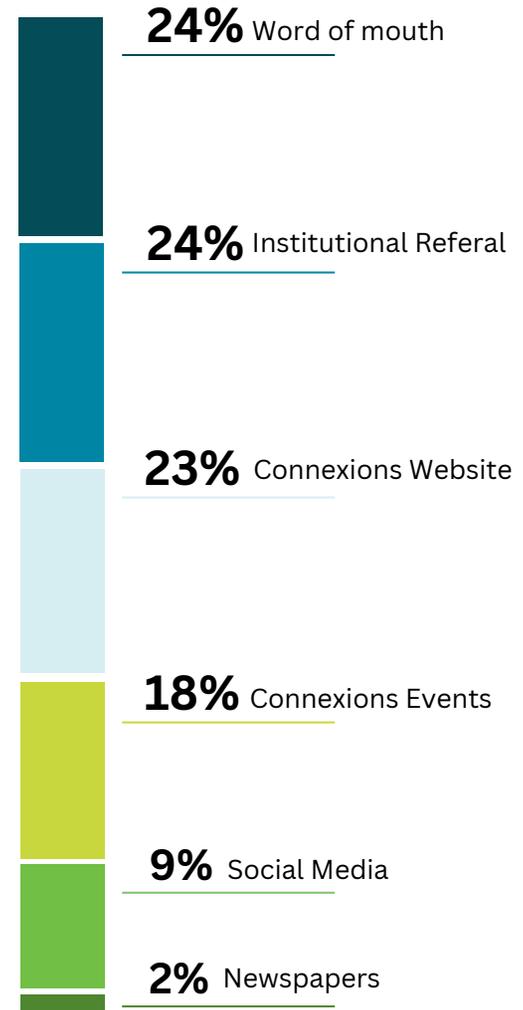
 **33%**
Reached out via telephone

 **15%**
Contacted us through email



- ↓ Inquiries from individuals seeking information about available health services (from 43% last year to 16% this year);
- ↓ Social services (from 37% to 14%);
- ↑ Services related to mental health increased significantly (from 5% to 43%);
- ↑ 24 % of those reaching out were seeking community services (housing, food, etc.); and
- ↑ 3% sought legal information.

How Are People Finding us?



Communications Activities

Newsletters

Connexions' email Newsletters have a wide readership from families with young children and youth (Family Buzz), the 55+ community (Well 55+) and caregivers of seniors (Caregivers' Circle).



42

Newsletters



1,654

Subscribers



31%

Increase

Website

Our website continues to be active. New to this year is our 27 Info Hubs, which offer a centralized online destination containing curated content around specific topics. Most Hubs include health & social services information and resources, videos, downloadable visuals such as infographics and promotional materials, and an overview of services offered by Connexions.



25,354

Unique
Visitors



62,204

Webpages
Read



27

Info Hubs
Created

Social Media

Connexions posts regularly to several different social media and media outlets, including Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Google My Business, YouTube, and TikTok. Our Facebook page is our most active social media channel and this year alone, we saw a 20% increase in Likes and Follows.



2,724

Facebook
Followers



528,242

Facebook
Reach



27,808

Facebook
Engagement

Advertising

According to our registration statistics, our participants first heard about our activities and events from one of our Connexions Newsletters, our social media and our website. A large part of the community found out about our events through their child's school and family & friends. This year, we continued our commitment to support print media and our local newspapers.



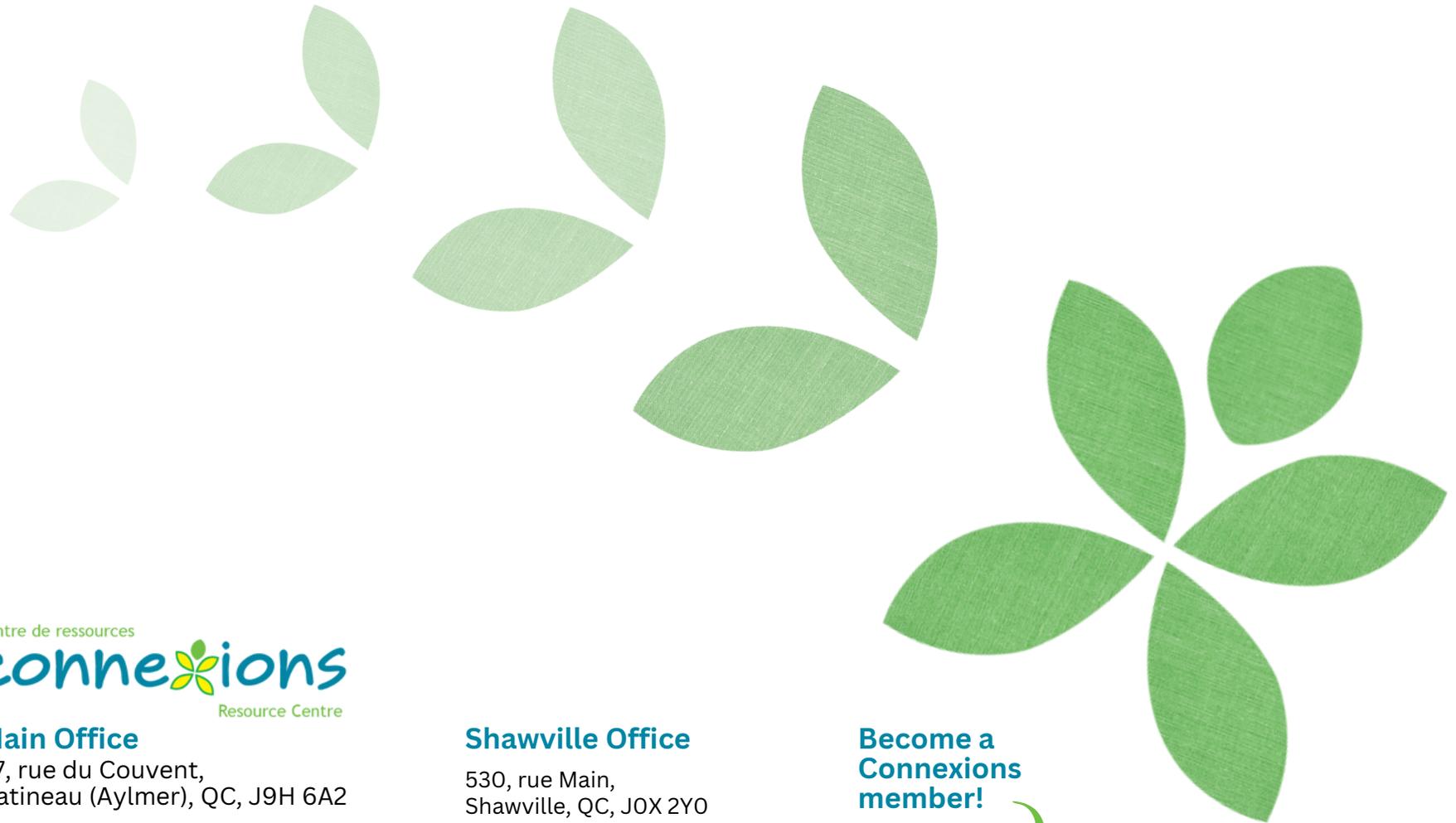
28

Newspaper
Ads



6

Local
Newspapers



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**Become a
Connexions
member!**

