



**[FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE]**

## ***\$15 Million in Québec Government Funding*** **Giant Steps Autism Centre Edges Ever-Closer to Reality**

Montreal, August 31, 2021 – Giant Steps is extremely pleased with the announcement that the Québec Government will contribute \$15 million in funding for the creation of the Giant Steps Autism Centre. The new centre will be the first of its kind in Canada. It will stand as a model for autism services around the world and will make Québec a leader in the field of autism education, research, advocacy and community service delivery.

“Today marks a momentous step forward in the history of Giant Steps. We wish to express our tremendous gratitude to the Québec Government. With the unwavering support of our donors and community, now bolstered by this generous public funding, we are ever-closer to realizing the dream we've all hoped could one day become a reality.”, says Co-Chair of the Giant Steps Autism Centre Capital Campaign, Andrée Dallaire.

### **More Steps to Take**

A total of \$42 million has now been secured for this innovative centre, thanks to the generous donations of several foundations, corporations and parents. The *Take a Giant Step for Autism* campaign is now focusing on its final target of raising \$10 million. The goal: to start construction of the Giant Steps Autism Centre in January 2022, with an anticipated move-in date of September 2023.

Giant Steps has also asked the federal government to contribute to this ground-breaking project and hopes that it will help to change the lives of thousands of persons with autism for years to come.

“We have assembled an outstanding team of volunteers who believe in this project and who are working hard to make it a reality”, adds fellow Co-Chair André Bourbonnais. “The autism community deserves more. It is time that the public and private sectors come together for one final push to impact the autism community for generations to come. It is time to *Take a Giant Step for Autism.*”

### **An Essential New Approach**

The number of children being diagnosed with autism in Canada now stands at 1 in 66, the prevalence rate having increased by 154% in the past ten years. A stunning majority of autistic adults, approximately 86%, remain unemployed. The time is now to find a new and better way to help families receiving, and currently living with, this life-changing diagnosis.

“Providing higher-quality, evidence-based educational and community services to more children and adults on the spectrum is an absolute necessity. With this funding today, we are one step closer to making our vision a reality.”, says Thomas Henderson, Director General of Giant Steps.

Upon consultation with the community and leading experts in the field, Giant Steps was able to conceive a project that will transform the autism community and provide much-needed services throughout a person's lifespan based on four pillars:

- An Expanded School
- An Adult Education and Employment Centre
- A Resource and Community Centre
- A Research and Innovation Centre

The project was developed in conjunction with Société de développement Angus, an urban revitalization project located in the Rosemont district of Montreal.

"We are pleased that Giant Steps is promoting neurodiversity in our community. Community engagement and social innovation are values that have driven us for 25 years. We are proud to be part of this project. This shows that we can develop inclusive living environments for everyone, including those that are most vulnerable.", says Christian Yaccarini, President and Chief Executive Officer for Société de développement Angus.

### **More on Giant Steps Montreal**

Giant Steps has stood at the forefront of autism and education for 40 years. Our intensive educational and therapeutic programs, offered in both French and English, to 90 students aged 4- 21, is unique in Quebec and has been replicated worldwide. We also offer an adult education program and collaborate on the federally funded Ready, Willing and Able program, which seeks to match employers with autistic employees. In addition, our Resource and Training Centre plays a vital role in providing ASD training across sectors and supports many types of organizations. Our team of over 90 professionals is one of the largest in the province.

### **More on Technopôle Angus**

The Technopôle Angus, an urban revitalization project located in the Rosemont district of Montreal, is guided by the principles of sustainable development and social economy. With its 70 companies and 3,000 workers, residents, shops and local services, the Technopôle Angus is a real living environment including, among other things, many green spaces and public places. Its mixed use and careful planning promote an urban lifestyle within a safe and supportive community.

### **Resources**

You can find more detailed information about the project here:

Website: <https://giantstepsautismcentre.com/>

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r0JVURAB39k>

Case for Support: <https://my.flipbookpdf.net/CeZOv>

Architecture Book: <https://my.flipbookpdf.net/dYAcS>

**TO MAKE A DONATION:** <https://interland3.donorperfect.net/weblink/weblink.aspx?name=giantsteps&id=22>

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