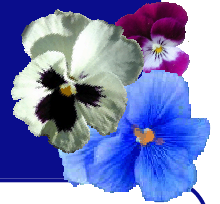




# An in*Vi*SIBLE minority

Think about it!

Multi-Ethnic Association for the Integration of  
Persons with Disabilities (AMEIPH)



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## **Employment integration... Is it possible?**

I would like to be able to answer "YES", to this question, but...

There are many "buts" when one thinks about the situation of the workers in the context of the current financial crisis. So what should we say, when the question is asked about immigrants with disabilities? Is it really possible for them to find employment?

It is interesting, and even important, to say that the AMEIPH has paid consistent attention to the problems of employment integration, as much through changes in the laws, as through the creation of programs connected to employability. Of course, it also supported and accompanied those people of various origins having disabilities who were "job hunting" and even prepared a whole kit of items designed with employment integration in mind destined for use by people with disabilities who are immigrants, parents (more particularly the parents of adults having an intellectual disability) and others with a stake in the problem.

All this experience, this work, seems to be coming together through its participation in the Montréal task force for the employment of persons with disabilities and at a joint committee of concerned groups of which the CAMO for persons with disabilities, the CAMO for immigrant persons and the ROSEPH (Coalition of Organizations Specializing in the Employment of Persons with Handicaps) are part.

The fact that various groups with a stake in the "Handicap-immigration" question are sitting around the same table to look into the subject is very promising. Add to this the MESS' strategy (Ministry of Employment and Social Solidarity) for people with disabilities and the addition of funds from the MICC (Ministry of Immigration and Cultural Communities). ***Is it a winning formula? " I believe that it is at the very least, a new avenue, which can lead to answers better suited to the reality of persons with disabilities who are also immigrants.***

The interest in finding an answer to the question is there, as much on the part of the AMEIPH as it is on the part of the other concerned groups, without forgetting the interested parties, and the people searching for work. What remains is for this table's guests to serve the meal!

Here is the Association's next objective: taking into account the importance of the subject, to organize the 2009 edition of in*Vi*SIBLE Minority Day around employment integration. Be ready to participate and bring your expertise, your anxieties, and your willingness to advance the employment integration file for persons with disabilities who are immigrants. A file which, in the present environment of financial constraints, can mean a lot for a group of people who find themselves distanced from the employment market which wishes to make itself *Vi*SIBLE!!

You are cordially invited for the Day next April 27th at 1:30 pm at Centre St-Pierre. Take out your agenda because this is a meeting not to be missed!

**Teresa Penafiel**

## CURRENT FILES

### *Immigration file*

Since 1981, the AMEIPH has been involved in the immigration file because the federal Law on immigration generally refuses families who wish to immigrate to Canada and whose only obstacle is the disability of one of their members.

This ban became more flexible thanks in part to the Law adopted in 2002 for persons who fit into the "Family reunification" category, for persons who have asked for a permanent resident visa as a refugee or anyone in a similar situation (a protected person, a spouse, a common law spouse, a child or other member of the family...).

In spite of the overall impression of "openness" and in spite of the signature of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, certain persons with disabilities are still refused under the pretext that they

represent a risk of "excessive burden for social or health services". (Art 38).

Bill C-254 was submitted to the Canadian Parliament to modify article 38. As a result of refusal or dismissal by certain persons, the Council of Canadians with Disabilities (CCD), decided to go on the attack. THE AMEIPH is itself cooperating the CCD and COPHAN (Confederation of Organisms of Persons with disabilities) to see to it that the Canadian Law on the immigration stops considering persons with disabilities a priori as a burden for the social and health system and not primarily as persons.

In the recent days, the AMEIPH had participated in a phone conference and hopes to announce some progress on this issue thanks to this coalition of forces in the next issue.

### *Meeting with the Minister responsible for Elders*

The AMEIPH's essential purpose began in 1981 focusing on one unique subject: obtaining the services necessary for immigrant children with disabilities Very quickly, the organization's doors opened and the AMEIPH's mission widened to meet the needs of immigrants of all ages with all forms of disability as well as their families.

As for the whole Quebecois population, immigrants and persons with disabilities age over time and their needs evolve as time which goes by. What is the reality of persons with disabilities who are immigrants once they reach their so called "Golden" age?

Let's think about communication for a moment The language barrier is always present, even in the case of people who have mastered French over the course of their life, but who, after a cerebrovascular accident (CVA) or as a consequence of Alzheimer's disease, forget the "second" language and keep only their mother tongue. What happens to these persons when they move into a CHSLD (Residential and Long-Term Care Centre)?

This aspect is one on which the AMEIPH has already proven itself, working with the Cultural Communities Committee of the Montérégie Social and Health Services Agency in producing a book of pictograms for communication among CHSLDs.

A harsher reality is that of the abuse of the elderly, when a disability is added to age and the difficulties involved with being an immigrant. What defenses do these people, who have always been dependent on their family and have hardly had any contact with the community have? Let us not forget that disability is, even today, a rather taboo subject for some ethno-cultural groups.

These questions, and many others, were outlined for Mss Marguerite Blais, Minister responsible for the Elderly, during a friendly meeting which encouraged us that action will be taken in the near future. Indeed, the warm welcome and the receptive atmosphere which she showed AMEIPH throughout the meeting demonstrated to which degree Ms Blais understands the problems and is prepared to work to improve what is already in place or create what isn't yet.

We believe that the Senior citizens who have disabilities agenda will be one "to follow" and it will be added to others on which AMEIPH has worked for a very long time.



Marguerite Blais  
Minister  
responsible for  
Elders

## ACTIVITIES

### Job Fair

Organized by the CAMO for persons with disabilities, the third edition of Contact Day will take place next March. It's goal? To favor the employability of persons with disabilities (including the difficulties associated with mental health or learning disorders).

In the form of a fair, companies and employment seekers will meet and exchange resumes and business cards.

The event will take place on **Thursday, March 26th, 2009** from noon till 6 pm at the Centre Royal Mountain, 2200 Mansfield Street (Subway Peel).

**C**  **NTACT**  
**Day**

**3<sup>RD</sup> EDITION**

**Be connected to the Employment Network**

**Pass the message along through your networks!**  
**Free registration before 4 P.M. Friday, March 20th**  
at 1 888 522-3310 or on the internet

[www.camo.qc.ca/journee-contact/formulaire.php](http://www.camo.qc.ca/journee-contact/formulaire.php)

Where does the AMEIPH fit into all this? This issue's editorial is a reminder that we are very involved in the work integration program. We sit at the Montréal task force for the employment of persons with a disability and, of late, are investing ourselves in the working sub-committee responsible for promotion and awareness rising. Recently, we also established a close partnership with the CAMO for persons with disabilities, the CAMO for immigrant persons and the ROSEPH (Coalition of Organizations Specializing in the Employment of Persons with Disabilities) for the purpose of contemplating adjustments to their respective practices and finding solutions to move this invisible portion of the population closer to the employment market.

Thus, it was the logical thing to do to have an information booth during this contact day, both to inform employment seekers about our accompanying services as well as to sensitize employers to the additional problem experienced by immigrants with a disability searching for employment.

### Concert for the benefit of AMEIPH

*As she has just launched her 3rd album, " I AM ", Giorgia Fumanti leaves on her world tour which will see her visit North America, China and Europe to share her gift with both young and old with this new little French language jewel.*

Within the framework of the Montreal High Lights Festival, internationally renowned Giorgia Fumanti will be giving a special benefit concert on **February 27th, 2009, at 8 pm** at St Jean-Baptiste Church at 309 Rachel Street (corner of Henri-Julien).

Faithful to her spirit of generosity, and to underline her close affection for and attachment to the Multi-Ethnic Association for the Integration of Persons with Disabilities (AMEIPH), Giorgia Fumanti who has been our spokesperson since 2007 has decided that all proceeds from this concert would be donated to the AMEIPH to help continue the development of the numerous services that the Association offers to hundreds of immigrant persons with disabilities. Having herself immigrated to Quebec and worked with persons with disabilities, the artist, who is herself of Italian origin, hopes in this way to sensitize her audience to this particular cause.

For more information or to purchase tickets, contact AMEIPH at 514 272-0680.





## Conference at McGill University

Last February 2nd, Luciana Soave, Director General of the AMEIPH, and Richard Asare, a contractual social worker, made a presentation at McGill University as part of an awareness raising week, organized by the **Social Equity and Diversity Education (SEDE) Office**, with the aim of sensitizing students with respect to the differences and to social commitment so that our society may become more just and more open. Thanks to the examples of the experienced shared by both presenters or by members of AMEIPH, the students were able to get a glimpse of the complexity involved in the integration process which persons with disabilities who are immigrants, accumulating several sets of problems, can experience.

A second group of McGill students will go to AMEIPH's offices in March for the same purpose: sensitization to the problem, information about the mission, the role and the activities of AMEIPH as well as getting acquainted with the community environment. Bravo to the students who set up this excellent educational Office!

## Québec Adult Learners' Week

Quebec Adult Learners' week will be held from March 28th till April 3rd of this year. To mark the occasion, the Montréal Regional Conference of Elected officials (CRÉ) and the Montréal regional coordination table organized the "Pride to learn in Montréal, 2009 edition, AMEIPH exhibited 12 works produced within the framework of the "I discover my new country, my new language, myself" program at the launch on February 4<sup>th</sup> at Montreal City Hall.

This program, targeted at adults from ethno-cultural communities with intellectual disabilities, utilizes French language teaching and artistic expression components.

In addition to reducing cultural and linguistic barriers, the "I discover" program helps to develop the students' involvement and creativity and allows, eventually, their global integration into society.



*Two proud students present their paintings alongside Ms. Luciana Soave*



### Services:

- Individualized (Reception, assistance, support, information sessions).
- In groups (Discussion groups, Coffee get-together)
- Promotion and Defence of rights
- "I discover... "Social and linguistic integration Program

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The Multi-Ethnic Association for the Integration of Persons with Disabilities is a non-profit organisation whose mission is to facilitate the integration and improve the quality of life of immigrant persons with disabilities, whatever their age, their type of disability or their status, as well as the parents and members of the families of persons of ethno-cultural origin with disabilities.