



QPIRG
McGill

Annual Report

2020
-2021

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ABOUT QPIRG-MCGILL

MANDATE

The Quebec Public Interest Research Group at McGill (QPIRG-McGill) is a resource centre for students and community members working towards social and environmental justice. We strive to engage students in research, public education and action, and to support grassroots activism around diverse social and environmental issues. We seek to build campus-community alliances and inspire social change through inclusive and non-hierarchical approaches.

QPIRG-McGill is opposed to all forms of discrimination on the basis of: race, class, gender, sexual orientation, and dis/ability. QPIRG-McGill is committed to engaging in research and action that are rooted in an anti-oppression analysis and practice.

HISTORY

In 1970-71, Ralph Nader, in the US, encouraged the formation of the first two PIRGs by university students and their organizing efforts and structures became the blueprint for the hundreds of groups to follow. By 1973, there were chapters on 135 campuses in 19 states across the US. In Canada, the first PIRG was set up in Ontario during the 1972-73 school year at the University of Waterloo. In Quebec, QPIRG has been an organization at both Concordia and McGill Universities since 1980. However, it was not until 1988 that a referendum was passed at McGill making QPIRG at McGill the first student-funded, autonomous PIRG in Quebec. Now, there are student-funded PIRGs at Concordia, McGill and UQAM.

Over the course of their thirty year development, Canadian PIRGs have diverged in important ways from their US counterparts. Most importantly, they are interested in encouraging grassroots organizing and changing public attitudes, rather than engaging in government lobbying. The PIRGs' mandate has been to provide a structure within which students and community members can develop the knowledge and practical skills needed for activism and community work. By providing a forum and training ground for people to be engaged members of their community, the PIRGs also provide a bridge between academia and organizing, by linking theory and practice. In the last five years, QPIRG McGill has been instrumental in promoting and supporting progressive movements on McGill's campus, through the formation of events like Culture Shock and Social Justice Days. As well, QPIRG regularly collaborates with other campus groups who are working for social and environmental justice.

Since 2001, QPIRG has adopted an anti-oppression framework, seeking to oppose all forms of oppression as they play-out within society at large as well as within our organizing work.

As of 1988, all McGill undergraduate and graduate students are automatically members of QPIRG-McGill and are entitled to all the organization's services by virtue of a refundable semester fee. Community members are eligible for membership if they pay the "community member" fee and complete 15 hours of volunteer work at QPIRG-McGill.

QPIRG-MCGILL BOARD

A volunteer Board of Directors, elected at the Annual General Meeting, runs QPIRG-McGill. The Board is responsible for all the decisions pertaining to the operation of the organization. The Board defines the vision and direction of the organization, allocates the budget, and also organizes independent QPIRG events.

QPIRG-McGill's voluntary Board members gain valuable skills and receive hands-on, practical training in running a non-profit organization. This year the Board formed the following committees: Staff Committee, Rad Research Committee, Popular Education Committee, Finance Committee, Outreach Committee, the Convergence Editorial Committee, and Policy Committee.

STUDENT BOARD MEMBERS

Athina Khalid (resigned)
Julia Crowley (resigned)
Hannah Beaudoin
Mayaluna Bierlich (resigned)
Adam Amsel (resigned)
Ella Wischnewsky
Amanda Chiu
Hannah Silver
Grey Cooper
Thai Judiesch

COMMUNITY BOARD MEMBERS

Jessica Szarek

SSMU REP: None

PGSS REP: None

STAFF

QPIRG-McGill has three core staff members who coordinate the day-to-day operations of the organization. The staff works hard to insure reliability, continuity and skill sharing within the organization. In addition to daily operations, the staff is responsible for programming, finances, outreach, working groups, programs, coordinating resources, volunteers, projects, grant research, and policy development among many other things. The Finance and Administrative Coordinator was Ivory Tong . The Outreach and Promotions Coordinator was Bofta Haile and the Working Groups and Community Research Coordinator was Sasha Simmons .

This year our part-time staff members were Aishwarya Singh (Resource Centre Coordinator), Rachel Schleiffer (CURE Coordinator), and Shaquiera Hamilton (Campus Outreach Coordinator). The 2020-2021 accountants were Dan Lacroix and Stephen Kamp.

In the summer of 2020, QPIRG-McGill hired one Rad Frosh Coordinator: Kate Ellis and two School School

QPIRG-MCGILL STRUCTURE

Coordinators: Nicholas Raffoul and Quinlan Green. We funded two summer research stipends, with Kapit-Bisig and Beyond Equity.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND COMPLAINTS COMMITTEE (CRCC)

At the Annual General Meeting in April 2020, the following QPIRG-McGill members were elected to the CRCC: Eddie Jude Hareven and Amanda Murphy. The CRCC follows a CRCC policy to address complaints involving QPIRG-McGill members that cannot be resolved by the Board of Directors.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS REPORT

OVERVIEW AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Board of Directors is composed of students and community members who have been elected and committed to planning the direction and development of the organization, fulfilling the organization’s financial duties and supporting staff members and their programs.

TIMELINE OF BOARD RESPONSIBILITIES & ACTIONS

SEMESTER	GENERAL YEARLY SCHEDULE	2020-2021 SPECIFIC
Summer Semester (May - August)	Board Training, Summer Reserach Stipend Selection, Rad Frosh & School Schmool	
Fall Semester (September - December)		New Logo Consultation & Approval, Medical Colonialism Panel
Winter Semester (January - April)	Culture Shock, Report Writing, AGM	CURE Coordinator Hired, Hiring Policy Update, Accessibility Statement Revisions & Audit

BOARD TRAINING

The board received trainings on the following topics, between May-June 2020 (Facilitators are mentioned in parenthesis):

- Board Intro & Tour of Office (Isabelle)
- QPIRG Structure, Committees, History, Consensus-building, Solidarity Not Charity Discussion (Becca Yu, QPIRG staff)
- HR & Staff and Board Relationship (Isabelle)
- Anti-Colonialism training, Accessibility Training (Isabelle)

MAJOR THEMES/ISSUES

BOARD OF DIRECTORS REPORT

The COVID pandemic forced the 2019-2020 QPIRG board into remote work and participation for the entire year. At the beginning of this crisis, the previous board and staff opted to use zoom despite the platform not being end-to-end encrypted. We did not face any zoom-bombing attacks or unsolicited recording or drop-ins during the year. Even with the remote work conditions the board met weekly and, compared to previous years, there was very consistent attendance - quorum was met for almost every meeting.

During the COVID pandemic, QPIRG received more requests for mutual aid funds striving to meet immediate needs of different communities around Montreal. Examples of these organizing efforts include Park Ex Mutual Aid and Montreal Student Initiative for COVID-19 Response & Relief.

Since QPIRG and CKUT were forced out-of-office during the pandemic, both organizations are co-drafting a rent relief letter to be presented to the deputy provost and SSMU in April 2021.

COMMITTEE UPDATES

RADICAL RESEARCH COMMITTEE

The Radical Research Committee works to support QPIRG's community-driven research projects by coordinating the Community-University Research Exchange (CURE) and compiling and publishing the Convergence journal. Though members were unable to meet in person, the committee still passionately pursued numerous projects and laid the groundwork for future developments.

During the fall semester, the committee partnered with the Montreal Indigenous Community Network to help summarize and code articles for their archives. Additionally, members alongside QPIRG Concordia, finalized Convergence's transition to an online format. The journal, publishing undergraduate and community contributions to social justice and art, is now public and will be accompanied by a social media launch. For the remainder of the Winter semester, the committee will conclude the hiring process for a new CURE coordinator. With the help of Accessibilize Montreal, members are currently reassessing and updating QPIRG's accessibility statement, which will be used to also inform the organization's upcoming space search. Also, the committee hosted well attended events including an anti-oppressive research workshop in February, a workshop on how-to-plan a research project during Culture Shock, and an upcoming open source research workshop.

FUTURE GOALS:

- Select QPIRG's summer stipend recipients
- Supporting new CURE coordinator to revision and revamp program

STAFF COMMITTEE

QPIRG's StaffComm is a group of Board members who take on many of the HR-like responsibilities for the organization. As employers of 3 full-time, 3 part-time and many project-specific staff, StaffComm is meant to facilitate easier communication between the Board and Staff. Between the three members, responsibil-

BOARD OF DIRECTORS REPORT

ities are shared throughout the year. Year-long commitments include contract signing, contract renewals, monthly meetings and bimonthly staff check-ins.

2020-2021 SPECIFIC:

Thanks to the work of the previous StaffComm we have a manual which gives clear instructions for each important task we have to address as a committee. Throughout the year, StaffComm had to adjust to a virtual form of communication. All staff check-ins and meetings were conducted on Zoom which was a new medium for all of us, but we adjusted quickly. In September, we drafted a new wage policy in collaboration with Ivory. We drafted a new contract for Katie Jung, who was hired as Accessibility Coordinator. We also drafted a contract for our newly hired CURE Coordinator.

FUTURE GOALS:

- Make small adjustments to the current manual. There are notes for unfinished portions which should be attended to.
- Continue the search for a legal representative

FINANCE COMMITTEE

This year we worked on a few policies, before the audit took over most of it!

Our goals were to work towards financial transparency as well as financial literacy for the Board, so that the Board can actually understand financial decisions that are voted on and discussed. We focused on and talked about figuring out how the board could actually support the Finance role, as all of the other staff helping seemed more straight forward, so we worked on how it would look to have the Board support with finances more in the case that we needed to. We also looked at the Finance Policy and rewrote it, adding and correcting sections. We also looked and discussed the budget more in order to help understand it in greater depth, as well as talking to other organisations about how they ran their finances, for inspiration and advice when rewriting out Finance Policy. We met every two weeks initially, though in the second semester we met more sporadically because the yearly audit needed to be Ivory's main priority.

FUTURE RECOMMENDATIONS:

- We talked on and worked on a list of tasks Board members could do to support with Finance work but this was never finalised, picking up on this might be good.
- There wasn't a clear decision on how financial literacy should work among the board other than having FinComm there to help understand and explain decisions. While we think this works, there's very much space to expand on that if the future Board wishes to.
- An open house for doing payroll was something we discussed but never were able to do, this might be good to increase literacy among the Board

BOARD OF DIRECTORS REPORT

- We updated the Finance Policy because it hadn't been gone over in years and had a lot of discrepancies - it would be good if there was a regular system in place to review policies like this so that we are not violating our own policies due to them being outdated. Setting up a timeframe to revisit policies would probably be helpful.

BOARD DYNAMICS

Board dynamics this year were great, it was lovely to get to meet every week. We had a smaller board this year but were able to make quorum nearly every meeting.

CHALLENGES

Despite a wonderful Board dynamic and frequent meetings, this year was not without its challenges. Many of them were brought about by the pandemic and our switch to an entirely online platform. This was the first time that all Board interactions had to occur entirely online so there was quite a big learning curve. While Board members consistently attended meetings, there was a small board this year. We attempted to do board recruitment at the end of fall semester, but did not receive many applications as callout is difficult to do online.

We also found that despite board engagement, we had a lower capacity at meetings. Due to the online format, there were fewer casual conversations in passing, and overall meetings tended to take longer. Also, since many people are on Zoom at other times in school or at work, the board was sometimes tired of using the online platform by the time our evening meetings happened. Lastly, smaller points mentioned during meetings are harder to keep track of when on Zoom, especially since minute takers must be monitoring the conversation, the Zoom chat and the Google Doc throughout the meeting.

FUTURE GOALS

This year has had a lot of ideas for how to be more accessible moving forward, especially as we had less organic communication options available!

TECHNOLOGY

- Leaving zooming as an option in the future might make meetings more accessible if it can be coordinated without too much lag. Given QPIRG already had a premium zoom account this probably wouldn't be hard to include in facebook and outreach mentions as an option, and could then be adjusted based on the reception/interest in it
- If things stay online for longer, figuring out multiple sound channels on zoom could

BOARD OF DIRECTORS REPORT

make our events much more accessible.

NEXT BOARD:

- If the Board and Staff meetings continue to be online, then try to find a way to have more casual interactions at board meetings so the board can identify policies they think they should work on without needing the staff to bring it up first. This also might help overall cohesion given the lack of office time and in person small interactions and work that happens in the QPIRG office that we cannot access anymore.
- If we continue to work online, organize more public events to provide opportunities for more social interactions between QPIRG board/staff and the community.
- Giving the next board the board report (and potentially access to the past reports) would help with giving context and training beyond sensitivity trainings.
- Sending the next Board to general meetings to increase campus connections and support would be good! Ideas at the time of writing include SACOMSS, SSMUnion, and GSC Committee, and also inviting groups to a specific board meeting to talk with us.
- Following up with groups that have asked us for discretionary funding to create longer term relationships.
- Class announcements to reach out to students to let them know how to get involved, what we do, and how we can help. This could probably be done both in person and online, with the prof's permission, or sending out a message for them to send forward.

STAFF REPORT

STAFF REPORT 2021

This year, a central theme at QPIRG was adapting to the realities of remote work, and staying flexible as new information became available throughout the year. Given the pandemic and political turmoil of this year, part of this change was focused on trying to avoid burn-out by continually adjusting group expectations of each other's capacity and workflow. However, it also allowed us to work on restructuring our goals, and the resources we offer to students and working groups. Weekly staff meetings on Zoom led to better communication between full and part-time staff, even while working around shifting capacities.

Volunteer engagement and recruitment took a big hit this year as in-person events and activities resulted in less face time with students and community members. As a result, the Board of Directors had to play a larger role in the planning and execution of events throughout the academic year. Given that McGill plans to resume in-person programming this September, we expect to see our volunteer numbers increase in the coming months and are excited to restart the program.

We had our staff visioning in December, which allowed us to plan together for the Winter semester and to accomplish collaboratively planned events and projects including our Culture Shock event series. We plan to have another staff visioning over the summer to develop our plans for the 2021-22 year.

In our three permanent positions: Sasha Simmons stayed on for her second year as Community and Research Coordinator, Ivory Tong stayed on for their second year as Finance and Administration Coordinator, and Bofta Haile stayed on for her third year as Outreach and Promotions Coordinator.

As part-time staff: Rachel Schleiffer stayed on as the CURE Coordinator throughout the year. Aishwarya Singh was our Resource Centre Coordinator throughout the year, taking leave during the Winter semester and returning in May. Shaquiera Hamilton stayed for her second year as our Campus Outreach Coordinator.

Our summer staff were Nicholas Raffoul and Quinlan Green as School Schmoool Coordinators, and Kate Ellis as Rad Frosh Coordinator.

Katie Jung returned after her planned leave of absence to continue working through an Emploi Quebec wage subsidy as our Accessibility Coordinator.

We thank all our volunteers and our Board of Directors, without whom our work would be both impossible and much less enjoyable! Shout-out to our friends at Midnight Kitchen, the UGE, MUNACA, AMUSE, AMURE, AGSEM, Black Students' Network, C-JAM, Queer McGill, the McGill Daily, CKUT, ECOLE, Our Shared Spaces, SACOMSS, SSMU VP External Office, the CSU, the Centre for Gender Advocacy, the Milton Parc Citizen's Committee, CURE Concordia, and QPIRG-Concordia. We love collaborating with you all and we look forward to continuing to grow and strengthen our relationship in the coming year! <3

One of our most important tasks this year will be finding a new physical home for QPIRG, and we are committed to finding a space that will be accessible to as many people as possible. We have learned a lot from running our events entirely online this year, and intend to continue incorporating elements of this in our

STAFF REPORT

future in-person events to increase accessibility. To clarify both of these commitments, the board and staff of QPIRG, along with Katie Jung have been developing a statement outlining specific ways we will commit to making our space and events accessible going forward. Other goals we intend to focus on this year include running an existence referendum, restructuring the CURE program, increasing the amount of training offered to volunteers, developing a new process for staff evaluations, and continuing to build connections with both campus and community-based groups. We don't know yet when we will be returning to working in-person together at the office, but we are looking forward to it!

In Solidarity,

The Current QPIRG Staff (Aishwarya Singh, Bofita Haile, Ivory Tong, Katie Jung, Rachel Schleifer, Sasha Simmons, and Shaquiera Hamilton)

POPULAR EDUCATION

CULTURE SHOCK - BOFTA HAILE

This year we decided to take a different approach with our regular popular education programming by pairing it down to only one large event week instead of the customary two. Partly due to budget concerns at the beginning of the academic year and an unanticipated leave of absence on my part, the decision was made to focus our time, budget, and energy on the winter education event series. This change allowed us to successfully organize within our capacity and ultimately, avoid burnout amongst the staff.

Organizing events always comes with unexpected challenges and this year was no different. This was QPIRG's first attempt in recent years to organize an online-only event series, an endeavour that turned out to be more difficult than anticipated. The popular education committee was on hiatus this year; as a result, Culture Shock was primarily organized by the staff team and board of directors.

Following the success of last year's scaled-down event series and given that everything had to move online,, we decided to keep the lineup of events short as to ensure that both the organizers and attendees would be less likely to be overwhelmed by the event schedule and therefore more likely to attend. The overall turnout for Culture Shock was pretty great!! As always, we worked with a variety of speakers, artists and local activists. Our keynote presenter was Neema Githere, an indigenous-African guerrilla theorist and curator who presented their theory of Afropresentism and guerrilla theorizing.

CULTURE SHOCK 2021

Culture Shock went from March 12th to 19th and included the following events:

- Street Medic 101: An Intro to Protesting Basics (Postponed to Summer 2021)
- Afropresentism: "Time -Traveling Desire and Reservoir Knowledge" in the #DigitalDiaspora w Neema Gather
- Being Black @ McGill with McGill TSL
- Starting, Sustaining, and Strengthening a Community Collective
- Film Screening: Our Dance of Revolution
- How to Plan a Research Project
- Sell-out: Exploring the Commodification of Asian Cultures through Storytelling
- Collective Art-Making with Shanna & Serian Strauss (postponed to Summer 2021)

This year, we ended up designing the event poster in-house using artwork created by the wonderful Shanna Strauss, a mixed-media artist based in Oakland, CA.

This year saw fewer events but we saw amazing turnout for the most part. We were not able to accept all

POPULAR EDUCATION

of the submitted proposals, but were able to locate other outlets for some of the workshop proposals we couldn't help sponsor as part of Culture Shock.

MOVING FORWARD

For this upcoming academic year, we hope to continue to focus on education, offering volunteers educational material and training modules regarding the practical considerations around organising community events (i.e. event logistics, budgeting, outreach, etc). We anticipate a return to in-person campus activities in the fall and are excited to get back to capacity-building with the popular education committee. We have all missed the presence of our volunteer team and cannot wait to get to work with everyone again!

We would like to give a huge thank you to everyone who supported all of our popular education events, and a special shout out to the Board of Directors, who became our unofficial PopEd committee this year. This year's events would not have been possible without their support <3

RAD FROSH - KATE ELLIS & IVORY TONG

Rad Frosh is a three-day orientation weekend for incoming students at McGill organized by QPIRG-McGill. The program is centered on introducing people to McGill and Montreal's vibrant activist communities. Rad Frosh 2020 occurred on Zoom from Friday, August 28th - Sunday, August 30th. Our objective was to offer both a creative and politically progressive orientation to new students, introducing folks to various social, political, and environmental issues, movements, and organizations within our communities. Our theme for 2020 was "Light, Camera, Action." It was our first frosh to happen entirely online.

This annual report is adapted from Rad Frosh 2020's exit report, written by Kate Ellis (they/them), the 2020 Rad Frosh Coordinator, and edited with contributions by Ivory Tong.

EVENTUS AND REGISTRATION

I personally found the Eventus platform very frustrating. I don't know if they're going to use it again, but it's been pretty popular in all orientation-related events this year, so I wouldn't be surprised.

From what I understand, incoming students can click "going" for multiple froshes on the Eventus platform (like a Facebook event). This created a huge discrepancy between our numbers on the Eventus page and the number of participants who actually showed up. According to the Eventus page on the day that registration closed (the Wednesday before frosh), we had around 80 participants. However, there ended up being somewhere closer to 40, which was still a great number for the weekend, but impacted the attendance of our workshops and our events.

POPULAR EDUCATION

All events this year occurred virtually. Some events include:

- Benefit Concert
- Workshops and tours
- Movie screening
- DIY fair
- Campus and community organizations meet and greet
- Queer prom
- Trivia night

SUMMER COLLECTIVE

This year, everyone on the summer collective was super helpful and nice, but a bit inconsistent. There were never really two meetings where the same people showed up. This is pretty understandable, considering that it was completely online, Zoom meetings are tiring, and the volunteers aren't personally getting much out of being there.

I mostly used the collective as a space to bounce off ideas and crowdsource smaller things (like which groups should be at the mixer, what movie to show, artists for the benefit, etc.), which worked out well in the end. Some of the folks in the collective also participated in frosh in other ways, like being facilitators and doing workshops, which was great!

FACILITATORS AND FACILITATOR TRAINING

We had a pretty low facilitator turnout this year, but the ones who did come were awesome. We had the added benefit of not having to set up venues, prepare food, and get from one place to another, which I think helped a lot. Most of them took on bigger roles in helping run events and keep people engaged throughout the weekend, which really helped me while I was trying to get everything behind the scenes done.

For facilitator training, we hired Becca (former QPIRG employee, incredible person) to do an anti-oppression workshop that was excellent – it was very conversation-based and easy to participate in. That night, I also went over the responsibilities and weekend schedule briefly. On the second night, Ivory did a training on active listening which was super helpful. It didn't really come into use during the weekend, but I found that it helped me in my own life. We also did facilitator agreements that night. Sasha also compiled a list of harm-reduction resources.

We communicated throughout the weekend in a Facebook group, which I found to be the best way to stay updated.

POPULAR EDUCATION

Many organizations contributed to the success of the weekend, including but not limited to SSMU, QPIRG-Concordia, Queer McGill, the Union for Gender Empowerment, AMUSE, Midnight Kitchen, the McGill Daily, SPHR-McGill, IJV-McGill, Socialist Fightback, the Milton Parc Citizens' Committee, ACCM, Jeunes Queer Youth, SFT-McGill, and CKUT.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR 2021 AND BEYOND:

- Update the website more frequently
- Decide how to follow-up with no-show facilitators
- Contact CKUT earlier for radio promotion

SCHOOL SCHMOOL ALTERNATIVE AGENDA - QUINLAN GREEN AND NICHOLAS RAFFOUL

School Schmoool, the agenda produced each summer as a joint project between QPIRG-McGill and QPIRG-Concordia, was successfully put out again this year. The 2020-2021 edition of School Schmoool was coordinated by Quinlan Green and Nicholas Raffoul.

The agenda dates back to 1994, beginning as a bi-annual publication that brought together group profiles, articles, and practical resources of use to all students, especially those interested in environmental and social justice issues. It was resurrected as an agenda and resource book in the summer of 2006, and has been connecting the Concordia, McGill and Montreal communities ever since.

This year's theme was Limit(less). We chose this theme because as people trying to transform the world, we try to be limitless in what we imagine it could become, but we are also well aware of the barriers that limit the change we dream of. To make those dreams come true, we are constantly learning and re-learning how to remove these barriers and how we continue to contribute to their existence, specifically on the unceded territory of Tiohtià:ke (so-called "Montreal") and Turtle Island ("North America"). For many of us, destroying these limits are about a lot more than giving ourselves the label "activist."

Some questions we asked our contributors this year were:

- What exactly does it mean for something to be "local"? What are the various ways we might be a "local", of a campus, a neighbourhood, a city?
- How does locality impact our views onto the rest of the world, the communities and affinities which create us?
- How do our local environments move us, and what routines have been altered, given the ways these environments are changing?

POPULAR EDUCATION

We continued to prioritize fairly compensating School Schmoool contributors -- this year we gave honorariums for all the new content printed in the agenda, and we continued to reach out to BIPOC, LGBTQ+ and disabled contributors to prioritize these voices. We continued to print on recycled paper at work with the local printer Katasoho. In past years, our project was funded mainly by the Sustainability Action Fund, but had limited funding this year and decided to not grant funding. For that reason, we are currently working on other sources of funding and have decided to print fewer physical copies because of COVID-19.

Six hundred agendas were printed this year, and so far we have plans to distribute them approximately on campus at Concordia and McGill, and various independent bookstores and community locations around the city.

We will update the website soon with this year's agenda content.

COMMUNITY RESEARCH

COMMUNITY-UNIVERSITY RESEARCH EXCHANGE (CURE) - RACHEL SCHLEIFER

The Community University Research Exchange (CURE) is a program that brings together grassroots community groups with radical mandates and research needs, and McGill students interested in doing meaningful community driven research. I was hired as QPIRG-McGill's CURE coordinator in February of 2020 after a few years of inactivity within the program. In my role as the CURE Coordinator, I reach out to community groups to explain how CURE works and how it can support their research needs. I also do outreach to students to spread awareness about CURE as an opportunity to gain experience in research for credit or extra-curricularly.

The pandemic created an extra layer of challenge within this role as many of the community partnerships that CURE McGill had established did not have the capacity for research projects. But collaboration continued despite this challenge. A partnership was established with Milton-Parc Citizens Committee, in collaboration with the Royal Vic for the Public Coalition, in creating a student research project on the community needs and wants of the Royal Vic hospital space. In the remote Fall 2020 semester, a research committee was established, composed of McGill students, SSMU employees, as well as community members and activists. This group created consultations for community organizations in the city to participate in and is in the ongoing process of surveying community members on their interest in the site. This one project will hopefully build a resilient partnership between QPIRG McGill and Milton Parc to collaborate on shared projects while sharing resources in the future.

Other than the Royal Vic project, I have been working with CURE Concordia to re-evaluate the structure of CURE projects and streamline the project process. In collaboration with Concordia, CURE's social media strategies have also been revised. I have additionally established relationships with some core student activist groups and McGill community-based research projects - namely SSMU's Community Commissioner and External Affairs, The Community Health and Social Medicine Incubator (CHASM) and SEDE (Social Equity and Diversity Education Office). Their interests in support and collaboration will be essential towards the building of a community-based research hub at McGill.

SUMMER RESEARCH STIPENDS - SASHA SIMMONS

One way in which QPIRG-McGill carries out its mandate to support community-driven research is through the provision of summer research stipends. The stipends consist of grants to fund projects that align with QPIRG's social and environmental justice mandate, are grassroots in focus, local in scope and long-term in their impact.

QPIRG-McGill was able to provide two summer research stipends this year- one for \$3000, and one for \$1500. We were excited to support the Montreal chapter of Kapit-Bisig Laban COVID in their project to document the experiences of Filipino workers and organizers during the pandemic, and to launch their website providing resources to the same community. Our second stipend went to Beyond Equity, a collective working to create trainings and resources to support organizations in addressing the ongoing racial tokenism within the non-profit sector in Montreal.

Due to unexpected funding through the Young Canada Works program that arrived towards the end of the

COMMUNITY RESEARCH

summer, we were also able to fund an additional research project this year. Bee Khaleeli had started their Erotic Cartography project as a summer stipend project with QPIRG Concordia, and was able to complete work on the project during the fall semester with the additional funding from us.

Building on our learnings from last year, for the 2021 summer stipends we've started our outreach and promotion effort earlier to make sure the opportunity reaches a wider audience. We are also going to have the full Rad Research Committee more involved in the interview selection process this year, with the goal that having these conversations will help prepare us for the process of revamping the CURE program this upcoming year.

KAPIT-BISIG

As members of Kapit-Bisig Montreal, we propose to gather stories from members of the Filipino community of whom we are serving through community based participatory research. Through Kapit-Bisig's work, we have been serving health care workers, temporary foreign workers, migrant workers and their respective families. We will also reach out to organizers from groups like the Immigrants Workers Centre, PINAY Quebec, Anakbayan Montreal's Kapatid Mentorship Program (KaMP); who are part of Kapit-Bisig and in the front-lines, working and helping each other through the pandemic. What are the challenges facing them? What are the different ways in which workers deemed "essential" by the government are overlooked and neglected? And how are grassroots organizations addressing and filling in these gaps? By gathering their stories, we hope to highlight their work and archive them.

We hope to launch a website specific to Kapit-Bisig Montreal at the end of the research, with the interviews archived along with the different resources that members of the community can access, for example, pamphlets on workers rights, pandemic related infographics, current news on government related monetary aid, etc. The hub created by Kapit-Bisig connects together organizations in the Filipino community that will look at the social issues in a multifaceted way, from worker's rights, to health and childcare. In the long-term, we hope this resource can illuminate a holistic view of the needs of the Montreal-Filipino community and surrounding areas. We plan to use this information to advocate in multiple formats for systemic changes that address the root causes of the inequities and injustices our communities have been facing during COVID-19 and much before. An example of an ongoing campaign the Immigrant Workers Centre is involved with is obtaining access to healthcare care and benefits for all migrants regardless of their status.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS for *interviewing Filipino front line workers/migrant workers/organizers in Montreal and surrounding areas during the COVID19 pandemic:*

- What challenges are you personally facing during COVID19?
- What is it like trying to find help for you and your family?
- Where do you get information about access to PPE, government monetary aid, health practices during the pandemic?
- Which group do you organize with?

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- What kind of support have you been providing to the community during COVID19?
- What do you see as the biggest challenges our communities are facing during COVID19?
- What do you hope comes out of community organizing or relief efforts?
- Is there anything else that you'd like to talk about your experience during this time that missed?

Community organizer questions:

- What kind of work do you do?
- What challenges are you facing during COVID19?
- Where do you get information about access to PPE ,government monetary aid, health practices during the pandemic?
- What is it like trying to find help for you and your family?
- What are your hopes for the future? (Have you thought about what you wish for you and your family in the short term? Long term?)
- Is there anything else that you'd like to talk about your experience during this time that we missed?

IMPORTANCE OF PROJECT

- This project allowed us to create a platform where we can centralize not only the work that Kapit-Bisig Montrealers has been doing but also the experiences of Filipino Montrealers.
- The interviews will allow the exposure of systematic inequalities and inspire the creation of more content that could ultimately amplify the community's voices.
- The project is an archive that also stimulates content creation

CHALLENGES

- Figuring out how to do consent forms digitally/audio due to the pandemic
- Finding and scheduling with interviewees: some people became too busy and couldn't do an interview

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- Language barriers with some interviewers and translating the transcripts
- Transcriptions can be time-consuming especially with the multiple languages
- Figuring out how to do finances: specifically how to pay researchers as they come and go into the project in the span of 3 months
- Anonymity: the content of their interviews were critical of specific workplaces and governmental inadequacies

SUCCESES

- Team meetings were regular
- Interviewing on zoom due to pandemic was convenient for all parties
- Creation of a website that contains all of Kapit-Bisig Montreal's information and experiences
- Collecting content and testimonials that can be explored beyond the scope of this project
- Managed to stay within budget
- Learned the depths of the stories from our own community

HOW WAS IT COMPARED TO HOW YOU PLANNED IT?

- The project timeline was pretty straightforward
- Mainly scheduling of researchers and interviewees that was difficult to predict
- Distribution plan of honorariums to team members needed to be adapted by how much one was able to contribute to the project during a particular month
- Overall planning was a challenge due to the volatility of what we are able to do during the pandemic

HOW DO YOU WANT TO CONTINUE THE PROJECT?

Qualitative analysis:

- Themes analyzed across the interviews with associated quotes, and a few reviewers

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for validation of themes

- Going through a process of analyzing. Finding themes, finding quotes and overarching themes and differences

Mobilizing findings

- Social media posts share-able quotes or something art based
- Transport the themes and quotes into large graphic (printable) and other shareables

Volunteer training on website maintenance

- Collect more stories and figure out a way to create an uploader on the website where the questions will be posted and people can interview others or themselves and submit to KBMontreal.ca

CONCLUSION

Overall, we managed to keep the project on its intended timeline, we completed the planned interviews and have developed a website that captures the Kapit-Bisig Montreal mutual aid network and the findings. We hope that our research project plan highlights the unique needs, interests and priorities of the Filipino community, especially those that face challenges with precarious status, work, housing or family challenges. We intend to bring the findings back to the community for feedback.

QPIRG-McGill's Research Stipend has allowed our Voices from the Frontlines project to set the groundwork for advocating for changes that represent the concrete realities and conditions of workers during the pandemic. Even though the findings are in the context of this pandemic, they also speak to the existing inequities of Filipino/a/x communities that have heightened during COVID-19.

We hope to use this website and these findings to continue sustaining a network of organizations supporting our communities, many of whom spent time or provided resources to get this project to completion. We thank them all: Anakbayan Montreal, PINAY Quebec, the Filipino Parents Support Group, the Centre for Philippines Concerns and the Immigrant Workers Centre.

Moving forward, we intend to find more ways to get the findings into more graphics, analyze for key themes and train to keep the website updated. We appreciate QPIRG McGill's support and are excited to have the voices of these frontline and essential workers and community organizers captured, archived and ready to be heard!

ACCESSIBILITY POLICY COORDINATOR - KATIE JUNG

Katie Jung's wage subsidy happened in two parts: the 1st part before she had her baby, Amari, and the 2nd part after maternity leave. The 2nd part of the subvention salariale started August 24th 2020 and ended Jan

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10th 2021. This report will focus on the second part.

Katie is a member of Accessibilize Montreal, who faced significant barriers to maternity benefits while pregnant. A wage subsidy provided by Emploi Quebec was possible because Katie was on welfare after graduating from her MA degree, and therefore qualified as underemployed within the government specifications. Because access to employment and a living wage for people with chronic illness/disability/neurodiversity etc. continues to be an important issue to Accessibilize Montreal, we approached QPIRG-McGill to help host the position. We are very grateful to QPIRG-McGill for helping to make this happen, as without their sponsorship the position would not have been possible.

With the help of QPIRG-McGill hosting Katie's wage subsidy, we were able to ensure she worked enough hours to qualify for maternity leave benefits. Returning to the position after her maternity leave ensured that she qualified again for employment insurance at the end of the job on Jan 10th 2021. This means that Katie was able to have a living wage from summer 2019 through to fall 2021. For the second part of her employment contract, with the support of QPIRG-McGill, Katie had access to health insurance. Access to medical care and affordable medication is another important issue to Accessibilize Montreal, and we have greatly appreciated QPIRG's support in helping make medical insurance a reality for Katie and her dependent, Amari.

Last year for part 1 (summer/fall 2019) of the wage subsidy's funding, we were certain we wanted to get NGO status for Accessibilize. This was our main goal. Katie traveled to the QPIRG-McGill office daily with her service dog, Spoons, and worked from the QPIRG-McGill office. Although this project had started and was already under way, it became delayed first due to Katie's pregnancy complications, and after the birth of Amari, the pandemic. As the reality of the pandemic unfolded and we adjusted to this uncertainty, the goal of applying for NGO status shifted. This shift in the group happened on a few levels, and is still being mapped as many of us have not been able to meet at all over the last year. Focus instead has been more and more on cultural production amongst members. This became the focus of Katie's work on part 2 of the wage subsidy. Katie is working on two zines and plans to add them to the QPIRG-McGill library in fall/winter 2021-2022 at the end of her employment insurance.

Katie also joined the Rad Research committee, working on updating QPIRG-McGill's accessibility policy, as well as looking at new potential QPIRG-McGill spaces.

ALTERNATIVE RESOURCE CENTER - AISHWARYA SINGH

I was hired as the Resource Center Coordinator in October of 2019. I took a temporary leave from January to mid-April 2021 in order to pursue a TAsip in McGill's English Department. Since demand for library resources has been low since the lockdown, we decided not to recruit a temporary replacement and just to suspend library activities for this time. I am now back at work :) Beyond the daily tasks of cataloging materials and keeping track of check outs/returns, here were some of my projects:

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EVENT PLANNING

- I was part of the 'Fighting for a Hand to Hold' book launch and panel. I attended planning meetings, assisted with contacting speakers, and promotions. I also purchased the book for our library.
- In early 2020, I received a free box kit from Librarians and Archivists from Palestine which contained artistic and informational material related to the effects of apartheid on literature, literary education, and information availability in Palestine. I started preparations on a panel on these themes for Culture Shock. I had done a bit of research and contacted a few members of the collective as well as some Palestinian academics and librarians. This event was not able to materialize before I went on leave due to time constraints as well as difficulties finding appropriate speakers (I was hesitant to have only western, white academics on the panel). I will resume planning this event now that I have returned and hopefully it can take place late in the summer or early fall.
- I did two meetings of the QPIRG library book club during the summer - we read Vivian Gornick's *The Romance of American Communism*, Kathleen Stewart's *Ordinary Affects*, and Saidiya Hartman's *Wayward Lives and Beautiful Experiments*

PROMOTIONS AND OUTREACH

- I hired a graphic designer, Yvan Kammelu, to make a new poster for the library. He completed the project in August of 2020. I look forward to using the poster on social media and circulating it on campus when it is possible to do so.
- I continued to showcase some of our materials on the alternative library instagram.
- I started the Research Catalyst Project which aims to give members an introduction to lesser known social movements, historical events, and radical figures. As part of this, I created infographics about the Dalit Panther Party and about Ashanti Alston, who is an anarchist organizer and former member of the Black Panther Party and Black Liberation Army.

LIBRARY (RE)ORGANIZATION

- I've continued to go through and make a record of QPIRG's archival materials. The goal

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is to create a functional community archive that can be browsed for research or pleasure.

- I've been discarding or archiving older and outdated materials that are on our shelves. This will hopefully open up more space for more relevant materials.

BOOK ORDERS

The library budget was around \$700 for the August 2020 to August 2021 fiscal year. So far, I have spent around \$500. Here are the books that have been ordered using this budget:

Fighting for a Hand to Hold	Samir Shaheen-Hu	book
At Penpoint	Monica Popescu	book
Bolivia in the Age of Gas	Bret Gustafson	book
Rhythms of the Pachakuti	Raquel Gutiérrez	book
Shipping and Tax from Duke University Sale		
Take Back the Fight	Nora Loreto	book
Haymarket Sale (The Palestine Communist Party, Sel	varia	books
Forget Burial	Marty Fink	book
Everyday Exposure: Indigenous Mobilization and Env	Sarah Marie Wiebe	book
Research is Ceremony	Shawn Wilson	book
Ebony Roots	Charmaine A Nelsc	book
Black Futures	Kimberly Drew	book
Dark Matters: On the Surveillance of Blackness	Simone Browne	book

*From the Haymarket Sale I purchased the titles The Palestine Communist Party, Selections from [Gramsci's] Cultural Writings, A Time to Die, The Black Power Mixed Tape, Freedom is a Constant Struggle, The Essential Rosa Luxemborg

CHALLENGES

Because of the pandemic, the biggest change to library programming is the absence of volunteers. I did a pretty significant volunteer drive before the first lock down and a couple people were really interested in becoming library volunteers. However, I could not figure out what sorts of volunteer activities are possible given that people are not able to use the space. I would like to devote more time thinking about whether volunteering in the library is possible during this time.

I tried to offer remote book drop offs/pickups. I promoted this through the alternative library instagram as well as through the QPIRG listserv. I did about 2 or 3 drop offs, but ultimately there was not a lot of demand for this service. However, it will continue to be offered and I will try to promote it more.

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Obviously, it's unfortunate that people's access to the library and its materials are restricted right now.

OBJECTIVES

- Again, I would like to actually organize the Libraries and Archives in Palestine panel in the upcoming year. I would also like to offer a cyber security workshop/skill share to students and community members.
- In the coming months, I would like to have an inventory of our archival materials and periodical holdings.
- A significant barrier to accessibility currently is a rather outdated and difficult to use online catalogue. During the summer, I would like to update the online catalog and also make it more user friendly.
- Some of the projects I would like to complete this year may require additional funding. In this case, I will also be applying to discretionary funding and McGill based grants.

GRASSROOTS MOBILIZATION

GRASSROOTS MOBILIZATION

DISCRETIONARY FUNDING 2020-2021

One way in which QPIRG-McGill supports grassroots organizing is by providing funding for smaller-scale, non-institutional projects and initiatives.

An annual budget is set aside each year by the QPIRG-McGill Board of Directors to fund such external projects. Campus and community groups are encouraged to submit requests for goal-oriented events that align with our mandate, up to a maximum of \$250.

Date Approved	Receipient	Amount
May 6, 2020	Emergency relief for student (COVID-19)	\$ 250
May 25, 2020	Medical Herstory	\$ 250
	Fire & Nice Podcast	\$ 250
	Caring for Social Justice	\$ 250
June 22, 2020	Young Roots Farm Camp	\$ 250
July 27, 2020	Volta Collective	\$ 250
August 8, 2020	MTL Air Care	\$ 250
September 10, 2020	McGill Radlaw H&C Application Project	\$ 250
	Vicky's Support Line	\$ 250
October 6, 2020	Cohabitation Milton Parc	\$ 240
October 22, 2020	Journée de solidarité avec #1492LandBackLane	\$ 250
November 5, 2020	Yellow Door Benefit Dinner	\$ 250
December 3, 2020	Parc Ex Mutual Aid	\$ 250
	Solidarity Across Borders poster design	\$ 250
	Prisoner Correspondence Project newsletter mailout	\$ 250
November 1, 2020	Queer Performance Camp 2021	\$ 250
	Meals for Milton Parc	\$ 250
January 2, 2021	Mobilisation Matawinie Ekoni Aci	\$ 100
March 8, 2021	Support Omar's Family Sponsorship	\$ 250
April 12, 2021	Young Roots Farm Camp	\$ 250
	Free Menstruation, Equal Education	\$ 250

GRASSROOTS MOBILIZATION

CO-SPONSORSHIPS

Date Approved	Group/Event
May 14, 2020	Statement urging Ministers of Health, Public Safety, & Justice to decriminalize simple drug possession (COVID-19 context)
July 27, 2020	MP Pledge campaign to Oppose Israeli Annexation
July 27, 2020	MTL Air Care
July 27, 2020	Community Cooks volunteer callout
July 27, 2020	Take James McGill statue down
July 27, 2020	Pervers/Cite festival
August 3, 2020	Open letter on racism in Desautels Management
October 8, 2020	Equitas job posting
October 29, 2020	Aaron Dixon event w/ Politics & Care
October 29, 2020	
November 26, 2020	March & Moving Blockade for Indigenous Sovereignty
December 3, 2020	SACOMSS Dec 6th Vigil
December 3, 2020	Gender Creative Kids Job Postings
January 11, 2021	McGill Nurses for Planetary Health event
January 20, 2021	Black Healing Fund
January 20, 2021	Choosing Real Safety: A Historic Declaration to Divest from Policing and Prisons and Build Safer Communities for All
February 1, 2021	Divest for Human Rights Campaign - SPHR
March 8, 2021	Declaration of Support: Justice for Migrant Sex Workers
March 8, 2021	Israeli Apartheid Week 2021
March 29, 2021	The Breach media launch
April 12, 2021	Soldiers of Creation "Healing Through the Senses" fundraiser
April 12, 2021	Petition to Andrée Laforest from the land defenders of Kahnesata:ke
April 12, 2021	GreenPAC Internship for the Environment

OUTREACH

OUTREACH REPORT - BOFTA HAILE

The Outreach team is responsible for the promotion of QPIRG-McGill events, research & funding opportunities as well as content from our working groups and partner organizations. Typically, promotion of events primarily happens in-person at fairs, Rad Frosh, and other similar events, with the addition of sending out info through email lists, social media, and cross-promotion through our friend organizations. Unfortunately due to the pandemic, we were forced to switch to strictly online modes of outreach meant that it was only that it was harder to do impactful outreach with McGill students. We are hopeful that that will change with the anticipated return to campus activities this Fall semester.

We are always looking to find ways to bring people who attend our events or are interested in our working groups into active roles in the organization. We saw broader volunteer outreach pre-pandemic and are looking forward to continuing after we revamp the volunteer program. We have made great strides in making volunteers a more central part of the organization, and hope to continue growing our volunteer base in the upcoming year.

Over the last summer, QPIRG-McGill had the opportunity to work with Keeyana Dalz (IG: Teenadult) on the redesign of our logo! Following the feedback from our volunteers, board members, and staff, we came up with a design that helps reflect a softer, more inviting feel that will better represent us as a campus and community organization where members can learn and grow together. Thank you Keeyana!

This year brought to fruition two different projects that have been in the works for the last couple of years that we are very excited to share with our members. The first project was an introduction to QPIRG-McGill video explainer of what it is that we do featuring current and former staff and board members.

The second project was the total redesign of the QPIRG website! This was a labour-intensive project that took up the bulk of the summer and fall semester. While an extremely rewarding process, it was not without its challenges. The main being that We are very excited to have a functional, bilingual website and look forward to using this platform as a central hub for all of QPIRG's online activities.

FUTURE GOALS & MOVING FORWARD

We anticipate that the return to in-person activities will result in a return to our regular pace of work. With that in mind, we plan on spending this summer working on building an official style guide for organization -- something that will help us create content with a consistent look which will be essential this fall semester as we begin to gear up for the referendum. This will include designing various graphic assets that match the look and feel of the style guide.

Now that we have an updated website, we plan to turn our attention to improving our search engine optimization (SEO) to further improve our online presence. In addition, I plan on developing a training manual for managing and updating the website as a contingency in the event that myself or Shaquiera (Campus Outreach Coordinator) are unavailable.

Moving forward, we will continue to look for ways to increase the visibility of our programs and working

groups so as to familiarize the McGill community with the awesome work that they have been doing.

FINANCIAL REPORT - IVORY TONG

This year marked my first complete year in the Finance Coordinator role, and it was a bit of a struggle to keep operations running smoothly while working remotely. That being said, to adapt to working from home, our financial documents are now digitized and uploaded to the cloud, which helps with accessibility throughout the organisation. I look forward to continuing to use the knowledge I have gained this year to support and further expand QPIRG's programming.

The 2018-2019 year ended with a deficit of \$8,878.00. The 2019-2020 year ended with a surplus of \$38,362.00. This large surplus (about 10% of our annual operating cost) is due to multiple factors, the largest being the COVID-19 pandemic. When the pandemic struck in March 2020, that drastically affected several budget lines, with 5 months until the end of our financial year to adjust for it. Events such as Rad Frosh ended up being virtual and therefore costing much less. Young Canada Works, an employment grant we received to fund two summer positions, was reimbursed at 100% this year rather than its usual 70%, so our employment costs were also cut. Additionally, we spent cautiously, first as a result of last year's deficit, and secondly due to uncertainty about how COVID-19 would affect our finances and operations.

The Finance Committee this year was much more robust than it has been in several years, and consisted of myself and four members of the board: Hannah Beaudoin, Grey Cooper, Jessica Szarek, and Ella Wischnewsky. In addition to the usual budget drafting and review, we were able to update QPIRG's funding policy and lay down plans to increase financial literacy within the organization. Hopefully, we will be able to continue with these plans in the upcoming year as well.

Importantly, we completed our audit dated Aug 31, 2020. Our audit was conducted by an independent auditor's office, APSV Chartered Professional Accountants inc., by Nadine Gravel and Mélanie Desmarais-Sénécal. Working with Nadine and Mélanie was a great experience and we thank them for their patience and hard work. The report outlines our major financial policies and shows that while QPIRG is at low risk for fraud overall, we still have improvements to make in terms of enriching and formalizing our written procedures. Our totals from last year had to be recalculated to be more accurate. Their full breakdown can be found after this report.

OTHER UPDATES FROM THIS YEAR:

I ran a finance training workshop for the working groups, and another one for the board. To do this, I revised the workshops that had been left previously, but I hope to better overhaul them now that I have a stronger impression of where there are knowledge gaps.

The costs of programming were significantly cut after the beginning of the pandemic, despite the additional cost of paying for a Zoom Pro account, and the Zoom Webinar add-on. For instance, without the costs of venue rentals or catering, Rad Frosh cost \$4000.00 this year, a decrease of ten thousand dollars from the previous Rad Frosh. With Culture Shock, we were also able to save on costs such as travel and accommodation for guests. This more than allowed us to pay for expenditures required by virtual events, such as hiring a

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live captioner.

Not being in the office affected our expenses in several ways. Less was spent on office supplies, office repair and maintenance, and photocopying. However, to facilitate working from home, we created a budget line to help partially reimburse the cost of personal computer repairs and upgrades.

As is the case every year, we apply to employment-based grants through government funding bodies, namely the Young Canada Works (YCW) and the Canada Summer Jobs (CSJ) programs. For our summer 2020 jobs, we received two YCW grants, one for Rad Frosh, and one for School Schmool. Unusually, both were funded at 100% rather than 70% due to the COVID pandemic. We later received a CSJ grant, but it did not take effect until September 2020. We used this last grant to fund a third summer research stipend. We also worked with Emploi Québec this year to continue funding our Accessibility Policy Coordinator.

Our opt-outs are fairly standard and stabilized at approximately 10% of the student population, as has been the case over the past couple of years. For us, this amounted to a total of \$32,837.60 for the 2020-21 year. We do not predict a change in this unless there are active opt-out campaigns or other forms of organized backlash, which we haven't seen much of over the last few years.

Our accountants are Dan Lacroix and Stephen Kamp, whose diligence and knowledge is greatly appreciated, and they do so much for the financial health of QPIRG-McGill. Our deepest gratitude to the many groups and organizations with whom we collaborated with this year, or supported us in various ways, including but not limited to: The Students' Society of McGill University, Midnight Kitchen, the Union for Gender Empowerment, Queer McGill, AMUSE, QPIRG-Concordia, SACOMSS, and many others.

