



**missing children's  
network**  
Keeping hope alive

## **2021 ANNUAL ACTIVITIES REPORT**

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# Message from the Chair of the Board of Directors and the Executive Director



**Yves J.  
Beauchesne**  
Chair of the Board  
of Directors



**Pina  
Arcamone**  
Executive Director

It's been a challenging year for everyone, and we are proud to say that our dedicated employees found innovative ways to help missing and sexually exploited children despite COVID-19 restrictions and lockdowns. When schools were closed and children were spending significantly more time online, we stepped up our prevention efforts, warning and educating families about dangers lurking on the internet.

We remain committed to safeguarding childhood and ensuring that every child in Quebec benefits from sound prevention programs. Together, through education, prevention, and intervention, we can find missing children and prevent countless others from going missing.

Although we continue to work remotely, this year we accompanied 96 families living every parent's worst nightmare. It is a tremendous relief that 88 of these families were reunited with their children. With the financial support of the Pathy Family Foundation, we are putting the spotlight on the issue of sexual exploitation of minors through our SHINE program. Education is our greatest weapon in the fight against this harrowing crime.

This year alone, we educated over 12,000 students, bringing our total to over 48,000 school-age children who have learned the importance of setting boundaries, developing healthy and egalitarian relationships and their absolute right to say "No!" to anyone or in any situation that leaves them feeling scared or uncomfortable.

This past year, a record 7 AMBER Alerts were issued by provincial law enforcement. The AMBER Alert is an indispensable and lifesaving tool that galvanizes an entire community to be on the look-out for missing children. Thankfully, all the children involved were located safe and sound within hours of their disappearance. We were proud to assist the Sûreté du Québec and the Montreal Police in searching for these children and returning them safely home.

We are also grateful to the Minister of Justice for awarding us with a very substantial one-time grant that enabled the organization to modernize its operations and develop shineforlife.org, a new website entirely dedicated to our SHINE program. The implementation of the Salesforce Platform will streamline many of our operational processes, allowing real-time access to the organization's key performance indicators. As well, all our data will be stored in one centralized location.

All of us at the Missing Children's Network, along with our Board of Directors, were deeply moved that, despite economic uncertainty, our donors and corporate partners continued to support our mission generously to help find missing children, reduce child sexual exploitation and prevent child victimization.

We would like to thank them sincerely for their unwavering support during this trying time. They are the reason that we can promise the children and families we serve that our work will never stop.



## Mission

The Missing Children's Network was founded in May 1985 following the abduction and murder, a few months earlier, of a 4-year-old child. The primary objective was to provide support, accompaniment, and guidance to parents of missing children.

Decades of commitment, help and research have allowed the Missing Children's Network's Family Support team to acquire exceptional expertise in abduction, missing children cases and assisting bereaved parents. Families and their supporters recognize the importance of our unique services and highly appreciate our collaboration. Our incomparable experience allows us to better support and equip parents and participants involved in these tragedies.

Today, our services and programs address several facets of this issue, including awareness, prevention and education as well as the search for missing children and the prevention of the sexual exploitation of minors.

The main objective of the Missing Children's Network is to contribute, through education and public awareness, to reducing the disappearance of children and preventing their victimization

## Affiliations

Over the years and through its interventions, the Missing Children's Network has built a vast network of institutions engaged in cooperation and exchange, which includes the National Centre for Missing Persons and Unidentified Remains (NCMPUR) and regional youth protection departments (DYP). This collaboration and our close ties with authorities allow police services to focus on locating the missing child, while we task ourselves with supporting and accompanying families through the investigation.

As a front-line partner of Quebec's AMBER Alert program, we regularly collaborate with Global Affairs Canada, Children's Litigation Section, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) and Canada Border Services Agency.





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Executive Director  
Missing Children's Network

## At The Heart Of Our Mission – Bringing Missing Children Home

According to statistics released by the RCMP, 3,456 children were reported missing in 2021. In Quebec, an average of 12 children are reported missing daily.

Not only is a missing child an unimaginable nightmare for a parent, but it is also a tragedy for the entire province.

2021  
.....  
**3,456**  
**missing children**  
Source: RCMP

.....  
**In Quebec**  
**12 young people**  
**missing daily**  
Source: Missing Children's Network





# Support for Families Across Quebec

In 2021, the Missing Children’s Network recorded 96 new cases of disappearance, of which 88 involved run away youth and 8 children were abducted by a family member. These additional cases were added to the previous 104 active and unresolved files from previous years. In total, our team managed 200 cases.

We accompanied and supported families from each of Quebec's administrative regions as well as from other jurisdictions in the rest of Canada and the United States.

**In the processing of these cases, we worked closely with the following police forces:**

- Service de police de la Ville de Montréal (SPVM),
- Service de police de l’agglomération de Longueuil,
- Service de police de la Ville de Québec,
- Service de police de Laval,
- Service de police de la Ville de Gatineau,
- Service de police d’Ottawa,
- Sherbrooke Police Service,
- Saguenay Police Service,
- Trois-Rivières Police Service,
- Régie intermunicipale de police Roussillon,
- Service de police de la Ville de Blainville,
- Sûreté municipale de Granby,
- Service de police de Saint-Jérôme,
- Sûreté du Québec (SQ),
- Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP).

**These collaborations helped resolve 88 cases!**



# Our Family Support Team *in action*

**2021**

**Processed 521 telephone calls**

concerning active cases of disappearances, prevention inquiries and support.

**Circulated 7 AMBER alerts in support of the Sûreté du Québec.**

**Produced an annual poster** profiling 12 unresolved cases.

**On May 25<sup>th</sup> : Commemorated National Missing Children's Day**



# Collaboration and Networking

To be impactful, we have a responsibility as adults to show leadership and vigilance towards our children. Through increased collaboration, new strategies and a firm resolution among interested parties, we must unite to protect our most vulnerable citizens– our children. Each of them counts on us and deserves nothing less.

## This year, our team...

1

**continued its partnerships** with members of the Our Missing Children program, as well as collaborated with Global Affairs Canada's section for Children's Litigation, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Canada Border Services Agency, the Central Authority – Quebec, Batshaw Youth and Family Centres and numerous police forces across Quebec;

2

**consolidated and forged connections** with several women's shelters, community organizations and key figures such as the CLSCs, Social Workers in Youth Centres, as well as lawyers specializing in family law in Quebec, Canada and the United States;

3

**shared information and collaborated** with several organizations dedicated to the search for missing children in Canada and abroad: Canadian Centre for Child Protection, Missing Children Society of Canada and the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children in Washington.



## Keeping Hope Alive – Poster Campaign

The distribution of a missing child's photo can make all the difference between a rapid return home or a prolonged search. Indeed, statistics have shown that one in five children is located thanks to citizens who recognized the child from a poster.

The Missing Children's Network is proud to be able to count on the collaboration of many businesses, law enforcement agencies, transportation companies, community organizations and hundreds of volunteers who eagerly distribute these posters and search notices throughout Quebec. Their invaluable support allows the Missing Children's Network to enhance its ability in safely recovering missing children.



## This year, thanks to the involvement of our partners, we have:

- distributed posters of missing children with the collaboration of Total Logistics Group of Companies;
- maintained our partnership with the Montreal Alouettes – in total, **27 cases of missing children** were displayed on the big screen during the regular season;
- Relaunched cases of unsolved disappearances on the Missing Children's Network's social media channels.





# Prevention, Education and Awareness

## The Shine Educational Program: A Protective Shield for our Children!



To reduce the risk of a runaway child falling prey to sexual exploitation, it is crucial to focus on the child's protective factors. For this reason, the SHINE program was created and has been deployed throughout Quebec since 2017.

SHINE's positive approach invites students to participate actively without frightening them, a feeling that often emerges when discussing sexual exploitation. We work on students' self-esteem, their ability to set limits, the development of healthy relationships as well as the criticism of gender stereotypes. By addressing these topics in an open and engaging way, youth are better protected as they gain the ability to be assertive and ask for help when needed.

### 2021 was a milestone year for the Missing Children's Network's team as we multiplied our actions in this sphere by:

- Delivering 481 workshops reaching 12,085 students. The team visited schools within 29 School Boards, as well as several schools in the private sector. A total of 13 administrative regions of Quebec were sensitized.
- Presenting 6 seminars to 109 parents on child safety. The presentations took place in very diverse environments: schools, daycares, and family resource centres from 3 different administrative regions. This offered the SHINE program the opportunity to target specific audiences.
- Hosting seminars on child safety with 12 day camp facilitators

### Reaching All Youth, Without Exception

SHINE is adapted to address young people who are questioning their gender identity as well as those with learning disabilities.

In 2019, SHINE was translated into Mohawk, Inuktitut, Cree and Innu. In addition to these versions, training was offered to First Nations workers who have a better understanding of their communities and can now model and align the exercises with their realities and add their expertise through games and concrete examples.

### Our initiatives with marginalized groups are multiplying:

- **Visited Inukjuak** in partnership with the public health agency to lead prevention workshops with young people and develop adapted content on healthy relationships.
- **Visited Puvirnituk** to facilitate training with the Hudson Bay Early Childhood Intervention Team on child safety and sexual assault prevention.

### Key Collaborations and Partnerships

In order to reach more youth and to offer them relevant and up-to-date tools, the team was able to count on the support and collaboration of key professionals:

- **In collaboration with the YWCA Montreal and Laurier Macdonald High School**, the prevention team developed an informative and educational video capsule on sexual exploitation in Quebec for English-speaking students enrolled in Secondary 1.
- **In partnership with the CISS de Laval and the Service de police de la Ville de Laval**, the team participated in SEXTO, a video capsule aimed to raise awareness and prevent the sharing of intimate photos.
- Our SHINE Coordinator is an active participant on **White Ribbon's community consultation committee** with the goal of developing an important awareness project on online sexual exploitation for youth from marginalized communities.
- The SHINE program can now count on a privileged contact with **the public health agency of the Nunavik territory**. The first steps of a partnership with the sexual health department are in place. This collaboration will leverage the Missing Children's Network's expertise and knowledge in preventing sexual exploitation and adapting the content to the realities of northern communities.





## The SHINE Jr. Workshop Is Born!



While the SHINE workshop was warmly welcomed by schools and communities, we found that it was necessary to start addressing the issue of sexual exploitation with a younger audience (Cycle 2 students).

For this reason, in 2021, we added a new component to the program: the SHINE Jr. workshop. Together with illustrator Amélie Martel, we created three storyboard characters: Jasmine, Gab and Raphaël. Through this new workshop, we follow their story addressing the same themes and concepts while favouring games and activities for youth and adapting the vocabulary for this age group.



## Teaming Up To Combat The Sexual Exploitation Of Minors

On February 26th, the Missing Children's Network, Aurora House and Maison Kekpart joined Conservative MP Pierre Paul-Hus, Official Opposition Shadow Minister of Public Services and Procurement, at a press conference calling on the House of Commons to support its Motion No. 63, which calls on the government to recognize the urgency of combating the sexual exploitation of minors.

## When Siblings Live A Traumatic Situation



For many years, we have observed the distress siblings experience when a tragedy occurs. Too often, their suffering is set aside, and they become a support system for their parents.

We realize now that siblings can experience dual suffering: not only experiencing their own personal traumatic loss, but also having to minimize their own feelings in order to not burden their parents any further. In collaboration with AFPAD, we participated in the creation of a resource guide for siblings.

We hope that this guide will lead to a better understanding of the hardships borne by siblings and to adopt strategies to alleviate their suffering. Siblings are a complex universe in which a great understanding of social relationships develops. Whether they are warm or scenes of sad disagreements, fraternal relationships certainly have an impact on who we are.





## Inspiring Interviews with our Partners

For a second year, Patrick Bergeron, Chief Liaison with Police Forces and the Community, conducted interviews with several of our key partners who discussed the role of police forces in cases of disappearances and abductions in Quebec.

### This year, we interviewed:



**Detective Lieutenant François Petit of the Service de police de la Ville de Montréal.**

We discussed the role of the SPVM in disappearances, whether they are runaways, parental and non-parental abductions, as well as the criteria to meet to trigger an AMBER Alert.



**Sergeant Patrick Berthelot of the Sûreté du Québec.**

We examined the AMBER Alert, the triggering process, the role of the media and the circumstances that justify the withdrawal of these alerts.



**Constable Yelena Handy, investigator at the RCMP's National Centre for Missing Persons and Unidentified Remains.**

We discussed Our Missing Children's program and the RCMP's support of police forces in national and international missing and abduction cases. In addition, we presented the transportation program available in cases involving the reunification of children following parental abduction and addressed the topic of age-progressed photos.

## The Disappearance Of A Loved One – An Endless Nightmare



In order to support families living with the disappearance of a loved one, as well as the professionals that accompany them, the *Association des familles de personnes assassinées ou disparues* (AFPAD), Missing Children's Network (MCN) and *Meurtres et disparitions irrésolus du Québec* (MDIQ), posted four informative videos online on our respective social media platforms.

Accompanied by experts in police matters, psychological support and media, seven

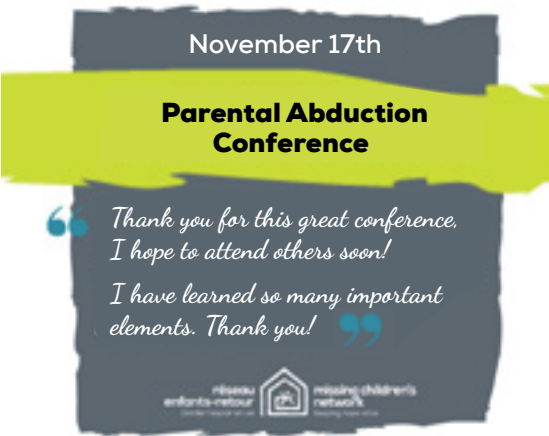
families share their experience, explain the challenges encountered and offer advice to all those agonizing over the worst nightmare possible.

## The Crime of Parental Abduction

As part of National Week for Victims and Survivors of Criminal Acts, and thanks to a generous grant by Justice Canada, the Missing Children's Network hosted a three-hour virtual session on November 17<sup>th</sup>.

We addressed the issue of parental abductions and the devastating consequences on the left-behind parent and kidnapped child.

Our information session brought together our community partners (law enforcement, social workers, family lawyers, community organizations) and sensitized them to the seriousness of this issue and what we can do collectively to prevent such incidents, support the left-behind parent and discuss resources and tools available in the community. We also looked at common emotional and behavioral responses to parental abduction, along with trauma informed treatment interventions and also explored the challenges with reintegration.





## A Voice for Missing Children



Once again, several media outlets called on the expertise of the Missing Children's Network.

Whether amongst traditional and print media or on specialized platforms – 49 interviews were granted on various topics, including the criteria for triggering an AMBER Alert, parental abduction, sexual exploitation of minors and

child safety.

For the tenth year in a row, we had the privilege of collaborating with Global Montreal on National Missing Children's Day. This partnership has not only increased awareness of the factors that can lead to the disappearance of children and youth, but also informed parents and educators on ways to better protect children from abduction, assault, and exploitation.

## Building a Caring and Supportive Virtual Community



**39,891**  
followers



**1,568**  
followers



**1,420**  
followers



**411**  
followers

## Fundraising Events

During 2021, the vast majority of the Missing Children's Network's fundraising events were canceled due to the on-going pandemic. However, we were able to host the following:

### Golf Classic – For Our Kids!

We warmly thank David Cervantes of CBRE and Brent Robinson of Cushman & Wakefield for their tireless involvement in making this annual event possible and a delightful occasion for our golfers.

After a one-year absence and with much anticipation, we eagerly awaited the arrival of 134 golfers to our 14th Annual Golf Classic! Despite the thunder and torrential rains that greeted us in the early hours of the morning, nothing could dampen the spirits of our guests! We were all set for a wonderful day of golfing at Hillsdale and raising awareness about the plight of missing and exploited children.

We are elated and proud to announce that thanks to the legendary generosity of our corporate partners and all of our guests, this year's edition raised an incredible \$105,000!

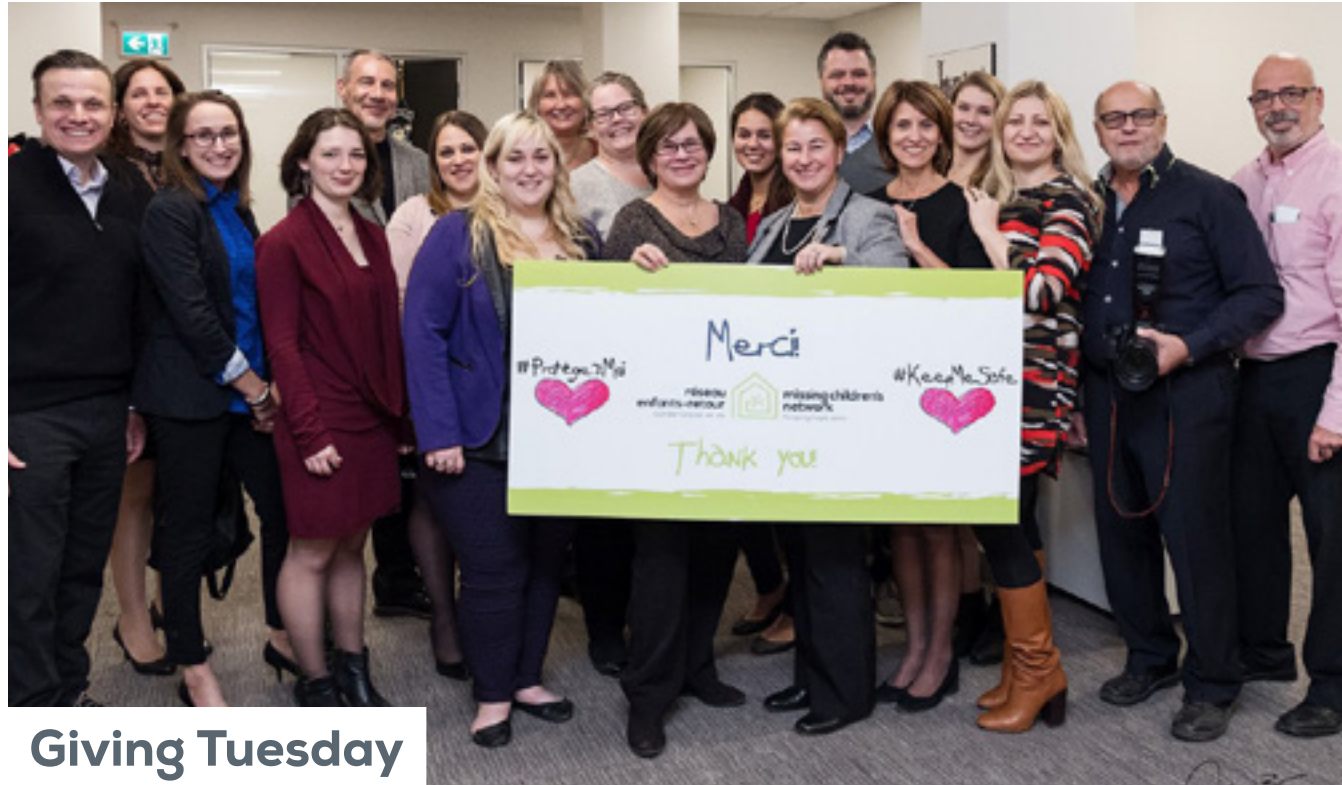


These funds were invested in our SHINE personal safety workshops, and as a result, thousands of students in Quebec developed the skills and knowledge needed to stay safe in their daily lives, both in the real world and online. We can all take pride in knowing that our efforts contribute to building will go towards building safer communities for our children.

An event of this magnitude is not possible without the generous participation and loyal support of our corporate partners. Sincerest and heartfelt appreciation is extended to the following: Co-Title Sponsors of the tournament, eStruxture and CBRE, Supporting partner, Schneider Electric, as well as Redbourne, iA Immobilier, Broccolini, Sekure Merchants, FL Fuller Landau, Fraternité des policiers et policières de Montréal, IG Patrimoine de gestion, Délice Pigalle and Fondation Air Canada.







## Giving Tuesday

On November 29th, we invited Quebecers to join the Giving Tuesday movement and help us raise \$40,000 to fund our #SHINEFORLIFE campaign.

Thanks to the outpouring of generosity of our donors, we raised more than \$49,000. This funding allowed us to increase the personal safety of hundreds of young school-aged students across the province. We believe that every child deserves to live their childhood in complete safety.



## An Important Contribution During a Pandemic

The Missing Children's Network would like to sincerely thank the Department of Justice for awarding a \$108,000 grant from the Fonds d'aide aux victimes d'actes criminels (FAVAC). This amount made it possible to undertake the modernization of our technological equipment and to develop the website [shineforlife.org](https://shineforlife.org).

A campaign to promote [shineforlife.org](https://shineforlife.org) is planned for Fall 2022.



# Thank You To Our Donors!

Our partners and donors are part of a unique group of people who, like us, believe that all children deserve to grow up safely and well protected.

Again, and despite the difficult economic context, many of them continued to unite with our cause and ensured that we can bring missing children home and prevent further disappearances.

## Public Donors

- Justice Canada
- Ministère de la Justice du Québec – Fonds d'aide aux victimes d'actes criminels (FAVAC)
- Ministry of Labour, Employment and Solidarity
- Government of Canada



## Discretionary Funds

We also thank the elected officials who, through their discretionary budgets, supported our mission:

- Christian Dubé
- Christine St-Pierre
- Claire Isabelle
- Enrico Ciccone
- Éric Girard
- Francine Charbonneau
- François Legault
- Gaétan Barrette
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- Vincent Marissal

## Heart of Gold Partner

Donations of **\$100,000** or more

- Anonymous

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**Missing Children's Network,  
a trusted partner in the accompaniment  
of families living an unimaginable nightmare  
and in the fight against the aggression  
and sexual exploitation of minors!**

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