

## UPF Canada's Montreal Peace Road Balloons When Joined By Diverse Crowd

Robert Duffy  
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**Montreal, Canada** – On a beautiful Saturday morning on the cusp of autumn, with clear skies and a gentle breeze, the annual Montreal Peace Road event – scheduled on September 21 to coincide with the UN International Day of Peace – began at Parc Beaudet in the borough of Saint-Laurent, Montreal. The UPF-Quebec organizing team was joined by local and national Lions Club members, elected officials from both the provincial and municipal governments, cyclists of all ages, and members of several other local organizations representing women’s and cultural issues.



The program opened with words of encouragement from elected officials and event partners for the fifty or so participants gathered in front of the Peace Monument. Among the dignitaries addressing the group were **Member of Provincial Parliament Alice Abou-Khalil** for Laval Fabre (who brought her own bike!), **Mayor of Saint-Laurent Alan DeSousa**, **City Councillor Aref Salem**, and other dignitaries such as **Mr. Antoine Nahas**, Canadian president of Lions Club International, and representatives of several other organizations. **Dr. Franco Famularo**, national president of UPF-Canada, served as MC, and **Mr. Robert Duffy**, secretary general of UPF-Canada, gave a few words on the origin and inspiration for the Peace Road concept.



Among the many heartfelt speeches on the theme of peace was the appeal by Saint-Laurent Mayor DeSousa to take the time to reflect on the significance of the gesture all were making with this event.



The dignitaries then launched the cyclists on a 15-kilometer trek across the north shore of the Island of Montreal to another park, Parc Eusèbe-Ménard in the northeastern borough of Montréal-Nord, while the remaining non-cyclists paraded around the park before setting off for Montréal-Nord, where they were greeted with great fanfare by the brass band from the **Centre Bon Courage**, an organization that works with underprivileged youth.



Two dances by youngsters followed, and a young woman, **Mégane**, from the **Centre des Jeunes l'Ouverture**, a youth center in Montréal-Nord, sang a beautiful rendition of "Heal the World." Mégane then received a certificate of appreciation from UPF on behalf of her organization's director, **Ms. Sheila Fortuné**, for her tireless commitment to helping youth.

A number of performances by young people from the Centre Bon Courage followed, and a certificate of appreciation was likewise presented to its director, **Mrs. Kadietou Savadogo**. Speeches were given by Dr. Franco Famularo and UPA member **Mr. Jonathan Gaspar**, who spoke of his gratitude for the



suffering of his ancestors who wanted to create a better world and for his experience of the Peace Road in Korea, as well as by **Mr. Marco Stocchero**, governor of District U-1 Lions Club, and **Rev. Serge Célestin**, president of the Conseil des Leaders Religieux de Montréal-Nord (CLRNM).



A letter of support from **Ms. Madwa-Nika Cadet**, MP for Bourassa-Sauvé, was read in which she stated: "The world may not be a better place today, the world may not be a better place tomorrow, but thanks to the actions we take today, the world will be a better place one day."

The group ballooned to over 70 people as many members of the Lions Club, the Lebanon Club, the Femmes Internationales Murs Brisés, the Centre Innovation Bien-être Numérique Québec (CIBNQ), the CLRNM and other friends of UPF joined for the conclusion of the event, a picnic in the park.



This activity will continue to build and strengthen over time, as we faithfully maintain an annual event and work together with our wonderful partners.