

Unprecedented success for the 5/30 Health and Wellness Challenge in 2010: 124,200 Quebecers answered the call of Marie-Claude Savard

Montreal, April 23, 2010 – Quebecers responded in large numbers to the appeal of this year’s spokeswoman, Marie-Claude Savard, and took action for their health in the sixth edition of the *5/30 Health and Wellness Challenge*. For 6 weeks, from March 1 to April 11, 124,200 participants took up the challenge to eat better, move more and take better care of themselves, at their own pace – and above all enjoyably! Over 500,000 people have registered for the *Health Challenge* since its first edition, in 2005.

Taking care of the body ...but also the mind

The *Health Challenge* this year proposed a more global approach to health, the Wellness goal being added to the “5/30” (eat at least 5 portions of fruit and vegetables and move for at least 30 minutes every day). This new feature, made possible thanks to the support of the Government of Québec, AstraZeneca and the program *Prends soin de toi*, stressed the importance of taking care of not just one’s body but the mind as well.

“We live in a society with a frenzied pace of life and it seemed important to us to offer participants tools that would help them learn to maintain a balance in their lives,” explains Dr. Louis Gagnon, co-president of ACTI-MENU, the organization behind the Health Challenge. “That’s why this year the Health Challenge offered 5 Wellness goals. Of those, ‘having some time to yourself,’ ‘opening up to relaxation’ and ‘assigning priority to priorities’ were the most popular, but the two others, ‘communicating better’ and ‘maintaining relationships with others,’ also found takers.”

An enormous health movement the size of Québec

The *5/30 Health and Wellness Challenge* is at the centre of an enormous health movement that encourages Quebecers to take concrete steps on a daily basis, and more and more of them are doing so as part of a group: **14,094 families** and **3,609 teams** made up of friends or work colleagues undertook the *Health Challenge* in 2010, proving that taking part in numbers is highly motivating. Moreover, aware of the importance of furthering the health and greater welfare of their employees, executives of more than **600 companies**, from all sectors of activity, promoted the *Health Challenge* in their organizations.

In addition, a pilot project carried out for a second consecutive year with the collaboration of the Union of Québec Municipalities, the Fédération Québécoise des Municipalités, the Réseau québécois de villes et villages en santé and the Government of Québec enabled **42 municipalities** to mobilize their citizens around the *Health Challenge*. This year, the City of Laval as well as Sherbrooke became actively involved in promoting the *Challenge* among their citizens as municipalities with over 100,000 residents. They were recognized during the closing event of the *5/30 Health and Wellness Challenge* on April 23, 2010, in the presence of the Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Yves Bolduc. The municipalities that had the highest participation rate in their respective categories were also rewarded:

- Victoriaville (category 40,000 to fewer than 100,000 residents);
- Ste-Marie-de-Beauce (category 5,000 to fewer than 40,000 residents);
- St-Elzéar-de-Beauce (category fewer than 5,000 residents).

Finally, as is the case every year, the *Health Challenge* could count on the contribution of numerous partners in the healthcare network, including the essential collaboration of the Québec Public Health Departments and the Health and Social Services Centres, who promoted the *Challenge* in the four corners of the province.

A winning formula!

Motivating and positive, the *5/30 Health and Wellness Challenge* offers participants free support in various forms: a participant kit offered by IGA, weekly e-mails of encouragement (which will continue all year) and the Internet site www.530HealthAndWellnessChallenge.ca, which is filled with tips and advice. The on-line community and the Facebook page allow participants to support and encourage one another. Additionally this year, 1,000 TELUS subscribers registered in the *Health Challenge* received, as part of a pilot project, advice, tips and little words of encouragement via text messaging. Those texts were sent daily, and completely free of charge, during the 6 weeks of the *Health Challenge*, on participants' cellphones.

The *Health Challenge* also offered participants the chance of winning prizes with a total value of over **\$22,000**, notably a trip for four offered by IGA and a registered education savings plan offered to the "2010 Desjardins Health Challenge Family."

About the 5/30 Health and Wellness Challenge

The *5/30 Health and Wellness Challenge* is presented by ACTI-MENU, which is associated with the Prevention Division of the Montreal Heart Institute (MHI), in partnership with the Québec Public Health Departments, the Québec Ministry of Health and Social Services, the program *Prends soin de toi* and the Canadian Cancer Society. It is carried out in partnership with IGA, Desjardins, TELUS Health Solutions, AstraZeneca, Pfizer, Danone, Evian, Exceldor, Multi-Marques, MOOV and Curves.

– 30 –

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