



CANADIAN
RED CROSS
QUÉBEC

LAC-MÉGANTIC ONE YEAR LATER



On July 6, 2013, the attention of the entire world was focused on Lac-Mégantic. The tragedy that took place as people watched on would forever change the history of the town and the surrounding community. Here and elsewhere, people's thoughts turned to the Red Cross as a way of expressing solidarity and providing practical support to the people of Lac-Mégantic. Over the last year, the Red Cross has been able to help those affected by the disaster, either in direct assistance or through projects designed to promote the recovery of the local economy. The work continues. Following is an outline of what has been done so far.

RED CROSS OPERATIONS IN A NUTSHELL



3 201 people have been or are being helped, including:



241 workers and students who lost their jobs



115 self-employed people and business owners who were evacuated or lost their livelihoods



113 grieving families, including **32 children** who lost one or both parents



47 196 debit cards and vouchers have been distributed



150 local volunteers have been trained and are available every week to provide assistance

Assistance planned:
\$5.6M

Assistance provided:
(money spent, committed or contracted for)
\$8.9M

Lac-Mégantic Support Fund
\$14.5 million

Support for:

170 businesses

16 not-for-profit organizations affected by the disaster

32 assistance projects submitted by not-for-profit organizations

1 healthcare project in conjunction with Le Granit healthcare and social services centre (CSSS)

5 education projects in conjunction with the Hauts-Cantons school board, its business services division and the Cégep Beauce-Appalaches

41 economic recovery projects

	Assistance provided (\$)	Assistance planned (\$)	Total (\$)
 Assistance to evacuees and others affected, workers who have lost their livelihoods and grieving families (including emergency assistance)	3,930,000	280,000	4,210,000
 Economic recovery	746,000	1,854,000	2,600,000
 Community recovery and reconstruction	-	2,000,000	2,000,000
 Healthcare projects	1,000,000	800,000	1,800,000
 Support for entrepreneurs	1,283,000	-	1,283,000
 Support for not-for-profit organizations	730,000	450,000	1,180,000
 School projects	400,000	-	400,000
 Disaster prevention and readiness	-	200,000	200,000
 Community support	100,000	-	100,000
 Fundraising costs (5%)	677,000	-	677,000
Total	\$8.9M	\$5.6M	\$14.5M

Édith Laflamme

Assistance to workers who have lost their jobs

Édith Laflamme lives on rue Dollard, close to downtown. On the night of July 6, 2013, she was awakened by the sound of her neighbour banging on her door. She hastily left her home, with her husband and son, and fled the flaming cauldron that had once been the downtown core of Lac-Mégantic. Ms. Laflamme was able to get back into her apartment the next day, but her job at Dollarama, which had been destroyed in the fire, has not reappeared to this day. That night, she lost much more than her job: she also lost close friends and acquaintances.

Red Cross help arrived at the right time for her and her family. Since she had been working at Dollarama for only a few weeks, she did not qualify for employment insurance, and since her husband had a job, temporary help through social assistance was not available. That was when a friend told her about the Red Cross. By the end of July, Ms. Laflamme had found a measure of relief through the Red Cross assistance program for workers. "That first day, when they said they could help me, is something I will never forget. The volunteers took the time to listen to us, and they were all very sympathetic," recalls Ms. Laflamme, in a voice filled with emotion. In the months that followed, Red Cross assistance proved indispensable for Ms. Laflamme and her family: "There are no words to express the gratitude we feel towards all the Red Cross employees, volunteers and donors."



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Ms. Laflamme realizes that there are still some clouds on the horizon, but she does not let it get her down. "In spite of everything, we tell ourselves that there are people who are even worse off than we are," she says, determined to hold her head high as she faces the challenges ahead of her.



Economic recovery

Thanks to the generosity of its donors, the Red Cross has been able to extend its assistance to businesses that can contribute to the recovery of the local economy. The goal is to maintain or create jobs, and maintain or improve the output and diversity of local businesses, while attracting and retaining workers.

Red Cross assistance complements insurance payouts, governmental programs and other programs,

such as the recovery program – *Relançons Lac-Mégantic* – launched by the local chamber of commerce, and the *Avenir Mégantic* fund established by the municipality of Lac-Mégantic to ensure the future of the area.

A local advisory subcommittee has been set up to consider projects as they are submitted, and a partnership arrangement will be developed to monitor projects and ensure their success.

Component	Details	Funding committed to date (\$)
Projects involving businesses in the downtown core, and those that were relocated after the demolition of their premises.	For example, assistance for business relocation, including leasehold improvements and the purchase of equipment, furnishings and materials	247,000
Group projects	Financial assistance for projects impacting businesses in Le Granit RCM	188,000
Support and guidance for entrepreneurs	Financial assistance for consultations with economic experts to develop business plans, budgets, etc.	50,000
Individual projects	Financial assistance for projects involving businesses located in Le Granit RCM that will create jobs and improve the output and diversity of the local economy. Examples include start-ups of businesses that will create jobs and provide services not previously available locally.	261,000
Total		\$746,000



Community recovery and reconstruction

Some \$2 million will be devoted to projects aimed at the sustainable reconstruction of the community environment.



Support for not-for-profit organizations

This is designed to ensure that such organizations will be able to continue their activities, and even increase their ability to provide services. For example, a project by the Maison des jeunes was approved so that a youth centre might expand its activities to keep pace with the increased number of young people who use its facilities. Among other things, this amount will help to develop new activities, offer longer hours and purchase equipment.



Healthcare projects

These are designed to help people cope with the effects of stress and anxiety and respond to requirements for individual and group psychotherapy, guidance for families through the various administrative procedures, in home help, home alterations for persons with disabilities, respite care for families, the availability of psychotherapists on the premises of helping organizations, and so on.

In this connection, the Red Cross supports the psychotherapy staff at Le Granit CSSS, among others.

Luce Robineau

Support for entrepreneurs

Luce Robineau is from Montréal. She settled in the Lac-Mégantic area in 2004. In 2011, she decided to establish IDfolle, which translates roughly as “crazy idea”, a store, café and studio that was prospering until tragedy struck on July 6, 2013. Her business was located in the very heart of downtown, and was completely destroyed by the explosion.

The weeks that followed were very upsetting for Ms. Robineau. In a state of shock, she decided to take a time-out to think things over, take stock and rebuild her energy for the fall. A major undertaking laid ahead: the relocation of her store.

Through a program created specifically to help Lac-Mégantic businesses affected by the disaster, she was able to devote herself fully to her new project. “The Red Cross provided reassurance and a measure of financial security. I no longer had to worry about the long-term basic needs of myself and my family – in other words, how we were going to eat,” recalls Ms. Robineau, surveying her new business premises. Last April, her relocation project was accomplished when she opened her doors in premises on rue Laval.

“I feel very positive about the future of my business. The facade will be fixed in June, and the accommodation will open in July. I find the project extremely motivating, and I am quite proud of it. Despite the business climate in the town, which remains fragile, it is important for me to stay here and soldier on. Lac-Mégantic needs people to get back on its feet. There is no way we can forget what happened, nor should we. We have to keep going, look to the future and remain infinitely patient. Our only ally is time.”



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For Luce Robineau, help from the Red Cross signalled a turning point in terms of the resumption of her business. She is most grateful to the organization and to its donors. “I am extremely grateful to the Red Cross. I understand now what its role is, and for me it is always an honour to spread the word about it. I was welcomed there in a very hospitable way; the people are dedicated and extremely kind. Many, many thanks!”



School projects

The goals of our school projects include supporting personal development and the learning of new skills for those who have lost their jobs and cannot return to them, or resume the same line of work elsewhere. For example, a project run jointly with the Hauts-Cantons school board provided occupational training for 17 people last winter.

In order to mitigate the negative impact of the disaster on young people, specialized staff have been hired to work in the schools and at the local cégep: remedial teachers, psychoeducators and others. The Red Cross is also supporting individual educational projects, such as Samajam, which is designed to help students succeed.



Disaster prevention and readiness

This component will provide the community with the tools and resources it needs to enhance its resilience when disaster strikes, through first-aid, emergency management and similar courses.



Community support

This portion of the program was developed in cooperation with a number of local organizations and partners in order to promote recreational, social, cultural and sports activities that are free, or provided at reduced cost. The goal is to promote gatherings of families and target groups, including vulnerable members of society, people under 30, and others. An example was Red Cross assistance for celebrations during the Festive Season.

The local advisory committee

We wish to thank all members of the advisory committee, which works with the Red Cross to ensure that the assistance provided matches the needs of the local people and the business community:



Bernard Lacroix, Executive Director, Hauts-Cantons School Board; **Michel Léveillé**, Director General, Red Cross, Quebec Division; **Gilles Bertrand**, Executive Director, Town of Lac-Mégantic; **Mylène Turcotte**, Chair of the Advisory Committee, and Chair, Quebec Council of the Red Cross; **Isabelle Hallé**, Executive Director, Chambre de commerce de Lac-Mégantic; **Lise Pouliot**, Hauts-Cantons School Board; **Denis Landry**, Director of the Recovery Department at the Ministère de la Sécurité publique; **Vicky Orichefsky**, Le Granit CSSS; **Jeannot Gosselin**, Le Granit CSSS; **Charles Rodrigue**, Business Consultant, Lac-Mégantic Local Employment Centre; and **Monique Phérigong Lenoir**, Executive Director, Community Development Corporation (CDC).

Missing from the photograph are:

Colette Roy Laroche, Mayor of Lac-Mégantic; **Guilaine Beaudoin**, Assistant Commissioner, Local Development Corporation (CLD), Le Granit RCM; **Ginette Isabel**, Executive Director, Community Development Assistance Corporation (SADC); and **Line Crevier** of the Insurance Bureau of Canada.

THEY ARE ON SITE IN LAC MÉGANTIC. THESE ARE THEIR STORIES.

Réjean Bourque

Volunteer since July 6, 2013

Mr. Bourque is from Disraeli, but as far as people receiving Red Cross assistance are concerned, he is one of the “locals” in Lac-Mégantic. On site from the earliest moments of the disaster, he has been a key participant in the recovery process for the people of Lac-Mégantic. It must be said that Mr. Bourque has always enjoyed helping his community. He has served as a police officer, an ambulance attendant and a firefighter. His years of experience in such occupations helped him maintain a cool head, thereby winning the trust of the local people.

Volunteering to help the community

Given his impeccable ethics and the effectiveness of his work, people might think he had been volunteering for years, but Mr. Bourque has been with the Red Cross only since the tragedy that befell Lac-Mégantic. He did not miss a beat in offering assistance to the people of his community, and he was on the first team of spontaneous volunteers formed by the Red Cross. “Over the first four months, we could see that most of the residents were still in distress, but we gradually saw signs of change. Today, we see a community that is proud, determined to win through, its eyes firmly on the future: the new town of Lac-Mégantic,” says Mr. Bourque.

Rebuilding strength and cheerfulness

What makes Mr. Bourque proud to be a Red Cross volunteer is the way people are affected when they receive help. “One client experienced post-traumatic shock to the extent that it left her speechless when she returned to her apartment, more than a month after the explosion. During her first Red Cross visits, she was completely shattered. The support of the expert team of volunteers enabled her to press on, and she told us she found it a source of energy for her. She still has a long road ahead of her, of course, but with each visit, we can see improvement. For us as volunteers, success comes from seeing someone like that getting her strength back, and her natural cheerfulness.”



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Belonging to a well-structured organization

While Mr. Bourque has been a volunteer only for a few months, he continues to be impressed by the way the Red Cross is structured: “I am happy to be a member of an organization of volunteers who care about their neighbours, and to have delivered all these assistance programs with absolute impartiality.”



Audrey Dubois

A new Red Cross employee in Lac-Mégantic

"On the morning of July 6, I learned that my town was in flames, but that my parents were safe and sound. I nevertheless began the day with a bad feeling inside, which got worse by the minute. At 8:30, I received news that would change my life forever - my brother and his friends were all missing. That evening, they had gone to the Musi-Café for a drink. Always looking on the bright side, I believed that anything was possible. Surely they had been able to hide somewhere, and would re-emerge from the carnage. I finally believed the awful truth only when the investigators confirmed that Max was dead. It was the beginning of a long summer.

My memories of the first few days are not very clear, but from the earliest moments, the Red Cross and all its volunteers were taking care of not only family members looking for loved ones, but also the entire population of the Lac-Mégantic area. People were anxious, disoriented and terrified. I thought at once that it was admirable that such an organization existed, but the speed with which it became operational was the most impressive!

"The volunteers and the employees welcomed me into the Red Cross family with open arms."

I went through the painful experience of losing friends, a whole downtown, but above all my brother, and I said to myself, "staying home does nothing to make things better." I therefore decided to apply for a position that would enable me not only to get my life back in order, but also to find fulfilment as a citizen of Lac-Mégantic by getting involved in helping the community.

I started working for the Red Cross last December, and since then, I feel I have grown as a person. A year has passed since July 6, 2013, and I see my town getting back on its feet, rebuilding and slowly healing.

The volunteers and the employees welcomed me into the Red Cross family with open arms. Helping people from my community, and knowing that the help we provide will enable my town to rise again, is by far the biggest accomplishment of my personal and professional life. As one of my colleagues often says, the real reward is seeing people's faces light up as they leave the Red Cross offices, where we have been able to help them."

"A year has passed since July 6, 2013, and I see my town getting back on its feet, rebuilding and slowly healing."



OUR PARTNERS

Major Partners

These partners support the Red Cross through substantial regular donations or by organizing major annual fundraising campaigns among their client base or their employees. Thanks to them, the Red Cross is ready to assist those who need it most, when they need it the most in an emergency.

Banque Royale	Hydro-Québec
Bell	J.A. Bombardier Foundation
<i>Campagne Entraide</i> among employees and retirees or the Government of Quebec	La Capitale Financial Group
City of Laval	Power Corporation Canada
City of Montreal	Quebecor
City of Quebec	Rio Tinto Alcan
Desjardins	Royal Bank
	STM
	Walmart Canada

Ready When the Time Comes

Ready When the Time Comes Red Cross partners are ready to provide backup when needed. In Lac-Mégantic, more than 100 employees and retirees from the following businesses and associations joined response and relief efforts.

Acklands Grainger	Bombardier Inc.
Association provinciale des retraités d'Hydro-Québec	J.A. Bombardier Foundation

Media Partners

The following media offered free coverage for the Red Cross fundraising campaign supporting Lac-Mégantic.

Main partner : Québecor

Les Affaires	Hebdos Québec
Canal V	Pattison Affichage
CBS Affichage	106.7 CJIT
Le Devoir	Transcontinental

Major Corporate Donations

\$200,000 or more

Costco and its clients	Metro and its clients
CP Rail	Quebecor and its employees
Desjardins and its members	Walmart and its clients
IGA and its clients	

\$100,000 or more

Association des concessionnaires Ford du Québec	Intact Insurance
Caisse de dépôt et de placement du Québec	J.A. Bombardier Foundation
Canadian Tire and its clients	Power Corporation Canada
Celine Dion Foundation	Syndicat des Métallos
Couche-Tard and its clients	Tim Horton and its clients
Fédération des chambres de commerce du Québec et Chambre de commerce région de Mégantic	TransForce

\$50,000 or more

Agropur	National Bank and its clients
BMO and its clients	Promutuel
BRP Corporation and its employees	Royal Bank and its clients
CANAC and its clients	Scotiabank and its clients
CIBC and its clients	Sisters of Charity of Ottawa
City of Quebec	Staples and its clients
Festival international d'été de Québec and its participants	STM and its employees
Industrial Alliance	Sun Life Financial
IPEX Management Inc.	TD Bank and its clients
Jean Coutu Group and its clients	Teamsters Union
La Capitale Financial Group	Ultramar Foundation
Loblaws and its clients	Qualinet



Stay in touch!

 For pictures of our operations in Lac-Mégantic

 For news about our activities throughout Quebec



For word about what is happening within the Red Cross: disaster response, first aid, water safety and so on: www.redcross.ca/where-we-work/in-canada/quebec/major-responses/lac-megantic-response



To view our most recent video productions

www.redcross.ca/megantic

Contact data for the Red Cross service centre in Lac-Mégantic:

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