



Centre communautaire
Tyndale St-Georges
Community Centre

Technology has become a Lifeline for our Community

The Digital Quantum Leap at Tyndale St-Georges Community Centre

Founded in 1927 to support families in Little Burgundy, Tyndale St-Georges Community Centre is an intricate part of the fabric of Little Burgundy. It has always provided in-person academic and social support for the entire community. With the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic and the resulting restrictions, Tyndale quickly recognized that it was paramount to maintain meaningful connections to residents for their social and mental well-being. Technology became a lifeline to and for our community. During the pandemic closure from March to June, Tyndale reformatted its program delivery to a virtual model. Although a mix of in-person and virtual programming resumed recently (with restrictions), program delivery for the Early Childhood and Adult Development programs remained virtual. Clearly the pandemic caused a digital quantum leap at Tyndale St-Georges Community Centre and technology has become a lifeline for our Community.

Tyndale St-Georges now offers all its programs in-person or virtually, and the staff pivot back and forth following the public health guidelines. None of this would have been possible without the creativity and flexibility of the staff, virtual meeting and presentation platforms and the generous donations of 30 loaner laptops for our community participants.

This document outlines several digital initiatives that support two critical pillars of Tyndale's community engagement and support:

1. Continued and continuous Community access and engagement through digital means
2. Digital Program Delivery, Education and Skill Development



Community Backdrop: The Poverty / Academic Success link

Why is virtual learning essential during the pandemic?

A recent study completed by Centraide outlines some key statistics regarding academic success in different areas in Montreal. Although the average drop-out rate for the youth in Montreal is 23%, in disadvantaged areas, the student drop-out rate can be as high as 40%. This study identified poverty as being one of the key determining factors impacting the drop-out rate. When a child's basic needs are at risk, with food insecurity, substandard living conditions and inconsistent or insufficient support from the nuclear family, academic success suffers.

Little Burgundy has its share of these challenges. This community has the highest concentration of low-income housing in Quebec, has a large immigrant population (38%), 43% of the residents live below the poverty line, 44% of the families are headed by a single parent, 45% of the kindergarten-aged children have a learning difficulty (average in Montreal is 29%) and 26% of the high school students drop-out before graduating. The pandemic exacerbated many of the pre-existing challenges in the community. Therefore, it was paramount to establish virtual programming to support the entire Tyndale community.

The Digital Education and Awareness Initiative

In the fall of 2019, one lead donor and another matching donor provided funds for Tyndale St-Georges Community Centre to implement a Digital Education & Awareness Initiative for our school-aged youth. The goal of this new initiative was to introduce theory and practice to pre-school and school-aged children within the Early Childhood and Children Youth and Families Departments. Tyndale St-Georges wanted to work closely with experts in the Digital & AI field to assist the effective implementation of Digital Education and Awareness into our programs. The pilot project started in September 2020 and should be completed by August 2022.

The intention of this initiative is to introduce Digital Awareness and seed interest in our existing programs. The objectives of this initiative are:

- To provide real work examples of Digital & AI that are relevant to children to spark their interest
- To partner with Kids Code Jeunesse to coordinate staff training, workshops with children and the first Code Club group in Little Burgundy
- To work alongside expert Vincent Boucher of AI Montreal to help guide our children in the creation of projects using the Open AI Gym platform
- To invite experts in the field in CEGEP and Universities to showcase programs and careers in this field for Tyndale families and the community at large

Generous donations of hardware helped Tyndale make a Digital Quantum Leap

A generous donation of computer hardware in the fall of 2019, enabled Tyndale St-Georges Community Centre to upgrade the Computer Lab and replace 12 desktop computers, 2 printers and provide the use of hundreds of USB sticks. The lab's hours were extended to include weekends and evening from November 2019 to March 2020, which helped our youth make the transition from using technology for fun to using technology as an education tool. Once we reopened in July 2020, the lab was retrofitted with plexiglass dividers so the youth could continue to use the lab for schoolwork and fun.

In the fall of 2020 two generous donors donated 30 laptops which established the Tyndale Laptop Loaner Program. Ten of these computers were loaned to the adults registered in the Pre-Employability Program, to enable them to continue their classes, and job search. The other 20 were made available to families registered in the After School and Early Childhood Programs.

Early Childhood Virtual Classes

This program hosts between 5-7 weekly virtual workshops and classes for families enrolled in the program. These workshops range from Story Time to enhance literacy, to a daily check-in service for parents, a weekly Parenting Support Group, weekly Parent and Child Play Groups and Child Stimulation Groups for healthy child development and a weekly Sharing Stories Group for stories and song. The CLSC and other community professionals have also established weekly virtual workshops for young families with infants. These workshops cover a wide variety of topics from infant health, sleep routines, nutrition to language development.





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Online Audio Books in the Tyndale Children's Library

Early in the pandemic our librarian and several volunteers chose books suitable for children 2-7 years of age and read them aloud and uploaded the recordings to the Tyndale Website. More than 50 audio books in both English and French are now part of Tyndale's Audio Library. For haggard housebound parents during the pandemic, this audio library was a lifesaver and helped entertain and educate hundreds of children in the community, while providing much needed respite. The audio library is available at this link: www.tyndalestgeorges.com/childrens_library

After School Programs Virtual Classes

The After School Program was available in-person from September to December for school-aged children, when we were required to go virtual in January 2021 to continue to provide academic support. Every day there were several virtual classrooms happening simultaneously, mirroring the different physical classrooms at Tyndale for children in different grades and age groups. The daily virtual class provided homework assistance for a part of the class as well as group socio-recreational activities. Specialized tutors and volunteers also provided appointment-based virtual one-on-one tutoring for any student who needed this kind of support, as well as literacy assistance (using the Response to Intervention model). Technology also plays an important role in helping our youth develop the executive function skills they need for high school. Tyndale St-Georges purchased a license for the SMARTS Executive Function Curriculum in 2020 and has incorporated the different lessons into the virtual After School program for the youths in grades 5-8.



Adult Department Pre-Employability Program's Virtual Classes

The Pre-Employability Program was retrofitted to a hybrid virtual/in-person format in September 2020 with the help of the Centre de Ressources Educatives et Pédagogiques (CREP) of the Commission Scolaire de Montréal. The students were loaned donated laptop computers to enable them to work from home. The computers were installed with zoom access, as well as all the other necessary software and staff provided each participant with the training so they could attend from home without incident. The classes will continue in this manner until the session is complete in the summer of 2021.





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You can help Tyndale St-Georges support Little Burgundy and prepare the next generation!

Since the onset of the pandemic, Tyndale St-Georges Community Centre has become even more aware of the value of technology to maintain the human connection that is core to our programming. Furthermore, based on many articles written all over the globe, the COVID pandemic pushed many schools and community services to go remote, and much more reliant on technology than ever before. It cannot be denied that technology-driven human-services evolved at an unprecedented rate during the pandemic.

However, many experts the world-over are now realizing that digital education and social services cannot wholly replace in-person services. People need a human connection. According to an article written by the BBC called 'Child-Psychiatrists Warn that the Pandemic May be Driving Up Kids' Suicide Risk' many vulnerable children experienced a marked increase in mental health issues because of a loss of critical in-person support services since the onset of the pandemic. Virtual education and social services have made it much harder for teachers, counselors, and parents to identify and assist children who are struggling.

Tyndale St-Georges Community Centre remains committed to providing social and educational support to our community through the human connection. We will continue to incorporate technology to assist in our mission, while we carefully balance the tug-of-war between virtual and in-person services and the need for the new generation to be digitally conversant and equipped for the future. Your support in assisting Tyndale St-Georges Community Centre provide these core human services to our community and assist children prepare for the future, will change the quality of their lives for years to come.

