



Press Release

For immediate distribution

Melissa Arsenault, a qualified and enthusiastic dietitian to serve the Francophone community

CHARLOTTETOWN (PEI), June 30, 2015 – The PEI French Health Network (PEIFHN) has a new campaign underway called *Étoile Santé* (health star). Its purpose is to value, recruit and promote health professionals who offer health services in French on Prince Edward Island. The PEIFHN is pleased to announce that its *Étoile Santé* for June is dietitian Melissa Arsenault of Egmont Bay.

Finding French speaking health professionals and accessing their services is still a major issue in increasing the offer of health services in French here on Prince Edward Island. French speaking professionals must be more accessible and visible in the community, which is the purpose of the *Étoile Santé* awareness campaign.

When she was a student at École Évangéline, Melissa Arsenault already knew she wanted to work in the field of health. The results of a career choice test directed her towards a career in nutrition. She was then certain of her career path. “I always liked preparing meals at home and trying different things with food. It has always been important for me to watch what I eat.”

In November 2014, she completed her science degree with a major in nutrition at the University of Prince Edward Island and was soon hired by the Prince Edward Island Healthy Eating Alliance that was looking for a bilingual dietitian to address a need in the province’s Francophone community. “It’s really because I am bilingual that I was able to get the job.”

Jeannette Gallant, provincial coordinator of the Jeux de l’Acadie regional committee, nominated Melissa after seeing the impact of her services at various levels. “During our regional games, Melissa conducted a session on sports nutrition for over 200 youth and members of the management team. This activity allowed participants to learn what to eat when practicing a sport and share their new knowledge with members of their family.”

As a community dietitian, Melissa plays an important role in the implementation of the Prince Edward Island Wellness Strategy. Her work consists of informing the public. For example, she makes presentations to many groups in Francophone communities; supports school breakfast programs; works closely with cafeterias to monitor their food policies; organizes activities with early childhood centres and provides French resources; attends many food exhibits and fairs; works with workplaces to try to improve their food options and attends numerous meetings.

“There are many aspects to this job, but I love it,” says Melissa, who is impassioned by this field of work. “I like being able to help people improve a part of their lives; it can really make a difference.”

Melissa Arsenault's contact information can be found in the bilingual service provider directory at www.santeipe.ca/repertoire.

People are invited to nominate health professionals who actively offer health services in French on Prince Edward Island. For more information on the *Étoile Santé* campaign or to nominate someone directly on the PEIFHN Web site, go to www.santeipe.ca.

The PEI French Health Network is a non-profit organization that collaborates with various partners in order to improve access to quality French-language health services and programs for Prince Edward Island's Acadian and Francophone population. The organization brings together representatives from target community groups, educational facilities, health professionals, health service managers and the provincial government. It is also one of 16 networks that make up the Société Santé en français. The PEI French Health Network is funded by Health Canada within the framework of the Roadmap for Canada's Official Languages 2013-2018 : Education, Immigration, Communities.

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Photo: Melissa Arsenault

Media Contact:

Tina Robichaud

Tel.: 902-314-3332