



Meet the Westmount– Saint-Louis candidates /3

Description

Candidate Samuel Kuhn of the Green Party of Quebec

Dear WestmountMag.ca reader,

In view of informing our readers on the various parties' platforms for the upcoming **Quebec Provincial Election 2018**, WestmountMag.ca has invited all the candidates for the district of **Westmount–Saint-Louis** to submit an article about themselves and their program.

Articles are published unedited and on a first submitted, first published basis.

Here is the third article of the series, submitted by **Samuel Kuhn** of the **CAQ – Green Party of Quebec**.

“We have a two tier healthcare system in Quebec.” – Rehabilitation Centre Social Worker

“The Quebec government doesn't listen to us.” – Montreal Pediatrician

“I started working at CROM (Montreal rehabilitation centre for kids with autism) in December and you are absolutely right, the waitlist for services are absolutely horrible. There have been significant changes this year from the ministry and we are trying to brainstorm new programs in an attempt to deal with these changes, without any increase in funding.” – Rehab Centre Access Team Worker

“Go private” – Principal of an English Montreal School Board school

The quotes are endless...



My name is Samuel Kuhn and I am the Green Party of Quebec candidate for Westmount-Saint-Louis.

I never thought I'd be running in a provincial election; I had given up on elections and politicians. What brought me to this provincial campaign was my disgust with the Quebec Liberals and how they treat our kids with disabilities.

Montreal's main rehab centre for kids with autism doesn't even have a speech therapist on staff. I was told this by a rehab centre worker about three weeks ago. Can you imagine a treatment centre for kids with autism in a major urban centre like Montreal that purports to treat children on the autism spectrum that doesn't even have a speech therapist? I was told that she quit.

My family has not had a disability social worker since last April. I was told three weeks ago that she too quit.

Healthcare professionals are fleeing the system in droves. I was told by the Executive Director of a large private school for kids with disabilities that she left the system as a manager of a rehab centre because she could no longer "ethically" remain working there.

Healthcare is in crisis in Quebec and the Liberals have no substantive plan to fix this crisis except to say "we can do better." If that isn't an understatement I have no idea what is.

We are witnessing the de facto privatization of healthcare in Quebec.

In 2012 my 18 month old daughter, Charlotte, was identified by our CLSC as needing speech and occupational therapy as she is non-verbal and has difficulty walking (she falls down and breaks her bones).

Our family waited patiently on a waitlist with no help only to be told in 2016, when she turned five, that she had "aged out" of the system and therefore kicked off the waitlist for speech and occupational therapy.

"Aging out" at five? Seriously?

On hearing this we freaked and had to resort to a GoFundMe campaign for speech and occupational therapy. Quebecers responded with their hearts and money and we were able to pay for speech and occupational



therapy as well as an assessment for Charlotte.

Across the province we organized other parents in the same boat as our child into the Autism Coalition of Quebec. The Liberal government eventually responded with their so-called "Autism Action Plan" which merely reinstated Charlotte on the wait list for speech therapy.

We were actually told by the rehab centre that we could either have speech or occupational therapy but not both. How in the world does a parent make such a decision? Our lawyer told us that this violated the law. However, I assumed the government had backed down.

We were able to nab three months of occupational therapy and saw life changing results for Charlie.

We completed the three month program occupational therapy and were anticipating finally starting speech therapy only to be informed by the Quebec government that because my Charlie turned seven that she was now kicked off the waitlist, yet again, even though she had NEVER received speech therapy from the Quebec government.

Under the Quebec Liberals, my beautiful seven year old child with such potential will NEVER receive the speech therapy prescribed to her by numerous healthcare professionals.

This is not just about Charlie.

My child is emblematic of the cruelty and chaos wrought by the Liberal Party of Quebec on our health care system and the Liberals have zero plans to fix it.

I have brought up this situation with the Liberal candidate again and again and her only response is that her kids are doing wonderfully.

The Liberal candidate asking for your vote says that there is a shortage of speech therapists in this province. This is not true. When people like you answered my call for help via GoFundMe we had absolutely no difficulty hiring a speech therapist. I even attended a meeting at my Liberal MNA's office accompanied by two speech therapists and were told the same phony story about a "shortage" of speech therapists. They answered back that there is no shortage, but rather, speech therapists do not want to work in a system that denies kids help merely for the crime of turning seven. That is unethical and cruel.

The Liberals do not deserve your vote.

When I was informed in February of this year that my child was kicked off the waitlist, again and forever, despite being promised speech therapy on numerous occasions, I set-up a two month protest outside the Quebec Liberal Minister's office joined by other parents, people with disabilities, doctors and healthcare providers. A parent of a child with autism ensured that I could maintain my picket outside the Minister's office by providing nutritious frozen home cooked meals to my family.

A doctor came to my home with a cheque for \$500.00. He was literally crying.

I found myself on numerous occasions consoling people upset at my child's plight hugging them and telling them that everything will be alright.

Our story made national news and was in every media outlet in Montreal because people could not believe it.

The Liberals refused to back down.



Not once did Madame Charlebois (the Quebec Liberal Minister in charge of kicking my child off the waitlist for speech therapy) come down from her office to talk to me.

She denied that kids were being kicked off the list for therapies when they turned seven and even claimed she had never heard of Charlotte despite being confronted by the media in the National Assembly on numerous occasions and despite Charlotte's story making national news.

This is how the Liberals deal with the debacle of healthcare in our province; deny and belittle that the problem even exists because they know damn well that if they help Charlie they will have to help all kids with autism in Quebec. This they will never do.

This is not just about my kid. I am fighting for all our kids and adults with disabilities. So is the Green Party of Quebec.

The only Party that showed up again and again in front of the Minister's office in the dead of winter during my two month protest was the Green Party of Quebec.

That is what solidarity looks like.

Going door-to-door in Westmount-Saint-Louis it became clear to me that you are not necessarily voting for the Liberals, but rather, against the CAQ. You are put in the unenviable position of holding your nose and voting Liberal to keep the CAQ out.

I propose another alternative.

The Liberal candidate is sure to win – in this riding at least. I propose you vote for the party with the best principled policies and send a message that hubris and arrogance will not be rewarded.

All the parties, in one form or another, are pandering to islamophobia, even QS and the QNDP. The Liberals (if they had their way) wouldn't allow Muslim women wearing the nigab a seat on a bus – at least Rosa Parks had a seat.

At a time when fascists are marching in our streets and after the carnage of the Quebec City massacre, this is no time to pander to the islamophobes and anti-semites.

Clearly, us Greens have the best policies to combat climate change.

We are a federalist party that will give indigenous people and local communities a right to veto pipeline projects like trans mountain.

We will lower the voting age to 16, bring proportional representation to this province, and give natives seats in the National Assembly.

We support the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions campaign against Apartheid Israel.

If you vote Liberal you will be throwing kids with disabilities under the bus. You don't have to do this.

Let the Liberals know on October 1st that gutting healthcare and achieving a budget surplus on the backs of little kids disqualifies them from office.

Make your vote count and vote Green.



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