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**For the first time in Quebec:  
Cogir, in partnership with Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Greater Montreal area, launches  
a match-up sponsorship program for the elderly living in a residence suffering from loneliness!**

**Quebec, February 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2009** – In the presence of the minister responsible for the elderly, Mrs. Marguerite Blais, Cogir Management Corporations’s Executive Vice-President, Mr. Mathieu Duguay and the Director General of Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Greater Montreal area, (GFGSGM), Mrs. Ginette Sauvé, launched *Par-Aînés*, an exclusive and innovative program of sponsorship for elderly people living in a residence and suffering from loneliness. This project took a long time to realize amongst Cogir’s management, the instigating force behind this project. “We have been financially supporting GFGSGM since 2001 by placing recuperation bins for clothing on the properties of our shopping centres and since 2006, with an annual fund drive. Overall, our contribution amounts to over 1 million \$. A portion of these funds is now directly being allocated to *Par-Aînés* project, which we hope will contribute significantly to improve the well-being of our residents” has declared Mr. Duguay.

**An inspiring project**

”The *Par-Aînés* program responds to an acute need of elderly people. The fight against isolation of elderly people represents one of my priorities. Today, it is my great pleasure to announce that Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Greater Montreal area will receive a grant in the amount of \$ 30,000 for its mentor program *Par-Aînés* being part of the program “Action from the Heart” for Quebec’s elderly. I certainly hope that this gesture serves as an inspiration for other organizations. We will closely monitor its evolution since this program fits perfectly into our vision of well-being for the elderly” has confirmed the minister Marguerite Blais.

**The Par-Aînés Project**

Recognized by its expertise, the GFGSGM team has contributed to the development of the project *Par-Aînés*, a formal mentor program addressing the elderly living in a residence and suffering from loneliness. This entails a strategically planned and structured twin-matching process to prevent isolation of the elderly. The clientele being addressed is composed of men and women aged 65 and older identified by the person in charge of a residence as being alone. “Since September 2008, a pilot project lasting one year was introduced into 2 Cogir residences whereby 20 elderly people were rigorously matched up by the GFGSGM. Thereafter, the project should be adopted by all Cogir residences throughout Quebec” has confirmed Mr. Duguay. “In terms of aging population, Montreal distinguishes itself from the rest of Quebec (and from Canada) by the presence of a higher proportion of elderly people within its population. It is therefore important that this project be extended mainly throughout the Metropolitan area” has explained Mrs. Sauvé.

**Vibrant testimonies**

“I’m 83 years old. I have been participating in the matching-up *Par-Aînés* project since the month of October 2008. Meeting Mrs. Francine whom I affectionately call “my angel” has totally changed my life. I can even state that I have found again the zest of life. I truly wish that many other elderly people can benefit from such a support“ has witnessed Mrs. Thérèse Pellerin. “As far as I am concerned, I am a retired nurse. Consequently, I have always been called upon helping others. This social commitment constitutes a great source of expanding my horizon. When I met Mrs. Pellerin, who is also a career nurse, we immediately felt very comfortable with one another. A presence of friendship and confidence has developed very quickly between us. Mrs. Pellerin comforts me as to the idea of aging and makes me realize the importance to live in the present moment”, concluded Mrs. Francine Tardif, Mrs. Pellerin’s “project godmother”.

**About Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Greater Montreal Area**

For over 100 years, the movement of Big Brothers Big Sisters has developed a unique expertise in recruiting volunteers, psycho-social evaluations, training, follow-up of match-ups, and evaluations of programs aimed at children, parents and volunteers. During the past years, Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Greater Montreal area has developed new transferrable programs. Our agency is considered to be the most dynamic one in Canada regarding its development.

**About Cogir**

Cogir Mangement Corporation administers over 250 real estate projects. The commercial, industrial and office space division regroups over 11 million square feet. As for the residential division, it accounts for over 20,000 apartments and condos located in the provinces of Quebec, Ontario, Nova Scotia and most recently in Europe. In Quebec it manages 30 residences for the elderly for a total of 6,070 inhabitable units. Due to an experienced staff of more than 1,900 employees, Cogir excels in the real estate market, thus combining the dynamics and entrepreneurial spirit of a small Company with the know-how of the largest real estate management Companies in Canada.

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