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PRESS RELEASE

**LA BOÎTE À GRAINS' 30th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS OFF WITH A BANG
WITH THE 2010 SME OF THE YEAR AWARD
GATINEAU CHAMBER OF COMMERCE EXCELOR AWARDS**

Gatineau, November 29, 2010 – La Boîte à Grains, Gatineau's pioneering health food store, launches its 30th anniversary celebrations with a bang – it has just been awarded the prestigious 2010 PME de l'année (2010 SME of the Year) title during the annual Gatineau Chamber of Commerce gala.

Founded in 1980, La Boîte à Grains is a unique source of products that are natural and organic, environmentally friendly, fairly traded, local and not tested on animals. It boasts two newly renovated locations (Hull and Gatineau).

From its beginnings as a visionary little market serving its neighbourhood and health proponents well before the rise of organic foods, La Boîte à Grains has grown into a well-run company employing a staff of about fifty. In fact, the company has joined the ranks of the five largest natural food stores in Quebec.

The path it has followed earned the company a finalist selection in two Gatineau Chamber of Commerce Excelor award categories: Trade and Distribution, and SME of the Year. "I am thrilled that La Boîte à Grains has won the SME of the Year award," states company founder Pierre D. Ménard. "It means even more to us since the other two finalists are organizations/businesses for whom we have the utmost respect. This award validates the hard work that our team has been doing for the past 30 years. And the timing couldn't be better, since we're celebrating our 30th anniversary next week, on Tuesday."

La Boîte à Grains had the "crazy" notion of opening a health-focused grocery store that advocated sustainable development, decades before it became a popular movement. Today, "Pierre Ménard is one of the top-ten health food leaders in Quebec, his long experience having made him very knowledgeable in the field," says Sebastian Wong of the Canadian Health Food Association's board of directors. "He has always been a valuable advisor, which is why he is one of the key retailers we regularly consult for feedback in Quebec."

To mark its 30th anniversary, La Boîte à Grains will be hosting a reception on November 30. The event will include the unveiling of a series of initiatives available to Gatineau residents. Other than the renovations conducted on its Hull branch, many of which were LEED-inspired, La Boîte à Grains will be launching a new corporate identity, an updated website, a series of workshops, contests, and the announcement of a special event slated for the spring of 2011.

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A look at some of La Boîte à Grains' achievements:

- La Boîte à Grains has grown into one of the five largest health food stores in Quebec.
- In 1987, La Boîte à Grains became one of the first stores in Quebec to hire alternative health specialists such as homeopaths and naturopaths, to provide in-store consultations for its clients.
- La Boîte à Grains is an essential showcase for local producers.
- La Boîte à Grains is a welcoming place to shop, meet friends and find out about new tips and products. Over a quarter of a million dollars were invested in LEED-inspired renovations in 2010.
- La Boîte à Grains has been a proud supporter of local non-profit organizations, including the Club des petits déjeuners du Québec, the Gatineau CSSS (Mount Kilimanjaro) and the Laiterie de l'Outaouais, along with national initiatives such as New Roots and Vitamin Angels. A more comprehensive list is enclosed.

La Boîte à Grains is also pleased to announce its partnership in the upcoming "Fête des semences 'bio-équitable' de l'Outaouais," to be held March 20, 2011 at Gatineau's Maison du citoyen. Organized by the brand-new C-BIO solidarity cooperative, this one-day event aims to promote the area's organic and fair trade products. The event features seeds, plants, equipment, workshops and renowned speakers, in a convivial setting that gives local residents the opportunity to get in touch with seed farmers, market gardeners, environmentalists, authors, horticulturists and other like-minded individuals. For further details on this event, visit www.bioequitable.ca (site in French only).

In addition, La Boîte à Grains announces that it will be a proud partner of the new Reboul community garden, slated to be inaugurated in the spring of 2011 behind the Cégep de l'Outaouais. This community garden, whose mission is to produce healthier foods for the local population, is meant to be a large-scale, family-friendly, intergenerational and multiethnic gardening space where citizens can gain dietary independence. For more information on the garden, visit [www.gatineau.ca/page.asp?p=environnement/jardins communautaires collectifs](http://www.gatineau.ca/page.asp?p=environnement/jardins_communautaires_collectifs).

Come meet the La Boîte à Grains team at the Salon de la femme, taking place in Gatineau on March 26 and 27, 2011, or by visiting one of its two newly renovated locations (581 St-Joseph Blvd in Hull, and 325 Gréber Blvd in Gatineau).

La Boîte à Grains is a real home-grown success story whose growth has been closely linked to that of the Hull-Gatineau area and of sustainable development in the region. And to echo the new slogan to be unveiled at the 30th anniversary reception to be held on November 30, La Boîte à Grains is good for a region like ours ("*La Boîte à Grains, c'est bon pour une région comme la nôtre*")!

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Media information:

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Members of the media are invited

to attend the 30th anniversary evening
Tuesday, November 30, 5 pm to 7 pm
Brasseurs du Temps
170 Montcalm Street
Gatineau