

The Caisse: A first Rate Cooperative Partner

I am very pleased to present our summer edition of *Desjardins and Me* magazine, which highlights the commitment of the caisses and Desjardins Group to the community. In addition to meeting the financial needs of their members, the caisses also support numerous projects and organizations that provide services to meet important and substantial social and community needs.

THE CAISSE: A FINANCIAL INSTITUTION WORKING CLOSE TO YOU

The origin of the caisses says a lot about their proximity to their members and the community. Every caisse was founded on the desire of a given community to create its own financial services cooperative. Each one exists today to serve the needs of its members and the community. That is why the caisse must remain attuned to the wide variety of those individual and collective needs. Because members can take part in the associative aspects of their cooperative's activities and influence its orientations, the caisses remain aware of what members want.

Also, there is the fact that the caisse's elected officers—and often its staff, as well—are residents of the neighbourhood or territory served by the cooperative. As such, they share the concerns and aspirations of their fellow community members and are often involved in the same projects and causes as the local population. As a result, caisse involvement in the community also includes volunteer work by people at the caisse, and their active participation in local affairs.

THE CAISSE: A DRIVING FORCE IN THE COMMUNITY

Thanks largely to the human and financial force they represent, the caisses today play an influential role in their communities. Their extensive resources give them an enormous capacity for action. If backed by a caisse, a cause or a project receives the kind of endorsement and contribution that will vastly improve its chances for success.

Moreover, the caisses do not hesitate to pool their resources in order to strengthen their impact on a regional or provincial level. In fact, many major healthcare and academic institutions have profited from the collective support of the caisses, enabling hospitals and universities to acquire cutting-edge equipment and undertake new R&D activities. As a result, services to local communities have been greatly improved.

THE CAISSE: A LEVERAGE TOOL FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

By acting as they do on a variety of fronts at one time, the Desjardins caisses are firmly oriented towards sustainable development. Long-term economic success is impossible if social problems are allowed to fester and the environment left to deteriorate. Working with a view to sustainable development means targeting a balance between economics, social harmony and respect for the environment.



On the strength of its cooperative values, Desjardins today is contributing to the creation of a more responsible, equitable and sustainable world. Read on for several examples that illustrate just how we are accomplishing that. **D**