

Standing up to the OQLF

By Kevin Woodhouse
The Suburban

West Island resident and entrepreneur Itsik Romano has been creating promotional items for clients for the last 10 years but has now branched out to get to the public at large through the sales of Unity pins and bumper stickers that boast "Jaime L'Anglais" with a portion of every sale to help businesses defend themselves against the OQLF.

"Our main objective is to give people a powerful way to express their objection to the recent surge of the Marois government versus the English language with the enforcement of Bill 101, the introduction of Bill 14 and the abuse that some small businesses are taking from the OLF," said Romano. "It's time to unify. And not just our politics or our ideologies, but our people. Our Unity Pin is exactly that; a shout-out to the powers-that-be that we are 'unpinning' ourselves from the shame and humiliation of being made to feel like second-class citizens."

Since beginning the campaign, Romano has been wearing the pin and has a bumper sticker on his car. He has received "a lot of support from people in the West Island and even some thumbs up when I drive to the East End."

The impetus for the campaign began when Romano and his Pointe Claire based company Definitive Image took on the Swiss Vienna Pastry retail outlet that has seen its share of OQLF visits and complaints. "I was shocked that a taxpayer had to spent his hard earned money to go up against the OQLF for posting messages in a non-francophone language," Romano told The Suburban.

Romano decided to sell the bumper stickers and pins as a "symbolic gesture as we don't expect to raise millions but many complaints from the language police are simply not justified at all."

Romano has no trouble having bilingual signage but finds that translating website or printed material "can cost thousands of dollars that they are taking out of small business' pockets who might

not have the resources to comply.

"Why does a government agency have to use scare tactics such as serious fines for people to comply?" Romano asked.

He wondered why the OQLF use such tactics when there is a service provided by the language enforcement agency that provides subsidies for translation and marketing material.

"This kind of approach is a positive step in the right direction," said Romano who has enrolled in the program him-

self. "Seventy-five percent of the cost is covered if you enroll in the program."

The Suburban contacted the OQLF to find out more about the program but never received an answer.

This past weekend, Romano noted that his Facebook page got 200 more fans and more than 300 pins and bumper stickers were sold.

To find out more about Romano's Unity Pin, go online



PHOTO SARA EIREW.

West Island entrepreneur Itsik Romano proudly wears the Unity Pin and Tee shirt "J'aime L'Anglais" that donates a portion of every sale to small businesses defending themselves against the OQLF.

LBPSB

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"This coming year, we will be sending a group from Lindsay Place High School and Beurling Academy to China," she said, "and students will come from China to study here, as well as at summer school, when students from all over the world come to us to learn English as a second language. We also have international students whom we put in all of our vocation centres like auto mechanics, who are integrated into our classes alongside local students."

"The governments of Quebec and Canada are actively promoting international students coming here to get their education in Canada," Mastuantono explained. "I travel quite a bit to create opportunities and partnerships. I will be making a presentation at the Canadian



LBPSB director general Robert T. Mills visited India, Aug. 21, to sign an agreement with Edu-Edge president Naveen Kolan to market the school board's courses in South Asia.

High Commission in New Delhi, which called us to tell us of potential partnerships as well as schools and institutions that we can connect with in different parts of the world." ■

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