"KEGHART" INTERVIEWS NEW MONTREAL COUNCILLOR HAROUT CHITILIAN

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Harout Chitilian, a 28-year-old computer engineer and an active member of the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) of Montreal was elected councillor for the Bordeaux-Cartierville district in the November 1 municipal elections. Chitilian, born in Lebanon, came to Montreal with his family at the age of nine. He attended AGBU's Ecole Alex-Manoogian, where he learned French and English. Fluently trilingual, Chitilian has worked in the community to bring together and to integrate Armenian youth. Below is Keghart's exclusive interview with Chitilian held immediately after his victory.

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KEGHART: What was the first thought that came to your mind following your election victory?
CHITILIAN: I was fairly calm and my initial thoughts were to express my thanks to every one who contributed to the accomplishment of this dream. Later on, at night, I had a tough time getting to sleep as I started replaying in my head the visual retrospections of the thousands of conversations I had over the past three months with the residents of my electoral district. It is an overwhelming feeling to grasp that several thousands of them placed their confidence in me by voting in such impressive numbers.

KEGHART: What are your immediate personal plans?

CHITILIAN: There are traditional ceremonies that have to be held prior to fully exercising my functions at city hall. Meanwhile, I will meet the citizens of my district and make weekly informal visits to residents and community organizations.
KEGHART: What changes do you hope to introduce as a councillor?

CHITILIAN: During my four-year mandate, I will stay true to the principles that have guided me throughout the campaign and my life. Principles such as respect, resilience and accountability. Any elected official, regardless of his position, is chosen by people to serve people. Therefore my core

purpose, first of all, is to serve the citizens of my district.

KEGHART: In light of your election at a relatively young age, do you anticipate other young people to follow in your footsteps?

CHITILIAN: Of course. The campaign was an interesting experience for many young friends and colleagues in the community. Dozens enthusiastically joined the ranks of the volunteers and contributed in a disciplined and professional manner to push forward our mission. On election day it was such an extraordinary sight to see so many friends and acquaintances telephoning constituents. Some fifteen supporters roamed the district to collect hourly information from the polling stations, while a group of young scouts knocked the doors of sympathizers to encourage them to get out and vote. Following this experience, I am certain that many will follow in my footsteps. And it will be my responsibility to sustain them during that process.

KEGHART: As a councillor will you promote Armenian community concerns?

CHITILIAN: I am a proud Montrealer of Armenian origin. I learned both official languages in Montreal; I integrated in the local community through my participation in the sports initiatives of Montreal; I obtained my engineering university degree in Montreal and now I am elected by the residents of Bordeaux-Cartierville. Throughout the years Montreal has also allowed me to preserve my Armenian identity and language. It is time for me to give back to Montreal and at the same time respectfully promote and represent the Armenian community in Montreal and throughout Canada.

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