

**Press release  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**



## **Metropolis Blue Foundation and the Douglas Institute combat the stigma associated with mental health**

**Montreal, January 31, 2013** – Blue Metropolis Foundation and the Douglas Institute join forces to offer an entirely new programme of literary events and activities on the theme of mental health, both online and during the 2013 Festival.

### **A digital platform to combat the stigma associated with mental health**

Blue Metropolis continues to develop its online activities aimed at promoting reading and writing and reducing social exclusion and prejudice.

The new “Mental Health and Literature” platform **allows Internet users to discover, or rediscover, authors** such as **Virginia Woolf, Nelly Arcan, Delphine de Vigan, and David Homel**, all of whom have lived with mental health problems or who have written about them. It also invites Internet users to **write their own work, following specific guidelines for creative writing.**

In delving into the universe of these authors and in drawing from their experiences or those of people close to them, Internet users will be able to take advantage of the power of words to write work that moves, inspires and liberates, and that helps to combat the stigma associated with mental health problems. Written works may be submitted and shared on the new platform, which is offered in English and French at [bluemetropolis.org/mental-health](http://bluemetropolis.org/mental-health)

The platform was produced by the Blue Metropolis team under the direction of Annie Heminway, long-time contributor to the Foundation, author of twenty books and professor of creative writing, literature and translation at New York University.

### **“Literature and Mental Health” track at Blue Metropolis Festival, from April 22 to 28, 2013**

The 2013 edition marks the 15th anniversary of Blue Metropolis Festival. On this occasion, a track that will strengthen the ties between literature and mental health will give the public the opportunity to rediscover great writers who have experienced mental health problems and the books that describe their journey. A perfect opportunity to explore new territory and to cross over from one literary genre to another!

A detailed programme for the 2013 Festival will be released on March 27. In the meantime, we are pleased to announce that the programme will include author meet-and-greets, writing workshops on “folie littéraire “ and a number of entirely new events, such as Vue de l’Esprit, an event produced by the Douglas Institute, as well as a talk to be given at the Institute by Dr. Camillo Zacchia and other guest speakers.

**About Blue Metropolis [www.bluemetropolis.org](http://www.bluemetropolis.org)**

Established in 1997, Blue Metropolis Foundation is a charitable organization that brings together people who come from different cultures and speak different languages to share the pleasures of reading and writing, in order to encourage creativity and intercultural understanding. Each year, the Foundation presents an International Literary Festival and offers, throughout the year, a range of educational and social programmes, both in the classroom and online. These programmes make use of reading and writing as therapeutic tools, to encourage academic perseverance and combat poverty and social isolation.

The 15th Blue Metropolis Festival and the 6th TD-Blue Metropolis Children's Festival take place April 22 to 28, 2013, at Hotel 10 in Montreal. Close to 160 activities will bring together writers and artists, representing 10 countries and speaking 5 languages.

**About the Douglas – [www.douglas.qc.ca](http://www.douglas.qc.ca)**

The Douglas is a world-class institute, affiliated with McGill University and the World Health Organization, which treats people suffering from mental illness and offers them hope and cures. Its teams of specialists and researchers continually advance scientific knowledge, integrate it into patient care, and share it with the community to increase awareness and eliminate the stigma around mental illness.

- 30 -

**Source:**

William St-Hilaire  
President, General Manager and Artistic Director  
Blue Metropolis Foundation  
514 932-1112 ext. 39 / [william@metropolisbleu.org](mailto:william@metropolisbleu.org)

**Media relations:**

Shelley Pomerance  
514 270-1199 / [pom.s@sympatico.ca](mailto:pom.s@sympatico.ca)