

**Desjardins Group honored at special international education and  
research conference on cooperatives**



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MONTREAL, JULY 2012 -- Educating the public for more than a century, the Desjardins Group gains top recognition of cooperators across North America and the Caribbean. They honored the group on June 25 in Montreal at their special international cooperative research and education conference in Montreal.

“There are not many cooperatives that can rival the Desjardins Group for its longevity and work in teaching people how to improve their circumstances through working together,” says Association of Cooperative Educators Executive Administrator Sarah Pike. She noted that the group continues to lead through instruction about personal finance, economics and democracy. The group has identified sustainable prosperity as important to its members and “education and cooperation are the driving forces,” adds Desjardins Group Cooperation Advisor Richard Fortier.

In addition to a culture of education, the group launched the *coopme* program ([www.desjardins.com/co-opme](http://www.desjardins.com/co-opme)) to help clients understand ownership of their financial futures. More than \$15 million annually is contributed by the group for education and community and program development. It maintains the School Caisse initiative started by founder Alphonse Desjardins in 1907 to teach youngsters financial independence.

Desjardins Group [www.desjardins.com](http://www.desjardins.com) is the leading cooperative financial group in Canada with assets of \$ 190.1 billion. Drawing on the strength of its caisse network in Quebec and Ontario and its subsidiaries across Canada, it offers a full range of financial products and services to its 5.6 million members and clients. Desjardins specializes in Wealth Management and Life and Health Insurance, in Property and Casualty Insurance, in Personal Services, and in Business and Institutional Services. As one of the largest employers in the country and among Canada's Top 100 Employers for 2012™, Desjardins is backed by the skills of its 44,645 employees and the commitment of nearly 5,400 elected officers.

ACE members are educators, researchers, communicators, and students and developers of cooperatives and credit unions, primarily in Canada, United States and Puerto Rico. An annual conference, held in a different city each year, allows members to learn from one another and their host region, and highlights new learning about cooperatives and credit unions.

Learn more at [www.ace.coop](http://www.ace.coop). Contribute to the blog on the international cooperative research and education conference: [www.2012edresearch.com](http://www.2012edresearch.com).

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