

Gathering as a community....

In addition to providing essential front line services to those in need and advocacy on behalf of vulnerable populations, MCM also opens up spaces for the wider community to gather, share stories, dream, and find meaning in our common humanity. In some ways, these gatherings re-imagine the church's role in the community for the 21st century.

Ma'an

The acronym Ma'an stands for the MCM Arab Action Network. Ma'an also means togetherness in Arabic. This dual meaning sums up the aim of the MCM Ma'an initiative: to build bridges between members of diverse communities on the island of Montreal. One of the first activities in this program in 2015 was...

... Child Friendly Space – Place aux Enfants

The arrival of Syrian refugees to Canada prompted MCM to develop a number of initiatives to reach out and welcome these new families. We first gathered on the St. James' Square in early fall with banners held high to circulate a petition urging the federal government to accept more Syrian refugees. Recognising the central place of children's wellbeing in that of the family, we then developed the Child Friendly Space - Place aux enfants, a project designed for newly-arrived Syrian children in partnership with the Alrawda mosque in Ville St-Laurent. Arts, crafts, and games, afford children and their parents a relaxed setting to make new friends and discover their new city. The Child Friendly Space project has provided a wonderful and practical opportunity for the United Church, through MCM, to build an alliance with the Muslim Association of Canada with whom we share a common tradition of hospitality.

"The Syrian crisis has brought our different communities together in the name of humanity"
Nabil Abu-Thuraia, Muslim Association of Canada

In Missio

MCM is asking what it means to be 'sent out' in the 21st century. And so, we launched the In Missio series, with the aim of inviting members of the United Church and wider community to weigh in on matters of daily life and spiritual significance. Our first guest was Dr. Nimi Wariboko, a Nigerian Pentecostal theologian at Boston University and a Wall Street financier. Dr. Wariboko engaged people's minds and hearts in hard talk and joyous celebration during a day-long symposium entitled 'Money and Mission in the Charismatic City'. Financial managers within church circles and those concerned with future trends in Christianity gathered in small focus groups with Dr. Wariboko and members of the United Church of Canada Foundation to discuss new ways of using our financial resources to further the work of the spirit. This full-day event concluded with an evening of music, food, and vibrant conversation.

In **Missio II** featured Rev. Dr. Russell Daye, a United Church minister and social justice activist with indigenous populations both internationally and locally, who had just returned from a 5-week visit to refugee camps in the Middle East. Rev. Daye met with over 300 people from United Church communities in the Eastern Townships, McGill School of Social Work (co-presenting with MCM intern Adnan Al Mhamied) and St. John's United Church in Point Claire. Over the course of two days, we held three sessions to investigate and reflect on 'smart and wise responses to the Syrian crisis'. Dr. Daye's recent first-hand experience provided participants with an invaluable insight into the living conditions of people displaced by the ongoing Syrian conflict. From rural churches to an urban university, participants were keen to receive front line information and share personal experiences and ideas about how to move forward.

Many thanks to the United Church of Canada Foundation and the Montreal Presbytery Kelly Trust Fund for supporting the In Missio series.



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ACCUEILLONS LES
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 REFUGEES

Annual Report 2015

... disponible en français

Student Leadership

The number of interns and pro bono students increased in 2015 by 60%!

Those students helped us keep pace with the increase in activity at our legal clinics through over 5,000 interventions, allowed us to provide more workshops in the community, and participated in the development of new projects.

All MCM programs are enhanced by the compassionate service and attentive presence of dynamic and energetic university students.

MCM is happy to announce a new partnership with McGill ICAN (International Community Action Network) to provide field placements for Syrian social work students.



The non-profit world is challenging... finding new ways to generate funds for important social programs really put our brains to work ... meshing strategy, marketing and finance together to come up with a plan that will help MCM survive and flourish.

Kieran Rankin, MBA Community Service Initiative, John Molson School of Business

The courage and strength of our clients continue to amaze and inspire me — hailing from all over the world, having survived family separation and some of the world's most violent conflicts — they are doing their best to re-build their lives and those of their children in Montreal. It is a honour to support and accompany them at this crucial moment in their lives.

My experience at Just Solutions has forever changed the way I think about refugees and new Canadians, and I hope to be an ally to this community for many years to come.

Claire Boychuk, Bac in Law, McGill University

As a Syrian Muslim, it was a great experience learning how a civil society organisation is structured and works and also attending United Church meetings: I still remember my first meeting in the church close to Westmount Park, and the words, peace, love and solidarity.

Adnan Al Mhamied, Masters student in Social Work, McGill University

Learning and working in a fast paced and demanding environment has furthered my professional and personal growth. Advocating for individuals facing multiple systemic issues developed both my social work and legal skills. Supportive and caring colleagues were always ready to debrief and lend a helping hand.

Marlene Tawfik, Masters student in Law and Social Work, McGill University



Just Solutions

The legal and accompaniment services of the clinic – often the last resort for refugees and vulnerable immigrants – are more in demand than ever.

In 2015 there was a 44 % increase in the number of individual interventions!

Whether responding to the legal needs of Haitians last spring when the moratorium on deportations to Haiti was lifted, or developing new programs and partnerships to welcome Syrian families this past fall, Just Solutions remains an innovative and compassionate front-line service for those most in need.

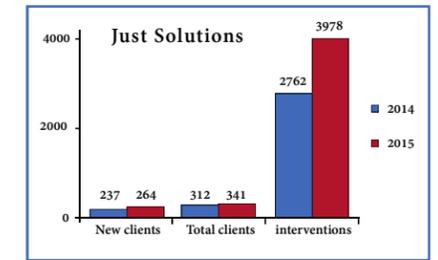
Increasing support to women and children through the Rebuilding Lives program:

In 2015 the number of interventions with women victims of violence increased by 112%. Often their tragic stories of abuse only surface after a relationship of trust has developed. The JS team of staff and students provides legal and material assistance, and an ongoing presence as these courageous women rebuild their lives.

Victims of Violence	2014	2015	Increase
Total no. of interventions	400	849	112,25 %
Immigration related	359	709	97,49 %
Non immigration related	41	140	241,6 %

Joyce risked having her Canadian permanent residency status revoked after her abusive ex-husband forced her to return to her country of origin. The Just Solutions clinic requested an exemption to the revocation and accompanied her during Immigration Canada's processing of her case. Joyce's permanent residence status is now assured and she lives independently in Canada.

After Alina arrived from the Ukraine with her young child, she moved from the family home to a women's shelter. The Just Solutions clinic provided her with information on her rights and options, referred her to the appropriate social services, and accompanied her throughout the process of obtaining support.



Ange was forced to flee his country...once his refugee claim was accepted, he only had one wish - to be reunited with his two nieces and build a safe life for the family in Canada. Just Solutions assisted and supported Ange throughout this process. Last June, the dream became reality when Ange and his nieces were finally reunited.

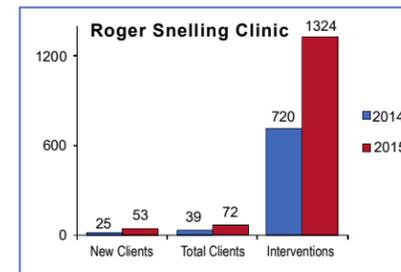


Roger Snelling Clinic

The number of clients in 2015 increased by 67% compared to 2014...

... with more than 1269 interventions in the clinic or by telephone, and 55 visits to clients in their own residences. Building a relationship of trust is the foundation of all MCM work, and the high number of interventions relative to the number of clients reflects the RSC approach to seniors: each person is given as much time as they need to communicate their issue, feel secure, and to understand the proposed and actual resolution.

The RSC also provided accompaniment and translations services at meetings with government officials to clients who were unable to communicate effectively in either English or French. Examples include accompaniment and translation for a unilingual Russian senior citizen during an interview with the Canadian Border Services and her subsequent visit to the immigration office.



Eight community workshops

One of the RSC highlights in 2015 were the eight Les Après-Midis juridiques gatherings...

...providing legal information to both Canadian seniors and those going through the immigration process. They covered subjects such as loss of capacity, basic needs and housing, wills and estates, access to healthcare, and grandparents' rights. Workshops proved popular, with 15 to 25 seniors attending each one. Another RSC initiative, the Doc Clinic, produced information guides to complement information discussed in the workshop.



RSC case histories

Lionel, a pensioner from Cameroon, could not receive treatment for blood cancer until he regularised his immigration status. The Roger Snelling clinic helped him to apply for permanent residence under humanitarian and compassionate grounds.

Hanna arrived from Egypt 40 years ago. Despite working and paying Canadian taxes, she was denied an old age pension. Clinic staff contacted the government to review and correct the information on her government file. Hanna now receives the pension she is entitled to.



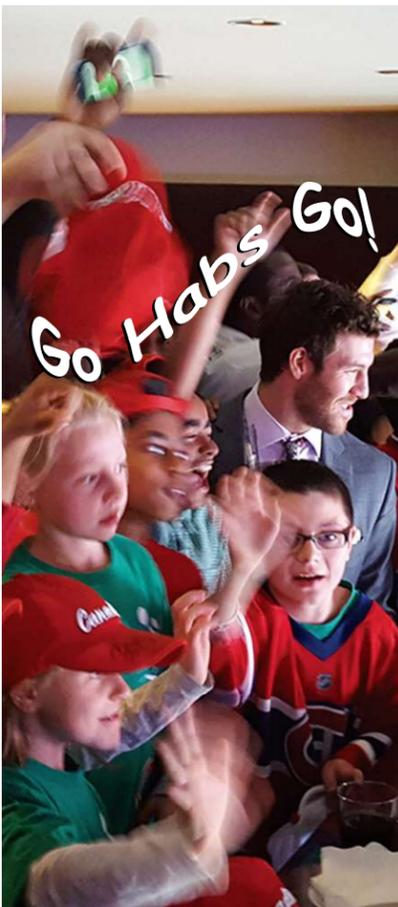
In 2015, we had a bumper crop year with a record 73 campers (18% increase over 2014)!

Camp Cosmos goes from strength to strength. In 2015 we launched the shadow-in-training program for young adolescents interested in working with children with special needs.

As well as lots of sports, games and swimming, campers visited farms, and had lessons in yoga, dance and archery. Campers also learned about reducing their environmental footprint, filling 6 recycling bins and 6 compost buckets each week.

Looking forward to 2016, Camp Cosmos will open a satellite camp on Montreal's West Island as well as creating 30 places both there and in the downtown camp for Syrian children.

The Montreal Canadians Children's Foundation has played a major role in supporting new initiatives at Camp Cosmos from 2012 – 2015.



The Summer Numbers

	2014	2015
Campers	55	73
Counselors	6	6
Shadows	4	4
Counselors-in-Training	8	6
Shadows-in-Training	0	3
Campers with special-needs	8	9
Mean staff-camper ratio	1.3	1.3
Recycling bins filled per week	6	6
Compost buckets filled per week:	6	6
Number of languages at camp:	12	15
(Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, Creole, English, French, Hindi, Italian, Kannada, Persian, Romanian, Portuguese, Spanish, Tamil, Vietnamese)		

