

Maa'n / Ensemble

...a new initiative developed in the wake of the Syrian refugee crises that aims to facilitate integration of all newcomers whatever their origin through concrete projects and inter-cultural partnerships



Celebration of Light

On December 17th, 140 Montrealers - representatives from the Jewish, Muslim, Christian and First Nations communities, Syrian newcomers, federal MPs, the RCMP and the Montreal Police gathered together to express solidarity with refugees and our collective desire to live and work with one another in peace and in harmony. We were delighted that so many came out on a cold, snowy and dark winter's evening to celebrate the light of Christmas, Hanukkah and the Muslim feast of Mawlid Al Nabawi.



Kid Zone

Play is often the best way to reconnect with the joy of living for children who have been traumatized by war and displacement. Throughout 2016, *Kid Zone* organized indoor and outdoor activities for refugee kids newly arrived and then expanded to include children from diverse backgrounds in order to facilitate integration. In addition to its weekly rendez-vous at St. James United that continue in 2017, *Kid Zone* has developed a new partnership with the Montreal School Commission and will be working with adolescents through sports and music in Ville St-Laurent.



Ride for Refuge

Our fearless riders were out in full force again in September 2016 in support of our work with refugees from around the world. The *Ride* is not only an opportunity to raise much needed funds, but a wonderful occasion to spend a fun day with our extended community. Many thanks to all who participated and raised over 6,000\$.



Iftar

Montreal City Mission and St. James United Church joined with the Muslim Association of Canada in June 2016 to break the Ramadan fast. Over 200 individuals, including the Moderator of the United Church of Canada, the Right Reverend Jordan Cantwell, gathered on the St. James Square in downtown Montreal for the first public inter-faith Iftar.



... since 1910

A United Church of Canada Community Ministry



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Annual Report 2016

Since November 2015, Canada has welcomed over 40,000 Syrian refugees generating a groundswell of compassion as countless citizens opened their hearts and their homes to the new arrivals.

MCM responded quickly to this historic opportunity by launching *Maa'n-Ensemble*. Throughout 2016 under the auspices of this new program, inter-faith/cultural partnerships and projects facilitated the integration of these refugees with the larger community. You will read about some of those initiatives in our report along with news of our other programs that have been enriched as a result of this new focus.

Although many challenges remain, MCM moves forward with the support of a vibrant and diverse community. It is only through our collective efforts that a narrative of love, dignity and hope will have the last word.

Rev. Paula Kline, Director

... disponible en français



Camp Cosmos continues to expand and flourish. In 2016 we opened up a second summer camp on the West Island and created an integration program which welcomed 23 newly arrived Syrian children!

We set a new record in attendance as well: 76 campers in Montreal and 30 kids on the West Island!

2016 was also a year for new intercultural partnerships, with the Muslim Association of Canada, the West Island Black Community Association as well as a delegation of Japanese students who collaborated with us on 3 days of intercultural games, as part of an exchange program with McGill.

For the third year in a row, Camp Cosmos Montreal received a certification from the City of Montreal for reaching our environmental goals!

We are looking forward to a new year of innovation and adventure as we prepare to implement an online registration system and aim to make the Camp Cosmos experience available to more families!

We would like to give special thanks to the Montreal Canadians Children's Foundation for their continued support in making Camp Cosmos possible as well as to all of our generous supporters.



Student Leadership

In 2016 our student internship/pro bono program increased by 72% compared to 2015.

We also opened our clinic doors to medical students wishing to develop a holistic approach to their work with vulnerable populations. Eight medical students from the course *médecine sociale engagée* at the *Université de Montréal* passed through our two legal clinics in 2016 for a short-term internship, observing the work and getting involved in a few aspects of our cases.

Providing field work opportunities to students from diverse academic backgrounds such as law, social work, theology and medicine allow us to ensure that our approach does indeed remain holistic. And while our main focus is legal, we never lose sight of the whole person and the many different facets that make up a life.

Testimonies

Every day, at MCM, clients demonstrate that no mountain is too high. Their courage and strength is what inspired me to work towards a career in refugee and human rights. They have shown me the importance of staying attached to your roots, while never being a victim of your own story. I could not have asked for a better experience!

Rita Nehme, Bac in law, *Université de Montréal*



The Summer Numbers

| | 2015 | 2016 |
|--|------|------|
| Campers | 73 | 106 |
| Counselors | 6 | 10 |
| Shadows | 4 | 5 |
| Counselors-in-Training | 6 | 5 |
| Shadows-in-Training | 3 | 3 |
| Campers with special-needs | 9 | 11 |
| Newly arrived Syrians | 0 | 23 |
| Ratio-supervisor to camper | 1-3 | 1-4 |
| Recycling bins filled per week | 6 | 10 |
| Compost bins filled per week: | 6 | 10 |
| Number of languages at camp: | 15 | 17 |
| <i>(Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, Creole, English, French, German, Hindi, Italian, Kannada, Persian, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Tamil, Spanish, Vietnamese)</i> | | |

Roger Snelling Clinic

Mobile Legal Service for Seniors

In 2016 the Roger Snelling Clinic (RSC) conducted 1200 interventions, either in the clinic, by telephone, or through home visits. These interventions represent a total of 75 clients in 2016, with 57 new clients from more than 37 different countries, mostly from Africa, (32%), Middle East (20%) and Europe (17%). Almost 50% of these new clients are Canadian citizens. Building a relationship of trust is the foundation of all MCM work, the high number of one-on-one meetings relative to the number of clients reflects that approach. We allow people the time they need to feel safe, tell their story and move forward towards a solution.

Case Histories

A non-status man from Jamaica moved to Canada 33 years ago after receiving death threats. He applied for refugee status in the 80s but was refused. A hard worker all his life, he was forced to retire when he developed heart disease. Fear of being sent back to Jamaica at his age put his health at more risk from stress and anxiety. In 2012, the Roger Snelling Clinic helped him apply for permanent residency which he received in 2016.

A Canadian citizen of Portuguese origin had worked many years in Canada but was told that he was not entitled to the Old Age Security Pension. He was asked to pay back the amounts of the pension that he received from 2004 until 2014. We overturned that decision.

A 62 year-old Ukrainian widow fled the civil war in Donetsk after losing both her children, and came to Canada accompanied by her granddaughter to live with her Canadian sister. Her granddaughter was granted refugee status but she was refused. She faced deportation. We obtained a temporary resident permit and applied for permanent residence on humanitarian and compassionate grounds.

From Loss to Living

Losses come in all shapes and sizes, from the loss of a loved one, a beloved animal, a job, a place in society to the loss of an entire family, a whole country. No one loss is any more legitimate than another despite its size or context. As humans we feel our losses deeply and for a long time. Our lives are changed forever. Every anniversary, every holiday we are reminded.

Thankfully, change also creates a space for the possibility of feeling better, of feeling whole, of doing things differently. All change provokes feelings of loss and of possibility.

A series of workshops on Loss-Grief-Living with seniors from the United Church and wider community allowed us to explore ways to let grief and suffering have their say, all the while being on the lookout for possibility.

Workshops in 2016 – early 2017 were held at the following United Churches: Beaconsfield; Northlea, Trinity, Rosemere as well as at Manoir St-François in Lennoxville and the Lennoxville District and Women's Group.



Working at Just Solutions has fundamentally changed the way I see refugees and new members of the Canadian community. We study many of these concepts and policies in the abstract, but you gain a far more profound understanding actually meeting refugees on the front line. I have gained such an appreciation for how strong our clients are - how remarkable they are - and for the challenges they face in building lives for themselves here. I will not soon forget them.

Kathleen McFarland, Bac in Law, McGill University

Student Interns and Volunteers (31 in total)

| | |
|----|--|
| 13 | Law (<i>McGill & Université de Montréal</i>) |
| 8 | Social Work (<i>McGill, Université de Sherbrooke, Université de Montréal, University of Manitoba</i>) |
| 1 | Divinity (<i>Centre for Christian Studies, Winnipeg</i>) |
| 1 | Political Science (<i>Concordia</i>) |
| 8 | Medicine (<i>Université de Montréal</i>) |

Just Solutions

Principal areas of intervention

- Permanent residence for humanitarian reasons
- Sponsorship
- Pre removal risk assessment
- Family reunification

Clients with extreme vulnerability: 75%

Some examples:

- 5 homeless
- 3 stateless
- 20 children with special needs
- 34 victims of conjugal or family violence
- 13 with a mental health problem

Principle countries of origin

| | |
|--|--------|
| Middle East (mainly Syria & Iran) | 23.01% |
| Sub saharan Africa (mainly Congo & Cameroun) | 13.15% |
| Latin America (mainly Mexico & Columbia) | 10.31% |
| Carribbean (mainly Haiti & St. Vincent) | 7.40% |
| Northern Africa (mainly Algeria) | 5.00% |
| Europe (mainly France & Spain) | 3.83% |

76 individuals contacted JS from abroad for assistance with sponsorship of which 83% were Syrian

... providing access to justice for refugees and vulnerable immigrants since 2004

| | 2015 | 2016 | Increase % |
|---------------|------|------|------------|
| New Clients | 264 | 327 | 23.6 |
| Total Clients | 341 | 365 | 7.04 |

Maria arrived in Canada in 2008, applied for asylum, but was refused. In 2014, she took refuge in a shelter with her Canadian born daughter. Referred to us by Médecins du Monde, Maria contacted the Just Solutions Clinic to determine the options available to regularize her immigration status. In December 2015, we applied to reopen her humanitarian application by submitting new evidence and accompanied Maria during all the proceedings until her claim was finally accepted. In August 2016, she became a permanent resident of Canada and no longer fears being separated from her daughter.

