

## Research, Advocacy and Student Leadership

Assisting vulnerable populations requires us to engage in front-line efforts to resolve individual cases, join with coalition partners to defend collective rights, and participate in research projects together with academia to produce the science that effects policy change. MCM Interns participate on all these levels.

### Camp Research

Camp Cosmos research findings were presented at the 21st national Metro-polis Conference in Halifax, NS last spring. Cosmos campers, staff and parents were interviewed both pre and post camping season to evaluate how the 'Cosmos factor' fostered feelings of belonging and healing for refugee children from conflict zones. The final report will be published in 2020. Many thanks to our partners at the 'Child and Youth Refugee Research Coalition', McGill School of Social Work and Professor Nicole Ives.



### Press Conference Bill 21

A press conference was organized at St. James United to request a seat at the table for communities of faith during the hearings on the secular Bill 21.

### MCM Interns

Who would have thought I would learn to slow down at a busy place like **Just Solutions!** We take the time to listen to people's stories and ensure they receive all the support they need. I'm also learning the value and impact of a multi-disciplinary team - one that has welcomed me with open arms. Combining social work and legal practice offers optimum assistance to the vulnerable migrants we serve. I have also had another revelation in my short time here - I want to continue working with this population upon graduation. Thank you JS!

Benodia Zamor, social work intern, Université de Montréal



### Cross-Cultural Gathering

MCM interns invited their peers from the United Theological College and ICAN McGill (International Community Action Network) for an evening of story telling. The ICAN students from Syria, Israel, Palestine and Jordan shared some experiences from their communities of origin in the Middle East and their work in Montreal building relationships with one another in a new context. The UTC students explained their call to ministry in a secular society and reflected on the religious symbols debate. And we all discussed the desire for an open and life-giving spirituality within both religious and secular worlds.

## MCM NEWS

### Peace Days

As part of the 5th annual Peace Day Activities, MCM organized a panel discussion, **Exclusion & Embrace: The Call to Community in a Changing World**. A teacher, a scientist, a life coach and a pastor shared their views on the current secular debate, articulated questions we need to be asking ourselves and others to improve inter-cultural relations, and reflected on ways honest, deeper conversations can counter increasing polarization in our world.



### Apple Picking

'Old' friends and newcomers who have been in Canada for only a couple of months, and in some cases, a mere few weeks, all joined in the fun at our annual Fall apple picking outing. Close to 300 participants - a record! - made the trip with us, representing over 10 countries from Europe, the Middle East, Africa, the Caribbean and North America.



### Muslim Awareness Week



MCM joined inter-faith and secular partners at a press conference to launch Muslim Awareness Week



### Ride for Refuge

Over \$4,000 was raised by our intrepid riders and walkers and thanks to our generous donors!

**Montreal City Mission**  
La Mission communautaire de Montréal

*A United Church of Canada Community Ministry*

**TRANSMISSION**  
2019 \* disponible en français

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*Camp Cosmos offers six weeks of exploration, learning and fun to children from diverse backgrounds, including First Nations, and job training/experience to teens and young adults.*



**Camp Cosmos** continues to innovate. Our 140 campers were able to enjoy more activities in nature as a result of our two new locations this year close to parks: Westmount Park United Church, as well as a site in Dollard-des-Ormeaux. Taking advantage every day of all the wonderful opportunities the island has to offer... from Verdun Beach to the Cap St-Jacques Nature Park... from trips to museums to cooking workshops with Midnight Kitchen... to staying fit at the pool and through Yoga sessions... our campers had a full schedule!

**Friends of the Family**

*Back by popular demand, our Kid Zone program of 2017 is taking on a new name and direction under the leadership of MCM volunteer and McGill law student Julia Green. A first Fall outing in November will be to the Biosphere to discover the world of water. FOF provides newcomer families a chance to discover Montreal, engage in outdoor winter activities and feel comfortable in their new city.*



*"Camp Cosmos has opened the door for my family to our new life in Montreal. My two daughters were campers and my son a counsellor-in-training. Knowing they were having such a rich experience was not only a comfort, but also allowed me to study French and pursue employment opportunities. Thank you to the wonderful staff for all you do for our children!"*

**Maa'n / Ensemble**

*...facilitating integration and building community through concrete projects and inter-cultural partnerships*



**Muslim Awareness Week Youth Panel**

With the help of CBC host Sonali Karnick, university and high school youth shared stories, challenges and excitement from their current context as well as dreams for the future during the inaugural MAW activities.



**Songcraft**

A group of eight adolescent newcomers met weekly this year to make music and create their own amazing compositions. The 'older' group will continue the adventure, while a new cohort begins this Fall.

**Women Weaving their Dreams**

In addition to the catering collective, we have begun a sewing bee with a donation of sewing machines from Mountainside United. Stay tuned for news on our quilt project!



**Iftar**

Families from the Jewish, Muslim and Christian communities came out in full force to break the Ramadan fast at our annual Iftar meal and celebration last May.



**Blue Metropolis Literary Festival:**

**Moving to the Front Balcony**

For our 2019 Blue Met edition, we presented a scene from the play 'Arabic Lessons' by author Endre Farkas, followed by a panel discussion moderated by CBC's Jeanette Kelly on how newcomers can move to the front balcony and claim their rightful place in society.

**Just Solutions Legal Clinic**

*...providing access to justice for refugees and vulnerable migrants since 2004*

*Mary was never able to reunite with her family due to multiple administrative and legal obstacles, causing a lot of distress to both Mary in Central Africa and her mother in Canada. Running out of options, Mary's mother turned to Just Solutions in 2017. JS staffers, Mylène Barrière and Louise Oliver, quickly decided to submit a new and one-of-a-kind immigration application for Mary which was finally accepted by both the provincial and federal governments - giving this family a breath of fresh air. Welcome to your new home in Canada Mary! And bravo Mylène and Louise!*



*After 18 years of obstacles and road blocks, Andrea finally became a permanent resident thanks to the JS team. She now looks to a brighter future with her son in Canada.*

**Roger Snelling Clinic**

*Mobile legal service & programs for refugee, immigrant and Canadian born seniors*



Since 2014, the **Roger Snelling Clinic** has been accompanying a Rwandan grand-mother in her efforts to remain in Canada with her children and grand-children. Last March our humanitarian and compassionate application was approved and in early October she finally became a permanent resident! Kudos to clinic coordinator Olga Houde for piloting this case to its successful conclusion and to this inspirational grand-mom for her perseverance and courage.

**Seasons/Saisons**

A new community-building project has just begun that brings together local and newcomer seniors to break isolation, make new contacts and work together on an art project. The Montreal group has begun meeting weekly at Westmount Park United and the West Island group will begin shortly. Phase two in 2020 will connect the newcomers with Canadian born seniors.



**Kudos to our Elders-in-Residence**

*...to Renate Sutherland, retired teacher and former MCM chair, who was recently named a 'Notable Woman' by the Canadian Federation of University Women (CFUW) as part of their centennial celebrations.*



*....and to Robert Verrall, National Film Board pioneer, who was a guest of honour at the ceremony to remove the iconic NFB logo in preparation for its new home in the Quartier des spectacles - next door to St. James United!*

