

Camp Cosmos was back and better than ever for 2021! After having cancelled our in-person session in 2020, it was a blessing to be able to open back up at Saint James United Church this past summer. Through hard work and vigilance from our staff and campers, we are happy to report that we ran for our entire 6 week summer session without any cases of COVID-19! Although Camp Cosmos had a capacity that was reduced by half in order to better ensure a safer camp, we were still able to reopen all of our programs and participate in some awesome activities. Opting to prioritize outdoor play and spending time with one another, the campers had beach days, barbecues, boat trips, nature hikes, and scavenger hunts, among other new and well-loved camp activities.



Impact!

The Camp Cosmos Impact Project highlights how many of our community members have evolved with us over the years.. Testimonies from some of our former campers, now staff and Leaders in Training, showed us how Camp Cosmos brings a community together and continues to support its members as they grow. It is our hope for 2022 to be back at full capacity in our Downtown chapter!

Liz Fowler, Camp Director

Xavier Ohana

My journey at Camp Cosmos started when I became a Camper at about 5 years old. Camp has had an incredible impact on my life, because I made a friend that I have had for the past 9 years! Now I get to call myself a Leader-In-Training and continue to grow here at Camp Cosmos.



Josh Cea

Since the summer of 2015, I have been working with Camp Cosmos and I was 14 years old when I started as Leader-In-Training. My experience has taught me many things - being independent, responsible, and becoming a leader. The one thing that I really love about every year is working with familiar faces along with meeting and getting to know new people. Camp Cosmos has and will always be a safe, comfortable and fun place-like a second home.



Liz Fowler

Being a part of the Youth Leadership Program was incredibly rewarding for me as a teen all the way back in 2010. It allowed me the opportunity to know and understand my passion for anti-oppressive childcare from a young age. It was Camp Cosmos that inspired me to continue working with children, and in the years since I have been able to obtain my bachelors degree in Child Studies, which has in turn allowed me to pursue my Camp Director position as a career. Not everyone gets the opportunity to work at their childhood dream job, but here I am living the dream!



MCM NEWS

On the Move for Newcomers

Thanks to our intrepid movers, we were able to raise \$6,800 this fall for our work with newcomers! From the cast of CBC's Moonshine in Nova Scotia to the majestic mountains of Charlevoix, to the streets of Montreal, our community of friends did what it takes to get the message across. A shout out to our move partners at Action Refugee Montreal, MCM Move Campaign chair - Montreal lawyer Youssef Kabaj, and all of our movers and shakers! Let's see if we can do even better next year!



Apple Picking

Our traditional apple picking outing was a 'pick me up' for pandemic spirits this year. With 250 + participants in 4 buses (using masks and social distancing!), and joined by our friends from the Beaconsfield Nigerian Network for the first time (thank you Ade for organizing that!), a joyful, sun drenched day provided a chance to breathe some fresh country air, visit with neighbours and store up on vitamin D for the winter!



Peace Days

For this year's edition, a panel of four at St. James United discussed how interfaith connections can facilitate peace in our world. Far from hiding one's light under a bushel, interfaith partners are called to share the contributions their communities make to the creation of harmonious relations, both locally and globally.



Broadview

MCM Assistant Director was featured in the national United Church magazine Broadview this year. Anwar shared stories of his journey from an unrecognized Bedouin village without electricity and running water to his current life in Montreal that has different challenges and countless opportunities - like working at MCM! Congrats Anwar for making a difference in so many lives and in the life of MCM as well.





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Maa'n / Esemble

Facilitating integration and building community through concrete projects and intercultural/faith partnerships

GAT How does food connect us with our families ... our ancestors ... our spirituality? These are some of the questions we have begun to explore through: **Gathering At Table**, a joint MCM/ St. James project bringing together newcomer and Canadian born elders along with student interns and volunteers. Our final goal is to produce a cookbook with a difference, one that includes not only recipes but the wisdom we will glean from our gatherings over the upcoming year ... and most importantly, testimonies to the relationships we have already started to build.



WWD Sewing Circle

Thanks to a generous donation of fabric from Rev. Heather McClure, our sewing circle (part of the Women Weaving their Dreams Collective) is up and running again. After sewing masks at the height of the pandemic, the women are happy to return to St. James in November when they will begin sewing gifts for the Christmas and holiday season.



Seasons/Saisons Our newcomer seniors' group stayed connected this past year through the purchase of tablets. Maa'n coordinator Anwar Alhjojo assisted the men in getting set up and familiarizing themselves with the technology.

Back to School & EID

School bags chock full of supplies were distributed to some of the children in our newcomer network as they made their way back to school this fall. And last spring baskets of goodies to celebrate EID also brought some joy into the lives of the little ones.



"I wasn't expecting this gift. I was worried about how to provide my kids with the school supplies they need. Everything is so expensive. Receiving 3 back packs with all the supplies was a huge relief for my family. Thank you!"

- Newcomer mom



Green SAGE Vert

A joint project of MCM and St. James United to raise awareness of bio-diversity in the urban setting and promote care of the environment



A little bed of plants sprouts beside the St-James church - not by our own hand or will, but whose dogged growth we admire. Over the summer we set out to construct an enclosure for this leafy patch, built up from stones picked from around the yard, and punctuated at different junctures by a small wood bench and a welcome crow: invitations to appreciate the unexpected abundance of Life in the forest. Both the crow and bench eventually disappeared from their posts; taken away, we presume, to serve some other ends. Perhaps they will reappear some day. Nevertheless, in their brief stint in the St-James Forest, they helped to animate the rocky yard for the Camp Cosmos kids, many of whom also helped us to plant some mint, which has nicely taken root.

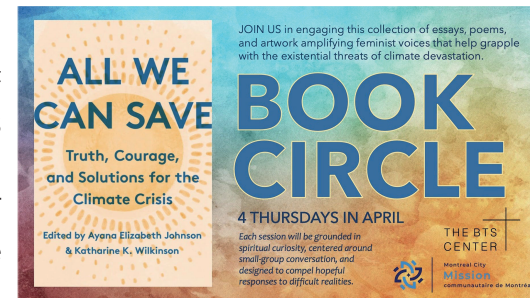
After all this, we remember that work can always be an abundant act, when we affirm Love and Care as the kernels of all ethical labour. And so we are compelled to carry on our work in the St-James Forest, a plot of land about which we care, for a community of Friends that we adore.

Likewise, a "B-Line" has taken root across Montréal, an interfaith network that connects St-James United with friends from all over the city and West Island, in a shared mission to ameliorate the state of our landscape for pollinators!

Karlo Trost, GSV volunteer

Climate Networking

GSV members also engage in different forums for climate justice, from co-leading a book circle with our friends from the BTS Center in Maine, to participating in a nation wide panel discussion with colleagues from Vancouver and Quebec (MCM board chair Wendy Evans), to creating the first Green Faith Circle in Montreal as part of the international Green Faith movement.



Faiths 4 Climate Justice

On October 18th, we gathered on the St. James Square with First Nations, interfaith and community partners to join our voices with those around the globe calling out for climate justice.



Just Solutions

Providing access to justice for refugees and vulnerable immigrants since 2004

While K was recognised as a refugee, her underaged daughter was not. K submitted her permanent residence application in Canada, in which she included her daughter, but ran into legal and administrative obstacles. K contacted the Just Solutions legal clinic and after a few months of hard work by the clinic's team, K and her daughter finally became permanent residents in May 2021. Congratulations and best wishes!!



Roger Snelling

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

F came to Canada in 1991 fleeing severe domestic violence. Her three adult children still reside in her country of origin. For her first four years in Canada, F did domestic work. Later on, she started her own cake baking business with the help of her nephew. Hoping to regularize her immigration status, F contacted a lawyer in 2000 whom she paid approximately \$8000, mostly in cash. The lawyer, however, did not file any immigration application on her behalf, was verbally abusive, instructed her not to speak to social workers and encouraged her to lie on her application. In 2016, F finally spoke to a social worker about her situation and was referred to Montreal City Mission. We submitted a Humanitarian and Compassionate application for F and the first stage was approved in September 2021. We will continue to accompany and represent her in the second stage of her application until she becomes a permanent resident.



To Miss Olga and the staff of Just Solutions

With a joyful heart I just want to say a very big thank you for all your time, hard work efforts and empathy you have shown me. You took the time to listen week after week after week. You and your staff were and still are like my extended family, the kind words and love that was shown to me was so comforting especially on days when I felt heartbroken. I am truly blessed to have and know wonderful people like you in my life and I will be forever grateful. Your kindness always makes me feel welcome. You provided a safe and respectful place for me and at every appointment you treated me with dignity. And you did all that with a beautiful smile. Words can not truly express the way I feel inside but I really want to say, Thank You! With great gratitude from the bottom of my heart. F.

Student Interns

I am in my final year of studies in social work at the Université de Montréal and have been doing an internship at the Just Solutions Legal Clinic since the beginning of September. It has been incredibly interesting to learn about the legal aspects of immigration. I have also met many people from many different backgrounds and from this, I have learnt a lot, but I have also realized the difficulties that many face when arriving here in Canada.

Fabricio Sanchez-Parnas

This fall we welcomed the 3rd cohort of McGill nursing students. Elise Whitehead, Catherine Warnement, Rachel Pearson and Yinka Oluwadayi are already hard at work organizing a series of health workshops for both the MCM community of friends and our partners at the Beaconsfield United Nigerian network.

