

Camp Cosmos

Another fun-filled summer of sports and educational activities with the camp running out of St. James United in downtown Montreal this year. We welcomed 87 campers, including 6 with special needs as well as 27 new or returning Ukrainian refugee families. Five dynamic young Leaders-in-Training provided invaluable assistance to the camp staff, developing their skills to one day soon become full-fledged monitors.

Guided by the dedicated environmental and intercultural coordinators, the campers embarked on captivating city-wide adventures that broadened their horizons and nurtured their connections.

And, for a second year running, the **St. James Music & Dance Program** under the guidance of **Yazan Salwaha** enriched the weekly schedule for our 7-8 year old group, as campers delved into diverse cultural dances and music.

New friendships, new experiences and lots of wonderful memories to last all year round!

Fatou Diop, Camp Director



For me as a mom, my main goal is to provide an experience that may have many life-long, positive benefits for my kids. Joining Camp Cosmos has given them just that - the opportunity to grow and develop skills and character traits that are often hard to develop in the comfort of home. That is exactly what Camp Cosmos did for my teenage daughter, who worked for the first time in her life. As a Leader-in-Training, she came home filled with new experiences, new challenges and new memories. Also my youngest son participated in camp for the third year. He really needed this chance to unplug and connect face-to-face with other kids while learning from positive young adult role models.

It was a wonderful summer! Thank you Camp Cosmos staff. We can't wait to repeat our experience with you back again next year.

Faten, Camp Cosmos parent



MCM NEWS

RIDE FOR REFUGE

MERCI! THANK YOU! GRACIAS! SHUKRANI E DUPE!

To all our cyclists, walkers and supporters - including MCM staff, board and volunteers - who made **Ride 23** a fabulous community event - and helped us raise close to 5,000\$ for MCM's work with refugees and vulnerable migrants! And thanks to our friends at Action Refugee Montreal who sponsored the event!

A gold medal was awarded to the **Evans/Sewall family** - Wendy, Sam, Justin and Leo - for raising over 1,000\$!!! Way to go! Félicitations!!!



HE SHOOTS HE SCORES!!

Thanks to the **Montreal Canadiens Children's Foundation**, we were able to treat a group of young teenage girls from our community of friends - one of whom had just arrived from Sudan - to their first hockey game - in a VIP box!

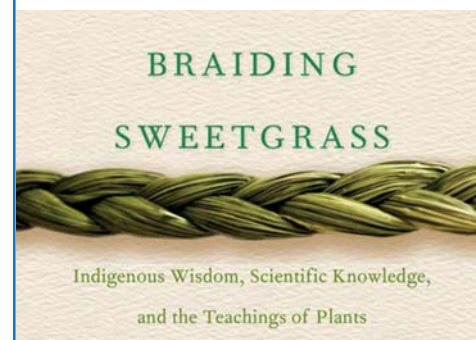


GreenSAGEvert

MCM board chair **Rev. Wendy Evans** participated in the BTS Center's annual fall convocation in Maine on the theme "Kinship: Re-weaving the Great Web of Belonging", together with members from the Wild Church Network and the Penobscot Nation from Indian Island in Maine.

An idea that was spawned at the conference for our own context: a January 2024 book study on **Braiding Sweetgrass** by **Robin Will Kimmerer**, through the **Montreal Green Faith Circle**. Stay tuned for more details.

Ongoing work will also continue in the new year on granting the status of legal personhood to the St Lawrence river.



Moveable Feast

Following a service on October 1st at St. James United where the first fully translated Mohawk Bible was received from Kanesatake elder and Bible translator **Harvey Satewas Gabriel**, we walked/drove to the Mt. Royal Cemetery for a ceremony at the gravesite of **Mohawk Chief and Methodist Minister Sosé Onasakenrat**. Chief Sosé, Satewas' great-grand-father, had translated the four Gospels in the 1800s and courageously fought the powers of the day to safeguard Mohawk territory.



CONGRATULATIONS!



*To MCM Outreach Coordinator **Arwa Nofal** who recently became a Canadian citizen. Canada has become a bit kinder!*

Good-bye and Good Luck!

With much sadness, we said good-bye to the Legal Clinic Coordinator, **Olga Houde**, after 8 years of dedication to the cause of vulnerable migrants.

Good luck for the next chapter Olga!

"It has been a pleasure and a privilege working with Olga these past 8 years - Olga's professionalism, dedication and tireless efforts have changed the lives of countless vulnerable migrants. Mazel tov Olga!"

Rick Goldman, MCM Supervising Lawyer



Montreal City Mission

communautaire de Montréal

A United Church of Canada Community Ministry

Transmission 2023



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Maa'n / Ensemble

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

Why Faith?

A spirited discussion was held in January to celebrate Muslim Awareness Week. Panelists from the Muslim and Christian traditions shared personal faith journeys, and engaged with an intergenerational, intercultural group (ages 5 to 95, and most decades in between), on the role faith plays in a secular society.

Gathering at Table

Close to 100 members of the Muslim, Jewish, Christian, Sikh and larger Montreal community, gathered on April 3rd to celebrate Ramadan, Passover and Easter over a meal and conversation. On the discussion agenda: the meaning of 'sacred', where we experience awe and wonder in our lives, and how and where faith and secularity can connect.

The sacred can be found in temples, churches, mosques, etc, but the most sacred is what you can't build – human life.

Guest Susan McCann

Apple-Picking

WHAT A BEAUTIFUL DAY! Over 500 participated in our annual apple picking this year - a record - where we were graciously received at the south shore farm of our good friends Hassan and Nathalie Guillet. A diverse, intergenerational group of newcomers, Canadians, young and old alike, delighted in this beautiful country venue as they connected with one another, made new friends, played games, danced, and enjoyed the fruit of the land. Many commented how they wait impatiently all year for this outing - their only chance to get out of the city.

Musical Meditation

Our community of friends, along with the noon hour lunch crowd, gathered on a Wednesday in September for a Musical Meditation session which we combined this year with our Peace Days event. Many thanks to Koa Boyd and Luc Lefebvre for leading us on that initial journey of inner peace, and to Brian Bronfman for his encouragement to transform our inner peace into peace work in the community.

Power Within

A 6-week workshop series was begun this fall to empower 14 newcomer adolescent girls. Through discussion and playful group exercises, the teens develop confidence, self-esteem and a healthy body image.

WWD Sewing Circle

We continue to offer a space for newcomer women to meet, learn new skills and experience community. French and English conversation classes have recently been added to the weekly gatherings.



Just Solutions Legal Clinic

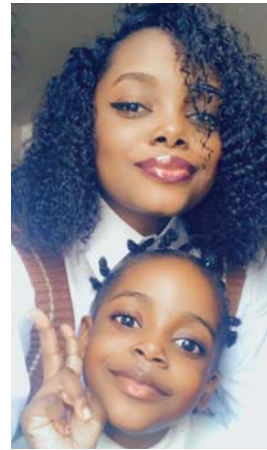
Providing access to justice for refugees and vulnerable immigrants since 2004

Louise and I have worked together since 2017 on my file of becoming a permanent resident of Canada along with my now 5 year-old daughter. Louise has been nothing but an absolute God send. I will forever be grateful to her because she has always put her last effort into my file. I am happy to mention that I now reside in Canada with my daughter and it's been a breath of fresh air. We love being close to my mom and spend much needed quality time with her. Thank you from the bottom of my heart to the Just Solutions team. Blessings to you all!

Nadine

I am a single mother of two, and I arrived in Canada in Nov 2017. My 14 year-old daughter was accepted as a refugee, but my 12 year old son and I were refused. I then heard of the Montreal City Mission. Madam Louise took up my case and helped me with my humanitarian application. If not for Montreal City Mission and Madam Louise Olivier, my son and I wouldn't be in Canada today as permanent residents. I will never forget you in the story of my life. I love you all and I will continue to love you.

Olukemi



This eye-opening experience is allowing me to gain insights into the complex realities of precarious status migrants and the need for better resources and laws to support them. I am also inspired by the resourcefulness of the passionate and brilliant colleagues who surround me and offer their help.

Delphine Brisson, McGill Social Work student



I am pleased to be part of the kind, knowledgeable team at Just Solutions. Working with families through both a social work and law lens on the Canadian immigration processes really demonstrates the importance of integrating different perspectives simultaneously.

Marie-Soleil Garzon, McGill Social Work student

Community Action

On Refugee Rights Day and throughout the month of April, MCM staff and board members joined fellow advocates in front of the Prime Minister's office to protest the expansion of the Safe Third Country Agreement.

As part of ongoing actions, MCM supervising lawyer Rick Goldman and staffer Peter Butler walked from Montreal to the US border at Roxham Road in June. Dozens of refugees, advocates and supporters marched for three days, in sometimes miserable weather, in favour of refugee rights and against the closure of the border to asylum-seekers.

On October 21st, MCM rallied with Amnesty International, Quebec unions, politicians, migrant farm workers and non-profit organizations, in support of undocumented migrants.



In January, the McGill Faculty of Law organized a week of activities for students to learn about working with marginalized populations. On Jan. 6, Peter Butler hosted a group of 25 students at MCM to talk about the services our clinics offer, as well as about refugee protection more broadly. Then on Jan. 9, Rick Goldman spoke to the entire first-year class about his work with vulnerable clients in different community settings, and the challenges and rewards of such work.

Last Spring, Peter Butler and Olga Houde gave a 3-hour training session on 'resources for refused refugee claimants' to three different cohorts of 20 non-profits each. Feedback was very positive, so on November 2, Peter and Rick Goldman will be presenting this session again. Past participants, from all across Quebec, have sometimes followed up with the clinic to ask about complicated cases they have seen in their practice for which there are no local organizations available to help.

Danaïdes: Research ... Advocacy ... Public Awareness

The pilot we presented to you last year is starting to take shape as the Danaïdes Project: Diversity without Discrimination.

Our three main goals are:

- To raise awareness and educate civil society about the obstacles, prejudices, and discrimination that migrants without status or with precarious status face constantly;
- To advocate for a regularization program promised by the federal government in 2021, but not yet in existence;
- To highlight, through a research and advocacy project, the hurdles and difficulties that migrants without status or with precarious status encounter when trying to access justice.



Research

We have already put together a research team of academics from Université de Montréal, Universités: McGill, Laval, Concordia, Ottawa, and InterAction and SHERPA research institutes.

Advocacy

For a greater impact, we established a steering committee, representing different non-profit organizations serving vulnerable migrants to collaborate on the research and advocacy elements of the project.

The Danaïdes team has also produced an initial research paper on 'Access to justice for vulnerable migrants', that was presented to the Quebec National Assembly earlier this fall.

Stay tuned for news on upcoming activities!