



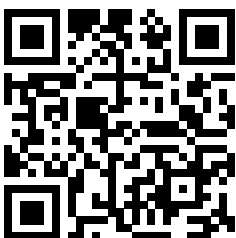
Montreal City  
**Mission**  
communautaire de Montréal



A United Church of Canada Community Ministry

# ANNUAL REPORT 2021

Compassion  
Hospitalité  
Justice



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*\*disponible en français*

Leaders today need to use their power and influence, their insight and compassion, to lead people back to an understanding of who we are as human beings, to create the conditions for our basic human qualities of generosity, contribution, community and love to be evoked no matter what.

**- Margaret Wheatley, Who Do We Choose to Become? Facing Reality, Claiming Leadership, Restoring Sanity**

We are never stronger as leaders than when we work cooperatively. And that is why St. James United and MCM are developing a **Spiritual/Justice Hub** to better structure our partnership and foster 'right relation' within our community and beyond. Over the past few years, and despite the challenges of Covid, we certainly have become a hub of dynamic intercultural/generational programming, interfaith action and work on climate justice. Together with our legal clinics that assist vulnerable migrants and seniors, all of these initiatives are helping us deepen our leadership potential, sharing that mantle with a growing community of friends. Wheatley encourages us to become *Warriors of the Spirit*, creating *islands of sanity* amidst chaos and despair. I think you will agree as you read the pages of this report, that the dedicated staff, student and volunteer team at MCM, along with our partners at St. James, are doing just that!



Rev. Paula Kline, Executive Director

## Maa'n / Ensemble

This program was initiated in the wake of the Syrian refugee crisis and aims to facilitate integration of all newcomers whatever their origin through concrete projects and inter-cultural partnerships.

### Sewing Circle

Our newcomer bees moved from sewing masks for homeless shelters in 2020, to making holiday gifts this past Christmas season: xmas stockings, table runners, decorative towels, etc. Many thanks to the women for these lovely creations and to those who purchased them!



### ARK (Art with Refugee Kids)

This past fall, volunteer Sammar Wakele introduced a group of newcomer kids (age 8-13) to the delights of art. The budding artists had a great time with each other and their teacher, and produced some lovely paintings. Art, as we know, benefits the physical, emotional and mental well being of all children.



### GAT (Gathering at the Table)

Another new project in 2021, Gathering at Table, brought together local and newcomer seniors to design a cookbook with a difference - that difference is the intercultural community we are creating, breaking down walls that divide and building relationships through sharing recipes, stories and laughter. Stay tuned for our cookbook in 2022!

### Holistic Reconciliation

Family therapist Waleed Al-Ahmed offered newcomers a series of sessions in 2021 to assist them in their struggles with family conflict and adapting to new societal norms.

### Online French classes

Renaude Grégoire provided dynamic weekly language classes to adolescents and adults. Renaude's approach is both professional and convivial, making it fun to learn French for newcomer families.

### Apple Picking

A wonderful outing last September, bringing together 250+ members of our community of friends, including the Beaconsfield Nigerian Network.



**Feedback from participants in Holistic Reconciliation:**

*I start to implement what I hear during the sessions with my kids and I see great results!  
With this group, I felt safe and assured that parenting is a challenge and life long experience.  
My experience at the parent support group has been so useful and exceptionally encouraging.*

# Legal Clinics

MCM's two legal clinics provide free information and services to vulnerable populations.

## JUST SOLUTIONS CLINIC

### Top Areas of Intervention

Humanitarian Application	27%
Family Reunification	18.5%
Asylum Application	15.5%
Sponsorship	8%
Non-Immigration related (eg. family law)	7.5%
Work Permit	6%
Permanent Residency	5.5%

### Total Cases

2020	292
2021	272

### No. of Interventions

2020	4895
2021	3910

### Vulnerability Factors

Health Problems (physical & mental)	25%
Domestic Violence	23%
Single Parent Families	15%
Children with Special Need	10.5%
Homelessness	6%
Sexual Minority	3%
Stateless Person	1.5%



The Lopez Arteaga family of 4, including a child with special needs, was sent back to Mexico in 2012 following the refusal of their asylum request. The family finally obtained confirmation of permanent residency for humanitarian reasons in December 2021. Their file had been in process since 2012 with Immigration Canada and, during all these years, the family was accompanied by the Just Solutions Clinic. Our recent application - Authorization to Return to Canada (ARC) - was successful and the family is now making plans to return to Montreal. We look forward to welcoming them!



"I would like to express my sincere gratitude and thanks to Louise and the entire clinic team for your collaboration and help. You supported me throughout my journey and thanks to you, my application for permanent residency on humanitarian grounds was accepted. I am very happy and thank God for putting you on my path. I also thank you for the professionalism that you have always shared with me. God bless you!" - Fernando

## ROGER SNELLING SENIORS' CLINIC



"I come to bring my testimony in relation to what you have done for me so that I could become a permanent resident. When I came to you, I was about to be deported to my home country. Thanks to the work of your legal clinic, I became a permanent resident 6 years after my arrival in Quebec. I would like to thank Mylène Barrière and Louise Olivier very much for the remarkable work they did for me. I also want to thank the team for agreeing to help me find my eldest son back home. I say a thousand times thank you to you all at the Montreal City Mission." - Mahamat

Ms. B. had been referred to us in 2015 by the PRAIDA (government) social worker. The moratorium for Haiti had been lifted and the social worker was looking for someone to submit a humanitarian application for Ms. B. who was living in a senior residence (CHSLD). The elderly Mrs. B, suffering from diabetes and high blood pressure and losing her autonomy, no longer had any support system in Haiti. We agreed to represent her and submitted an application in June 2015, followed by periodic updates. Ms. B's application for permanent residence on humanitarian and compassionate grounds was accepted in principle in February 2021. Steps are now being completed as part of the permanent residence process.

### Total Cases

2020	42
2021	25

### No. of Interventions

2020	468
2021	428

### Top Areas of Intervention

Permanent Residency (humanitarian reasons)	32%
Civil Law (eg. wills)	20%
Housing	20%
Family Reunification	8%

### Vulnerability Factors

Health Issues (physical & mental)	48%
Domestic Violence	20%
Homelessness	8%

# Camp Cosmos

This dynamic program includes activities focused on building connections and leadership skills for children and teens.

Camp Cosmos was back and better than ever for summer 2021! After having canceled our in-person session in 2020, it was a blessing to reopen all of our programs and participate in some super activities. Opting to prioritize outdoor play, the campers had beach days, barbecues, boat trips, and scavenger hunts, among other new and well-loved activities. Through moving testimonies, our *Impact Project* highlighted the journey taken by many from camper to leader-in-training to program coordinator to assistant director and director, showing us how Camp Cosmos is able to bring a community together and continue to be a support to its members as they grow. The expression - training tomorrow's leaders - certainly is lived out at Camp Cosmos!



- Liz Fowler, Camp Director

# Student Interns

This program provides front line experience to students from a wide variety of disciplines and MCM with valuable human resources.

Two cohorts of nursing interns in 2021 delivered eight workshops to the MCM newcomer and Beaconsfield United networks. The online format provided a wonderful opportunity for the interns to connect with populations that are sometimes hard to reach while the participants gained invaluable knowledge in the area of child development, nutrition and vaccinations as well as adult mental health. Dozens of individuals - mainly newcomers but also local - continue to profit from this program.



McGill Social Work	1
Université de Montréal Social Work	2
Dawson College Social Services	1
McGill Ingram School of Nursing	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>



"My internship has allowed me to witness the compassion, respect and inclusivity that MCM offers as well as finding a new perspective to what can be done as a social worker. I am extremely grateful to the MCM team, and in particular Olga, Louise, Rick, and Paula."

# Resources, Workshops & Gatherings

During the pandemic we have been providing important information virtually while keeping our community connected.

- Muslim Awareness Week: January** - a workshop on the theme: *Journey of Discovery*, highlighting the evolution of the St. James United/MCM partnership with the wider Muslim community over the past 5 years; presentation in the annual launch;
- Blue Metropolis Literary Festival: April** - a conversation with Dr. Jim Torczyner on his book, *All People Share the Same Rights*, and his long experience in Canada and the Middle East promoting solidarity across religious and cultural divides;
- Iftar: May** - a virtual gathering with our Muslim friends to break the Ramadan fast;
- Peace Days/Journées de la paix: September** - a panel discussion - *Revealing our Light/An Interfaith Journey Towards Peace*, with Jewish, Christian and Muslim spokespersons on the contributions made by different communities of faith, locally and globally;
- Celebration of Light: December** - our annual celebration at St. James with members from the Jewish, Christian, and Muslim communities, and other Montrealers, to share stories and music.



# 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.

2021 was a busy year on the front for environmental care and climate justice.

- A garden next to St. James Church that provided a learning experience for Camp Cosmos kids;
- An island wide B-line with ecumenical and interfaith partners to nourish our winged friends;
- The first Canadian Green Faith Circle (GFC) launch - under the auspices of GSV;
- A GFC gathering on St. James Square with interfaith and First Nations partners;
- A book circle on climate justice - *All we Can Save* - with our partners at the BTS Center in Maine and co-led by MCM board chair Wendy Evans;
- A 'research collaborative' with those New England partners to foster conversation on the environment in all of our community organizations;
- An online panel hosted by Kamloops United Church: *Changing the Climate on the Climate Emergency*, with international climate activists including Wendy Evans;
- An interview (GSV youtube channel) with Dr. Peter Soroye for: *Black in Entomology Week*;
- A weekly Facebook post - GREEN THURSDAYS - with articles and videos on the environment.

