

Camp Cosmos

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

50 years young!

For the past 50 years, Camp Cosmos has been offering a safe space in Montreal for children of diverse backgrounds to learn, grow and play throughout the summer. 2022 was no exception. We were thrilled to run the first full capacity in-person camp after the pandemic at the beautiful Westmount Park United Church, welcoming 98 children including those with special needs. The campers visited countless parks, pools, beaches while enjoying programs carefully planned by coordinators from our environmental, intercultural, and athletics & well-being programs. Of special note is our refugee program which allowed us to register free of charge 28 Ukrainian children who had recently arrived in Montreal. A new camp video can be viewed on the camp website <https://www.campcosmos.org/>

Echo Jiang, Camp Director



Dave Sidway, Montreal Gazette

Student Interns

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

MCM combines opportunities for practical experience with a pedagogical approach, providing a stimulating learning environment to a wide variety of students. In 2022, MCM once again benefited from a dynamic group of interns - 15 from 4 disciplines, representing 3 universities. Whether providing social work guidance, working on a case at the legal clinics, doing a home visit, presenting an online workshop or designing an evaluation process, MCM interns hone their skills as future professionals on a diverse interdisciplinary team.

Online Workshops

Refugee 101: Information on the refugee claimant process provided in two workshops by MCM supervising lawyer Rick Goldman and caseworker Peter Butler to Beaconsfield United Refugee Network and the Nakohna:ka Regional Youth Network in the Eastern Townships.

Career Readiness/Mentorship: Sponsored by international firm Goodera for 25 members of MCM's newcomer youth network in Montreal and Toronto on: career journeys, interview prep, upskilling, tips on jobs & internships.

Ancient Texts/Contemporary Conversations: Exploration of hospitality in the Qu'ran with Muslim scholar Imad Balkis.

Language Classes: Weekly conversation sessions in French and English provided by Renaude Grégoire and Andrew Cutforth.

My supervisors and my colleagues have been supportive, approachable, welcoming, resourceful, and flexible despite the challenges and workload of a legal immigration clinic. I learned valuable lessons being a stagiaire there. They ignited a flame in me, transforming my interest in law into a passion for law, advocacy and social justice. I'll be forever grateful to them. Thank you, Montreal City Mission!

Ovie Joseph, McGill Social Work



"After volunteering at the Just Solutions Clinic for two stints in 2010 and in 2017-2018, I was delighted to return to MCM for my masters project to support the team on an evaluation process of the Maa'n intercultural/faith program. I'm a long time fan of MCM's work and I'm excited to bring support in a new way through this project."

Owen Campbell, Concordia Human Systems Management



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.

Activities in 2022:

- Two meetings of the BTS Research Collaborative in Maine exploring ecological imagination;
- A gathering on the St. James Square for climate justice with Interfaith and First Nations partners organized by the Green Faith Circle;
- A vigil on the St. James Square preceding the COP 15 Conference;
- Participation in the city wide demonstration for climate justice.

It was an inspiring experience to participate in the UN Biodiversity Conference (COP15) in Montreal this past December as co-chair of the Montreal GreenFaith Circle, gathering with people from around the globe who are committed to honouring the sacredness of all life.

Early in the morning on the final day of the conference, there was a sign of hope as "the nations of the world secured a historic deal on behalf of nature". Now, we are all called to play a role in ensuring the deal is actually lived out and with even more breadth and depth in scope!

Rev. Wendy Evans, MCM Board Chair



Montreal City
Mission
communautaire de Montréal

"At CBC, we are committed to sharing stories of people who are making a difference in our communities. We were proud to choose Montreal City Mission as Charity of the Year because of the wonderful work they do welcoming and assisting newcomers and building community in so many unique and creative ways. Congratulations MCM!"

Debbie Hynes

Regional Manager, Quebec
CBC Marketing & Communication

A United Church of Canada Community Ministry



Annual Report 2022

1435 rue City Councillors
Montréal, Québec H3A 2E4
www.montrealcitymission.org
montrealcitymission
(514) 844 9128
(514) 844 0067

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Once the band begins to play, they know that for the next hour and fifteen minutes, everyone - musicians and waitresses, the initiated and the unsuspecting - will be united in the purest possible expression of community, having made the choice to become "us" instead of "me".

Wynton Marsalis, Moving to Higher Ground, How Jazz Can Change Your Life

At MCM, a stellar team of staff, students, program participants, board members, volunteers, and our wider Community of Friends aims for higher ground every day. Through collective efforts in our Maa'n program, at the Legal Clinics and during the summer season with Camp Cosmos, we are able to tap into a wealth of talent and create a welcoming space where strangers become friends, gifts are shared and creativity flourishes. *You don't have to earn your creativity...you're born with it...all you have to do is tend to it and unleash it!* (Marsalis)

Tending to our creativity as we plant and water the seeds of friendship and community is perhaps why we were chosen as CBC Charity of the Year in 2022. And what a whirlwind it was - interviews on TV, radio, and diverse media platforms to spread the message of MCM's work, vision, and the new Spiritual-Justice HUB we are developing with our partners at St. James United. Thank you CBC for allowing us to take a step back, celebrate the accomplishments, and envisage new ways of transforming the "me" into "us"!

Rev. Paula Kline, Executive Director



Maa'n/Ensemble

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

Gatherings

Iftar/ Easter/ Passover

In April, we celebrated Ramadan, Easter and Passover over a delicious meal provided by our catering service Women Weaving their Dreams (WWD); presentations by Rabbi Lisa Grushcow, Samer Elniz and Rev. Arlen Bonnar shed new light on these ancient feasts.

Good Neighbour

In December, we gathered with our interfaith/cultural friends to enjoy another wonderful meal provided by WWD and to discuss how we can extend hospitality to our neighbours near and far. CBC Daybreak's Sean Henry co-hosted the event and the entire Daybreak team was present to distribute CBC socks and cookies to the 90+ guests. Music from the group Osmoste delighted one and all!

Projects

Gathering At Table Cookbook

Our first project bringing together local and newcomer seniors in 2022 was a resounding success. The Gathering at Table intercultural cook book that was launched in September at a Peace Day gathering, not only contains precious family recipes but, most importantly, the stories that are behind them.

Pledj (Promoting Leadership for Empowerment & Justice)

Together with this close community partner, we organized weekly employability training sessions for newcomers wishing to work in the nonprofit sector.

Holistic Reconciliation Within Newcomer Families

14 newcomer parents accompanied by a social worker met 10 times to share life experiences and get advice on understanding and integrating Canadian society.

Women Weaving their Dreams

WWD provides income to refugee women while allowing them to share their expertise and experience the support of a closely knit community. In 2022, 12 meals were catered by the women at both public and private events. *It's a heartwarming feeling to share our love for food with others and bring a taste of our culture to the wider community, one woman said.*

Outings

Apple Picking

This annual event continues to draw dozens of families for a day of fresh air, community and fun in the country. In 2022, 85 families representing over 200 individuals connected with old friends and made new ones. A special treat for the kids was the presence of Camp staff Josh and Fatou who amused young and old alike with their activities.

Moveable Feast

A visit to the 5 historic sites of St. James Methodist/United followed by lunch and discussion, allowed a diverse group to learn about the history of Montreal and the important role of St. James in building a just and inclusive society for all.



Legal Clinics

Just Solutions for vulnerable migrants
Roger Snelling for seniors

Message from the Clinic Coordinator

As coordinator of MCM's legal clinics for the past eight years, I am proud of the help, professional solutions and hope we have been able to provide to hundreds of vulnerable men, women and children. That work includes assisting female refugees who are victims of domestic violence - indeed the clinic has developed an expertise in this area - as well as parents and grand-parents seeking to reunite with their families. Our capacity to offer services in multiple languages, including Ukrainian and Russian, greatly facilitated our work in 2022 with refugees arriving from that war torn area of the globe, and will continue to do so in the months and years ahead. Joining with community coalitions to advocate for fair treatment of migrants, and improvement of government policies, is also an important part of weekly activities. A small dedicated and indefatigable team, along with student interns, accomplishes all of this and more - something that we can truly all be proud of! I would like to thank all of our supporters who make this work possible, with a special word of appreciation to BINAM (Bureau d'intégration des nouveaux arrivants à Montréal) whose partnership is essential to our ongoing mission of providing access to justice for vulnerable migrants.

Olga Houde, Legal Clinic Coordinator



CAR



The Committee to Aid Refugees (CAR) was established in 1984 as a project of the United Church of Canada. Over the past nearly 40 years, it has played an important role in collective advocacy and individual casework for refugees and other migrants with precarious status. CAR has also been involved in the supervision of the Just Solutions Legal Clinic since 2006.

However, the challenges of running a small stand-alone organization, along with the obvious complementary between the missions of CAR and MCM, led the two organizations to decide to join forces in an official manner. Throughout 2022, the boards of CAR and MCM met to discuss and then implement this important transition. At the start of 2023, MCM assumed all of CAR's activities as well as the employment of CAR's sole staff person, Peter Butler, who is now the MCM's Socio-legal Intervention Worker.

Rick Goldman, MCM Supervising Lawyer



Pilot Project: Access to Justice

We are very excited to announce that at the end of 2022, Just Solutions launched a pilot project which will have a duration of three years and is centered around improving the situation of migrants with a precarious status living in Quebec. We will be taking action on this issue on a number of levels including a research project, advocacy efforts, and increasing the number of clinic staff to be able to assist more vulnerable migrants access justice. Many thanks to the Chagnon Foundation for their generous support.



Lauren Lallemand
Project Manager

Just Solutions	
Top Areas of intervention	
Refugee Claim Proces	20%
Family Reunification/Sponsorship	20%
Humanitarian Application	14%
Vulnerability Factors	
Financial Precarity	36%
Serious Health Issues	34%
Domestic Violence	17%
Single Parent	14%
Special Needs Children	8%
Total Cases	253
Total Interventions	3995

Roger Snelling	
Top Areas of intervention	
Humanitarian Application	36%
Family Reunification/Sponsorship	20%
Refugee Claim Process	20%
Welfare, Housing, Health Care	16%
Vulnerability Factors	
Serious Health Issues	68%
Financial Precarity	36%
Elder Abuse	18%
Special Needs (Grand)Children	14%
(Risk of) Homelessness	14%
Total Cases	29
Total Interventions	756



Words of thanks for the clinic team

After six years of sadness, Olga and Louise have brought into my life my most cherished family members. I am now the happiest person alive... Just Solutions worked hard for my family to arrive. Even after all this time, I cannot find the words to express my gratitude.

Violine

Olga, we want to thank you personally for your willingness at all times, we know that all that has been achieved is largely due to your great support, truly my family and I do not know how to thank you. May God shower you with great material and spiritual blessings, not only this year, but always. We are very happy to be here, after such a long time of waiting and we want to thank you for all that you and Mr. Rick Goldman have done for us.

David Lopez

Dear Olga, Thank you again for all you do for my family and me. I don't know how to thank the whole team who contributed to this case. God bless you!

Edouard Kisoni

The thought of leaving my home in Kigali, Rawanda always looked impossible. Long after my mother had successfully migrated to Canada, she put me in touch with Louise at the Just Solutions Clinic and I began to hope again. After a few years of sending documents and communicating back and forth, I am now waiting to receive my visa that has been approved by Canada!

My deepest appreciation goes to God and to each and everyone who laid hands on my file in the interest of helping me reunite with my family and have a better life, and especially to the two people who always reached out to give me all the important information, advice and support - Louise Olivier and Anthony Rougert. May God bless you immensely.

Mugisha Christian

My journey started with Louise and ended with the lovely Anthony. I never felt abandoned by either one. They helped me when I couldn't see a way forward. I now have my three with me here in Canada and life seems kind once again. Thank you, Louise and Anthony!

Josephine

