

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.

GSV was launched in 2020 with a series of activities. A first 'pick-up' day took place in July to clean up the St. James Tiny Forest, pay respect to First Nations ancestors in whose steps we tread, and to discover the biodiversity at our feet and in the air. In the fall, we continued clearing a small portion of the land in preparation for spring planting.

Our [GSV Media youtube](#) channel now offers captivating conversations with Neil Whitehouse, United Church of Canada Pastor, on *Jesus Green*, Michael Marder, Basque Research Professor of Philosophy, on *Plant Thinking* and Peter Soroye, Conservation Biologist at the University of Ottawa, on *Bees & Pollinators*.

Two [GSV newsletters](#) are also now available to spread the word about this exciting new project and ways to get involved.



Concordia Professor Carly Ziter at GSV pick-up day



Peter Soroye, Conservation Biologist on GSV Media Channel

Student Interns

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

In 2020, 16 interns from the fields of Law, Social Work, Nursing and Human Resources adapted quickly to the new virtual reality of communication. Through online workshops, consultations and zoom meetings, interns at our legal clinics were able to provide essential services and information to vulnerable migrants. Additional student projects included: neighbourhood consultation connected with the St. James Tiny Forest, a check-in with Camp Cosmos families, and a survey of online program participants to collect data on what is working and improvements that can be made to our online resources.



McGill Ingram School of Nursing	5
Université de Montréal Social Work	4
Dawson College Social Services	3
McGill Law	2
McGill Social Work	1
Concordia Human Relations	1
Total	16

My experience through the Green SAGE Vert project with the concept of Eunoia - planting the seeds of friendship - inspired me and broadened my perspective of the role of a social service worker - sensitizing diverse neighbours throughout Montreal to build a connection to and through the power of nature.

Ryoko Hashizume, Dawson College Social Services Intern

Online Resources & Workshops

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

Now available on our new website at montrealcitymission.org

Refugee Law workshops (2) presented to the Beaconsfield Women's Collective in Spring 2020 by one of our law interns together with colleagues from Montreal and Toronto.

Health and Well-Being workshops (4) presented to the MCM Community of newcomer friends and the Beaconsfield Women's Collective by our fall 2020 nursing interns from the McGill Ingram School of Nursing.



Networking with MCM expands our reach and enriches our community.

Adedeji Sunday Akintayo,
Beaconsfield United Nigerian Refugee Coordinator



Research

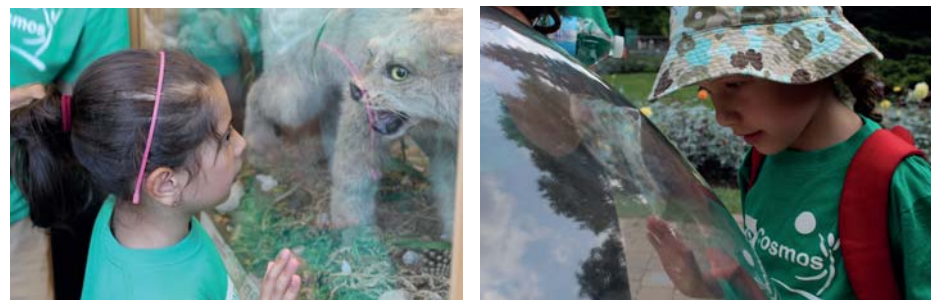
MCM engages in research projects with academic partners that allow us to discern emerging needs, improve programs and effect policy change.

Research projects begun in 2020:

[Access to Mental Health for Refugee Newcomers](#), McGill University

[COVID-19 and Refugee Families in Montreal: Strategies for reaching hard-to-reach populations in health emergencies](#), McGill University

[Exploring Coping Mechanisms: Experiences of Camp Cosmos families during Covid-19](#), Concordia University



Montreal City
Mission
communautaire de Montréal

A United Church of Canada Community Ministry



Annual Report 2020

*disponible en français

1910 - 2020

Compassion
Hospitalité
Justice



Montreal City Mission marked a milestone in 2020 with its 110th anniversary. Celebrations of our storied history, however, were put on hold as we turned on a dime to adapt programs and develop new responses to the pandemic reality: **refugee women sewed masks for homeless organizations, nursing interns raised money for newcomers who were struggling, and friends from the wider community made donations to our emergency food program like NDG residents Arthur and his mom Myrian shown offering a food box in this picture.**

We have been overwhelmed by the solidarity expressed by so many and very proud of our own MCM-St. James United Community who are going the extra mile to ensure connections are maintained and friends cared for.

As we continue to meet the myriad challenges facing us all, let us increase our efforts to keep that communal spirit alive. **Together we are writing the next chapter in a story of compassion, hospitality and justice!**

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 inter-cultural partnerships.

At the outset of 2020, our projects with newcomer women, senior men and youth were off to an exciting start: Women Weaving Their Dreams (WWD) catering collective had a full roster of contracts and were developing a business plan; the WWD sewing circle was launched in January with 15 women gathering weekly on the 3rd floor of St. James to learn new skills, sew and network; the newcomer senior men's group, Seasons/Saisons, had begun rehearsals for a play and had started compiling photos for an exhibit to mark MCM's 110th anniversary; French tutoring classes were held at MCM for newcomer youth and those in the welcoming classes needing extra support.

All that came to a halt in March when the pandemic was declared. And then something wonderful happened. The members of our community took the lead in organizing a response to this challenging time. The women asked for the sewing machines to be delivered to their homes and **started sewing masks** for front line homeless organizations and families on low incomes with 2000 delivered in 2020; the WWD catering collective began **making meals and organizing food boxes** for shut-ins; members of the men's group **set up a What's App** to keep in touch with more vulnerable seniors and participated with us in food delivery. MCM youth took to social media with messages of support and even produced a video to inspire those confined at home. **'Stories of Hope'** were posted on our FB. Other activities such as **'exercise in the park'** and **'nous parlons français au parc'** were also organized, moving online last fall. Virtual **vocational workshops** were held as well.

The **MCM SAGE model** - Service, Advocacy, Gathering, Eunioa (planting the seeds of friendship) - creates a space for newcomers to receive the assistance they need while demonstrating their leadership. By tapping into their own gifts and talents, they realize their dreams and contribute to the health and well-being of the whole community. We are blessed by their presence.

Over 2,000 participated in our different projects and online courses in 2020.



Recognition for Maa'n Coordinator and MCM Assistant Director Anwar Alhjojo

Anwar was selected as **CBC Montrealer of the Month** in November 2020. The distinction is awarded to Montrealers who are a 'positive force in the world'. Surprised by the call from CBC that day, Anwar shone the light back on the community.

"Everyone who comes here really loves Montreal... it is our obligation to open the door for them so they can show us what they are capable of."



Panel Discussions

The MCM-St.James participation in Peace Days and Blue Metropolis Festival took place online in 2020, pandémie oblige, with two captivating panel discussions that included questions from the larger public.

Peace Days-Journées de la paix

Year two of our participation in this important gathering provided an opportunity to hear directly from newcomer women in our community of friends. The theme - **Who Feels it Knows It: First Hand Experience of Refugee Activists Building Peace** - set the stage for a group of those women to discuss how they are contributing to social peace and cohesion. The space for a direct connection with the larger public was created during a dynamic question period.

Blue Met

For the fourth year running, we joined forces with the Blue Metropolis Literary Festival through an online panel entitled - **Listen To My Story** - that featured MCM board member Ehab Lotayef and MCM friend Nida Samaha. Ehab and Nida recounted their journey of migration - challenges, blessings and opportunities. Once again, questions from the larger public allowed us to deepen understanding of these compelling migration journeys.



Legal Clinics

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

JUST SOLUTIONS CLINIC

Top Areas of Intervention	
Refugee Claim	19 %
Humanitarian application	16 %
Permanent Residency	15 %
Non immigration related assistance (eg family law)	11 %
Sponsorship	8.5 %
Work Permit	7 %
Family Reunification	5 %

Total Cases	
2019	357
2020	292 (54% women)

No. of interventions	
2019	4679
2020	4895 (98 non immigration related)

Vulnerability Factors	
Health problems (physical & mental)	30 %
Domestic Violence	17 %
Single parent families	16.5 %
Children with special needs	5 %
Homelessness	4.5 %
Sexual minority	1.5 %

Irene and her children arrived from Pakistan in 2010. Her initial refugee claim, as well as the pre-removal risk evaluation, were rejected.

A victim of domestic violence for several years, Irene separated from her husband and made a Humanitarian application through a lawyer. There was no follow-up on that application, so Irene came to Just Solutions in 2017 where we updated her application and filed a new risk evaluation.

After 10 years in Canada marked by violence, fear and uncertainty, Irene and her two children became permanent residents in July 2020.



After being forced to flee her country, Doria encountered several obstacles in her efforts to acquire Canadian residency. Just Solutions took over her file in 2017, and in 2018 we were successful in the first step of her Humanitarian application. In 2020, Doria and her son obtained permanent residency. She is now preparing a sponsorship application to reunite with her husband and other children whom she has not seen in 6 years.

I can't thank the clinic enough!! Today, my life begins anew. I would never have made it without your help!

Kloe became a permanent resident in 2020 thanks to Louise and the JS team. Congratulations!

Oumou arrived from Guinea in 2009 and currently works as a caregiver in a seniors' residence (one of the guardian angels!). In 2019, she was referred to Just Solutions where we completed her immigration request and were able to reinstate her medical coverage. Oumou became a permanent resident in 2020 and can now sponsor her children.

ROGER SNELLING SENIOR'S CLINIC

Total Cases	
2019	47
2020	42

No. of interventions	
2019	555
2020	468



Roger Snelling was the director of MCM throughout the 90s. Guided by his faith, Roger worked tirelessly for a more just and compassionate society, touching countless lives. His spirit lives on as we carry his work forward.

Vulnerability Factors	
Health Issues (physical & mental)	56.5 %
Financial Stress	15 %
Homelessness	6.5 %

John is 65 years old and arrived in Canada 25 years ago due to political problems in his country of origin. Throughout the years, he was given bad advice from legal representatives who took advantage of him, leading to the loss of his status. In 2019, the Roger Snelling Clinic was contacted to solve some immigration issues, helping him obtain medical coverage and a work permit, among others. We then took over his immigration file to obtain his permanent resident status. John can finally put the stress and constant anxiety from these last 25 years behind him and enjoy a fresh new start.

Emilienne is a 61 year old Haitian woman whose refugee claim was refused. In 2016, the Roger Snelling Clinic was asked to take on her case by a government social worker. We intervened directly with Immigration Refugee & Citizenship Canada on her behalf and the first stage of her Humanitarian application was accepted recently. The second steps are all completed and we are confident she will receive her permanent residency soon.

Top Areas of Intervention	
Permanent residency for humanitarian motives	31.25 %
Civil law (eg : wills)	12.5 %
Housing	9.5 %
Family Reunification	9 %

Principle Regions of Origin	
North America (Canada)	22 %
Carribbean (Haiti)	22 %
Aisa	18.5 %
Subsaharan Africa	16.5 %
Europe	6 %

Our legal team is comprised of 2 full time and 2 part time staffers. Rick Goldman is one of Canada's leading experts in immigration and refugee law. Olga Houde worked previously at the International Bureau for Children's Rights and has expertise in domestic violence and its impact on vulnerable migrants. Louise Olivier has a Masters in Law and worked previously for the UNHRC, Red Cross and immigration holding centers in France. Chloé Delolme recently launched the MCM Scoopit Immigration & Refugee Newsfeed, and is developing digital educational resources, allowing us to reach an even greater number of migrants.

