

# Camp Cosmos

Another year, another unforgettable summer at **Camp Cosmos**! For the 52nd consecutive season, our multilingual and multiethnic camp has provided a nurturing and enriching environment for families in Montreal, celebrating diversity and fostering community.

After initially facing challenges in finding a suitable location, we were fortunate to host the camp on the beautiful **Selwyn House School Campus** in Westmount this summer. The impressive facilities provided the ideal environment for our diverse range of programs.

Our Environmental, Intercultural, Accessibility, and Youth Leadership programs flourished under the expert guidance of returning staff, while our Athletics and Wellbeing Program experienced a revitalization with its reintroduction to the camp this season.

With the help of **St. James United**, the **Music & Dance Program** moved in new directions, and thanks to the **United Church Erskine & American/Mountainside Fund**, the **Amazing Kids at Camp Program** once again provided vital assistance to families facing financial difficulties. With the support of the **United Church Rosemary Lambie Fund**, we saw the debut of the newest addition to our summer programming: *The Indigenous Knowledge Pilot Project*.

*A heartfelt thank you to our incredible staff members, both familiar faces and new recruits, who bring energy and enthusiasm to our camp each year. Here's to summer 2024 and to many more wonderful summers at Camp Cosmos!*

Emily Bickert (Director)



## Green Faith Circle



Wendy

Megan

As part of the international multi-faith grassroots movement ([green-faith.org](http://green-faith.org)), our local **Montreal GreenFaithCircle**, headed up by MCM board member **Wendy Evans Sewall** and **Megan McQuirter** has continued to be active in recent months with online circle gatherings, participation in climate justice rallies with partner organisations, assisting with the organisation of the annual interfaith eco-action day, and leading book studies.



## FOR THE LOVE OF CREATION

On November 14th, the GFC along with the wider MCM Community of Friends, will gather for a vigil at St. James Square, 463 St. Catherine St. West at 5 p.m. **Candles for COP 29**

Our Montreal activity is part of a nationwide ecumenical initiative sponsored by the coalition: **For The Love of Creation**. Vigils will be taking place at the same time across Canada.



# MCM NEWS

## AWARDS

*Congratulations to two MCM board members for their well-deserved recognition:*

**Adedeji Akintayo: CBC 2024 Black Changemaker** for his work among Nigerian refugee communities in Quebec.

**Dr. Nicole Ives: Governor General Meritorious Service Distinction** for her work with Indigenous Access McGill.



Photo: C. Leslie

## Resonance 2025

### Seeking Deeper Connections in a Secular World

MCM, St. James United and the UCC Nakon-ha:ka Region are currently planning a conference with a difference for spring 2025. Keynotes and workshops will be offered alongside sensorial experiences in the arts and nature. With special guests - world renowned, Canadian philosopher **Charles Taylor**, and equally distinguished German sociologist, **Hartmut Rosa**. Stay tuned for more information!



## Visit from Selwyn House

MCM hosted a group of high school students to discuss intercultural relations, MCM projects that welcome newcomers, and how we can work together to make a difference in society.



## Children Helping Children

Thanks to **St. James United** for organising a benefit concert for **Camp Cosmos - Children Helping Children** - and to the wonderful voices of the students at **Félix Leclerc Elementary School** in Longueuil.

## MCM Welcomes 4 new team members

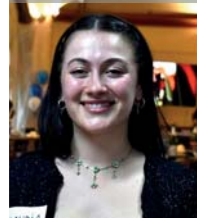
Catherine Blais-Delisle



Norman Robert Boie



Claudia Limoli Cubria



Noémie Beauvais



Photo: C. Martin

## New MCM Board Chair

Welcome to **Julia Green**, Montreal refugee lawyer and new MCM chair. As a law student, Julia took newcomer families on outings to discover the city. We are delighted she is continuing her volunteer commitment in this new capacity.



As year end approaches, we reflect with gratitude on the achievements, connections, and shared purpose that have shaped our journey thus far. A thriving team, expanding services and an MCM antenna in Quebec City, illustrate our commitment to widening our circle and fostering meaningful growth. Building on this momentum, we look forward to deepening relations and making an even greater impact in the year ahead.

Rev. Paula Kline, Executive Director



A United Church of Canada Community Ministry



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\* disponible en français

# Maa'n / Ensemble

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



## Outings/ Cultural Activities

Unique opportunities for families to bond while learning about Quebec and Canadian culture. Four hundred at this year's apple picking in September.



## Pollinators Sewing Bee

A partnership with a theatre company enables single newcomer moms and Canadian seniors to connect with the Quebec cultural scene by working on costumes for theatrical productions.

## Peace Days

A dialogue in September with two MCM lawyers on the theme of Holistic Justice and the current challenges faced by asylum seekers in Canada. Peace Days/Journées de la paix is sponsored by our partners at: **The Peace Network for Social Harmony**, and celebrated its 10th anniversary this year.



## Muslim Awareness Week

A conversation in January with Montreal neurologist and peace activist, Dr Aimen Moussaddy, on how to deal with trauma brought on by the war.



## Blue Met Literary Festival

A public art exhibit and story sharing in April with 3 newcomer artists (Palestine, Sudan, Egypt) on the theme of Passages - transitioning between cultures.

# Just Solutions Legal Clinic

Just Solutions Legal Clinic: Providing access to justice for refugees and im.migrants since 2014.

## Family Reunification

Diane came to Just Solutions in 2022 for help to reunite with her 15 year old daughter, Zoé, living in a dangerous situation in Burundi. MCM volunteer Janet Dench (and former director of the Canadian Council for Refugees), was assigned her case and over the course of the next year, successfully guided Diane's application through to its acceptance. This included negotiating the complex interplay between Canadian immigration authorities, the medical systems in two countries, offices of the International Organization for Migration, and visa offices in Africa.



*I can't thank you enough for helping me reunite with my daughter. I really don't think I could have accomplished this on my own as the process is so complicated. Thanks to you, she is here by my side and we are a family once again.*  
Diane

Zoé finally arrived at Trudeau Airport and became a Permanent Resident of Canada on June 3 of this year. She was greeted by her joyous mother after a years-long separation, and her Canadian baby sister whom she had never met! Congratulations Diane, welcome Zoé and kudos to Janet for a job well done reuniting this family!

## Student Interns



*I really enjoyed my time last summer at the Just Solutions Clinic. This experience allowed me to learn about immigration law. Everyone working at the clinic is incredibly passionate and dedicated to their work, and I greatly benefited from each person's expertise. It's work that offers the opportunity to make a real difference in people's lives.*

Daiana Gomez, Law, Université de Montréal



*My experience thus far at Just Solutions Legal Clinic has been nothing short of amazing. I have learnt so much about the intersection of social work and the law, and I continue to learn daily with the support of the knowledgeable staff and supervisors. It has been so enriching to navigate social work practice through a socio-legal lens and be able to see the first hand impact our work has on migrants and their families.*

Bianca Maselli, McGill Social Work

## World Refugee Day

On June 20th, we celebrated **World Refugee Day** at a gathering of over 100 people. Our MCM booth welcomed many visitors interested in learning about the services and programs we offer. Many thanks to our partners at **Action Réfugiés Montréal** who hosted the event, MCM board member **Adedeji Akintayo** and the **Nakona:ka Regional Strategic Planning Fund** for invaluable support in organising this event.



## March 8<sup>th</sup> Women's Day Rally

## Rêver à l'essentiel

The MCM team was graciously welcomed at **Plymouth Trinity United Church** in Sherbrooke on October 15th for the launch of a public awareness campaign – *Rever à l'essentiel* – to shed light on and educate about the challenges faced by migrants without immigration status or in precarious situations. Supported by the **Chagnon Foundation**, this campaign captures the difficult contrast between dreams and reality for those without status, revealing stories of anxiety as well as resilience.



Forty plus colleagues and friends from Sherbrooke and Montreal community networks, Sherbrooke municipal government, UCC Nakona:ka Region and Plymouth Trinity were on hand to learn about this important campaign and how they can spread the word and get involved.



For information about migration realities in Quebec and to view a compelling video, visit: [rever.solutionsjustes.org](http://rever.solutionsjustes.org). An excerpt from the video will be presented before each film at **La Maison Du Cinéma** in Sherbrooke from October 18th to November 18th, and posters will be displayed throughout the city.

## Just Solutions 20th Anniversary

A 90+ crowd of the **MCM Community of Friends** gathered in May to celebrate 20 years of legal services and accompaniment for the im.migrant population: community colleagues, lawyers, UCC supporters, MCM staff, board, volunteers, students and MCM elders-in-residence and, last but not least, individuals and families who now live in safety thanks to the tireless efforts of the clinic team, past and present.



We honored MCM supervising lawyer, **Dr. Richard Goldman**, as well as former JS coordinator **Olga Houde**, and introduced **Projet Danaïdes: Diversité sans préjugés**, advocating for barrier-free legal access for im.migrants and challenging stereotypes.



## Exciting Expansion News

### Just Solutions 2

Opening of an MCM antenna in Quebec City in spring 2025 with an initial pilot project represents a critical effort to help people with few resources navigate the immigration system. Conversation with community, government and UCC/interfaith partners will continue in the upcoming year to explore other opportunities for service and community action.

### Launch of 3 new programs focusing on:

- English speaking im.migrants and the professionals that serve them supported by Justice Canada, April
- Neighbourhood info sessions increasing access to justice for diverse communities, supported by the City of Montreal, October
- Female im.migrants and 2SLGBTQ+ population supported by Women and Gender Equality Canada, November



*Congratulations to Anthony Rouget on his appointment as legal clinic coordinator.*

### Just Solutions Website Launch

In September, we launched a dedicated website for **Just Solutions**. The new site enhances accessibility, creating a supportive space for those navigating immigration and legal challenges, reinforcing our commitment to accessible justice for all. View our new website at [solutionsjustes.org](http://solutionsjustes.org)