



M S C M

Montreal Southwest Community Ministries

ANNUAL REPORT

2011—2012

ANNUAL MEETING

MAY 29, 2012

Fulford Hall, Diocese of Montreal

1444 Union Street

Montreal, QC

OUR STEERING COMMITTEE



Back row from left to right:

Anouk (*CoSA Data Coordinator*), **Mark** (*Treasurer*), **Barry** (*Ex-officio, Resource Person*), **Gabrielle** (*Bookkeeper*), **Peter Huish** (*Chaplain-Coordinator, CoSA Project Coordinator and Founder of MSCM*), **Jeri** (*Open Door Coordinator and CoSA Project Bookkeeper*), **Tim Smart** (*Prison Chaplain and Chaplain-Coordinator back-up*).

Front row from left to right:

Michèle (*Ex-officio, Resource Person and 2011 Award of Merit Honoree*), **Vanessa** (*Volunteer Coordinator*), **Paula** (*Editor of The Sou'Wester and Administrative Assistant*), **Margaret** (*Coordinator of Escort-Accompaniers and 2010 Award of Merit Honoree*), **Marie Beemans** (*P-2 Focus and Institutional In-Reach Projects and 2009 Award of Merit Honoree*).

A WORD FROM OUR CHAIR

Peter Huisb
Chaplain-Coordinator
Chair and Founder of **MSCM**



There have been significant developments for **MSCM** this year: visibly, **Open Door** which is our meeting place, our crossroads, under the gifted leadership of Jeri, has been consistently pleasing and well-attended, especially by those becoming re-established in the community.

We have been joined by several people this year—the Rev. Canon Tim Smart who serves as Chaplain at Cowansville Institution, and has generously become a leader and pastoral resource in **MSCM** and a back-up for me; Mark Weatherley, a knowledgeable and implicated Treasurer, who will help us manage sometimes-complicated financial relations with funders; Vanessa as Volunteer Coordinator, who has returned to us after several years away. Perhaps with greatest visibility, **The Sou’Wester**, so lovingly and enthusiastically crafted by Paula, has become an important binder for our community and a vehicle for linking us with many beyond **MSCM**. I want to acknowledge with gratitude also some less visible though important volunteer work by Margaret who willingly serves as the representative and presence of **MSCM** in regular gatherings of organizations who participate in the larger community chaplaincy endeavours in the Montreal area.

We note with sadness the passing of Mike Ackroyd who some of us knew in Cowansville and MSFI, and in the community as he struggled to join us at **Open Door** while adrift in Montreal, and of Iris Glenn who served **MSCM** as a knowledgeable volunteer in our early years, especially at the time when we were ‘co-locs’ with *Oxygène* on St. Antoine Street in St. Henri. And we send greetings to Barker, the ‘all-rounder’ who though not visible at **Open Door** any longer due to illness, is still very much part of who we are.

Some less visible yet very important work has taken place during the year by your Steering Committee with large amounts of time given by members in an extended Retreat and in several subsequent meetings, to equip us for viability and development into the coming years. Given the present climate this equipping of ourselves is especially important. We are committed to opening this review and visioning work to our entire membership for which our Annual Meeting is a first intentional step. Please let us have your views and let us know about your hopes for **MSCM** on this occasion and help us to ensure that our consultation and conversation continues.

OPEN DOOR

One of the year's best moments for the *Open Door* Coordinator was the phone call confirming Tyrone Benskin, Member of Parliament for Jeanne-Le Ber, (Montreal Southwest) as keynote speaker at the *Open Door* Tenth Anniversary Dinner. The gala was on! We expected a good turn out, considering the wide-reaching reputation of *Open Door*, and as the doors opened people flooded in, some strong arms quickly set up more tables filling the hall to capacity! We were favoured by Bishop Barry Clark, who said grace, and wowed by the gospel music of the Vivianne Deane Trio. The Member of Parliament cast aside his prepared speech to share that he had childhood friends who ended up incarcerated, and described the radical hospitality of his parents as they cared for foster children for decades. From an early age, he understood the rewards of preventative and Restorative Justice.

Tuesday night *Open Door* continues to draw crowds that would delight Goldilocks: not too big, not too small, always just right. We featured a special summer programme entitled "Ten Weeks Ten Years" which highlighted a major event from each year from 2001 to 2010, and finished the series with an evening called "I'm Ten, We're Ten." Participants told stories from when they were age 10 or when they were in Grade 10, any story that involved the number 10. One guy humbly mentioned that all of his girlfriends have dated a 10!

Jeri and Gabrielle would like to say a huge thank you to everyone who made 2011, the Tenth Anniversary of *Open Door*, a memorable one. Its growing reputation in the community is due to its attendees and escorts, organizers and presenters, donors and chair stackers—together we have built a solid example of the power and beauty of Restorative Justice that flies in the face of our country's sharp shift to the right.



Scene from the Tenth Anniversary Dinner



*Tyrone Benskin
MP for Jeanne-Le Ber*

VOLUNTEERS

Imagine being invited to speak about Restorative Justice to a group of university students and then learning that 17 of 40 students in the class chose to do their term projects with your organization. When **MSCM** spoke at a Community Development class at Concordia University, students jumped at the chance to explore this exciting alternative to our existing criminal justice system. The students and their projects were a big influx of ideas to our group and one student, Audrey, chose to do a 200-hour internship with **MSCM**. She produced a Volunteer Coordinator's Manual which details all the steps involved in what is known as the "Volunteer Cycle".



Some new volunteers attending an Orientation Meeting.

MSCM was also invited to speak to nurses at McGill University and to prison volunteers from Bishop's University in Sherbrooke. In September, we set up one of the most visited kiosks at Montreal Volunteer Fairs and introduced new recruits into programmes that fit their interests, such as **CoSA** (Circles of Support and Accountability), prison visits and **Open Door**. For fun and entertainment, **MSCM** volunteers and members feast on popcorn and soft drinks at our Free Film Nights on the last Friday of each month. Everyone is welcome!

With all this volunteer activity, one would never know that for half a year **MSCM** has been without a Volunteer Coordinator. Yet this vacant post has recently been filled! Former volunteer, Vanessa, has returned from a two-year study period in Western Canada and has begun her duties with great vigor. She will have a full slate of activities as the momentum of **MSCM** and its energetic group of volunteers continues to grow and explore the drive of Restorative Justice.

MSCM has now completed its third year of involvement in the 5-year nation-wide Demonstration Project coordinated by the Church Council for Justice and Corrections (CCJC) and funded by the National Crime Prevention Center (NCPC), a brand of Public Safety Canada (PSC). The focus of the project is on the effectiveness of Circles of Support and Accountability (**CoSA**'s) in supporting the safe reintegration of ex-inmates who have reached the end of their mandates.

The **MSCM-CoSA** Management Team, responsible for running the **CoSA Project for MSCM** currently consists of four members, including Peter (Project Coordinator), Jeri (Bookkeeper), Anouk (Data Coordinator), and Teng (Project Associate). We are grateful for the care and competence of each of them in carrying out this challenging work for us.

During the 2011-2012 year, **MSCM** ran **CoSA**'s for a total of 20 Core Members (ex-inmates), 15 of which have reached the end of their mandates and 5 of which fall under some other category. This year, **MSCM** has had an average of 27 volunteers per month involved in the **CoSA Project**. We are fortunate that each year, a number of new **CoSA** volunteers come forward.

A recent national gathering of the 14 sites involved in the Demonstration Project identified 'commonalities' to which all sites might subscribe. The process is still ongoing as individual sites decide on their support for these commonalities. **MSCM CoSA Project** is presently involved in this evaluation. Various types of forms and documentation have been developed to ease the data collection process and to ensure informed consent of the Core Members and volunteers involved in the study.



Chaplain-Coordinator Peter Huish,
presenting the **CoSA Project** video
"One of Us"

We are happy to announce that the **MSCM CoSA** video production entitled, "**One of Us/L'un des nôtres**" is now ready for viewing and has thus far received wonderful feedback. This video was created with extra funding from the Demonstration Project, which was awarded to **MSCM** for the very purpose of creating a short video about **CoSA** in order to raise awareness.

At this time a few of our long-running Circles are coming to a natural end and we are giving close attention to promoting **CoSA** in the intended population and to recruiting new Core Members.

COMMUNITY BUILDING WITHIN MSCM

When we speak of Montreal-Southwest Community Ministries (**MSCM**), we are referring to a wide range of individuals, active in different areas of the work, several of whom have probably never even met. We have discovered that one way of drawing together those involved in the different parts of **MSCM** has been the organizing of a weekend event, known as a *Community Building Workshop*. Our aim is to hold such an event twice per year, so there was one held in September 2011 and another more recently in March 2012. Four of these workshops had been organized inside both medium and minimum security prisons, with the desired results, so our hopes were for similar effects in the world outside and to allow a stronger sense of community amongst all those involved in **MSCM** programmes.

For ex-inmates living in half-way houses or apartments and with working schedules and curfews to juggle, there are more complications when trying to attend a workshop for a whole weekend, than when in prison. They show up, however, as do volunteers, escorts, organizers and facilitators, **CoSA** members, as well as selected prisoners permitted by CSC to participate. In September, there were 16 participants and in March, 22. Peter Huish and Margaret MacCormack, the original facilitators, conducted the workshop in September and in March, with the addition of an intern-facilitatrice and her supervisor, in collaboration with **M. E. C.** (*Mouvement vers l'Esprit Communautaire Inc.*)

So, what happens throughout the weekend? The group sits in a circle (this time in the church basement at St. James the Apostle where **MSCM's** offices are located), the facilitators explain the process—which was first developed in the 1980s by Scott Peck¹)—and the work of becoming a community begins.

There will be much sharing of joys and sorrows, an enormous amount of non-judgmental listening, a commitment to confidentiality and plenty of silence. As the weekend continues, a bond begins to form, the group having come close together as an organic body and having had the privilege of sharing some aspects of each other's lives. This we call *community*.



¹Scott Peck, an American psychiatrist, co-founded the Foundation for Community Encouragement (FCE), a public educational foundation whose stated mission is 'to teach the principles of community to individuals and organizations.' Peck started FCE to promote the formation of communities, which, he argues, are first steps towards uniting humanity

M*SCM* inherited P2 when Marie Beemans joined us some 11 years ago. Marie was a prime mover in P2 (Person to Person) which through the dedication of a handful of people ensured that some of the most isolated prisoners had regular visits.

The ‘person-to-person’ focus has shifted slightly (given much more strict CSC rules about volunteering with those under sentence) but the objective remains, of facilitating visits for those who otherwise have no visits, particularly in more remote institutions, and Marie is both the example and the organizer for this part of our mission.

In collaboration with **CEJC** (*Conseil des églises pour la justice et la criminologie*) Marie now coordinates three community visits per year at La Macaza Institution, on each occasion taking a busload of community members, both francophone and anglophone, to spend the day with long-sentence men who have no other visitors.

At the present time, we are beginning a programme of visits with selected, high-needs men who are perhaps as far from the community as it is possible to be in CSC, in Canada’s ‘*Supermax*’ prison, the Special Handling Unit in the St. Anne des Plaines Complex. If arrangements can be completed, we hope to make an overdue 2-day visit to Port Cartier Institution in September 2012.

 **REV. CANON PETER HUISH AWARD OF MERIT**

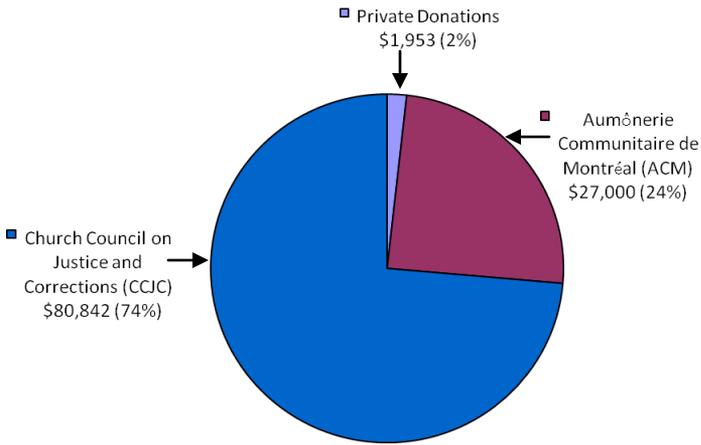
Established in 1999, on the 10th Anniversary of *MSCM*, the Award of Merit is presented annually to the outstanding individual and/or group who displays the passion and compassion to the principles that *MSCM* is based on.

The Award of Merit honors *MSCM*’s founder, Peter Huish, for his outstanding commitment and leadership in the field of community-based restorative justice and engagement. All members of *MSCM*, including inmates, ex-inmates, volunteers and staff are eligible to submit their votes for nominees. Past winners include Marie Beemans (2009) and Margaret MacCormack (2010).

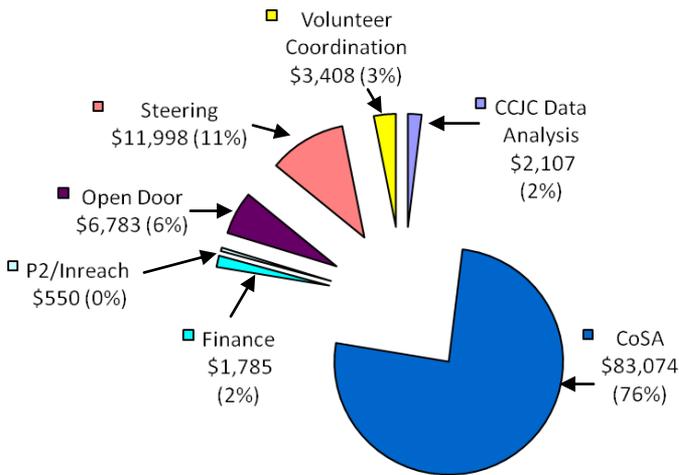
MSCM was pleased to announce the 2011-2012 honoree of the Rev. Canon Peter Huish Award of Merit—Michèle Rattray-Huish. Michèle regularly attends weekly *Open Door* meetings extending a welcome to those enjoying their outings from the pens and socializing with all of *MSCM*’s volunteers. She is a member on a variety of *CoSA* and Reintegration Circles and her dedication and devotion to all those affected by crime is invaluable.



Revenue 2011-2012



Expenditures by Program 2011-2012





MISSION STATEMENT

Mission Statement (adopted at Steering Committee Meeting January 11, 2012)

***MSCM** (Montreal-Southwest Community Ministries) is a non-profit essentially volunteer-driven, English-speaking organization, working in accordance with the principles of Restorative Justice for a safe community, through the accompaniment and re-integration of those who have served time in a penitentiary.*

One of the fruits of the review, reflection and visioning work that has occupied the Steering Committee since last November is this Mission Statement. The guiding principle “essentially volunteer-driven” has received much attention in our conversations along the way. I would like to offer you a personal perspective on the meaning and implication of voluntarism as included in our self-understanding and in our statement of our mission.

It is clear that the voluntary giving of oneself in the service of others is an important part of understanding the meaning of voluntarism, especially for **MSCM** in the significant role we play personally for each other, and collectively for the larger community. I want to underline the other, perhaps less-acknowledged dimension of the experience of those who offer themselves for service in this community of ours: I am speaking of the profound blessing upon each of us in the trust, respect and affection of those whom we welcome into community with us. In this way, one who gives of her or himself, perhaps intentionally, is also one who receives the gift of trust, respect and affection of another, perhaps surprisingly. Understood in the context of our intentional community, volunteers are also beneficiaries.

It needs to be remembered that those who are attracted to our services and who may benefit from them, do so entirely voluntarily. There is no coercion. We are not a required ‘program’. So in this way those who are attracted to us as prospective beneficiaries, come also as voluntary members.

There has been some gnashing of teeth over the years about these terms, ‘volunteer’ and ‘beneficiary’, as suggesting a ‘hierarchy’ of membership. Try not to succumb to that limited understanding. They are founding and supporting principles of **MSCM** that each of us comes to the community willingly, and that we remain in the benevolence and affection of each other that blesses us.

It is a mark of our intentional community that each of us is both a volunteer and a beneficiary, and that we live together in a mutuality of voluntarism and benefit, good-will and blessing.

*Peter Huijs
Chaplain-Coordinator
Founder of **MSCM***

A WORD FROM THE BISHOP

“The pain of those who cannot fit into the mainstream of society is so great! They feel useless, a dead weight. This feeling is shared by many old people, or by people out of work, immigrants, fragile and weak people, people with disabilities or chronic sickness—whether physical or mental—people caught up in obsessions of eating, alcohol or drugs.”

The Broken Body (Journey to Wholeness) by Jean Vanier (p. 12)

Montreal-Southwest Community Ministries (**MSCM**) is integral to the life of the community and the church. It is a ministry that touches people’s lives at the core of their being by offering hope through Restorative Justice, healing and reconciliation. This ministry listens with empathy to the ‘pain of those who cannot fit into mainstream society...’ these words of Jean Vanier reflect the vocation of church and society to come alongside the prisoner, the marginalized and the out-cast and restore dignity, value and worth to every human being. As Bishop, I am grateful for this work in Montreal and the Diocese of Montreal.

Blessings,



*Bishop Barry C. Clarke
Anglican Diocese of Montreal*

A WORD FROM OUR PRISON CHAPLAIN

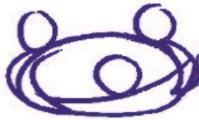
I’m pleased to be part of the **MSCM** Steering Committee and am taking this year to get to know who is who, and what various projects and events people are involved in. I am impressed by the time and commitment that so many people give to **Open Door**, **CoSA**, volunteering and visits to the penitentiaries. I hope to find more time to be involved in **Open Door** as the year proceeds.

When I go into Cowansville Institution as Chaplain, I tell the men who are moving on to minimum institutions that there is a group of people you should connect to—**MSCM**—folks who care enough to follow and support you in your transition back into the community. They are encouraged to know that the **Door** is **Open** for them.



Rev. Canon Tim Smart

*We wish to take this opportunity to thank our sponsor,
L'Aumônerie Communautaire de Montréal (ACM)
for their past and continuing support.*



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