



**M S C M**  
Montreal Southwest Community Ministries

# THE SOU'WESTER

MONTREAL-SOUTHWEST COMMUNITY MINISTRIES

VOLUME 6 ISSUE 2

MAY/JUNE

2014

## OTTAWA WILL REINSTATE SOME SEX-OFFENDER PROGRAM FUNDING

There are changes coming for **MSCM** this fall—most importantly projected funding cuts that will affect many of our programs if we do not increase our donations—not at all unfamiliar to all grass-roots organizations like ours. You will note on page 4 that we have now provided an online method to donate, along with other options. If you donate \$50 or more online, you will receive a tax receipt immediately.

We thank you for your continuing support.

After a long and dreary winter, we would like to take this opportunity for all of you to enjoy your summer and we will see you again in the Fall. .

### IN THIS ISSUE

"Absences" for Inmates	2
In Person Profile: Laura	3
Community Building Workshop (CBW)	4
Visit to Port Cartier	5
New Parole Rules Violate Rights	6
Inmates Serve Thyme While doing time	7
Kindness of a Stranger The Last Laugh	8

The federal government has partly reversed a spending cut after being told the cut could expose Canadians, especially children, to greater risk from dangerous sexual offenders.

Public Safety Minister Steven Blaney asked Correctional Service Canada (CSC) to reconsider cutting off a program called Circles of Support and Accountability (CoSA). Circles try to help integrate sexual offenders into society when they are released from prison.

The announcement followed two straight days of opposition questioning the decision to stop funding Circles, which has been copied in the US, United Kingdom and Europe.

"Canadian families know they can count on our government to take strong action to protect children from sexual predators," Blaney said.

A day earlier, Blaney defended the cuts in the House of Commons, saying it wasn't part of the CSC's mandate to fund ex-convicts who are no longer on parole.

CoSA has proven its value over the past 20 years, said Ron Melchers, a University of Ottawa criminologist. "It's been one of the most successful programs dealing with any released group of offenders," Melchers said.

"It's been almost a lighthouse in terms of success."

This change of heart doesn't fully rescue the program. The CSC said *only* \$650,000 of the \$2.2 million Circles has received annually since 2009 will be restored.

Canada's National Crime Prevention Centre (NCPC) has provided \$7.5 million over five years to expand CoSA projects as part of a major evaluation of their effectiveness. But the results of the evaluation aren't expected until December, and the funding lapses at the end of September.

Melchers accused CSC of 'sabotaging' five years of work and its own reputation as a leading correctional organization by cutting the CoSA program loose without waiting for the NCPC's evaluation report.

One study in 2007 found that sex offenders involved in CoSA had an 83% reduction in sexual reoffending compared to offenders who were not in the program. About 700 volunteers across Canada are involved in Circles with nearly 200 released sex offenders.

That would force restructuring from a professional national organization to one largely run by volunteers operating from their homes, according to Andrew

McWhinnie, a Vancouver psychologist on contract to advise Ottawa on the program.

"After September, we are back to the kitchen table. Half of Circles' staff will be let go, offices, phones and infrastructure will close," McWhinnie said.

He said the program will have to downsize to the 50 or so it handled before the injection of federal funds in 2009.

Bob Cormier, a former executive director of the NCPC and member of the Ottawa CoSA board, said he believes CSC has a responsibility to be involved in CoSA because of its mandate to protect public safety.

"It clearly isn't any other public agency mandate.

Whatever happens, the Ottawa CoSA and others across the country are determined to continue their work," Cormier said.

*Source: Postmedia News*

### Editor's Note:

Want to know more about the **CoSA Project** of **MSCM**? You'll find more detailed information on our website ([www.mscm-qc.org](http://www.mscm-qc.org)) along with our video entitled, **One of Us**.

**PROGRAM SETS STAGE FOR EVENTUAL RELEASE****PRISONS BOSS DEFENDS 'ABSENCES' FOR INMATES**

Allowing federal inmates temporary, escorted release is often a critical 'first step' in their gradual integration into the community. Canada's prison boss says—his first public defence of the process for Conservative government has chided as "parole through the back door."

"By continuing to allow inmates to maintain family and community ties and to participate in rehabilitative activities through (escorted temporary absences), offenders are more likely to be successful once released into the community," Don Head, commissioner of Correctional Service Canada (CSC), told a parliamentary committee in March.

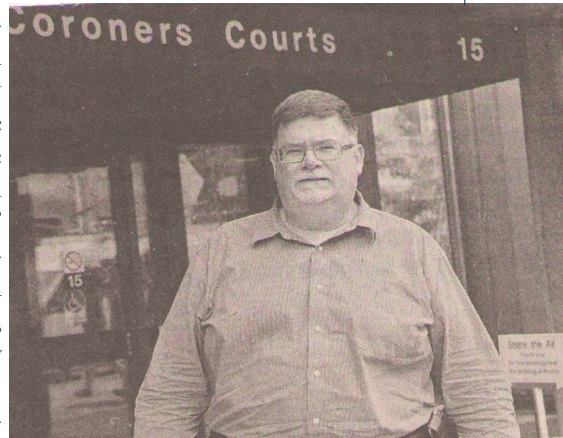
The House of Commons public safety committee is examining a Conservative private member's bill that would strip prison wardens of the power to grant short-term releases to offenders convicted of first-and second degree murder and leave those decisions to the Parole Board of Canada.

The committee heard from the widow of slain Toronto police officer, Det. Const. William Hancox, who was stabbed to death in 1998 while working undercover.

Kim Hancox testified that she was "shocked" and "disillusioned" to learn in December 2011 that a warden

had granted Elaine Cece, one of two women convicted of second-degree murder in her husband's death, escorted temporary absences just 18 months after the Parole Board had denied the same request.

"How could it be that the very clear denial of the Parole Board just 18 months earlier was seemingly dismissed without any consideration?" she said.



*Don Head told MPs that 99 per cent of all escorted absences for offenders occur without problems.*

A year later, the same warden allowed Cece a 60-day work release and transfer to a halfway house.

Just last month, Hancox said, a warden granted Cece's accomplice, Mary Taylor, 17 escorted temporary absences per month, even though the Parole Board had previously allowed only one a month.

Hancox said she understands that offenders will eventually be returned to the community and their success depends on a managed reintegration plan.

Currently, authority to grant temporary absences to an inmate serving life sentences shifts from the Parole Board to corrections officials when the offender is within three years of being eligible for full parole.

Bill C-483, put forward by MP Dave MacKenzie, would keep the decision in the hands of the Parole Board.

But Head said corrections staff, under the current system, carefully consider the risk an offender poses, and also review Parole Board decisions.

A policy introduced last month also requires that victims' families have a chance to submit an updated letter expressing any concerns.

Head noted that 99 per cent of all offender absences are problem-free.

Temporary releases typically allow an inmate to attend medical appointments or treatment programs, visits with family members, perform community services or attend to legal matters.

How an offender behaves during such absences is often viewed as a gauge of their suitability for day parole, Head said.

Research has shown that those gradually released into the community, starting with an escorted temporary absence, are less likely to re-offend, he said.

*Source: Postmedia News*

*It is  
never too late  
to mend.*

## AN INSPIRATION IN PERSON PROFILE

*The Sou'Wester was pleased to sit down with Laura, one of MSCM's first volunteers who started in 1999 and has stayed with us actively throughout the years, offering her experience and knowledge to those in need.*

***Q.** Thank you Laura. How did you get involved with MSCM in the first place?*

***A.** I was working at the downtown YMCA as a counselor in a Community Residential Centre (CRC), a halfway house for ex-prisoners from the federal and provincial detention centres. When it closed in its capacity as a halfway house, we were mandated to open a day program. One of our new employees, who was already volunteering with MSCM, began to speak to me about the work Peter Huish was doing, especially about Circles of Support and Accountability (CoSA). This sounded very interesting and I made further inquiries, met with Peter and decided to join the ranks.*

***Q.** You are very active with our CoSA Project and have participated in many Circles. Have you seen any changes over the years?*

***A.** There are many more Circles today than when I first started in 2000. This indicates that more inmates are made aware of this type of help available when they are released. I think this is excellent because research has shown that Circles do work with as much as 83% less*

*recidivism. As well, there are many more Circle volunteers today which means that the community is taking a greater interest in helping these individuals who need so much support. This shows true community spirit.*

***Q.** Do you have a success CoSA story to tell our readers?*

***A.** It is difficult for me to pick just one story because many Circle Core Members have continued to be contributing members of society, some over 20 years. There are many success stories.*

***Q.** You also participate in our new SHU (Special Handling Unit) program. Do you feel you are helping those incarcerated under these circumstances?*

***A.** Yes, I do believe we help these individuals. We are part of what is known as "The Good Lives Model", a program that emphasizes the positive qualities of the inmate rather than the perceived risk he represents to society. We offer them a new experience of community, simply because, in many cases, we are the only people they see other than CSC personnel. One of the participants I visit has had no outside contact for nearly 14 years. He talks about his favorite books, the sports he enjoys, the movies he has seen, the French course he is taking, world history, among other topics. I feel privileged to be a part of this innovative program.*

***Q.** What has kept you continuing to volunteer with MSCM?*

***A.** I have always had a desire to help individuals who have any kind of altercation with the law. These individuals need to be accepted and supported no matter what they have done because they are human beings. I believe everyone is entitled to the opportunity to get the help they need to be pro-social citizens.*

***Q.** Would you like to pass on any experience to our newer volunteers?*

***A.** First of all, I want to thank our newer volunteers for joining MSCM. This shows that there are citizens out there who care. Just be yourself and enjoy what you do. Those you help will greatly appreciate that someone accepts and supports them, does not judge them, but, instead, treats them as rightful citizens.*

*I also want to add to never give up on some individuals who may have a weak moment or re-offend because nobody is perfect. Just be there for them when they come back into the community. They will need your support even more.*

*Lastly, your volunteering with MSCM is the best example to others in the community. You are the promoters of MSCM and be proud.*



*"Believe when you are most unhappy that there is something for you to do in the world. So long as you can sweeten another's pain, life is not in vain."*

*Helen Keller*

*Editor's Note:*

Want to get information on volunteering with MSCM? Visit our website at [www.mscom-qc.org](http://www.mscom-qc.org)





*\*Scott 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 a first step towards uniting humanity and saving us from self destruction.*

**Donations of time and service are also welcome.**

**Please contact our offices by phone or email, or visit our website:**  
**(514)244-6147**  
**info@mscm-qc.org**  
**www.mscm-qc.org**

**Please mail your cheques to:**

**MSCM**  
**3974 Notre Dame St. West**  
**Suite B**  
**Montreal, QC**  
**H4C 1R1**

## ***SIGHTS AND SOUNDS FROM MSCM A COMMUNITY BUILDING WORKSHOP***

*I*n late March, **MSCM** hosted a Community Building Workshop at Mission Étrangères in Laval.

Coordinated by Chaplain-Founder, Peter Huish, the event was facilitated by volunteers Margaret MacCormack and Louise Royer, assisted by Roger Letourneau. In total 26 community members, including volunteers, ex-offenders, and current offenders being held at the Federal Training Centre (FTC) and Montée St. François (ESMF) Institutions—out on escorted temporary absences—attended the weekend workshop.

The goal of the workshop was to form a true community best defined as a group of people who, regardless of their diversity or backgrounds, were able to transcend their differences, enabling them to communicate effectively and openly work together towards goals identified as being for their common good.

The process of reaching community was an adventure for all attendees, using FCE\* and MEC's\*\* (*Le Mouvement vers l'Esprit Communautaire Inc.*) experiential learning process.

Since a group of people do not become a genuine community easily or accidentally, the group was asked to follow a set of principles; inclusivity, participation, punctuality and confidentiality.

Everyone agreed, giving up the weekend was well worthwhile. All participants left feeling encouraged that they were connected to the community they created.

*\*\*Editor's Note: If you would like further information re MEC, you can visit their website at:  
[www.mec-quebec.org](http://www.mec-quebec.org).*

*Thank you to our donors who made this workshop possible.*

## ***I SUPPORT MSCM AND THEIR PROGRAMS***

*O*urs is challenging work and there is always more to do than present funds allow. For example, we would like to increase the number of our Community Building Workshops, our in-prison visits to those located in remote institutions that rarely see anybody from the community, and improve our capacity to provide full-time services in the community. Please assist us by your generosity.

***MSCM** has relied upon support from the Community Chaplaincy of Montreal (Aumônerie de Communautaire de Montréal) and individual donors like you.*



You can make donations online using your credit card by going to [CanadaHelps.org](http://CanadaHelps.org). Or, you can go to our website and find a direct link at the bottom left-hand side.

**Please make sure you select MSCM in the drop down menu.**

Using this method will provide you with a tax receipt immediately.

*Cheques for less than \$50 can be made payable to **MSCM** directly. Cheques for more than \$50 should be made payable to **Anglican Diocese of Montreal: memo MSCM**.*

*Thank you!*

## MSCM VISITS PORT CARTIER



the next day. It was during this briefing that we learned that our plans to have a full day of activities with the same group of

It's 2:15 p.m. on Sunday March 9, 2014, and we are on our way back from Port Cartier—stopping in St. Anne de Beaupré for a spot of lunch. Tired, but happy, the six of us all agreed that the visit to Port Cartier maximum security institution was very well worth the effort.

Our reception by the inmates was appreciative, in particular for the English language activity noting that since the departure 2-1/2 years ago of Chaplain Keith Eldridge, there had been no English language activities or services at Port Cartier.

It was 6:30 a.m. on the previous Friday morning when we (Peter, Michèle, Jeri, Jeff, Gaby and Caroline) set off on the cross-country trip to Port Cartier, travelling in the generously donated van from CSC—Institution Montée St. François in Laval.

The journey lasted a total of 13 hours. We arrived at 7:30 p.m. Friday night where we were met by Brigitte Lambert, the Chaplain from Port Cartier without whose help the trip would have been impossible. She quickly organized us for dinner at a nearby restaurant during which plans were finalized for the visit to the prison

inmates would not pan out due to the reality of separate prison populations in the prison. We had to quickly reorganize!

Saturday morning dawned bright and clear and after a quick continental breakfast, we were on our way by 8:00 a.m.—heading for our appointment at the prison. We arrived on time, only delayed by the Quebec Cartier Mining (QCM) train that held us up at the tracks for what seemed forever.

Once in the reception area, we were met by Chaplain Lambert and her volunteer, Louise, who joined our group for the day. This turned into a blessing as Louise, being completely bilingual, was able to bridge any incomprehension between our group and the French-only speaking guards.

Getting through security was a familiar exercise for those of us who visit the Federal Training Centre in Laval on a weekly basis. However, there were a few more additional measures taken—our coats were not allowed into the Chapel and while in the Chapel, we were locked in by the guards!

Because of the separate populations, it was decided to split our group into two. Peter, Michèle and Caroline together with Louise stayed in the Chapel to meet one group while Jeri, Gaby and Jeff went to the visitors' area to meet with a separate group.

Each group met with two inmates where we introduced ourselves. The Chapel group shared conversation and did a short bible study. The visitors' area group spent two hours in conversation and discussion.

The morning session went quickly and before we knew it lunchtime arrived—pizza, chicken and salad. Our group reunited in the Chapel and exchanged stories from our morning's encounters.

After lunch, the format changed and we all met together in the Chapel in a big circle, the 7 of us joined by 8 inmates. Again we went through introductions, getting to know each other's names and sharing a bit of ourselves. During this time, the atmosphere was very jovial with a number of the guys expressing heartfelt appreciation for the volunteers from **MSCM**—pointing out that some of them had never received a visit in all the years they had been at Port Cartier.

As the afternoon progressed, we all joined in a lengthy discussion on Restorative Justice—what it was, how could it be applied in Canada and what are the benefits.

All too soon the time was up. It was 3:00 p.m. and the guys had to return to their cells.

Despite stretching out the leave, taking a further 15 minutes, it was finally time to go.

The inmates left with more expressions of thanks, while we regrouped for the long trip home—all on a high from the shared experience!

*A special thanks goes out to MSCM Volunteer, Margaret MacCormack, without whom the logistics and planning of this trip would not have been possible.*

*Thank you to our donors for helping us make this trip possible.*





Give credit  
where  
credit is due.

SUPREME COURT OF CANADA  
NEW PAROLE RULES VIOLATE RIGHTS

Tougher parole-eligibility rules introduced by the Conservative government a few years ago—and applied retroactively—violated offenders’ Charter rights not to be punished twice, the country’s highest court has ruled.

When the Conservatives abolished early-parole eligibility for certain offenders in March 2011, they applied those changes to offenders who were already serving their sentences.

Three federal inmates in B.C. complained, saying the old law—which offered day parole to first-time non-violent offenders who had served one-sixth of their sentence—should apply to them.

The B.C. Supreme Court and the B.C. Court of Appeal agreed, but the federal government appealed. On March 20, 2014, the Supreme Court of Canada denied the appeal.

“The federal government’s decision to apply the tougher parole-eligibility rules retroactively “deprive(d) the three respondents of the possibility of being considered for early day parole, which

was an expectation they had had at the time they were sentenced,” Justice Richard Wagner wrote for the court. “...the effect—extended incarceration—was automatic and without regard to individual circumstances.”



The Supreme Court of Canada has upheld an objection to change in parole-eligibility rules.

The decision dealt another blow to the tough-on-crime Conservatives. Last December, the Supreme Court struck down the country’s prostitution laws, saying they violated the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

The latest decision “sends a strong message to the federal government that when it comes to making changes to the criminal justice system, it has to have careful regard to provisions of the Constitution,” said Michael Jackson, a

Vancouver lawyer who represented the B.C. Civil Liberties Association as an intervener in the case.

But Jackson said the decision was a bit of a “hollow victory” because the majority of offenders who stood to benefit from it have either reached their regular parole periods or have completed their sentences.

Federal officials remained defiant. “Our Conservative government has been clear. We do not believe that white-collar criminals and

drug dealers should be released after a mere one-sixth of their sentence,” said Jason Tamming, a spokesman for Public Safety Minister Steven Blaney.

Paloma Aguilar, spokeswoman for Justice Minister Peter MacKay, said Justice Department officials “thoroughly review all government legislation to ensure it will withstand constitutional scrutiny.”

Source: Postmedia News

“There is an exception to every rule.”

Anonymous



**RESTAURANT IN LONDON PRISON****INMATES SERVE THYME WHILE DOING TIME**

**H**er Majesty's Prison Brixton has had some tough reviews.

In 2008 there was an inspection that found the south London prison infested with vermin and rife with gangs. Then there was the report from the chief inspector of prisons last December, which found it was easier to get drugs than clean underwear, with an 'evident and blatant' smell of cannabis on the wings.

Yet even the razor wire-topped walls of one of Britain's most notorious prisons cannot stop the gentrification of the former bandlands of London. Now the Clink restaurant is open for business inside HMP Brixton. So it is the turn of the capital's restaurant critics to sharpen their pens (once out of harm's way, of course).

The 100-seater restaurant, staffed by 30 inmates, is the third to be opened inside a prison by the Clink Charity in recent years. The idea of the project is simple: Prisoners cook and wait tables to learn the skills required to work in top restaurants and, one hopes, to stop them re-offending once they have been released.

Backed by Lady Edwina Grosvenor (the second daughter of the 6th Duke of Westminster) and chefs Giorgio Locatelli and Antonio Carluccio, it is recording some impressive reductions in re-offending.

In 2011, graduates from the first two Clink restaurants in HMP High Down and HMP Cardiff recorded reoffending rates of just 12.5% compared with a U.K. average of 47%.

Inside Brixton prison, a set lunch was served to supporters of the charity in advance of opening to the public. The restaurant has been set up in the old



*The 100-seat Clink restaurant inside Brixton is the third to be opened at a prison by the Clink Charity in recent years.*

prison governor's house in the middle of the main courtyard, which dates back to 1819, and is surrounded by the six jail wings that can house up to 798 prisoners.

To gain access to the prison requires having your mobile phone confiscated before being marched through the hulking Victorian prison arch. Visitors must book online in advance and are security screened.

Inside the restaurant, however, all is bright airy exposed stone and leather chairs, even if there are bars on the windows and panic buttons embedded into the walls.

The plastic cutlery and bundles of razor wire could be perhaps described as industrial chic.

Inmates dressed in smart blue tunics waltz around the assembled diners. The jail was once home to a notorious treadmill upon which prisoners would spend hours marching to grind flour.

Now, as 37-year-old inmate Marlon says as he serves a glass of non-alcoholic bucks fizz (alcohol is banned), they are being taught to make pasta from scratch.

Marlon, who doesn't want to give his surname, is serving a 16-month sentence for assault.

Like all those working in the Clink he has volunteered. He says even the prison guards have taken to calling him 'chef'.

It's hard work but satisfying," he says. "Before this I would just talk to my cellmates about soap operas because there was nothing else to do. I've been in and out of prison before but this time I feel like I'm getting something out of it."

The restaurant will be open for breakfast and lunch and prisoners work under head chef Vladimir Seko, formerly of Claridges and Langan's. Chris Moore, chief executive of the charity, was formerly head of catering at Harrods.

*Source: London Daily Telegraph*



**MSCM**  
Montreal Southwest Community Ministries

3974 Notre Dame St. West  
Suite B  
Montreal, QC  
H4C 1R1

Tel: (514) 244-6147  
Fax: (514) 284-5070

E-mail:  
info@mscm-qc.org  
cosa@mscm.qc.org

Website:  
www.mscm-qc.org

## KINDNESS OF A STRANGER

*I*t was a bitter, cold evening in northern Virginia many years ago. The old man's beard was glazed by winter's frost while he waited for a ride across the river. The wait seemed endless. His body became numb and stiff from the frigid north wind.

He heard the faint, steady rhythm of approaching hooves galloping along the frozen path. Anxiously, he watched as several horsemen rounded the bend. He let the first one pass by without an effort to get his attention. Then another passed by, and another. Finally, the last rider neared the spot where the old man sat like a snow statue. As this one drew near, the old man caught the rider's eye and said, "Sir, would you mind giving an old man a ride to the other side? There doesn't appear to be a passageway by foot."

Reining his horse, the rider replied, "Sure thing. Hop aboard." Seeing the old man was unable to lift his half-frozen body from the ground, the horseman dismounted and helped the old man onto the horse. The horseman took the old man not just across the river, but to his destination, which was just a few miles away.

As they neared the tiny but cozy cottage, the horseman's curiosity caused him to inquire, "Sir, I noticed that you let several other riders pass by without making an effort to secure a ride. Then I came up and you immediately asked me for a ride. I'm curious why, on such a bitter winter night, you would wait and ask the last rider. What if I had refused and left you there?"

The old man lowered himself slowly down from the horse, looked the rider straight in the eyes, and replied, "I've been around these here parts for some time. I reckon I know people pretty good." The old-timer continued, "I looked into the eyes of the other riders and immediately saw there was no concern for my situation. It would have been useless even to ask them for a ride. But when I looked into your eyes, kindness and compassion were evident. I knew, then and there, that your gentle spirit would welcome the opportunity to give me assistance in my time of need."

Those heartwarming comments touched the horseman deeply. "I'm most grateful for what you have said," he told the old man. "May I never get too busy in my own affairs that I fail to respond to the needs of others with kindness and compassion."

With that, Thomas Jefferson turned his horse around and made his way back to the White House.

*Source unknown*

## THE LAST LAUGH

- ◆ Experience is simply the name we give our mistakes.
- ◆ Only dead fish go with the flow.
- ◆ If winning isn't everything, why do they keep score?
- ◆ A clear conscience is usually the sign of a bad memory.
- ◆ If you keep your feet firmly on the ground, you'll have trouble putting on your pants.
- ◆ Keep the dream alive—hit the snooze button!