



MSCM
Montreal Southwest Community Ministries

THE SOU'WESTER

MONTREAL-SOUTHWEST COMMUNITY MINISTRIES

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On September 11, 2013, **MSCM** celebrated the 12th Anniversary of their flagship program **Open Door!**

Over the years, members have come and gone successfully reintegrating back into the community while continuing their connection to **MSCM**.

Volunteers have also come and gone, although many have remained in touch while spreading their wings, and many have stayed offering support and accompaniment to those in need. New volunteers are coming on board helping us to continue all our programs.

MSCM would like to take this opportunity to thank all of those who have made our programs a success and affording us a bright future.

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CANADA'S CRIME RATE DIPS

LOWEST LEVEL IN 40 YEARS

Canada's crime rate dipped to its lowest level in 40 years in 2012, the same year the federal government enacted some of its harshest tough-on-crime policies.

Just under 2 million criminal incidents were reported to police last year, about 36,000 fewer than the previous year, according to the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics study on police-reported crime.

The decline is primarily attributed to decreases in non-violent crimes like mischief, break-ins and motor vehicle theft. In fact, 2012 marked the ninth consecutive year that both the volume and severity of crime was down.

According to the report, 543 homicides were reported across the country, 55 fewer than in 2011. "As a result, the homicide rate fell to its lowest level since 1966," the report concluded.

Although crime rates have been falling for years, the federal government passed a controversial omnibus crime bill early last year that set mandatory minimum penalties for drug trafficking and sex crimes against children and got tough on marijuana producers, young offenders, Canadians imprisoned abroad seeking a transfer to a Canadian institution, and ex-cons seeking pardons.

The government also scrapped the controversial long-gun registry last year.

"While we are encouraged by the fact that the crime rate has hit its lowest point in 40 years, there were still nearly two million criminal incidents reported to police last year," said Paloma Aguilar, a spokeswoman for Justice Minister Peter MacKay.



"Our government believes that one victim of crime is still one too many. We will continue to stand up for victims and ensure that law enforcement have the tools they need to keep our streets and communities safe."

NDP Public Safety critic Randall Garrison said the report is helpful in that it points out which areas need attention, essentially resources for enforcement and prosecution. Given the spike

in violent gun crimes, for example, he questioned the government's decision to cut front line border guards and intelligence officers at a time when more and more firearms are flowing across the border.

Liberal Public Safety critic, Francis Scarpaleggia, emphasized the need to invest in prevention instead of relying on harsher sentences. He said more expertise is also needed to combat electronic crime and that new technology and open data is creating new opportunities for crime forecasting—a new frontier worth exploring.

The survey, conducted annually, is one of two major Statistics Canada initiatives aimed at tracking crime.

While this report offers insight into the crimes being reported to police, the survey on victimization conducted every five years capture crimes that are not.

University of Ottawa's criminology professor, Irvin Waller urges caution when considering the statistics. "These are police-reported (statistics) and they are not useless but they have to be dealt with carefully, he said, adding the victims' survey offers a more accurate reflection and should be conducted annually.

Source: Postmedia News

NATIONAL RESTORATIVE JUSTICE WEEK NOVEMBER 17-23, 2013

WHAT IS RESTORATIVE JUSTICE?

Restorative process

Definition:

A restorative process is any process in which the victim and the offender and, where appropriate, any other individuals or community members affected by a crime, participate together actively in the resolution of matters arising from the crime, generally with the help of a facilitator.

New and established forms of restorative justice offer communities some welcome means of resolving conflicts. They involve individuals who are not detached from the incident, but are directly involved in or affected by it. The participation of the community in the process is no longer abstract, but rather very direct and concrete. These processes are particularly adapted to situations where the parties participate voluntarily and each one has a capacity to engage fully and safely in a process of dialogue and negotiation.

In many countries, the idea of community involvement enjoys a large consensus. However, a fundamental challenge for participatory justice is to find ways to effectively

mobilize the involvement of civil society, while at the same time protecting the rights and interests of victims and offenders.

Restorative justice is an approach to problem solving that, in its various forms, involves the victim, the offender, their social networks, justice agencies, and the community.

Restorative justice programmes are based on the fundamental principle that criminal behavior not only violates the law, but also injures victims and the community. Any efforts to address the consequences of criminal behavior should, where possible, involve the offender as well as these injured parties, while also providing help and support that the victim and offender require.

Restorative justice refers

to a process for resolving crime by focusing on redressing the harm done to the victims, holding offenders accountable for their actions and, often also, engaging the community in the resolution of that conflict. Participation of the parties is an essential part of the process that emphasizes relationship building, reconciliation and the development of agreements around a desired outcome between victims and offenders. Restorative justice processes can be adapted to various cultural contexts and the needs of different communities.

Through them, the victim, the offender and the community regain some control over the process. Furthermore, the process itself can often transform the relationships between the community and the justice system as a whole.

FEATURES OF RESTORATIVE JUSTICE PROGRAMMES

Restorative Justice Programme

Definition:

Restorative justice programmes means any programme that uses restorative justice processes and seeks to achieve restorative outcomes.

Source:

United Nations, Office on Drugs and Crime, Handbook on Restorative Justice Programmes, Criminal Justice Handbook Series, United Nations, New York 2006

- ◆ A flexible response to the circumstances of the crime, the offender and the victim, one that allows each case to be considered individually;
- ◆ Response to the crime that respects the dignity and equality of each person, builds understanding and promotes social harmony through the healing of victims, offenders and communities;
- ◆ Viable alternatives the formal criminal justice system and its stigmatizing effects on offenders;
- ◆ An approach used in conjunction with traditional criminal justice processes and sanctions;
- ◆ An approach that incorporates problem solving and addresses the underlying causes of conflict;
- ◆ An approach that addresses the harms and needs of victims;
- ◆ An approach which encourages an offender to gain insight into the causes and effects of their behavior and take responsibility in a meaningful way;
- ◆ A flexible and variable approach which can be adapted to the circumstances, legal tradition, principles and underlying philosophies of established national criminal justice systems;
- ◆ An approach that is suitable for dealing with many different kinds of offences and offenders, including many very serious offenders;
- ◆ A response to crime which is particularly suitable for situations where juvenile offenders are involved and in which an important objective of the intervention is to teach the offenders some new values and skills;
- ◆ A response that recognizes the role of the community as a prime site of preventing and responding to crime and social disorder.

THE WIDE REACH OF OPEN DOOR

A VISITOR FROM NAIROBI, KENYA

Washington came to Montreal on a brief four month stint for work from Nairobi, Kenya. He was invited by a colleague to come and check out *Open Door*. He came and never left.

During his four months in Montreal, Washington was a faithful participant in *Open Door* every week as well as attending and fully participating in the annual Resource Development Day held in July.

A quiet man, his thoughtful and at times, humorous interventions during the various *Open Door* evenings were well received, provoking good and animated discussions among the participants. He noted that he was struck by the openness, acceptance and trust displayed by everyone that he met at *Open Door*.

He wished that such a programme could exist in his own country, noting that support for prisoners was not

something that could be said to be prevalent in Africa.

During his brief stay, Washington was particularly pleased to make contact with some of the inmates who originally hailed from Africa although he also related well with inmates of all ethnicities.

We hope that we will continue to have news of Washington from afar and that one day he may return to Montreal to be reacquainted with his *Open Door* friends



INMATES HELPED BY ONE OF OLDEST FAMILIES IN BUSINESS:

ITALIAN PRISONERS PRODUCE WINE

A group of inmates on a remote prison island off the coast of Italy have started producing their own wine, making them perhaps the country's most unlikely vintners.

The prisoners are incarcerated on the tiny island of Gorgona, the farthest flung speck of the Tuscan archipelago. The island has been a penal colony since 1869.

The inmates planted a vineyard recently and have now produced 2,700 bottles of white wine. They will not be allowed to sample it themselves. Instead it will go on sale to restaurants and wine bars around Italy.

The 50 prisoners on the island, which is covered in Mediterranean scrub, pine trees and holm oak forest,

have been given tips by the Frescobaldi, one of Italy's oldest and most respected winemaking families.

The aristocratic Tuscan dynasty has been producing wine at their estates for seven centuries and count among their past customers the court of Henry VIII, several popes and the artist Donatello. A Frescobaldi of the 13th century was friends with Dante. The company is the first to take part in a scheme, launched last year, in which businesses are invited to invest in the island and to give prisoners skills and training that will help them get jobs once they are released.

The inmates grow grapes in a corner of the island, which is barely 3 kms long, lying north of Elba where Napoleon was exiled by the

British and Giglio, where the Costa Concordia capsized last year.

Italian prisons are notoriously overcrowded, with some inmates spending up to 22 hours a day in cramped cells. At Gorgona, the jail has capacity for up to 140 inmates but is barely a third full at present.

The project was welcomed by Annamaria Cancellieri, the Minister for Justice, who said it could be replicated at other prisons.

"Initiatives like this have a constructive effect on inmates, allowing them to specialize in an area of work which will be useful to them once they leave prison. We know from statistics that for prisoners who do not find work, the rate of recidivism is 80 per cent."



Source: The London Daily Telegraph



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*"You cannot do
a kindness too soon,
for you never know
how soon it will be too late.*

Ralph Waldo Emerson

**Donations of time
and service are
also welcome.
We are especially
looking for volunteers
who would be
interested in
escorting.**

**Please contact our offices
by phone or email, or visit
our website:
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NO MORE TOMORROWS—WHAT IF?

Doing time trying not to lose my mind
Never wanting to walk in the darkness and chaos of this world.

Faded dreams and broken windows like a thief of the night
In an empty cell with no air or sunlight
What would happen if we had our last day?

When our world comes to an end, the question remains—where?
Who will survive and who will die?
Some will call it the Prophet of Doom—I call it the great "Purification".

Some call me the bad guy for I've done so wrong
And I have committed crimes.
As our world is slowly dying, what will happen to mankind?

Let's try to make this world a better place for all
For the remaining of our earthly time.

Guard it well with all your pride, life is sacred
Keep it pure and look not with evil eyes
Speak up and stand firm against injustice.

Let's be proud of who we are and try not to look back
See everything with the eyes of your heart.

Give a smile, put some light in the heart of your soul
Honor life—it's a priceless gift.

Karl Fromel

PLEASE SUPPORT MSCM

MSCM is a volunteer organization welcoming ex-offenders back to the community by supporting them in their social, spiritual, social, emotional and practical needs. We foster restoration and accountability and attend to the needs of all those affected by crime.

MSCM has relied upon support from the Community Chaplaincy of Montreal (Aumônerie de Communautaire de Montréal) and individual donors like you. The stigma associated with offenders brings financial and other challenges with it. Your contribution helps.

I support *MSCM* and their programs and am enclosing a donation of:

☐ \$25 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$100 ☐ Other: _____

*Note: Cheques less than \$50 should be made payable to **MSCM**.*

Cheques greater than \$50 should be made payable to:

Anglican Diocese of Montreal, memo: MSCM.

Tax receipts will be issued for donations of \$50 or greater.

Name: _____

Address: _____

E:mail: _____

TORIES WANT MORE RESTRICTIONS

TEMPORARY RELEASE OF INMATES DEBATED

The Harper government says it is pushing forward with plans to place more restrictions on temporary releases of federal inmates, even as an internal Correctional Service of Canada briefing document highlights their benefits.

Inmates can be granted escorted and unescorted 'temporary absences' for a variety of reasons: to perform community service, attend medical appointments or treatment programs, and visit with family members. They can last a few hours, a few days or even weeks.

A November 2012 briefing document sent to then-Public Safety Minister Vic Toews and obtained under access-to-information legislation said temporary absences play an important role in helping offenders re-integrate into society.

It cites the 'low rate of failure' arising from temporary absences and notes that offenders who participate in the program are less likely to be readmitted following release on full parole.

"A gradual, structured, and supervised release process represents an effective means of contributing to public safety," the document said.

But Julie Carmichael, communications director for new Public Safety Minister Steven Blaney, recently said the government is intent on closing a loophole that allows for "parole through the back door."

The government first raised concerns earlier this year after it was revealed that a prison warden had granted Elaine Rose Cece, a woman convicted in 1999 of second-degree murder in the death of a Toronto police officer, an escorted temporary absence even though the Parole Board had denied the same privilege a year-and-a-half earlier.

"We strive to have a justice system that respects victims and holds offenders to account and



we will continue to take steps to achieve this end. Individuals deemed ineligible for parole should not be given conditional release that is tantamount to parole through the back door," Carmichael said via e-mail.

"We are examining options to make sure that prisoners are not released before it is safe to do so, including Bill C-483 introduced by MP Dave MacKenzie."

The bill proposes to amend the Corrections and Conditional Release Act to strip prison wardens of the authority to grant temporary escorted absences to inmates convicted of first-or

second-degree murder, except in the case of a medical emergency. In all other instances, the Parole Board would have to authorize escorted temporary absences for that group of inmates.

The November 2012 briefing document prepared by the correctional service says each temporary absence application already 'undergoes a thorough analysis of risk' that includes consultation with a security intelligence officer and community corrections liaison officer.

It is noted that 99% of offenders successfully complete their temporary absences without any problems.

Participation is either escorted or unescorted temporary absences are 'critical to establishing offender credibility for early release,' the document said.

Further, research has shown that offenders who participate in temporary absences prior to release on full parole or statutory release have lower rates of re-admission.

The document noted that the average daily cost to incarcerate someone is \$312, while the average cost to maintain an offender in the community is \$80 per day.

Source: Postmedia News

"Nature knows no indecencies; man invents them."

Mark Twain

Editor's Note: Please see Page 6 for the response to this article printed in The Gazette July 31, 2013.



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*"Truth
gives a short answer;
Lies
go round-about."*

German Proverb

RE "TEMPORARY RELEASE OF INMATES DEBATED" (GAZETTE, JULY 29).

"TEMPORARY RELEASES ARE NOT PAROLE"

There is much to say in this matter of temporary releases for inmates of our federal correctional facilities, both escorted and unescorted. That some are escorted and others are not, is a major distinction.

The concern expressed by the Public Safety communications director about 'parole through the back door' is misleading, and appears to be another thrust in the game of manipulation of public opinion.

Escorted Temporary Absences (ETAs) are short, and by definition, the inmate is always under the monitoring eye of an accompanying escort, a prison guard or a trained volunteer. The inmates who benefit from these outings have earned the privilege in the painstaking assessments and evaluations constantly at play within our correctional facilities.

As coordinator of a community project that welcomes escorted visits by those for whom it is deemed beneficial

in the slow and managed process of being equipped for safe and productive reintegration, I can say that in 12 years of such experience, not one of some thousands of such outings has resulted in harm, damage or escape of men who are varying well motivated in wanting to be re-socialized well. On the contrary, along with numerous volunteers from the community who participate in such meetings, I know that these visits make significant contributions by assisting the safe reintegration of those who have been incarcerated.

These outings are *not* parole and can in no way be characterized as 'parole through the back door'. They can however, be seen as making significant contributions to effective eventual parole and so should not be reduced or, heaven forbid, eliminated. The evidence is there that this kind of connecting and interaction between inmates and the community should be increased. There should be much more opening of the

doors in intentional and managed ways. Similarly, Unescorted Temporary Absences (UTAs) are generally understood within the system as being a short step away from parole but with many more controls and safeguards than apply to parole itself.

The Correctional Service is to be congratulated and supported in its humane, pro-social and effective practices of ETAs and UTAs. The proposal to strip prison wardens of the authority to grant ETAs fails to recognize that those who have regular contact with inmates and have full information at their disposal, are professionally equipped to make appropriate decisions concerning prospects for social reintegration of individual inmates, consistent with public safety.

Peter Huish
Chaplain-Coordinator
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Montreal

MORE PRISON STAFF MAY GET

STAB-PROOF VESTS

The Correctional Service of Canada is seeking a new supplier to provide more than 1,200 stab-proof vests to front-line staff working in prisons across the country to protect them from possible attacks. A move is also underway to expand use of the vest among correctional officers.

Up until now, they've

been provided to officers working in men's maximum and medium security prisons and in maximums for women's prisons. They will now likely be provided to officers in medium level units in women's prisons. A final decision from Ottawa is expected soon.

Some critics however question the need for the vests, particularly in women's prisons. "How does that lead

to respectful, productive relationships between staff and inmates?" asked Mary Campbell, recently retired as Director General, Criminal Justice at Public Safety Canada.

"You're trying to effect positive change—if the first thing an offender sees is a stab-proof vest, as opposed to street clothes, it sets up a different relationship."

Source: Postmedia News



THE DARK HISTORY OF THE OLD PRISON OF TROIS-RIVIÈRES

A GLIMPSE INTO EARLY PENAL LIFE

There was a place for the difficult inmates at the Trois-Rivières prison. They called it the Cave, and with its metre-thick stone walls and sandy floor, it felt like one. They put down sand so that prisoners who moved too much would stir up a choking cloud of dust. Worst of all, it was kept pitch black and prisoners were fed at irregular hours to further disorient them. At the end of one or two weeks underground, the prisoners would emerge, hacking, eyes stinging in the light, discom-bobulated and broken. They generally behaved after that.

This was among the elements of early Canadian penal life and rehabilitative theory gleaned from a recent guided tour of the Old Prison of Trois-Rivières, which was opened by the British in 1822 and remained in operation until 1986, making it the longest continuously run jail in Canada.

Just as a bakery might feature a carved loaf of bread to denote its vocation, the Trois-Rivières prison bears the symbol of a cord over the main doors, for it was a place where inmates could be hanged. Seven prisoners were executed there for the crime of murder. Although public executions, once promoted as a moral deterrent and widely attended, were outlawed in the early 1900s, the last hanging was held in 1934.

Homeowners charged \$5 to wealthy gawkers to watch from the roofs of their houses.

Although it could be cruel, the prison represented an evolution in rehabilitative therapy that stressed public humiliation,

teenage boys would come in as delinquents and emerge as full-blown sociopaths.

Repeat offenders were put on a bread and water diet and forced into hard labour, and they would often die of malnutrition and disease as a result.



The Old Prison of Trois-Rivières, opened by the British in 1822, was the longest continuously run jail in Canada. It was in operation until 1986.

like being locked in stocks outdoors where people would fling horse droppings, or public floggings with a whip known as “cat o’ nine tails” laced with metal studs.

The prison was meant to provide prisoners with adequate living conditions, with heat and ventilation and segregated spaces according to age, sex and nature of the crime. Unfortunately, children as young as 12 could be sent there, and with as many as 100 inmates crowded into a facility designed for 40 and only 12 guards and no lights at night,

Often unclaimed by large families incapable of paying their funeral costs, their corpses would be sold to medical schools.

Walls one metre thick meant modern plumbing could not be installed, so prisoners used buckets well into the 20th century.

Some froze to death as late as the 1980s because the heating system was spotty, and the alpha males hogged the warmer spots.

In 1986, it was finally closed.

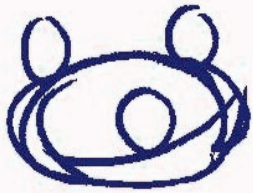
Source: The Gazette

*“I had love,
I suffered,
now I hate”*

*Written on a cell
wall at the prison.*

IF YOU GO

It’s a 90-minute drive from Montreal to Trois-Rivières. The prison and museum make a good stopover visit on the way to Quebec City. The tour, which takes just over an hour, is not recommended for children under 12. Tours are available in English and groups of 15 to 39 can arrange to spend the night in prison. Call 1-800-372-0406 or visit www.enprison.com for more information, or the museum website at www.culturepop.qc.ca.



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MAN'S A GENIUS

No English dictionary has been able to adequately explain the difference between these two words.

In a recently held linguistic competition held in London, England, and attended by the best in the world, Samsundar Balgobin, a Guyanese man from Bachelors Adventure, was the clear winner with a standing ovation which lasted over 5 minutes.

The final question was: How do you explain the difference between *complete* and *finished* in a way that is easy to understand? Some people say there is no difference between *complete* and *finished*.

Here is his astute answer:

When you marry the right woman, you are *complete*. When you marry the wrong woman, you are *finished*.

And, when the right one catches you with the wrong one, you are ***completely finished!***

He won a trip to travel the world in style and a case of 25-year-old Eldorado Rum.

WORD FUN

How can you rearrange the letters E D O R N O W into one word?

— — — — —

What word of 5 letters is never pronounced right?

— — — — —

*Congratulations to Laura L. for correctly completing the crossword puzzle in our last issue.
Laura wins a small gift from MSCM.*

THE LAST LAUGH

- ♦ Why do they lock gas station bathrooms? Are they afraid someone will clean them?
- ♦ Only in America...do banks leave both doors open and then chain the pens to the counters.
- ♦ Why didn't Noah swat those two mosquitoes?
- ♦ How do you get holy water? Boil the hell out of it.
- ♦ Funny how a dollar can look so big when you take it to church, and so small when you take it to the store.