

2019-2020 Annual Report

Mouvement Communitas



Content

1. 2019-2020 Overview

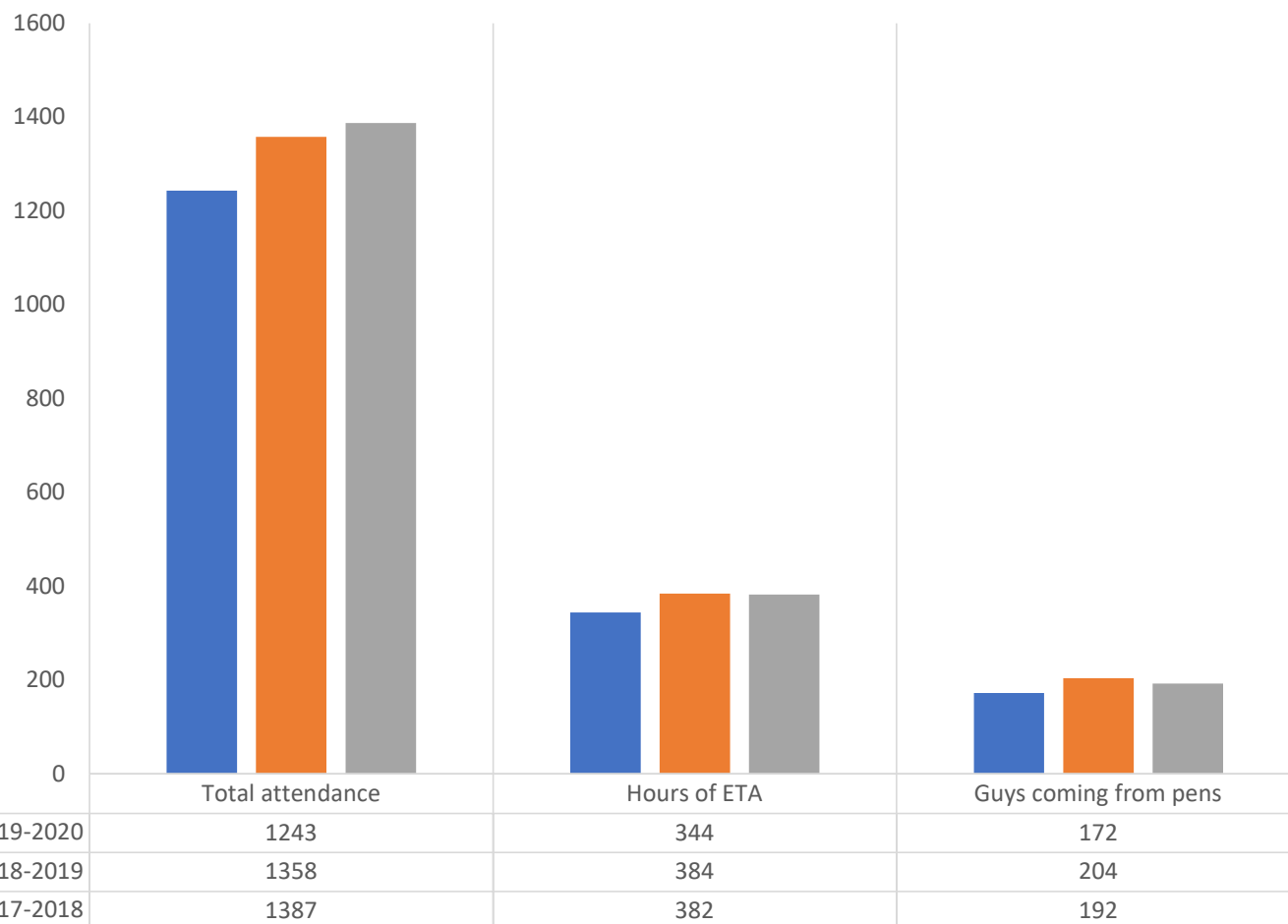
- Activities
- Financial Report

2. 2020-2021 Plan

- Budget
- Consultation Report



Open Door



1243

TOTAL ATTENDANCE

344

HOURS OF ETA

Table Talk



606

TOTAL ATTENDANCE

49

SHARED MEALS

Circles of Support and Accountability



12

CIRCLES

187

CIRCLE MEETINGS

over 750

VOLUNTEER HOURS

Inreach

- 2 Bible Study sessions per month with an average of 7 volunteers & 7 guys

201

TOTAL PARTICIPATION

over 30

INREACH VISITS



Newsletter

- 4 editions with a print circulation of 1000 copies!

Communitas' grassroots newsletter on criminal justice & prisoner reintegration

the Sou'wester

Spring 2019

PRISON LEGAL SERVICES IN CANADA : A PERSONAL LOOK BACK

No one would argue that our prison population's legal needs are fully met, but few will deny that the presence of lawyers in the service of those needs is a familiar sight inside the walls.

This has not always been the case. In 1985, when I joined Nicole Daignault and Renée Millette as a full-time prison law practitioner, we were but three in the province. And a few years later, as I accompanied activist Claire Culhane to Saskatchewan's super max to take statements from 16 prisoners complaining of torture, CSC's Prairie Region found the idea of convicts receiving legal assistance so unusual that it obliged me to procure precursory letters from the prisoners... *Continued on page 2*



Communitas Restorative Justice Focus Group



There is a renewed movement at Communitas to embrace restorative justice more completely. Following an Open Door Presentation in mid-February on the November 2018 National Restorative Justice Symposium held in Saskatoon, Communitas members expressed a desire to look into what more Communitas could do on the matter of restorative justice.

The Communitas link to restorative justice is firmly embedded in the organization's Mission Statement that affirms in part that "Communitas 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 reintegration of those who have served time in a penitentiary."

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We would love to hear from you!



397 4 Notre Dame West, Suite B
Montreal, QC H4C 1R1
Tel: 514-244-6147
Email: info@communitasmontreal.org
www.communitasmontreal.org

The Sou'Wester name is a reference to Montreal's Southwest, where Communitas began its work in 1999 and is still based today.

Twitter: [@communitas_MTL](https://twitter.com/communitas_MTL)
Facebook: [/communitasmontreal](https://facebook.com/communitasmontreal)

the Sou'wester

Summer 2019

ON GROWING OLD IN PRISON

Wandering around a federal prison, my future is all around me.

They are wheeled around by other inmates; they creak and waddle to and from the cafeteria at mealtimes; they wander in the noonday sun talking to themselves. They occupy prison hospital lineups in increasing, and heavy numbers. It's a silent, hidden and terrifying way to go gently into that good night. But as often as not, these older folks are smiling. As has been observed, old age brings quietude and good behaviour, even as the mind drifts away like the tides.

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GETTING TO KNOW RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

Restorative Justice is a frequent topic of discussion at many Communitas gatherings as well as in this newsletter.

With the upcoming Restorative Justice week in November, the question often arises about what restorative justice is, and what place it has in our justice system.

The roots of restorative justice can be found in the practices of many Indigenous populations around the world, including the many Indigenous nations across Canada and the United States. The name restorative justice was adopted in the late 60s in academic circles, with the first instance of its use in a Canadian criminal process in Elmira, Ontario in 1974 where two youths were accused of vandalism after an evening of drinking. The youths made amends to the victims by repairing the damage.

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Fall 2019

COMMUNITAS DOUBLES YOUR DONATION!

Fundraising season has arrived to Communitas and, again, we have been blessed by the generosity of our community.

For the second year in a row, an anonymous donor has committed to match all donations given in memory of Hugh MacCormack, a dear long-time member and passionate supporter of Communitas.

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Celebrating Restorative Justice in Canada

Every year, the third week of November is celebrated across Canada as Restorative Justice Week. RJ organizations across the country take the opportunity to share with the public the life-changing work that is underway in the area of restorative justice.

Communitas, which is based on restorative justice principles, is focusing many articles in this issue of the Sou'wester on restorative justice.

While restorative justice principles have been part of Indigenous practices in Canada pre-dating colonialization, it was not until 1974 that a Canadian court took notice and implemented a restorative action. Two teens were before the court accused of vandalizing the property of 22 homeowners in Elmira, Ontario. Two young probation officers suggested to the court that the accused apologize to the homeowners and make restitution, instead of being imprisoned. Judge Gordon McConnell agreed, and in doing so set a new legal precedent in Canadian law. Since then, the practice has spread across the country in limited use. It is used more often within Indigenous circles but is also used in some communities with great success.

The principles of restorative justice revolve around the concept that when a crime occurs, work must be done to repair the damage and promote healing and growth in a collaborative way that involves the victim, the offender and the affected community. Restorative justice asks who has been hurt, what are their needs, and whose obligation it is to repair the damage.

There are more than 100 restorative justice organizations throughout Canada promoting its use and working with the legal system to implement restorative practices. It is also being introduced into some schools as a method of resolving bullying and conflict.

Bill

We would love to hear from you!



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Winter 2020

THE EXPERIENCE OF A VOLUNTEER AT COMMUNITAS



After I retired, I was looking for some "meaningful" volunteer work. I'd been a social worker for 40 years, and had learned in my long life that when you help another person, it feels good. I was still hungry for the experience of helping.

By Marilyn

But after retired, I couldn't find volunteer work which offered a real connection with people. I could either teach or volunteer in a hospital kitchen but the hours were either very limited and/or paid. Then, about a year ago, my friend, Mary, who had volunteered at the Open Door Ministry for years, brought me to their door. "There is no better place to be at Open Door/Tuesday evenings," she told me. I had to give it a try.

At first, I was uncomfortable at the meetings. I didn't understand what was happening. I wasn't used to religious people, but after a few meetings, I began to feel more comfortable.

After a while, the feeling of being accepted and able to help others grew. I began to feel more comfortable at the meetings. I wasn't used to religious people, but after a few meetings, I began to feel more comfortable.

Continued on page 2

Charles Park, affectionately known as "Charlie", a long-standing Communitas member and particularly of Open Door, passed away last November following a short illness.

Charlie was 87 years old - though you wouldn't know it to look at him, and was there at the very beginning when Open Door started their formation in December 22, 2002. He lived under the Tree House too.

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Send your letters to The Editor at:

editor@communitas.org



2075 Howe Street, Suite 2
Vancouver, BC V6J 2P4, Tel: 604-681-2571

www.communitas.org

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@communitas_bc



/communitasbc

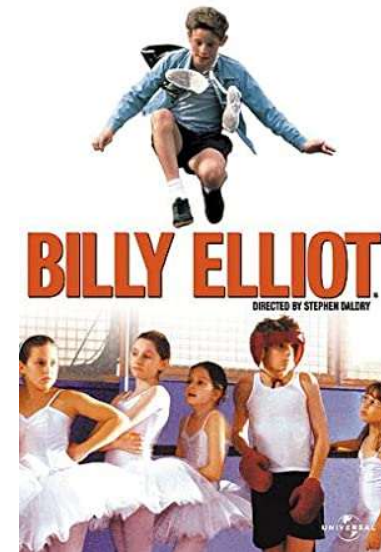
- **Movie Night** 8 movies

- **Restorative Justice Group**

5 meetings in 2019-2020
Restorative Justice Week

- **Summer picnic** 31 attendees, 7 from pen

- **Scholarship** 2nd year, \$1300
- **Peace Education Program** 10 sessions, avg. 5 participants



Financial Report



Looking Back. Finances

REVENUE ITEM

Donations	\$ 27 282.83
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Aumônerie Communautaire de Montréal	\$ 15 493.52
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CoSA Canada	\$ 67 500.00
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TOTAL	\$ 110 276.35
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Looking Back. Finances

EXPENSE ITEM

Office	\$ 21 443.22
Staff & coordination	\$ 63 785.95
Professional services	
Bookkeeping	\$ 2 720.00
Review engagement	\$ 4 828.00
Food & refreshments	\$ 3 785.88
Community development	\$ 2 457.96
Scholarship	\$ 500
TOTAL	\$ 99 521.96



2020-2021 Plan



Budget 2020-2021

EXPENSE ITEM

Office	\$ 21 028
Staff & coordination	\$ 57 110
Professional services	
Bookkeeping	\$ 2 400
Review engagement	\$ 4 829
Food & refreshments	\$ 1 350
Community development	\$ 1 020
Scholarship	\$ 500
TOTAL	\$ 88 237



Communitas

ANNUAL CONSULTATION REPORT

Self-identified impacts

- Learning to see the good in everybody, challenging preconceived ideas about *certain kinds of people*
- Opening towards looking outside of oneself and cultivating empathy
- Giving members a sense of belonging, acceptance, and community
- Allowing members to feel part of a family
- Having a voice in a community
- Expanding members' understandings about people and their experiences
- Having access to a space to build and strengthen the sense of community
- Working towards a pro-social, positive, safe, and healthy reintegration
- Enrichening spiritual and faith life
- Healing our humanities



Communitas

ANNUAL CONSULTATION REPORT

Members' Needs

- More opportunities to share with other Communitas' members
- Offering more intense and individualized support to guys in the community
- Grow and strengthen our community
- Support and training for employment
- Strengthening financial literacy of our community
- Develop more programming



Selected themes for 2020-2021

- 20th anniversary
- Togetherness and belonging
- Financial independence
- Community building
- Our *new normal*