



ANNUAL REPORT 2019

Catholic Action

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A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

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Dear Members,

It is my great privilege, on behalf of our Board of Directors, to present to you our Catholic Action Montreal Annual Report for 2018-2019.

As you will read in the details of this report, it has indeed been a very busy and exciting year for Catholic Action as we strive to help those within our English Speaking Montreal Catholic Community put their faith into action for the good of our community at large.

Our mission and goals have remained constant: 1. To identify and connect with the various individuals and organizations within our Montreal Catholic Community who are serving various needs within our community; 2. To become a liaison organization which helps to match expressed need with volunteers and expertise; 3. To become an encouraging and supportive body for individuals and organizations striving to grow in the work that they do to help others (including support for the creation of new projects in response to an unmet need); 4. To connect organizations with a common service interest, and help facilitate collaborative networks of support toward meeting a common expressed need (i.e. round tables, coalitions, etc.).

Judy Wong, our Executive Director, has been busy helping our organization to experience some tremendous growth in all of these areas, and the name “Catholic Action Montreal” is becoming more and more recognized in our Montreal Catholic Community and beyond as a key player in helping to respond to specific expressed needs within the community. In the process we have met many wonderful people, including members new and old; organizations that we have had the privilege of assisting, collaborating with and learning from; and several parishes - allowing us to share stories and work together. We used our collective gifts to the best of our ability and expanded our partnerships and collaborations in an effort to expand our ability to “Serve our Neighbors”.

On behalf of our Board of Directors, we thank you for your support as we - united and guided by faith - strive to serve, care for, and bring hope to others with humility, compassion and respect.

We look forward to what God has in store for us in our 2019/2020 season as we, together, continue to grow Catholic’s Action’s ability to bring people and organizations together to better serve our community.

Thank you for all you do to help and serve others. We want to know about and celebrate what you do – please do not hesitate to share your story with us!

This is YOUR organization. As always your thoughts, ideas and suggestions are welcome, important and needed. Please do not hesitate to speak with or contact Judy, or any of your board members to share what’s on your mind.

We look forward to collaborating with you in exciting ways in response to our baptismal call to respond to the needs of others – to be His hand and feet in our world.

*Anna Graham
Chair of the Board of Directors – Catholic Action Montreal*

Board of Directors:

Executive board: Anna Graham, Bishop Thomas Dowd (Spiritual Director), Patrick Gillespie (Treasurer), Cathie Macaulay (Secretary), Paul Donovan,

Board: Archbishop Christian Lépine, Alisha Ruiss, John Murphy, Cathie Macaulay, Fr. Andrew Thuraisigam, Jessica-Anne Jalea, Enza Timpano, Phil Grant

Executive Director: Judy Wong

Neighbourly Highlights

Using our gifts to serve our neighbour continues to ring true. These are some of the larger contributions we have made this year:

Asylum Seekers: We continued directly assisting families until the fall of 2018 where we formed a round table of experts that included the Archdiocese project, Le Pont, Action Refugee, The Jesuit Refugee Service, Transfiguration of Our Lord Parish, and Wendy de Sousa of St. Jean Brebeuf parish and the Welcome Collective Organization. By the time we had concluded furnishing apartments, we had served over 220 families directly. By forming our coalition we realized that Welcome Collective was doing furniture collection for this reason, as was Transfiguration of Our Lord. We offered all donations that came our way to these groups.

Le Pont was supported all year when specific needs were required. We ran winter clothing, hygiene items, juice box and snack drives. Our current “very cool project” is collecting fans for the residence for the summer.

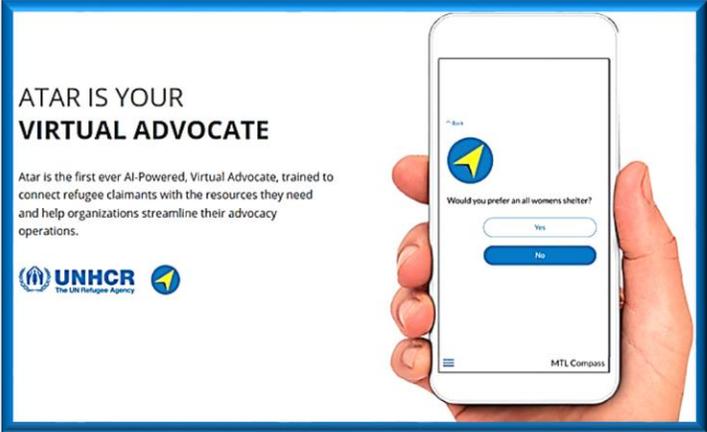


Our expert finance trainer continues to offer courses to residents at Le Pont and other Asylum Seekers.

We have also met other organizations, like Promis, that offer free services for refugee claimants, like accredited French courses & resume writing assistance to name a couple. We have added, “Servizio Scalabriniano Migranti, a partnership between St. Rita’s and Our Lady of Pompeii in Ahuntsic. We have become a hub of information and service for these organizations. We have supplied volunteers where needed. Our John Molson School of Business MBA student completed his business plan in regards to the needs of these refugee claimants, which we have shared with our team. Possibly the most exciting deliverable is the new app called ATAR - virtual advocate for refugee claimants! The first link is the TED talk explaining the app, the second is for the app.

https://www.ted.com/talks/muhammed_idris_what_refugees_need_to_resettle#t-355848

<https://atar.bitrix24.site/>



Isolated Seniors

Reaching isolated seniors remains a priority of Catholic Action. In collaboration with The Father Dowd Foundation and the English Speaking Catholic Council, we connected and solicited the English speaking senior centers to fill the need. Using a workshop format, we facilitated and developed a specific training program to share the tools necessary to reach these often frightened, vulnerable and underserved people. This 3 part program was given over 6 months and a refresher earlier this month. The centers were thrilled with the results.

We have decided on a new project for the coming year, "speaking as one voice". In collaboration with Seniors Action Quebec we will build a marketing plan that will highlight the plight of English Speaking Seniors where and when necessary. We also included other activities in these sessions, a performance by RECAA, (Respecting Elders Communities against Abuse), a guest speaker from the Concordia Perform center offering a free program on seniors' fitness and health. We are now working with LaSalle D & D 50+ and Concordia to offer these services.

"Really good workshop on Friday, thank you very much, the meetings have helped me quite a bit. I am mostly alone working with seniors in my work environment, so the exchange is of great value to me. Michael is a great facilitator"



During the summer, some of the senior center's had scheduled trips to Camp Kinkora but unfortunately the New Hope Bus was out of commission. Catholic Action reached out to donors to sponsor the bus for 2 of the trips and was successful. Needless to say the seniors were grateful! Catholic Action has recruited 5 new volunteer drivers for the 20 seater bus which will allow the centers to offer more day trips with just the gas expense.

THE CONNECTED GROUPS

Almage Senior Community Centre, Contactvity Senior Center, Extra Miles Senior Visiting Program, LaSalle D & D 50+ Senior Centre, NDG Senior Center, New Hope Senior Centre, St. Antoine Senior Centre, St. Columba House, SASMAD, Teapot, Volunteer West Island, WICA, Yellow Door

Afghan Women Center

This group works to empower socially isolated immigrant women within Montreal creating programs that meet their needs, self-development workshops for example. They came to Catholic Action for assistance during their application for charitable status, running their first AGM, and creating a workshop for healing. Catholic Action also introduced them to the "Shield of Athena" who works with culturally abused women, as some of their membership were in need of their services. We facilitated their workshops allowing culturally abused women to share their stories in a very safe space and realizing they are not alone in their journeys. The event was sincerely appreciated by many. We assist them with design and translation. We also introduced them to the Camp Kinkora experience!



"The workshop was amazing and very productive. Everybody in the groups participated and people were amazed and touched by sharing and hearing others' stories. My friends told me how good the event was and that they learned a lot. Thank you for your expertise and helping us to this workshop."

CENTER FOR REPRODUCTIVE LOSS

Grief never ends but it changes
It's a passage, not a place to stay.
Grief is not a weakness, nor a
lack of faith,
It's the price of love!



Founded in 1992, by healthcare professionals, the Centre for Reproductive Loss is a non-profit charitable organization, located in Montreal, Quebec, Canada. It was established in order to respond compassionately to the emotional, spiritual, and psychological distress of individuals and families affected by such loss as miscarriage, stillbirth, abortion, adoption, infertility, and sterility. One of its original founders Kathleen Gray is looking for a succession plan to ensure this good work and important service lives on. Catholic Action connected and introduced the diocese Family and Life ministry and Kathleen. They knew of Kathleen and were thrilled to meet and learn from her. Catholic Action's expertise pool has someone who is very motivated by the work of the center and is working to be part of the succession solution.



DrugRehab.com, a web resource that provides information and support to people fighting substance abuse and addiction, reached out to partner. Catholic Action met with them to understand the synergy between the two groups. The loss of a baby, discovery of infertility, and other situations around reproductive grief, takes an enormous toll on the family, especially the mother. Often times, the grief and stress can lead to substance abuse. We are working to bring awareness to this issue and to be a resources for families struggling with substance abuse, addiction, and mental health problems.

Kathleen Gray, the current director and one of the founders of this organization has written a book on the subject: "Grieving Reproductive Loss: The Healing Process". Her book recently received an amazing review from a doctor in the US. https://www.amazon.ca/Grieving-Reproductive-Loss-Healing-Process/dp/0895032279/ref=sr_1_1?keywords=reproductive+loss+the+healing+process&qid=1551469623&s=gateway&sr=8-1#customerReviews



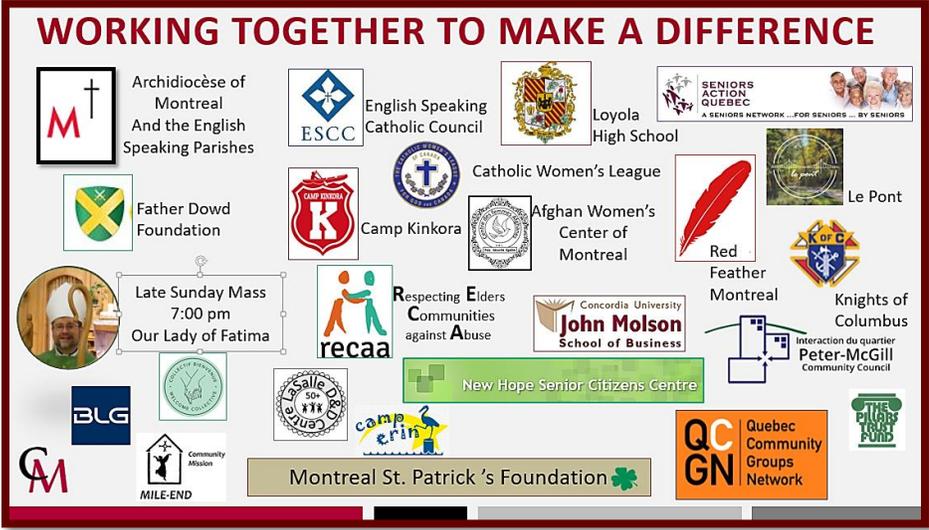
ARCHDIOCESE INITIATIVES

Catholic Action supports the initiatives in the English speaking Catholic Community. Front and center is our continued support for Le Pont.

Participating in the Parish Vitality Conference allowed us to recruit new experts to further assist us in serving in the name of the Lord. When speaking at churches we incorporate the Mission versus Method message that Archbishop Lépine asked us to pursue as listed in our October newsletter. We were also invited to participate in the Rachel's Vineyard retreat discussion because of our work with the Center for Reproductive Loss. Catholic Action assisted with the implementation of the Responsible Pastoral Ministry at St. Edmund of Canterbury Parish.

There are many other smaller day to day needs we serve.

- Mile End Mission, at the request of the Father Dowd Foundation we visited the Mile End and learned of their volunteer needs and filled them.
- Jesus Light of the World Parish has the first Catholic Action representative and we are grateful!
- Catholic Action assisted in the Peter McGill Hallowe'en initiative serving the kids in that community.
- We continue to promote Camp Erin - A special camp for grieving youths.
- Support the Diocesan Camping Association
- Management of the Late Sunday Mass
- Became a member of the QCGN



While we have served many in collaboration there have been some who have come to Catholic Action, to share with us, their own initiatives.



Carolina Bottari – Ran a winter clothing drive (brand new items) and invited our Chair Anna Graham to share these donations. Catholic Action shared them with some of our Asylum Seeker friends, and Le Pont, and Transfiguration of Our Lord.

Andrea Bourke – Came to Catholic Action as a volunteer after visiting Le Pont. She is the initiator of “Catholic Action’s really COOL project”. After learning that the residents have no air conditioning in the monastery, and speaking with the director, Arthur Durieux, it was agreed that collecting 20 fans for the rooms and common areas would be greatly appreciated. Thank you Andrea for the initiative.



Brian Keane – Came to Catholic Action as a volunteer. After understanding his “gifts” we quickly introduced him to LaSalle D & D 50+ senior Center. Brian has taken on an advisory role to their board and is assisting them with the processes of fundraising!

How can we share our gifts with each other?

The groups we serve all have needs. Can you translate English to French, (all groups), do you have counselling experience (Centre for Reproductive Loss), and can you drive someone in need, meals on wheels, or maybe dabble in website design/update? Can you teach a Yoga class, English, computer? These are a few of the common requests. How about becoming a board member and lending your professional expertise to a team? There are many one time or full time opportunities throughout the year. You would be surprised how easy it is to help. Is your organization missing a service, check in with us, we can help. Join our expertise pool and help us help our neighbour – go to the website and click on the “expertise” tab.

Your opinion matters! Tell us what you think? As a member what else would you like to see us doing? We’d love to hear your ideas. Drop us a line at jwong@catholicaction.ca

Thank You!

Kind, Versatile, Optimistic, Understanding, Talented, Energetic, Enthusiastic, Resilient – that is the kind of amazing “Catholic Action Experts” that you are. Thank You!

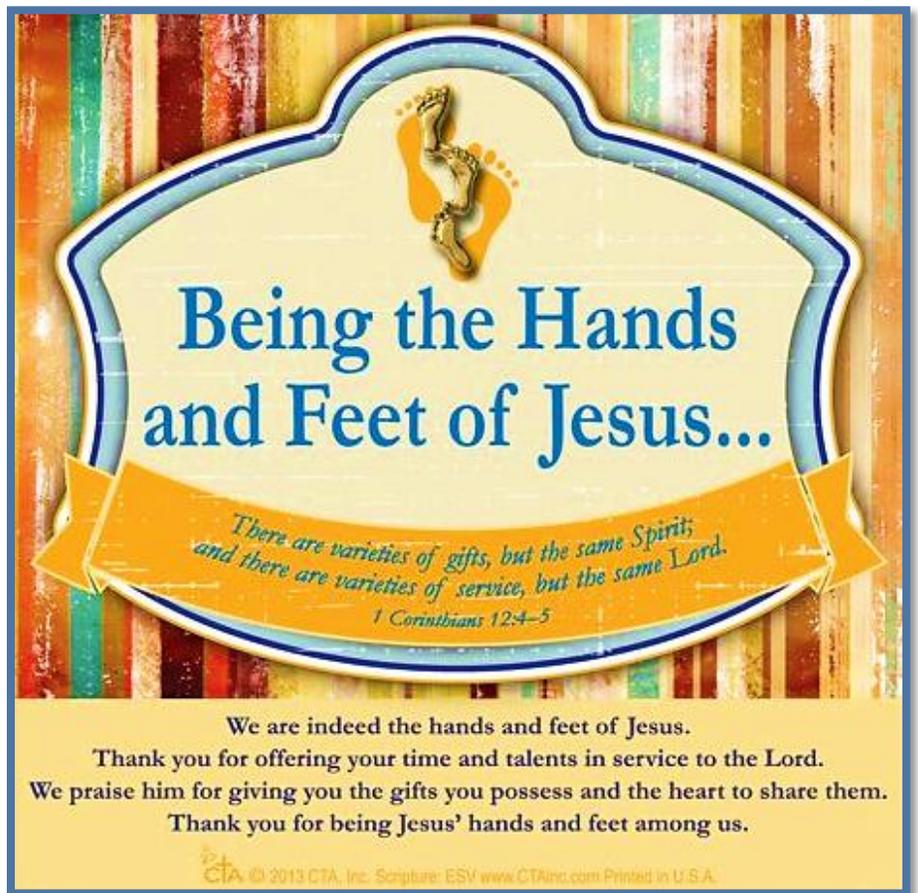
Thank you to the supporters of the Late Sunday Mass, the celebrants, the lectors and the behind the scenes team that make it happen at our Lady of Fatima Parish.

Thank you to the Parishes, their secretaries that have reached out and supported our mission with specific initiatives.

Thanks to all you have donated to Catholic Action as we carry out our mission to serve our neighbour in the name of Our Lord. Your gifts of time, talent and treasure are truly appreciated.

You are proof that volunteers are people who don’t want to be thanked for helping others, but want to thank others for giving them the opportunity to help. God bless you!

*Please share our stories.
Invite your family and friends to share their expertise and become members and help serve our neighbours in the name of Our Lord!*



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www.catholicaction.ca



<https://www.facebook.com/catholicaction.ca/>