



ESCC

ENGLISH SPEAKING
CATHOLIC COUNCIL

LE CONSEIL CATHOLIQUE
D'EXPRESSION ANGLAISE



ESCC



English Speaking Catholic Council
Annual Report 2022-2023
Conseil catholique d'expression anglaise

The English Speaking Catholic Council

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Harold Thuringer
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Staff

Anna Farrow
Executive Director
(Retired in December 2022)

Maria G. Centoni
Executive Director
(Appointed in January 2023)

Suzanne Brown
Executive Assistant

In **2022-2023**, the Council found itself at a crossroads in its development. Anna Farrow's decision to retire from the Executive Director function, to embark on a new career as a columnist for *The Catholic Register*, meant that the ESCC was engaged in a lengthy search to find a successor. Contextually and by consensus, the five strategic priorities that have guided the actualization of the ESCC's vision and mission, essentially since 2016-2017, were renewed. Throughout the year, governance focused on seizing all opportunities to better understand the evolution of the profiles of its key target groups (seniors, newcomers / asylum seekers, and underrepresented groups), as well as the environmental factors that drive it.

In **January 2023**, we welcomed Maria Centoni as the new Executive Director and began transitions. We held a reception in Anna Farrow's honor, we said good-bye formally to our long-time spokesperson, guide, and mentor. We then quickly engaged in mapping out the key elements of an integrated, accompanied strategic planning journey which we officially launched in our Annual General Meeting of members on June 14. We look forward to working together as we forge our new path for the future of the ESCC.

In terms of highlighting other developments and some of our activities,

-in **October 2022**, The Foundation of Catholic Community Services (FCCS) notified tenants of its intent to sell the building that has housed the ESCC offices since the outset (1981). The effortful search for a new lease led to the identification of the option best reconciling all considerations as recently as **June 21**. The move to the Maison Mère d'Youville in Old Montreal, a property of the Grey Nuns is scheduled for **July 13!**

-in **November**, the ESCC participated in the delegation of the QCGN to Ottawa, joining a group of 30 leaders from English-speaking Quebec who met with an equal number of MPs and Senators. The goal of the delegation was to impress upon Parliamentarians that Bill C-13, *An Act to amend the Official Languages Act*, to

enact the use of French in Federally Regulated Private Businesses Act and to make related amendments to other Acts, would inflict severe repercussions on Quebec's official language minority community and divide Canadians along linguistic lines. The ESCC continues to collaborate with the QCGN and other community organizations / bodies in its resolve to mitigate the impacts of language legislation on the vitality, resilience, and prosperity of Quebec's English-speaking communities.

-in **December**, the ESCC co-hosted a community gathering with the Office for English Pastoral Services. This was the first in-person activity since the fall of 2019. The evening began with a panel discussion moderated by Fr. Raymond Lafontaine. John Zucchi, spoke about his involvement with *Communion and Liberation*, Marybel Majorga talked about her new podcast *A Walk of Faith*, and ESCC Board

member Talitha Cere spoke of the organization she founded, *Momentum*. Her husband, Brian Traynor, spoke about his work with *Divine Renovation*. The presentation of the Bishop Crowley Memorial Award to Eric Durocher followed. Eric was notably recognized for his extensive years of service in communications for the Archdiocese of Montreal and as editor of *The Catholic Times*.

-**throughout the year**, the ESCC maintained its contributions toward

- the wellness of seniors, primarily through its collaborations with Seniors Action Quebec (SAQ), One Voice Coalition and the Community Health and Social Services Network (CHSSN)
- services for newcomers / asylum seekers by broadening its bridge building to encompass organizations such as the Welcome Collective and Le Pont.

In closing, it would be remiss of me not to give heartfelt thanks to our funders: the Government of Canada through its Department of Canadian Heritage, the Pillars Trust Fund, Montreal St. Patrick's Foundation, and the Father Dowd Foundation. We are grateful for the trust placed in us and look forward to many more years of productive collaboration.





VISION

To be a forum for Montreal’s English speaking Catholics of all origins as well as a knowledgeable, articulate and reasoned lay Catholic voice on matters affecting the vitality of the English-speaking community in Quebec and the common good of Canadian society.

Building on our President’s Message, in 2022-2023, while fording transitions in governance, the Council’s Executive Committee and Board explored how best to create room for an independent expert’s accompaniment in objectively assessing its strengths, challenges, opportunities, and development capacity. Identifying flagship projects, indicators of impact, and refining its processes and approaches impel it forward. More specifically in relation to Board renewal, mentorship, and succession planning, lessons learned have the ESCC choosing to revisit its progress on a quarterly basis. This should notably contribute to its actualization of its commitment to support the leadership of young adults and to provide representation opportunities for underrecognized / insufficiently tapped voices, such as those of seniors and visible minority groups.

Consensually viewing the journey toward an integrated strategic plan as an essential investment toward building on our legacy, taking more data-driven decisions, and becoming more agile in relation to changes in the social and political landscape, the ESCC identified the following models / frameworks and action plans as structuring its accountability:

- the Action Plan for Official Languages 2023–2028: *Protection-Promotion-Collaboration* from the Department of Canadian Heritage (PCH);
- *A priority-setting Model for Quebec’s English-speaking Community*, from the Quebec Community Groups Network (QCGN);
- the QCGN’s 2022-2027 Community Development Plan for English-Speaking Quebec *Working Together for a More Vital Community*;
- *For a Synodal and Missionary Church* Toolkit developed by the Archdiocese of Montreal.

MISSION

To act as a catalyst, convener and facilitator of community life and collective action for the English speaking Catholic Community of Greater Montreal and to develop and advocate positions on issues of public concern which affirm and promote Catholic ideals and values related to human dignity, social justice and the common good.



The ESCC then enlisted the expertise of Statistics Canada in relation to a portrait of the evolving religious and ethnocultural diversity (in Canada, Quebec, and Greater Montreal), welcomed the Black Community Resource Center’s (BCRC) invitation to formalize a trilateral Memorandum of Understanding about sharing 2021 Census data with the Office for English Pastoral Services (OEPS), and joined the QCGN’s Data Roundtable (while upkeeping its membership on the QCGN’s Representation Roundtable). Its 2022 signature of a distribution agreement with the Quebec English-speaking Communities Research Network (QUESCREN), taking a first step in contributing to the Community Knowledge Open Library (CKOL) on English-speaking Quebec, progressively took on more meaning.

On June 14, 2023, the Council launched its stakeholder consultation in the context of its Annual General Meeting. Small group work allowed it to collect a wealth of complementary perspectives for discernment. The ESCC looks forward to using nuanced approaches to reconcile input toward strategic priorities, outreach, and its becoming.



Courtesy of QCGN

Though the ESCC benefited from its home being in the FCCS building for its first 42 years, and the solidarization opportunities afforded within the community of occupants / tenants it fostered, the impending move to new offices seems to fit with the renewal and refreshment which we aim to embed in the ESCC’s activities.

Strategic Priorities 2022-2023

1. Participate with community organizations and initiatives which advance the interests of the English-speaking community in Quebec, with a particular emphasis upon, and concern for the English speaking Catholic community.
2. Work with community leaders to welcome and integrate new immigrants and new-comers to the English-speaking community of Quebec.
3. Provide research and plan activities to improve the quality of life for English speaking seniors.
4. Collaborate with established networks to promote access to English language health and social services.
5. Engage with community leaders and government representatives on life and education issues, including but not restricted to, abortion, euthanasia and palliative care.

In coherence with its September 2021 statement on Bill 96, *An Act Respecting French, the official and common language of Québec*, the ESCC partook in the May 14 rally organized by the *Citizens Coalition Against Bill 96*, to vigorously promote a vision of an inclusive Quebec.

It united with the QCGN, the English Parents' Committee Association (EPCA), the Quebec Federation of Home and School Associations (QFHSA), the Quebec English School Board Association (QESBA) and many other community groups. On May 26, Bill 96 passed into law.

Recognizing its tenacity and robust processes, and sharing its views on the challenges and opportunities at hand, the ESCC engaged in the mobilization led by the QCGN and invested to sustain it throughout the year. It endorsed the QCGN's rigorous September 2022 *Report on the Priorities of Quebec's English-speaking Community for the 2023-2028 Official Languages Strategy*, and, as mentioned by our President, joined a delegation of 30 leaders from English speaking Quebec that met with Parliamentarians in Ottawa in November in relation to Bill C-13, *An Act to amend the Official Languages Act (OLA), to enact the Use of French in Federally Regulated Private Businesses Act and to make related amendments to other Acts*.



Courtesy of QCGN

The Council was galvanized by the emerging asymmetry in aspects of the modernization of the OLA. It saw the wisdom of the QCGN's renewal strategies, its commitment "to create a more open and democratic membership structure".

The ESCC rejoices in the fact that Mr. Martin Murphy, its Executive Director from 1995 to 2012, Past President and current Advisory Committee member, considered by the QCGN to be its "Founding father", became the first Individual Member.

At the April 26, 2023, meeting of its Board of Directors, the ESCC passed a resolution to

nominate Senator Joan Fraser as a candidate to stand for election as an individual member of the QCGN's Board of Directors at its AGM. The Council celebrates the renewal of her mandate.

Finally, we underscore our gratitude to Anna Farrow, past Executive Director, for serving on the QCGN Board of Directors until the end of her 3-year term, in June 2023.

The parish consultation led with the Pillars Trust Fund in the spring of 2022 resulted in a clear message of lack of fit of the Council's planned expansion of the 2021-2022 senior information sessions / workshops toward the fall, considering their responsibility in continuing to adapt to the everchanging COVID mitigation reality. The need to further defer group activities emerged discretely, also affecting social action with newcomers, skewing the latter toward addressing shelter needs, material insecurity, and family cohesiveness throughout the rest of the year. Though paradoxical, contributing "to allowing for the creation of room for local capacity-(re) building" respected the agency and dignity of persons, and perhaps mitigated against the attrition of their resiliency / trust in life and others.

In relation to Newcomers / Asylum Seekers

In light of the evolution of the profile of newcomers to Quebec and asylum seekers, and the reality of displaced persons / families (such as those welcomed from Ukraine, notably in / via parishes and our health and social service network), the Council sought to be proactive and broadened its approach and networking toward reducing the vulnerabilities acquired by this culturally diverse population, bolstering their sense of belonging, and identifying age-appropriate opportunities to contribute in daily life. The investments since January 2023 have included:

- a meeting with Charles Taker of the Montreal Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages (OCOL's Representative | Quebec and Nunavut Region) resulting in an informal agreement to collaborate in offering a workshop for newcomers regarding Bill C-13 in the fall of 2023;
- communications with Patricia Allard, appointed in October 2022 as the first Social Justice Coordinator for the parish of Jesus Light of the World (JLOW) in Pierrefonds. The questionnaire used in the ESCC's study of newcomers in parishes as well as a copy of the ESCC's presentation of the 2019 parish survey results were offered with a view to revisit how either or both could be helpful by the fall. Kim Piche, Social Action Coordinator of the English Sector of the Diocese of Montreal was integrated in the relationship-building;
- preliminary discussions with the Welcome Collective around possible collaborations in the short term (e.g., in relation to their Workshops with Welcome Haven and / or their Welcome Guide);
- on a cue from Catholic Action Montreal (CAM), exploration with Le Pont's team aiming to create a working group that would be supported by researchers and public health / social service sector specialists in identifying gaps in services the ESCC may help address.



In addition to its commitments to organize thematic workshops and networking opportunities for newcomers, the Council will soon restart its analysis of the relevance and feasibility of a project dedicated to orchestrating collaborations to ensure the provision of schoolwork / French language support in parish settings. In all cases, it will systematically survey participants on their experience to inform next steps and adjust its outreach or its actions in a timely way.

In relation to Seniors

Throughout the year, the Council upheld its collaborations with the following organizations / groups with a view to establish / consolidate an interdependence rooted in a differentiation and complementarity of evolving service offers to seniors and their caregivers / loved ones. In each case we name concrete actions to illustrate how we are uniting to mitigate the vulnerability to experience isolation, at the level of policy or of equity and timeliness of access to required services.

- Seniors Action Quebec (SAQ)
The Council provided feedback on the SAQ's brief on the 2024-2029 Action Plan *Vieillir et vivre ensemble, chez soi, dans sa communauté, au Québec (VVE)*, in view of their representation at Quebec and federal government levels;

- Community Health and Social Services Network (CHSSN)

The collaborative investigative study of English speaking seniors and access to the health and social services system launched in 2021 was brought to closure in March with a consensus to offer findings to Montreal's Age-Friendly Municipality team (AFM -linked to the World Health Organization's framework). The Council looks forward to contributing specifically to the actualization of the increased support for Senior Wellness Centres (SWCs) serving the English-speaking population across Quebec announced by the provincial government in March 2023;

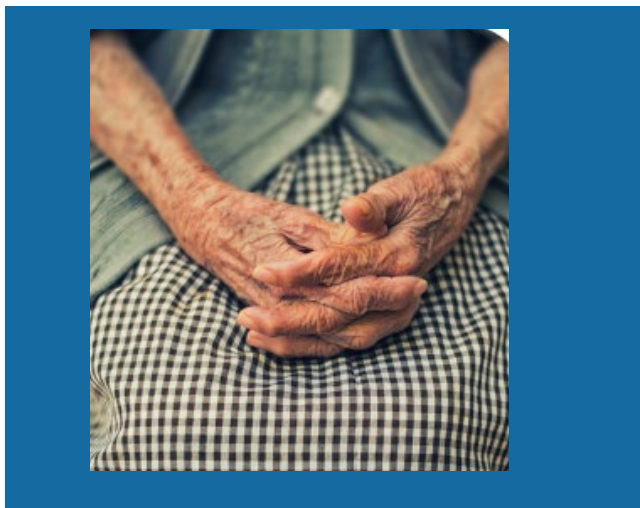
- One Voice Coalition

The relevance of the Social Prescription Pilot Project involving Montreal's West-Central Integrated University Health and Social Service Network ("CIUSSS Centre-Ouest") lies in its creating opportunities for mutual influence between an interdisciplinary intervention team and a senior in need of punctual, intermittent, or sustained social services of various degrees of specialization. The ESCC will stay abreast of developments in order to identify how it can contribute to the viability, success, and possible generalization of the model;

- EDUCALOI

Its expertise in demystifying legal affairs, in print and in person, such as wills, *Dealing with a Death and Settling an Estate*, and *Protect Your Money from Financial Fraud and Abuse*, motivates the ongoing exploration of collaboration in response to needs that may be best addressed with parishes in mind.

The Council partook in the annual Goldbloom Family Forum on April 23. The keynote address by the award-winning healthcare journalist André Picard, on the theme of *Aging with Dignity in a Changing World*, was followed by an invigorating panel discussion with Dr Elise Levinoff, geriatrician, Liv Mendelsohn, Executive Director of the Canadian Centre for Caregiving Excellence, and Aaron Derfel, medical reporter. The Council seized the networking opportunities that closed the event.



Finally, we underscore our continued support of Camp Caritas, as part of our actions in fostering community, and close this report with three 2022-2023 events that rallied members of the English speaking Catholic community:

- In October, the ESCC took part in the live *Ask Us Anything* session hosted by the Pillars Trust Fund;
- In December, as mentioned by our President, the ESCC hosted a panel discussion with four community leaders in collaboration with the Office for English Pastoral Services (OEPS). The testimonies of John Zucchi, Brian Traynor, Marybel Majorca, and Talitha Cere moved all participants. The evening also allowed participants to celebrate Eric Durocher as recipient of the 2022 Bishop Crowley Memorial Award. His contributions in communications, involvement in parish work / community projects, and his generosity in offering his expertise and breadth of knowledge were underscored unabashedly;

- In March 2023, the ESCC promoted and participated in McGill University's Newman Centre's Marguerite d'Youville Lecture on *Faith, Science, and the Common Good*, given by Br. Guy Consolmagno, SJ, Director of the Vatican Observatory. The Panelists that made room for dialogue with participants on the second evening included Professor Vicky Kaspi of the McGill Department of Physics and Trottier Space Institute, Professor Basil Favis of the Department of Chemical Engineering at École Polytechnique de Montréal, and Professor Cory Labrecque of the Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies at Université Laval. Professors Daniel Cere and Terry Hebert of McGill University organized the events with Professor Cory Labrecque.



2023 MARGUERITE D'YOUVILLE LECTURE

FAITH, SCIENCE, AND THE COMMON GOOD

BR. GUY CONSOLMAGNO, SJ
DIRECTOR OF THE VATICAN OBSERVATORY

Science investigates the natural world based on reason, yet always starts with basic assumptions accepted on faith. These core beliefs not only shape how we expect the universe to work, they also supply the motivation for the science we do, determine what counts as "success," and affect why we as individuals choose to be scientists. Research astronomer and physicist, Br. Guy Consolmagno, explores how faith affects these choices.

Sunday 26 March
6:30pm
Palmer Amphitheatre (522)
McIntyre Medical Sciences Building
3655 Promenade William Osler

Please RSVP using the QR code or by e-mailing
coordinator@newmancentre.org

McGill School of Religion Studies





ACRA – Association of Catholic Retired Administrators
www.acracan.org

Adult Religious Education Services
www.diocesemontreal.org/en/services

Aid to the Church in Need (ACN)
www.acn-canada.org

Almage Senior Community Centre
www.almage.org

Ancient Order of Hibernians
www.aoh-montreal.com

Auberge Madeleine
www.aubergemadeleine.org

Batshaw Youth and Family Centres Foundation
www.batshawfoundation.ca

Benedict Labre House
www.benedictlabre.org

Camp Caritas
www.campcaritas.ca

Camp Kinkora
www.campkinkora.com

Canadian Centre for Ecumenism
www.oikoumene.ca

Catholic Action Montreal (CAM)
www.catholicaction.ca

Catholic Christian Outreach (CCO)

Catholic Times Montreal Inc. (archives)

Catholic Women’s League of Canada

CCS – Collective Community Services
www.ccs-montreal.org

Centre for Reproductive Loss
www.crl-rho.org

Christian-Jewish Dialogue of Montreal

Citizen Advocacy Montreal
www.parrainagemontreal.org

City House Foundation
www.sacredheart.qc.ca

Commissioner of Official Languages

Communion and Liberation
www.ca.en.clonline.org

Community Health and Social Services Network
www.chssn.org

Concordia University Catholic Student Association (CUCSA)
www.facebook.com/ConcordiaCatholic-Students

Consensus Mediation Centre (CMC)
www.consensusmediation.org

Couples for Christ (CFC)

Dans La Rue (Le Bon Dieu)
www.danslarue.org

Department of Theological Studies, Concordia University
<https://www.concordia.ca/artsci/theology.html>

Development and Peace – Caritas Canada
www.devpc.org

Diocesan Camping Association (DCA)
www.dcakinkora.org

DCA - DAYLIGHT CAMP
www.kinkoradlc.com

DCA - Diocesan Family Camp
www.dfckinkora.org

DCA: Visions Camp
www.visionscamp.ca

DCA: Youth in Action Camp
www.youthinactioncamp.com

Diocesan Centre for Marriage, Life and Family (DCMLF)

Diocesan Liturgy Services

Diocesan Office for Faith Education
www.diocesemontreal.org/en/services-resources/faith-education.html

Diocesan Priesthood Guild of Montreal (DPG)

Diocesan Youth Ministry Office
www.diocesemontreal.org/en/services-resources/youth-ministry.html

Divine Renovation Ministry
www.divinerenovation.org

Don Bosco Mission Office
www.dbmo.ca

En Route Foundation
www.ca.en.clonline.org

Executives Available
www.ea-cd.ca

Family Matters / Workshops
www.letstalkaboutlove.ca

Family Retreat Centre (Dominus Vobiscum: Catholic Family Foundation)
www.dominusvobiscum.ca

Father Dowd Foundation

Father Dowd Residence

Father Dowd Residence Auxiliary

Foundation of Catholic Community Services Inc.
www.fccsmontreal.org

Ignatian Spirituality Centre of Montreal
www.ignatiancentremtl.ca

Institute For Christian Communities

Knights of Columbus

L’Abri en Ville
www.labrienville.org

L’Arche Montreal Inc.
www.larche-montreal.org

Legion of Mary – Montreal Curia

Logifem Inc.
www.logifem.org

Loyola Alumni Founding Chapter
www.concordia.ca/alumni-friends

Loyola High School Alumni and Associates
www.loyola.ca

Loyola High School Foundation
www.loyola.ca

Marriage Preparation

MEDITATIO – The Canadian Christian Meditation Community
www.wccm-canada.ca

MOMENTUM: Catholic Single Mothers
www.momentummothers.org

Montreal Catholic Challenge Movement
join.montrealchallenge.ca/today

Montreal Directed Retreats
www.montrealretreats.org

Montreal St. Patrick’s Foundation

Nazareth Community – Nazareth House, Anne’s House & John’s House
www.nazarethcommunity.com

Newman Association of Montreal Inc.
www.newmancentre.org

Notre-Dame-de-Bon-Secours Chapel
www.marguerite-bourgeois.com

Notre Dame de Sion Elementary School (Bilingual)
www.ebnds.ca

Office for English Pastoral Services (O.E.P.S.)
[Office for English Pastoral Services \(OEPS\) | Diocese of Montreal \(diocese+montreal.org\)](http://OfficeforEnglishPastoralServices(OEPS)|DioceseofMontreal(diocese+montreal.org))

Pastoral Home Care Services (S.A.S.M.A.D. – English Sector)
www.Facebook.com/pastoralhomecare-services

Peace, Freedom and Healing Ministry
www.fatherlou.com

Pillars Trust Fund Inc.
www.pillarstrust.org

Quebec Community Groups Network
www.qcgn.ca

Quebec Life Coalition
www.cqv.qc.ca

Residence Projet Chance Inc.

Residence Robert Dobie (former Holy Cross Residence)

Sacred Heart School of Montreal
www.sacredheart.qc.ca

Saint Antoine 50+ Community Centre

Salesian Youth Centre (Don Bosco Youth Leadership Centre)
www.dbylc.com

Separated and Divorced Catholics

Social Action Ministry Office

Social Justice Connection
www.sjc-cjs.org

St. Margaret Residence

St. Mary’s Hospital Auxiliary

St. Mary’s Hospital Centre
www.smhc.qc.ca

St. Mary’s Hospital Foundation
www.stmaryshospitalfoundation.ca

St. Patrick Development Foundation (St. Patrick Square)
www.spsquare.ca

St. Patrick’s Society of Montreal
www.spsmtl.com

The Alpha Course

The Priory School
www.priory.qc.ca

The Teapot 50-Plus Centre – Lachine Senior Citizens
www.theteapot.org
Theologia Book Ministry
www.theologia.ca

Thomas More Institute
www.thomasmore.qc.ca

United Irish Societies of Montreal Inc.
www.montrealirishparade.com

Villa Maria Foundation

Villa Maria High School
www.villamaria.qc.ca

West Island Citizen Advocacy
www.volunteerwica.com

Worldwide Marriage Encounter (ME)
www.wwme.org



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Father Dowd Foundation

Montreal
St. Patrick's
Foundation



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