



Mennonite
new life
centre

ANNUAL REPORT 2010



Walking together with newcomers | www.mnlct.org



The Mennonite New Life Centre seeks to be a place of welcome, friendship and community, where newcomers and neighbours gather to support each other, learn from each other, and take action together for a more just and compassionate society. 2010 was the first year of a new strategic plan, focused on Strong Programs and Partnerships for Full Integration, Community Engagement for Social Justice and Social Change, and Organizational Capacity Building. Inspired by these three strategic directions, the Mennonite New Life Centre engaged newcomers and neighbours in a wide range of program activities and social change initiatives, while building internal capacity and strengthening our network of community partnerships.



“Our clients and neighbours are our community. These two sectors are what constitute our community because we influence them and they influence us.”

~ Staff focus group participant



Strong Programs and Partnerships for Full Integration

GOAL As programs grow and diversify, we want to stay focused on the long term goal of full integration for newcomers. We will design new programs and community partnerships in such a way as to facilitate full participation of newcomers in all aspects of community life. We commit to using participatory processes to ask newcomers how successful we are in making a difference.

Bridge Training for Internationally Trained Psychologists and Allied Mental Health Professionals

In 2010, we launched an exciting new bridge training program to help internationally trained professionals integrate into the mental health sector. Already, the program has attracted professionals from over twenty countries to participate in high quality course work, occupation specific language training and supervised clinical internships. Twenty seven mental health providers have joined our network of internship partners, offering exposure to a wide range of work environments. Meanwhile, a strong advisory committee has provided leadership in educating regulatory bodies about the skills and needs of internationally trained candidates to the Colleges of Psychologists and Psychotherapists.

LINC Program Review

In 2010, external evaluators talked with our language students about their successes and challenges in the LINC Program. Successes were many: developing communication skills, feeling better integrated into the community, and learning about job search strategies. LINC level completion rates compared favourably to national averages, and were increasing steadily after a renovations project that improved classroom space. At the same time, students made valuable suggestions for improving the program through more frequent feedback, and increased content related to civic participation, employment and mental health. In response, teachers implemented student/teacher interviews for individualized feedback, and worked collaboratively with other programs on two enhanced content initiatives: civic education and mock voting linked to the Toronto Elections, and a parenting program delivered in collaboration with our community mental health team and the Chinese Canadian National Council.

Latin American Civic Participation Campaign

In 2010, the Mennonite New Life Centre gathered a coalition of sixteen organizations to work together on the Latin American Civic Participation Campaign. Together, coalition members worked to: a) build a collective and unified advocacy agenda, to encourage municipal candidates to take action on issues of concern to the Latin American community; and b) promote greater understanding of the electoral system and greater electoral participation by Latin Americans. The campaign culminated in a mayoral candidates debate on immigrant inclusion, the first of its kind organized by the Latin American community. The debate was attended by over 300 people and broadcast online with Spanish subtitles by Perlas del Mar.



Organizational Capacity

GOAL *Building organizational capacity and infrastructure is key to organizational effectiveness. In the context of organizational growth, we will work to strengthen teamwork and participatory planning, while building capacity in the areas of finance, human resources, information technology and outreach.*

Employee Engagement and Recognition

In 2010, the Mennonite New Life Centre conducted our first employee engagement survey, to tap into staff ideas for improving their working environment. Staff helped implement many of their ideas and recommendations through participation in a Joint Health and Safety Committee, and a Volunteer Committee mandated to develop stronger processes for the recruitment, orientation, support and recognition of volunteers. Staff also gave and received recognition through a peer awards ceremony at the end-of-year holiday party.

IT Network and Improvements

In 2010, the Mennonite New Life Centre networked our three service locations, allowing for more efficient communication and information sharing across sites. Important IT tools include a shared calendar system, for easy referral and appointment booking across sites, and a staff intranet, for sharing of announcements and staff meeting calendars, as well as work and planning documents. In cooperation with TAPE Educational Services, we constructed a specialized website for our bridge training program, including an online learning component using the Moodle platform. Drawing on this experience, we began work on a redesign of our organizational website. We anticipate launching the new site in late spring of 2011. Also in 2010, we conducted needs assessment and initial planning for upgrading our database. The new database will come into use in 2011.

Maple Key Fundraising Campaign

In 2010, the Mennonite New Life Centre worked with a creative writer to design a fundraising campaign that would communicate the importance of our work, engage supporters from local businesses, churches, and community groups, and build a sense of belonging and participation in the work of the Mennonite New Life Centre. The Maple Key Fundraising Campaign invited donors to participate in building the future of Canada by investing in the skills and voices of newcomers. The fundraising campaign raised \$27 614 in individual donations, and an additional \$7600 from churches and church organizations, for a total of \$35,214.

Service Statistics

As we continue to grow and deepen our engagement with immigrant and refugee communities, we draw an increasing number and diversity of newcomers to the Mennonite New Life Centre. In 2010, our Settlement program served 4,202 newcomers, while our LINC program registered 321 new language students. For settlement clients, the top three countries of origin were: Colombia (32%), China (16%) and Mexico (16%). In our LINC program, 76% of our students spoke Mandarin or Cantonese as their mother tongue, 5% spoke Tamil, and 3% spoke Farsi. *Stats continued on page 7*

Community Engagement for Social Justice and Social Change

GOAL *Full integration happens when newcomers participate in shaping their environment, rather than being simply shaped by it. We will use community engagement strategies to involve newcomers in shaping programs and formulating public policy recommendations. We will also work to engage community partners and the broader public.*



Community Forum on Newcomer Employment and Civic Participation

In March 2010, the Mennonite New Life Centre and Newcomer Advocacy Committee held a community forum which engaged a wide variety of stakeholders – over 150 participants from 50 organizations and 3 levels of government - in proactive dialogue regarding newcomer employment challenges and policy proposals, seeking to identify new ways of working together so that newcomers might contribute their skills and their ideas to this country. The Forum yielded policy recommendations related to employment equity, paid internships for internationally trained workers, and municipal voting rights for all permanent residents.

Raising our Voice

Launched in the fall of 2010, this video documentary has brought to a wide audience the story of newcomer organizing efforts to address the root causes of injustice, exclusion, and poverty. Screenings and workshops at the OCASI ED Forum and Professional Development Conference created an opportunity to engage leaders and front line workers in talking about the role of settlement organizations in engaging with newcomer communities in the important and challenging work of social change. Additional screenings have allowed newcomer activists to engage with fellow immigrants in Toronto and beyond. The video follows nine newcomer journeys as these developing activists reflect on the root causes of newcomer poverty and propose concrete recommendations to overcome barriers to employment and civic participation for newcomer communities in Toronto.

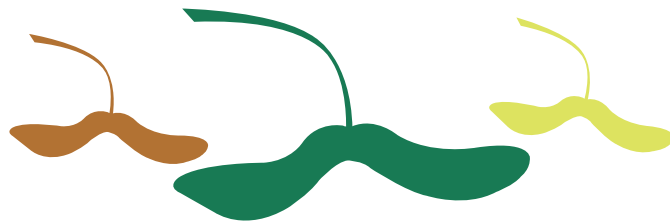
Healthy Families, Healthy Communities

Newcomer parents have high hopes for the future of their children. However, the struggle to overcome barriers to employment and integration often brings stress to family relations. The Mennonite New Life Centre helps support healthy families through culturally sensitive childminding services, parenting support groups, and interactive workshops on healthy relationships. We also engage newcomer youth in expressing their own hopes and dreams, struggles and challenges, through the medium of popular theatre. Performances for newcomer parents and grandparents open up needed spaces for intergenerational dialogue. Meanwhile, public performances educate native born Canadians about the experience and contributions of newcomer youth. In 2010, the youth theatre group offered 10 public performances and two participants participated in the professional theatre production *La Comunion*, that told the story of child soldiers in Colombia.

Finances

Funding for our budget of \$2.9 million comes from a wide variety of contributors. Citizenship and Immigration Canada, through its ISAP and LINC programs, is our primary contributor, followed by the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration, which funds our Bridge Training Program for Internationally Trained Psychologists and Allied Mental Health Professionals, together with NSP services for refugee claimants and immigrant citizens. Our community mental health program was supported by the Counselling Foundation of Canada, and the Investing in Neighbourhoods Fund of the City of Toronto. Our Newcomer Skills project was funded by the Metcalf and Catherine Donnelly Foundation, with additional support from Carranza LLP, Freedomia, UFCW Canada and the Wallenstein Feed Charitable Foundation. The Mennonite New Life Centre also received financial support from Mennonite Church Eastern Canada (MCEC), Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), the local supporting Mennonite churches, other church groups and interested individuals. We finished the financial year with a small surplus. We would like to take this opportunity to thank all of our funders and donors for their generosity in walking together with newcomers through the Mennonite New Life Centre.

We look to your continuing support in 2011. 2011 will be a challenging year for the Mennonite New Life Centre, as we absorb a 25% cut in CIC funding. After thoughtful restructuring, we are confident that we can continue to provide high quality programs and services with your support. Please consider making a gift or becoming a monthly donor through our Maple Key Fundraising Campaign. Your gift is a seed of hope for immigrants and refugees, and an investment in the future of Canada.



Audited Financials (Summary)	2009	2010	2011 (est)
Revenue			
Government - CIC	\$1,551,729	\$2,154,957	\$1,533,022
Government - Other	\$80,802	\$544,141	\$790,670
Churches & Individuals	\$103,649	\$97,567	\$95,000
Foundations & Other	\$111,319	\$142,356	\$137,696
	\$1,847,499	\$2,939,021	\$2,556,388
Expenses			
Staff	\$1,230,485	\$1,772,142	\$1,496,983
Building	\$125,034	\$261,741	\$337,174
Program	\$130,764	\$425,254	\$548,827
Office & Other	\$330,942	\$447,295	\$186,206
	\$1,817,225	\$2,906,432	\$2,569,190
Excess of revenues over expenses before the following:	\$30,274	\$32,589	\$(12,802)
Transfer to Program Reserve Fund	\$(27,100)	\$(30,000)	\$-
Transfer from Program Reserve for renovation project	\$7,000	\$-	\$-
Excess of revenue over expenses	\$10,174	\$2,589	\$(12,802)

Complete audited financial statements may be requested by calling 416-699-4527.

Language of Service: **Spanish** **Mandarin** **English**

Newcomers served

4,202

Client visits

9,981

Increase from 2009

42%

2010 was a year of engaging newcomers and neighbours in programs, partnerships, and social change. It was a year of walking with immigrants and refugees on the journey of language learning, settlement and integration, raising the profile of immigrant skills through an opportunities fair and clinical internships for internationally trained mental health professionals, and lifting up newcomer voices through a successful community forum and mayoral candidates debate. As we look to the future, we seek to deepen our commitment to community engagement, and widen the circle of participation and partnership with the Mennonite New Life Centre.

Many thanks to our program participants, volunteers, donors and supporters for walking with us throughout 2010. We look forward to “living the vision” together in **2011**.

The 2010 Board of Directors, together with their affiliation

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