



Mennonite  
**new life**  
centre



**ANNUAL REPORT 2011**



The Mennonite New Life Centre is a place of welcome. It is a place of friendship. It represents a starting point from which newcomers can create a meaningful and fulfilling life, in Canada, for themselves and their loved ones.

## **A CLEAR VISION – WHAT WE SEE**

It is our vision, our purpose, to walk together with newcomers on their journey toward full participation and integration in all aspects of Canadian life. We offer our clients and participants holistic programs that seek to bring together meaningful and relevant community services and community engagement events. We work with our newcomer clients to reduce insecurity, enable integration, strengthen voices and increase social equality.

## **FOCUS ON THE FUTURE**

2011 marked a year of change for the Mennonite New Life Centre. Changes in funding levels from traditional sources reminded us that we need to focus on the future and to find innovative ways to continue to support newcomers. We aligned our efforts by focusing on the three key strategic goals that would allow us to offer newcomers within the Greater Toronto Area relevant and community-oriented services. As outlined in our three year strategic plan, and given that 2011 marks our second year of this plan, we continued to develop programs and partnerships for full integration, to build organizational capacity and to strengthen community engagement for social justice and social change.



*"When you are a newcomer and are far from familiar surroundings, you feel alone. The Mennonite New Life Centre and its staff made me feel like I belonged again."*

Norma J., Volunteer/Client

*"MNL is a well-coming open door to newcomers, and I think it is the best community centre that the community has in Toronto. It is dynamic, friendly, versatile and what is very important, goes beyond the 'formal requirements' to serve its clients. Actually, clients are people and not only numbers. The counsellors and staff work from their heart and clients feel it."*



*"I found the Mennonite New Life Centre is not only a Community Centre, it also is a big family, treating everyone as a member and everyone here feels welcome."*

Alex C., Placement Student

*"For was the light in the dark tunnel of my immigration process. Thank you!"*

Isabel A., Bride Training Program Alumni & Volunteer



*"The support provided by the Mennonite New Life Centre was fundamental when we arrived in Canada. The caring guidance of the settlement workers, the emotional support I received from the mental health team, along with the youth theatre program my daughters joined, all of this programming allowed me to take my first steps in Toronto with confidence and strength."*

Olga F., Member of Newcomer Advocacy Committee

## WHAT WE SEE

# *the hopes and dreams of newcomers*

These very same newcomer hopes and dreams shape the Mennonite New Life Centre. We strive to develop relevant programs and partnerships to help newcomers fully integrate. We are committed to designing new programs and community partnerships in such a way as to facilitate full participation of newcomers in all aspects of Canadian life.

## Strong Programs and Partnerships for Full Integration

### Mobile Services

In 2011, we launched our innovative Mobile Services, which offer high quality orientation sessions and workshops to newcomers across the GTA. These services are available upon request from partnering organizations that require on-site services for their clients. We work with shelters and schools, churches and community groups, to bring newcomers the information and support they need, when and where they need it.

### Parent Council

In late Spring 2011, the Parent Council was formed by parents attending our LINC programs and have a child enrolled in our childminding program. The Council's purpose is to provide parents with an opportunity to network and share experiences on raising a family as newcomers to Canada. The Parent Council meets once a month, sets its own agenda, elects its own chair and makes recommendations to improve the quality of childminding services.

### Community Mental Health

Our Community Mental Health program offers emotional support to newcomers struggling with different kinds of stress or trauma. The program offers support for those requiring crisis intervention, managing family and relationship issues or dealing with post-traumatic stress disorder (such as victims of war, kidnapping, sexual and physical abuse, or multiple losses), depression, anxiety or migration stress (grieving losses and dealing with the refugee process). In 2011, we engaged organizations such as the Centre for Addictions and Mental Health (CAMH) and the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) to help newcomers access mental health and well-being assistance.

### Bridge Training for Internationally Trained Psychologists and Allied Mental Health Professionals

The bridge training program, in its second year of operation in 2011, continued to focus on helping internationally trained professionals integrate into the mental health sector. Since its launch in 2010, the program has initiated three cohorts and placed eighty students in 33 placement agencies. A strong advisory board guides and provides leadership in developing strategic relationships with the Colleges of Psychologists and Psychotherapists and CMHA. To date, 36 participants have found employment in the mental health sector or a related field.





## WHAT WE SEE

*that engagement happens when newcomers participate in shaping their communities*

The Centre believes strongly in a holistic approach to services and community engagement. We realize that full integration happens when newcomers participate in shaping their environment. That's why we employ community engagement strategies that aim to involve newcomers in shaping programs and in formulating public policy recommendations.

## Community Engagement for Social Justice and Social Change

### Newcomer Speakers Bureau

This diverse group of newcomer men and women, over a ten-week period, gathered to reflect on the challenges affecting immigrants and refugees from diverse cultural, religious and professional backgrounds and on the importance of speaking out to counter myths and stereotypes about new Canadians. Participants received formal training in public speaking and used the techniques learned to develop relevant speeches that described their newcomer integration experience. On April 27, 2011 at their graduation ceremony, sixteen newcomers took to the stage at Toronto's City Council Chamber and presented their reflections to elected officials, the media and the public at large. The speakers' experiences were diverse, rooted in twelve different countries of origin and in different migration stories. Remarkably, each experience presented was marked by common themes – themes such as finding meaningful work and similar hopes for a bright future for themselves and their families.

### The Beyond Canadian Experience Conference

With the University of Toronto, TRIEC, and the Chinese Canadian National Council, the Mennonite New Life Centre formed a partnership this year called "Beyond Canadian Experience". This group held a "Beyond Canadian Experience" conference with the main purpose of exploring the concept of Canadian experience with employers, universities and other settlement agencies. The conference discussed, in roundtable format, the barriers that newcomers face in finding meaningful employment in the absence of pure Canadian experience. The findings of the conference will be published the latter part of 2012.

### Certificate in Civic Participation

In the lead-up to the spring 2011 federal elections and the fall 2011 provincial elections, we worked together with members of the Newcomer Advocacy Committee to deliver a "Certificate in Community Engagement and Civic Participation" as a way of nurturing leadership and political engagement among community members. The certificate consisted of three sessions that included key topics on the Canadian social and political system, participants' neighbourhoods and their reality, and taking action and promoting social change. Twenty community leaders attended the training, with several of them continuing in supporting community activities in the GTA.

## WHAT WE SEE

*in developing our organizational strengths we are better positioned to support newcomer integration*



### **Organizational Capacity**

Building organizational capacity and infrastructure is the key to our effectiveness. We work towards strengthening teamwork and participatory planning while building our capacity in the areas of finance, human resources, information technology and outreach.

### **Bylaw Review**

The Mennonite New Life Centre Board was committed to working with a consultant to review our bylaws and explore a community-based membership structure more reflective of our commitment to community engagement. Through client feedback, the Centre developed new bylaws that allows for membership and participation of community members within the organization. The revised bylaws were reviewed by the Executive Committee of the Board and approved on September 2011 during a Special Members' Meeting. It is anticipated that the new bylaws will provide us with a path forward in developing a membership engagement strategy to engage newcomer populations, test programs and services, support good governance best practices within the organization and, finally, allow us to foster new partnership relationships with other organizations that can provide support to newcomers.

### **Volunteers**

Volunteers play an important role at the Mennonite New Life Centre. Over 100 volunteers dedicated their time and efforts in 2011 to help us succeed in delivering programs and services to newcomers and their families. Volunteer involvement is ever-present in all areas of the Centre, ranging from facilitation of group programs, to providing logistic, administrative and outreach assistance, to providing strategic guidance to ensure sustainability of our services (as provided by the members of our volunteer Board of Directors). During 2011, we worked on developing a structured volunteer program that concentrates on creating development opportunities for our volunteers while aligning volunteer interests and skills to program goals and objectives.

### **Health and Safety Training**

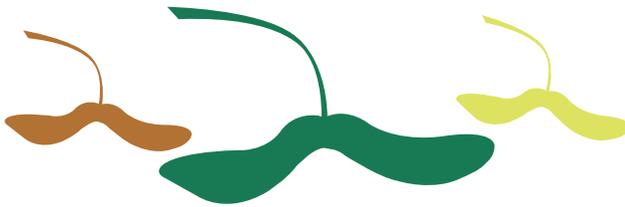
The Joint Health and Safety Committee of the Mennonite New Life Centre worked on developing a comprehensive health and safety program to support our employees, volunteers and clients. The focus was on creating a healthful work environment free of harassment and violence. To prepare for this, committee representatives from each of our locations received first-aid training and engaged in developing a comprehensive health and safety manual. Staff and applicable volunteers participated in a ½ day training session to become familiar with the Centre's health and safety policies and procedures.

# FINANCES

Funding for our budget of \$2.5 million comes from a wide variety of contributors. Citizenship and Immigration Canada 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 Foundation and the Catherine Donnelly Foundation, with additional support from Carranza LLP, UFCW Canada and the Wallenstein Feed Charitable Foundation. The Mennonite New Life Centre also received financial support from 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.

	2010	2011	2012 (est.)
<b>Revenue</b>			
Government	\$2,748,409	\$2,377,991	\$2,306,933
Churches & Individuals	\$93,217	\$75,866	\$51,419
Foundations & Other	\$97,395	\$158,933	\$143,179
	<b>\$2,939,021</b>	<b>\$2,612,790</b>	<b>\$2,501,531</b>
<b>Expenses</b>			
Staff	\$1,772,142	\$1,578,848	\$1,496,043
Building	\$416,650	\$267,038	\$381,747
Program	\$460,728	\$500,763	\$494,659
Office & Other	\$227,880	\$211,354	\$144,157
	<b>\$2,877,400</b>	<b>\$2,558,003</b>	<b>\$2,516,606</b>
Excess of revenues over expenses before the following:	\$61,621	\$54,787	\$(15,075)

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



We look to your continuing support in 2012, as this will be another challenging year for the Mennonite New Life Centre as we absorb further cuts in funding. We are confident that we can continue to provide high quality programs and services with your support despite projecting a small loss for the year 2012. Please consider making a gift or becoming a monthly donor. Your gift is a seed of hope for immigrants and refugees, and an investment in the future of Canada.

## 2011 Service Statistics

**3,656**

newcomers served in our Settlement programs

**7,625**

total visits to MNLC

Languages spoken

**67%**

Spanish

**13%**

Mandarin

**13%**

English

Top 3 countries of origin

**31%**

Colombia

**17%**

China

**13%**

Mexico

**252**

Students in LINC program, mother tongue of students:

**72%**

Chinese

**5%**

Tamil

**3%**

Farsi

**2%**

Vietnamese

## 2011 BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND THEIR AFFILIATION

Herb Buckwalter	At Large
Sandra Cordero	Community
Mohan Doss, Chair	Community
Helen Griebeling	Mississauga Mennonite Church
Laurie Hadden	Markham Area Mennonite Churches
Julia He	Community
Joyne Lavides	Community
Evan Heise	Mennonite Central Committee
Miriam Reesor, Vice Chair	Toronto New Life Mennonite Church
Robert Tiessen, Treasurer	At Large
Sam Simarajan	Community
Miriam Wiebe, Secretary	Toronto New Life Mennonite Church

## SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR FUNDERS:

Citizenship and Immigration Canada  
Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration  
Mennonite Central Committee  
Local Supporting Mennonite Churches  
Metcalf Foundation  
Catherine Donnelly Foundation  
Carranza Law Firm  
Wallenstein Feed Charitable Foundation  
United Food and Commercial Workers  
City of Toronto: Investing in Neighbourhoods Fund  
Counselling Foundation of Canada  
Other Church Groups  
Individual Donors

*We would like to thank our program participants, volunteers, donors and supporters for walking with us during this past year. As we engage with newcomers and communities in programs, partnerships and social change we will continue to work towards our strategic goals in 2012.*



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