



Mennonite
new life
centre

Annual Report 2016

Welcome home!

2016 saw a global focus on migration – from individual musings and grassroots conversations to media allure and large-scale refugee systems thinking – as nations prepared to open their doors to Syrian refugees. The plight of people desperate to escape persecution and violence was vividly, heartbreakingly documented, and politicians and humanitarians alike stood shoulder to shoulder and decided that more must be done to help the displaced people of Syria. In response, Canada welcomed home migrants from across war-ravaged countries – 25,000 from Syria alone – and became a shining example to the world of the importance of building a country based upon compassion, inclusivity and diversity.

The challenge of resettling thousands of refugees is not new to the many settlement agencies and community organizations across Toronto. For over three decades, the Mennonite New Life Centre of Toronto (MNLCT) has followed a holistic approach to newcomer integration, bringing together practical assistance, emotional support and community engagement practices.

Today, MNLCT is a member-based community settlement agency that remains steadfast in its purpose to support newcomers and their families from diverse cultural backgrounds to build community connections, explore their talents and their strengths, and come to make Canada home.



Mission

The Mennonite New Life Centre's mission is to facilitate newcomer settlement and integration through holistic services and community engagement, carried out within a gender justice and anti-oppression framework.

Vision

We envision a society in which all people from diverse cultural and religious backgrounds participate fully in all aspects of Canadian life. We will model an approach that brings together community engagement and community services, working together with newcomers to reduce insecurity and reach integration, strengthen voices and increase social equality.

Strategic Direction Building a Resilient Organization

- ✔ Development of strategic alliances and sectorial collaboration.
- ✔ Succession planning supporting organizational sustainability.
- ✔ Leadership and staff development through the building of strengths in cultural competency, evaluative capacity and cross-program collaboration.
- ✔ Diversification of funding streams to include alternative funding models such as social impact bonds and social enterprise.

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Designing Responsive Programs

- ✔ Conversion of the Community Mental Health Program to a core service.
- ✔ Innovation in service delivery model through the development of self-directed, on-line integration content and reaching out to newcomers where they live, work and play.
- ✔ Creation of program initiatives that support the economic integration of newcomers.

Maximizing Community Impact

- ✔ Development of an adult education framework for community engagement.
- ✔ Increased awareness in both newcomer communities and the public at large about civic participation, social change, and the value of newcomers to our economy and society.
- ✔ Engagement of policy makers through participatory action research to enable systemic change.



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Building a Resilient Organization

Effective leadership guided by a sound governing body while working collaboratively with traditional and nontraditional stakeholders to develop new initiatives in response to an ever changing environment.

Social Enterprise Development

As a strategic plan direction, a select group of program leaders at MNLCT explored the development of a social enterprise that would not only create an income stream to sustain important MNLCT programs, but also stay true to the social good of the mission and vision of the Centre.

Over the course of the year, this micro-team engaged in Social Enterprise training offered by industry leader Innoweave, and in July 2016, the team was awarded a business development grant to hire a social enterprise business consultant who would aid MNLCT in creating a viable business model.

As a result of this work, MNLCT will initiate a soft launch in 2017 of the Toronto New Life Wellness Place Inc., a social enterprise, for-profit business corporation that will generate income through the sale of wellness services to the general public. Portions of the funds raised through the operation of the social enterprise will be invested in MNLCT to support ongoing settlement, mental health and language programming.

Welcome Home Benefit Concert

On December 30, 2016, MNLCT held a fundraising concert featuring award-winning artists Jadea Kelly and Samantha Martin & Delta Sugar. With Beaches-area businesses contributing door prizes and Newcomer Kitchen providing the catering, the event raised over \$7,000 through ticket sales (80 tickets) and donations, including a large donation by The Unicorn Project in support of the local musicians, and was successful in reaching new donors from across the Greater Toronto Area.



Service Relocation & Enhancement

After nearly a decade at our Scarborough location, MNLCT made the decision to seek out a service location that would provide the organization with the opportunity to expand programming, create a welcoming space for service users, and be accessibility compliant. In July 2016, we opened our new service location at 3570 Victoria Park Avenue, strategically positioned at the border of North York, Scarborough and Markham. This location boasts a large community room, a computer lab, bright and airy classrooms and daycare spaces as well as networking and meeting spaces for clients and community members.



Designing Responsive Programs

The design of responsive programs requires innovation, creative thinking and the incorporation of new technologies in service delivery as well as a heightened capacity for data analysis to stay abreast of emerging trends.

Core Program Funding for Mental Health Services

The HOPES (Helping Our Newcomers Prepare for Employment Success) Program is a unique, evidence-based initiative designed to move newcomers towards employment and income security by increasing rates of participation in employment, education, or training opportunities.

The program first provides, through one-on-one counselling, strategies to address mental health issues newcomers can face before being able to successfully engage with employment or other supports. Counselling is followed by a series of group workshops – Building Strengths for Work – that focus on developing a strategic action plan that identifies life, financial and career goals. Finally, participants work with Employment Ontario partners in the areas of job search, interview preparation and internships to access the labour market.

The program is based on the Canadian Mental Health Association's Choose-Get-Keep model for mental health and employment, and reflects the MNLCT's holistic approach by offering ongoing mental health counselling to ensure retention and career mobility, and ultimately poverty reduction for newcomers.

Counter Human Trafficking

Our Counter Human Trafficking Program received funding from the Department of Justice in June 2016 to identify the case management service needs of victims of human trafficking and service provision gaps and to develop and deliver programs, services, and assistance to victims based on these findings.

The MNLCT recognizes that a very diverse group of individuals are targeted and trafficked within Toronto. Through this program we



offer a safe welcoming place for vulnerable women, men, youth, and members of the LGBTQ community who are victims of human trafficking activities – including sexual exploitation, forced labour and forced marriages.

We provide in-house case management services within a continuum of care model to assist individuals from across the Greater Toronto Area. The MNLCT works in partnership with Aurora House, a community-based safe haven transitional housing organization, to empower individuals who have been trafficked and exploited in Canada to thrive in society.

Together we are committed to providing a safe, secure, supportive environment for community reintegration.

From Garden to Table

In March 2016, MNLCT received funding from the New Horizons for Seniors Program to design and deliver the “From Garden to Table” project to bridge the intergenerational gap between newcomer seniors and newcomer youth.

Through accessing healthy and culturally appropriate foods, this project would act as a catalyst to improving the physical, mental, cultural and social well-being of newcomer seniors and youth. Project activities included the training of volunteer seniors on how to grow low cost container gardens and then how to harvest the crops so that they can be incorporated into healthy, culturally appropriate recipes to be shared through gardening and cooking classes with newcomer youth.

The project saw 41 seniors and 13 youth participants benefit from leadership skills development, education around healthy eating, and increased self-esteem and social interaction.

Maximizing Community Impact

By combining adult education and participatory action research, we can promote active civic participation in immigrant communities to help address barriers that result in social exclusion. The outcome is an inclusive and globally minded society.



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Righting Relations: Strengthening Adult Education for Social Change

A long-time partner in adult education work, the Catherine Donnelly Foundation retained the MNLCT as the Southwestern Ontario “Central” Hub charitable partner in their Righting Relations: Strengthening Adult Education for Social Change Program. With a shared purpose to strengthen the capacity of adult educators and adult education to bring about radical social change through political and economic literacy for a just society in Canada, the MNLCT – through the Community Engagement Program – supported activities and outcomes including:

- ✔ Bringing together 50 organizations working in adult education for radical social change
- ✔ Sharing the vision of Righting Relations and what is meant by adult education for social change
- ✔ Assessing the need for and interest in a network of adult educators in Ontario
- ✔ Understanding what adult educators are currently doing that is effective at engaging newcomer and refugee communities in political action to shape their own future

As a member of the Steering Committee, MNLCT continues to actively engage in shaping the framework of the program and, in 2017, will lead the development of the central/southern Ontario hub.

LatinX Parents Project

LatinX Parents is an innovative program, funded by a City of Toronto Access, Equity and Human Rights (AEHR) grant, that builds on MNLCT’s many years of experience with community building and civic engagement.

The program brings together Spanish-speaking newcomer parents of elementary children in marginalized communities (with a focus on Neighbourhood Improvement Areas), and supports them, in forming relationships and networking with each other. This relationship building takes place within a learning environment that encourages participants to understand the school system, learn how to navigate it to better access supports for their children (including information and skill building), and come together to explore how they can make a difference in their schools.

The skills that the newcomer parents develop are tools that they will carry with them throughout their children’s education to create meaningful change at the individual and systemic levels.

MNLCT is committed to community engagement and civic participation to achieve the outcomes we seek for the newcomers we serve, and the LatinX Parents project promotes these outcomes by supporting newcomer parents to connect, explore the future for their families together, and lead the way in making the change they want to see.



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Finances

Funding for all programs and services offered at MNLCT is dependant upon the generosity of donors and foundations as well as from grants received from ministries and departments within the federal, provincial, and municipal governments.

In 2016, we recognize the financial support received to ensure the successful operations of our programs and services:

- ✔ Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC)
- ✔ Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration (MCI)
- ✔ City of Toronto via Investing in Neighbourhoods (IIN) and the Access, Equity and Human Rights (AEHR) Grant
- ✔ Government of Canada's New Horizons for Seniors Program
- ✔ Ontario Trillium Foundation
- ✔ Department of Justice
- ✔ Catherine Donnelly Foundation
- ✔ Mennonite Central Committee
- ✔ Wallenstein Feed
- ✔ Unicorn Project
- ✔ Aurora House

Beyond support from governments and foundations, the generous donations received from members, clients and interested individual donors have made it possible to support activities that extend beyond our current funding agreements – activities such as professional development and training for staff; senior and youth programming; and pilot projects to meet the emerging needs of newcomers and refugees.

In addition to the financial support, we value the contributions of time, passion, and dedication of our clients, volunteers, donors, funders, and community members – thank you for your generosity! A special thanks to Mirna Chacin for her commitment to capturing the stories of the Centre in photographs, including the ones in this report.

We are grateful for the opportunity to walk together with newcomers.

The Board of Directors

| | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|-------------|
| Miriam Reesor (Chair) | Miriam Wiebe (Secretary) | Leanne Buck |
| Mohan Doss (Vice Chair) | Edgardo Romero | Evan Heise |
| Sam Sivarajan (Treasurer) | Julia He | Kathy Luan |

Summary of Audited Financials

Revenue

| | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 |
|---------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Government | 2,187,950 | 2,153,697 | 2,278,004 |
| Donations | 36,487 | 25,895 | 38,661 |
| Foundations + Other | 31,746 | 43,861 | 52,248 |
| TOTAL | 2,256,183 | 2,223,453 | 2,368,913 |

Expenses

| | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 |
|----------------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Staff | 1,583,858 | 1,583,259 | 1,731,823 |
| Building | 385,112 | 392,227 | 345,614 |
| Program | 158,575 | 142,589 | 142,009 |
| Office + Other | 131,773 | 97,998 | 144,900 |
| | 2,259,318 | 2,216,073 | 2,393,314 |
| Excess of revenues over expenses | (3,135) | 7,380 | 4,567 |

Service Statistics

January 1st to December 31st 2016

LINC

| | Males | Females | TOTAL |
|---|------------|------------|-------|
| Number of clients who joined LINC Program | 78 | 163 | 241 |
| by Gender | 32% | 68% | |

| Top 5 Languages Spoken by LINC Clients (% of Total) | | | |
|---|------------|-----------------|-----------|
| Mandarin | 51% | Tamil | 5% |
| Arabic | 18% | Persian / Farsi | 3% |
| Cantonese | 5% | | |

Client Services

| | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| 3,028 | 9,112 |
| Total # of Clients served | Total # of Clients Visits |

| | |
|--|---|
| 365 | 1,328 |
| Total # of Clients served by our Community Mental Health Program | Total # of Client visits to our Community Mental Health Program |

- Top Five Countries of Birth in order :
- 1 Colombia
 - 2 India
 - 3 Mexico
 - 4 China
 - 5 El Salvador