

THE THIRTY-FIRST ANNUAL REPORT

Message from the President

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I am pleased to present to you the Annual Report of the English Speaking Catholic Council, Inc., for the year 2011-2012.

Our Mission Statement calls on The English Speaking Catholic Council 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. Highlights of these activities are presented elsewhere in this report and I encourage you to familiarize yourself with the results of our efforts.

The ESCC will continue to be proactive in its efforts to demonstrate the relevance of Catholic values in understanding and addressing the current and emerging social, economic, cultural and political challenges confronting our society.

Advocacy to combat poverty, prevent its causes and reduce its effects on individuals and families, and the care of seniors, especially the frail elderly, are moral and social imperatives for us. The dignity of the human person is at the heart of our vision of social justice and this framework captures the essentials of what must be promoted to make this vision a reality.

My term as President comes to an end. It has been a privilege to serve our community through the work of the English Speaking Catholic Council. I wish to express my appreciation for the support of the members of the Board of Directors and the Advisory Committee of the Council. I want to acknowledge with gratitude those organizations which have demonstrated confidence in the effectiveness and promise of the Council by financially supporting its activities, notably the Montreal St. Patrick's Foundation, Pillars Trust Fund, the Father Dowd Foundation and the Department of Canadian Heritage. I am also very appreciative for all the encouragement the ESCC receives from so many people in our community, especially the Office for English Pastoral Services of the Archdiocese of Montreal, Parish Priests, the Religious, the laity and all volunteers who give so generously of their time and talents.

I would like to thank our Executive Director, Martin Murphy and our Executive Secretary, Suzanne Brown, for their excellent work. The success of the Council is due in large part to their dedication and sound management. We are indeed fortunate to have a staff whose work is of such a high caliber and whose presence enables all of us to pursue our mandate.

Sincerely yours,

Mary McDaid, President
The English Speaking Catholic Council
Montreal, June 5, 2012

ESCC COMMITTEES 2011 - 2012

Executive

MARY McDAID
President

RAFIK GREISS
Treasurer

PAUL DONOVAN
Vice-President

PAUL ALLEN
Secretary

CLIFFORD LINCOLN
Past-President

Education

- Monitors policy & legislation;
- Facilitates communication among leaders;

Health & Social Services

- Participates with other members of the Community Health & Social Services Network in promoting access to healthcare services in English for the English-speaking minority population, especially seniors, the vulnerable and those who have special needs.
- Ensures that Catholic values are promoted.

Social Issues

- Monitors legislation in the areas of poverty, income security, housing and family policy;
- Prepares position papers consonant with Catholic values.

Young Adults

- Encourages young adults to participate actively within organizations;
- Creates opportunities for development of leadership skills;
- Explores resources available for training and employment.

Seniors

- Advocates to improve the quality of life for Seniors.

Community Animation

- Participates in conferences and celebrations to affirm the dynamic and positive aspects of our community.

Communications

- Parishes, Media, Annual Report, E-Mail, and Web Page;
- Develops liaison with community leadership and its resources.

Finance

- Reviews monthly financial statements;
- Prepares budget proposal;
- Monitors investments.

Advisory

- Provides continuity and enhances the strength of the Council;
- Recommends names of candidates for election to the board;
- Offers advice on issues affecting the community.

Chairperson: Patrick Rourke

Membership: Warren Allmand, Gail Campbell-Tucker, David Dussault, Margaret Lefebvre, Mary McDaid (ex-officio); Don Myles, Daniel O'Brien, Harold Thuringer, John Walker, Fr. John Walsh, Robert Wilkins.

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES

The following priorities were identified by the English Speaking Catholic Council (ESCC) for 2011-2012 :

1. Advocate to improve the quality of life for Seniors;
2. Advocate to support measures addressing Poverty (Bill 112);
3. Collaborate with networks to promote access to English-language health and social services;
4. Support initiatives directed to encourage youth retention and educational/employment opportunities.
5. Liaison with the Quebec Community Groups Network:
6. Promote Communications: Community's need for an independent and autonomous press/media.

Education

- In December 2010, Family Minister Yolande James issued a Directive requiring faith-based early childhood and subsidized childcare centres to cease all activities “aimed at learning a religious belief, a dogma or a practice”, by June 2011. In response, the English Speaking Catholic Council once again re-affirmed the importance of freedom of parental choice in the domain of education of their children. The ESCC appealed to the Government of Quebec, to re-consider and allow for healthy forms of educational pluralism so that parental choice may be meaningfully expressed. It presented the view that religious freedom and the co-existence of diverse religious identities are not threats to Quebec’s liberal democracy but vital expressions of the pluralism and open secularism essential to all genuinely free societies. This appeal together with that of the Association of Catholic Parents of Quebec, the Muslim Council of Montreal and the Quebec Association for Equal Rights to Subsidized Day Cares, among others, evidently had an influence on the Minister to delay implementation of the Directive indefinitely.
- In November 2011, the ESCC participated in a campaign by a coalition of community citizen action groups opposing the possible closure of St. Gabriel School in Pointe-Saint-Charles, the only English elementary school in that neighborhood. Arguments advanced by all parties affected in favor of retaining St. Gabriel School were compelling. It was our belief that decisions of this significance should be based primarily on how changes are going to affect children and their parents and not solely on budgetary considerations. In January 2012, the English Montreal School Board voted in favor of keeping open St. Gabriel School.
- The Advisory Board on English Education was established by the Minister of Education in 1993, with a mandate to provide advice to the Minister on all matters affecting the educational services offered in English elementary and secondary schools. The term of office for the fifteen members on the Advisory Board is three years. In 2011, the ESCC nominated Pascale L’Heureux, Academic Vice-Principal at Queen of Angels Academy and we are pleased to report that the Minister appointed our nominee to this Board. In April 2012, once again, the Minister invited community organizations that represent parents, teachers, school and board administrators and commissioners as well as individuals involved in post-secondary education, to nominate candidates. The ESCC submitted the names of two candidates who bring with them a wealth of knowledge, experience and expertise in Quebec’s education system.

- In September 2008, a compulsory course in Ethics and Religious Culture was introduced in all elementary and secondary schools in Quebec. A family in Drummondville sought an exemption for their children to be enrolled in this course on the grounds that being exposed to the tenets of different faiths would make it difficult for their children to be raised as Catholics. The local school board refused its request. After a three-year battle, the case ended up in the Supreme Court. A joint application to intervene at the Supreme Court was granted to the Association of Catholic Parents of Quebec and ten other interested parties. The ESCC formally supported this initiative, mindful of its longstanding and consistent position, viz. we believe parents have the right to choose religious education for their children in school according to their personal conviction and conscience. In February 2012, the Supreme Court rendered its judgment, ruling that the Ethics and Religious Culture course does not violate any rights and that parents could not seek an exemption on behalf of their children on religious grounds.

The Quebec Court of Appeal heard arguments on May 7, 2012, on whether or not Loyola High School could teach its equivalent version of the compulsory government's controversial Ethics and Religious Program. A ruling is now awaited.

Health and Social Services

- Article 348 of the Act respecting health and social services reads: "Each regional board, in collaboration with institutions, must develop a program of access to health services and social services in the English language for the English-speaking population of its area in the centres operated by the institutions of its region that it indicates or, as the case may be, develop jointly, with other regional boards, such a program in centres operated by the institutions of another region. The program must be approved by the Government and revised at least every three years." In 2010, the Agence de la santé et des services sociaux de Montreal mandated CROP to evaluate the program on Access to Health and Social Services in English in the Montreal Region. Representatives of English-speaking organizations and institutions, including the ESCC's Executive Director, participated in this exercise and also communicated its concerns to the English-speaking representative at the Agence de Montreal, to the President of the Regional Committee (Montreal) and to the Chairperson of the Provincial Committee on Access to Health and Social Services in the English language.
- Last Fall, the ESCC appealed to officials of the Health and Social Services' Ministry to support measures in the Access Plans which are generous sensitive and compassionate to apply to the Lindsay Rehabilitation Hospital, the latter having lost its designated bilingual status when it amalgamated to become the Institut de réadaptation Gingras-Lindsay. The Minister has authorized this institution to continue to offer bilingual services to its clients. The final recommendations for Access Plans have now been approved by the Provincial Cabinet. (Visit the documentation section at www.santemontreal.qc.ca).
- Access to health and social services in English varies widely, even in the Greater Montreal area. Maintaining the English-language capacity of institutions that do provide services in English is a challenge. This includes community involvement in the management and control of English-language public institutions. In this regard, the ESCC was active in encouraging members in our community to nominate candidates to stand for election to the Boards of Directors of Health and Social Services' institutions and to participate in the elections to these Boards on November 1, 2011. There are forty-three institutions in Montreal which renewed the composition of their boards, including, for example, St. Mary's Hospital Center, McGill University Health Centre, the Centre de réadaptation-en-déficience-intellectuelle-et-en-trouble-envahissants-du-développement de Montréal, et al. ESCC Treasurer, Rafik Greiss, was elected to the Board of Directors of St. Mary's Hospital Centre.

- In June 2011, the ESCC was invited to submit the name of a candidate to sit on the Montreal Regional Committee for the program on access to health and social services in the English language with a mandate for the next three years. We are pleased to report that our nominee, Bruno Mital, Director General of CCS (Catholic Community Services), has been appointed to this committee.
- The Community Health and Social Services Network (CHSSN), is a network of seventy community resources, associations and public institutions dedicated to the development of health and social services for English-speaking communities in Quebec. Through the Federal Road Map for Canada's Linguistic Duality, the CHSSN receives a contribution of \$19.5 million between 2009-2013 from Health Canada to support the development of community-based health networks whose mission is to improve access to health and social services in English in Quebec. (Visit www.chssn.org.)
- The federal government is currently planning its Road Map for 2013-2018 and has consulted the Quebec Community Groups Network (QCGN), including the Community Health and Social Services Network (CHSSN). The ESCC participated in consultations organized by both of these networks. Prevailing priorities in Health and Social Services for the English-speaking communities as well as the predominant themes that preoccupy them include:
 - i) adaptation of human resources;
 - ii) adaptation of local services to local needs;
 - iii) availability of information about services in English
 - iv) creation of a continuing knowledge base about English-speaking users of the health and social service system;
 - v) community involvement.
- Bruno Mital, Director-General of CCS (Catholic Community Services), is a Director of the CHSSN. John Walker, a former Director of the CHSSN's Board is now the Treasurer of the Quebec Community Health and Social Services Foundation (QCHSSF), launched in October 2011.

Social Issues (General)

- In September 2010, the ESCC presented its Brief to the Select Committee on *Dying with Dignity* at the National Assembly public hearings in Montreal. The ESCC adamantly opposed any effort to introduce policies aimed at terminating the lives of our citizens under the guise of a gesture of mercy. In April 2012, the ESCC issued a statement on the recommendations in the Report of the Select Committee presented to the National Assembly in March 2012. It reads in part:

“The recent report of the National Assembly's Select Committee on Dying With Dignity recommended opening the door to doctor-abetted killing in Quebec hospitals even if that means flouting federal laws against euthanasia and assisted suicide. On the positive side, the report calls for the state to develop palliative care facilities throughout Quebec, something that virtually all citizens welcome. The recommendation to introduce euthanasia and assisted suicide is much more controversial and is opposed by a large segment of the Quebec population. This was clear to the Select Committee. Both in its news conference and in its report, the Select Committee discussed palliative care recommendations first and only afterwards moved to the more contentious issues. Even more tellingly, euthanasia and assisted suicide were shrouded in euphemisms. Quebecers should not be lulled into a false sense of security and wellbeing by soothing language.....

The English Speaking Catholic Council and the community it represents adamantly oppose any effort to introduce policies aimed at terminating the lives of our citizens under the guise of a gesture of mercy. Let's call a spade a spade.

Such policies and practices would be utterly dangerous for our democracy and especially for the lives of the men and women, and eventually the children as well, of Quebec.”

For further information, please visit the ESCC's website www.catholiccentre.ca/esc, Living with Dignity's website at www.vivredignite.com, and the Catholic Organization for Life and the Family at www.colf.ca.

- In December 2010, the ESCC presented its Brief to the Federal Parliamentary Committee on Palliative Care and Compassionate Care at its public hearings in Dorval. In November 2011, the final report of the all-party Committee was released. The landmark report urges specific policy action on palliative care, elder abuse and suicide prevention. In terms of policy, the section in the report on “law and rights” (p. 46-53) leans heavily on one of the main recommendations of our brief: Recognition of the fundamental right to palliative care. Perhaps a nod to the impact of our brief on the thinking of the Parliamentary Committee on this recommendation is signalled by the fact that this section of the report is book-ended by quotes from statements made by the ESCC at the public hearings.
- A conference on Trauma and Transformation – Sexual Abuse Crisis within the Catholic Church organized by the McGill Centre for Research on Religion was held in Montreal in October 2011. It was co-sponsored by several organizations, including the ESCC. It brought together researchers from various disciplines (social sciences, forensic psychology, social work, law, religious studies, theology and ethics), as well as individuals with direct experience of the abuse crisis. Two hundred people attended the event. Salt and Light television has produced a DVD of the symposium which is available at saltandlighttv.org.
- The ESCC's Website has been updated. You are encouraged to visit it at www.catholiccentre.ca/esc.

Social Issues (Poverty)

- Advocacy to combat and ultimately eradicate poverty remains a high priority for the English Speaking Catholic Council. In recent years, in collaboration with partners, we have been applying pressure on members of the National Assembly to support the inclusion of significant funding in the budget to address the challenge of the poverty issue. The ESCC is pleased that the Quebec Government is continuing to honor its commitments as set out in Bill 112 adopted in June 2002 to combat poverty and social exclusion by launching the Phase II Action Plan with an investment of \$7 billion for the period 2010-2015.
- In the Fall of 2011, the ESCC collaborated with several organizations to discuss priority measures that should be identified for Government financial support in its 2012 provincial budget. Appeals for financial support of these measures to be implemented in 2012-2013 were made to Government decision-makers and especially the former Chairman of the Standing Committee on Social Affairs and currently Cabinet Minister, Goeff Kelley, (with whom we have an ongoing dialogue). More than 50% of measures identified to combat poverty and social exclusion were included in the March 2012 Budget, notably:

- i) Investment of \$180 million for the construction of 3,000 new community and affordable social housing units. This budget is the ninth in a row to include investments to increase the stock of social housing in Quebec. This brings to 35,000 the number of social housing units announced since 2002-2003 for a total investment of \$1.5 billion. The goal was 50,000 units.
- ii) Investment of \$150 million over the next two years to provide financial support for the renovation and adaptation of private homes and low-income households and households with special needs; notably, a) shelter enhancement program (for women and young people who are victims of family violence; b) residential adaptation assistance program to meet the needs of a person with disabilities; c) Renovation Quebec (aid to improve housing in rundown residential areas).
- iii) Maintenance of the Work Premium, continuation of the Child Assistance program for underprivileged families and indexation for social assistance benefits.
- iv) Support of community recreation centres: There is an increase of funding allocated (\$1 million in 2012-2013; \$1.5 million in 2013-14; \$2 million in 2014-15 and \$2.5 million in 2015-16) for the governance of a financial assistance program for community recreation centres. Many are located in areas with the highest level of material and social deprivation.
- v) Additional funding for family community organizations and community daycare centres. This program provides considerable financial assistance to parents providing respite and drop-in services, enabling them to participate in training and social and vocational integration activities, homework assistance workshops, French as a second language and other job readiness skills. (\$2 million in 2012-13 and again in 2013-2014).

Social Issues (Seniors)

- Our society is on the verge of profound demographic changes in the coming years. This reality makes it necessary to recognize the need for increased support and assistance for our seniors. The Minister Responsible for Seniors, Mme Marguerite Blais, deserves high praise for her many successful efforts in continuing to address issues identified in her public consultation report on Living Conditions for Quebec Seniors. The ESCC is pleased with the recent provincial budget which offers additional benefits to Seniors and those who are most vulnerable. While the economic recovery is slow and still fragile, once again the provincial budgetary balance is not being restored at the expense of social justice.

The 2012-2013 Budget “Quebec and its Seniors” provides key policy directions of an Action Plan, its funding and the fiscal measures that are integral to it. Highlights of selected important investments targeted to improve the quality of life for seniors include:

- i) Announcement of the Growing Old At Home Action Plan. Thus over the next five years, \$76 million to support seniors through community-based projects, one of which is to identify problems connected with English-speaking seniors’ access to services and programs essential to their health and well-being.
- ii) \$2.3 billion in new investments will be devoted essentially to health services better adapted to the needs of seniors.
- iii) \$86 million more will be allocated for affordable, safe and adapted housing for seniors;
- iv) \$172 million will be invested in the form of additional tax assistance.

- In April 2012, Seniors Minister Marguerite Blais announced a \$5.8 million funding allotment for seventy-three senior-focused community projects. Among the nine province-wide projects targeted by the Ministry is one by the Quebec Community Groups Network. The QCGN will receive \$274,328 over three years to identify problems connected with English-speaking seniors' access to services and programs essential to their health and wellbeing.

The Ministry is also funding sixty-four locally-based projects. Among these is the NDG Community Committee on an Elder Abuse program, SAVA, the province's first shelter for abused seniors which will receive \$232,000 to expand its operations. The Côte-des-Neiges Seniors Centre will receive \$243,432 to assist vulnerable immigrant seniors living in social housing. The Montreal City Mission will receive \$50,000 to create a mobile legal clinic for seniors. Prévention Côte-des-Neiges-NDG will receive \$48,000 to register vulnerable and isolated seniors in the neighbourhood.

Minister Blais has also indicated that a new program to expand home-care services for seniors is soon to be announced. Some 15,000 seniors will benefit from this new funding. And a new official formal government policy on seniors is to be announced shortly.

- In the Fall of 2011, a Provincial Seniors' Conference was held in Montreal. ESCC Board member and Chair of its Seniors' Committee, Anne Fitzpatrick, and ESCC Executive Director, Martin Murphy, attended this event. The objective was to move forward with the formalities associated with the creation of a Provincial Seniors' Network. An Action Plan was developed for the next three years based on findings of a province-wide consultation conducted in the Spring of 2011 by the Quebec Community Groups Network (QCGN). It incorporates priority recommendations addressing concerns and challenges, all designated to improve the living conditions and quality of life for seniors. These include access to essential services in English; translation of related literature; elder abuse; taxation issues, guaranteed income supplement; social housing; transportation for medical appointments, shopping and recreation and support for caregivers.
- From Ottawa, the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages is funding an analysis of the situation of Quebec's English-speaking seniors and those support programs now being provided to seniors by federal institutions.

Social Issues (Young Adults)

- In March 2011, the ESCC launched its Young Adults' Committee, chaired by ESCC Board member, Julie Lafontaine. Its objectives are to encourage young adults to participate actively within organizations, to create opportunities for the development of leadership skills and to explore resources for training and employment. Topics of discussion for engagement include: Student debt, apathy, social media, mentorship, roles and responsibilities, faith education and advocacy.

Cultural Issues

- In the Fall of 2011, the Department of Canadian Heritage initiated a province-wide priority-setting process with the objective of providing input to the next Roadmap for Canada's Linguistic Duality (2013-2018), and help guide federal priorities in the future allocation of support and resources for Quebec's English-speaking population.

In March 2012, 180 members of the English-speaking community of Quebec took part in a Community Priority-Setting Conference in Montreal, including representatives of the English Speaking Catholic Council. This event marked the culmination of consultations involving over five-hundred English-speaking Quebecers on federal priorities in the future allocation of support for the English-speaking population in Quebec. A broad consensus was reached and the following Declaration was endorsed:

WHEREAS we reaffirm the English-speaking Community of Quebec as an integral part of Quebec's past, present and future, and a fundamental element of Quebec's and Canada's culture, history and heritage;

WHEREAS English-speaking Quebecers must have an equal opportunity to fully participate in, and contribute to, the social, cultural, economic, and political life of Quebec;

WHEREAS the Government of Canada is committed to fulfilling its duty to enhance the vitality of linguistic minority communities by supporting and assisting in their development;

WHEREAS the community has identified the following priorities to ensure a more vital and sustainable future:

ACCESS TO SERVICES IN ENGLISH Increased access to services and government information in English in all aspects of daily living is a pressing issue. The ability of individuals in our community to make informed decisions depends on our capacity to understand options and implications in English.

COMMUNITY BUILDING

Developing relationships by fostering greater collaboration and networking among English-speaking organizations and the broader community, diversifying resources, and sharing and developing expertise will make our communities stronger.

ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

Greater access to employment and educational opportunities and higher levels of bilingualism will support the economic prosperity of English-speaking Quebecers thus improving the resilience of our communities.

IDENTITY AND RENEWAL Nurturing a strong sense of belonging, expressing our identity, enhancing our visibility, and working towards a Quebec society that embraces diversity will ensure the renewal of our communities.

LEADERSHIP AND REPRESENTATION

Promoting leadership development at all levels, with an emphasis on youth engagement, and encouraging volunteerism will ensure we are an integral part of Quebec and Canadian society.

STRONG INSTITUTIONS

Healthy institutions are the cornerstone of a dynamic community. Maintaining and supporting existing institutions and establishing new ones will strengthen our communities.

The Priority Setting Steering Committee (PSSC) calls upon our community to:

1. **Work individually and collectively** in a collaborative environment to develop and implement specific strategies that support these priorities.

2. **Engage with the PSSC** to create an action plan for the community based on the priorities identified and validated through the Strategic Priorities Forum process.

3. **Solicit all levels of government** to consider these priorities for the purposes of policy and program development in support of the English-speaking community of Quebec.

This Declaration was formally supported by the ESCC Board in May 2012.

- In June 2011, Colleen Bronson, Director of Advancement and Communications at Sacred Heart School, nominated by the ESCC, was elected to the Board of Directors of the Quebec Community Groups Network.

Nomination /Succession

The ESCC's Nominations/Succession Committee's mandate exercised by the Advisory Committee is to ensure that the by-laws governing the membership of the Board of Directors are respected. The process includes the search for candidates, representative of the community, for election to the Board at each Annual General Meeting, keeping in mind the expertise and experience that will enable the Council to meet the challenges facing our community. It must also assure the succession of the Council's Executive Officers.

Finance

- The Council's audited financial statements for the period April 1, 2011 to March 31, 2012 are presented in the 2011-2012 ESCC Annual Report.
- Canadian Not-for –Profit Corporations and Registered Charities which are federally incorporated (as is the ESCC), are required to apply for a Certificate of Continuance before 2014 or be subject to dissolution. The ESCC has been briefed on the responsibilities associated with the new Act and will follow the steps in the transition requirements.

Advisory Committee

- The Advisory Committee, established in 1994, fulfills a supportive role for the English Speaking Catholic Council by providing continuity and enhancing the strength of the Council. It serves as a link for access to senior business, institutional and government officials and provides input on issues affecting the community.

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To a limited extent, as a non-profit charitable organization, the ESCC may engage in non-partisan activities to influence law, policy and public opinion on matters related to its mandate. In this respect, the Council believes it has a responsibility to take a stand on issues when they infringe on democracy, social justice and related Catholic values.

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For the past three decades, the ESCC has served the English-speaking Catholic community through the commitment of dedicated volunteers who have provided their time and expertise in the service of others and by contributions and the generous financial donations of community foundations. I am especially grateful to the Council's President, Mary McDaid, and other members of the ESCC Board of Directors and its Advisory Committee for their continuing interest and support of the work of the Council. Finally, I wish to acknowledge the excellent work done by our Executive Secretary, Suzanne Brown.

Martin P. Murphy
Executive Director
The English Speaking Catholic Council
Montreal, June 2012