First Syrian Arrivals

ARM was overjoyed to have its first group of Syrian families arrive within one year of the submission of their applications. In November these two sisters were reunited.

ARM’s 20th Anniversary

In January ARM celebrated 20 years of serving refugees in Montreal and beyond.

Refugee Rights Day

In April ARM organized its first ever celebration for Refugee Rights Day. It was a great success with over 80 participants!

World Refugee Day

In June ARM co-organized a family friendly event with plenty of activities. Over 700 people participated!

Ride for Refuge

In October ARM raised over $15,000 during this bike ride fundraiser! Despite the rainy weather we all had a great day together.
What is the Sponsorship Program?

ARM is proud to have facilitated the resettlement of over 780 refugees to Canada through its sponsorship program over the past 20 years.

This program allows refugees from overseas to be sponsored by family members to come to Canada. Once ARM has accepted a file, we provide assistance with all immigration paperwork and submit the file through our agreement with Immigration Québec. We provide all the follow-up during the processing time which can be anywhere from one to six years. After the family has arrived in Canada we provide some assistance during their first year.

Meet a family

Evelyn*, a single mother of four children, fled the Democratic Republic of Congo after she was targeted by the government. The family lived in a refugee camp in Uganda for 3 years before being sponsored by a Presbyterian congregation in the Montreal area. The family arrived in Canada just before Christmas in 2013. A whirlwind year followed, including new schools, all kinds of appointments, new languages and foods. There were high and low points, some crying but much more laughing. Through this sponsorship we have seen the tremendous effort put in by the church members, but also the resiliency of a family who have integrated in a city where they did not know anyone before arriving. The family continues to thrive and their relationship with the church remains strong. Bonnie, a member of the church says, “We all feel blessed by this family.”

Photos: (Above) A newly arrived Syrian family, (Left) Evelyn (*name has been changed) with her children, and church members Yvon and Bonnie

EDUCATION PROGRAM

Program at a glance

- 33 speaking engagements with a total reach of 1400 people
- Featured on ICI Radio Canada, le Téléjournal and in Le Devoir

ARM had an unprecedented year in terms of media coverage and speaking engagements. We were featured a number of times on radio, television and in print. We also spoke at churches, universities and CEGEPS, to Amnistie internationale, and at conferences.

Photo: (Left) Paul and Jenny at an Amnistie internationale event, (Right) Paul and Faisal Alazem on the radio
THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

In March 2014, ARM adopted a new vision statement: “Compassion and justice for refugees”. These key words speak to our vision for the future and to our everyday mission at ARM. They also serve as a reminder of the fundamentals of refugee protection that need to be upheld and promoted. Recent global human catastrophes implicating refugees and migrants are a terrifying indication that these fundamentals seem to be eroding. But then I think about the generous support we received over the last year from our partners, the many sponsorship applications we helped file, the refugees finally starting to arrive to safety, or the detained asylum seekers having someone to provide them with a phone card to call home, and I can see that compassion and justice are alive and well. Our actions may feel small in the grand scheme of things but our vision is big and with the two together, I remain hopeful.

Patil Tutunjian, Chair

BOARD MEMBERS
Patil Tutunjian, Chair
Anna Purkey, Vice-Chair
Eliane Bastos, Treasurer
Margaret Bryson, Secretary

Stewart Blott  Dorothy Samuel
Robert Camara  Colin Steensma
Phil Dawson  Virginie Tchatchou-Fonga
Ian MacDonald  Gwenda Wells
Jane Maxwell  Louise Willis
Judy Nagy

DETENTION PROGRAM

Program at a glance
- 412 detainees assisted in 2014, including 18 children
- 204 refugee claimants assisted at the Immigration Holding Centre in 2014, most detained for identity verifications
- 582 phone cards were distributed to people in detention

What is the Detention Program?
Through an agreement with the Canada Border Services Agency, ARM is allowed inside the Immigration Holding Centre in Laval, Québec. The Coordinator and student interns visit the centre twice a week to provide information and support to detainees. Our priority is for refugee claimants, with special attention to families with young children, pregnant women, unaccompanied minors and other vulnerable people. Many detainees rely on ARM to provide phone cards, which allow them to reach out to family and obtain the documents they need to be released from detention or to support their refugee claim.

Meet the Coordinator!
Jenny Jeanes has been managing this program since 2005

Meet a detainee
Dany* first met one of ARM’s interns shortly after he arrived at the Immigration Holding Centre. A few days later, an ARM volunteer accompanied him to his detention review hearing, allowing us to understand his case and better support him. Like many detained claimants, Dany knew no-one in Canada, and could not contact his family back home without phone cards provided by ARM. Faced with the stress of his refugee hearing within 60 days, Dany learned just a few days before that it was postponed. After many phone calls back home and a long wait, Dany finally obtained documents that convinced CBSA that he was telling the truth about his identity, and he was released after more than two months in detention. Dany has kept in touch with ARM and was accompanied by an intern to his refugee hearing. He is still waiting for a decision.

Photos: (Above) The Immigration Holding Centre in Laval, Québec, (Left) Dany (*name has been changed) at an ARM event in a suit he made himself

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Patil Tutunjian, Chair
Program at a glance

- 10 Refugee women and their volunteer twins participated in 2014
- 7 group activities hosted by ARM in 2014
- Strong bonds of friendship formed between participants

What is the Twinning Program?

A small but powerful program, Action Réfugiés Montréal’s Twinning Program pairs newly arrived refugee women with women volunteers. The experience is designed to break isolation, create unique bonds of friendship and introduce both women to realities they might never have otherwise encountered. Women meet at least six hours per month for at least six months, and also participate in regular group activities hosted by ARM, including potluck meals, information sessions and collective cooking.

Meet a pair of twins!

Martine arrived in Montreal near the end of 2012, forced to leave behind her family and her career as a journalist in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). She first heard about ARM’s Twinning Program when a social work intern visited the YMCA Day Centre, a gathering place for newly arrived refugee claimants. Laurence, a volunteer, reached out to ARM hoping to share some of her time and energy. Martine and Laurence met over a shared potluck meal at ARM’s office in early 2014, and they felt an immediate connection. Laurence, who works at Radio Canada, invited Martine to visit the newsroom. The two have become close friends, and spent Christmas Eve together. Martine is one of our most active participants, always ready to lend a hand organizing group activities. During one of our group activities, Martine shared video footage of her work in DRC reporting on women’s rights and the environment.

Photos: (Above) Zehra, a Twinning participant, with Dominique, a social work intern, (Left) Martine and her twin Laurence

ABOUT Action Réfugiés Montréal

Action Réfugiés Montréal is a strong voice for refugees in Montréal and beyond. As a not-for-profit, faith-inspired organization we seek justice for asylum-seekers and refugees.

We promote partnerships among people in refugee and faith communities and society at large for mutual empowerment.

Through our Detention, Sponsorship and Twinning programs we provide hope and assistance while raising awareness of refugee rights.

1439 Ste-Catherine St. West, Suite 2, Montréal, QC H3G 1S6
514.935.7799 info@actionr.org www.actionr.org
The year 2014 was one of hard work, outreach, growth and celebration. We knew that in celebrating our 20th anniversary we would have a great year.

We reached out to our clients, friends and colleagues by holding a Refugee Rights Day event in April. More clients than ever before attended our Annual General Meeting. It was an enriching way to have people encourage each other.

In June we hosted a World Refugee Day event at the Parc Olympique in collaboration with the UNHCR and Projet Refuge. We were part of a large group of volunteers who entertained 700 guests with concerts, sports activities, and information about the realities refugees face. It was a great way to demonstrate to the wider public the contribution of refugees to our society.

The ongoing refugee crisis in Syria occupied our minds and hands all year. The crisis created substantial interest in the media and we were invited to speak many times. A Laval newspaper highlighted our work at the Immigration Holding Centre as did ICI Radio-Canada and L'Actualité. We are proud of the work we do, and we are glad to be given opportunities to let the wider public know about refugee issues and how they can help.

Our Detention Program continues to provide information and support to hundreds of people every year. Visiting the Immigration Holding Centre twice-weekly is crucial in providing direct help as quickly as possible. Our Twinning Program continues to flourish, with many matches and numerous group activities. Our coordinator Jenny Jeanes has been elected to two positions in our networks, bringing influence at a provincial and national level.

The Syrian crisis had a major impact on our Sponsorship Program. The number of enquiries doubled for the second year in a row and we submitted 67 files, by far a record for Action Réfugiés.

We had another successful Ride for Refuge, which complements our regular fund-raising efforts. We invested time in researching new sources of funding and were pleased to receive first-time grants from two foundations for our Twinning and Sponsorship programs.

We are thankful to our dedicated employees, faithful donors and friends who, all working together, provide help and hope to refugees here in Canada and abroad.

**Paul Clarke**

Executive Director

**Staff and Student Interns**

**Staff**
- Paul Clarke
- Jenny Jeanes
- Lauren Lallemand
- Maryse Meyo Akoulouze (Nov onwards)
- Tyler Goettl (June and July)

**Student Interns**
- Myriam Carbonneau-Giroud
- Jessie Font Alfaras
- Tyler Goettl
- Humera Jabir
- Virginie Locas
- Dominique Mathieu-Lavoie
- Aishah Nofal
- Robert Nsabimana

**Volunteers**

ARM could not offer all of its services to refugees if not for the help of volunteers. A total of 42 volunteers generously

**Photos:** (Top) Aishah, a law intern, (Bottom) Dominique, a social work intern, with Tyler and Myriam, both law interns
It has been a busy year at ARM. There was an increase in donations from congregations and individual donors in 2014. We also received two first-time government grants: the Canada Summer Jobs funding for a student during the summer and another for our World Refugee Day event. The increase in the number of refugee sponsorships ARM files led us to hire a new administrative assistant, on a temporary basis, partially funded by Emploi Québec.

The generous capacity-building grants received in recent years from a family foundation continued in 2014. However, these grants will cease this year. In order to be able to maintain our current operations, continuing donations from individuals and congregations are enormously important.

The small surplus in 2014 is mostly the result of a donation received specifically for publicity. A portion of this grant was used to re-work our website. The remainder of this grant will be spent in 2015.

In addition to its operating account, ARM manages a segregated in-trust account containing funds provided by Canadian residents applying to sponsor family members as refugees. In 2014, $93,377 was disbursed from the in-trust account in connection with refugees who had arrived in Canada, and $580,193 was deposited for new sponsorships during the year. At year-end 2014 the in-trust account contained $949,944, involving 92 files for the sponsorship of 213 persons.

Eliane Bastos
Treasurer

### CONTRIBUTING ORGANIZATIONS AND FOUNDATIONS

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Eliane Bastos
Treasurer

**CONTRIBUTING ORGANIZATIONS AND FOUNDATIONS**

- Anglican Diocese of Montreal
- Blue Sea Philanthropy
- Briarwood Presbyterian Church, QC
- Canada Summer Jobs
- Canadian Ministries—Presbyterian Church in Canada
- Cedar Park United Church, QC
- Charis Foundation
- Christ Church Cathedral, QC
- Church of St. Andrew & St. Paul, QC
- Congregation of Notre Dame Visitation Province Inc., NS
- CN Community Fund
- Deep River Community Church, ON
- Emploi Québec
- Fondation Thérèse-Casgrain
- Georgetown Presbyterian Church, QC
- International Ministries—Presbyterian Church in Canada
- Jean Rich Foundation
- Les éditions du passage
- Les Oeuvres Josaphat-Vanier, QC
- Loblaws
- MacKay United Church, ON
- Maisonneuve Presbyterian Church, QC
- Maplewood Presbyterian Church, QC
- McCarthy Tétrault S.E.N.C.R.L., s.r.l.
- McGill Law Students’ Association
- Northern Nitrogen Inc.
- Presbytery of Montreal—The Presbyterian Church in Canada
- Presbyterian World Service and Development
- St. Columba by-the-Lake Presbyterian Church, QC
- St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church St Lambert, QC
- St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Huntingdon, QC
- St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Thunder Bay, ON
- St. James the Apostle Anglican Church, QC
- Sisters of Saint Martha of Antigonish, NS
- Soeurs Missionnaires de Notre-Dame des Anges, QC
- Soeurs de Ste Croix, QC
- Soutien à l’action bénévole, Gouvernement du Québec
- Staples Advantage
- Student Society of Presbyterian College
- The Sisters of St. Joseph of Sault Ste. Marie, ON
- The Sisters of St. Joseph of Toronto, ON
- The Sisters of the Presentation, NL
- The Youth Group of St. Andrew’s Church of Dartmouth, NS
- Westminster Presbyterian Church, QC
- Westminster Presbyterian Church, ON
- Ville de Montréal (World Refugee Day event)