REFUGEE RIGHTS DAY
In April, Action Réfugiés Montréal hosted over 170 guests at our 3rd annual Refugee Rights Day celebration.

PEOPLE WHO HAVE ARRIVED
120 sponsored refugees arrived in 2016 from four different countries of origin: Afghanistan, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, and Syria.

LAUNCH OF NEW WEBSITE
In December, we launched our new website with lots of new information and updates, plus our new logo.
www.actionr.org

WEBABE À SUCRE
In April, thanks to a special grant for social activities, 46 twins and sponsored refugees visited a cabane à sucre, our biggest group activity ever.

WORLD REFUGEE DAY
We partnered with UNHCR, Montreal City Mission, and the YMCA Residence to organize the walk for World Refugee Day in June for a record turnout of over 200 participants.

NEW DETENTION CENTRE ANNOUNCED
In August, Minister of Public Safety Ralph Goodale announced the building of a new Immigration Holding Centre by 2020, to replace the centre that we visit each week.

Image credit: CBSA
MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Everyone in Canada will remember 2016 as the year that refugees were welcomed in Canada all across the country. Individuals, community groups, churches, foundations and corporations opened their hearts. A national project seemed to unfold as the year progressed.

Action Réfugiés Montréal was busy throughout the year. We received over 14,000 phone calls, welcomed record numbers of sponsored refugees and submitted a record number of new files for government review. Our Twinning Program grew substantially to reach more women in Montreal who shared meals, outings, and laughter together. We are pleased to have initiated and expanded many partnerships, including with the Canadian Red Cross and the Canadian Council for Refugees. We are grateful that we were able to expand our office space in our location at St Jax Montréal with support from the parish.

In August, the federal government announced investments in and suggested changes to the immigration detention system. We welcome intentions to lessen detention, especially of families, and favour the greater use of alternatives to detention whenever possible. In the case of many families and refugee claimants, alternatives do not need to be costly or complex. We were encouraged to hear the government speak of a need for an accountability mechanism, and continue to advocate for decisions about detention to go hand in hand with greater transparency about immigration enforcement. Action Réfugiés Montréal is committed to maintaining and growing our outreach to refugee claimants. Most have no network and often stand alone. Now some refugees are arriving on foot: we journey with them as we can. Our unique role is to help refugees from all countries, asylum seekers as well as sponsored refugees - irrespective of religion, ethnicity, or race. The Syrian refugee crisis has brought to light the complex issues concerning all refugees, regardless of where they come from. As crises in many countries continue to force people from their homes, we work to provide support to as many people as we can.

You likely heard us speak on the radio or saw us on television in 2016 - we intentionally invest time in speaking out to protect refugees. We will remain a strong voice for refugee rights here in Montreal and beyond. Everyone connected to Action Réfugiés Montréal is passionate about supporting refugees. We walk alongside our many clients as they begin their new lives in Canada. We are glad you walk with us as well.

Paul Clarke, Executive Director

WE WALK ALONGSIDE OUR MANY CLIENTS AS THEY BEGIN THEIR NEW LIVES IN CANADA. WE ARE GLAD YOU WALK WITH US AS WELL.

EDUCATION

In 2016, Action Réfugiés Montréal continued to work promoting refugee issues among the general public, both through presentations and media appearances in many different venues, including Parliamentary Committees. Media appearances covered such diverse topics as the detention of children, and local churches sponsoring refugees. ARM team members spoke to audiences at Concordia University, McGill University, and several CEGEPs as well as at several conferences. On a lighter note, we began and continue to receive many donations from people younger than 10. Our Education Program seems to be working! We estimate over 2,000 people attended presentations by staff during the year.
ARM HIGHLIGHTS 2016

**JANUARY - FEBRUARY**
- Welcomed numerous Syrian refugees on chartered flights arranged by the federal government.

**MARCH**
- Ardene event on International Women’s Day with gifts for 91 of our clients - we advocated that Ardene open the event to include clients from all countries.
- Press conference on St Jax Montréal site by the Foundation of Greater Montréal regarding CN and Manulife grant.

**MAY**
- Paul and Emily appeared before the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration about the resettlement of Syrian refugees, and on the same day Cathy appeared before the Senate Committee on Human Rights.
- Cabane à sucre - biggest twinning activity ever - a busload of clients visited a sugar shack thanks to a special grant for activities and the energy of our intern.
- 4 new members elected to the Board of Directors.

**JUNE**
- World Refugee Day Walk for over 200 people, evening event held at Hôtel de Ville for 120 people.
- Paul elected to Board of TCRI, to keep private sponsorship and refugee claimant issues in the foreground.

**JULY**
- ARM invited to participate in consultation with IRCC for changes to the refugee determination system - Jenny and Paul travelled to Ottawa.

**SEPTEMBER**
- For the first time a social work intern joined the Sponsorship Program to offer support to families after arrival.
- Another big outing: Apple-picking with 45 twins and some sponsored families.
- Stakeholder consultations with Canada Border Services Agency on important changes to detention policy in Canada.

**AUGUST**
- Canadian Council for Refugees and Red Cross special grants for Syrian refugees - funds to support the more vulnerable among the many Syrian refugees who we sponsored.

**OCTOBER**
- Jenny interviewed on Radio Canada about the launch of a Statement to End the Immigration Detention of Children.
- Paul joins Comité directeur and Sous-comité de parrainage collectif with MIDI.

**NOVEMBER**
- Jenny re-elected as co-chair of CCR Working Group on Inland Protection, keeping a leadership role on detention and refugee determination issues in Canada.

**DECEMBER**
- Biggest holiday party ever for participants of our three programs.
- One-year anniversary of the arrival of the first special flight for Syrian refugees.
- By year-end we had worked with 116 volunteers through all our programs, including 26 for sponsorship - a new initiative.
- 82 sponsorship applications were submitted, our largest number yet.
- We launched a new website, introduced our new logo, and invested in a new client management and donor tracking system.
- ARM is facilitating sponsorships with 22 congregations and community groups to reunite 52 people overseas with their families in Montreal.
- Since our founding, over 1000 people have arrived in Canada through our Sponsorship Program.
- We coordinated many exciting offers from individuals, community groups, and local businesses to support newcomers in their settlement.

**SUMMARY OF THE YEAR**
**TWINNING PROGRAM**

**What is the Twinning Program?**

Newly arrived women refugees are “twinned” with women from Montreal. Twins spend time together developing friendship, exploring Montreal, and learning about each other’s realities. ARM personnel sometimes provide extra support when refugee participants face challenges with immigration, housing, or financial issues. More than anything, the program is about creating bonds of friendship and social integration. At least once each month, all participants are invited to join in a group activity hosted by ARM.

50 active participants in program

15 new matches in 2016

**DALIA AND JULIE, AN ENDURING FRIENDSHIP**

Dalia arrived in Montreal in late 2015 through our Sponsorship Program. Though she had some family in Montreal, she was eager to make friends and participate actively in the community. We suggested the Twinning Program to her and she was keen to join. Before we had found her a twin who could match her interests, Dalia came to a group activity where participants cooked and ate together. After seeing her strike up a long conversation with Julie, a Montreal woman also waiting to be matched, we suggested they become “twins”. The two have become close friends and shared many experiences. Just after Christmas, CBC contacted us looking to interview a pair of twins to highlight the role of Montrealers in befriending and welcoming refugees. We thought of Dalia and Julie and when we called Dalia to ask if she was interested, the two happened to be together! They were interviewed on both radio and television and shared their inspiring story of friendship.

**MUCH NEEDED SUPPORT FOR WOMEN REFUGEE CLAIMANTS**

Since 2013, due to changes in the in-Canada refugee determination system, the extremely short timelines made it difficult for us to include women claimants in our Twinning Program, a departure from the many years when the program was mainly for women with pending refugee claims. When a social worker called to refer a young woman from Bangladesh still waiting for her refugee hearing, we agreed to find her a twin who could match her interests, Dalia came to a group activity where participants cooked and ate together. After seeing her strike up a long conversation with Julie, a Montreal woman also waiting to be matched, we suggested they become “twins”. The two have become close friends and shared many experiences. Just after Christmas, CBC contacted us looking to interview a pair of twins to highlight the role of Montrealers in befriending and welcoming refugees. We thought of Dalia and Julie and when we called Dalia to ask if she was interested, the two happened to be together! They were interviewed on both radio and television and shared their inspiring story of friendship.

16 group activities for twinning participants including skating, lanterns at the Botanical Gardens, collective cooking, painting, Zumba, and dance
DETENTION PROGRAM

Through an agreement with the Canada Border Services Agency, ARM personnel visits people detained for immigration reasons inside the Immigration Holding Centre in Laval, which is near Montreal. We visit two times per week and offer support by telephone five days per week. Most people are detained either for identity verifications or to enforce their removal from Canada. This program gives priority to refugee claimants and vulnerable people. ARM volunteers regularly accompany people to their detention review hearings.

What is the Detention Program?

478 total people assisted in detention
206 total refugee claimants assisted in detention
39 children assisted in detention, including 3 unaccompanied minors

1000+ phone cards distributed to people in detention
2 employees in Detention Program to allow more follow up and advocacy

FAMILIES IN DETENTION

In July 2016 we met a family in detention with two young children, a one-year-old and an eight-year-old. Thanks to calling cards provided by Action Réfugiés Montréal, they were quickly able to call home and arrange for their identity documents to be mailed to Canada. The parents spoke about how painful it was to be detained. The mother and baby both cried a lot when we met, and the older child asked her parents why they were in jail. We suggested they arrange for scanned copies of their documents to be sent to their lawyer by email, and gave them more calling cards. Thanks to their quick efforts, the tribunal agreed to release them at their first hearing based on their full collaboration and the presence of two young children. In September, the family called with the happy news that they had been accepted as refugees. They are now living, working and going to school in Toronto, and keep in touch.

In June 2016 we met a Congolese family in detention: two parents, four young children and their elderly grandmother. The parents and children were detained for two weeks before being released the day before our World Refugee Day Walk from the YMCA Residence, where they were staying. The family joined us in celebration of their newfound freedom, walking with other refugees and supporters. The celebration was bittersweet, however, as the elderly grandmother, who had health problems, was in a wheelchair and could not speak French or English, had not been released. We gave the family information about visiting hours, and they left the festivities to go back to the detention centre only one day after having been released.

The harmful effects of detention on children have been well-documented. The Canadian government has made promises to limit the detention of children. The Canada Border Services Agency is developing new policies, and there was a drop in the number of detained children in 2016. Action Réfugiés Montréal continues to pay close attention to how these policies evolve, with particular concern about the separation of parents and children for the sake of keeping children out of detention.

We remain concerned about the ongoing detention of other vulnerable people, such as the Congolese grandmother.
SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM

WHAT IS THE SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM?

We work directly with residents of Greater Montreal to sponsor their family members who are refugees overseas. ARM staff assist with all of the immigration paperwork, submit the file, and complete all of the necessary follow-up during the processing of the case. Depending on where the refugee is living, this typically takes anywhere between 18 months and 6 years. Once the refugees arrive in Montreal, the family receives tailored information and referrals to community resources to facilitate settlement during their first year in Canada.

120 sponsored refugees arrived in 2016
82 new applications submitted this year for 210 people from 7 different countries
133 total files in progress representing 335 people overseas waiting to come to Canada

THE SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM

CONGREGATIONAL SPONSORSHIPS

Over the past year ARM has worked in collaboration with 22 local congregations, parishes, and community groups interested in sponsoring a refugee family. The mobilization and commitment of these teams has truly been inspiring. With this growing interest, we were able to match groups with people on our waiting list who would not have been able to sponsor their family overseas without the additional support. The family members in Montreal and the sponsorship groups are building new relationships as they get to know each other.

These teams have taken initiative in advocating for faster processing times for sponsored refugees as they actively wait for the families from overseas to arrive in Montreal. As one group member expressed, “we are busy and committed to the plight of refugees”. In the meantime, we have developed workshops and resources to help these groups prepare for the arrival of the newcomers. We hope this will help facilitate the welcome and the settlement of the refugee families in their new communities.

2016 BREAKDOWN OF NEWLY ARRIVED REFUGEES SPONSORED BY ARM

120 PEOPLE
62 ADULTS 58 CHILDREN
Afghanistan | Democratic Republic of Congo | Eritrea | Syria

20 COUNTRIES
WHERE ARE PEOPLE WAITING WHILE THEIR CASES ARE BEING PROCESSED? (COUNTRIES OF ASYLUM)

335 PEOPLE
196 ADULTS 139 CHILDREN
Afghanistan | Burundi | Democratic Republic of Congo | Eritrea | Iraq | Rwanda | Somalia | Syria
Cameroon | Egypt | Eritrea | Ethiopia | India | Israel | Jordan | Kenya | Lebanon | Malawi | Oman | Pakistan | Rwanda | Saudi Arabia | South Africa | Sudan | Tajikistan | Turkey | Uganda | United Arab Emirates

ON THIS SPECIAL DAY OF MY NIECE’S FIRST YEAR ANNIVERSARY IN CANADA, I WANT TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THIS JOYFUL OPPORTUNITY TO REITERATE ONCE AGAIN OUR MOST SINCERE THANKS.

– Edouard

NAME HAS BEEN CHANGED TO MAINTAIN CONFIDENTIALITY

19 information sessions given to new and potential sponsors in 2016
900+ people on our waiting list hoping to sponsor their family members

ONE-YEAR WINDOW FAMILY REUNIFICATION

While Karim* was beginning his new life in Montreal, his thoughts were in Africa with his wife and their young child who were unable to flee their home country with him. Fortunately, under certain circumstances, Canada’s Refugee Sponsorship Program allows recently arrived refugees to apply for immediate family members who were not able to accompany them to Canada. Newly arrived refugees like Karim have up to one year after arriving in Canada to apply to be reunited with these family members.

We worked with Karim on the application and sent the file to the Québec government. This is the first time that Action Réfugiés Montréal has submitted this type of application. Although it will take some time before his family comes to Canada, Karim and ARM look forward to welcoming them.

*Name has been changed to maintain confidentiality
MESSAGE FROM CHAIR OF THE BOARD

Proud to protect refugees - in previous years, this was an affirmation made in protest. In 2016, the pride we feel is literal as we recall the way this affirmation played out in practice in exceptional and consistent ways.

As Chair of the Board, I am proud of the outpouring of generosity displayed and the determined efforts made by ARM staff, the Board, and our partners to protect refugees in face of increased global displacements. In the summer of 2016, the Board participated, along with the staff, in a strategic planning meeting to prepare and plan for the foreseeable future to ensure that we continue to rise up to meet challenges and offer our services to asylum seekers as we have done so over the years. On behalf of the Board, I wish to thank you for supporting our mission and for standing in solidarity with refugees.

Patil Tutunjian, Chair of the Board of Directors

BOARD MEMBERS

Patil Tutunjian, Chair of the Board of Directors
Phil Dawson, Vice-Chair
Eliane Bastos, Treasurer (January - August)
Vesna Milicevic, Treasurer (August onward)
Margaret Bryson, Secretary
Judy Nagy (January - August)
Stewart Blott, Robert Camara, Dilara Dzafik, Katrina Heyde, Jane Maxwell, Maura McGrath, Anna Purkey, Louise Willis

TREASURER’S REPORT

The year 2016 was by far the busiest year in the history of ARM. We are extremely grateful for the generous donations that enabled us to expand our operations and respond to the Syrian refugee crisis and the increasing need to help refugees from many other countries. 2016 was a record budget year for ARM! However, while we met our aggressive revenue goals in 2016, we continue to need strong revenues for 2017 to operate at the same level and meet the increasing needs Canada, and especially Quebec, is facing in light of increasing refugee and asylum seeker needs.

There was continued strong support from churches and individuals, though at a lower level than in 2015. With grants received in late 2015 from donors such as the J. W. McConnell Family Foundation, the Foundation of Greater Montréal and TD Bank Group, we were able to maintain the same headcount through the rest of 2016 and keep the same budget for 2017. Exceptionally, we received a number of large donations dedicated to provide direct support to some of our more vulnerable clients: many Syrian cases but also some for long-time complex family situations and some for refugee claimants. These funds cannot be used for our regular budgetary needs.

The challenge now is to ensure a sufficient stream of donations to sustain our expansion over the longer term. Our activities have expanded with a larger team, which represents a substantial operational cost for the organization. In addition, last year we leased additional office space to accommodate the expanded team. One-time costs in 2016 include office equipment, a new client relations management system, and a completely revamped website along with new publicity materials.

In addition to its operating account, ARM manages a segregated In-Trust account containing funds provided by Canadian residents applying to sponsor refugees. In 2016, $788,641 was disbursed from the In-Trust account to refugees who had arrived in Canada. A total of $633,532 was deposited for new sponsorships. At year-end 2016 this account contained $1,201,049 for 133 files (which will ultimately support a total of 335 persons following their arrival in Canada).

ARM is increasing its efforts to support refugees, asylum seekers, and detained persons in the Greater Montreal area. We thank all our donors for their support, dedication, and service to this just cause and count on the generosity of our fellow Canadians to help us do even more in the future!

Vesna Milicevic, Treasurer

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<td>Revenues less</td>
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Amounts are in $ (000)
CONTRIBUTING ORGANIZATIONS AND FOUNDATIONS

ABC Life Literacy Canada, ON
Anglican Church Women, Diocese of Montréal, QC
Anglican Diocese of Montréal, QC
Andes, QC
BILL Montréal, QC
Blue Sea Philanthropy, Kitchener, ON
Briarwood Presbyterian Church, QC
Canada Summer Jobs
Canadian Council for Refugees
Canadian Red Cross
Canadian Visa Specialists, Hudson Heights, QC
Cedar Park United Church, QC
Centaur Foundation for the Performing Arts, QC
Centre de Grande Montréal, QC
Christ Church Cathedral - Social Services Society, QC
Christ Church, Anglican Parish of Rawdon, QC
CN Employees’ and Pensioners’ Community Fund, QC
Cole Foundation, QC
Committee of residents of Manoir Outremont, QC
Congregation of Notre-Dame of Québec, QC
Congregation of Notre-Dame Visitadion Province Inc., NS
Dawson Teachers’ Union, QC
Deep River Community Church, ON
Drummond Foundation, QC
Émilie Tavener-Camelin Foundation, QC
Foundation of Greater Montréal, QC
GAHNN-McGill, Global and Indigenous Health Nursing, QC
Georgetown Presbyterian Church, Howick, QC
Government of Québec - Volunteer action support program
Grace Church of LaSalle, QC
Grace Presbyterian Church, Calgary, AB
Kensington Presbyterian Church, QC
Knox Women’s Missionary Society, Morrisburg, ON
Les Œuvres Lefroy, QC
Lush Fresh Handmade Cosmetics, BC
Maplewood Presbyterian Church, QC
Marie-François Foundation, QC
Marvin A. Driemer Foundation, QC
Mary Queen of the World, Rawdon, QC
MASS - McGill African Students Society, QC
McCarthy Tétrault LLP, QC
Merck Canada Inc., QC
Mid-Laurierien United Church, QC
Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of the Angels, QC
Montreal Gazette, QC
Montreal Turkish Women’s Association, QC
Œuvres Marie-Anne-Lavallée, QC
Parish of St. Andrew and St. Mark, QC
Presbyterian World Service and Development
Rougemount Bible Church, QC
SCCCUM - University of Montréal Teachers’ and Lecturers’ Union, QC
Sisters of Charity, Halifax, NS
Sisters of Providence, QC
Sisters of St. Joseph of Toronto, ON
SPECAS - College Ahuntsic Teachers’ Union, QC
St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church, Strathroy, ON
St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church, Thunder Bay, ON
St. Columba by the Lake Presbyterian Church, QC
St. James Anglican Church, Parish of Vaudreuil, Hudson, QC
St Jax Montréal, QC
St. Matthew’s Presbyterian Church, Wallace, ON
St. Paul’s Presbyterian Church, Peterborough, ON
St. Stephen’s Anglican Church, QC
St-Denis Theatre, QC
Students of John Abbott College, QC
Talisman Theatre, QC
TD Bank Group
TELUS Telecommunications Company, BC
The Bereavement Community Impact Fund Calgary, AB
The Capucinhs of Québec, QC
The Chapel of Notre-Dame-de-Bon-Secours, QC
The Church of St. Andrew and St. Paul, Montréal, QC
The Colwyn and Jean Rich Foundations, QC
The Encourage Group, QC
The George Hogg Family Foundation, QC
The J.W. McConnell Family Foundation, QC
The Parish of Saint Stephen, Lachine, QC
The Presbyterian Church in Canada - Canadian Ministries
The Presbyterian Church in Canada - Presbytery of Montréal
The Segal Centre for Performing Arts, QC
The Sisters of St. Joseph of Sault Ste. Marie, ON
Thérèse-Casgrain Foundation, QC
United Way / Centraide, Ottawa, ON
United Way, Toronto & York Region, ON
War Memorial Library, Hudson, QC
Wesley United Church, QC
Women’s Missionary Society of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, ON

ARM relies on the support of individual donors - please consider a donation

VOLUNTEERS

ARM could not offer all of its services to refugees if not for the help of volunteers. A total of 116 volunteers generously donated their time in 2016. Many thanks to Tamar Peled (www.ofait.ca) who generously donated her time to design this year’s Annual Report.

STAFF

Paul Clarke, Executive Director
Jenny Jeanes, Detention & Twinning Program Coordinator
Lauren Lallemand, Sponsorship Program Coordinator (January - April)
Cathy Nguyen, Sponsorship Program Coordinator (March onward)
Emily Woods, Sponsorship Program Officer
Zehra Kavame, Administrative Coordinator
MéliSSa AbbouD, Detention Program Assistant (April onward)
OSSANE FrÉMOND-Guilbault, Twinning Program Assistant (Summer Job)
Rim Berrada, World Refugee Day Coordinator (Summer Job)

STUDENT INTERNS

Laura Bosse - Université de Montréal, Faculty of Law
Carla Breadon - McGill University, Faculty of Law
Hanna Caldwell - McGill University, School of Social Work
Kate Forrest - McGill University, Faculty of Law
Ossane Frémont-Guilbault - Université de Montréal, School of Social Work
Theo Lyons - McGill University, Faculty of Law
Vanessa Ntaganda - Université de Montréal, Faculty of Law
Mahnaz Rezaye - Université de Montréal, Faculty of Law
Elizabeth Robertson - McGill University, Faculty of Law
Camila Sanchez Lancheros - Université de Montréal, School of Criminology

ABOUT ACTION RÉFUGIÉS MONTRÉAL

Action Réfugiés Montréal is a strong voice for refugees in Montreal 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, Montreal, QC H3G 1S6
(514) 935 7799 | info@actionr.org | www.actionr.org

Staff members of Action Réfugiés Montréal