

THE TWENTY-SIXTH ANNUAL REPORT

Message from the President

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I am pleased to present the Annual Report for 2006-2007.

The English Speaking Catholic Council celebrated its 25th Anniversary on October 5, 2006 with some 650 members of its community present at Loyola High School's Centre for Performing Arts, a truly successful event enjoyed by all. The theme was *Transforming Your Life, Transforming the World – A Catholic Faith that Makes a Difference*.

Last year saw the passing of a past Board member and stalwart member of our community, Fr. Eric Maclean. He is sadly missed.

The ESCC continued its support of religious education within the elementary and secondary school curriculum on several fronts. The Council also actively supported various members of the community in the health and social service elections in order to assure good representation, continued to lobby for more affordable housing for the poor and established a committee to address many important seniors' issues.

The English Speaking Catholic Council also undertook to develop an Ethical Guidelines Handbook offering basic ethical guidelines for lay Catholics involved in various areas of apostolic service as well as in lay Catholic associations and organizations. At the moment, this document is in draft form as we are in a process of consultation in our community inviting suggestions to enhance the quality of the content for possible incorporation in a revised final edition.

I would like to thank all of my colleagues around the table who contributed their expertise and experience throughout the year to ensure the success of our organization, particularly those who have faithfully served the Board for the last six years; Brian O'Neill and Lorette Noble, and Warren Allmand for eight years.

I would be remiss not to mention the generous support of the St. Patrick's Foundation, Father Dowd Foundation, Pillars Trust and the Department of Canadian Heritage along with the excellent coverage of the Council's activities by the Catholic Times.

Last but not least, a heartfelt thank you to our Executive Director, Martin Murphy, and our Executive Secretary, Suzanne Brown, for their excellent work.

Sincerely yours,

Colin J. Coole
President

ESCC COMMITTEES 2006 - 2007

Executive

COLIN COOLE
President

BRIAN O'NEILL
Vice-President

ROBERT VAUPSHAS
Treasurer

LYNN LONERGAN DOYLE
Vice-President and Secretary

WARREN ALLMAND
Past-President

Education

- Monitors policy & legislation;
- Facilitates communication among leaders;
- Develops and articulates unified positions;

Social Issues

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

Communications

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

Health & Social Services

- Ensures that English-speaking Montrealers have access to services (especially seniors, the vulnerable & those who have special needs);
- Seeks to promote working relationships with parishes and local healthcare institutions.
- Ensures that Catholic values are promoted and that institutions identified with the English-speaking Catholic community continue to be identified as such.

Rally

- Organizes Rally to affirm the dynamic and positive aspects of our community.

Finance

- Reviews monthly financial statements;
- Prepares budget proposals;
- 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: Colin Coole, Gail Campbell-Tucker, Eamon Dillon, David Dussault, Margaret Lefebvre, Don Myles, Neil McKenty, Daniel O'Brien, Claire Robinson, Harold Thuringer, John Walker, Fr. John Walsh, Robert Wilkins.

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES

Education

- In September 2006, the English Speaking Catholic Council was invited to a consultation meeting on the draft program of Ethics & Religious Culture which will be introduced in all public and private schools, French and English and compulsory for all students, grades 1 to 11 in September 2008. The recognition of others and the pursuit of the common good are the two main objectives of this program. It takes into account secular representations of the world and humanity and the fact that religions also have a moral dimension.

The ESCC's Education Committee responded by affirming the positive aspects, viz.

- 1) To incorporate ethics and religion into public education;
- 2) To foster students' capacity to know and express their moral and religious convictions within a pluralistic context;
- 3) To develop the capacity for meaningful dialogue about diverse moral and religious convictions;
- 4) To anchor this program in the distinctive cultural and religious heritage of Quebec.

And it recommended some major revisions to sections on five interrelated areas:

- Age appropriate pedagogy;
- Development of Religious Identity;
- Definition of core values and the common good;
- Recognition of parents as central partners in the dialogue of Religious Education;
- Issues of Religious Freedom, confessional institutions, and recognition of Charter Rights.

In March 2007, the ESCC supported an initiative by the Parents-Action Committee addressed to the leaders of the political parties in the recent Quebec Provincial Elections, asking that they make a public commitment to respect parents' rights and religious freedom in the schools to:

- 1) Respect Paragraph 3 of Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 that states that "parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children." (Adopted on December 10, 1948 by the General Assembly of the United Nations).
- 2) Re-instate Article 41 of the Quebec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms in its original form "Parents or the persons acting in their stead have a right to require that, in the public educational establishments, their children receive a religious or moral education in conformity with their convictions, within the framework of the curricula provided for by law."

- 3) Amend Bill 95 so that the State course of Ethics and religious Culture becomes optional in public and private schools.
- 4) Grant parents who request it access to a program of moral and religious education for their children, in conformity with their beliefs, in public and private educational establishments within the framework of the school timetable, while allowing the churches and religious groups recognized by the State the choice of the contents and of the teaching personnel.

We now have a new Government, a new Minister of Education and an Official Opposition dedicated to promoting family values. We will continue to be proactive.

- The Office for English Pastoral Services under the leadership of Msgr. Sean Harty and coordinator Deacon Robert Zankoski, offers a professional formation program in Pastoral Care Services. Today, in the Diocese of Montreal, there are seventeen parishes participating and six others ready to begin, involving hundreds of volunteers. The ESCC encourages personnel in the community to give consideration to this special vocation.
- The Department of Theological Studies at Concordia University offers a Certificate in Pastoral Ministries. It is designed to provide a university level professional preparation enabling one to serve in a variety of pastoral activities. The ESCC encourages anyone who may have an interest in this field to consider enrolling in the program. Our community needs you.
- The Advisory Board on English Education was established by the Minister of Education in 1993, with a mandate to provide the Minister advice on all matters affecting the educational services offered in English elementary and secondary schools. Candidates serving on the Board are nominated by community organizations that represent parents, teachers, school and board administrators and commissioners as well as individuals involved in post-secondary education. Currently, there are four members from our community on the Advisory Board.
- In December 2006, the ESCC participated in a campaign by a Coalition of community citizen action groups to keep open St. Gabriel's Elementary School in Point St-Charles, the only English school in that neighborhood. It was argued that closure would have a negative impact on parents, the children and community development at the economic, social and cultural levels. In January 2007, the English Montreal School Board voted to keep open St. Gabriel's Elementary School.
- The ESCC participated in discussions with the Ministry of Education on exploring the possible creation of Community Learning Centres (CLC), a formal partnership of one or more schools, public or private agencies and community groups working together for the benefit of students, families and community. This three-year project supported by the Canada-Quebec Entente for Minority Language Education is intended to support and monitor the development of a diverse group of CLCs that serve as "hubs"

for English-language education and community development, partnerships, and enhanced access to services for the English-speaking community. Fifteen such Centres are located in schools under the jurisdiction of the nine English-language school boards in the Province.

- In March 2007, the ESCC participated in a First Forum on policies and orientations of the Ministry of Education, to which representatives of the universities, CEGEPs, school boards' associations of administrators and teachers, both public and private, the Provincial Parents' Committee, Health and Social Services and Home and School. This is a table where issues are identified and recommendations made to the Ministry as to how they may best be addressed.

Health & Social Services

- The ESCC is an active member of the Coalition Solidarité Santé comprising forty-three organizations advocating to improve conditions especially for seniors and the impoverished. The pressure applied by the Coalition two years ago through letter-writing to government representatives, personal appeals to MNAs and Cabinet Ministers convinced the Minister of Health & Social Services to agree that effective July 2005 seniors (40,000), receiving the maximum guaranteed income supplement would be entitled to have all of their prescribed medication free. On February 1, 2007, the Minister of Health & Social Services announced that seniors who receive more than 94% of the supplement (29,000) and those on welfare (280,000) will receive free prescribed medication, effective July 1, 2007. We continue our campaign to have this measure extended to seniors (380,000) receiving the partial income supplement.
- In the recent provincial election campaign, the Liberal Party promised that if elected, it would include in Cabinet a Minister responsible for Seniors and also create a Working Group with a mandate to identify issues of concern to the English-speaking community and recommend measures to address them. The new Government has honored the first commitment by appointing the MNA for Saint-Henri-Sainte-Anne, Marguerite Blais, to be Minister responsible for Seniors. The ESCC has already communicated with Premier Charest in regard to the formation of a Working Group for English-language affairs.
- In October 2006, the ESCC participated in the Provincial Committee's consultation on the revision of regional access programs and the integration of innovative practices in the delivery of English language health and social services in areas such as primary care, residential long-term care, Info-Santé, tele-health, language training, staff retention and community networking. The recommendations emanating from this consultation to update the current access plans were submitted to the Minister for approval in the Spring of 2007.

- In January 2007, the ESCC proposed the names of candidates to serve on the Provincial Committee for the delivery of Health & Social Services in the English-language, in response to an invitation from the Minister of Health and Social Services, Philippe Couillard. Appointments have not yet been announced.
- Elections to the Boards of Directors of Public Health and Social Services' institutions took place in October 2006. The ESCC encouraged members (via the Catholic Times and in cooperation with other community organizations), of our community to consider presenting themselves as candidates and to exercise their right and responsibility to vote.
- The Community Health & Social Services Network (CHSSN), of which the ESCC has a member on the Board of Directors (John Walker), has initiated and partnered a number of projects to further accessibility to English-language healthcare services in Quebec. It works to empower Anglophone communities across the province to play a significant role in the development of these services, e.g.
 - Networking and Partnership: “Cultivating Roots”, intended to increase access to health and social services in English in the East End of Montreal. It is administered by CCS. The objective of the project is to generate, integrate and share information and knowledge by:
 - Establishing a network;
 - Completing a best practices community needs assessment;
 - Developing a website and e-mail list and;
 - Building and maintaining links to policy makers by being an active member of the provincial network.
 - The Primary Healthcare program: a \$10 million, two-year project that provides funds for public healthcare institutions to improve delivery of their services in English.
 - Partnering a language training and human resources development project, administered by McGill: a five-year, \$11.5 million program of second-language training and continuing education for francophone and anglophone healthcare professionals in the regions.
 - The Community Information and Resources program through which CHSSN provides the socio-demographic data necessary for anglophone communities to identify the health and social services issues affecting their particular population.
 - The translation network, which facilitates access to healthcare documentation in English.

Visit www.chssn.org for the latest reports on CHSSN activities under “Access” and “Community Netlink”.

Social Issues

- The future of the English-speaking population in Quebec continues to be challenged by an aging population, by fragmentation, by isolation and by changing societal values. Inspired by the conviction that seniors still have a valuable and rich contribution to make, the ESCC sees it as a civic duty to ensure that they are not marginalized and that policies and programs are in place whereby seniors are treated with dignity, enjoy access to a support system offering financial security and a supporting living environment.
- The ESCC has established a Special Committee with a mandate to advocate to improve the quality of life for Seniors. Priorities for 2007-2008 are:
 - A. Promote participation in Certificate in Pastoral Ministries Program (Concordia) and formation in the Pastoral Home Care Services initiative.
 - B. Collaborate in the Coalition dedicated to restore free medication for seniors receiving the partial guaranteed income supplement.
 - C. Pressure federal, provincial and municipal government authorities to commit to investments in measures that effectively address child and family poverty, transportation services for dependent seniors and affordable quality social housing.
 - D. Active liaison with other organizations concerned, notably, Coalition Solidarité Santé, Project Genesis, FRAPRU, CARP, Quebec Alliance of Retirees and Seniors Associations, National Council of Welfare, Conseil des Aînés, etc.
- The ESCC's Executive Director is a member of the CCS Transportation Committee chaired by Vera Danyluk, City Councillor and Mayor of Mount Royal. There is an overwhelming demand for transportation services for seniors (especially for medical appointments) in Almage, Good Shepherd, and the Teapot. It is an expensive program (salary for mini-bus driver, insurance, gasoline, etc.). Fortunately, our community is blessed with having many volunteers providing assistance to these Centres who are very dedicated and generous.
- In March 2007, the ESCC supported a petition initiated by Project Genesis addressed to the City of Montreal to purchase the site of the Hippodrome de Montreal (Blue Bonnets) from the Government of Quebec and plan a mix of residential development that would include 2,500 units for social housing, HLM residents for seniors, and cooperatives.

- The ESCC is collaborating with other community organizations, deploring the delay of one and one-half years set by the Rental Board to deal with non-urgent problems and the nine-month delay to deal with problems the Rental Board deems a priority for tenants who file complaints. For example, 82% of residents of Cotes-des-Neiges are tenants, many of whom live in precarious housing conditions that threaten their health and security. We are urging the Minister of Municipal Affairs & Regions to intervene now and significantly reduce the delays experienced for a hearing at the Rental Board. As well, we object to any legislation that may be contemplated which would make it possible to evict tenants without a hearing or which may threaten harm to tenants' rights in any way.

- In December 2002, the National Assembly adopted Bill 112, An Act to Combat Poverty & Social Exclusion, the objective of which is to guide the Government towards a process of planning and implementing actions to combat poverty, prevent its causes, and reduce its effects on individuals and families. In the Fall of 2006, the ESCC communicated with MNAs, including four Cabinet Ministers, in an appeal to ensure that adequate funding would be included in the next budget to finance measures in the legislation and honor obligations set out in the legislation to combat poverty aggressively in our society. The most recent report on the Government's Plan to combat Poverty highlights concrete measures introduced this past year, notably,
 - Increase in the minimum wage
 - Assistance to visible minorities under the Programme d'aide à l'intégration;
 - Additional monies earmarked for constructing housing units in addition to the 18,000 others under Accès Logis and the Affordable Housing Quebec program.
 - Support provided to poor families through two poverty prevention components, viz., Soutien aux jeunes parents and Soutien aux familles vivant dans l'extrême pauvreté;
 - The Homework Assistance program budget has been doubled to \$19.6 million;
 - \$90 million to provide students with disabilities or learning disorders with guidance and supervision;
 - The Child Assistance refundable tax credits;
 - Youth intervention teams, training and support services for dropouts.

Cultural Issues

The Quebec Community Groups Network (QCGN) established in 1995, represents all of the English-language minority organizations from the Outaouais to the Gaspé that receive program funding from the Department of Canadian Heritage for the development and enhancement of the vitality of the English-language minority communities in Quebec. Incidentally, our Executive Director, Martin Murphy, continues to serve as President of the QCGN (2002-2007).

In 2005, the Quebec Community Groups Network established a road map, called a "Community Development Plan", for how resources and talents can be mobilized, networks strengthened, institutional and organizational capacity built, and a new generation of leaders can acquire experience and visibility. The Plan presents a collective vision that has been elaborated by communities across Quebec.

Subsequently, a five-year Strategic Plan was adopted by the QCGN which focuses on four key objectives:

- Progressively develop a comprehensive knowledge base to support evidence-based community development among its members;
- Renew its approach to community development so that its members have access to the most current models and strategies for effectively nurturing community growth and vitality.
- Improve its capacity to influence government so that public programs and services respond more adequately to the needs and priorities of the English-speaking communities in Quebec, and
- Enhance its organizational and professional development capacity so that it provides learning and training opportunities to enhance the skills and competencies of its members.

The QCGN is supporting a project entitled “*The Greater Montreal Community Development Initiative*” that is being implemented by a group of volunteers from the West Island, Montreal Centre, East Island, Laval, and the South Shore. The purpose is to engage and consult English-speaking Montrealers, community leaders and local professionals on key issues affecting their communities and explore how they can work together to address these issues. Discussions have centered on demographics, health and social issues, education, social participation, arts and culture, heritage, economic development and employment. Phase I was launched in 2005-2006; Phase II in 2006-2007; Phase III in 2007-2008. Visit website www.qcgn.ca/greatermontrealinitiative for Report on Building upon Diversity and Change within the English-speaking communities of the Greater Montreal Region: Pursuing Shared Development Goals and Strategies, June 2007.

The QCGN’s headquarters is now located at 1255 University Street, Suite 1000, Montreal. In June 2007, it is expected that there will be a renewed membership and governance structure for the QCGN, completing the repositioning it has initiated. Its staff now includes a Director-General, a Director of Community Development and a Director of Communications. For more information on the QCGN, visit its website at www.qcgn.ca.

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

An annual budget and regular financial reports for the Board of Directors are prepared. It is expected that the ESCC should build a working capital reserve to correspond to one year's operating budget in order for the Council to continue to function without interruption from one fiscal year to the next. The Treasurer is in communication regularly with the Executive staff to review accounting and reporting procedures and to ensure that the financial resources of the ESCC are effectively managed.

The Council's audited financial statements for the period April 1, 2006 to March 31, 2007 are presented in the next section of this report.

We wish to acknowledge with gratitude those organizations which have demonstrated confidence in the effectiveness and promise of the Council by financially supporting its activities, especially the Pillars Trust Fund, other community foundations and the Department of Canadian Heritage, thus permitting the Council to continue its work directed to the enrichment of a vibrant community.

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 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 twenty-six years, the English Speaking Catholic Council has served the English-speaking Catholic community through the commitment of dedicated volunteers who have devoted their time and resources in the service of others. I am very appreciative of all the encouragement the ESCC receives from so many people in the community: the ESCC Board of Directors and Advisory Committee, Parish Priests, the Catholic Times, Catholic Community Services, Pillars Trust Fund, Montreal St. Patrick's Foundation, Father Dowd Foundation, the Department of Canadian Heritage, the Archdiocese of Montreal, Msgr. Sean Harty, Episcopal Vicar and Director and staff of the Office for English Pastoral Services. I am especially grateful to the Council's President, Colin Coole, for his generosity and support. Finally, I wish to acknowledge the excellent work done by our Executive Secretary, Suzanne Brown.

Martin P. Murphy
Executive Director
June 6, 2007