

THE TWENTY-EIGHT ANNUAL REPORT

Message from the President

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I am pleased to present the Annual Report for 2008-2009.

The Council has continued to be very active in promoting the values which form part of its mission. The following are the highlights I would like to stress:

Freedom of religion and parental choice for people of all faiths has been one core value which the Council has defended over the years. We have followed very closely the debate, as well as legal actions taken by a group of parents and by Loyola High School, regarding the new Ethics and Religious Culture Program introduced in Quebec Schools. We continue to hold that the place of parents in this context must remain paramount.

Access to English-language health and social services has been another major preoccupation of the Council. In this regard, we are very pleased to note the new agreement signed between the Community Health and Social Services Network (on whose Board the ESCC is represented) and Health Canada for a grant of \$19.5 million over four years. This will have a significant and positive impact on the services sought by an ever-increasing number of people at risk, especially seniors and the handicapped.

Community Celebration: As we are still in the Pauline Year which was designated by our Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI, to commemorate the life and ministry of St. Paul, this year the ESCC sponsored a special community celebration, with the theme "Revitalizing Faith Today". Our Guest Speaker, Father Frank DeSiano, CSP, from New York, suggested some directions that the Church (clergy and laity) could take in view of what is happening in society today as well as in terms of any particular initiatives for evangelization. Over four hundred members from various organizations which provide services to the English-speaking Catholic community attended the event.

Five years ago, the ESCC developed its Strategic Plan for the period 2005-2006 to 2009-2010. The environment in which the ESCC has operated has continued to evolve. A renewed strategic plan and positioning for the ESCC is required. Such a plan will enable the ESCC to continue to play its leadership role in the community and contribute to its ongoing vitality in a relevant and meaningful manner. This is one of our priorities for the 2009-2010 fiscal year.

I would like to acknowledge the generous support of the Montreal St. Patrick's Foundation, the Father Dowd Foundation, Pillars Trust, the Department of Canadian Heritage, and the Catholic Times, without whose continuous cooperation the Council's mission and work could not be achieved.

Finally, as I terminate my mandate, I would like to express my grateful thanks to my colleagues on the Board and Advisory Committee for their support, as well as their continuing interest in the mission and work of the Council. May I add a special word of appreciation to Martin Murphy, as well as Suzanne Brown, for their outstanding dedication and efficiency.

Sincerely yours,

Clifford Lincoln
President

ESCC COMMITTEES 2008 - 2009

Executive

CLIFFORD LINCOLN
President

LYNN LONERGAN DOYLE
Vice-President

ROBERT VAUPSHAS
Treasurer

MARY McDAID
Secretary

COLIN COOLE
Past-President

Education

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

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

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.

Community Animation

- Organizes a celebration to affirm the dynamic and positive aspects of our community, including the presentation of the Bishop Crowley Memorial Award.

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, Clifford Lincoln (ex-officio); Neil McKenty, Don Myles, Daniel O'Brien, Claire Robinson, Harold Thuringer, John Walker, Fr. John Walsh, Robert Wilkins.

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES

The following priorities were identified by the English Speaking Catholic Council for 2008-2009:

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 (The Quebec Community Groups Network, the Greater Montreal Community Development Initiative, and the Community Health and Social Services Network);
4. Reaffirm the ESCC's historical position that parents have a right to have the choice to have their children educated according to their religious convictions and personal conscience;
5. Support initiatives directed to encourage Youth retention and educational/employment opportunities.

Education

A compulsory course in Ethics and Religious Culture (E&RC) was introduced in all public and private elementary and secondary schools, French and English, in September 2008. This new course in a student's program of studies marks the final step in the secularization of schooling in Quebec that began with the constitutional amendment in 1997 and led to the replacement of denominational school boards with linguistic school boards.

Time and time again, the ESCC has defended the right of parents to have free choice in religious education for their children in accordance with their religious convictions and personal conscience. This principle was reiterated in submissions to the National Assembly, the Commission for the Estates General on Education, the Special Joint Committee of the House of Commons, and the Bouchard-Taylor Commission on Reasonable Accommodation of Minorities. More recently, since May 2008, the ESCC has been represented at meetings convened by the Quebec Association of Catholic Parents of Quebec to discuss the implementation of an action plan for the mobilization of parents in Quebec who are opposed to the imposition of the E & RC program.

In October 2008, the Gazette published the ESCC article entitled "*Freedom of Religious Instruction: A Fundamental Right of Parents and Children*". It recommended that the E&RC program be offered in a way that respects parental rights and choice in moral and religious instruction. The ESCC also publicly supported Loyola High School's motion filed in Superior Court for an exemption and to relieve it of the obligation to teach the Ministry's Ethics and Religious Culture course. On September 15, 2008, Loyola High School filed a Motion to this effect in Superior Court, which case will be heard June 8 – 11, 2009.

On April 28, 2009, the Assembly of Bishops of Quebec issued a statement assuring the Knights of Columbus (Quebec) that its Christian Education Committee is monitoring carefully the implementation of the E&RC program.

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. There are currently seventy students registered in this program. And the Office for English Pastoral Services offers a formation program in Pastoral and Spiritual Care Services. As members of the Christian community, its mission is to strive to become a compassionate care to the sick and the elderly. The program aims at providing ongoing support to volunteers on pastoral and spiritual care outreach teams in parishes and to pastors in the diocese. The ESCC encourages personnel in the community to consider enrolling in these programs.

Health & Social Services

The Community Health and Social Services Network (CHSSN) is an innovative community development initiative that brings together the experience and expertise of community resources, associations and public institutions concerned with the health and well-being of English-speaking communities in Quebec. The ESCC is a member of the CHSSN. A former President, John Walker, has been serving on the CHSSN Board of Directors and has just been elected for a further three-year term.

The CHSSN has just concluded a new Agreement with Health Canada that will deliver \$19.5 million over the next four years to improve access to English-language health and social services in Quebec. These new resources will support measures to improve the quality of life for seniors, for youth and families, and for people with physical and mental disabilities.

As of July 1, 2007, 29,000 seniors who receive more than 94% of the Guaranteed Income Supplement and those on welfare, receive free prescribed medication under the public Prescription Drug Insurance Plan. Once again this year, the ESCC appealed to the Minister of Finance, the Minister of Health and Social Services and to the Minister Responsible for Seniors, to extend this measure to the 380,000 other seniors currently receiving the partial income supplement. It should be evident that seniors who receive the partial supplement must not have much freedom in making choices for their basic necessities and must be struggling daily to survive. The ESCC continues to collaborate with Project Genesis and other members in a Coalition in the campaign to extend this measure to all those who receive the supplement.

The CHSSN has now concluded a new agreement with McGill University covering 2009-2013. This continues the five-year partnership with the McGill Training and Human Resources Development Project that began in 2003. A solid foundation was laid during Phase I of the project. The university linked up directly with seventeen regional health and social services institutions, twenty-eight language training organizations and six English-speaking community organizations. Over 5,000 French-speaking healthcare professionals received second-language training to improve their ability to provide services in English. Visit www.chssn.org for the latest reports on other initiatives.

Listed below are members currently serving on various advisory committees on health and social services, at the provincial and regional (Montreal) levels of government.

The Provincial Committee for the delivery of health and services in the English language
(www.msss.gouv.qc.ca)

Ralph Bienstock
James Carter

Laval Region
Montreal

Vicky Driscoll	North Shore
Marjorie Goodfellow (President)	Eastern Townships
Vacant	Outaouais
Jennifer Johnson-Blouin	Quebec City
Vacant	Gaspésie-Iles-de-la-Madeleine
Maria Piazza	Montreal
Aline Rahal Visser	Chaudière-Appalaches
Lorraine Torpy	Montréal
Michael Udy (Vice-President)	Montreal

The Regional Committee (Montreal) for Access to Health and Social Services Programs in English.
(www.santemontreal.qc.ca)

Cyril Morgan
 Jim Tremain
 Robert Martini
 Diane Sasson
 Germain Tullio
 Jim Gates
 Rosemary Steinberg
 Janet Forsyth
 Dora Cesta
 Marie-Josée Bonin
 Colin Goldfinch

The ESCC calls on these representatives from time to time to enlist their support of initiatives to promote and complement the health mandate of the public system, always with an explicit reference to include seniors in their deliberations.

Social Justice Issues

In the Fall of 2007, the Minister Responsible for Seniors, Marguerite Blais, conducted public consultations on Living Conditions for Seniors. The report describes the phenomenon of the ageing of the population of Quebec and concludes that the current situation calls for reform based on these principles, notably, the respect for the dignity of the whole person, the need for all policies and programs to be constructed on the recognition of the value of seniors to our communities and that seniors are one of society's greatest assets. Translating these principles and associated recommendations in the Report into concrete measures to improve conditions for Seniors is a moral and social imperative.

Reference to inadequate access to government information on public services in English was a recurring theme identified by seniors and their families during the public hearings. While the Report "*Preparing the Future with our Seniors*" is available in English on the internet, we know that only 28% of seniors have access to that medium. We believe it should be widely distributed and readily accessible in print form to the English-speaking community. The ESCC has communicated with the Minister urging her to take corrective action in order that English-speaking organizations and interested individuals will have access to the printed Report in English and the necessary resources to ensure full participation in initiatives being offered.

As a direct response to the testimony heard from Seniors during the consultation process, three priorities in the 2009 budget were identified by the Government, viz., support for caregivers, an investment of \$4 million to put into effect an action plan to deal with elderly abuse, and \$1.4 million for the protection of vulnerable seniors (un service d'appel automatisé). The Minister invited organizations to submit projects focusing on these objectives. The ESCC encouraged CCS to submit applications for funding on behalf of its three centres.

The Quebec Community Groups Network received funding for a project to conduct a survey on specific issues affecting English-speaking seniors in Quebec, and formulate specific recommendations to address its findings. The target date for completion is December 2009. The ESCC Executive Director is involved in this project.

The Federal Government is now accepting proposals from non-profit organizations under the new Horizons for Seniors Program, which provides funding to help ensure that seniors can benefit from and contribute to the quality of life in their communities through Community Participation and Leadership Funding, Capital Assistance Funding (upgrading community facilities and equipment related to existing programs and activities for seniors), and Elder Abuse Awareness. The ESCC is encouraging organizations within its network of community resources, including CCS, Combined Homes of Father Dowd, St. Andrew's and St. Margaret's, to apply for funding through Call for Proposals (visit www.hrsdc.gc.ca/seniors).

Bill 112, legislation adopted in 2002, called on the Government for an action plan to combat poverty, introduce measures to prevent its causes and reduce its effects on individuals and families. Progress achieved to date summarized in successive government annual reports is encouraging.

In the Fall of 2008, the ESCC recommended to the Quebec Minister of Finance that significant investments be targeted in the next budget to support the well-being of all citizens, especially the most vulnerable members of our society. In the 2009 budget, the Quebec Government announced important investments for the construction and renovation of additional quality, affordable and accessible social housing units. It set aside \$26 million a year under the five-year Accès Logis program to build new housing units and has earmarked \$96 million a year until 2013 to renovate and repair existing housing units under another infrastructure program, Habitations à loyer modique. The ESCC continues to support the Front d'action populaire en réaménager urbain (FRAPRU) in lobbying the Provincial Government to provide additional financial support for social housing units to respond to established needs.

The Member of the National Assembly for Jacques-Cartier and Chair of the Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Geoff Kelley, conducted a consultation in the Fall of 2008 on the subject of Homelessness. "The objective is to propose realistic concrete solutions to the problem that will have lasting effects, whether it be a matter of helping the homeless find their way back to their communities, developing social reintegration programs, facilitating access to school or the job market, providing more social housing with community support, keeping the homeless out of the court system or optimizing the resources already in place". Thirty-five organizations which serve the homeless were invited to participate in the public debate held in Montreal in late September and early October. (Le Bon Dieu dans la rue, Mission Bon Accueil, Mission Old Brewery, Les Oeuvres de la Maison du Père, etc.). The Committee completed its hearings on the day before the recent provincial election was called. It is expected that the report will be tabled in the National Assembly before adjourning for the summer. The Gazette reported on April 10, 2009 that Quebec is declaring War on Poverty II with a multibillion-dollar battle plan. The ESCC has been in communication with Members of the National Assembly on this file. And in another section on the same page, there is the announcement of a

contract for the construction of a long-term care centre for seniors in St-Lambert. ESCC Immediate Past President, Colin Coole, is monitoring this file.

Advocacy to combat poverty remains a priority for the English-speaking Catholic Council. We will continue to be proactive in our efforts to influence public policy at both the Provincial and Federal levels, advocating for initiatives directed to eradicating the scourge of poverty in our society. We acknowledge that federal/provincial inter-jurisdictional issues can complicate implementation of certain programs in areas where the Quebec Government claims exclusive responsibility. However, there are many fine examples to demonstrate where collaborative agreements have been successfully concluded to the satisfaction of both parties concerned; notably on September 4, 2008, the Federal Government allocated \$1.9 billion to extend programs to combat homelessness in Canada. Finance Minister Flaherty in the January 2009 budget under infrastructure, targeted \$ 2 billion over the next two years for the construction of social housing. Incidentally, in early January 2009, the ESCC made a special appeal to the M.P. from Lac St. Louis, Francis Scarpaleggia, to support measures to counter the debilitating effects of poverty and reduce the inequalities that are detrimental to social inclusion. Mr. Scarpaleggia immediately forwarded the ESCC recommendations directly to the Minister of Finance and indicated to him his support of our proposals.

Cultural Issues

The Quebec Community Groups Network (QCGN), established in 1995, represents all of the English-language minority organizations and sectors 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.

In 2005, the QCGN 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. This Plan presents a collective vision that has been elaborated by communities across Quebec. Subsequently, a five-year Strategic Plan was adopted by the QCGN and it is now being updated covering the period 2009-2014. The QCGN is also supporting a project entitled “The Greater Montreal Community Development Initiative”. It is being implemented by a group of volunteers from the Greater Montreal area. Leaders in the community meet regularly to shape policies and find concrete solutions that will have a direct positive impact on the lives of members of this community. A new Strategic Plan for the period 2009-2014 is being developed. It will include a proposal for a permanent coordinating capacity to ensure effective leadership in the Region and support of long-term funding of key community sectors. (Visit QCGN’s website at www.qcgn.ca and see the link for GMCDI).

As part of its ongoing expression of its own leadership role, the ESCC is encouraging leadership for the benefit of the greater community by identifying and motivating candidates to sit on various Boards and Communities of significance to the minority community in Quebec.

In 2008, the ESCC sponsored five members of our community to attend the Association of Canadian Studies and its partners’ Symposium on Youth and Official Language Minorities in Canada held at Concordia University. In January 2009, the QCGN Youth Standing Committee (ESCC’s representative was Co-Chair) produced a document entitled “Creating Spaces for Young Quebecers”. It outlines strategies that youth have recommended to help achieve its collective vision for English-speaking youth in Quebec. (Visit QCGN’s website at www.qcgn.ca for a complete report.)

In the Fall of 2004, the ESCC sponsored the English-speaking Catholic Community Rally. Eighty community organizations participated, demonstrating the great diversity of our community's resources and the remarkable contribution of hundreds of generous volunteers. In 2006, the English Speaking Catholic Council celebrated its 25th Anniversary. This year instead of a Rally, a community celebration at which over four hundred people were in attendance was held on Thursday, May 14, 2009 at the Eric Maclean, S.J. Centre for Performing Arts. Father Frank DeSiano, CSP, from New York was our guest speaker, who addressed us on "*Revitalizing Faith Today*". Fr. DeSiano is an international leader, inspirational speaker and author in the field of evangelization. He is former President of the Paulist Fathers and is currently serving as President of the Paulist National Catholic Evangelization Association.

In memory of the late Bishop Leonard Crowley, former Auxiliary Bishop of Montreal and Director of the Office for English Language Affairs, the **Bishop Crowley Memorial Award** recognizing distinguished service in the community by an individual or organization was presented at this special event to Don Myles, Janet and Richard Macklem and the Parish Catechetical Leaders from the English Section of the Archdiocese of Montreal.

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-half 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, 2008 to March 31, 2009 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 Father Dowd Foundation; the Montreal St. Patrick's Foundation, the Pillars Trust Fund 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-eight years, the English Speaking Catholic Council 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. 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, the Archdiocese of Montreal and the Office for English Pastoral Services, Parish Priests, the Catholic Times, Catholic Community Services; Father Dowd Foundation; Montreal St. Patrick's Foundation; Pillars Trust Fund and the Department of Canadian Heritage. I am especially grateful to the Council's President, Clifford Lincoln, for his inspiration and support. Finally, I wish to acknowledge the excellent work done by our Executive Secretary, Suzanne Brown.

Martin P. Murphy
Executive Director
June 17, 2009