

# THE TWENTY-NINTH ANNUAL REPORT

## **Message from the President**

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I am pleased to present the Annual Report for 2009-2010.

The English Speaking Catholic Council continues to uphold and promote Catholic values in its advocacy efforts.

Within the main areas of our mission, we strive to be both present and proactive in expressing the concerns and aspirations of the broader community.

In Education, our interventions and continuing interest have been recognized by the Quebec Government. We have been invited by the Minister of Education to nominate a candidate to the Advisory Board on English Education for the term 2010-2013. At a moment when we face important and sensitive issues such as Bills 104 and 103, and the debate surrounding the Ethics and Religious Culture program, it is timely that we should have a continuing input into advice given to the Minister of Education on English Education.

We continue to be particularly active in the field of Health and Social Services. Services in English, especially in the Greater Montreal Region and in relation to an ever-increasing elderly population, have been a key focus of our initiatives. ESCC remains one of the very few organizations which, in all its interventions, keeps stressing the importance of the religious dimension within the overall context of care extended to citizens, especially seniors – among the most vulnerable of our community. One of the focal channels of our activity is the strong continuing presence we enjoy on the Board of the Community Health and Social Services Network, where John Walker, a former ESCC President, represents us most effectively. The work as well as the substantial level of funding achieved by the CHSSN, are excellent examples of community coordination and advocacy at their best.

We have endeavoured to keep abreast of key social and cultural issues related to our mission, continuing to press government and other decision-makers to implement programs and commitments in the intertwined fields of poverty, homelessness, and the minimum wage. To this end, we have intervened or have met with political representatives throughout the year, to urge follow-up and implementation.

The ESCC will present a Brief to the Quebec Government's Select Committee on Dying with Dignity, which will sit at the end of this summer. One of our Board members, Dr. Philippe Violette, and his wife, Dr. Ramona Coelho, have kindly accepted to be principal authors of our brief to the Commission.

Finally, the Board and Advisory Committee of the ESCC spent several meetings to discuss and suggest revisions to update our Strategic Plan for the coming five years. We are deeply grateful to Kevin Saville of KSAR & Associates Ottawa, for having kindly offered his expert advice and services pro bono, and for having so effectively guided us in our deliberations. We will complete our work this summer, with a view to adopting the new Strategic Plan at the forthcoming Annual General Meeting.

To all members of the Board and Advisory Committee, I would like to express my warm appreciation for your presence and contribution. My special thanks go to Martin Murphy, ably assisted by Suzanne Brown, whose dedication and efficiency greatly facilitate the work of the Council.

Sincerely yours,

Clifford Lincoln  
President

## **ESCC COMMITTEES 2009 - 2010**

### **Executive**

CLIFFORD LINCOLN  
President

MARY McDAID  
Vice-President

ROBERT VAUPSHAS  
Treasurer

DANIEL CERE  
Vice-President

PAUL DONOVAN  
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.

### **Seniors**

- Advocates to improve the quality of life for Seniors.

### **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 2009-2010:

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.
6. Develop new Strategic Plan 2010 – 2015.

### **Education**

- On October 22, 2009, the Supreme Court of Canada found Bill 104 (denying eligibility to a student to attend an English school after having attended a non-subsidized private English school for one year), to be unconstitutional. At the time, the Quebec Government was given a reprieve of one year to review the legislation and consider an amendment to Bill 101, the Charter of the French Language. As a member of the Quebec Community Groups Network (QCGN), the ESCC's Executive Director participated in all discussions on this issue by the Executive and Board of the QCGN. The QCGN had the resources to solicit professional advice on strategies to achieve a reasonable compromise between the goals of protecting the French language and preserving the vitality of English schools and school boards. The QCGN has requested a meeting with the Minister of Culture, the Minister of Justice and the Minister of Education, and has invited a representative of the ESCC to accompany the QCGN, if and when such a meeting is scheduled. The ESCC was also invited to attend a press conference of May 11, 2010, involving the Presidents of the four largest English public school boards in the province, the Quebec Association of Independent Schools and a former Commissioner of Official Languages. The Quebec Government has introduced legislation in response to the Supreme Court ruling on Bill 104. It is Bill 103, An Act to amend the Charter of the French language and other legislative provisions. The Committee on Culture and Education will hold public hearings on this Bill, beginning on September 2, 2010.
- 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 Ethics and Religious Culture (E & RC) compulsory course introduced in all public and private elementary and secondary schools, French and English, in September 2008, be offered in a way that respects parental rights and choice in moral and religious instruction. The ESCC also supported Loyola High School's motion filed in Superior Court on

September 15, 2008, for an exemption and to relieve it of the obligation to teach the Ministry's Ethics and Religious Culture course. On June 18, 2010, the Quebec Superior Court rendered its decision. It ruled in favor of Loyola High School's motion that by compelling Loyola to adhere to rigidly secular teaching guidelines, the provincial government violated the school's freedom of religion as guaranteed under the Quebec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms.

- In January 1993, the Advisory Board on English Education was established. Its mandate is to advise the Minister of Education on all matters affecting the educational services offered in English elementary and secondary schools. The term of office for the fifteen members on the Advisory Board is normally three years. Candidates are nominated by English education associations and organizations that represent teachers, parents, school and board administrators and commissioners as well as individuals involved in post-secondary education, and community representatives. The ESCC has received an invitation from the Ministry of Education to nominate a candidate to serve on the Advisory Board, 2010-2013.

### **Health & Social Services**

- The Agence de la santé et des services sociaux de Montréal invited representatives of English-speaking community organizations and institutions, including the ESCC, concerned with Health and Social Service issues to a meeting in April 2010, the purpose of which was to evaluate the current program on access to health and social services in English in the Montreal Region. It mandated CROP to conduct the exercise. An inventory was taken of good practices and areas of vulnerability. The findings will be considered by the Agence in the development of an action plan with the objective of improving accessibility to quality health and social services in English in the Montreal Region. On this occasion, the ESCC underlined the importance of the spiritual dimension of personal identity and its importance to aging individuals and to people around them. It was noted that the elderly often enter a phase of intense search for meaning and for understanding of the nature of life and the place of the individual in the world. This search for meaning can be aided by the provision of pastoral relationships through the presence of clergy, trained laity and other spiritual advisors. The importance of the spiritual aspect of aging combined with the growing cultural and religious diversity of the Quebec population suggest that this challenge needs to be addressed directly and creatively.
- The Community Health and Social Services Network (CHSSN) has concluded a new Agreement with the Federal Government that will deliver \$19.5 million between now and 2013 under the management of CHSSN, to improve access to health and social services in the English language in Quebec. These new resources will support measures to improve the quality of life for English-speaking seniors, for youth and families and for people with physical and mental disabilities. Another \$19 million was awarded to McGill University for training and retention of healthcare professionals (to serve English-speaking clients). This brings the total investment to \$75 million since 2001 to support measures to improve access to health and social services in English in Quebec. The ESCC is a member of CHSSN. A former ESCC President, John Walker and the current Director-General of CCS – Catholic Community Services, Bruno Mital, are members of the CHSSN Board of Directors.
- In March 2010, the ESCC was represented by Board Member, Nina Kim, at the Seniors' Health Promotion Symposium: Sharing Best Practices of the English-speaking Community from across Quebec. The

program funded by Health Canada (a joint initiative of the Cummings Centre, Jeffrey Hale and CHSSN), included such topics as:

- Intergenerational Volunteerism: When Students and Seniors share their expertise;
- Program for Seniors with reduced autonomy;
- Community Mental Health Program;
- Home Care;
- Adapted exercise programs;
- Seniors' Health Promotion and Education.

## **Social Justice**

- Poverty: Bill 112, An Act to combat poverty and social exclusion, adopted in June 2002, requires the Government to appoint an Advisory Committee (every three years) of fifteen members from representative groups to advise the Minister on planning, implementation and evaluation of actions to combat poverty.

In visiting the Ministry's website in early February, it was discovered that some terms had expired in 2008 and others in 2009. A message was sent to the Bureau des renseignements et plaints du ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale, requesting that at least one member of the English-speaking minority community of approximately one million people be invited to represent it on this committee. This was brought to the attention of the Member of the National Assembly for D'Arcy McGee, Lawrence Bergman. He followed-up and discovered that the appointments have been confirmed again without any specific representation unfortunately from the English-speaking community. However, he invited us to provide him with recommendations of candidates to be considered in future appointments to serve on other Committees.

- In November 2009, the ESCC's Executive Director participated in a "Call to Mobilization" event organized by the Coalition Solidarité Santé (of which the ESCC is an associate member), for "a real plan to combat poverty". This appeal was addressed to the Minister of Employment and Social Solidarity, Sam Hamad, who was then consulting representatives of selected organizations prior to the launch of Phase II of the Governmental Plan to Combat Poverty and Social Exclusion. Included among many other demands were:
  - The provision of concrete measures to combat poverty affecting immigrants and visible minorities in the Montreal region.
  - An increase in the minimum wage to a level that enables people no longer to live in poverty;
  - The institution of a strategy on homelessness with concrete measures to improve the situation especially in Montreal;
  - The elimination of the categorization of last-resort financial assistance and an increase in the benefits to provide for the special needs of people with disabilities.
- In January 2010, the Front d'action populaire en réaménagement urbain (FRAPRU) communicated with the Minister of Finance, Raymond Bachand, urging him to commit to a five-year investment in social housing in order to permit the construction of 50,000 new social housing units. The ESCC supported this campaign.
- On March 30, 2010, the Minister of Finance, Raymond Bachand, announced that the plan to combat poverty will be renewed for five years, until 2014-2015. The new plan provides for investments of \$1.3 billion. In

particular, it maintains the existing programs for the most underprivileged. Since 2004-2005, the government has devoted \$4.5 billion to this plan that has produced results of which all Quebecers can be proud. According to data provided by the Government of Quebec, the poverty rate of Quebec families is now 20% lower than that of other Canadian families.”

- In the Fall of 2008, the Government of Quebec conducted a consultation on the subject of Homelessness. The objective was “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.” We have been advised that the translated version into English should be available in June 2010.
- On April 11, 2010, a Press Release was issued by the Minister Responsible for Seniors, Marguerite Blais, on the 2010-2011 provincial budget stipulating that the social safety net will be maintained: “Budgetary balance will not be restored at the expense of social justice. We are protecting our values by improving the living conditions of Quebecers, particularly those who are most disadvantaged, and seniors.” In April 2010, the Minister Responsible for Seniors, Marguerite Blais, announced an increase of \$16 million over the next five years for community organizations intended to improve living conditions of seniors, e.g., an action plan to combat elderly abuse and mistreatment, support home caregivers more efficiently, etc. CCS has submitted several project funding applications to the Provincial Government on behalf of its three Centres.
- The Federal Government has invited non-profit organizations once again this year to submit proposals 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. This material has been distributed within our network of community resources. CCS has submitted applications on behalf of its three Centres to the Federal Government.
- In the Summer of 2009, the Quebec Community Groups Network (QCGN) received a project grant through the New Horizons for Seniors Program from Human Resources and Social Development Canada to develop a database of available services in English in Quebec for Seniors. A survey was conducted to identify organizations that provide services to seniors in English. A working Committee of Seniors actively involved in their regional English-speaking communities in Quebec was formed to provide strategic direction in the development of an Action Plan. The ESCC Executive Director participated in the development of the initial survey project and supported a multi-year application to the Provincial Government submitted to the Secretariat by the QCGN. The appeal centered on the urgent need for seniors’ organizations and service providers to develop strategies which will specifically address and respond to the growing challenges facing our aging English-speaking population. A total of \$98,000 (\$50,000 in 2010-2011 and \$48,000 in 2011-2012) has been approved for this project.
- The Quebec English Speaking Communities Research Network (QUESCREN), a joint initiative of the Canadian Institute for Research on Linguistic Minorities and Concordia University’s School of Extended Learning, is an alliance of researchers, community members and institutions, dedicated to developing research capacity related to Quebec’s English-speaking communities. QUESCREN has invited the ESCC’s Executive Director to join its Poverty Research Group. – sixty people, academics, community stakeholders and government representatives interested in studying poverty and social exclusion among Quebec’s

English-speaking communities. Activities to date have been to define the parameters of its work: What has been done and what needs to be done in terms of research and action.

- Federal Bill C-384, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (right to die with dignity) was defeated in the House of Commons on April 21, 2010 (59 Yays; 228 Nays). In December 2009, the National Assembly unanimously adopted a motion to create a Select Committee on dying with dignity. Those who wish to present a brief must submit such a request by July 16, 2010. MNA and Chairman of the Committee, Geoff Kelley, has already indicated that ESCC representatives will be invited to the public hearings which will begin in late Summer 2010.
- The ESCC has added its voice with other leaders, clergy and laity of major religions in opposition to the entry of Loto-Quebec into internet gambling, and the expansion of the base of casinos, whether sponsored by the Government or not.
- In November 2009, the ESCC submitted a program funding application for the fiscal years 2010-2012 to the Department of Canadian Heritage under the Community Life Component – Official Language Communities Program. One activity component is Advocacy to alleviate Child and Family Poverty. Progress in the area of economic security is a sign of hope for thousands who want to live with dignity, achieve their ambitions and contribute fully to our society's development. But persistent social and economic inequality based on gender, race and ability continues to be reflected in high poverty rates especially among families. A second component of the application is funding for Advocacy to improve living conditions of English-speaking seniors. Despite very tangible results taken by the Government of Quebec to strengthen social policy benefitting seniors, the recent province-wide consultation report bears witness to a vast range of issues which remain to be addressed. The care of seniors, especially the frail elderly, is a moral and social imperative for the ESCC.

## **Cultural Issues**

- In 2004, the ESCC Board of Directors and its Advisory Committee developed a framework for a five-year Strategic Plan having identified the context in which it operated, objectives that would guide a focus and initiatives intended to support its strategic objectives. Both parties are currently involved in composing a new Strategic Plan for 2010-2015 in order that it may position itself to operate successfully in its evolving environment during this period. 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.
- On May 19 and 20, 2010, the ESCC Executive Director participated in a dialogue session on the Roadmap for Canada's Linguistic Duality 2010-2013 in Ottawa organized by the Official Languages Secretariat of the Department of Canadian Heritage. This is a government-wide investment of \$1.1 billion over five years. Through the Roadmap, the Government of Canada will increase its support in the areas of health, justice, economic development, and arts and culture for both official language minority communities in Canada.

The event focused on developing a shared understanding of the issues, challenges and proposed solutions related to the implementation of the Roadmap, as well as maintaining a dialogue on the evolution of the Official Languages Program. Challenges: Lack of progress in addressing the conundrum of supporting an English Official Language Minority Community within a jurisdiction that does not recognize the concept

and trying to impose federal will in a Province that jealously guards its constitutionally protected jurisdiction.

The ESCC Executive Director speaking in the dialogue session reiterated many of the key messages in the ESCC Brief delivered at the public consultation on Seniors' Living Conditions conducted by the Government of Quebec in September 2007:

1. The value of the individual person and the protection of the dignity of each individual as he/she ages must be recognized.
2. Respect for dignity has an important language dimension, especially in health and social services, where quality of care is directly linked to the capacity for clear communication between health professionals and patients or clients.
3. Respect for dignity must take account of the spiritual element of individual identity and well-being.
4. All policies and programs must be constructed on a repeatedly stated recognition of the value of seniors to our communities. Their presence enriches the lives of all members of the community. Their energy, experience, wisdom, creativity, counsel, search for meaning at the end of life, involvement in the lives of others, especially children, are all precious contributions to the health of families, communities and society.
5. Efforts must be made to capture the willingness of younger generations to work with seniors to protect dignity, to provide care and to promote as full and independent life as possible to each aging individual.

There are clear gaps between services that are provided/available and services that are required for English-speaking seniors. The ESCC recommended that English-speaking seniors need a provincial network that is equivalent to what exists for the Federation of French-speaking Seniors (in the rest of Canada), to advocate for their rights, provide organizational support, and develop partnerships for national programs.

- The Language Rights Support Program (LRSP) which replaced the Court Challenges Program, was introduced in 2008. It aims to inform Canadians of their constitutional linguistic rights through public education, to provide access to an alternative dispute resolution process, and to support legal remedies that will allow the advancement and the clarification of linguistic rights. Made up of lawyers, dispute resolution specialists and minority language community representatives from across the country, the nine-member panel is responsible for guiding the LRSP's efforts. One of these experts is Montreal Lawyer, Richard McConomy. A Gaspé marketing firm manager, Brad McDonald is the other Quebecer named to the panel of experts. The LRSP also has a National Consultation Board which has five members from Quebec, viz., Robert Donnelly, President of the Quebec Community Groups Network, Sylvia Martin-Laforge, QCGN Director-General, a representative of the Voice of English Quebec in Quebec City, ESCC President, Clifford Lincoln and its Executive Director, Martin Murphy. The first meeting of the National Consultation Board was held in Ottawa on February 24, 2010.
- The Greater Montreal Community Development Initiative (GMCDI) was created by the QCGN in 2002/03 to assist the English-speaking minority community in the Greater Montreal area in identifying shared community development challenges and priorities and determine the most effective strategies to address them. The origins and diversity of the English-speaking population living in Greater Montreal are significantly different from those of English-speaking Quebecers living elsewhere in the province. This

population is far from a homogeneous group. Their daily realities are different as well as the challenges they encounter.

In recent years, since the vacuum created by the inactivity of Alliance Quebec, the QCGN and the English Speaking Catholic Council, among others, have attempted to fill that void. It has provided leadership in advocating to improve conditions for the English-speaking minority population, especially in education, health and social services, social justice, culture and community animation. But the Greater Montreal area where seventy-six percent of the English-speaking minority lives, requires a formal community coordinating mechanism which will nurture and foster a collective expression of needs and aspirations and more importantly, a collective engagement towards community problem-solving. The GMCDI has the potential to respond to the contemporary realities and diversity of this community.

The English Speaking Catholic Council has supported the efforts of the Quebec Community Groups Network in securing adequate resources from the Department of Canadian Heritage for the Greater Montreal Community Development Initiative in order that it may effectively execute its community development mandate, fully cognizant of the current community dynamics and political landscape. In 2009-2010, the Department of Canadian Heritage provided QCGN with a contribution of \$180,000 for this project.

- One of the priorities of the ESCC is to support initiatives directed to encourage Youth retention and educational/employment opportunities in the Province of Quebec. The ESCC has been invited to participate actively in the QCGN Youth Initiative. It also wishes to collaborate with the Youth Ministry's services of the Office for English Pastoral Services and through this network have closer liaison with youth leadership in Parishes.

## **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, 2009 to March 31, 2010 are presented in the 2009-2010 ESCC Annual 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-nine 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. We are very appreciative of all the encouragement the ESCC receives from so many people in the community: The ESCC Board of Directors and its Advisory Committee, the Archdiocese of Montreal and the Office for English Pastoral Services, Parish Priests, the Catholic Times, CCS - 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  
The English Speaking Catholic Council  
Montreal, June 2010