



2023/2024

Annual Impact Report

**MANITOBA**





# THANK YOU

## FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

*The wise woman builds her house, but with her own hands the foolish one tears hers down.*

— PROVERBS 14:1 NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION (NIV)

Proverbs' Lady Wisdom teaches us the lasting value of wise planning and hard work. This wisdom is especially meaningful as I write this letter just days after MCC Manitoba's first anniversary in our new Winnipeg location, where we moved on June 28, 2023.

Thanks to God and careful planning, our first year at 140 Bannatyne Ave. confirms we have built a strong foundation.

Many folks will remember that MCC Manitoba resided on Plaza Dr. and Henderson Hwy for many years. With the closing of Ten Thousand Villages and the rise of hybrid work, it became clear we would not fill the building on Plaza anymore. Our new building provides a beautiful and unique venue for three key things: offices, a material resources working space and youth engagement programs at Sam's Place Coffee shop.

One year in, the coffee shop is busy and youth employment training has been elevated. All MCC Manitoba offices and staff coexist in one location. And most happily, volunteers, supporters, churches, schools and guests visit us often in the Exchange District.

MCC Manitoba is finding innovative ways to do our work in a new neighbourhood, supported by friends, both familiar and new, and the vast generosity of MCC supporters, as this annual impact report shows.

We continue to pray for wisdom as we learn and grow, giving thanks to Christ who strengthens us in all things.

**DARRYL LOEWEN**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, MCC MANITOBA



# ABOUT MCC MANITOBA

MCC Manitoba works to relieve injustice, develop people's inherent strengths and foster peace within communities. We strive to create and support individuals and communities through the values of justice, dignity and compassion in the name of Christ, both at home and around the world.

## MCC MANITOBA LEADERSHIP TEAM



**Joanna Hiebert Bergen**  
Program Director



**Valorie Block**  
Development & Communications Director



**Josué Figueroa**  
Director of Social Enterprise



**Carlee Friesen**  
Director of Finance, Manitoba & Saskatchewan



**Iliana Friesen**  
Director of Human Resources



**Joni Sawatzky**  
Executive Office Administrator

## WORKING IN TREATIED TERRITORIES

MCC Manitoba is committed to building right relationships with one another, God and creation.

MCC's work and relationships extend to all five numbered treaties that cover the province. These treaties are not simply agreements made in the past but require continuous renewal of commitment and action to live well with others on the land. We acknowledge the harms that have been committed to the Indigenous peoples of this land by those of us who have settled here, and we strive toward reconciliation in our words and deeds.

MCC Manitoba seeks to prioritize equity, justice and Indigenous self-determination according to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

## MCC MANITOBA BOARD MEMBERS

**Janet Plenert**  
Chair, MC

**Ed Barkman**  
Vice Chair, EMC

**John Wieler**  
Secretary, MB

**Lloyd Plett**  
Treasurer,  
Director at Large

**Ennet Bera**  
Director at Large

**Maureen Gathogo**  
Director at Large

**Robert Goertzen**  
EMC

**Carla Kehler**  
Director at Large

**Yvonne Stoesz**  
MC

**Danika Warkentin**  
Student Representative

**David Woelk**  
MB



# THRIFT

Over the past two years, Steinbach MCC Thrift Shop has experienced significant success with record-breaking sales and a doubling of volunteer numbers. Major renovations including new flooring, paint and displays have led to a refreshed shopping environment, attracting more customers and donations.

“The dynamics of our current board are fantastic,” says store manager Dave Thiessen (pictured). “With the support of our loyal volunteers and the community, we’ve not only recovered from COVID-19 but exceeded expectations.”



(MCC Photo/Michael Veith)

## MCC Manitoba Social Enterprise highlights:

**\$ 4,273,131**

contributed by Thrift to the work of MCC

**1,752**

MCC Thrift shop volunteers

**1,088**

training hours (approx.) logged by Sam’s Place Coffee program participants

**19**

youth and young adults gained employable skills

# SOCIAL ENTERPRISE



You’re giving opportunities to members of our community.

*“It’s amazing and it’s very evident that Winnipeg needs more spaces like this because there’s just not enough.”*

REBECCA ENGEL, SAM’S PLACE COFFEE VOLUNTEER AND YOUTH PROGRAM COORDINATOR

Photo: 

Sam’s Place Coffee youth training program participants behind the coffee shop counter at the new location at 140 Bannatyne Ave. (MCC photo/Michael Veith)



Sam's Place Coffee, a vibrant youth-run coffee shop, relocated from Henderson Hwy to its new home in Winnipeg's Exchange District in October 2023. Transitioning away from its former roles as a bookstore, music venue and restaurant, Sam's Place has become a platform that encourages curiosity and creates connection between MCC's local and international programs.

The shift was aimed at prioritizing the quality of the shop's youth engagement training program and enhancing the visibility of MCC Manitoba's international efforts. The space was intentionally designed with glass barn doors that offer patrons a glimpse into MCC Manitoba's adjoining Material Resources space, showcasing activities like relief kit packing.

The Sam's Place team ensured a smooth transition, refining its youth program, brand and merchandise, as well as planning new social media strategies. Half a year into operating at 140 Bannatyne Ave., their efforts have paid off with a

beautifully designed space and renewed focus on youth employment training.

"The response that we received was much more than we were anticipating," says Alison Greenslade, Sam's Place manager. "Basically, we had hours-long lineups all opening week."

In February, Sam's Place launched a new Barista certification program. One standout participant earned a spot by improving reliability and communication skills during the core retail training program last Fall. With ongoing success stories, the youth engagement program remains highly sought after, with more youth applications than available spots.

"The response has been amazing. My email is full," says Youth Program Coordinator Rebecca Engel. "It's amazing and it's very evident that Winnipeg needs more spaces like this because there's just not enough."

Scan the QR code to hear the Threads podcast:



# MATERIAL RESOURCES



Your support brings relief and offers people hope.

*“Recognizing the humanity and worth of the inmates, meeting their basic needs is an investment in their future and their communities.”*

**SOPHIA KUTSIURUBA,  
MATERIAL RESOURCES  
AND ENGAGEMENT  
COORDINATOR**

Photo: \_\_\_\_\_ ↗

Linda Dickinson, (pictured top left), material resources coordinator with MCC Alberta, greets a woman and baby at Mukobeko Maximum Correctional Centre in Kabwe, Zambia. (Photo courtesy of Zambia Correctional Services)



During a visit to Zambia in September 2023, the material resources network stopped at Zambia Correctional Services, an MCC partner receiving and distributing material resources kits and comforters. This partnership provides hygiene items and skills training supplies to support inmates’ rehabilitation. A recent shipment from Canada included hygiene kits, relief kits, comforters, school kits and sewing kits.

“I recognized multiple items as coming from Manitoba, including some of the comforters and the hygiene kits on the bunks,” says Sophia Kutsiuruba, material resources and engagement coordinator for MCC Manitoba. “One comforter was made by a Manitoba Hutterite colony.”

This year, MCC provided 53,601 comforters to people in need in Zambia, Ukraine, Malawi, Puerto Rico and El Salvador, with 14 per cent originating from grassroots support in Manitoba.

## Material resources shipped from Manitoba last year:



**7,622**  
Comforters



**4,220**  
Hygiene kits



**686**  
Relief kits



**792**  
School kits



**1,003**  
Volunteer hours




**700**  
Dignity kits



# COMMUNITY GIVING



You're working as a community to support the work of MCC.

**Photo:**  Frank and Betty Friesen with their daughter and son-in-law on the golf green in 2016. They've golfed together for many years. (MCC photo/Alison Ralph)

**20**  
years of the annual golf tournament raising funds for MCC projects

**369**  
Grow Hope acres sponsored in support of global food security

**4,317**  
individuals, businesses and churches made a donation

**6,628**  
personal connections made with MCC supporters



The annual MCC Manitoba Golf Tournament at Bridges Golf Course near Starbuck celebrated its 20th year, attracting 131 golfers and raising \$25,000 for MCC's humanitarian relief efforts.

The event is a testament to the vision, dedication and legacy of four friends during a casual game of golf. The late Jona Leppky, who passed away in 2022, took on the role of chairperson by default because, as he put it, he was the only one who stayed north for the winter. For nine years, he spearheaded the event, nurturing the growth that led it to where it is today.

Avid golfers Frank and Betty Friesen have enjoyed the tournament for many years, "maybe as long as it has been in existence," said Frank. "We enjoy the outing with friends or family centred around golf – which is our favourite thing to do."

## Practicing generosity

Lorena Penner inspired her piano students to practice more and fundraise \$150 at the same time. "The students were given a nickel for every day that they practiced," said Penner. A chicken sticker was added to a wall chart for every \$10 raised until they had enough for 10 chickens from the Christmas Giving Guide, with parents pitching in enough for five more.



Chim Yean and Reach Koeun, with their chickens in Prey Toun, Cambodia. (Photo/Matthew Lester)

# Your Gifts at Work at Home

## 2022-2023 MCC Manitoba Program highlights:

86

people attended events about the importance of peace to creation care and climate change response

99

participants in *Our Shared Future* experiential activity

10

local partners received support from the Indigenous Neighbours program

4

advocacy initiatives for Indigenous rights and environmental impacts

11

students joined the first Abuse Response and Prevention university-accredited course

25

events (sermons, presentations and workshops) facilitated by the Indigenous Neighbours program and partners

## Indigenous Neighbours



(ICH photo/Will Braun)

Hydropower is often seen as an eco-friendly energy source, but it has harmed Indigenous lands and livelihoods in northern Manitoba. Communities like O-Pipon-Na-Piwin Cree Nation (South Indian Lake) have faced displacement and disruption to their way of life.

Leslie Dysart, a multi-generational hunter, fisher and trapper from the First Nation (pictured above), was forced to relocate when his home and traditional lands were flooded by Manitoba Hydro for the Churchill River Diversion (CRD). “Before [the CRD], South Indian Lake was a beacon of independence and prosperity,” said Dysart. Now, the community deals with social and economic issues like dependency, poor health and addictions.

MCC has been working with these communities through organizations like the Interfaith Council on Hydropower (ICH) to address these injustices and advocate for meaningful consultation. In May 2023, MCC met with Manitoba Senator Mary Jane McCallum to discuss Bill C-226, highlighting Dysart’s advocacy. This bill would bring the concept of environmental racism into Canadian law. Dysart testified on Bill C-226 in April, and the bill received royal assent in May 2024, mandating Canada’s first national strategy on environmental racism and justice.



## Peace & Advocacy

In an era when isolation can result in narrow thinking, it's crucial to listen to voices outside our usual spaces. MCC's new experiential group activity, "Our Shared Future", encourages communities to explore diverse climate actions and exemplifies the power of working together.

The activity emphasizes the importance of climate mitigation, adaptation and justice. This year, 99 participants joined the inaugural activity across six groups, fostering solidarity and collaboration by highlighting how diverse community roles can make impactful change.

Groups can self-form for the activity but are later randomly paired to discuss their priorities. According to facilitator Marta Bunnett Wiebe (pictured right), group dynamics can be very interesting to watch, especially when a pairing learns another group was actively disadvantaging them. "Coming to an understanding of how we can collaborate based on our different priorities and perspectives isn't always easy," she said.



(MCC Photo/Michael Veith)

## Abuse Response & Prevention



(MCC Photo/Michael Veith)

MCC Manitoba led its first university-accredited course on addressing abuse in the church, aiming to create safer and healthier congregations. During the week-long intensive at Canadian

Mennonite University, participants learned strategies to respond to and prevent abuse, as well as foster a supportive environment for pastors.

Janessa Nayler-Giesbrecht (pictured left), one of the first 11 students to participate in the program and a pastor herself, said she came out of the course with a deeper understanding of power dynamics and her privilege as a pastor.

"This needs to be a course because pastors are struggling. And we're seeing misuses of power," said Jaymie Friesen, abuse response prevention coordinator. "Some of it is pastors who are not supported ... and then make mistakes. That's something we can prevent, and we need to do better."

Scan the QR code to read the complete story:



# MIGRATION & RESETTLEMENT



You're building community between Canadians and newcomers.

108

refugees sponsored

26

community and church sponsor groups

Photo:

(Centre and right): Nathan and Noh's family was the first to be welcomed by the Boissevain Resettlement Committee. (Boissevain Recorder photo/Lorraine Houston)



Biniam Debesay, from Eritrea, lived in a refugee camp in Ethiopia for about a decade before being given the opportunity to resettle in Boissevain in 2017 with his wife and two children. Now, he says, "I feel this is my home. This is my place."

In December, the Boissevain Resettlement Committee (BRC) welcomed its third Eritrean refugee family to the community, a single mother with two children. The resettlement efforts have enriched Boissevain culturally and added diversity, offering the refugee families stability, a home and sense of belonging.

"We're bringing in these people who are strangers to all of us," said BRC co-chair Heather Goertzen, "and that's going to require the support of all of us."



Scan the QR code to hear the Threads podcast:

## Welcome the Stranger

MCC connects sponsors with displaced people worldwide through a cost-supported refugee sponsorship program. Sponsors provide 12 months of social, emotional and settlement support, with half of the costs covered by the Canadian government and the other half by MCC Manitoba's Catalyst Fund.

"Everyone deserves a safe place to make a home and build a life," says Erin Morash, BVOR\* program associate. "It is possible to help them rebuild their lives and their future in your home community."

\*The Blended Visa Office-Referred (BVOR) program matches refugees with no prior ties to Canada with private sponsors, sharing costs and support between the government and sponsors.

# Financial highlights

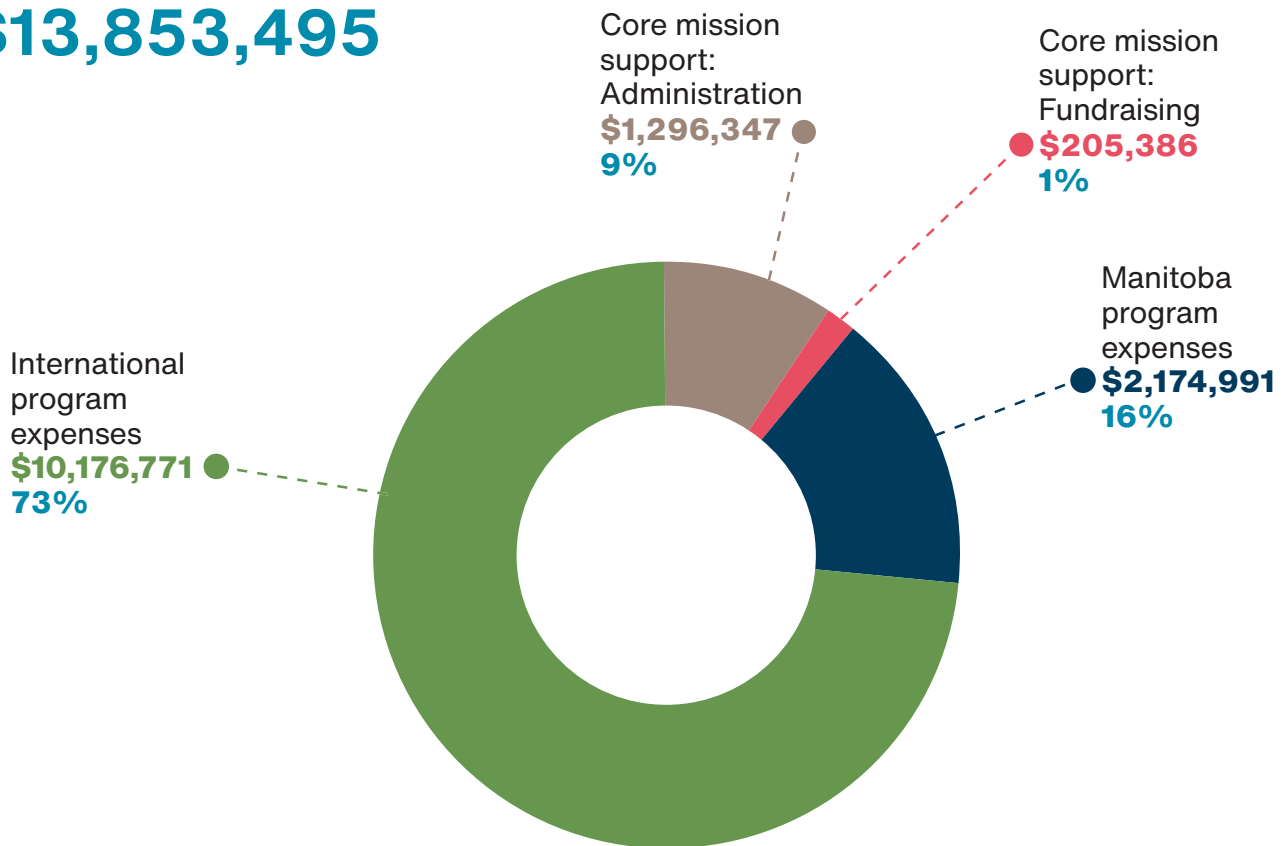
These 2023-2024 fiscal year numbers reflect the kindness of compassionate donors, the generous contribution of MCC Thrift shops and the support of grant programs.



Scan the QR code for complete audited financial statements

## TOTAL EXPENSES:

# \$13,853,495



## TOTAL REVENUE:

# \$15,599,992

### Funding Sources

