

*Clinique juridique*  
MILE END  
*Legal Clinic*

# ANNUAL REPORT

2019 - 2020

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# MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD

M<sup>e</sup> Geeta Narang  
(President & Founder)  
M<sup>e</sup> Aisha Topsakal  
(Vice-President)  
M<sup>e</sup> Allen Mendelsohn  
(Treasurer)  
M<sup>e</sup> Caroline Moreau  
(Secretary)

The Honourable Danielle Grenier  
Valérie Gascon  
M<sup>e</sup> Michèle Moreau  
M<sup>e</sup> Marek Nitoslawski  
M<sup>e</sup> Léa Charbonneau  
M<sup>e</sup> Alexandre Ricci

The year 2020, which was shrouded under such unfortunate circumstances, will remain memorable in so many ways. But it must be stated that the public health measures put in place as a result of COVID-19 did not prevent the Mile End Legal Clinic (MELC) from carrying out its mission effectively and professionally.

Through their tenacity and ingenuity, Executive Director Sophie Lefebvre and the members of her team faced down the adversity with excellence. Their efforts have certainly paid off. While one might have expected a slowdown in the MELC's activities, over the course of this summer in fact 180 individual meetings were held by telephone and/or videoconference, giving vulnerable citizens access to free legal information likely to solve the problems they were facing. The impact of the pandemic and its consequences on the daily and ordinary lives of vulnerable people are enormous, and the extension of the measures adopted to fight it will have repercussions with an impact that cannot be measured with certainty, but with a magnitude that can easily be believed.

In our 2017-2018 annual report, Me Geeta Narang distinguished between the concepts of "vision" and "mission" – not only to highlight the differences, but also to emphasize the similarities. They are in a sense two sides of the same coin. The ultimate goal of the MELC is to ensure equal access to the justice system for all citizens; regardless of race, religion, affiliation or means. The mission of the MELC is to promote access to justice by providing the necessary support to those who need it. Our clinics are simultaneously motivational and educational. The students who volunteer at our clinics are presented with an enriching and formative reality.

The mission of the MELC cannot be accomplished without securing long-term funding. The precariousness of the current funding situation jeopardizes our mission. In this context, it is imperative to convince government authorities to become more involved and to fund part of our activities without the MELC having to demonstrate that its grant applications «are based on an innovative

project that targets a specific social problem». Without funding from the Law Foundation of Ontario (LFDO) and the Fonds d'accès à la justice du Québec (FAQ), we would be unable to continue our activities in the Parc-Extension and Little Burgundy clinics.

This year's fundraising campaign «One Hour of Your Time», whose opening was presided over by the Honourable Clément Gascon, was a great success and we were able to reach our goal of \$30,000. Nonetheless, these donations are wholly insufficient to finance a legal clinic that is increasingly called upon to help a community of individuals weakened by a continuing pandemic, which continues to create instability and uncertainty within an increasingly vulnerable population.

Let us end on an optimistic note by once again underlining the considerable contribution of Me Sophie Lefebvre, whose dedication appears limitless. Her comforting presence, her (apparent) calm, her inspiring wisdom and her creativity are just a few of her tremendous assets. Surrounded by an outstanding team including Me Emmanuelle Moussa, who joined the MELC in the spring of 2020 as Coordinating Attorney, and Me Olivier Aldama, who works as Coordinating Counsel, Sophie has fully accomplished her mission. Above all, we must not forget our less visible but equally important partners – the volunteer lawyers and students who work together, and who make the MELC a real success.

The Honourable Danielle Grenier

*\*on behalf of the entire Board of Directors of the MELC*

# MESSAGES FROM THE EXECUTIVE

## A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

I want to begin by expressing how proud I am of the work done by the team this year. It has been an especially complex and demanding year that has, more than ever, required resilience, creativity, cooperation and flexibility in everything that we do.

The year 2019-2020 got off to a great start with the launch in September of our “One Hour of Your Time” fundraising campaign. For the launch event, the MELC was privileged to welcome the Honourable Clément Gascon, who shared his thoughts and observations on access to justice in Canada with us. This kick-off was also when we thanked our volunteer lawyers for their work and commitment to the MELC. In particular, we highlighted the involvement of Me Maryse Lapointe who was awarded the Volunteer Lawyer of the Year.

This fundraising campaign was a great success as we met our goal of \$30,000! These funds raised are essential to maintain our services at our three service points for the year 2020-2021, and we are therefore relieved to be able to continue to offer our local services to a diverse population. This success is the result of a significant mobilization of the legal community and testifies to the trust placed in the MELC team for their work with the most vulnerable people in our society. I would like to thank each and every one of the individuals, foundations and law firms who contributed to the success of this important fundraising event for our operations.

In the first six months (September to March), no one could have anticipated the upheavals that would occur in the second half of this year. Indeed, as of March 13, in response to the global health crisis, we had to suspend our walk-in consultations. A necessary gesture, but nevertheless heartbreaking considering the impact on our clients. All of our energy was focused on finding a way to quickly resume our services. We thus created a crisis unit and rethought our operations so that we could offer legal information consul-

tations that were accessible given the circumstances.

Our efforts and creativity paid off, and during the summer of 2020 we offered more than 180 remote legal information consultations with follow up (by telephone and videoconference). The legal problems were diverse, and far too often amplified by the impact of the pandemic (isolation, new remote court proceedings, precariousness of tenants, family tensions, wrongful or constructive dismissals, etc.).

It was in the midst of this unprecedented transition that we welcomed Me Emmanuelle Moussa, coordinator for our three service points, to the team. I salute her professionalism and her great capacity for adjustment! I would like to add that our students quickly adapted to the work to be accomplished. They met the challenges one by one and with excellence!

Finally, I cannot overlook the importance of the support, cooperation and flexibility of our many partners and donors, and organizations who provide significant grants. Their trust has been invaluable in these uncertain times and I thank them deeply.



M<sup>E</sup> SOPHIE LEFEBVRE

## A MESSAGE FROM THE COORDINATING ATTORNEY

(Coordinator from our three service points since May 2020)

It was in the spring of 2020, in the midst of the COVID-19 crisis, that I joined the Mile End Legal Clinic team. While the Clinic had closed its doors in a hurry following the announcement of a public lockdown a few weeks before I began my position, the major challenge for the entire team was to adapt to the new reality of remote services.

In the last annual report, Me Anne Thibault rightly pointed out that the strength of the Clinic was anchored in the neighbourhood. We feared that the pandemic would wipe out this major asset in the blink of an eye. However, this was not at all the case and in fact the opposite occurred: the Clinic's phone never stopped ringing! Indeed, it is not because the pandemic had the effect of slowing down - or even suspending - the activities of many legal information services that it also suspended the problems faced by hundreds of Montrealers every year, problems that the pandemic has, conversely, considerably increased. Determination of the right to the CERB, economic layoffs and dismissals, the entanglement of immigration status, threats of eviction from one's home in the midst of COVID, child custody disputes during the pandemic... these are just some of the issues that students faced throughout the summer.

Most of the time, the people who contacted us were desperate, anxious or destabilized by the crisis. The students therefore quickly had to learn how to conduct telephone consultations and overcome the handicap of not being able to use non-verbal communication. However, the consultations were longer in order to take the time to better identify the problem and the questions of the client, and relevant documents were received by e-mail, mail or dropped off at the Clinic, always respecting the rules of social distancing. The team meetings were held by videoconference and generated the usual legal debates and ideas to determine the best follow-up to be given.

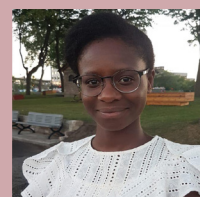
In the end, being at a distance was not necessarily a handicap. It made it possible to spend more time on written follow-ups,

providing more documented answers, which not only promotes sustainable assistance but also empowers the people involved. As for the students, they acquired more active listening and research skills.

As a result, many people have benefited from our services, including written information in the form of research notes, and videoconference interviews to prepare for hearings and mediation sessions at the Municipal Court, the *Tribunal administratif du logement*, the *Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse* or the *Commission des normes, de l'équité, de la santé et de la sécurité au travail*; which would not have been possible without the invaluable assistance of our volunteer lawyers. We were also able to continue to offer psychosocial support over the telephone thanks to our two experienced volunteer social workers, even though the distance has brought its share of frustration in the limited help they could provide to our clients.

I think the whole team at the MELC is coming out of this new experience with a sense of accomplishment. We are now ready for any eventuality, pandemic or not, in order to continue our mission in which I am very proud to be part of and reach as many people as possible with our services, which remain more essential than ever.

ME EMMANUELLE MOUSSA



## A MESSAGE FROM THE COORDINATING ATTORNEY

(Park-Extension)

Over the past year, our various clinical interventions with Park-Extension residents have made us understand the need for constant support for families in vulnerable situations. This is true for the year 2020 in particular, as the health crisis has exacerbated the already existing problems and in particular the precarious situation of these families. Now, faced with the pandemic, confinement, social isolation, uncertainty and anxiety, new arrivals are faced with challenges tenfold in terms of access to information, access to health and social services, schooling opportunities and financial uncertainty. Moreover, the Park-Extension neighbourhood, which is one of the most densely populated areas in the city, has been disproportionately affected by the pandemic.

In order to fully understand and help these families, it was essential for us to consider the simultaneous presence of different social and legal problems they deal with on a daily basis. It is very common for our clients to face problems related to fundamental issues such as housing, access to health services, or the normalization of

their status in Canada. These cumulative legal complications exacerbate the problems they already face such as stress and anxiety, and difficulties in communication and integration. Situations that undermine their ability to have sustainable access to society and the labour market. The isolation and marginalization experienced by these residents generally excludes them from existing traditional service structures. This is why the Clinic's interventions in this neighbourhood remain absolutely necessary.

ME OLIVIER ALDAMA





\*Picture taken in January 2020

# OUR

## EXECUTIVE

M<sup>e</sup> Sophie Lefebvre (Executive Director)  
 M<sup>e</sup> Emmanuelle Moussa (Coordinating Attorney started May 2020)  
 M<sup>e</sup> Anne Thibault (Coordinating Attorney for the Accompaniment Project)  
 M<sup>e</sup> Olivier Aldama (Coordinating Attorney Park-Extension)  
 M<sup>e</sup> Alex Boudreau-Leclerc (Acting Coordinating Attorney Park-Extension)

## STUDENT INTERNS

Annabelle Bergeron Gendron	Safi Nsiempba
Audrey Berteau	Alexandre Pagé
Narek Chakhalyan	Daphné Pomerleau-Normandin
Olivier Drapeau	Gabriela Primeau
Catherine Dufort Cusson	Tomas Rojas Vazquez
Grecia Esparza	Samantha Sainthelmy
Pamela Ewert	Annabelle Semerdzhiva
Stéphanie Gazecimeon	Victoria Théoret
Marc-Antoine Gignac	Cezar Valentin Lliescu
Vincent Lachance	Xiao Wen Zhang
Luca Manfredi	Camille Winiarz Devault

## ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

Anik Isabelle (Bookkeeping)

## STUDENT VOLUNTEERS

Sofia Khan	Arsalan Ahmed (PBSC)
Marc-Antoine Gignac	Kayla Miguez (PBSC)
Marie-Noëlle Bigras	Bret Howie (PBSC)

## SOCIAL WORKERS

Noémie Boisclair, student intern, UQAM  
 Sylvie Cameron, Social worker, volunteer  
 Sylvie Sarian, Social worker, volunteer





# TEAM

## VOLUNTEER LAWYERS

M<sup>e</sup> Aude Bastien  
 M<sup>e</sup> Daniel Baum  
 M<sup>e</sup> Hugo Beaulieu  
 M<sup>e</sup> Marie-Hélène Bélanger  
 M<sup>e</sup> Coline Bellefleur  
 M<sup>e</sup> Fernando Belton  
 M<sup>e</sup> Martin Bergeron  
 M<sup>e</sup> Alex Boudreault Leclerc  
 M<sup>e</sup> Annabel Busbridge  
 M<sup>e</sup> Natacha Calixte  
 M<sup>e</sup> Vincent Cérat Lagana  
 M<sup>e</sup> Frédéric Lussier Cardinal  
 M<sup>e</sup> Pierre-Richard Deshommes  
 M<sup>e</sup> Hugo Collin-Desrosiers  
 M<sup>e</sup> Julien Delangie  
 M<sup>e</sup> Stéphanie Delisle

M<sup>e</sup> Julien Dion  
 M<sup>e</sup> Laurence Dubé-Proulx  
 M<sup>e</sup> David Éthier  
 M<sup>e</sup> Renaud Gauthier  
 M<sup>e</sup> Yoann Gauthier  
 M<sup>e</sup> Magalie Gingras  
 M<sup>e</sup> Jeanne Ollivier Gobeil  
 M<sup>e</sup> Geneviève Griffin  
 M<sup>e</sup> Mike Grodinsky  
 M<sup>e</sup> Laurent Gryner  
 M<sup>e</sup> Matthew Hamerman  
 M<sup>e</sup> Geoffroy Huet  
 M<sup>e</sup> Gene Kruger  
 M<sup>e</sup> Camille Lachance Gaboury  
 M<sup>e</sup> Jean-Marc Lacoursière  
 M<sup>e</sup> Jonathan Lafrance

M<sup>e</sup> Daniel Laine  
 M<sup>e</sup> Joanie Lapalme  
 M<sup>e</sup> Maryse Lapointe  
 M<sup>e</sup> Félix Larose  
 M<sup>e</sup> Gabriela Machico  
 M<sup>e</sup> Alexandre McCormack  
 M<sup>e</sup> Andres Miguel Pareja  
 M<sup>e</sup> Vanessa Ntaganda  
 M<sup>e</sup> Benjamin Prud'homme  
 M<sup>e</sup> Vincent Ranger  
 M<sup>e</sup> Alexandre Ricci  
 M<sup>e</sup> Éva Richard  
 M<sup>e</sup> Elsa Rizkallah  
 M<sup>e</sup> Andrei Roman (notary)  
 M<sup>e</sup> Alexandre B. Romano  
 M<sup>e</sup> Farah Rousseau

M<sup>e</sup> Nicholas Scheib  
 M<sup>e</sup> Catherine Sénéchal  
 M<sup>e</sup> Max Silverman  
 M<sup>e</sup> Natasha Sivret  
 M<sup>e</sup> Ari Sorek  
 M<sup>e</sup> Nicholas Teasdale  
 M<sup>e</sup> Gretchen Timmins  
 M<sup>e</sup> Dominique Turcotte  
 M<sup>e</sup> Ariane Vanasse  
 M<sup>e</sup> Aude Vaugois

# Service Points

## ◀◀ MILE END LEGAL CLINIC

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE MILE END COMMUNITY MISSION

\*Since 2002\*

Population: 103 995  
 Single-Parent Families: 33.1%  
 Immigrants: 24%  
 Visible Minorities: 17.4%  
 Low-income individuals: 25.3%  
 People 15 & older without diploma or degree: 7.8%



Source : Statistics Canada, 2016

Number of  
New Clients

265

Drop-in  
Sessions

23

In-person  
Consultations

Remote  
Consultations

259

111

## ◀◀ TYNDALE ST-GEORGES LEGAL CLINIC

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH TYNDALE ST-GEORGES COMMUNITY CENTRE

*Founded 2008 by the late Colin Irving Ad.E.*

Population: 15 650  
 Single-Parent Families: 45.3%  
 Immigrants: 34.4%  
 Visible Minorities: 52.5%  
 Low-income individuals: 31%  
 People 15 & older without diploma or degree: 12.1%



Source : Statistics Canada, 2016

Number of  
New Clients

59

Drop-in  
Sessions

20

In-person  
Consultations

Remote  
Consultations

80

17

## ◀◀ PARK-EXTENSION LEGAL CLINIC

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE COMITÉ D'ACTION DE PARC-EXTENSION

Since 2017, thanks to the support of the Law Foundation of Ontario

Population: 29 425  
 Single-Parent Families: 31.6 %  
 Immigrants: 56.5 %  
 Visible Minorities: 63.5 %  
 Low-income individuals: 38.4 %  
 People 15 & older without diploma or degree: 33.5 %  
 People who have moved in the last 5 years: 43 %



Source : Statistics Canada, 2016

Number of  
New Clients

220

Drop-in  
Sessions

18

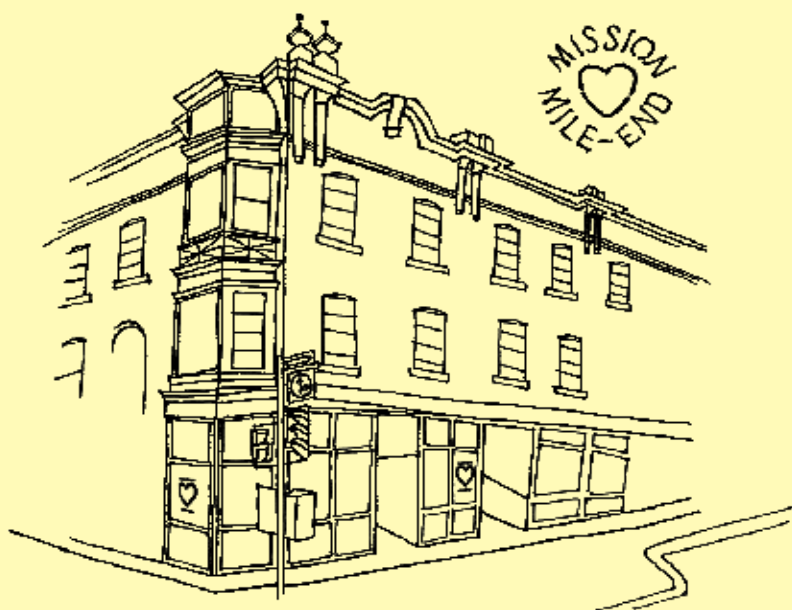
In-person  
Consultations

Remote  
Consultations

198

50



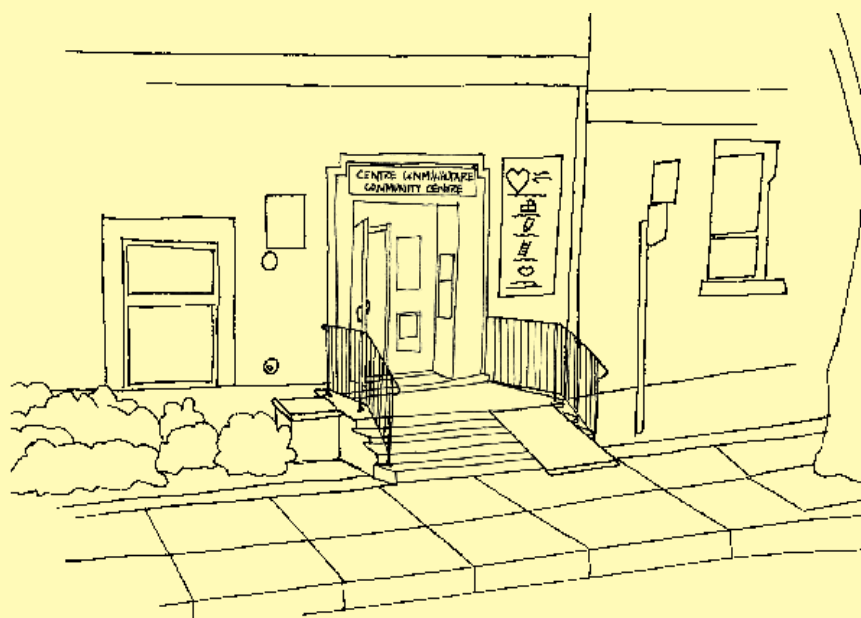


"From the very first days at the MELC I had the feeling that I had found my place in the legal field as well as a new lease of life for the rest of my studies. Through this experience, I had the chance to meet extraordinary people, both within the work team and within the community served by the organization. My colleagues saw justice as a vital public service and worked hard to improve accessibility issues. People in the public, on the other hand, were often in very difficult situations. difficult, but did not give up. It was very stimulating to work and learn under these conditions! Multicultural, multidisciplinary, flexible and creative; cooperative and tireless at heart, the MELC is unique and I will always have great memories of my internship".

- Tomas Rojas Vazquez, student from Université de Montréal, Mile End Service Point

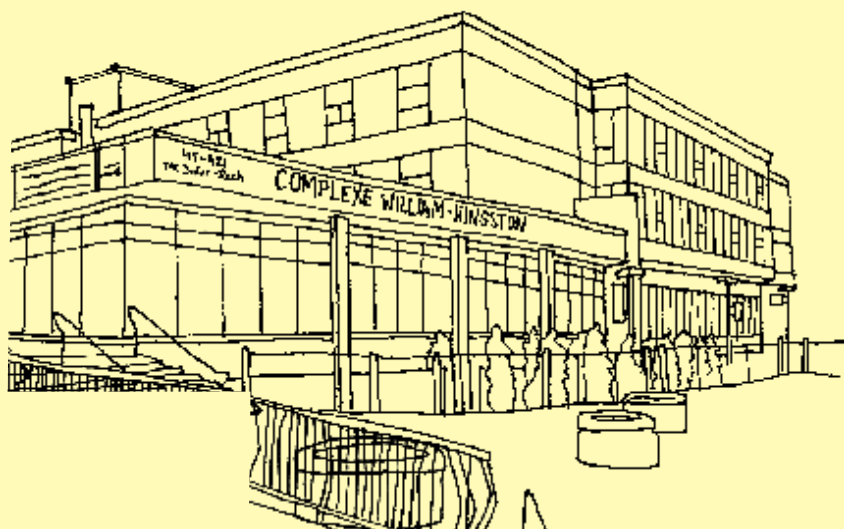
"My internship at the MELC was an opportunity for me to contribute, in a small way, to increasing access to justice in my community. This experience made me realize the extent of the problem, but also the numerous initiatives and individuals working hard to address these challenges. The strength of the MELC is the highly personalized legal and often multidisciplinary services it offers, accompanying clients from the beginning to the resolution of their legal problem. It empowers vulnerable individuals by giving them the tools they need to represent themselves in Court, assert their rights and understand their obligations."

- Audrey Berteau, student from McGill University, Tyndale St-Georges Service Point



"The internship at the MELC is an excellent way to conclude a law degree. It is above all an opportunity to rise above the theoretical and competitive environment of the law faculty, and to dive into pragmatic cases where teamwork and the client's interest are placed at the forefront. I am particularly happy to have made the acquaintance of classmates and professionals that I never would have met otherwise, but that are all unified by their common concern for the issue of access to justice. It goes without saying that the summer of 2020 came with its own challenges for both the users and the Clinic team members. On our end, we had to adapt our working methods in order to observe the social distancing measures without affecting the quality of the service. Even though the pandemic mostly slowed things down, the need for a reliable and accessible source of legal information is greater than ever."

- Alexandre Pagé, student from Université de Montréal, Park-Extension Service Point



# ONE HOUR OF YOUR TIME!

## FUNDRAISING



In the fall of 2019, the MELC held its fundraising campaign called  
**ONE HOUR OF YOUR TIME!**

This fundraising campaign, which we have been running since 2016, consists of reaching out to members of the legal community by inviting them to make a donation at their billable hourly rate (or more!).

Thanks to the generosity of many people and a real mobilization of the legal community for better access to justice and recognition of the work accomplished on the ground by the MELC team, we were able to reach our goal of \$30,000!! This amount is used in particular to ensure the maintenance of our three Service Points by allowing us to hire a full-time lawyer coordinator-supervisor.

**Our next campaign will take place in  
May 2021!  
Thank you for your generosity!**

# ONE HOUR OF YOUR TIME!

## LAUNCH EVENT AND THANKS



L. to R.: Me Olga Redko (Board until Dec. 2019) and the Honourable Clément Gascon in conversation on the issue of access to justice

On September 26, 2019, our fundraising campaign ONE HOUR OF YOUR TIME! launch event took place. This event was graciously hosted by FASKEN, long-time partner of the MELC.

At the launch of our campaign, we were privileged to have the Honourable Clément Gascon speak with then Board member Olga Redko on the issue of access to justice from his perspective as a judge of the Supreme Court of Canada.



L. to R. : Me Sophie Lefebvre (ED)  
Me Pierre-Richard Deshommes  
(volunteer), Me Dominique Turcotte  
(volunteer)



L. to R: Carmen Hojabri (student),  
Marc-Antoine Gignac (student),  
Me Allen Mendelsohn (Board)



L. to R.: Me Geeta Narang (founder and Board),  
Me Olga Redko (Board until Dec. 2019),  
the Honourable Clément Gascon

## PRESENTATION OF THE 2019 VOLUNTEER LAWYER OF THE YEAR AWARD

The evening was also an opportunity to highlight the work and involvement of the lawyers who volunteer their time with the MELC. Their contribution is essential and allows us not only to fulfill our mission with the people who call upon our services, but also their expertise is a significant addition to the training of law students. The MELC presented the 2019 Volunteer Lawyer of the Year Award to Me Maryse Lapointe, in particular for her involvement in consultations at our Park-Extension Service Point.



*"I fundamentally believe in the mission of the MELC and that is why I chose to get involved. The MELC, due to its structure, allows it to respond well to the legal needs of the people it serves, giving them, as a volunteer lawyer, legal advice in the most complex cases, which allows them to be well guided. As a lawyer, the MELC allows me to give back to the community and to collaborate with a very dynamic team. Moreover, being involved with the MELC allows me to make a difference after certain litigants, sometimes by taking actions as simple as a phone call to the party with whom they are in litigation, which allows me to explain the situation to them and guide them in the strategy to be taken. These are often actions that don't take up much time, but they make a big difference for the clients of the MELC. It was a great privilege for me to receive the 2019 Volunteer Lawyer of the Year Award and I encourage all of my legal colleagues to donate their time to the MELC"*

# 2019-2020 HIGHLIGHTS

## Autumn 2019

### SEPTEMBER 2019

September 3: Student interns return home and training of the 2019-2020 team!  
September 12: The MELC participates in the UQAM pro bono event with a booth for the accompaniment project.  
September 25: Participation in a roundtable with the TCRI, the CCR and the CRCIC concerning the problem of illegal practice of lawyers at Park Extension.  
September 26th: Launch of our fundraising campaign ONE HOUR OF YOUR TIME 2019!  
Appearance of the Honourable Clément Gascon (discussion with Me Olga Redko, then member of the board, on access to justice)

### OCTOBER 2019

October 18: Me Anne Thibault participates in a round table discussion at the symposium on partnership research at the University of Ottawa Accompaniment Project and its repercussions.  
October 22: Me Lefebvre attends the benefit evening for the *Fondation du Barreau du Québec*.  
October 28: Me Lefebvre participates in the CSCM's AGM as a new eligible member.  
October 30: Organization of a meeting of Park-Extension's community stakeholders on the issue of illegal practice (presence of Me Guertin, *Barreau de Montréal* and Me Hogue, *Barreau du Québec*).

### NOVEMBER 2019

November 1st: 2nd meeting of the Legal Education Network at Déclic (MELC among the organizers)  
Nov. 20: participation of Me Sophie Lefebvre at the 10th anniversary Gala evening of Juripop.  
Nov. 2: Luncheon talk organized by RIPE Making services accessible to people with precarious status.

### DECEMBER 2019

December 3: Relocation to our new administrative offices located at the *Centre de services communautaires du monastère*



# 2019-2020 HIGHLIGHTS

## Winter 2020

### JANUARY 2020

January 10: psychosocial training for students interns, offered by Simon Lacoste, former MELC student intern and holder of a bachelor's degree in psychology.  
January 13: The Clinic welcomes an intern from UQAM's propaedeutic social work program, Noémie Boisclair.  
January 14: Closing of our fundraising campaign

### FEBRUARY 2020

February 6: Executive Director Sophie Lefebvre attends the Lord Reading Law Society's annual dinner for students as honoured guest.  
February 14: A workshop on tenants' obligations and rights offered by a volunteer lawyer, Me Caroline Brodeur, at the Park-Extension library. More than 30 participants from the neighbourhood benefited from this workshop.  
Participation of Me Sophie Lefebvre in a video report on access to justice (journalist: Emmanuelle Leroux-Nega, Journal Métro).

### MARCH 2020

March 13: In response to the COVID-19 pandemic situation, the MELC suspends its walk-in legal consultation sessions and creates a committee to set up remote services to meet the needs of its clients.  
Starting March 23: the MELC participates in the collective effort of MELC lawyers at the COVID-19 Legal Assistance Clinic (2 weeks).  
Starting March 23: Participation in La Justice en live!, a virtual information session on rights and obligations organized by the Clinique juridique Saint-Michel.

### APRIL 2020

Transition period: end of internships 2019-2020 UdeM, McGill, UQAM  
April 6: Me Sophie Lefebvre and Me Anne Thibault participate in a virtual meeting of the Legal Clinic in Montreal.  
Establishment of a special committee for our remote operations!

### MAY 2020

May 4: Our new Coordinating Attorney, Me Emmanuelle Moussa, takes up her new position.  
May 18: Arrival of our cohort of students employed for the summer through the Canada Summer Jobs program.  
May 19: official start of our distance learning services.

### JUNE 2020

June 4: First session of exchanges and discussions among team members on the psychosocial situations and highly emotional issues encountered at the MELC. Led by Sylvie Cameron and Sylvie Sarian, volunteer social workers.  
June 29th to July 8th: implementation of a housing crisis cell in collaboration with the Comité logement du Plateau and the Table de quartier du Plateau Mont-Royal.  
In Vlog format, interview with Sophie Lefebvre, Executive Director of the MELC, by the Cyberjustice laboratory of the Université de Montréal, on the theme of access to justice in times of pandemic.

### JULY 2020

July 4: Me Emmanuelle Moussa participates as MELC's lawyer in a free legal consultation session, an initiative of two organizations: Justice Pro Bono and Ali et les Prince.esses. More than sixty consultations were offered in Ali Nestor's gym located in the St-Michel district.  
July 9: Second session of exchanges and discussions between team members on psychosocial situations and highly emotional issues encountered at the MELC. Led by Sylvie Cameron and Sylvie Sarian, volunteer social workers at MELC.

### AUGUST 2020

August 7: Me Emmanuelle Moussa participated as a lawyer of the MELC in the second session of free legal consultations initiated by Justice Pro Bono and Ali et les Prince.esses. More than sixty consultations were offered in Ali Nestor's gym located in the St-Michel neighborhood.  
August 24th: arrival of our new team of articling students for the year 2020-2021!

# ACCOMPANIMENT PROJECT



The socio-legal accompaniment project  
Subsidized by the Fonds Accès Justice

May 2019 to June 2020

Project Best Practices Guide for socio-legal  
support material

Subsidized by the Fonds Accès Justice  
June 2020 to June 2021

This year, the accompaniment project began its research component in order to allow us to fully understand the needs of litigants and our law students. Thus, in 2019-2020, focus groups were organized on the theme of their experiences as accompaniers or coaches. The preliminary results allowed us to understand that additional support should be offered to the students in order to help them through the psychosocial difficulties they encounter with the litigants they meet. As these difficulties were exacerbated during the pandemic, the Clinic set up monthly meetings with students to allow them to discuss more difficult situations with two volunteer social workers in groups and individually. Although in-person accompaniment was suspended during this period, this allowed us to double our efforts in the area of psychosocial accompaniment of individuals and students. These efforts have been well documented by our researchers

as well as through the development of accompaniment tools and a psychosocial intervention guide, which outlines the psychosocial intervention practices used at the Clinic over the past two years.

Interdisciplinary work at the Clinic is becoming more and more essential, and the benefits of this collaboration are enormous for the entire team and the people involved. Thus, the two central elements of the accompaniment project, i.e. the legal and the psychosocial elements, are of equal importance in the search for global solutions for litigants and in the support provided through their legal experiences.

M<sup>E</sup> ANNE THIBAUT, Project coordinator

## SOCIO-LEGAL ACCOMPANIMENT PROJECT:

From April 2019 to May 2020, the Clinic conducted a project on socio-legal accompaniment subsidized by the Fonds Accès Justice of the Ministère de la Justice du Québec. The objective of this project was to develop our accompaniment services for people who represent themselves in a judicial process. During the course of this project we documented this service at the MELC, which consists of offering social support to unrepresented litigants, helping them find their way through the judicial system, notably by guiding them to the appropriate legal resources such as legal aid, court registries, docket information, or by accompanying them to a mediation or a hearing. In particular, in light of the results collected by the researchers, we have perfected the training developed for the students who accompany and documented our work in the field by asking these accompaniers to make a report following their experience. The arrival of the pandemic slowed down our schedule somewhat as we had to temporarily suspend our services in March and only resume them in May 2020. From May to August, we therefore continued to document our accompaniments in terms of court preparation, developed numerous tools for accompaniers and placed a lot of emphasis on psychosocial support for self-represented persons.

We have the support of Professor Emmanuelle Bernheim and researcher Alexandra Bahary whose work in analyzing the data collected at the MELC for this project is funded by the Canadian Council for the Humanities and Social Sciences.

In total, over the course of the project, the Clinic, through the intermediary of law and social work students, was able to provide 54 accompaniments to various tribunals, legal aid, the local employment center, the Ministry of Immigration, and Service Canada in order to support the litigants in their efforts. We also did 12 hearing preparations and offered 25 psychosocial supports.

## GUIDE PROJECT:

Since June 2020, we have been working on a draft of a Guide of best practices in socio-legal accompaniment. The Guide will be aimed at the various stakeholders involved in providing support to unrepresented litigants. This Guide will be published in the summer of 2021 thanks to the financial support of the *Fonds Accès Justice du Québec*.





The MELC adapts in order to maintain free, quality and accessible legal information services

**THE MILE END LEGAL CLINIC  
OFFERS FREE LEGAL  
CONSULTATIONS!**

(HOUSING, WORK, FAMILY, IMMIGRATION, ...)

01

BOOK AN APPOINTMENT

☎ 514-507-3054

✉ info@melc.ca

02

WE'LL HELP REMOTELY

...
...

New Clients

129

Number of  
consultation weeks

15

Total number of  
consultations

178



\*When the situation required and only exceptionally, we met clients in person at our administrative offices with all the necessary sanitary measures in place.

## Other involvements during summer 2020:

- Participate in LIVE information sessions on social media to answer general questions and provide legal information in several areas of law (in cooperation with the *Clinique juridique Saint-Michel*)
- Create and participate in a housing crisis unit (Plateau Mont-Royal) and offer more sustained legal services in housing law for the period from June 29 to July 8, which is around July 1, the date of several moves in Quebec. The crisis unit was also set up to respond to issues arising from the resumption of hearings at the *Régie du logement* (now called *Tribunal administratif du logement*), particularly with respect to repossession and eviction.
- On July 4 and August 7, 2020, the CJME is participating in the Free Legal Clinic organized by *Justice Probono Québec*, in cooperation with the organization *Ali et les princes de la rue*.

ON BEHALF OF THE MELC TEAM AND ALL THOSE WHO HAVE BENEFITED FROM OUR SERVICES SINCE THE BEGINNING OF THE PANDEMIC, WE WOULD LIKE TO THANK IN PARTICULAR THE TROTTIER FAMILY FOUNDATION FOR THEIR EMERGENCY FINANCIAL SUPPORT.



# New offices!

Relocation of the MELC Head Office  
(*Centre de services communautaires du monastère*)



The mission of the Centre de services communautaires du monastère (CSCM) is to bring together under one roof various organizations offering a variety of direct services to the population in need. With this in mind, the MELC complemented a range of services already available at the Centre.



December 9, 2019:  
Moving!



\*Picture taken January 2020

Free access to multimedia-equipped rooms for our in-house training and legal education workshops for citizens.



Our new premises allow us to welcome our students and hold our team meetings.

\*Picture taken February 2020

# Psychosocial Support



In January 2020, I had the chance to do my propaedeutic internship in social work (UQAM) at the Mile End Legal Clinic. Having little experience in the field, I was able to learn about the collaborative clinical approach between psychosocial and legal support. I loved leading individual meetings in partnership with Sylvie Cameron, a volunteer social worker at the Mile End Legal Clinic (MELC) and also participating in group meetings with law students. Several discussions with team members allowed me to gain a more nuanced reading of mental health, domestic and systemic violence and to find ways to welcome recipients with empathy and openness.

The MELC's investment in the community environment is distinguished by a significant collective work where the team's experiential baggage allows them to support users in their respective approaches. The development of tools for record keeping and training on immigration law and active listening, among other things, allow for the linkage between legal and social disciplines. In this way, accessibility to information and the sharing of expertise result in a rich democratic environment.



Noémie Boisclair, social work student,  
École de travail social UQAM,  
Intern winter 2020

# TESTIMONIALS

## STUDENT INTERNS & VOLUNTEERS

"Interning at the Mile End Legal Clinic was the best experience of my bachelor's degree. Overwhelmed by a variety of readings and theory courses, the Clinic allowed me to put my knowledge into practice and make a real difference in the community. Access to justice also means making available to citizens the knowledge and tools related to the legal process in order to resolve a conflict. And this is a mission that the MELC and its team fulfill brilliantly on a daily basis, even in times of pandemic."

GRECIA ESPARZA  
UDM-LL.B.'20

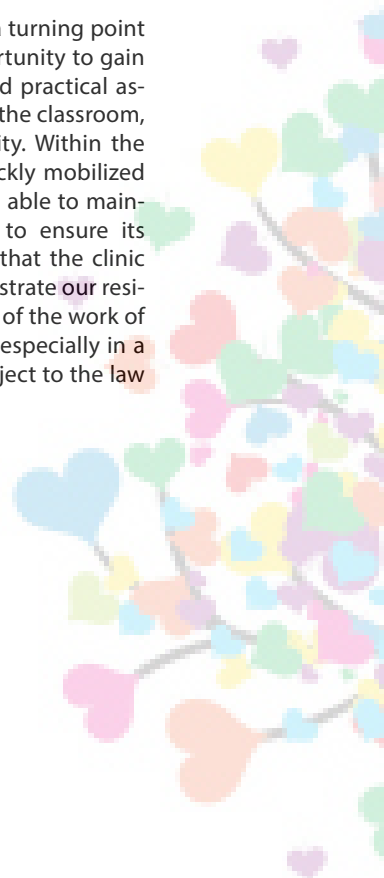


"My experience at the legal clinic was a turning point in my academic career. I had the opportunity to gain knowledge on various areas of law and practical aspects of practice that are not taught in the classroom, while being involved in our community. Within the framework of COVID-19, the clinic quickly mobilized and adapted its services in order to be able to maintain its interventions. By continuing to ensure its presence in the community, I believe that the clinic has given us the opportunity to demonstrate our resilience and to highlight the importance of the work of all the stakeholders of the legal clinic, especially in a context where the people who are subject to the law are particularly vulnerable."

DAPHNÉ POMERLEAU-NORMANDIN  
UDM LL.B. '21

"This past winter, I had the chance to volunteer with the Mile End Legal Clinic through PBSC. I enjoyed being able to listen in on cases and write memos providing important legal information. Sophie and Alex provided me with a welcoming space to learn, receive timely feedback, and develop my legal skills. This client-centric training remains highly relevant in practice; I see myself applying these skills everyday as a law student at McCarthy Tétrault."

ARSALAN AHMED  
PROBONO MCGILL





# TESTIMONIALS

## CLIENTS

Thanks to our three meetings with Me Moussa and Marc-Antoine (by telephone and video-conference), we were able to represent ourselves before the Régie du logement, without a lawyer! A great victory for us, who at our young age had no legal training. The judge at the Régie even congratulated the quality and rigour of our preparation, which is clearly due to the support of the Legal Clinic. For the four of us, it was a first in court. We have come out of this experience, as demanding as it was instructive. Thanks to the support of the Clinic, we learned how the legal system works, how to answer for our duties and how to have our rights respected. This experience and the support we received allowed us to develop legal and civic skills that will be useful for the rest of our lives, both personally and professionally. Thank you for everything again.

CHLOÉ GAYRAUD AND ROOMMATES (AHMED, NICO, MARIE)

The clinic helped us a lot. I really appreciated the help they provided, free of charge, to my wife and me. Even though we had difficulty communicating, because of the language barrier, our legal problems, the people who work at the legal clinic took the time to listen to us, assess our case and help us with our file. When we arrived here, we had a lot of problems, we received a lot of legal documents and the MELC helped us to solve all these problems with a lot of energy and conviction. They accompanied us and we particularly appreciate the assistance provided by Me Olivier Aldama during our numerous consultations at Park-Extension.

PINTU PATEL

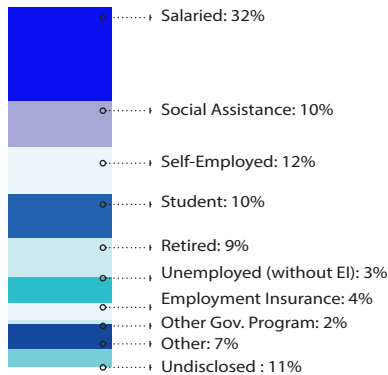
I experienced violence at the beginning of my independent life. In spite of poverty, I chose the law as a way to face my fears and heal. In this journey, the Clinic has been present and it has been a determining factor for me.

PIERRE-ÉTIENNE LÉTOURNEAU

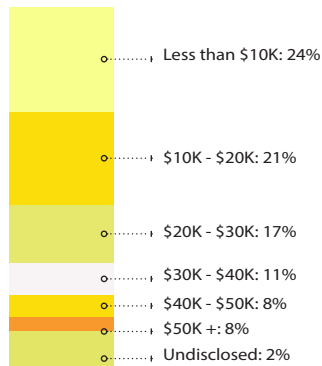
# CLIENT STATISTICS

Period : October 1, 2019 to September 30, 2020

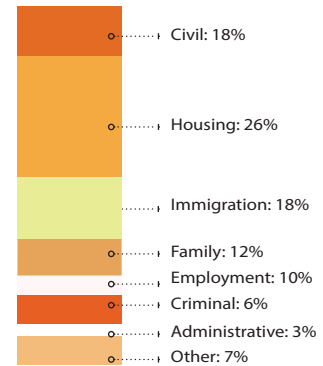
## OCCUPATION



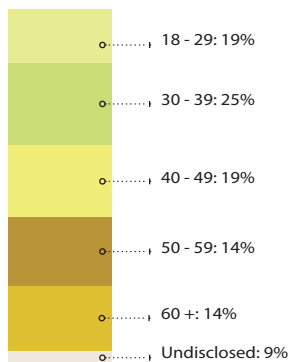
## INCOME



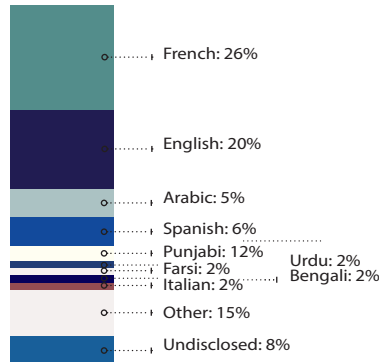
## AREA OF LAW



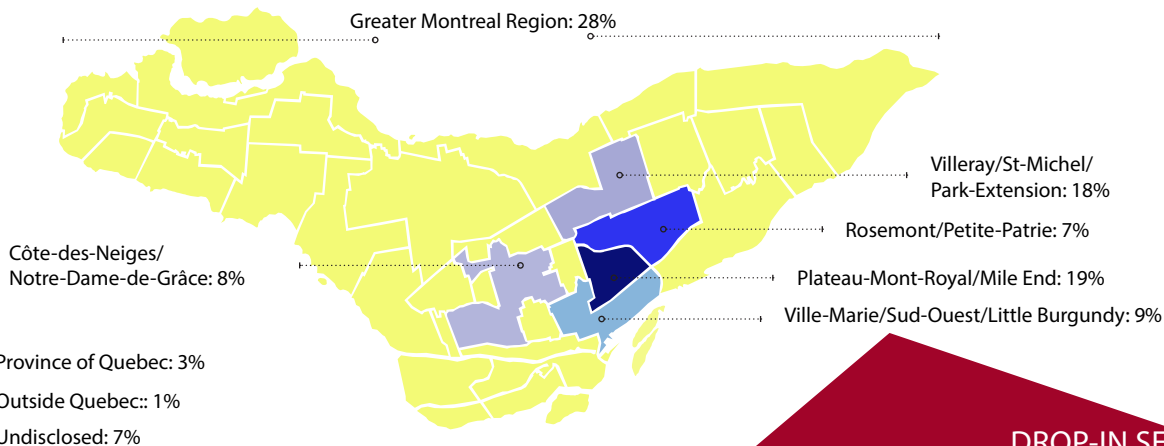
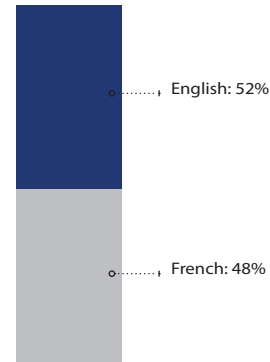
## AGE



## MOTHER TONGUE



## CONSULTATION LANGUAGE



## NEW CLIENTS

This figure represents the total number of people who received services from the Clinic for the first time this year

## DROP-IN SESSIONS

This figure represents the total number of consultation sessions for the three Service Points

## CONSULTATIONS

This figure represents the number of individual consultations between a client and a student, staff or volunteer lawyer at the Clinic (a client may benefit from several consultations). \*Including distance consultations.

544

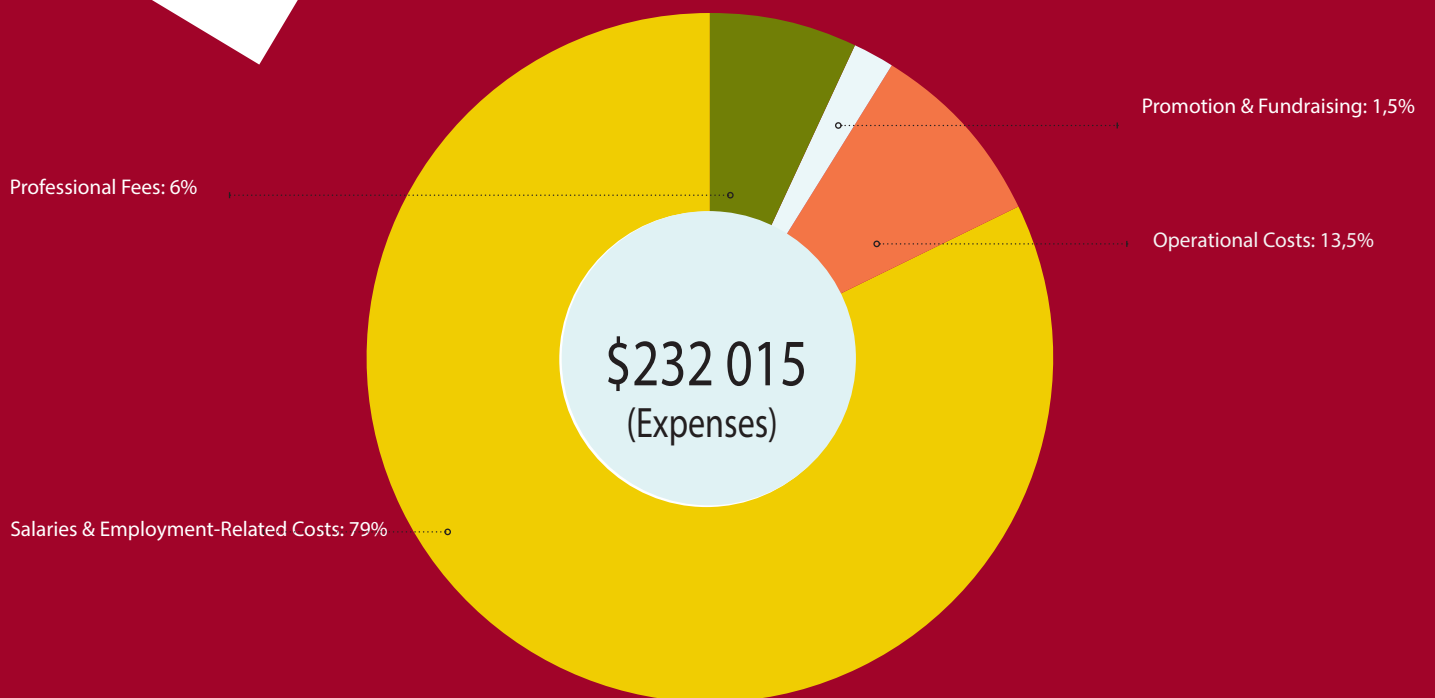
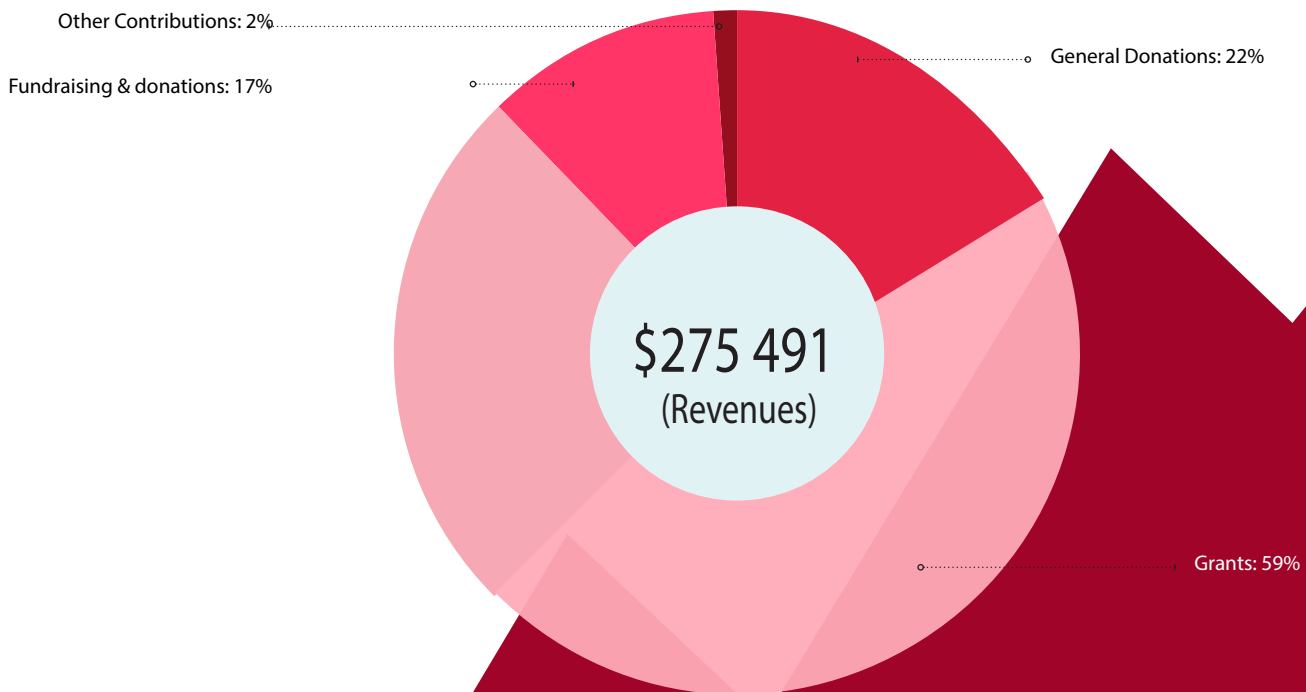
61

715



# FINANCES

Based on audited financial statements as of  
September 30, 2020.



# THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS

## Grants



## Major Donors(\$10 000 +)

**FASKEN**

The George Hogg  
Family Foundation



Bannerman  
Foundation

ECHO Foundation

## Donors and Supporters (less than \$10 000)



We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to all those who made a donation during the year, including anonymous donors, and especially for their generosity in our fundraising campaign ONE HOUR OF YOUR TIME!

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\*multiple donors  
and anonymous donors

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CAIJ, Université de Montréal, McGill University, Université du Québec à Montréal  
Université of Ottawa, ADAJ



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Donate on line at :

[justicemontreal.org/donate](http://justicemontreal.org/donate)

Cheques payable to "Mile End Legal Clinic":

4450 Saint-Hubert, room 424

Montreal, Quebec, H2J 2W9

Tax receipts are available for donations of more \$25. Please include your full email and mailing address with your donation so that we can send you a receipt

## ◀ FREE LEGAL INFORMATION SESSIONS ▶

### PARK-EXTENSION LEGAL CLINIC

Mondays 3pm-6pm  
at the Comité d'action de Parc-  
Extension (CAPE)  
419 rue St-Roch, roomSS.04

### MILE END LEGAL CLINIC

Wednesdays, 4pm-7pm  
at the Mile End Community Mission  
99 Bernard Street West

### TYNDALE ST-GEORGES LEGAL CLINIC

Mondays, 6pm-7pm  
at the Tyndale St-Georges Community  
Centre  
870 Richmond Square

For eligibility criteria for our services, visit our website for more details:

[www.justicemontreal.org](http://www.justicemontreal.org)



