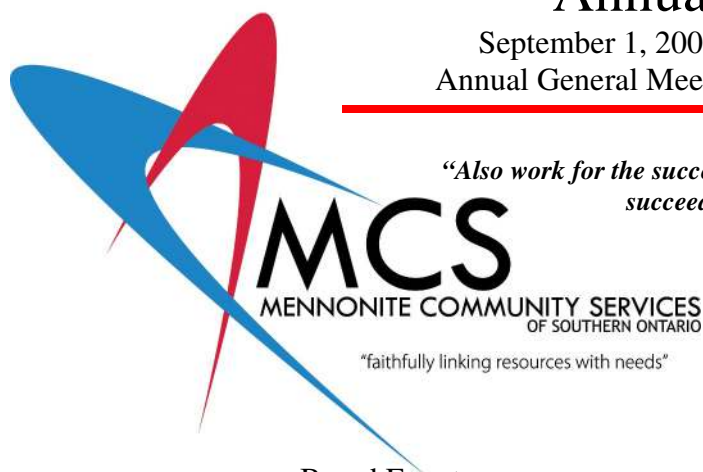


# Annual Report

September 1, 2009 to August 31, 2010  
Annual General Meeting November 30, 2010



*"Also work for the success of the city I have sent you to. Pray to the Lord for that city. If it succeeds, you too will enjoy success." -Jeremiah 29:7*

## Board Events:

The Annual Mennoniten Treffen took place on September 27, 2009. Guest Speakers Victor Sawatzky and Eduard Thun, Low German Mennonites from Germany, shared inspirational stories about life in Russia. Victor shared his personal faith journey growing up in Russia and moving to Germany after the fall of Communism. More than 750 people attended.

The Annual Auction for Relief raised \$42 673 (net) split 75% MCS and 25% MCC. The highest bid of \$3 500 was for a trailer, 2nd highest bid of \$3150 was for a dining room set and the 3rd highest bid of \$1800 was for a swing set. The Fish Fry booth raised \$2000 and Meats & Sausages raised \$3021.90. For the first time, MCS Auction Committee worked with the Aylmer Strawberry Fest for a joint event.

*Thank you to the Auction Committee and all the volunteers that make the Auction and Mennoniten Treffen possible.*



*(Back) Peter Bergen, Abe Harms (staff), Abe Harder, John Unger;  
(middle) Peter Wiens, John Wall, Peter Penner, Cornelius Knelsen;  
(front) Tina Giesbrecht (missing: Frank Martens, Sara Dyck)*

## **MCS Board of Directors 2009-2010**

<b>Representative</b>	<b>Church</b>	<b>Position</b>
Abe Harder	EMMC	Chair
John Wall	EMMC	Director
Peter Bergen	OCC	Vice-Chair
Frank Martens	OCC	Director
Sara Dyck	EMC	Secretary/Treasurer
Tina Giesbrecht	EMC	Director
John Unger	SMC	Director
Peter Penner	SMC	Director
Cornelius Knelsen	RFM	Director
Peter Wiens	RFM	Director
Lily Hiebert Rempel	MCCO	Representative

## **MCS Mission Statement:**

- ◆ To be the social arm of the Mennonite (Anabaptist) Churches in the area.
- ◆ To actively and faithfully seek resources, partner with other churches, donors and agencies
- ◆ To provide social, ethnic, informational and educational services with equity and integrity to a diverse community
- ◆ To aid in world relief through Mennonite Central Committee (MCC)
- ◆ To provide leadership to churches, the public and private sector with information that aid in service and support, integration and inclusion of newcomers
- ◆ To provide the above from an Anabaptist faith perspective, propelled by our faith in Jesus.

## **Our Priorities:**

- ◆ Bridge this community with MCC by being a conduit for its information and gathering resources for its programs.
- ◆ Help and promote integration and inclusion of newcomers, but not assimilation.
- ◆ Promote and communicate our Low German ethnicity, language, heritage and history, values and truths.
- ◆ Advocate for housing for disadvantaged people.
- ◆ Help facilitate means for people to recover from addictions.
- ◆ Provide educational opportunities for newcomers.
- ◆ Promote a simple modest lifestyle that expresses harmony with God's creation. Promote conservation and reuse of resources.
- ◆ Channel resources to our community but not loan or give money to individuals.
- ◆ Advocate for the Low German community and help other agencies engage with it. Cooperate with agencies that wish to engage us to deliver services.
- ◆ Encourage businesses, churches, and volunteers to respond to service gaps in our community.

## Employment Services

On August 1, 2010, the MTCU initiated a new program for all employment service providers including MCS, under the "Employment Ontario" banner. The program is geared to ensure clients get effective, relevant skills training, employment and career planning services, where and when they need them. John Wiebe elected to retire after changes allowed for only one counselor. His guidance and input is sorely missed.

Changes to MTCU programs that most affected our clientele were the upgrading time frames and the reduced amount of living allowance. Several Low German students in LBS upgrading programs lobbied the offices of the MPP Steve Peters for changes to programs to extend the time frame given for upgrading.



Susan Loewen, John Wiebe

The number of Low German people that are getting resumes done is steadily increasing as they are becoming aware that this is the way employers are expecting them to apply for jobs. The percentage of Low German clients visiting the office is approximately 70%.

Low German clients are applying for schooling, being successful in their training and finding work after. This is a very positive thing for them and they have commented on the positive support and encouragement they received through the Employment Services provided by Mennonite Community Services.

*Thanks be to God for John Wiebe's years of dedicated work.*

## Family Education & Support Project of Aylmer (FESPA)

We had what I term as a sad year. One of our FESPA School women passed away and there was much illness and personal sadness within the staff. However we are glad to have had:



- 55 women attended the FESPA School learning ESL and life skills while 64 children attended the school readiness program
- 15 volunteers gave 181 hours of their time to our FESPA School
- 22 new women registered for our Mam&Bebi program
- The Family Support Worker assisted with 269 appointments



Anna Bergen, Anita Harms

*"I can drive myself now because I took the Driver's Education class at FESPA" -newcomer, FESPA student*

## Aylmer Mennonite Community Store



Linda Miller, Agatha Giesbrecht,  
Helen Fehr

We had 33,329 customers last year -an increase of 3,319. We have between 90-100 volunteers and currently 4 co-op students.

We sold a large wooden office chair for \$232.00, a Salad Master Salad Cutter for \$110.00, a Mini Cooper Car for \$45.00, a Police Car for \$120.00 and an Old Country Roses Royal Albert 6 cup and saucer set for \$100.00. These are a few examples showing that Silent Auction does well and it brought in \$3752.00.

We are happy when the customers are happy. I happened to be up front when a customer was getting her items rung in. She turned around to look at the women's suit jackets and to her surprise found one that fit her perfectly and it was the same name brand as her eye glasses. The tag showed it was 75% off and she was so happy. She purchased her items and left the store. Not two minutes later and she was placing a bid on the antique dresser and bed set in the Silent Auction window. She won the bid at \$225.00. So an 85cent purchase equalled a \$225 bid and she was a very impressed customer. Goes to show a little can go a long way.



## Visitation/Out-reach Program

Visitation Ministry has dealt with a total of 182 new clients this year and 1295 repeat clients. Of all the services rendered, 467 comprised of meeting clients at the Resource Centre, in coffee shops, in homes, accompanying clients to agencies or public service locations, visiting someone in prison or in hospitals to support them. There were 242 services involving transporting clients and/or translating for clients for medical appointments, support clients involved with F&CS, teach and mediate. And 102 services were provided where staff liaised with or provided information to outside agencies. There were 581 phone calls logged.

Thanks be to God for our computer that ran for 7 years equaling 27 billion revolutions.



Jake Wall, Henry Rempel, Helen Bergen, Lena Wall, Maria Dyck

Radio CHPD partnered with at least 17 other organizations to broadcast 4 hours a day Monday through Friday and 3 hours a day on Saturdays. At least 18 of the 23 hours per week consist of Low German programming. The remaining hours contained High German, English, Spanish and instrumental music, Spanish programming and English children's programs.

We were privileged to receive programming from 18 different partners, the majority of which were Canadian sources such as Family Life Network (MB), Bradley Street Church of God (ON), Gospel Message (SK), Elgin County Library (ON) and P-D Bibel Stund. Our listeners especially appreciated international and local news coming to us from Rio Mensaje out of Paraguay, Casa Siemens and Durango News out of Mexico, local news as communicated live by radio staff and of course the hugely popular Carl Zacharias who weekly sends a smattering of news from around the world, humorous anecdotes about *Fritz* and *Fraunz* and *Taum äwa Nudenkjen*. The bulk of radio staff time is taken up with the six programs we create on-site as well as the hours spent hosting live broadcasts.

We were excited to receive the MSCU Charitable Fund Grant this year to create 5-10 minute spots about peace, justice and mutual aid. We appreciated our 61 businesses that bought contracts, approximately 260 individuals who bought advertisements and at least 28 different community organizations who made announcements.

Thank you volunteers and listeners for another year.

## Volunteer Co-ordinator & Driver/Documentation/ Newcomer Services

"If I had never had to go to Citizenship Classes, I'd not have learned English. Now at least I can speak a little bit. And it helps the kids too."- newcomer looking back over the years.

### Description of activities:

**Immigration:** Included providing preliminary information and guidance to Visitors beginning the process of applying for and maintaining valid status in Canada; applications for Permanent Residence, Work Permits, Visas, Permanent Resident Cards; follow-up once applications are processing; providing information on travel documents for Permanent Residents.

**Citizenship:** Included applications for first time proof of, Grant of, Retention of, and Resumption of Citizenships as well as the providing preliminary information and follow-up correspondence.

**Seniors:** Included Old Age Security/Canada Pension applications and assist with correspondence.

**Volunteer:** connecting clients with volunteer drivers/interpreters or co-ordinating appointments (majority were health related).

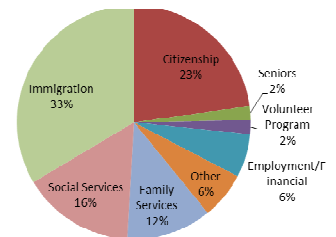
**Employment/Financial:** Included referring clients to employment services; information and assistance with financial matters.

**Other:** Included general referrals to other agencies/services.

**Family Services:** Included assistance with Family Benefits, School matters, Birth and Death Certificates, Passports, Drivers, and SIN applications and information.

**Social Services:** Included connecting clients with health professionals, OHIP registration/renewal, Housing, Disability Benefits.

Activities by Grouping 2009-2010



(Back) Cornelius Reimer, Helena Guenther, Abe Harms  
(Front) Helen Bergen, Margaret Reimer, Anni Bird, Shelley Berg, Anna Bergen

### The Volunteer Driver Program is an opportunity for:

- ◆ Bridge-building between service providers and our clients,
- ◆ The program is a place for at risk clients to seek support.
- ◆ A place for former clients to volunteer in the Volunteer Driver Program.

There were 10 volunteers who drove, translated or interpreted for 403 clients. Some clients making use of the program have been in Canada longer than 5 years but do not have access to transportation, continuing language barriers, or disabilities.

God keep our land glorious and free, O Canada  
Government funding pays for much of the  
Immigration, Documentation and Newcomer  
Settlement Services and Outreach Work. With this  
support we are blessed to provide newcomers with  
affordable services.



## MCS Executive Director's Report

MCS just completed its second year as an "independent" organization, separate from but supported by MCCO. It has made big strides but fine-tuning is continuing.

All of last year's programs continued, and some even expanded a bit. Two years ago when MCS took on all the programs from MCCO, was also the time when the economic crisis began and fund raising became more difficult. So the administration is thankful for the way MCS has been able to turn the budget in the right direction.

The Ontario government has also changed how employment services are delivered, and it looked like MCS would not be able to continue with that program. It was downsized to previous levels but MCS continues to be a real presence in this field. The overall costs of programs were brought down and revenue up, and that reduced the operating shortfall significantly.

The aim for the 2010-11 fiscal year is to break even on the budget. A consultant, Henry Hildebrand, was brought in to help with the fine-tuning of all the programs to achieve this. This restructuring will take a significant amount of work for the next year. It is also hoped that an economic community impact study on the radio will help to generate more income for this service.

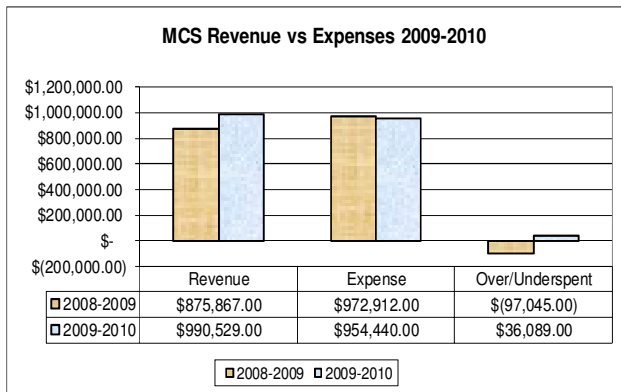
MCS owes a debt of gratitude toward the churches that send Board members and support it financially; to government and other funding agencies that see the value in the services; to staff and volunteers that cheerfully carry out their duties and more; to this country of opportunity; and most of all to our God who gives the staff and the Board the compassion, health, strength and encouragement for this service.

The application for registered charity status has dragged out yet another year but the hope is that this will be the year where it comes through. This should make fundraising through donations more in-house, hopefully increase the amount and also make it easier.

The vision and mission of MCS is to "faithfully link resources with need" or as the prophet Jeremiah expresses it in 29:7 (adapted) *Make yourselves at home in your new country and work for the country's welfare. Pray for its well-being. If things go well for the country, things will go well for you.*"



### Financials at a Glance



#### Other Services

- ◆ Provided cultural information to the community as requested.
- ◆ *Mennonitische Post* Outlet Book Store and newspaper subscriptions
- ◆ Weekly News Briefing *Kurze Nachrichten*

Thank you MCS volunteers. You drive, interpret, price, organize, sew, read stories, host radio shows and so much more. May God bless you. We couldn't do it without your help.

### MCS Funding Partners:

- ◆ Ministry of Community & Social Services
- ◆ Community Action Program for Children
- ◆ Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program
- ◆ United Way
- ◆ Ministry of Training, Colleges & Universities
- ◆ Immigrant Settlement Adaptation Program
- ◆ Newcomer Settlement Program
- ◆ Mennonite Savings & Credit Union
- ◆ MCS Member Churches (SMC, RFM, OCC, EMC, EMMC)
- ◆ Donations
- ◆ Advertisers/Sponsorships
- ◆ Fundraising Events