Lebohang Motseki, 27, is the farm manager of Malealea Teaching Farm in the village of Malealea, Lesotho. He also farms 2.1 hectares near the town to Maphutseng with his mother. Lebohang took part in the International Volunteer Exchange Program (IVEP) between 2015 and 2016 at Willowview Farms in Abbotsford, B.C. He says his IVEP experience inspired him to try modern farming techniques. (MCC Photo/Matthew Sawatzky)
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In addition to more than 700 projects worldwide, MCC is actively making a difference in the lives of people through our programs in Ontario. We walk toward reconciliation with Indigenous Neighbours and alongside newcomers building a new life in Canada. We support those impacted by crime or facing the realities of poverty and homelessness. We work to build stronger and safer communities.

Our Material Resources program collects and ships desperately needed aid materials all over the world – from nutritious dried soup mix flown into Ontario Indigenous communities, to emergency food and shelter supplies shipped overseas to refugee camps. mcco.ca/mr

MCC Ontario’s Refugee Resettlement program works with churches, neighbourhood associations, institutions and municipalities who open their hearts and homes to welcome newcomers. mcco.ca/supporting-refugees

Our People in Poverty program walks alongside people in our community facing the realities of poverty and homelessness, champions the Living Wage movement and supports The Raw Carrot, a gourmet soup-making enterprise that helps create employment for individuals with disabilities. mcco.ca/poverty-reduction

MCC Ontario’s Low German program works with service providers and agencies to help deliver culturally sensitive services as well as build relationships between Low German newcomers, community helpers and churches. mcco.ca/lowgerman

Across Ontario, the Indigenous Neighbours program facilitates reconciliation through education, relationship and advocacy, to help address systemic issues and promote sustainable livelihoods. As well, we support Indigenous artisans through the Niska program. mcco.ca/indigenous-neighbours

MCC Ontario’s Restorative Justice program supports a holistic approach to criminal offences so that the needs of the victim, the impacted community and the offender are all addressed. Initiatives are offered to promote social inclusion, skill building and community safety. mcco.ca/rj

Ontarians serving Internationally in 2017/2018

Leanna Buisma: SEED, Community Worker, Colombia
Raquel Conde Guevara: Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Coordinator, Haiti
Marty & Dianne Climenhage: Newfoundland and Labrador Regional Representatives
Naomi & Doug Enns: Reps for Western Europe
Katelyn Folkerts: SALT, Peace Project Assistant, Nigeria
Stefanie Heide: SALT, English Teacher & Tutor, Cambodia
Rebecca Isaak: SALT, Program & Educational Activities Assistant, Lebanon
Bonnie Klassen: Area Director, South America Mexico, Latin America and Caribbean Programs
Dave Klassen: Interim Rep, Bangladesh
Mary Lou Klassen: Peace Advisor, Bangladesh
Wendy Martin: Rep for Laos
Talina Matthies: Capacity Building Coordinator for Eastern Congo, DR Congo
Rudi Okot: Peacebuilding Coordinator, Iran-Iraq-Jordan
Kataryna Patsak: Peacebuilding Resource Person, Ukraine
Ruth Plett & Krystan Pawlikowski: Reps for East Europe, Bosnia and Herzegovina
Elysha Roeper: SEED, Community Development Worker, Bolivia
Nathan Schmidt: SALT, Project Assistant, Chad
Andrea Sherk: SALT, Community Worker & Field Staff, India
Rebecca & Paul Shetler Fast: Reps for Haiti
Vanessa Snyder-Penner: SALT, Peace Program & English Teaching Assistant, China
Caitlyn Tardif: SALT, English Teacher, Laos
Krista VanderHout: SALT, Program Assistant & Office Staff, India
Cath & Peter Woolner: Interim Reps for Swaziland, Lesotho and South Africa
Sara Wyngaarden: SALT, Community Worker, India
A MESSAGE FROM MCC ONTARIO’S EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

This is my first Annual Report letter as Executive Director of MCC Ontario. I was initially reluctant to apply for the Executive Director role after serving with Rick Cober Bauman for four years as Associate Executive Director, but after an unmistakable stirring within me, and encouragement from my colleagues, I applied and was invited to the position. I consider it a privilege to serve in this role.

I ran across a familiar passage today from the Old Testament and was heartened by its simplicity, yet struck by the challenge to live it out each day.

What does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God. (Micah 6:8)

Listening to news reports on any given day, the opposite is occurring around the world: injustice, no mercy and a lack of humility is the norm.

As we try to respond to the growing needs around the world, it often feels overwhelming since there is so much more that could be done. Yet it is a joy to know that the relief, development and peace work of MCC is impacting the everyday reality for men, women, children and families in the 57 countries in which we work.

In the pages of this Annual Report, you will read about our Sowing Reconciliation project among Indigenous Friends in Northern Ontario, our work with churches and other groups to resettle refugees in Canada, and our work bringing relief supplies to displaced families in Jordan. You will also learn about MCC’s work to supply food packages for families in DR Congo who are fleeing violence, and assisting young people in Rwanda to find employment through skill development projects. These are just a few stories of needs that are being met in the name of Christ.

And for your involvement I want to say a sincere “Thank you.” Whether it is a financial contribution, a donation to our Thrift shops or volunteering your time, you are making a difference and we appreciate your partnership. Together we are helping to bring justice and show mercy to people whose needs and voices are often overlooked.

Joyfully in Christ,

John Head, Executive Director, MCC Ontario
FUNDING SOURCES
$17.1 MILLION

- Cash & Other Contributions: $7,971,624
- Thrift Shops: $4,574,504
- Relief Sales: $595,601
- Material Resources (in kind): $823,869

DOLLARS AT WORK
$16.4 MILLION

- Humanitarian Relief & Disaster Recovery: $883,296
- Canadian Foodgrains Bank: $451,967
- Estates & Trusts: $706,677
- Other: $1,058,740

ONTARIO PROGRAM DOLLARS AT WORK
$3.9 MILLION

- Indigenous Neighbors: $205,565
- Low German: $479,272
- Material Resources: $567,813
- Poverty: $426,634
- Refugee: $1,450,581
- Peacebuilding & Education: $124,811
- Restorative Justice: $700,975

TOTAL ONTARIO DOLLARS BY THEME
$3.9 MILLION

- Education: $6,144
- Food Security & Sustainable Livelihoods: $543,563
- Migration & Resettlement: $1,929,852
- Restorative Justice: $700,975
- Humanitarian Relief & Disaster Recovery: $567,813
- Peacebuilding & Conflict Transformation: $207,303
MCC Ontario Highlights

Material Resources

- **10,800** Hygiene Kits
- **4,260** School Kits
- **6,687** Comforters
- **1,744** Bags of Dried Soup
- **1,132** Personal Care Kits
- **33** Teacher’s Kits
- **44,792** Cans of Meat
- **925** Meat Canning Volunteers
- **40** Sewing Kits
- **39** Newcomer Welcome Kits
- **8,736** Tubes of Toothpaste
- **4,564** Relief Kits
- **100** Gardening Kits
- **148** Baby Blankets
- **4** International Shipments
  - 2 to Ukraine
  - 2 to Jordan
- **436** Infant Care Kits
Restorative Justice Program

When someone asks long-time MCCO Restorative Justice worker Ed Vandenberg about his ministry with Circles of Support and Accountability (CoSA), he talks a lot about grace. “I talk about grace because the individuals we work with are some of the most unlikely candidates for special favour or consideration.” Ed and others who work and volunteer with CoSA, walk alongside individuals who have committed sex crimes and are returning to society after time served in prison.

Here are some inspiring stories Ed has encountered over the past year:

- Nick, who almost lost his life due to an unprovoked stabbing incident a couple of years ago, is now known in his current residence for his sewing skills. He is often asked to repair clothes and make curtains. At a recent meeting, Nick said to a circle member, “You’re like a father to me.”

- Jim first came to Toronto after hearing the story of a volunteer involved in CoSA. This volunteer became a vital source of support and accountability for Jim. Then, during the final months of this circle volunteer’s life, Jim became a vital support to him and his wife.

In spite of the many uplifting stories, there are no guarantees of success, cautions Ed. “There were times when things seemed to fall apart and all I could do was offer my best and leave the rest in God’s hands.”

Ultimately, Ed sees this work as a prime opportunity to put our faith in action even when we don’t want to. “We have a commitment to affirming the God-created humanity of each person we work with.” The support MCC receives for this life-giving work is a vital resource for those who would otherwise be living without hope.

Indigenous Neighbours Program

This year, through generous support and partnerships, MCCO was able to create the Sowing Reconciliation project, providing Gardening Kits for communities in Northwestern Ontario. The individual Gardening Kits went to six remote First Nation communities in Northwestern Ontario and featured seed potatoes, vegetable seeds and basic gardening supplies, with 140 kits distributed between the communities.

One of the most exciting parts of this project was the engagement of some of the younger generation gardeners. One 10-year-old girl joined her family as they planted a garden of potatoes, carrots, tomatoes and rhubarb. Seeing that the plants were growing after watering and weeding the garden, she became overly excited to see the growth of the vegetables and began pulling up the carrots to check on how much they had grown, not realizing she was embarking on an early harvest of her vegetables!

Another group of gardeners in Sachigo Lake donated their freshly harvested potatoes and vegetables to be used in the annual moose stew community feast that celebrates the start of the moose-hunting season.

In addition to the excitement of those who received the kits, many constituents and partners across the province were also deeply engaged. A dozen volunteers in Kitchener, along with 40 students and staff from O’Gorman High School in Timmins, participated in packing and sorting kits, and one especially dedicated volunteer drove nearly 2,000 kilometres to deliver the kits to the airport.

Taking encouragement from this year’s exceptional results, MCCO will be increasing the amount of seeds and supplies for next year, and transitioning from individual gardening kits to larger community gardening kits as requested by the communities. We are deeply appreciative of your generosity and commitment to making fresh food more accessible in the Northern communities. Thank you!
Poverty Reduction Program

Jonathan Klassen participated in the TOOLS (Toronto Ontario Opportunity for Learning and Service) program, which is a short-term service venture that introduces groups to individuals living on the streets of Toronto, and reveals the realities of poverty in our community. Jonathan participated four years ago but reached out recently to TOOLS coordinator Pete Olson to reflect on how impactful that time was for him (edited for length and clarity).

“TOOLS taught me the importance of being compassionate and non-judgmental in all aspects of life. I’ve really held onto the idea that you can never blame the victims in these situations. There’s a story behind everyone.

Ever since I went on TOOLS, I’ve tried to see the value and think about the story behind everyone I interact with and treat them accordingly. I’m trying to be less judgmental and more loving.

I’ve changed my field of study in the past year to try to align with what I feel my purpose in life is. I was originally in a Computer Science and Business program, but I didn’t feel like this would lead me to a career that would be focused on loving others and helping people (although I’m sure it could for some people), so I’m now taking Social Development Studies and Business along with a Peace and Conflict Studies minor.

So just wanted to give you a response to the questions you asked and let you know how meaningful TOOLS was for me. Thanks so much for the work you do, Pete.”

Last year, 13 groups ventured onto the streets of Toronto. Nearly 200 individuals were challenged to confront their own fears and anxieties and to step out in grace and compassion toward the most marginalized in our society.

Low German Program

MCCO networks with community service agencies and Low German communities to promote culturally sensitive services for Low German newcomers. Low German newcomers often face a number of challenges including language barriers, literacy challenges, cultural misunderstandings and poverty. The work with this community is sensitive and built on relationships. Here are a couple of examples of how this work is carried out:

One family with three members received significant support from their settlement worker – at times several contacts in one week. A family conference was held to connect the various service providers who were involved with this family, resulting in greater understanding of the family dynamics and needs. The assistance this settlement worker provided prevented many crises as well as building greater understanding about the complexity of services needed. The worker also conveyed many messages to the family so they could follow through with their service plans.

As a result of these coordinated services, the family is now living in affordable housing and receiving long-term financial support. This complex family situation will continue to require long-term coordinated support. While MCCO no longer provides these services directly, we support and train other agencies that do.

A major event in the Low German program calendar are the networking conferences. This year, over 350 social workers, teachers, health professionals, and law enforcement officers took part. Conference-goers come away with both big picture context and concrete actions to better do their work.

“So I will stop assuming we all have the story or same struggles [and start] having conversations to get to know their stories,” shared one participant in the evaluation.

Children from a Low German Colony in Mexico. Many Low German speaking Mennonite families continue to travel from Mexico to Canada fleeing violence and persecution and searching for economic viability. (Photo/Margaret Penner)

First Hmong Mennonite Church from Kitchener brought a small but mighty team to TOOLS. (MCC Photo/Pete Olsen)
Refugee Program

In August 2016, Shinga and Esperance Bienvenue came to Canada with their children, as refugees fleeing violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). After some time, they started attending Erb Street Mennonite Church located just one block away from their home.

In the spring of 2017, members of this church decided to sponsor a refugee family from the DRC, so Margaret Brockett, a sponsor group member, reached out to Shinga and Esperance to help facilitate this welcome. They asked them to provide interpretation and be a friendly face from “back home” to ease the newcomer family’s transition to Canada.

“We thought it was a good idea to have Shinga and Esperance involved; they knew what it was like to be newcomers in Canada, and of course the possibility of common language is such a comfort,” says Margaret. Little did they know how familiar this new family would be.

Imagine the shock and delight Shinga and Esperance experienced when they discovered that the family they were sponsoring was their former pastor, Tito Gatako, and his family! “Oh my goodness,” laughed Shinga, “I was very happy – and Tito Gatako, too. If you are coming and you don’t know anybody, it can be so hard.”

The family has been humbled and deeply grateful for the generosity of the sponsor group: “They have been working hard for us; they teach us how to survive in Canada. They really care about us.”

Social Enterprise

With community and caring for creation at its heart, the MCC rePurpose Centre, located at 6 Arthur Street North, Elmira, is a new initiative with a high priority focus on recycling, reusing and repurposing materials, along with retail sales. Like all MCC shops, the rePurpose Centre is run by a small staff with day-to-day positions filled by volunteers.

The first stage of this new venture was to provide a retail structure where shoppers pay for their purchases by weight. Clothing, footwear and accessories are sold for $1.88 a pound, housewares and books for $0.88 a pound and jewellery for $5.88 a pound. “So if you’re a young parent and in need of infant clothing you can come and purchase a large bin of infant clothes for $1.88 a pound. There are a lot of baby clothes in a pound!” said Karla Richards, MCC’s Social Enterprise Operations Manager.

Textiles not sold in the shop are made into handwoven rag rugs, industrial rags and comforter patches, while e-waste and metal are recycled. The MCC rePurpose Centre will also experiment with shredding material like books which, when mixed with straw, can be used as animal bedding by farmers.

The MCC rePurpose Centre supports all MCC Thrift Shops across Ontario by collecting unsold and excess donations, and assisting shops in balancing stock and alleviating back-room congestion through planned redistribution and holding services.

Last year MCC Thrift Shops in Ontario kept over 600,000 cubic feet of items from the landfill and with the MCC rePurpose Centre’s projects this number will increase substantially.

Jan Martens Janzen, MCC Ontario’s Director of Social Enterprise, said, “The rePurpose Centre was intentionally and thoughtfully designed to maximize the value of donated goods. On our opening day we sold over 1.25 tons! This is another step in making the landfill the last choice.”
Thrifty Shops
MCC Thrift shops in Ontario contributed more than $4.5 million to the work of MCC this past fiscal year, and we couldn’t do it without you. Thank you!

Volunteers
The thousands of generous, kind, and compassionate volunteers we are blessed with in Ontario and worldwide are the core of both the legacy and future of MCC. In Ontario, over 3,000 people volunteer their time, their energy, and their skills to empower the work of MCC. They pack relief kits, knot comforters, sort used items at Thrift Shops and advocate for the vulnerable. As an organization, and as individuals, we are eternally grateful for your service!
mcco.ca/volunteer

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mcco.ca/volunteer

MCC Thrift & Gift Shop, 59 Church Street West, Elmira
MCC Thrift on Kent, 50 Kent Avenue, Kitchener
MCC Thrift on Mill, 58 Mill Street West, Leamington
MCC New Hamburg Thrift Centre, 41 Heritage Drive, New Hamburg
Port Thrift Shop, 12 Charlotte Street, Port Colborne*

Port Rowan Thrift Shoppe, 1026 Bay Street, Port Rowan*
New to You Thrift Shop, 59 Southworth St. N., Welland*
MCC Christian Benefit Thrift Shop, 254 Grantham Ave, St. Catharines
MCC Care & Share Thrift Shop, 33 Ringwood Drive, Stouffville
*Associate Thrift Shops

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Thrift on Kent volunteers Joshua Huebner and Herta Park with Volunteer Services Manager Margaret Smart-Wheaton (left) on National Volunteer Appreciation Week. (MCC Photo/Ken Ogasawara)

Mary Groh at the Welcome Desk in the lobby of the 50 Kent building in Kitchener. (MCC Photo/Ken Ogasawara)

Dedicated comforter makers from Bethany Mennonite Church in Virgil - we appreciate you! (MCC Photo/Shoua Vang)