



INSTITUT
THOMAS MORE
INSTITUTE

2018-2019

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ANNUAL REPORT

Québec 



OUR MANDATE

Founded in 1945, The Thomas More Institute (TMI) is a secular, liberal arts academic institution that offers adults of all ages opportunities to explore a wide variety of topics in university-level discussion courses.

TMI is dedicated to the principle that learning is a lifelong process and that people learn best from each other by listening, questioning and discussing in an environment where all perspectives are welcome.

Our outreach programs and special education events are designed to nurture curiosity, learning and social engagement, particularly for those who may feel socially isolated or for those seeking a different approach to

education. TMI's varied courses and activities are offered with the belief that intelligent inquiry and critical reflection are central to community and well-being.

Students who seek an alternative method of education have the opportunity to earn a Comprehensive Certificate from TMI or a Bachelor of Arts degree through TMI's affiliation with Bishop's University. Whether taking courses for credit or for pleasure, participants develop a stronger sense of community belonging, a new or renewed passion for lifelong learning and an understanding of other perspectives.



A Message from the **CHAIR OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

The 2018-19 academic year has brought renewal to the Thomas More Institute. In the Spring of 2018, the Board of Directors invested in the future of the Institute, hiring a full time Executive Director, Dina Souleiman, and a new Academic Director, Jonathan Powers. Under Dina's leadership, TMI has opened its doors even more widely to the Montreal community, attracting over 90 new students through extensive promotion and advertising outreach. The office has become revitalized, blending a dedication to professionalism with the warmth and spirit of friendship that has always been the hallmark of TMI.

Jonathan Powers, our Academic Director, has brought great energy and zeal to this newly conceived position. He has engaged in extensive outreach, bringing TMI's commitment to the liberal arts together with liberal arts programs throughout the city and beyond. He has professionalized the academic policies of the institute and worked with TMI's exceptional designers and leaders to help them shape and drive the Institute's courses.

In the Fall of 2018, I took over the role of Chair of TMI's Board of Directors from Andrew Byers. Andrew's dedication and hard work over the past five challenging years kept the Institute on steady ground and prepared it for a relaunching this past year. We are very grateful to Andrew, who not only led the Board for five years, but took on the presidency on two occasions when the need arose. My thanks also to departing Board members, Jim Cullen and Greg Peace, who provided devoted service to the Institute as former president and long-standing board member in the case of Jim, and as board member and treasurer in the case of Greg.

I wish to take this opportunity to very publicly extend a sincere thank you to TMI's extensive volunteers, whose passion for thinking, reading, and discussion makes possible the Institute's commitment to bringing life-long learning to the Montreal community. From members of the board, to our designers and leaders, to our volunteers who work in our office and make possible our book launches and other community events, we are grateful for all you bring. Your multi-faceted contributions and gifts—manifested in so many different and critical ways—help ensure that the wonderful—now 75-year-old!—legacy of the Thomas More Institute will live on. **Lastly, a most heartfelt thank you to the hundreds of participants who bring their deep curiosity to our courses and fill our classrooms with their contagious enthusiasm from year to year!**

Carol Fielder, Board Chair

OUR PROGRAMMING

ACADEMIC COURSES

For this year, we are proud to announce that we had 276 students registered in our courses, with a total of 452 registrations, in the 42 courses that we offered in Montreal, Pointe Claire and Gatineau. These courses were designed by our course designers in the fields of the liberal arts, which included credit and non-credit courses.

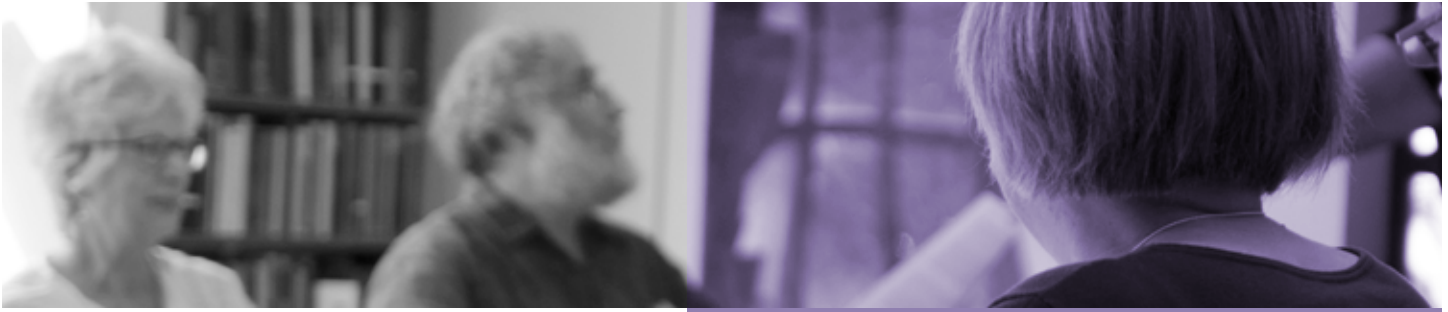
The uniqueness of the institute is that these courses are delivered in a **discussion group where students are invited to participate collaboratively in a process of shared inquiry and reflection**. At the centre of this process are carefully chosen readings representing different perspectives on the questions each group of participants has come together to explore. Participants engage in dialogue with each other, focusing on readings that typically represent a mix of historical materials, recent multidisciplinary scholarship, and literary explorations on a given theme.

VOLUNTEER TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Given that the academic courses are predominately delivered by our volunteer population, the training and development of these volunteers is an essential part of the institute's mandate. The majority of our volunteers have an academic profile, most are retired professionals, and some still teach and lecture in Montreal educational institutions. With the vision of supporting our academic philosophy and to ensure the leaders and designer deliver the Thomas More method of lifelong learning, we offered this year:

- **An annual training and orientation for new volunteer course leaders;**
- **3 continuing education trainings for the volunteers on the topics of teaching and academic approaches;**
- **One-on-one coaching and mentoring for existing and new course leaders and designers.**

For this year, we had 83 academic volunteers that devoted their vital time to TMI, delivering more than 12,000 hours of volunteer time in support of the institute.



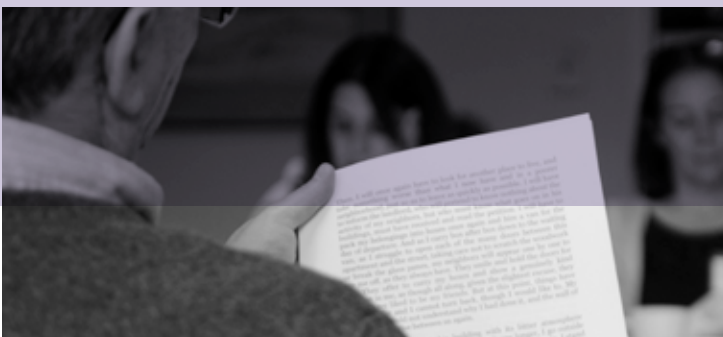
SENIORS OUTREACH PROGRAM

Since 1975, TMI has offered the **Seniors Outreach program. It is designed to reach isolated English-speaking seniors in the Montreal community, and is funded annually by the Lindsay Foundation.**

The program is an adapted TMI course (shorter readings, larger print material etc.) with a specific theme, that is discussed over the fall and winter periods. The program operates out of 15 points of service, senior residences and drop-in centres. Over 200 seniors participated in the program, helping them to reinforce cognitive skills, to break isolation, and to assist them in forging new friendships, all the while supporting TMI's approach to lifelong learning in the community.

This year's theme of discussion was *The Evolution of Detective Fiction*; where participants explored detective fiction over the last century, and its development and evolution through the decades.

The program was delivered by over 30 volunteers who devoted over 3,000 hours of their time to the community and to reach isolated seniors.



ACADEMIC AND CULTURAL EVENTS

TMI also places an emphasis on academic and cultural events, as these allow the institute to reach out to new student populations and to forge new academic and community partnerships. For this year the following events were organized by TMI, where **we were able to reach out to a population of over 1,500 people:**

- **Annual TMI Open House**
- **The Liberal Arts Fair:** a collaboration with educational institutions in Montreal (Concordia, McGill, UQAM, Brébeuf, Dawson, Marianopolis);
- **3 Book launches** with local Quebec writers;
- **The Liberal Arts Colloquium** with Concordia and Bishop's University;
- **4 academic lectures;**
- Participation in the Bishop's University **Annual Liberal Arts Conference: Heart and Souls.**
- **Cultural activity: The Stratford Festival**
- **Warren Allmand Lecture Series,** *The Fight for Freedom of Expression Around the World*, by John Ralston Saul.

OUR TEAM

WE WOULD LIKE TO THANK ALL OUR DYNAMIC VOLUNTEERS, STAFF AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS FOR THEIR COMMITMENT TO TMI! WITHOUT THEIR COUNTLESS HOURS, TMI WOULD NOT BE THE INSTITUTE THAT IT IS TODAY.



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OUR FUNDERS

TMI is a registered charity mandated to provide imaginative, rigorous, convivial, lifelong learning opportunities to adults. Contributions may be made online at www.thomasmore.qc.ca, by mail, or by telephone using a credit card. Charitable donation receipts will be issued.

We gratefully acknowledge the ongoing support of the *Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur du Québec* as well as those corporations and individuals who responded in the past year to our appeals.

Benefactors (\$2,000 +)

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Ellen Kom
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Every donation is a concrete gesture of support for better listening, more dialogue, and sharper curiosity.

UP TO \$249

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There are many ways to support TMI. Please reach out to our team to discuss the best way you can get involved.

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**BECOME A
DISCUSSION
LEADER**

**DESIGN A
COURSE**

**ACTIVITIES
& EVENTS**

**TMI
COMMITTEES**

Visit our website for more information

THOMASMORE.QC.CA

