



INSTITUT
THOMAS MORE
INSTITUTE



2023/24 ANNUAL REPORT

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Curiosity



Québec 



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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. Our programs, which include cultural, academic and outreach events, nurture curiosity, facilitate learning and promote social engagement.

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.

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



OUR IMPACT

The impact of TMI is widespread, enriching not only its direct community members but also contributing to the broader local landscape. As we approach our 80th anniversary in 2025, we look forward to continuing to create a vibrant environment that enhances learning, community connections and personal growth.

What TMI Offers	In Numbers...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lifelong learning for adults of all ages • Courses in literature, philosophy, social sciences, art, music and more • Academic and cultural events • A collaborative discussion-based approach fostering new perspectives • A Seniors Outreach Program in community centres and residences • Enriching volunteer opportunities • Local partnership initiatives • A welcoming community and lifelong friendships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 40+ new liberal arts courses every year • 370+ registrations in academic programs • Partnerships with 14 seniors residences and community centres • 290 registrations in the Seniors Outreach Program • 10+ academic and cultural events per year • 85+ volunteer course leaders • 30+ volunteer course designers • 5 active volunteer committees • 18,500 + volunteer hours • 92% satisfaction rate with TMI courses

A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR OF THE BOARD AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

We are delighted to share with you our 2023/2024 Annual Report in which we present some of the year's highlights and the accomplishments achieved thanks to the tremendous support of our volunteers, donors, partners and staff.

Fostering a vibrant community of lifelong learners through enriching programming lies at the heart of TMI's mission. This year we continued to diversify and expand our offerings, gaining momentum as we work to strengthen TMI's commitment to this mission. Courses included timeless classics alongside more contemporary subjects such as courses that looked at certain political issues and listened to indigenous voices of today. The "TMI and Our City" series introduced this past year offering shorter courses paired with a local cultural outing proved to be very popular. Our calendar of academic and cultural events was more than doubled, generating strong attendance and introducing many new faces to TMI. Meanwhile, with support from TMI's Curriculum Committee, and thanks to the creativity and talent of TMI's course designers, 45 new courses were developed for the upcoming year.

A key part of our efforts to diversify has been to expand our community partnerships. TMI's Seniors Outreach Program, which collaborates with 14 seniors' residences and centres is a longstanding example of this approach. This year, new partnerships were established with local libraries and cultural institutions, opening up new programming and outreach opportunities.

Throughout the year, TMI's Board and committees worked on many fronts, spearheading and contributing to initiatives in all areas of the organization. Alongside volunteers, staff continued optimizing operations to better serve our community and maximize our resources. Administrative roles were restructured to align more effectively with current needs. With grant funding, a series of projects were undertaken to enhance marketing effectiveness including investments in digital training and upgraded technology.

Though this collective effort, much has been accomplished. Following the difficult pandemic years, we are now seeing strong growth in new student registrations and have built awareness of TMI in the community. Our operations and infrastructures are more efficient. The generosity of our funders and donors is allowing us to invest in initiatives with longer term benefits. Thanks to you, we are facing the future on a sounder footing.

In closing, we extend our heartfelt gratitude to all who support TMI's mission. Your generosity, endless enthusiasm and many talents have been key to our success and are invaluable as we continue to shape a bright future filled with growth and discovery.

Thank you,

Carol Fiedler
Board Chair

Madeleine Colaço
Executive Director

ACADEMIC PROGRAMMING

ACADEMIC COURSES 2023/24

Enriching discussions in person and online

From literature to art, music to writing, and much more, the year's offering of 45 courses catered to various interests and passions. Courses which included "Love in the Italian Renaissance," "The Lost Art of Scripture," and L'intelligence artificielle: qu'est qui se prepare?" illustrate the variety on offer. In-person courses took place at TMI's Atwater, Pointe Claire and Gatineau locations, while online courses attracted participants from across Canada and beyond.

While TMI's 12- and 6-week discussion courses form the bulk of our programming, our shorter format courses, grouped under the banner "TMI and our City," invited participants to learn while getting out in Montreal. A new walking tour course proved particularly popular, attracting many newcomers. Meanwhile, TMI continued to foster a strong writing community with varied writing courses and the launch of "Voices," a journal featuring contributions from TMI writers.

Overall, TMI had 372 registrations in its programming over the year, including 68 new students, a 10% increase over last year. TMI is extremely grateful for the ongoing support provided by the **Ministère de l'Enseignement supérieur du Québec**, a longstanding partner whose support for our academic programming, training, and events is invaluable.

2024/2025 CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

A slate of over 40 innovative new courses

Throughout the year, TMI's course designers and Curriculum Committee worked on programming for the upcoming academic year. The 45 courses developed span various disciplines, each stemming from community-driven interests and addressing contemporary and classical themes. Ongoing trialling of new concepts continued, including a new French conversation course built around Quebec literature.

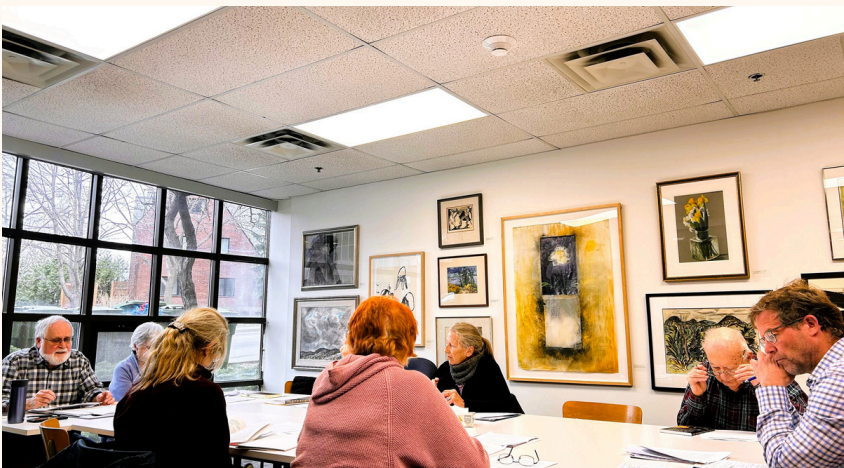
VOLUNTEER TRAINING

Mobilizing an engaged volunteer community

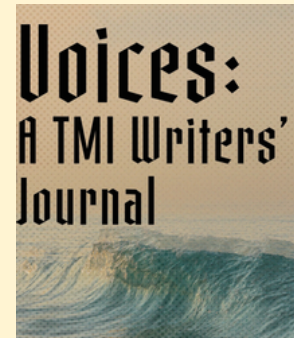
Volunteers are the heart of TMI. Most of those involved have an academic profile, are retired professionals or still teach and lecture at educational institutions. Ongoing volunteer training is offered to enhance skills in designing and leading courses. This year, new training approaches highlighted course designers sharing their design process through a podcast series "Curious Conversations" and a newsletter feature "Anatomy of a Course Design."

VOLUNTEER TRAINING

- 3 LEADER AND DESIGNER WORKSHOPS
- NEW DIGITAL TRAINING TOOLS
- ONE-TO ONE MENTORING AND SUPPORT



HIGHLIGHTING TMI WRITERS



CULTURAL AND ACADEMIC EVENTS

A diverse calendar of events drawing new participants

A diverse calendar of academic and cultural events throughout the year catered to a broad range of interests. TMI volunteers were key in organizing these events which drew strong participation and introduced many new faces to TMI.

September 7: “Exploring Everyday Inspiration: Expressions of Poetry”

During this lively event, poets Olivia Tapiero, Jerome Ramcharitar, Sarmara Garfinkle, Devon Gallant, and Sophia Devi each read two poems and discussed their sources of inspiration.

October 12: “What Constitutes a Good Death? Exploring Questions around Medical Assistance in Dying.”

Dr. Eugene Bereza, Director, MUHC Centre for Applied Ethics, provided a fascinating first-hand account of the thought that went into Québec’s pioneering of medical assistance in dying (MAID), followed by that of Canada.

November 22: Book Launch “James Wilson Morrice: Paintings and Drawings of Venice”

TMI hosted the book launch of Art Historian Sandra Paikowsky’s latest work. Paikowsky’s book, which is organized around the places Morrice painted in Venice, provides a beautiful tour of the city.

November 30 & February 28: TMI “Literature Circle”

TMI collaborated with local libraries to offer stimulating discussions around selected short stories. At the Westmount Library Souvankham Thammavongsa’s short story, “Edge of the World” was discussed and at the Côte St-Luc Library, Sinclair Ross’s “The Painted Door”.

February 1st: Art Exhibitions in Unusual Spaces

TMI welcomed the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts Volunteer Guides for a special talk on TMI’s recently installed Art Gallery Wall. The talk was presented by Sandra Paikowsky, Professor Emerita of Art History at Concordia University, and curator of the gallery wall.



April 15th and 22nd: Languages of Truth Mini-Series

TMI welcomed Dario Brancato and Maude Vanhaelen to offer, respectively, the events “Patronage in the Renaissance” and “Myths & Poetry in the Renaissance.” The series explored themes of storytelling, the creation and manipulation of narratives, and the dissemination of historical and scientific information—themes which were also echoed throughout our courses over the year.

April 20th: Watching “Open House” at Infinthéâtre

TMI community members gathered to watch the play *Open House* by Drew Hayden Taylor. The play follows five individuals at an open house and examines our tendency to compare and compete, frequently along cultural lines, and to attach ourselves to the concept of land-ownership.

May 23rd: Exploring Montreal’s Urban Nature With Ezra Soiferman

TMI welcomed local photographer and filmmaker Ezra Soiferman to explore the idea of paying attention to both nature and urban life in the city, and capturing the different kinds of “wildness” they both hold.



COMMUNITY OUTREACH

As a fixture in the local landscape for almost 80 years, TMI has consistently collaborated with other community organisations. This year, alongside longstanding TMI partnerships, new collaborations were established allowing TMI to diversify its programming and increase outreach while continuing to contribute positively to the local community.

THE SENIORS OUTREACH PROGRAM

Making a difference in the lives of Montreal seniors

TMI's Seniors Outreach Program was established in 1975 and offers an annual program of discussion-based courses in 14 English-speaking seniors' residences and community centres. Trained volunteer course leaders animate weekly discussions around readings linked to a course theme that runs over the fall and winter. The program has come to be treasured for providing a forum for people who might otherwise be isolated to engage in both intellectual and social stimulation.

This year's course "From Potter to Potter and Grimm to Disney: Exploring the Relationship Between Children's Literature and Childhood" looked at the development of children's literature and explored a series of related questions. The lively weekly discussions were animated by a team of some 25 volunteer leaders. The course drew 290 registrations this year, proving its ongoing popularity.

We thank the **R. Howard Webster Foundation** for its generous support of the program in 2023/24, allowing us to keep program fees at an accessible cost. We would also like to thank the team volunteers whose talents and dedication are the key to the program's success.

TESTIMONIALS

"HEARTFELT THANKS FOR SO MANY YEARS OF FASCINATING READINGS AND GREAT DISCUSSIONS."

"I'M SO HAPPY TO BE ABLE TO OFFER THIS EXCELLENT COURSE TO OUR RESIDENTS ONCE AGAIN."



NEW COMMUNITY COLLABORATIONS

Partnerships building local networks

This year, TMI implemented several initiatives aimed at building its community and outreach efforts while also modernizing its infrastructures. Collaborations with Infindh atre and the Victoria Visual Arts Centre enriched our programming offer in the arts while literary discussion events at the Westmount Library and C te St. Luc Public Library introduced new audiences to TMI's collaborative learning method.

Feedback from these initiatives has been extremely positive and plans for additional joint initiatives are already in the works. We thank the **Federal Government's Community Services Recovery Fund and Centraide** for their generous funding of these important initiatives.



TEAMWORK

At TMI, teamwork is the foundation of our achievements. The collective contributions of volunteers, staff, donors, and partners drive the many initiatives that allow us to continuously adapt programs and operations to better serve the needs of our community.

THE POWER OF MANY TALENTS

Throughout the year, TMI's staff worked closely with volunteers who collectively dedicated over 18,000 hours of their time to TMI's lifelong learning community. In addition to course programming, volunteers contributed to all areas of the organization including events, fundraising, communications, translation, art initiatives, office administration and facilities management. TMI's community events provided the occasion to come together in a relaxed and convivial setting and to celebrate collective achievements.



IMPROVING CORE INFRASTRUCTURES

This year, staff implemented several initiatives improving operations. The production of course reading materials was streamlined for greater efficiency. New computer equipment allowed us to bring the production of marketing materials in-house. Administrative roles were restructured to create a new marketing and community relations role. We thank our staff for their hard work and dedication. We also thank **Employment and Social Development Canada** for funding a summer intern this year through the "Canada Summer Jobs" program. We were delighted to offer this year's intern the new marketing role and happy to report that she has now joined us on a permanent basis.

PARTNER AND DONOR SUPPORT: THE KEY TO ONGOING SUCCESS

The generous support TMI receives through funding partners and donors is a critical part of TMI's ability to continue to thrive and adapt to changing circumstances. At a time when the ideals of civil society are being challenged by a tendency for people to identify more with a polarized ideological group than with their neighbours, TMI offers the opportunity to come together for shared learning and to deepen their understanding of the world we have inherited and the one we currently inhabit. We thank our funders and donors for their belief in the importance of TMI's mission and the community of lifelong learners we foster.

THANK YOU!

STAFF & VOLUNTEERS

We thank our outstanding volunteers, staff, and Board of Directors for their commitment to TMI! Your steadfast support, talents and time are the bedrock of our institution.

STAFF

Madeleine Colaço, Executive Director
Joseph Vietri, Manager of Academic Affairs
Cecilia Mueller-Judson, Administrative Services Coordinator (outgoing)
Katie Hautakoski, Communications and Academic Program Coordinator
Lucia Linaje-Ferrel, Marketing and Community Relations Coordinator (incoming)
Jennifer MacGregor, Seniors Outreach Program Coordinator
Patricia Saxton, Accountant
Bridget Anthony, Administrative Assistant



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The TMI Board play a key role in areas including curriculum development, designing and leading courses, serving on TMI committees or acting in an advisory role requiring specific expertise.

Carol Fiedler, Ph D., Chair
Len Richman, M.A., Vice-Chair
David Dussault, B.A., Treasurer
Martin Baenninger, B.A., Secretary
Shernaz Choksi, Ph. D
Anne Fitzpatrick, Ph. D
Christine Jamieson, Ph. D
Louise Jarrett, B.A., Dip. Ed.
Marilyn Kaplow, M.B.A., M.Sc.A.
Judy Macdonald, B.A., B. Ed., M.Ed.
Brian McDonough, B.A., B.C.L., M.A.
Anthony Rustin, Ph. D.
Daniel Schouela, M.A.
Mariela Tovar, Ph. D.
Madeleine Colaço, M.B.A. ex officio

COMMITTEES

The work of TMI would not be possible were it not for the dedication and vision provided by our numerous committees and their chairpersons. Each TMI committee is mandated to contribute to the growth and success of TMI in its particular domain.

CURRICULUM

Charged with developing our annual academic program and supporting over 100 volunteer academic positions, the Committee's work is dedicated to encouraging and supporting designers in the development of their courses. The Committee met weekly from mid-September until the end of May, sending out four calls for proposals, meeting with prospective designers and supporting them through the design process. Overall, a programming calendar of 45 courses was developed for the upcoming academic year.

ACCREDITATION

Focused on advising our credit students on their path to attaining a Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Arts, in association with Bishop's University, or a Comprehensive Certificate on a subject of interest. This year the committee's work included the organization of TMI's Convocation event in May and the launch of the TMI writers' journal "Voices." The Committee also updated the archives of past alumni and implemented outreach activities to re-engage them.

NOMINATION

Responsible for ensuring the continuity of our Board of Directors by identifying potential Board members who capture and cultivate the TMI spirit and who can contribute to achieving the goals of the organization. This year the committee met four times, and recruited a new member to fill a Board position in the upcoming year. The Committee also progressed plans for a Board Self-Evaluation exercise which is planned for November 2025.

INTERVIEW

The committee hosts webinars in which TMI volunteers interview authors, professors or public speakers on the issues of our time and subjects of interest to the community. This year, the committee planned and held a webinar in October as well as identifying themes of potential interest for future webinars and events.

STRATEGIC FUNDING

Charged with overseeing TMI's long-term financial needs and developing strategies for the annual campaign, grants, and investment policies. This year the Committee met five times. Initiatives included a review of TMI's Strategic Plan, a pricing strategy review, and the evaluation of several initiatives requiring major funding. This work has secured new partnerships with private foundations.

FINANCIALS

	2024	2023
REVENUES		
Grants		
- Ministère de l'Enseignement supérieur du Québec	131,400	120,500
- Government of Canada – Community Services Recovery Fund / Centraide	40,000	2,000
- Employment and Social Development Canada – Canada Summer Jobs	4,936	10,462
- Employment and Social Development Canada – New Horizons for Seniors	2,285	1,292
- Donations		
- Courses and Seniors Outreach Program	165,288	148,143
- Others	63,669	62,235
	1,857	1,784
	409,435	346,416
EXPENSES		
- Salaries and social charges	249,916	257,668
- Office expenses	17,131	13,860
- Professional fees	16,431	7,058
- Website and computer equipment	16,244	12,636
- Classroom material and supplies	16,076	17,431
- Major office upgrades	13,795	8,000
- Publicity	11,700	9,979
- Lecturers and facilitators	11,046	9,360
- Prospectus, Fundraising and Mail Charges	9,818	12,283
- Seniors Outreach Program*	9,311	3,950
- Interest and bank charges	10,856	10,239
- Depreciation of fixed assets	7,265	7,862
- Taxes and insurance	5,647	6,840
- Energy	5,106	6,808
- Community events and others	5,020	1,310
- Occupancy costs	4,862	8,786
- Maintenance and repairs	4,807	4,672
- Telecommunications	2,554	2,788
	417,585	401,530
DEFICIENCY OF REVENUES OVER EXPENSES BEFORE UNREALIZED (GAIN) LOSS ON INVESTMENTS	(8,150)	(55,114)
UNREALIZED (GAIN) LOSS ON INVESTMENTS	(121,174)	(32,155)
EXCESS (DEFICIENCY) OF REVENUES OVER EXPENSES	113,024	(22,959)

*Note: Excludes recharges for overhead and administrative costs

OUR FUNDERS AND DONORS



TMI is a registered charity mandated to provide imaginative, rigorous, convivial learning opportunities to adults. THANK YOU to our donors for your tremendous support. Your generosity provides vital funding for this mission. We also wish to gratefully acknowledge the ongoing support of the Ministère de l'enseignement supérieur du Québec, as well as support from Employment and Social Development Canada and the Federal Government's Community Services Recovery Fund.

\$25,000 +

Anonymous

\$10,000 +

Estate of Laurie McRobert

\$5,000 +

Anonymous

George and Sylvia Aikins
Foundation

Carol Fiedler

Clare Hallward

R. Howard Webster
Foundation

Anthony Rustin

\$1,000 +

Martin Baenninger

Andrew Byers

Cole Foundation

Madeleine Colaço

Kathleen Dunn

David Dussault

Madlyn Ferrier

Anthony Joseph

Gail Merilees

Sharon Poissant

Alain Renaud

Danny Schouela

Thomas Tutsch

\$500 +

Anonymous

Munirah Amra

Barry Cole & Sylvie Plouffe

James Cullen

David Doheny

William Fiedler

Ronald Fitzgerald

Anne Fitzpatrick

Louis Gadboury

William Gilsdorf

Grendon Haines

Marilyn Kaplow

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Irene Menear

Brian McDonough

Veronica Noble

Francis Parfitt

Susan Perreault

Sara & Donald Pistolesi

Stephanie Scherzer

\$250 +

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Hélène Roy

Erika Podesser-

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Mariela Tovar

Teresa Tropea

Debrah White

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Anonymous

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Wilma Brown

Moira Carley

Giovanna D'Alesio

Marlene Danies

Julia Dawson

Jerrolyn Dietrich

Nasser Elmasri

Maureen Fitzgerald

Pierre Fregeau

Louise Jarrett

Donna Jensen

Patricia Legault

François Lorrain

Irene Menear

Kay Palkhivala

Leopolda Pedicelli

Paula Pedicelli

Margaret Piton

James Queen

Brigitte Ramaseder

Barbara Smith

Robert Smol

Ninfa Spagnolo

Graham Stewart

Joseph Tarasofsky

Charles Taylor

\$99 +

Anonymous

Mary Allen

Susan Anastasopoulos

Donald Andrus

Lois Brimacombe

Canada Helps

Martin Carnegie

Rosemary Cyr

Christina Duvander

Ann Elbourne

Maureen Fitzgerald

Harriet Gold

Bernadette Griffin-Donovan

Margaret Griffin

Jean-Eudes Guy

Annemarie Hautakoski

Lou Lukanovich

Louise MacLellan

Elsebeth Mercky

Carmela Mindel

Deena Minna

Sarah Reingewirtz

Roman Rogulski

Fiorina Sammartino

Josef Schmidt

Justine Sentenne

Heather Stephens

THANK YOU

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



Visit our website for more information
THOMASMORE.QC.CA