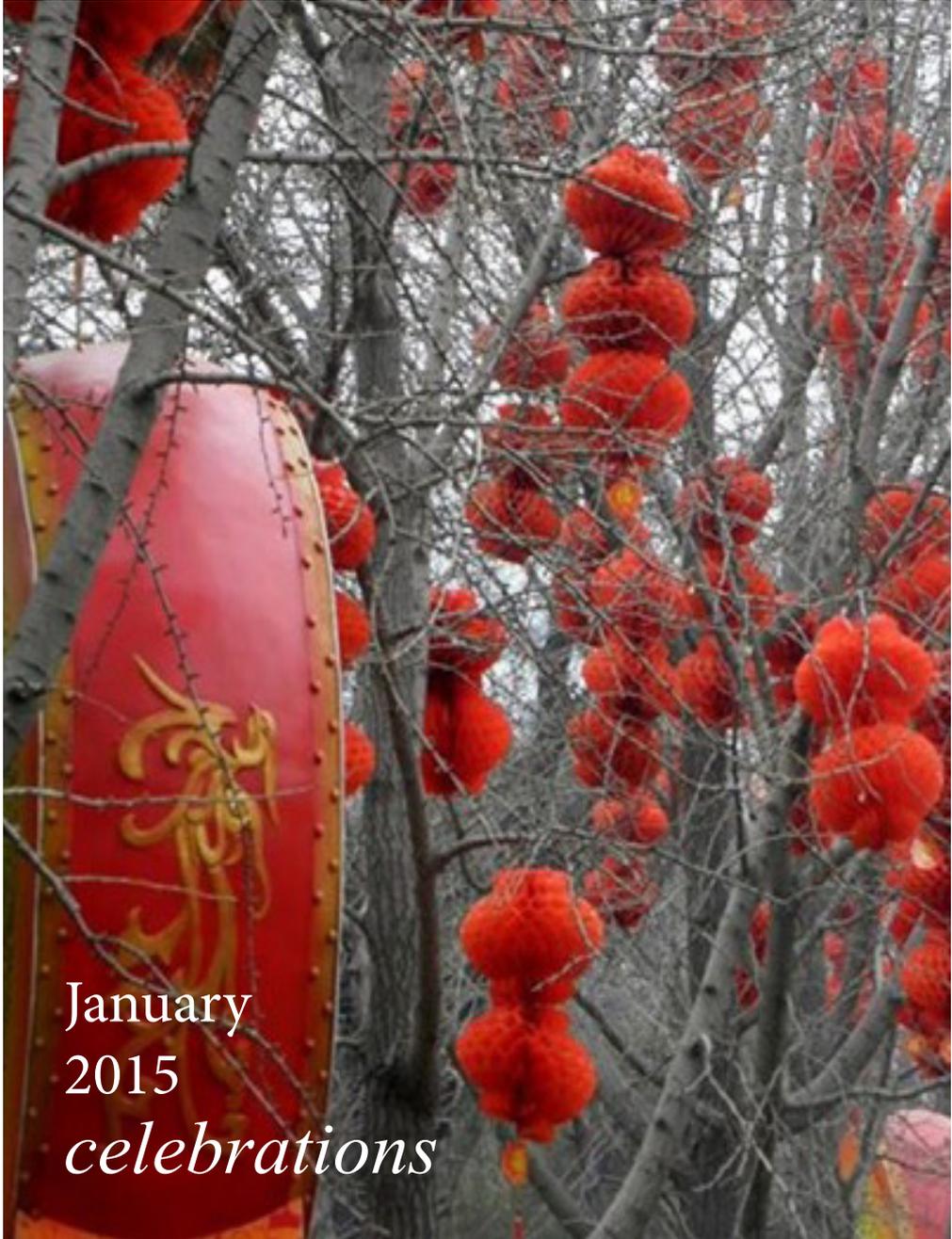


radix

McGill's Student Spirituality Magazine



January
2015
celebrations

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This photo by
Edward Ross at
Norwich Cathedral

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Graphic Design - Edward Ross
Poetry Editor - Nina Ciffolillo**

**RADIX magazine is produced by students for
students with support of the
McGill Office of Religious and Spiritual Life**

editorial

Ayman Oweida

Dear Radix Readers,

As we begin the first month of 2015, there are many things to ponder, not the least of which are the celebrations that warmed our cold winter days.

The essence of all celebrations is to bring people together. Whether it is Chanukah or Christmas or Prophet Muhammad's birthday or Guru Singh's birthday (all happening between Dec. 17 - Jan. 3), or any other holiday for that matter, the essence is the same: to give people time to reflect on their faith and their unions with each other.

During our celebrations, let us not forget those who are less fortunate than us. There are many who will die of hunger and because of the cold weather, and it is our civil and humanitarian duty to support them—whether it is financially, socially or politically. There are over 1.7 million Syrian refugees living in tents with little shelter to keep them warm and little food to sustain their bodies. As Ebola continues to ravage through the volatile region of West Africa, experts predict that over a million people will require food aid to counter the food shortages and possible famines they may face.

This issue of Radix invites you to reflect on your celebrations and new beginnings and to share them with those who are less fortunate.

Ayman Oweida
Radix Co-Editor

Ayman Oweida is Co-Editor of Radix magazine and a PhD candidate in the department of experimental medicine at McGill University.

on the roads of the world column

celebrations

By Lea Corset

The entire planet is waiting for something to happen: waiting for celebration to happen. Waiting for fun; we all are. No matter where you come from, whichever language you speak, or how old you are, we are all waiting to rejoice in a shared moment of ephemeral happiness.

We continuously wait for this bliss of forgetfulness as just for a moment, we are able to lose our minds, smile, laugh, and feel like we are living in an important moment. We wish to feel that we are a part of a community, or perhaps we even wish to be able to pretend to enjoy the moment.

It doesn't matter. Celebration can last for a long time: the time to plan it, to organize it – these are the best parts, so much for our expectations.

Time to live it. Time to tell others about it, time to recollect, years later.

Celebration brings people together. Any occasion is an occasion to celebrate! My plan for celebrating my 19th birthday last year did not quite turn out as I was expecting. I had been on the roads for months, and I was in China at the time. I thought I would do something I never ever do: stay in the hostel and do nothing.

However, I forgot to take into consideration the incredibly social and friendly tendencies of the Chinese. As soon as one of my fellow Chinese backpackers heard it was my birthday, he jumped to his feet and told me not to move and ran off.

The lights went out, a large white creamy cake came out of nowhere, as if floating in the air. He had gathered everybody he could at the hostel and organized a birthday party.



We had green pea ice cream, fried stinky tofu and dumplings. The same wonderful Chinese showed me a “green euro bill” - 100€... and gave it to me. When I tried to refuse, he became upset.

People helped me when I started travelling, he told me. I will help you now.

You will help younger travellers when you are older, that's how it works. That's how it should always work.

This is the wheel of generosity.

I will always be thankful for this wonderful lesson of humanity on my birthday. While spending it alone would have been nice, actually celebrating it together with some wonderful people gave it so much more intensity.

Celebration is only about this: finding an excuse to bring people together because no matter how introverted, shy or agoraphobic we are, spending time with others always ignites a spark in our hearts that brings warmth and comfort.

Léa Croset is a modern nomad and wanderer, currently a UI student in Philosophy and Religious Studies.



the candle

by Edward Ross

Out in the darkness,
there is a light.
It twinkles out
in the cold, dark night.

The flame of a candle
standing tall and fair.
Flickering bright,
but soft like a prayer.

That light in the window
is a gleam of hope.
It guides your way
up life's eternal slope.

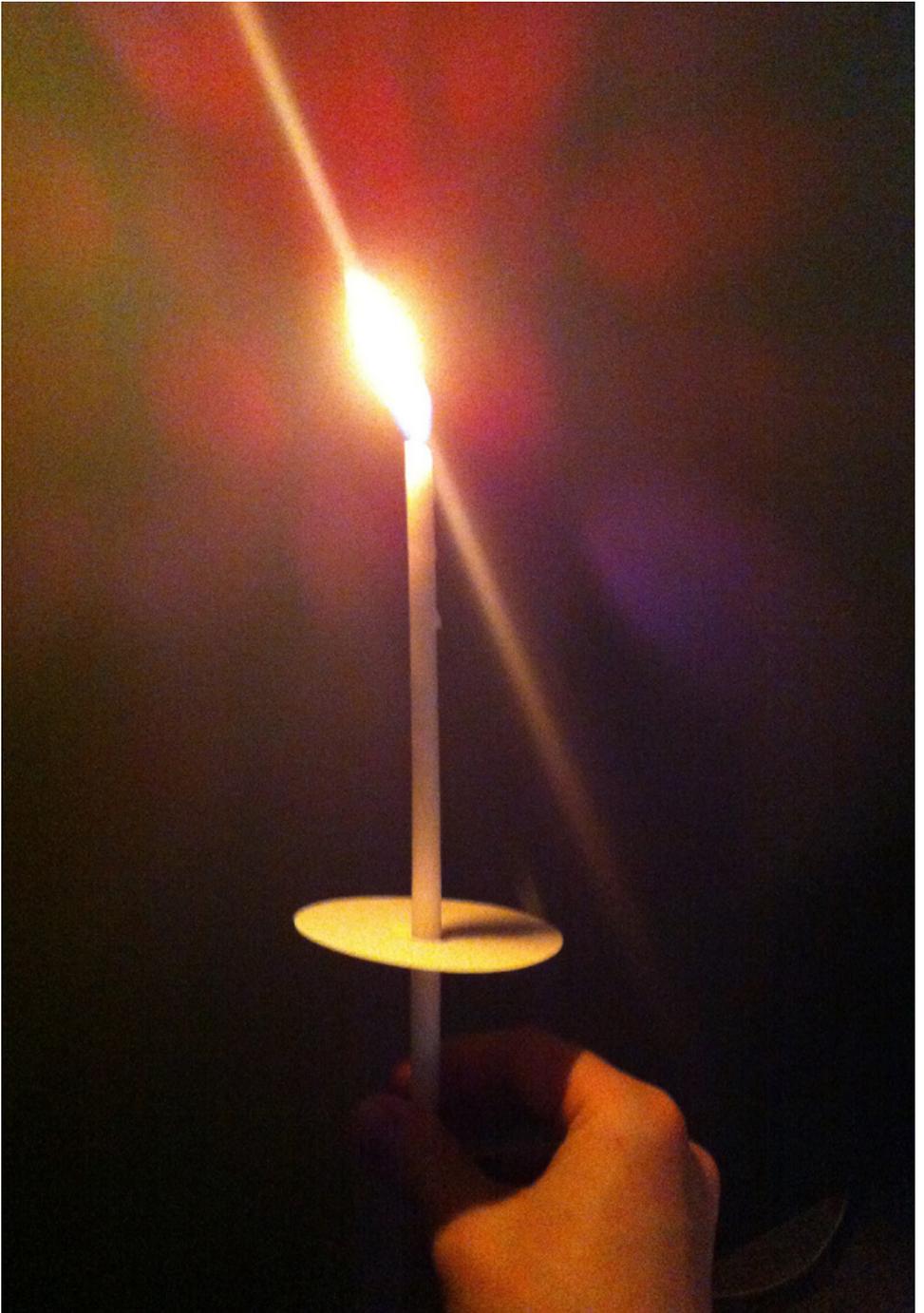
But as you get closer,
yes, you will see,
there are five candles,
on a wreath near the tree.

A symbol of hope,
of peace, joy and love.
The last candle is
for Christ from above.

In Advent, we light
each candle with care;
to show our devotion,
and offer up prayer.

The story is shared
with those we hold dear.
The story of Jesus
whose birth day is near.

So please, do remember,
that candle shining bright
is a sign of the child
who was born on Christmas
night.



Edward Ross is a UI Religious Studies and Classics Student from Cornwall, Ontario.

medicine & spirituality column

challenging definitions

by Jocelyn Goldberg

Since arriving at university, I have become aware of how limiting my understanding of certain ‘definitions’ are, as they have been put to the test. Beyond the academic and spiritual widening of my horizons, I have come to question the very nature of certain definitions that I once held as the most basic concepts. First and foremost, what is home?

Growing up that question was simple. My family, my house and my heart all lived in one place. However, when I came to university those three things changed: my family moved to Florida, my apartment was in Montreal, and my heart was in New York.

The initial recognition of how my understanding of these definitions was changing came when I realized I distinguished between a house and a home. A house is strictly physical. It is confined to its brick and mortar existence, while a home is the myriad of memories and experiences. It is the amalgamation of feelings and subtleties that are created somewhere. The confines of that somewhere are inconsequential. It’s the feeling you get that all is right in the world. Its comfort is palpable and pervasive.

When I was forced to redefine what makes home “home,” I still could not neatly place into boxes the three places in which my heart lies. Nevertheless, it has made me more comfortable with the lack of definition that home delineates.

When you’re home, you know it. It is the spirit. It is the mind. It is the heart. Is there any better definition than that?



Jocelyn is a UI student studying psychology and the social study of medicine. She hails from the great city of New York and is a writer for the McGill Tribune, an avid cyclist on the McGill Cycling Team, a salsa dancer at Salseros, and active at the MORSL office on campus. She is thrilled to be joining the Radix staff this year as a columnist.

four thoughts on the subject of east vancouver

by Taylor Gray Moore

1: Oppenheimer

A river runs through
the gasping town—
she asks:
“is it water?”
It hits the buildings
on Cordova Street;
the wind
Howls.

2: Waldorf Hotel

If
the walls are still
the same,
like the floor is
still the same,
is the house
still the same?
Is the water
in the river
the same?

3: Boheme

Wood and signage
through the glass,
and jobs;
yes, something new.
It cuts the face
like a knife.

4: Idle no more

There are tents
in the park
like there
used to be
people
in the park.
Later,
there will be
no tents
in the park.

Taylor Gray Moore was born in 1992 in Vancouver, BC. He began writing in 2007, and his work has previously appeared in The Rusty Nail. He is currently studying English Literature at McGill University.



*Art work by Claire Gignoux.
She is a UI International Student at McGill from France.
She studies International Development with a double minor in
International Relations and Art History.*

o little town of thuruthicad

by Kripa Koshy

With a gentle whoosh, the automated doors slide open and I breathe in the dewy petrichor following the recent monsoon downpour in the city. The din of conversation amongst the waiting crowd is only punctuated with the yells of frustrated cab drivers as they wait for passengers. I step out of the Cochin International Airport as these smells and sounds envelope me in an all too familiar, warm embrace. Sighting my grandmother swathed in her cotton sari, I wave and welcome her soft kiss on my cheek when I approach her.

Three hours away from the city, my grandmother lives in small town called Thuruthicad. On our arrival, the streets are dark: the several lampposts that line the street are seldom lit as a result of electricity shortages. Despite the obvious perils of cars navigating the narrow streets with only their headlights to guide them, I cannot help but delight in this darkness. It allows for the community to be illuminated instead with light that spills out from homes lining the street. Paired with the paper star-shaped lanterns hanging above each home's porch, this makes for a poignant scene.

As we step into our home, we pass our own paper star overhead. Said to represent the Star of Bethlehem that guided the Three Wise Men to the promised Messiah, these little lanterns are found in the homes of Hindu and Christian residents alike as they prepare for the season's festivities.

In the days leading up to Christmas day, my grandmother, with the help of her trusty Tata Indica, makes a visit to a local bakery that stocks, in her opinion, the best variety of seasonal delicacies. Once in the store I sight some of the snacks my grandmother has come in search of – crunchy pastries called achappams (made with coconut milk and rice flour), and halwa (a dessert made with coconut and cane sugar). Dishes that feature cane sugar, coconut and/or jackfruit in some form are staples at the average Malayalee breakfast table come Christmas morning. However the standout dessert of the season I've learnt is often the humble plum cake that invariably finds itself in the hands of guests as they visit a home, or set down on tables alongside some tea when entertaining said guests.

With her snacks in tow, my grandmother makes her way home. As it is Christmas Eve, she reminds every one of the church service we are to attend later tonight. Located across the street from us is a small bungalow with the faded blue lettering painted above its entrance identifying itself as a Pentecostal church.

It is eight o'clock in the evening when we cross over to the church and enter a small hall, the perimeter of which is lined with windows to let in the cool monsoon breeze (and mosquitoes) during the service. The floor is lined with coloured polypropylene mats, which we drop to sit on when the service begins. The next two hours are spent singing Malayalam hymns and hearing a sermon that calls for its listeners to ponder on the significance of Christ's arrival on earth. The service concludes with the partaking of the Eucharist, a reminder of Jesus' atoning sacrifice through which love and grace were extended to a sinful humanity.

At the end of the evening we step out into the night hearing the slow start of fireworks in different homes. In time, this builds to sudden bursts of light in all their pyrotechnic splendour overhead. In the brief respite between the fireworks, the sounds of chirping crickets and the murmurs of churchgoers are heard.

Christmas morning begins as the night before ended - with a cacophony of voices. I awake to the crooning of country singer Jim Reeves, from my grandmother's prized Christmas CD. Reeves' cheerful refrains are accompanied by strains of animated conversation from the front porch.

A flurry of activity follows with more family joining us through the day to partake in the laboriously prepared meals including ethakkappam (sugar-dusted fried plantains) and payasam (the iconic Keralite pudding with semolina and nuts swimming in its sugary depths).

With dusk comes the joy of distributing gifts amongst family members as well as small tokens offered to my grandmother's household help (the latter are often a stalwart feature in many Malayalee homes).

The family soon takes to the front yard to light firecrackers that range from sparkers clutched in the hands of my 10-year-old brother, to tops that spit out a slew of coloured sparks when lit.

The night draws to an end with the family gathering in the living room for a time of worship and prayer. Everyone sits cross-legged on the floor (a posture that is meant to convey reverence and humility) as we begin. My grandmother drapes the end of her sari over her head as she leads us in traditional Malayalam hymns. After the songs, she begins to pray, her dulcet tones filling the quiet room. All members of the family follow suit by offering their individual prayers of praise and thanksgiving in what is the zenith of the season's celebrations.



Kripa Koshy is a U3 student working toward a major in International Development Studies and a minor in Religion and Globalization at McGill. She often finds herself thinking a great deal about cultural and religious identity and is thankful for any opportunity she has to articulate her thoughts on the matter. She loves jazz and coffee and is happiest when singing.



Photo by Edward Ross in Lancaster, Ontario.

wisdom

by Noemie Benaudis

Throw caution away to the reckless winds,
When wisdom presents some uncommon things,
Careful carelessness is not a thought gone,
For it may bring an end to the night, a new dawn.

Nature and Time are strange forces,
Although both follow the same courses,
But when great men to the dust, they bring,
Nothing is left wise beyond the grave,

A risk is worth what it gives and takes,
For it brings along some certain change,
But beware of the wise man's depth, for then,
Foolish wisdom will be his death.

Paths laid out, hidden in misdirection,
May bring upon new intersections,
An unexpected change is not always ill fated,
For new opportunities lie behind it, waiting.

Keep in mind that wisdom does not die,
When minds are laid to rest, and mine,
Will be spilt on paper and thus survive,
For wisdom lives when written down,

With words chosen by each breath of life,
Let the will of Nature be your guide,
I pray you, think wisely or speak silence,
To salvage life, and wisdom's balance.

Noemie Benaudis is a U2 Arts student majoring in English literature and minoring in Music. She was born in Paris and raised in Miami.

Radix

Call for Submissions

STORIES

PHOTOGRAPHY

POETRY

ART

OPINIONS

ARTICLES

STORIES

Theme: Radicalism

Submission Deadline: February 23, 2015

Submit to: radix@mail.mcgill.ca



classifieds

Radix is looking for Volunteers.

Like what you see?

Believe in student creativity, and inter-faith collaboration?

Help us do it better! We can always use help in marketing, web-development, research, distribution, writing, layout, and much more! Email us to join the community. radix@mail.mcgill.ca

The McGill Office of Religious and Spiritual Life (MORSL)

MORSL, a proud member of McGill Student Services, is located in the Brown Building, suite 2100. Please feel free to stop by our Meditation/Prayer Room any weekday from 10:00am to 4:00pm! You'll find a full-spectrum light therapy lamp, CD's for guided relaxation, a serene space with floor pillows and meditation stools, and some suggestions on how to meditate in different traditions. Take time for some serenity and zenity! Stay connected with MORSL on Twitter [@SpiritualMcGill](https://twitter.com/SpiritualMcGill) or like us on Facebook: fb.com/morsl

Weekly Zen meditation

Every Friday morning at 8:15am, McGill Zen Buddhist chaplain, Myokyo Zengetsu, offers guided Zen practice in the Birks chapel (3520 University Street, 2nd floor). Free of charge. Must arrive early or on time in order to join!

Newman Centre

Newman Catholic Centre, 3484 Peel Street, is a home away from home for Catholic Students. Visit www.newmancentre.org to find out more about this centre for Catholic spiritual, social, and intellectual life on campus!

The Rabbit Hole Café

Food for Thought's vegan collective, The Rabbit Hole, cooks up vegan lunches every Friday at 1:00 p.m. Drop by, pay a toonie, enjoy the company and eat up! All proceeds go towards maintaining this Yellow Door program (3625 Aylmer) along with their Food For Thought student food bank, sponsored by the McGill Office of Religious and Spiritual Life.

The Radical Christian Students' Association

Thursdays at 6pm in the Presbyterian College second-floor lounge (corner of University and Milton). Exploring, living, and testifying to the justice mission of Jesus Christ. Enjoy a free vegan meal and spiritual conversation, then move into Bible Study or a presentation, followed by music and prayer. Rad Christians support each other's social justice work. Check out facebook.com/radicalchristiansmcgill or e-mail radchristiansmcgill@gmail.com

McGill Student Parents' Network

The MSPN provides a support network for McGill students who are parents. We have grown! No longer based in the Office of Religious and Spiritual Life, we are now housed with PGSS. We still offer regular "Study Saturdays" at Thomson House, where parents can study while the kids enjoy free programming, and more. Interested families can contact the MSPN at mcgillspn@gmail.com.

Russian Orthodox and Ukrainian Orthodox Christian Students

Join our weekly student meeting, Orthodox Christian Fellowship! We also have monastery visits, picnics, and movie nights. Contact McGill's Orthodox chaplain, Father Ihor for details: ikutash@gmail.com.

The Muslim Students Association of McGill

MSA aims to provide spiritual, social, and educational services. We offer weekly study circles, free Islamic educational materials, Ramadan services, lectures/conferences, and a wonderful library called House of Wisdom. We also have many community events to serve others (eg. Project Downtown), as well as exciting social events (eg. ski trips, cultural dinner nights, MSA Frosh, and so much more!) Come drop by and say hi to us in our office (Shatner building, room B09.)

Mondays at MORSL

New this year! The Office of Religious and Spiritual Life hosts "Mondays at MORSL" – a variety of free Monday-night events, including art therapy, yoga, zen meditation, Quaker meditation, Om meditation, talks on World Religions, Orthodox icon-writing workshop, movie nights, and more! Like us on facebook at fb.com/morsl to find out more or email morsl@mcgill.ca.

Drop-in Friday Yoga:

End your school week with a relaxing drop-in Ashtanga yoga class in the Brown Building (suite 5001) at 4:30 on Fridays. A suggested donation of \$5 to the instructor is appreciated. Mats and tea provided. Bring your own mug!

classifieds

The Jewish community at McGill

Visit www.hillel.ca and www.chabad-mcgill.com for information on shabbat meals, holiday celebrations, educational programming, and fun social activities!

My Neighbour's Faith Series

This series of monthly visits to Montreal's places of worship joins forces with Concordia's "Sacred Sites Visits" to provide a guided experience with various world religions being practiced in Montreal, and a free meal! Visits include a Sikh Gurdwara with Punjabi meal, a Baha'i temple, a candle-light Christmas Carol service, and more! Email morsl@mcgill.ca to join the mailing list or visit <http://www.mcgill.ca/morsl/what-we-offer/my-neighbours-faith>"

Winter Coats Needed!

Donations of clean winter coats in good condition are desperately needed for the Winter Coat Project. Smaller donations can be dropped off at MORSL (Brown Suite 2100) Mon-Fri 10am-4pm and large bags of donations can be dropped off at the Newman Centre, 3484 Peel Street, 10:00am - 2:00pm on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays. Please mark all bags clearly as "Winter Coat Project" and drop them in the Newman lobby via the lower entrance.

Emerging Leaders Mini-Conference

The **Emerging Leaders Mini-Conference** is a free conference for students featuring great speakers, workshops and panel discussions at McGill's downtown campus.

start or continue developing your leadership skills

meet other like-minded students

get engaged at McGill and in Montreal



6 pm - 9:30pm, Wednesday, January 28, 2015



Keynote Speaker: Wanda Bedard

Entrepreneur and businesswomen, she has now achieved her most compelling role: activist. In the early 2000's she was shocked into action by the plight of Afghan girls under Taliban rule. In 2006, after research and volunteering with other organizations, she founded **60 million girls**: www.60milliongirls.org, a completely volunteer-based organization that promotes access to a quality education for some of the most vulnerable and marginalized girls in the developing world.

find out more:
mcgill.ca/engage

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campus life and engagement