



# RAPM 2017 Annual Report

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## Regina Anti-Poverty Ministry

2330 Victoria Avenue,

Regina, SK S4P 0S6

TEL: (306) 352-6386

Website: [www.antipovertyministry.ca](http://www.antipovertyministry.ca)

## Mission Statement

**Rooted in God's radical love,  
expressed through  
compassion and action,  
the Regina Anti-Poverty Ministry  
advocates and educates  
with and for  
those seeking  
social and economic justice.**

## REPORT OF THE CHAIR

2016 was another busy year at RAPM. Seeking justice for those living in poverty, both on an individual basis and by addressing systemic issues, seems to be increasingly challenging. The workload for our staff continues to grow with the growing number of clients being assisted by our ministry.

Bonnie Morton and Peter Gilmer continue to serve in ministry as the RAPM staff. They are well known and respected in the church and in the wider community. Their wisdom, experience and expertise enable them to make a significant contribution to clients seeking to address issues regarding their rights, and to addressing the systemic social justice issues faced by those living in poverty in Saskatchewan. It is a tremendous gift to have such dedicated and knowledgeable staff.

One of the goals we have had for the ministry for some time is to make Bonnie and Peter full-time ministry employees. For the Board, it really is a justice issue because we realize that we have been expecting more of our staff than we should, and because they are caring and committed to the ministry, they often do more than part-time employees should. We have not had the resources to address this issue in the past. However, because of some special gifts from congregations in the past couple of years, we felt it was time to address the issue. In order to make the change, we entered into a Joint Needs Assessment involving Wascana Presbytery of the United Church to determine whether or not we needed 2 full time staff people and whether we had the resources to make that shift. As a result, Bonnie and Peter are now full time.

In addition to Peter and Bonnie, we had a number of practicum students this past year. They included Aimee Yuzicappi, Abiola Awokoya, Shanae Soucy and Sean Nixon.

We are grateful for the ongoing support of Knox-Metropolitan United Church for providing office space for RAPM. Without them we would be struggling to carry out our ministry.

In connection with the celebration of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of RAPM, we have been working on updating some of the public information about our ministry. We have created a brochure (thanks to the talents of Devin Bratvold) that highlights the work RAPM does. Thanks to Donna Nelson we also have updated our website, including adding a PayPal option for donations. Check us out at [www.antipovertyministry.ca](http://www.antipovertyministry.ca)

We are also encouraging people to join our 20/20 campaign. Support the 20 ways that RAPM impacts the community by committing to giving \$20 as a monthly gift through pre-authorized remittance.

We continue to be blessed with many ongoing gifts from congregations and individuals and our thanks goes out to all who support us. Your generosity makes possible the ministry of seeking justice for some of the most vulnerable in our society. This year, we were fortunate to receive \$15,000 from the G. Murray and Edna Forbes Foundation.

We are very aware of the need to continue to work on how to make RAPM sustainable into the future. We have had a number of special one-time gifts from congregations in the past couple of years that have made a huge difference in our current stability, but we are faced with declining funds from sources such as Mission Support Grants from The United Church. The Board is trying to make the best possible use of these special gifts by spending the money received over a period of time to help address rising costs and anticipated reductions in Mission Support Grant funding.

Thanks to all who have served on the Board this past year, and special thanks to

Laura Thomson and Mike Lamb who retired from the Board after several years.

We are looking forward to continuing our celebration of the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of RAPM in 2017! We hope you will join us in the celebration of the ongoing life of this important ministry.

Respectfully submitted,  
Holly Schick

## **STAFF REPORT**

The work of the Regina Anti-Poverty Ministry (RAPM) is done in three areas: individual advocacy, public education, and social justice. Here are some of our activities in each of these areas in 2016.

### **Individual Advocacy**

Individual advocacy involves providing support for low-income individuals and families to ensure that they are receiving those benefits that they are entitled to and that they are being treated fairly by the institutions that they are dealing with. RAPM attempts to mediate conflict between individuals and institutions so that there are mutually agreed upon resolutions, but we do represent clients through the various appeal processes which are in place to resolve conflicts.

A majority of our individual advocacy casework involves responding to decisions made by the Income Assistance and Disability Services Division of the Ministry of Social Services. Since the closure of the Welfare Rights Centre in 2011, we are the only community organization with a mandate to provide this service. We also represent clients with a range of other institutions.

Our income security advocacy includes handling social assistance cut-offs and denials, underpayments and overpayments, shelter and utility coverage, as well as

special household, medical, travel, dietary and disability needs.

RAPM handled a record high number of cases related to difficulties covering rent in 2016. We also handled many rental availability, eviction and condition cases. RAPM continued to help many clients with Saskatchewan Assured Income for Disability (SAID) application and eligibility issues. We also saw a continuing growth in cases related to the Transitional Employment Allowance (TEA) as that program has been expanded.

In total, RAPM handled an all-time high 2,271 cases in 2016. We successfully resolved a significant majority of these cases. This does not mean that the persons necessarily received everything that they would have liked but their situation was made better after having made contact with our office.

RAPM is also a food bank referral agency and intervenes on behalf of individuals and families to help them meet immediate needs such as food, shelter and clothing. We help navigate systems and refer people to appropriate services. RAPM also provides pastoral care for persons who are dealing with issues or crises that are not advocacy or charity related. In all our casework, we seek to uphold the dignity of those requesting our help. We also maintain strict confidentiality.

During the past year, the RAPM staff conducted four advocacy training workshops for volunteers, clients, ministry personnel, service providers and practicum students. This included workshops to the staff of Aboriginal Family Services and Aboriginal Grandmothers Raising Grandchildren. These workshops develop advocacy skills in the community and help us keep up with the demand for this service. We present a recognized certificate to those who take the workshop and then provide 30 hours of advocacy service.

## **Public Education**

Public education involves providing educational workshops and producing educational resources on anti-poverty issues. Our public education campaign is aimed at the local and provincial public, with a focus on faith-based, community and educational groups and institutions as well as interested individuals.

Within the faith community, RAPM conducted 22 anti-poverty services of worship in the past year. We gave a theme presentation to the 2016 Annual Meeting of Saskatchewan Conference of The United Church of Canada. We also gave presentations to outreach and social justice committees, youth groups and confirmation classes as well as ecumenical and multi-faith groups and gatherings.

In the wider community, RAPM provided many workshops on a range of poverty issues to community and youth groups, women's shelters, labour unions, service providers and a broad cross section of post-secondary and high school classes. Our office acts as an anti-poverty resource centre and we remain a media resource on poverty issues. RAPM was quoted on over 50 occasions in 2016 through interviews and press events.

RAPM facilitated a Human Justice, Community Partner and two Social Work practicum placements in 2016. We expect a similar number of placements in 2017. We also had four work placements through the John Howard Society Fine Option Program.

A key public education activity continues to be RAPM's monthly study circles with low-income volunteers and activists. These study circles offer individuals the opportunity to discuss poverty concerns that affect their lives. While our staff may provide resource materials or speakers, the topics are decided upon and often led by the group. In 2016, we celebrated 20

years of study circles. Our circles included discussions of living wage campaigns, civic accessibility issues, the TRC Report and decolonization. These study circles influence RAPM's public policy and tactical direction. They are also a meaningful way for low-income people to connect with and empower each other.

## **Social Justice**

Social justice work involves anti-poverty activism and lobbying as well as community consultation and consensus building around key issues. It also includes joint projects and campaigns with community partners.

RAPM frequently makes presentations to politicians and other government representatives. We know that there are many powerful interests which carry considerable influence in policy-making circles. The concerns of low-income people and the issues of the anti-poverty movement must also be heard by decision makers. In the past year we have had two meetings with the Minister of Social Services. We have also met with senior officials of the Ministry and Saskatchewan Housing. In 2016, RAPM was part of presentations to two Federal Standing Committees regarding legal protections for social and economic rights.

RAPM continues to chair the Regina Anti-Poverty Network, which is a network of over 20 organizations dealing with poverty issues. The Network provides a forum for information sharing and has been active in the campaign for adequate and affordable housing.

RAPM is active in the Disability Income Support Coalition (DISC), which has been working with the Government of Saskatchewan on the development of the SAID program. At present, we are represented on the DISC Benefits Committee which is looking at adequacy measures for SAID.

RAPM played a lead role in resisting proposed cuts to SAID, social assistance and the Saskatchewan Employment Supplement. We also took part in the Sask Forward consultation process which considered transformational change to make Saskatchewan a happier, healthier and more prosperous place for all.

Over the past 19 years, RAPM has identified key anti-poverty proposals through extensive consultation with low-income people and community groups that deal with poverty issues. These proposals have included adequate income security benefits, a living wage, quality and affordable housing and childcare, equity initiatives and fair taxation. We are presently promoting the proposal of a Saskatchewan Anti-Poverty Act which would ensure basic social and economic rights committed to under international law.

Each year, the Education and Proposals Committee of our Ministry develops and presents anti-poverty proposals to Wascana Presbytery and Saskatchewan Conference of The United Church of Canada. We also play a leadership role in developing and presenting the Saskatchewan Conference Brief to the Government of Saskatchewan and the Provincial Opposition.

RAPM networks with many organizations at the local, provincial and national levels. Locally, this includes involvement at all levels of the church as well as in community organizations. Bonnie Morton is presently the President Elect of Saskatchewan Conference. At the national level, Bonnie is on the board of the Court Challenges Program where she chairs the Equality Advisory Committee and Poverty Sub-Committee. Bonnie is also on the Community and Social Justice Ministries Working Group of The United Church of Canada and the board of Canada Without Poverty.

## **RAPM STAFF**

### **Peter Gilmer**

#### **Designated Lay Minister**

Bachelor of Arts (Sociology),  
Master of Theological Studies,  
Human Rights Summer College,  
29 years advocacy experience,  
2005 Saskatchewan Centennial  
Medal Recipient.

**rapm@sasktel.net**

### **Bonnie Morton**

#### **Designated Lay Minister**

Bachelor of Human Justice,  
Certificate in Dispute Resolution  
and Mediation, 31 years advocacy  
experience, 1991 Keith Couse  
Award, 1999 YWCA Woman of  
Distinction, 2001 Helen Prize  
Winner, and 2005 Saskatchewan  
Centennial Medal Recipient, 2012  
Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal.

**bonnie.morton@gmail.com**

**Regina Anti-Poverty Ministry**

	2016 Actual	2016 Budget	2017 Budget
<b>Income</b>			
<b>Donations</b>			
<b>Churches &amp; Other Groups</b>	18,802	22,200	12,000
<b>Individuals</b>	19,326	13,200	24,000
<b>Knox Met Donation</b>	0	0	56,000
<b>Total Donations</b>	38,128	35,400	92,000
<b>Endowment Fund</b>	3,607	3,000	3,500
<b>Fees for Service</b>	45	900	900
<b>Fund Raising</b>	862	0	1,400
<b>Gift in Kind - Rent</b>	12,000	12,000	12,000
<b>Grants</b>			
<b>G. Murray and Edna Forbes Foundation</b>	15,000	10,000	10,000
<b>Saskatchewan Conference</b>	10,450	10,450	5,500
<b>United Church Mission Support</b>	23,050	23,050	23,050
<b>Wascana Presbytery</b>	20,000	20,000	20,000
<b>Grants - Other</b>	355		
<b>Total Grants</b>	68,855	63,500	58,550
<b>Interest Income</b>	974	360	300
<b>Total Income</b>	124,471	115,160	168,650

<b>Expense</b>			
<b>Insurance</b>	364	350	900
<b>Ministry &amp; Personnel</b>	0	200	200
<b>Office</b>	1,581	1,200	1,200
<b>Payroll Allow/Reimbursement</b>	2,628	4,038	3,440
<b>Payroll Expenses</b>	117,233	110,472	148,878
<b>Rent - Knox Met UC</b>	12,000	12,000	12,000
<b>Telephone &amp; Internet</b>	1,890	1,900	2,032
<b>Travel Expenses</b>	37		
<b>Total Expense</b>	135,733	130,160	168,650

<b>Net Income</b>	<b>-11,261</b>	<b>-15,000</b>	<b>0</b>
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