

Apropos...

Batshaw Youth and Family Centres

News from Michael Udy, Executive Director

THE YOUTH HORIZONS FOUNDATION

You may have heard of an organization called the Youth Horizons Foundation (YHF). Those of you who worked for Youth Horizons will certainly be familiar with it. Active for many years, YHF has raised the funds necessary to continue the operations of Camp Weredale, which benefits youth both in residential services and those living at home and in foster care. YHF also funds a scholarship fund for former youth in care and the Helping Hand fund which grants small amounts of money to support youth either in care or leaving residential care.

All of these activities are supported by an annual fundraising drive. As Batshaw has evolved, YHF expanded its scope from supporting the former Youth Horizons programs to supporting all the residential programs. This year the foundation is looking to widen its scope again to encompass all of Batshaw. It is also considering expanding its fundraising efforts correspondingly.

Attached you will find the annual fundraising appeal letter. I urge you to consider giving to the foundation as a way of providing the much needed special assistance our clients require. Most charitable causes deduct a portion of donations to cover overhead costs, this is not the case with the Youth Horizons Foundation, 100% of your donation to YHF is used to benefit clients. Tax receipts are issued.

CHRISTMAS TREES WITH A DIFFERENCE

You may be familiar with the ERS Foundation, a non-profit organization which helps young people find employment. One part of this mandate has been the development of a Christmas tree farm on the land at Prévost which employs some of our clients.

The farm has reached the stage where trees are for sale. These are cultivated trees, and they will be on sale from November 27th to December 23rd at the Esso station on the South West corner of St. Jean and Brunswick in Pointe Claire, just across from our West Island office. You will get an excellent tree and support a worthy cause.

ACJQ CONFERENCE

The Quebec Association of Youth Centres (ACJQ), of which we are members, held its biennial congress in Sherbrooke in early November. Batshaw participants were among the 650 people in attendance. An interesting choice of workshops focused on the theme of the clinical, administrative and other supports available to the staff who form the backbone of the Youth Centres system in Quebec. Participants noted, how after everything youth centres have been through in the last few years, there is still an air of optimism and determination to carry out our mission.

FOSTER CARE WEEKEND

On the weekend of October 10th, a weekend retreat for foster parents was held at Camp Weredale. With the financial support of the Pfizer Corporation, some thirty foster parents and children enjoyed a relaxing weekend in a beautiful, tranquil setting.

TWO NEW BOARD MEMBERS

Sharon Sandiford and Karen Potter-Bienvenue recently joined the Batshaw board of directors. Sharon is a lawyer who works for the Commission des Normes du Travail du Québec. She also has experience with the Elizabeth Fry Society and is a member of the board of the Black Community Resource Centre.

Karen is currently looking after her children full time and has a background in public relations. She has simultaneously become a member of the Youth Horizons Foundation fundraising committee and will focus on helping the Foundation solidify its link with Batshaw. Both board members will be able to contribute substantially to our work. The new board members replace Marlene Jennings, who became a Member of Parliament and Carleen Joseph, who is continuing her studies in Washington, D.C.

HOLIDAY GIVING

Some 125 Batshaw clients and 25 Council for Clients and Community beneficiaries will receive support from the Gazette Christmas Fund. These 150 places have already been filled.

Over and above this, there were traditions in the founding organizations which live on today. I am referring to the collections of canned food and dry goods which are carried out in many of the different points of service. I want to heartily endorse the collections and publicly thank the staff members and others who organize them. Please give as generously as you can.

At this time of year, there are many appeals for funds and greater attention paid to people who scarcely have the basics of life. If you have responded, I want to commend you for taking the step to share with others.

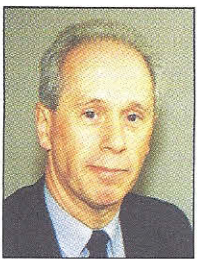
PROJECT 10 GOES PAN-CANADIAN

Project 10, an innovative outreach program for gay, lesbian and bisexual youth has operated from Batshaw for the last five years. A driving force behind its creation and success is Bill Ryan, social worker, who has become a respected authority in the field of AIDS/HIV prevention, and programs aimed at raising self-esteem for gay, lesbian and bisexual youth.

Now, Bill has been seconded to a national committee supported by Health Canada to assist in the creation of Project 10 - like programs in Halifax, Moncton, Winnipeg and Kamloops. This will mean not only establishing direct services such as a telephone help line, counselling and social support, but also an evaluation of these services to determine the real level of help they bring. Congratulations Bill! We believe the new services in other cities will be as helpful as Project 10 is here.

HOLIDAY GREETINGS

This is the last edition of *Apropos...* for 1998. I thank everyone for the extraordinary efforts made to get us through a tumultuous 1998. May I wish you and your family an enjoyable and relaxing holiday season, and best wishes for a healthy and happy new year.



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GIFTS FOR CHILDREN

In November, Batshaw received a donation of \$1000 worth of diapers, which will be distributed to caregivers of infants in foster care and in their own homes. This much appreciated assistance came from an anonymous donor, who routed the gift through the Sun Youth Organization. We don't know who to thank, but if the donor is reading this newsletter, on behalf of the children and parents, we thank you.

In December, Batshaw received a donation of Mega Bloks from the radio station Mix 96. In all, over \$2000 worth of these toys were distributed to children in foster care and in their own homes. Many thanks go to the staff of Mix 96 for their generosity.

Also in December, Batshaw was a co-recipient of the proceeds of charity raised by the travel wholesaler Holiday House. This company is a Batshaw neighbour on the 11th floor at the Guy street office. Every year they hold a trade show which doubles as a fundraiser. This year they selected Batshaw and the Neurological Institute as recipients of the funds raised. Over \$4000 will be donated to Batshaw's Ville Marie Foundation. Many thanks to the staff and clients of Holiday House for their generosity and thoughtfulness, particularly Nathalie Taniou and Marc Vézina.

Lastly, a very special thanks to Marisa Rezzara who works at the accounting firm of Richter, Usher, Vineberg. For the last six years, Marisa has coordinated a Christmas gift project which has provided gifts to children and families at Centre City. This year, Marisa and her team of volunteers collected 458 gifts! All these gifts were personally wrapped and addressed to each youngster. Thanks Marisa, we truly appreciate the contribution you and your generous donors make to the children and families at Batshaw.

These are a few examples of different acts of kindness, that members of the community give to the children and families served by Batshaw. It is encouraging to witness such generosity, and I express our collective thanks.

Especially heartwarming and noble were the many efforts of many of our staff. In many different points of service staff organized collections of dry goods, non-perishibles and money that benefited clients of Batshaw or other charitable groups in the community. To all of you who put your efforts in this direction, we say thank you and bravo!

A GREAT HOLIDAY PARTY!

On Friday, December 4th over 100 people gathered at Auberge Mont Gabriel to celebrate the arrival of the holiday season. The attendance at the party was lower this year, nonetheless, the food was excellent and the dancers among us were out in full force.

We also had a splendid choral presentation by the Montreal Welsh Male Choir. One of the choir members was Batshaw's own Phil Henry. Many thanks go to organizers Roy Durant, France L'Esperance and Henri Derome. Next on the celebration agenda is a long service and staff recognition event for late spring/early summer. Stay tuned for details.

YOUTH PROTECTION RECEIVES A BOOST

In mid-December Batshaw was the recipient of a different kind of generosity. You are probably aware that for over two years we have had long waiting lists for Youth Protection services. This situation should not exist. A provincial study in the spring of this year identified our waiting lists for Youth Protection services as among the longest in the province.

In the transformation plan, some resources were reallocated to help solve this problem. In December, the Regional Board acknowledged that Batshaw cannot solve this problem unassisted, and allocated \$402,000, non-recurrent, to help us reduce the waiting lists.

Some of the money will be used in our Social Emergency service. Other resources will be added to the Evaluation and Application of Measures teams. Hopefully, this much appreciated assistance will help us resolve this problem. It also leaves more latitude for our internal resources to deal with the extra closed custody residential resources we have had to operate since October.

GOALS FOR THE YEAR

I have modest, but firm hopes for 1999. We have a number of problems to deal with from our past, and particularly the Transformation plan.

But notwithstanding these, I hope that in 1999 we can put the emphasis on the excellence of our protection, rehabilitation and family support services, by adopting new programs and tools, and by putting our maximum effort into our staff development program. I think this is the only way to put quality into what we do, so that our clients benefit, and so that we can be proud of our work.

Best to you all in the New Year!