



Apropos...

Batshaw Youth and Family Centres

News from Michael Udy, Executive Director

HOLIDAY HELP

Batshaw clients have been able to benefit from the Gazette Christmas fund campaign over the past several years. Every year 125 places have been reserved for families referred by Batshaw workers. This year we also have the help of Sun Youth. They will reserve places for an additional 125 families in their holiday support program. Referrals for the 250 allocated places must come from social service practitioners and be turned in before the stipulated deadline to be considered. Further details will be circulated to all social work practitioners. This support to Batshaw clients from the Gazette and Sun Youth is immensely appreciated.

YOUTH PROTECTION WAITING LISTS: GOOD NEWS, PART 1

For the last three years you've been hearing about Batshaw's problems with unacceptably long waiting lists and lengthy delays for both the Evaluation/Orientation and the Application of Measures phases of our Youth Protection Service. These have been caused by a combination of the limits on Batshaw's resources after successive rounds of cuts, and on our difficulties in recruiting sufficient staff for this difficult work.

Enormous effort inside Batshaw has been expended towards resolving these problems over an extended period of time. We have also had the support of some non-recurrent funds from the Regional Board. Our work in this area has been monitored over the last year by the Lebon committee, which is monitoring all Youth Centres in Quebec on these issues.

Our problems with waiting lists in the Application of Measures service continue, though the list has shortened substantially over the last couple of months (from 130 in August to 85 near the end of September). However, in Evaluation/Orientation, the list had reached 137 in July, and it recently dropped to 20! The staff team has been able to complete about 35 evaluations per week.

As long as urgent cases are dealt with right away, which is the case in Batshaw, any list under 35 is considered within normal limits and can be responded to within a week. This is very good news for Batshaw clients. Congratulations to our staff who have worked so hard on addressing the waiting list problem.

NATIONAL FOSTER FAMILY WEEK

The week of October 18th to 25th is National Foster Family Week. I would like to take this opportunity to thank and recognize the efforts of our 300 foster families caring for over 600 children in challenging circumstances at best. Thank you!

ADOLESCENT DAY TREATMENT PROGRAM

The Contact program which operated at 6 Weredale Park for many years closed this summer. Its role has been assumed by a new program which continues to be a joint collaboration between Batshaw and the English Montreal School Board. Once the problems of space and recruitment are resolved, the program will open in October at St Kevin's school.

The program is designed for youth who are at risk of placement because of serious behaviour problems at home, school and in the community. The school board will provide teachers and classroom intervention. Batshaw social service practitioners and child care workers with expertise in family work, will work with the youth and family on the issues that brought them to the program.

MANY VISITORS!

In the last three months Batshaw has had a number of interesting visitors. In June, a group from the government of Saskatchewan working in the areas of Youth Protection and Young Offenders services spent two and a half days with us. During that time they were given an overview of the Quebec system and were shown how this work is done in Batshaw. They also visited Kahnawake social services to see how the work is adapted to a First Nations community.

In August, we received a visit from a group from Israel working in the areas of child welfare and mental health. This visit is part of a larger program of exchange between Montreal and the city of Beersheva in Israel. This spring Doreen Levy, Manager, Application of Measures and the Jewish Unit, and Bill Rowe, Director, McGill School of Social Work and a Batshaw board member, were part of a group that visited Beersheva. The group that visited Batshaw were given an overview of our family preservation programs, our collaboration with the Council for Clients and Community and our work on multiracial/multicultural issues.

In September, we received a visit from a delegation from Japan. This was a group of practitioners involved in child welfare and placement work who visited both Toronto and Montreal. At Batshaw they were given an overview of Youth Protection, residential placement and our new initiatives in aggression replacement therapy.

Our visitors were extremely impressed and interested in our work. The Batshaw staff who met and presented to the visitors also found the experience very stimulating.