



Apropos...

Batshaw Youth and Family Centres

News from Michael Udy, Executive Director

YOUTH PROTECTION WAITING LISTS

In December the waiting lists for Youth Protection Services were at the lowest they have been in several years. On December 10th the waiting list for Evaluation/Orientation was down to six cases. As Batshaw's capacity to accomplish evaluations is 36 per week, these cases will be responded to within less than a week.

On December 17th the waiting list for Application of Measures was 15, down from a peak of 130 earlier this year. This represents an outstanding accomplishment by the Evaluation/ Orientation and Application of Measures teams who have weathered the stress of coping with waiting lists for a very long time.

It is also evidence of the impact of the *on site verification* program. This program deals with cases at the earliest possible moment, reducing the number of reports (*signalments*) deemed received, and thereby reducing the number of evaluations to be done and the need subsequently for Application of Measures. Operated jointly by the signalement verification and family preservation teams, this program and much of the progress Batshaw has made on its Youth Protection waiting lists would not have been possible without the additional \$500,000 support made available by the Regional Health and Social Services board this past year.

WORLD AIDS DAY

Contributed by Martine Bernier

More than 60 Batshaw staff and clients were present on December 1st, 1999 to congratulate the winners of the World AIDS Day contest for Batshaw youth. Over twenty posters, essays and poems had been entered addressing the question: "HIV/AIDS: are you at risk?"

In his opening remarks Michael Udy, Executive Director reminded people how our young clients are truly at risk. On average, youth in placement usually become sexually active at 13 years of age and roughly 50% of girls in placement have been sexually abused. It is our responsibility to assist all youth in understanding, preventing and dealing with at risk behaviors.

To commemorate World AIDS Day, many agency programs made a point of wearing red clothes or the symbolic red ribbon. This was also the case at Health Services, DPS and certain units of the Application of Measures. Marcel Croteau distributed red ribbons to people entering 5 Weredale Park. All youth at Prévost also received red ribbons. All these gestures of solidarity were greatly appreciated.

Many prizes were awarded to the contest winners through the generous support of the Youth Horizons Foundation, the Council for Clients and Community (CCC), McDonald's and HMV Stores. Even the Prévost kitchen staff helped out by preparing a marvelous cake for the event. Thanks to all participants, staff and sponsors that showed their support to the AIDS cause!

NEWS FROM THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

At its December 13th, 1999 meeting, the board co-opted two members after consultation with the milieux of justice and education. They are John Dalzell, Director of the CN Police, and Bill Rowe, Director of the School of Social Work at McGill University. Both gentlemen had occupied these same seats on the previous Batshaw board. The last step in the renewal of the board membership will be taken at the January meeting when four more members will be co-opted.

HOLIDAY THANKS

Every holiday season there a number of staff, individuals and companies who go the extra mile to assist our Batshaw children and families. Here are a few of the many to be applauded and thanked:

Through the generosity of Mix 96 and the Hedstrom company, some 2000 new toys were donated to us in December, which in turn were distributed to children and families served by Batshaw. Such generosity is an outstanding example of community spirit and caring for children.

Through a new initiative with the Sun Youth Organization some 70 food baskets were distributed to Batshaw families. Thanks Sun Youth for always being there for groups like ours. If you ever wonder where the proceeds of The Gazette Christmas Fund go, you have to look no further than right here at Batshaw. Once again the Gazette Fund came through, offering financial holiday support to over 125 of our neediest families.

The Batshaw West Island team, led by Hoda Choueri and Gloria Ann Cozier, received tremendous holiday support for children and families from a number of companies. Sponsors included STS, Minute Muffler, Chenoy's, McDonald's, Cineplex Odeon, Flyght Canada and the Kirkland Community Centre.

Therapeutic Foster Care's Cathy Carroll led another successful food basket campaign for our families. And a special thanks to our own Kim Kurtz and Felicia d'Orvé whose efforts impacted in assisting hundreds of children and families during the holiday season.

MORE THANKS

Contributed by Leigh Johnston and Darlene Job

Hats off to Sam Barile and the rest of the gang who organized the BYFC employees' children's Christmas Party. We enjoyed hot dogs, hot chocolate, and cold sleigh rides. Bill Bertrand's guests even serenaded us through the sleigh ride. It was a glorious winter day and the children were enthralled with Santa's visit. Nice job, and we'll certainly push for improved attendance next year.

KWANZAA CELEBRATIONS

Kwanzaa is an African-American feast and celebration which takes place from December 26th to January 1st. To celebrate the occasion and help Batshaw staff become more familiar with this growing holiday festivity, a Kwanzaa party was held at our Tupper offices on December 23rd. Congratulations to Annie Alexander, Hermina Antoine, Gail Bell, Colette Chapman, Catherine Greenidge, Sandrine Hendrickson and Nehemie St. Hilaire.