



Apropos...

Batshaw Youth and Family Centres

News from Michael Udy, Executive Director

WHAT A WEEK!

The week of November 20-24 was declared staff appreciation week at Batshaw Youth and Family Centres, and quite a week it was! We awarded certificates of appreciation for long service to all staff who have reached the levels of 7, 15, 20, 25, 30 and 35 years of service. That covers about 680 of our 1,100 staff. Divisions held ceremonies for those reaching 7 and 15 years, and during the course of the week I attended 15 such events, which I found both exhilarating and exhausting!

All those who reached 20 years of service were invited to a reception and dinner on the evening of November 23rd. Of the roughly 250 eligible staff, 160 were able to attend. During the dinner we presented gifts of appreciation to all those who have reached 25 years and more, about 70 people. In my view this was one of the finest social events I have witnessed at Batshaw. There was a wonderful ambience and convivial atmosphere. Many people contacted me subsequently to say the same thing. The week was a great success. Many amusing things happened along the way. In January I'll give you a little excerpt from my diary for that week.

SUMMER AND FALL EVENTS

At the end of August Batshaw fielded two teams in the provincial Youth Centres softball tournament held in Valleyfield. The women's team was coached by Cathy Carroll (6 Weredale), and the mixed team by Bob Davies (Baillie). If you are interested in playing next year, contact one of the coaches.

On Saturday, September 9th the Foster Family Association held a day in the park, featuring a BBQ lunch at Angrignon Park. This event was part of the Black History Millennium celebration and the event was well attended particularly by foster children who played games under brilliant sunshine.

On September 15th the annual Batshaw Golf Tournament was held at the Bonnybrook course in the Laurentians. About 100 golfers hit the links, and about 80 stayed for the excellent supper and presentation of awards and prizes. Congratulations to David Ney and Terry Newcomen for organizing the most successful tournament to date.

MULTI-DISCIPLINARY COUNCIL

(Contributed by Linda Danson-Smyth, Past President)

The Multi-Disciplinary Council (MDC) is the voice of clinical staff. The MDC came into existence with the changes in the Quebec Health and Social Services Act in 1993. It replaced the previous Clinical Staff Advisory Councils. The purpose has remained the same, that is: "The Multi-Disciplinary Council" is responsible for providing advice and formulating recommendations on the quality and distribution of care and services to the Executive Director and Board of Directors".

Shortly, we will be electing our representatives for the new MDC Steering Committee (MDSC). If you are interested in being elected, or if you would like to discuss clinical concerns please call one of the present representatives, Zalman Bitensky, Linda Danson-Smyth, Karen Goodhand, Lisa Sanschagrín, Wendy Potter or Michael Hunter. Other active members of the MDC steering committee include the board committee representatives, Susan Adams and Joyce Lepage, the representative from the Nurses' Council, Pat La Roque, the Director of Professional Services, Claude Laurendeau, and the Executive Director, Michael Udy.

LEGACY OF A VISIONARY

(Contributed with deep gratitude, caring and respect by the West Island staff.)

Sylvia Kirstein is retiring at the end of December. It is not surprising that this news was received with an acute sense of loss. We truly feel honoured to have worked with her. Her prodigious strength, brilliance, philosophy, and astute clinical abilities have earned her our profound respect.

Every organization needs to have representations of bureaucrats and visionaries. The former are necessary for the organization to function in an efficient manner, but the people with vision are the true revolutionaries. Sylvia is one of the few blessed with the ability to transcend both frontiers. She has been able to maintain a dynamic homeostasis between the structural needs of the agency and the imaginative, creative needs that good clinical practice demand.

Sylvia has inculcated in us the understanding that our job is about the coexistence of relationship and spirit. She has taught us to share our selves with our clients or risk treating them as "things". She continually reminded us that each client is an individual, worthy of dignity and respect. She shared her spirit with us and encouraged and allowed us to share our spirit with her. Her self-confidence allowed for an abiding respect for the diverse opinions of her staff.

She displayed deep regard and affirmation for the difficult work and the dignity of frontline staff. She encouraged and enhanced our self-actualization, even in an atmosphere of unrelenting erosion of recognition and lack of validation for the complex nature of our work. Like many visionaries she often had to stand alone in difficult circumstances. She had the strength to deny conformity and adhered to her convictions.

Sylvia's deep understanding of and sensitivity to human emotions, her strong advocacy for the rights of and betterment of families, and her genuine belief in us as workers, are exemplary qualities that will always be cherished.

Sylvia will now have more time to share her profound joy for life with her husband, children and grandchildren. What we miss they will gain. There is no doubt that we will be losing one of our best. She deserves our greatest accolades.

The Talmud tells us to choose a friend and to choose a teacher. In Sylvia, we have been blessed to have found both.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

We have reached that time of year when we can relax a little and surround ourselves with family and friends. May I express to each and every one of you my appreciation for your commitment and accomplishments through the past year. I wish you Happy Holidays and best wishes for health and happiness in 2001.