



Apropos...

Batshaw Youth and Family Centres

News from Michael Udy, Executive Director

STAFF APPRECIATION WEEK FROM THE INSIDE

(Excerpts from Michael Udy's diary)

Dear diary: Monday, November 20th, 2000: After months of preparation, years of saying we'd do it, we're finally ready to carry out the staff appreciation activities. (Later that afternoon) We had the Montréal administrative services reception at 5 Weredale and they really liked both the ceremony and the certificates. Phew! First event a success, 15 to go.

Tuesday, November 21st Just had the Youth Protection division reception. It went very well. Someone was kind enough to make a public statement of thanks at the end. I really appreciated that.

Wednesday, November 22nd Now we're getting into the heart of the week. Many events in the next two days. (10 am) We have the reception for staff who work in 6 Weredale. It went well. I am meeting people I've never seen before. And some whom I've seen, but never knew what their name was, or what they did. There are probably people who wonder who I am and what I do. (11:30 am) Now we're having a reception for some of the people who work in the pre-adolescent group homes. We've gone from receptions of over 50 people to one with about 10 people. It makes it more personal and relaxed. (12:30 pm) I've arrived at Bourbonnière, and it turns out they have no idea I'm coming, or why I'm there! They're looking at me mystified with my pile of blue boxes in my arms. They are also saying goodbye to a departing staff. I'm crashing their party! Well, we worked it out, everyone likes their certificate, and I had some of the best chocolate cake going, thanks to the housekeeper-cook at Bourbonnière. (2 pm) Now I'm at Prévost. This reception is huge! Easily over 80 people. Everyone seems in a good mood, and once again people seem to appreciate the recognition and their certificates. (4pm) Now we're at Cartier. A meeting room is quickly transformed into a reception hall. The staff from Northview and Jeanne Sauvé arrive with a somewhat quizzical look on their faces. But soon we're into it, and the certificates and the recognition do their magic. A smaller reception was a really nice way to end the day.

Thursday, November 23rd This is the day Thérèse has warned me about. There are eight events on the agenda! There's not room, dear diary, to mention each one. But starting at 11:30 am we go to: Intensive Probation, Rudel, Montclair, Couvrette, Addington, Lachine, and finally end up at Dorval campus around 3:30 pm. Memo to self: don't go anywhere near the Décarie service road if you're trying to get anywhere in a hurry.

At Dorval I encounter the most elaborate reception preparations so far: sound system, hands free microphone, a table holding the certificate boxes surrounded by a huge trellis affair! To top it off, someone has a digital camera and the photos are printed right there on the spot! I was very impressed. All through the day I continued to see how much people appreciate the certificates and these modest acts of recognition. I go home to say hi and bye to my children, and with my wife (who, dear diary, is also a Batshaw employee), we head off to the reception and dinner planned for those with 20 years and more of service. (7:30 pm) I am walking up the staircase to the ballroom at the Badminton and Squash Club. When I enter the room I can't believe my eyes. It looks beautiful, and it is already filled with what turned out to be 160 people who are relaxing, chatting. The hubbub conveys clearly the special atmosphere already in place. The chamber music group provides an excellent musical background, the food is great. We present all the certificates, and about 40 gifts for those with 25 years and more of service. People come up to me and say how much they are enjoying the evening and the recognition. I go home tired and happy.

The next day in my office we receive e-mail, phone calls and people stop me on the street to say how much they appreciated the evening. What more can you ask for?

Monday, November 27th (1:30 pm) After regaining my energy over the weekend, I am at the final event of staff recognition week: the St James team. The event goes as well as all the others. But the housekeeper-cook is acting suspiciously. She tells me she's heard I like chocolate cake, she's made one, serves me a piece and asks me what I think of it, how I would compare it to the cake I ate at Bourbonnière? By this time I can tell there are right and wrong answers to these questions, but I can't figure out what they are. The cake is very good I say, hoping diplomacy is going to buy me some time. She finally tells me she called the housekeeper-cook at Bourbonnière to know what recipe she used for the cake I liked so much. The answer? The cake was bought at Costco! So I declare the housekeeper-cook at St James the winner in this year's chocolate cake wars. I conclude that staff recognition week has been a great success, and that Thérèse Gauthier is the best event organizer I know!

PS: Diary, there were some frequently asked questions:

Q: If there's something wrong with my certificate or gift, what do I do? A: Call Thérèse Gauthier, 989-1885. Q: Will we do this again next year? A: Absolutely! Q: What happens if I'm already eligible for the next level of certificate next year? A: You'll get it. Q: If I was invited to the 20 years plus reception and dinner this year, will I have to wait until I get to the next level to be invited again? A: No, once you reach 20 years of service you will be invited to the reception and dinner every year for as long as you work at Batshaw.

ADDITIONAL FUNDING

We received good news before the holidays concerning our funding from the Ministry. Our annual budget has been increased by \$393,000. Of this, about \$260,000 is recurrent, with a decision pending on the balance; \$100,000 non-recurrent has been allocated to reduce the Evaluation and Application of Measures waiting lists.

SUICIDE PREVENTION WEEK

(Contributed by Kees Maas, Professional Services Division)

The week of February 11- 17th is Suicide Prevention Week. The objective of the week is to mobilize as many resources as possible in order to prevent suicide. The focus of this year's week is the male population between 20 to 40 years of age. Suicide is the number one cause of death in this age group, four out of five suicides are committed by men.

In an effort to create greater awareness throughout our agency, posters will be distributed to all our residential programs and points of service. Clinical managers will receive pertinent information to be shared with their teams. For further information regarding Suicide Prevention Week, please contact Kees Maas, 932-7161, ext. 459.

FEBRUARY APROPOS

The February edition of *Apropos* will feature a number of stories and thanks to individuals and groups who have helped our children, families and programs in the last few months.