



Apropos...

Batshaw Youth and Family Centres

News from Michael Udy, Executive Director

BLACK HISTORY MONTH 2003

(Contributed by Hedy Taylor, Manager of Application of Measures in the Child and Family Services Division, and Felicia Agyekum, Caseworker in Evaluation of Measures in the Youth Protection Division, and Chairperson of the Batshaw Multiracial/Multicultural Committee)

This year's Black History Month celebration was marked with several activities, including shows and luncheons held in various divisions. The theme for this year's panel discussion, "Where do we go from here: Accomplishments and Aspirations", took place on February 14, 2003.

We were very fortunate to have as panellists, seven distinguished individuals from Batshaw and the community. Each presenter emphasized the importance of history and education, and the need to hold on to cultural values and the rich heritage of a proud community.

We were introduced to the new characterization of immigrant youth as belonging to "The Third Space", meaning youths sandwiched between two cultures, and the ongoing need to help these families adapt. It was also emphasized that youth in placement must maintain a connection with their family and community.

In all, we learned that Black people's most important achievement is that they are still standing in spite of racism, discrimination and degradation left by slavery. We were reminded not to lose sight of important individual and community accomplishments, and that we should acknowledge the gains and focus on the next steps.

Our sincere thanks to the moderator, Ms Hedy Taylor, and all the panellists: Darren (Batshaw youth), George McKenzie (Batshaw educator), Joy Abel (Batshaw foster parent), Shirlette Wint (Côte des Neiges Black Community Association), Shirley Douglas (parent), Nozethelo Ncube (young adult), Sandrine Hendrickson (Batshaw Family Preservation program).

PREVENTION OF EXPLOITATION OF YOUTH: OUR COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY

Once a year, I publish a reminder to all Batshaw staff that our own vigilance serves as an important part of society's safety net to counter exploitation of youth. The activities of individuals and groups who seek to exploit youth are insidious and tend to be hidden. Exploitation flourishes when responsible adults are not watching what is going on, or talking to each other about it.

In a large organization like ours, it is possible for different staff members to have important observations about possible exploitation of young people. These observations don't mean much until they are put together with the comments of others. We have designated one person, Liz Pusztai, Manager of Professional Services, to gather this information. If you have direct experience with or hear rumours about people engaging in behaviour that exploits youth, contact Liz at 932-7161, # 454 or by e-mail. She can make links between different pieces of information, and is in a position to make the necessary contact with the police.

This invitation in no way replaces or annuls every citizen's obligation under the law to report to the Director of Youth Protection (935-6196) the situation of a child whose security or development appears compromised.

CENTRE RELAX-ACTION CENTRE IS OPEN!

(Contributed by Philip Burns, Manager of Evaluation/Orientation in the Youth Protection Division, and member of the Fitness Centre Organizing Committee)

The Batshaw Fitness Centre is now a reality for Batshaw staff. For those who aren't yet aware, you are now offered the opportunity to shed those holiday pounds and return to "svelte-ness" in a well-equipped gym and fitness facility recently renovated at 6 Weredale Park. This is all part of the agency's commitment to promote employee wellness.

Professional quality equipment has been purchased and installed. The gym will be able to support a number of individual and group sports and activities. There are showers and lockers available as well. Open House was held March 6th and 7th, and already there are over 50 members signed up.

In order to cover expenses, there is a minimum membership fee, (\$120 annually/ \$75 for six months) which is obligatory for all employees wishing to use the premises.

A contest was held to create a name and logo for the centre. Claude Galarneau thought up the winning name which is "Centre Relax-Action Centre". The winning logo, the Youth Centre logo figure lifting weights and wearing a happy face, was invented by Danyel Verdon. Both Claude and Danyel are from the Information Services team.

More details on the centre are posted on the intranet. Stay tuned for announcements of additional activities as they are organized.

We continue to be receptive to proposals that promote wellness. Such proposals can be discussed with Henri Derome, Director of Human Resources and Administrative Services, 989-1885, #230.

FOUNDATION FUNDRAISING UPDATE

The Batshaw Foundation fundraising letter campaign is doing well and recently reached the \$175,000 mark. These funds support the whole range of Foundation programs. It is always possible for staff members to contribute, either once or continuously. Just contact Ghislaine Corbeil at 989-1885, #201. She can assist you to use the payroll deduction method to make a donation.

Sales of tickets for the lottery to support the Lois Daly Scholarship fund continue. Consult the intranet for a list of persons from whom you can purchase a ticket, or how you can become a ticket agent yourself. Alternatively, you can call France Lespérance at 989-1885, #204. It's a great way to support the future ambitions of young people who have been served by Batshaw.

DONATIONS WANTED

Anyone who might know where we can get donations of diapers and baby formula should contact Kim Kurtz at 932-7161, #340.

BATSHAW CALENDAR

April 27th - May 3rd

Volunteer Week

For information contact:
Kim Kurtz at 932-7161, #340

May 12th

Board Meeting

For information contact:
Thérèse Gauthier at 989-1885