



# Appropos

Batshaw Youth and Family Centres

News from Michael Udy, Executive Director

## **BLACK HISTORY MONTH**

Celebrations have been continuing throughout the month. Here are a few reports on the events.

### ➤ *Panel discussion on mental illness and the Black Community*

On Friday, February 4<sup>th</sup>, a panel of four well-known professionals gave us much food for thought. Dr Jaswant Guzder, Director of Child Psychiatry at the Jewish General Hospital, Shirlette Wint, psychotherapist, Olayinka Renner, Manager in Batshaw's Application of Measures Service, and Myrna Lashley, psychologist and CEGEP teacher, provided us with a wide variety of professional and personal views. Issues related to how mental illness is experienced in black communities, how oppression and marginalization can interact with mental illness, how the language and concepts of mental illness can mask racism, and how important it is for workers to attend to their own mental health, were all explored with thoughtfulness and humour.

### ➤ *Talent Extravaganza*

*(Contributed by Margaret Douek, Assistant Executive Director)*

On Friday, February 11<sup>th</sup>, Yolande James launched Batshaw's 6th Annual Talent Extravaganza. A source of inspiration to many and a role model for our youth, she was elected last September, at the age of 26, to represent the riding of Nelligan and became the first Black woman to be sworn in as a member of the National Assembly. As the events of the afternoon unfolded, she and the many spectators present were visibly moved by the caliber of talent and the deep roots of history and culture on display.

The brain child of Claire Clifton-Newton, the Extravaganza has grown in stature and importance. This year's show was tightly crafted and featuring award winning essays, poems, singers, dancers and musicians. After many hours of hard work, attention to detail and organization, "auntie Claire" as she is affectionately referred to by the young performers, with the help of her son Omari, executed their role of co-masters of ceremonies, as they called upon the children of our staff, as well as from the community, church groups, dance schools, etc. to deliver their messages of hope, love and appreciation of family, community pride, and understanding of heritage and culture. One could feel the room bursting with pride as our youth took front and center stage, from the first notes of the Canadian and then South African National Anthems, to the final notes of Barry White. Many thanks go out to a long list of contributors who made this celebration a huge success.

### ➤ *Foster Family Association Fashion Show*

*(Contributed by Margaret Douek, Assistant Executive Director)*

The objective: to create positive experiences for our children. The event: the Fashion Show, held Friday, February 18<sup>th</sup>, an initiative of the Foster Family Association in the context of Black History Month. The Afro Caribbean fashions modeled represented traditional African dress attire for all occasions, from everyday wear to special celebrations; all created by Andrea Holder.

The resounding beat of a drummer summoned rhythmic dancers and elegant models to the stage. Although the thermometer registered frigid temperatures outside, the audience was transported to warm, sunny days through vibrant colours and smiling faces. The hard work of so many, the sleepless nights of the young performers, and the meticulous planning all paid off. The show was a wonderful success and many thanks are extended to all those who devoted so much time to pull together such a creative event. Thank you to the CCC for the refreshments.

## **HERE COME THE JUDGE(S)**

On Thursday, January 20<sup>th</sup>, Batshaw was host to eight judges of the Québec Court, Youth Division. Included was our former colleague, Judge Michèle Lefebvre. The judges who preside at the Youth Court have a certain number of days a year set aside for the purpose of increasing their knowledge about a variety of subjects that will help them with the decisions they must render. On this occasion they asked both Batshaw and Centre jeunesse de Montréal to prepare a program for them that would give them a more detailed grasp of how the youth centres go about applying the Youth Protection Act. The program included information of programs, clients as well as vignettes including a re-enactment of an Orientation Table. Reaction from the judges on the spot and subsequently was that they found these presentations very informative and helpful. Congratulations to Claude Lamoureux, Gérald Savoie, Samia Ackač and Susan Adams for representing us so well.

## **RETIREMENT PLANNING – A NEW SERVICE**

*(Contributed by Henri Derome, Director of Human Resources and Administrative Services)*

We are pleased to announce that a retirement planning service is now available. Recognizing the importance it has for all staff, the Division of Human Resources and Administrative Services has established this service to inform and assist all employees in planning for retirement. The service will also help you understand your rights, assist you in buying back years of service and in your planning - in a nutshell, you will get answers to all your questions, regardless of your age or how close you are to retirement. This highly personalized service is open weekdays, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Depending on demand and needs, the service will travel to Dorval and Prévost campuses. Under the supervision of Linda Corbeil, Coordinator of Financial Services, it is offered by Josée Beaudin. If you want to know more about your pension plan, buying back years of service, or planning for the big day, please contact Josée Beaudin at 514-989-1885, local 212, 5 Weredale Park, room 106.

## **THE BATSHAW CALENDAR**

- March 21<sup>st</sup> Batshaw Board meeting. For information, call: Thérèse Gauthier, 989-1995, local 202.
- April 19<sup>th</sup> Batshaw Foundation Fundraising Fashion Show at Ogilvy. For information, call: Ghislaine Corbeil, 989-1885, local 201
- April 17<sup>th</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup> Volunteer week.  
For information call: Kim Kurtz, 932-7161, local 340