



# APROPOS

BATSHAW YOUTH AND FAMILY CENTRES

News from Michael Udy, Executive Director

## BLACK HISTORY MONTH

*(Contributed by Claire Roy, Manager, Communications and Public Relations)*

Three great activities are coming soon, don't miss them!

### Thursday, February 22, at 3 p.m.: The Talent Extravaganza and Fashion Show

This year, those two famous activities are brought together. Just imagine how wonderful and exciting it will be for everyone! Come and applaud our clients and children from the community!

### Tuesday, February 27, at 9 a.m.: Panel Discussion on this year's theme, Reconciliation... Understanding the past to build a better future

Two well-known speakers will share with us their knowledge and their experiences, Ms. Cindy Blackstock, Executive Director of "Caring for First Nations Children Society" in BC, and Ms. Dorothy Williams, Historian and founder of Ethnocultural Diffusions, established to collect the oral history of Blacks in Montreal. The theme is fascinating, the speakers are unique, it's a must!

### Thursday, March 1<sup>st</sup>, at noon: The Luncheon

This always popular culinary experience is back again and at \$12 is a real bargain! From jerk chicken to samosas, from curried goat to corn au gratin, from home-made ginger beer to finger licking desserts, I'm sure this closing activity will once again this year be sold out!

## SUICIDE PREVENTION WEEK

*(Submitted by Wendy Lewis and Kees Maas, Psychologists in the Professional Services Division)*

The *Association québécoise de prévention du suicide* organizes a yearly suicide prevention week, it took place February 4-10. Posters were distributed to all Batshaw points of services. The objective is to break the isolation of individuals (men, in particular, do not tend to reach out for help) who consider suicide, sensitize the general population to the fact that the suicidal process is reversible and that suicide can be prevented through a collective effort. These messages are all the more appropriate for Batshaw as we move ahead in implementing the Suicide Prevention Protocol. Since 2004 there has been one single phone number to access suicide prevention help lines throughout Québec: 1-866 APPELLE (277-3553).

## KWANZAA CELEBRATION

*(Contributed by Sandrine Hendrickson, Family Support Worker, Family Preservation Program)*

Batshaw's 7<sup>th</sup> Kwanzaa Celebration took place on December 14<sup>th</sup>. The underlying values were introduced so that all in attendance could appreciate the meaning and message of Kwanzaa. These values are called Nguzo Saba which in Swahili means the Seven Principles. These principles represent values and vital teachings of the African ancestors on how to live just and meaningful lives. It also teaches us how to relate to each other and the world.

This Kwanzaa was also special because of the passing of Joy Lepage. It was Joy Lepage who originally researched the information and entrusted me with the task of organizing the celebration. I found it an honor and truly fitting to mention

Joy using Nguzo Saba to highlight her qualities and some of her beliefs.

During the celebration children and youth expertly explained the seven principles, recited poetry and lit the seven candles of the Kinara (candle holder). They also played the Gymlby drums under the expert guidance of their instructor Franklyn Lewis, and performed traditional dances. The symbols of Kwanzaa were on display and there was a traditional "feast" for all to enjoy at the end of the evening. Sayida Bruno provided the spiritual guidance, and it was clear by the response of the audience that filled the auditorium that the message of Kwanzaa was clearly communicated and the celebration very much enjoyed by all.

Special thanks to everyone who made this event such a success, including those who volunteered their time to help raise funds to sponsor the celebration, and who took the time to attend. We all can learn and benefit from the lessons and values of Kwanzaa that emphasize everyone's obligation to strive and struggle to improve the world in which we live.

## 2006 HOLIDAY BASKET DRIVE

*(Contributed by Cathy Carroll, Division of Child and Family Services)*

I want to thank the BYFC staff for their generous contribution to our 2006 Holiday Basket Drive. Can you believe it all started seventeen years ago! With the help of many, we were able this year to prepare and deliver 65 Holiday Baskets to needy families serviced through BYFC. They received baskets containing non-perishable foods, fresh fruit and vegetables, meat and turkey, and toys for each child in the family. None of this would have been possible without the contribution of BYFC staff and private sponsors.

Each contribution is significant in making the drive successful and helps us to serve the number of families that we do. From the collection of non-perishable goods, the donations of money, turkey and toys, the wrapping of presents, and all the other tasks that are necessary to provide the families with a significant basket for the holiday season. A big thank you especially to: Maria Zanti as co-organizer and Ola Dupelycz who runs the internal operations. Thanks to all the staff who contributed and my Santa's helpers: Manon, Serge, Phyllis, Doris, Sheryl, Karen, Marie-Josée, Leigh and Cindy. Special wishes go out to my little regular volunteers: Andy, Marie Claire, Jordan, Sean, Sofia, Janina, Xavier, Mitchell, Patrick and Megan, all under the age of 12 and some of them being their 7<sup>th</sup> year. Hats off to the Access and OT Department for their yearly raffle earnings. Thanks to all the private donors who sponsored a family. I apologize that I cannot name everyone who made this possible as I would need the whole newsletter. Best wishes to all for 2007 and I count on your support for next year's baskets.

## CONGRATULATIONS MAJENTA & JONATHAN!

Majenta and Jonathan Whyte Potter-Mäl, children of Marva Whyte and Batshaw's Ed Potter-Mäl, have been recognized by the City of Montreal's Round Table on Black History Month. Their photos and accomplishments appear in the City's Black History Month calendar. Last year, they received the Young Achievers Award given during Batshaw's 2006 edition of the Black History Month.

May their dedication and accomplishments inspire all of us.

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