



# APROPOS

BATSHAW YOUTH AND FAMILY CENTRES

News from Michael Udy, Executive Director

## YOUTH CONFERENCE FOR CREATIVITY AND INDEPENDENCE

*(Contributed by Marie-Pierre Ulysse, Liaison officer FFA-CCC)*

Presented by the Council for Clients and Community in collaboration with the Ways and Means Committees, the Québec Association of Educators (QAE) and the English-Montreal School Board, the conference will be held on

Thursday, May 10, 2007, at Prévost Campus  
3065 Labelle Blvd, Prévost

It will be a fun, informative and interactive day for the youth in care. The keynote speaker is Carleen Joseph who spent five years in care, living in four group homes and two foster homes. Carleen attended McGill University where she received a Masters of Education degree in Counselling Psychology. She now resides in Colorado.

## MDC ANNUAL MEETING THE MDC GOES TO PRÉVOST

*(Contributed by Sandra Baines, Chair MDEC)*

The Multidisciplinary Council annual meeting will take place on Friday, May 25<sup>th</sup>, from 9 a.m. to noon, at 6 Weredale Park, but with the addition of an afternoon program at Prévost campus. Feedback from members at last year's annual meeting included a suggestion to make the MDC more accessible to staff. We are happy to be able to offer this program for our 'up north' colleagues. This is an opportunity for our Prévost members to have access to MDC events without making that trip downtown.

We look forward to welcoming guest speaker, Geraldine Crisci, MSW, a consultant and teacher from Toronto. Geraldine specializes in the assessment and treatment of children who have experienced trauma. She provides clinical consultation to a variety of treatment programs, children's mental health centres and treatment residences. We have asked Geraldine to speak about her experiences with youth whose behaviour difficulties are related to fragile attachments in their early lives. She will address the morning meeting at Weredale, and head up to Prévost to do a presentation in the afternoon for staff there.

Volume 3 of the MDC Journal will be distributed at the meeting. The theme for this year's edition is Permanency. Members from the across the agency - about 13 in all - contributed articles and poetry. We thank all those who contributed and we will take the opportunity to acknowledge their efforts at the AGM.

Mark May 25<sup>th</sup> in your calendar now. Take the opportunity to share the time with your professional colleagues and learn about the work and activities of the MDC. Come prepared to identify any clinical issues that are of particular concern to you. See you on the 25<sup>th</sup>.

## A BATSHAW VOLUNTEER STORY

*(Contributed by Kim Kurtz, Volunteer Services)*

As you read this, Volunteer Week will have come and gone. However, this year I thought I would share at least one Batshaw volunteer story. As most *Apropos* readers know we have volunteers involved in a number of ways: animating special activities, tutoring, special friends, Older Sisters and Brothers, to name a few. What you may not know is the subtle and not so subtle impact that volunteers can, and do make in young people's lives at Batshaw. I thought I would relate a story conveyed to me this past week.

My story is about Suzanne, she has been volunteering for over two years with us. I matched her to an adolescent girl, Lynn, (not her real name) struggling with her homework, partially due to a difficult home situation. Suzanne, a teacher to be at McGill, recognized that she had a very bright, low self-esteem teen. With little support at home to encourage and stimulate her academic side, Suzanne helped Lynn get her homework organized, met with her teachers on the parents' behalf, and, step by step, helped her to start believing in herself again. Lynn's marks and attitude began to slowly climb.

The relationship has grown over time, Suzanne continues to advocate, cajole, patiently explain homework and most importantly, encourage Lynn. Today, Suzanne is a full fledged teacher. Lynn is about to graduate from high school with good marks. In the last few months Lynn has been toying with the idea of CEGEP. Suzanne recognized that she needed that extra encouragement. Suzanne picked up a CEGEP application, sat down with Lynn and completed it. I just met with Suzanne to catch up and review her volunteer activity. So I asked: Any news? Beaming ear to ear, Suzanne informed me that Lynn is accepted at Marianopolis and excited about the prospect. That little bit of extra help from a volunteer, helped make the difference. Thank you, Suzanne, and all our Batshaw volunteers who give their time quietly and without fanfare.

Annually, the third week of April officially marks **National Volunteer Week**. It is a wonderful time to give thanks to those who give their time freely to our young people, families and programs. But as a learned colleague recently shared with me, the gift of others should not be restricted to saying thanks during a one calendar week period. I agree, I encourage you to reach out and say thanks to those volunteers around you, whenever, I am sure your words will be appreciated.

I also extend an open invitation to all of our staff to drop by the Volunteer Services office, room 159 at 6 Weredale Park on Wednesday, May 2<sup>nd</sup>, and sign the "Thanks Volunteers" book. This book will be shared with all our volunteers. We all need a cheering section; your words would be appreciated. If you cannot stop by, you can send me an e-mail or card and it will be added to the book.