



APROPOS

BATSHAW YOUTH AND FAMILY CENTRES

News from Michael Udy, Executive Director

LISTENING, LEARNING, NETWORKING

(Contributed by Linda Piano, Program Manager, DRTSA)

On April 29, 2008, approximately 65 people gathered in the Weredale Auditorium to attend Network Your Life, an event hosted by Services to Older Adolescents. The goal of this day was simple: To bring together youth in care, community partners and agency workers in order to explore the theme of transitioning out of care. We all came together to listen, to learn and to network.

Starting with a panel presentation, we listened to the experiences of two youths in care who are currently in the process of preparing to transition out of care and into independent living, as well as two alumni who shared their experience of having done so some years ago. Their stories, reflection and insights allowed us all to learn about the reality that young people face during this significant time.

After the panel presentation, all guests had the opportunity to network with ten community organizations that were kind enough to participate in this event. These community partners included: YWCA, YMCA (NDG), Héberjeune, Project Pride, Centre local d'emploi Pointe St-Charles, Native Friendship Centre, Portage, Head & Hands, Carrefour jeunesse-emploi du Sud-Ouest de Montréal and the Lester B. Pearson School Board. Representatives from these organizations were on hand to provide information and documentation about their services.

Forums such as these are organized in hopes of building bridges so that youth receive the support they need prior, during and subsequent to leaving care. These are avenues where youth can meet and connect with community partners whom they can turn to for guidance and support – essentially, opportunities for youth to build their network. We hope that Network Your Life was a step toward that end.

Needless to say, the success of Network Your Life rests in the hands of many. The contribution made by panel members was invaluable, the participation of our community partners was fundamental to the success of this event and the workers who took the time to attend and to accompany youth helped us achieve our goal.

Finally, behind these events are always the commitment, hard work and generosity of many dedicated individuals and here, I would like to extend my appreciation to the entire team of Services to Older Adolescents. Their tireless hours of planning, organizing and mobilizing made this event possible. Thank you to Kerry-Ann Carty, Alan Cobb, Mélanie Fournier, Danny Hoelscher, Monique Laverdure and Silvana Scarapicchia.

‘Til next time ... let's keep building bridges ...

11th ANNUAL POWWOW – “HONOURING OUR YOUTH”

(Contributed by Merv Atta-Segal, Powwow Organizing Committee)

On **Saturday, June 21st, from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.**, BYFC's Prévost Campus, in collaboration with the people of Kahnawake, will come alive with the sights, sounds and smells of Aboriginal culture as native communities entertain and educate spectators.

This year will mark our 11th annual Traditional Powwow. First Nations representatives from Quebec, Ontario and other parts of Canada will gather together to showcase their culture. Food from the Mohawk and Cree Nation will be available for sampling. Roasted beaver, bear, moose, caribou, wild goose, sturgeon and lake trout are all on the menu, accompanied by bannock, the native bread. Inuit throat singers, Iroquois and Mohawk dancers, and host drum “Ojibway Cree” as well as the Odaya women's drum group are among the performers present to exhibit the traditional dances and music of their communities. Singers Claude McKenzie, formerly of Kashtin, and Donna Jacobs from Kahnawake may also put in an appearance and contribute to the entertainment. Special feature events such as the “walking out” ceremony for Cree Nation toddlers will be performed as extra touches to the day. First Nations veterans, Peacekeepers and rangers as well as all CAF will also be honoured in a ceremony during the day's events. We will host special guests from the Kahnawake and Morin Heights Legions as well as members of the 2nd Canadian Ranger Patrol Group many of whom are native. The commanding officers of the 2nd Ranger patrol will be in attendance to take part in the day's festivities.

Overall, the day promises a perfect balance between culinary delights, enchanting entertainment and a peek into the traditions of our nation's first people.

In hosting this event, Batshaw Centres creates a venue to sensitize non natives, both within the agency and in the community, to the First Nations cultures. In the multicultural society that we live in, tolerance of differences is important. The Powwow is an experiential way to convey this message. This event also allows the surrounding community to partake in the day's activities.

This feast of colour and culture will be held “rain or shine”. In the case of poor conditions the event will be moved under the arena roof. Admission and parking is free. Native crafts will be showcased some of which will be for sale. Food and beverages will be for sale throughout the day at the BBQ.

For more information, please contact Merv Atta-Segal (ext. 0), Dave Brown (ext. 291) or Andy Simon (ext.269), at 450-224-8234 or 514-932-7722.