

APROPOS

BATSHAW YOUTH AND FAMILY CENTRES

HOLIDAY PARTY SETS RECORD PARTICIPATION!

Tony Maciocia, Program Coordinator, DRTSA

Where were you on the evening of Friday, November 21, 2008? Well, if you were one of the 375 fortunate participants who was having a blast of a time dancing, eating and socializing in a beautiful venue of the Plaza Volare on Côte-de-Liesse, you were part of making history! This was the largest ever single event to draw so many people from our agency. The cross-section of our organization was fully present and having fun all evening.

After a few years of not holding the Annual Holiday Party, it was decided to form a collaboration with several groups (CUPE – Locals 3350, 2718, Cadres APER, QAE), as well as the many other staff who personally paid their own way to attend the party.

Special thanks go out to France Lespérance, Rosanna Strippa, Ola Dupelycz, Linda Pelletier, Lucy Capparelli, Sam Barile, Phil Alleyne, Francis Sergerie and Nancy Labrie who helped with the preparation and logistics in planning this great event. Many are already talking about looking forward to next year. We will approach once again all locals within Batshaw to join in collaboration for The Holiday Party 2009. Stay tuned!

FOSTER PARENT APPRECIATION DINNER

Gérald Savoie, Coordinator of Resources, DCFS

It was a dark and stormy night... but that didn't keep 94 foster parents from attending Batshaw's Annual Foster Parent Appreciation Dinner on Tuesday, October 28th, at the Atwater Club. Many more had confirmed their presence but horrible weather and intense traffic unfortunately kept them away.

This special evening is organized every year by Resources staff as a way to acknowledge the essential role foster families play as our most important partners in the protection and care of children. The particular twist to this evening is that the staff take care of just about everything except the cooking. It's great fun for the families to be greeted and served by the support staff, educators, workers and managers to whom they are generally accountable. Many of them look forward to it every year as a very special event of their social calendar.

Among the different speeches and words of appreciation, there was Michael Udy who wanted to say farewell, Margaret Douek who welcome everyone and Robin Ouellette, President of the Foster Family Association (FFA) who took this opportunity to explain the many benefits of joining the FFA.

Two very moving moments contributed to making this a memorable evening, first a poem written by a foster parent depicting the reality of dealing with an adolescent having difficulty with attachment, she called it "I'm not your Mommy...". The other was the presentation of Sandy Duncan and Eric Govers of a Certificate of Appreciation from the Child Welfare League of Canada for having been nominated for the Foster Family of the Year Award. They responded by sharing their experience in a way that showed the incredible warmth and commitment they bring to fostering via the Mixed Bank program.

WHIRLWIND TOUR OF BATSHAW EVENTS

Margaret Douek, Executive Director

In the whirlwind of the last two months, juggling priorities and honing my survival skills, the events that stand out the most for me are those which have brought me in touch with the Batshaw staff and programs.

I was a lucky guest to attend the Fall Feast at Tobin House, hosted by the staff and children honour of volunteers. I was privileged to meet some of the wonderful people who have forged significant relationships with youth in that group home and who have found ways to enrich the learning experience through giving of themselves. The youth in Tobin House learned well as they participated in an event where it was their turn to give of themselves and show appreciation.

The Foster Family Appreciation dinner was another heart-warming evening where the Atwater Club, through their generosity, made it possible for our staff to show concretely how precious foster families are in the work we do. Without the over 300 families who open their homes to children who need a safe and secure environment to live when they are not with their families, our work would be impossible.

Staff recognition certificates were presented by the President of our Board, Judy Martin, the Vice President, Anna Grafton, and me, at the various events held during Staff Recognition Week. These events permitted us to meet more than 100 employees who were shown appreciation for their years of service, not only through the presentation of certificates, but also through the celebrations they enjoyed with their colleagues. The staff recognition reception for those with over 20 years of service was an elegant soirée. It was an opportunity to realize the large number of staff who have made it their mission and their passion to devote their career to working with youth and families. Over 220 staff were present.

At the Annual Public Information Meeting, it has become our tradition to recognize the exceptional contribution of staff who have been nominated by their colleagues for the excellence of their work. This year 17 employees were nominated from every sector of the organizations. It is a huge honour to be nominated, and this year, the Ruth and Manny Batshaw Award of Excellence went to Maureen McKeown, team leader at Bourbonnière group home. Three certificates of meritorious achievement were awarded to Debbie Boyer, and Ola Dupelycz and Ted Larivière.

Every two years, the Association des centres jeunesse du Québec awards prizes to recognize exceptional contributions and innovation in quality of services. This year and for the first time, Batshaw Centres and its partners – the Boys' and Girls' Club of LaSalle and the CSSS Dorval-Lachine-LaSalle – were the recipients of the award in the category of clinical intervention for the LaSalle Community Prevention project. At the heart of this project are the staff who have worked with such dedication to reach some amazing results.

I urge you to consult our intranet site for details of the project and the staff involved, as well as the profile of nominees for the Ruth and Manny Batshaw Award of Excellence.

The month of November ended on a glorious note – our Holiday Party. Through the leadership of many, the party was a resounding success. It had all the ingredients that make Batshaw Centre so special: a multicultural flavour, participation from every sector, great atmosphere and a level of energy that never subsided even as I took my leave around 12:30 a.m.

So what is the conclusion one can draw from this whirlwind tour of my first two months as Executive Director, you may wish to ask, and when did you work? The conclusion I arrived at is what a wonderful organization I work for. The quality of our staff is unparalleled. This is recognized internally and externally.

Many thanks to all of you for your contribution on a day-to-day basis and Happy Holidays!

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