

# APROPOS

BATSHAW YOUTH AND FAMILY CENTRES

## NORTHWATERS

*Daina Girard and Phil Segal, Educators, Bridges, DRTSA*

In late August, two Batshaw staff adventured into the wild of northern Ontario with 6 willing residents from foster care, group homes, and residential care to be part of a 10-day Northwaters outdoor wilderness program. This was Batshaw's fourth year sending a group of youth to experience the beautiful Lake Temagami region. Our journey started with a nine-hour drive, followed by a water-plane flight to base camp. There we were greeted by the Northwaters staff who can be described as professional, patient, good humored and honest. They were excited to get to work with our boys, and gave them a crash course in paddling, portaging, packing a duluth bag, setting up a tent and working with others, all necessities to travel in the wilderness. Each individual challenged themselves physically, mentally, and emotionally on a daily basis. As the trip progressed, the rigors of life 'on trail' forced our clients outside their comfort zone and helped them to open up about deeper issues. There were humorous and memorable moments as well; with clients falling face first in the mud, unintentionally tipping our canoes, catching and eating fish, as well as hearing our clients' scariest stories around the fire. Despite some obstacles, everything was done with a sense of camaraderie, respect, cooperation, and determination.

After our trip, many of these boys were discharged home with new skills and many stories to tell.

A follow-up session was planned in November. The reunion included an outdoor activity to keep with the Northwaters philosophy. We went horseback riding and then sat down for group discussion over pizza. The participants said that the Northwaters trip had been a real eye opener on life's challenges, and how to overcome any obstacle. All the participants want to go back for the laughs, the down-to-earth living, and the mental and physical challenge that life "on trail" can provide.

Plans are already being made for Northwaters 2009, so keep your eyes open for application & information for the youth in your care!

Annual participation of Batshaw youth in the Northwaters leadership development program is subsidized by the Batshaw Foundation.

Feel free to contact Daina Girard or Phil Segal at local 2269 or Sam Barile at local 1183 with any questions about Northwaters.

## A HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL HOLIDAY BASKET CAMPAIGN

*Gérald Savoie, Coordinator of Resources, DCFS*

For the past 19 years, Cathy Carroll has been spearheading this campaign that provides generous Holiday baskets and gift certificates to needy families serviced by Batshaw.

This year's campaign saw the numbers increase significantly from a recent average of 75 to 110 families. Private sponsors and specific initiatives from Batshaw staff such as selling raffle tickets, attending Comedy for a Cause, selling sporting goods donated by Carol Vengroff of Adoption-Retrouvailles allowed Cathy and her army of elves (including the children of many Batshaw staff) to raise the equivalent of more than \$20,000. Four teams (Access, OT, Legal Services and Resources) pitched in to sponsor individual families when it looked like money was running short. The daughter of Andy

and Bessie who work at Prévost asked that instead of getting birthday presents for herself, the money be directed to our families in need. Ray Coney and the staff at Transport Services, as usual, put in that extra effort to facilitate the delivery of baskets to many of the families.

These are just a few examples of the many people who went out of their way to contribute to making the Holiday period brighter and happier for the neediest of our families. Here are some comments from Batshaw staff that speak loudly of the impact of this extraordinary undertaking: *"I have worked with this child for over a year and it was the first time I saw a sparkle in the eye and a smile..." "The family was so overwhelmed at the amount of food and gifts that they were speechless. The Mother just continued to say thank you over and over again!"... "I have been in this business for 20 years and have seen everything. Delivering the Holiday Basket to a well deserving mom and kids was one of the most special tasks I have ever done."*

Our deepest appreciation goes out to all of those we are unable to mention because of space limitations. A special tribute has to go to Cathy Carroll, Manager at Resources, a true inspiration to all of those who accept to go over and above the call of duty to lighten the hearts of our children and families.

## MDC PROFESSIONAL DAY

*Virginia Kerr for the MDC Professional Day Organizing Committee*

The MDC Professional Day organizing committee would like to thank everyone who participated in this year's event that made the day a success, particularly all the presenters: Dr. Franziska Baltzer, Natalie Coull, Carlos DeCastro, Eva deGosztonyi, Nicolette deSmit, Lynn Dion, Lilia Goldfarb, Nancy Gunion, Sue Silva, Manon St-Hillaire and Michael Straw, who did an outstanding job with their workshops. Importantly, we thank Joanne Marcotte for her fantastic administrative support. The workshops were all well-attended and the feedback from the evaluations was very positive. As part of the opening presentations, Tony Maciocia, on behalf of the Quebec Association of Educators, presented a well-deserved award to Kuldip Thind in recognition of her dedication, hard work and commitment to the field of Child and Youth Care. Congratulations Kuldip! From the feedback provided from the participants, some of the ideas generated for the upcoming year's presentations are: working with the Aboriginal community, eating disorders, teaching families how to play and topics on sexual exploitation, just to name a few. We invite everyone to start thinking about presenting at next year's professional day and take the opportunity to share your valuable knowledge and experience with fellow workers. We look forward to seeing everyone again next year!

## THE BATSHAW CALENDAR

### BLACK HISTORY MONTH EVENTS

- |                                  |   |
|----------------------------------|---|
| <b>February 5<sup>th</sup>:</b>  | <b>Movie</b><br>12 to 2 p.m. Bring your lunch   |
| <b>February 12<sup>th</sup>:</b> | <b>Panel Discussion</b><br>9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. |
| <b>February 19<sup>th</sup>:</b> | <b>Talent Extravaganza</b><br>3:30 to 5 p.m.    |
| <b>February 26<sup>th</sup>:</b> | <b>Luncheon</b><br>12:30 to 2 p.m.              |

All these activities take place at 6 Weredale Park.  
Information: Denise Bertrand 514-989-1885, ext: 1015

January 2009

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