



News from Margaret Douek, Executive Director

APPROPOS

BATSHAW YOUTH AND FAMILY CENTRES



BLACK HISTORY MONTH - MOVIE INVISIBLE CITY

Virginia Kerr, Member of the BHM Organizing Committee

On February 4th, the movie, *Invisible City*, was presented as part of the Black History Month celebration. *Invisible City* traces three years in the life of Kendell and Mikey, two teenaged boys living in the Regent Park housing development of Toronto, the oldest social housing unit in Canada. We also meet Ainsworth Morgan, a counselor whose involvement in the development helped to lower the drop out rate by 50%. In the movie we watch Mikey and Kendell struggle with family, academics and behavioral issues as they make their way into adulthood. Academy award nominated director Hubert Davis paints a poignant picture of life in the projects while leaving the audience hopeful that by viewing and discussing this reality film we will all be better equipped to work toward change. While the auditorium was nearly full for the showing, it is strongly felt by all who attended that this is a film that should be viewed by everyone!

YOUNG BLACK ACHIEVERS AWARDS

At the Talent Extravaganza on February 18th, four young Black Achievers were recognized. May they be an inspiration to us all!

Anna: Over the years Anna grew into a constructive, caring, giving, nurturing and loving young lady despite the obstacles she has encountered on this journey. Anna has been a source of support for her younger sibling and is active in her community. Anna participates in her church's youth group. Presently in grade 11, Anna is looking forward to graduating at the end of the school year and going on to college. She has already applied and awaiting responses. While at school, Anna is reported to present as an aspiring student with very good social skills. Academically, she is performing very well. She is also gainfully employed on a part-time basis. Anna is a Young Black Achiever because she is succeeding very well in all aspects of her life despite the many obstacles she faced in her life.

Daniela: Daniela moved to Canada in 2005, and despite facing much adversity and turmoil in her life, she was ready to embrace opportunities to learn a new language and a new culture. She quickly made friends and showed determination to be the best she could be. Daniela developed an interest in helping people while volunteering for the Red Cross, and decided to make that one of her goals for the future. Daniela, who is 15 years old, excels in her studies and places a high value on her education. She is presently completing grade 9. Daniela would like to go into medicine with hopes of specializing in Pediatrics or Obstetrics. Daniela is a Young Black Achiever because she has overcome the many challenges in her life by showing that through her studies she can have a successful future and achieve her goals.

Jennie: Jennie, 15 years old, was born without any lower limbs. Yet, she is more active and mobile than most people. They describe Jennie as happy, bright, vivacious and confident. Jennie has also demonstrated leadership and her ability to challenge barriers around her disability. Last summer, several summer camps did not allow her to join their programs because their facilities were not suited for disabled individuals. Yet, she found a camp that accepted her. This year, Jennie will return to the same camp as one of the summer camp counsellors! Jennie provides an important example to all young people of the importance of giving to the community, having goals in life, and reminding everyone to focus on the ability within the word *disability*, and for this reason she is a Young Black Achiever.

Dennis: Dennis is a 17 years old whose life story tells of adversity, determination, resourcefulness, resilience and success. He has dealt with the tragic losses of his father and older sister, anger, addiction, separation, replacement, rehabilitation and reintegration. At a younger age, Dennis began heading down a negative path, but he has turned his situation around. He successfully completed the drug rehabilitation program at

Portage. Dennis has learned the importance of the relationships he has with his family members. He has been actively working to strengthen, maintain and utilize these relationships since returning home. He is a volunteer at the Boys and Girls Club of LaSalle. Dennis is a role model for any youth faced with adversity. Dennis has displayed great maturity and a deeper understanding of himself over the years and for this reason, he's a Young Black Achiever.

NORTHWATERS PROGRAM

Daina Girard and Philip Segal, Educators, Bridges, Prévost Campus

Last summer was a busy one for Batshaw's Northwaters program with two separate trips, one for boys and one for girls, setting out for the wilderness of Ontario's Temagami region. Clients were interviewed from across the agency to fill the six spots for each trip. Six girls from Dorval Campus and six boys from various points of service were chosen, and those selected experienced the adventure that Northwaters is fast becoming known for.

After a long drive to North Bay, participants were flown into basecamp by floatplane, many experienced their first flight in an airplane. Once there they received two days of canoe, portage, and wilderness training before embarking on an eight-day canoe trip. This trip challenged their physical, mental and emotional limits by exposing them to the beautiful and rugged Temagami lake system.

Clients learnt to adjust to the daily routine on trail, which doesn't run by the clock but rather by setting and meeting goals, even if it meant paddling to our campsite in the dark! Days were spent learning about how to live in the wild, and in doing so participants learnt about themselves and how these skills can be used once they return home. But life on the trail wasn't only about hard work, there was plenty of fun to be had! Our girls' trip competed in an eight-day fishing derby, and in doing so learnt about many species of fish as well as how to be a successful angler. The boys tested their bravery jumping from dizzyingly high cliffs! Despite the laughs and the tears, the eighty-degree days and the two-degree nights, the scrapes, cuts, bumps, and bruises that are all part of life on the trail, the majority of our clients said they would do it all again if they could.

The Northwaters staff were so impressed with our clients' efforts that they offered four of them scholarships to return to Northwaters next summer! Preparations are already being made for Northwaters 2010 and we will be launching our recruiting campaign in the coming months. If you have a client to recommend, or have any questions about the Northwaters experience contact Daina Girard or Philip Segal at Bridges, or Sam Barile. All clients across the agency are encouraged to apply regardless of gender, age, or placement in the agency.

ROXBORO GROUP HOME:

RABBITS MAKE A... DIFFERENCE

Colm McNamee, Coordinator, DRTSA

Over the past few months, clients and staff at Roxboro group home worked together to raise money through Plan Canada, an organization seeking to mobilize people around the world to support social justice for children in developing countries. The contribution from the Roxboro clients and staff was used to purchase rabbits for a family in a third world country, with the hope that these rabbits will breed and in a short time, provide an essential income for the recipient family, eventually turning into a "hopping business". Congratulations to the Roxboro clients and staff for their initiative and generosity in finding ways to assist others in unfortunate circumstances.