



# APPROPOS

BATSHAW YOUTH AND FAMILY CENTRES



## THE DEVELOPMENT OF A PROGRAM ON NEGLECT FOR THE ISLAND OF MONTREAL

*Gérald Savoie, Advisor to the Executive Director*

In November of 2009, a regional table was created. Its members are the two youth centres, the 12 CSSSs and the *Agence de Montréal*. Its goal is to support the implementation of the "Programme-services Jeunes en difficulté" launched by our ministry in 2007. This document describes 22 different programs and services that fall under the exclusive or joint responsibility of the two types of establishments.

Among the work projects prioritized by the *Table*, the development of a program on neglect is moving forward. Its goal is to provide a common frame of reference and language within and between establishments in working collaboratively and/or in continuity in situations of neglect. This is not the same initiative as the one presently spearheaded by Susan Gallo from our Division of Professional Services. However, Susan is part of the work group that has been mandated by the *Table* to develop this program. Her participation will contribute in ensuring that the work accomplished through both processes is coherent and results in speaking the same language when it comes to dealing with situations of neglect.

A significant event took place on January 14, 2011. It brought together 10 renowned experts in research, clinical practice and programming. The members of the work group animated the discussion by asking the experts to validate and comment on the first version of the document by eliciting their perspective and critical thinking. Thirty-three representatives of the ministry, universities, *Agence*, some youth centres and CSSSs along with their associations also participated.

This was truly a unique event and the enthusiasm was high. The experts acknowledged that recent advances in knowledge and research reaffirm the need to work in partnership. Participants felt that the outcome of the process will be of great benefit to the many children and families we work with. The success of the day led to potentially holding a second round table when the document is ready for implementation. Another event is being planned to further explore the ethno-cultural component of our interventions. We will keep you informed of further progress in this major sector of service to vulnerable families.

**The experts:** Claire Chamberland (researcher and professor (retired), *UdeM*), Renée Giguère (CSSS Ahuntsic-Mtl-Nord), Carl Lacharité (researcher and professor, *UQTR*, author of the PAPFC program), Michèle Brousseau (scientific director (retired), *CJQ-IU*), Odette Ouellet (CSSS Estrie), Jacques Moreau (researcher and professor, *UdeM*, author of GED), Nico Trocmé (McGill University, researcher, professor and director of CRCF), Sylvie Normandeau (scientific director, *CJM-IU* and professor at *UdeM*), Monique Elliott (*Agence*, coordinator of the SIPPE program), Dr. Jean-Yves Frappier (Ste-Justine Hospital).

**The work group:** Nathalie Boucher (CSSS Sud-Ouest Verdun), Sylvie Cadieux (CSSS Dorval-Lachine-LaSalle), Carole Fontaine (CSSS Jeanne-Mance), Susan Gallo (Batshaw Centres), Suzanne Girard (CSSS Lucille-Teasdale), Suzanne Young, group leader (*CJM-IU*).

## A TRIBUTE TO MRS FRANCELLE MAXWELL

*Garnett Forbes, Human Relations Agent, Resources, DCFS*

Mrs. Maxwell began fostering children for Batshaw Centres in September of 1982, known at that time as Ville Marie Social Service Centre. In December of 2010, she retired from fostering. Over the years there have been many changes but Mrs. Maxwell has never changed how she met the needs of children i.e. with love, compassion, caring and understanding.

Mrs. Maxwell was an exceptional foster mother who was able to manage the exceptions and demands of a child protection agency with dignity and the attitude that she would do her best for any child during the time he/she is in her home. She built bridges between the Social Service Agency and the parents always in the best interest of the children.

During her fostering career, she fostered more than one hundred children varying from babies to teenagers. She was always accepting our emergencies, providing supportive care to the children which decreased the traumatic impact of placement upon them. Being a warm, caring and competent foster parent she made all children feel comfortable, safe and secure when they entered her home confused and scared.

She fostered children from different racial and cultural backgrounds, and always endeavored to meet their racial and cultural needs, i.e. by taking them to racial and cultural activities and the feedback from workers were positive. She took part in Black History Month celebrations every February providing her wonderful curry goat, ginger beer and fruit cake

She worked very well with the natural parents and was very accepting and non-judgmental of them. She always took the time to teach the young parents, parenting skills, when she was called upon to do so. If visits were required five days a week, her home was open to that parent. She never envisioned herself replacing the biological parents, so she encouraged the children to be involved with their parents, as outlined in their case plan. She was excellent at supporting and facilitating the return of children to their natural parents or going for adoption. All her foster children loved her and they all called her grandma. No child in her home ever had to leave after the age eighteen; the message was that they could stay for as long as they wanted to.

Throughout her fostering career she had the unconditional support of her husband who did many things, for example, he was a driver, a mentor, helping with homework etc. And when cell phone came in he bought one for the children with an open plan! You can just imagine that phone bill!

Their faith was the guiding light throughout her life. They made a perfect team.

Unfortunately, Mrs. Maxwell passed away on January 15, 2011. We will all miss her. She will continue though to be an inspiration to all of us in the services we are giving to our clients.