



Batshaw Alumni Association Newsletter

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Batshaw Alumni Association raises \$3,000 for Batshaw Foundation*

Submitted by Julia Paré

For some time now, various members of the Alumni have tossed around the idea of having a fundraising event with proceeds to go to the Batshaw Centres Foundation, in the spirit of giving back to the agency and the community it serves.

In the spring of this year we learned that the all female choir, Concerto Della Donna (CDD), was looking for a partner to co-host a June concert at McGill's Pollack Hall.

This well known Montreal Choir has had many years of experience organizing concerts and thus had the skills and the contacts to plan a successful event.

After a preliminary meeting with the executive of CDD we agreed on a contract and formed a joint planning committee with members of their executive. Batshaw Alumni Association (BAA) members on the planning committee were Louise Jessop, Carol Kimmis, Kathy Faludi and Julia Paré.

It was agreed that all proceeds would be shared by the CDD and

the BAA. The CDD already had secured expertise in advertising and publicity. Our contribution was advertisement and ticket sales as well as assisting on the night of the concert. 30 free tickets were offered to teens accompanied by an adult in the "Bring a Teen" program run by "La Scena Musicale", a Montreal music magazine.

On June 5th, the choir of young women, led by Artistic Director Iwan Edwards, presented "Northern Exposure" a concert and dance performance which focused on the music, the people, the folk traditions and the geographical phenomena of the North. Featured in the program were works by Canadian and Scandinavian composers including the premiere performance of a new work by the young Canadian composer Marie Claire Saindon.

Violin, cello and piano accompanied the choir, as did the Kate Ward dancers and the Montréal storyteller, J.D. Hickey.



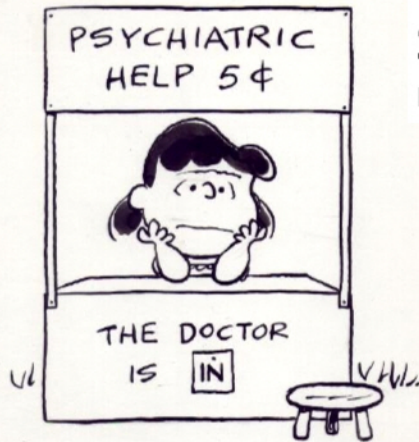
The choir Concerto Della Donna

The evening at Pollack Hall was well attended and enthusiastically received by the audience. Batshaw employees were well represented at the concert.

Our contribution in ad sales, ticket sales and donations was close to half the overall sales and allowed us to give the Batshaw Foundation our proceeds of just over \$3,000.

We were pleased to be part of a musical event that promotes this choir of exceptionally talented Montreal women and proud of the results of our first fundraiser and contribution to the Batshaw Centres Foundation.*

*The Batshaw Centres Foundation provides financial support, when public funds are not available, to youth and families served by Batshaw Youth and Family Centres. Scholarships, emergency funds, tutoring and therapy are some of the services covered by donations to the Foundation.



I recently stumbled across my 2006 “things to do” list in my computer archives. On it was the goal “start working on private practice”, with a 5-year time line. Six years later, and two years into my private practice, I thought it might be helpful for others to review the action plan I followed.

Order of Social Workers

You must be a member of an accredited professional order if you plan to hang out a shingle of your own. Quebec has tightened the rules of private practice over the past few years. As well, most websites and referral sources require proof of your professional status and insurance provided by an Order

Office rental

When you are starting out, you may not want to rent an office on a full time basis. I called a few dozen therapists until I found some who were interested in sub-letting their offices for a few hours each week. Remember to research the location where you intend to rent. In Montreal, not everyone has a car, so being lo-

Starting a post-retirement private practice

By Nicolette de Smit

cated close to public transportation is important.

Getting referrals

Until you begin to receive referrals from former clients, you will need to advertise your availability and your areas of expertise. Psychology Today has a great referral service on their website. For about \$40 per month, your personal online profile can be accessed by potential clients looking for a therapist.

Employee Assistance Programs are constantly on the lookout for independent therapists willing to see employees for counselling.

Government services such as IVAC and CSST also use private therapists. I recently received a referral from the federal Ministry of Justice for a situation of criminal injury sustained abroad.

Some of the larger group practices in Montreal may be willing to refer their overflow of cases to independent therapists. Accepting their referrals may eventually lead to an invitation to join the group, which will result in a steady flow of clients.

Paperwork

Private practice requires at least as much record keeping as agency work. Each professional order has requirements related to assessment, progress reports, and intervention plans, and you can

be audited. Files must be kept in a locked cabinet, either at your rented office or at your home office. Besides client notes, you will also have to develop forms for invoices, receipts, informed consent, release of information, and client intake information.

Finances

Yes, unfortunately, we have to pay income tax on the client payments we receive. Not declaring private practice income can lead to huge problems later on. You will need to develop a system to keep track of your income and expenses. I hired an accountant, as the calculations and deduction tables are just too complicated once you are self-employed and allowed to deduct expenses from your income.

Private practice is a wonderful way to be independent, creative, self-motivating, and “on the ball” after retirement. It is not an easy path, and the work can be demanding. Nevertheless I heartily recommend it to those who want to maintain sharp clinical skills and fascinating human relations after retirement.



"My parents are divorced, both remarried, I have six new siblings, one bathroom, a new school, and I'm doing very nicely, thank you."

Travel–Wise

By Louise Jessop

Have you ever spent a week in a Venetian Palazzo? I have.

Senior manager's salary, you think. Actually, that week cost less than a three-night stay in a 3 star hotel in Venice! Anyone can take advantage of super deals on accommodations if they are willing to do a little research.

There are a number of websites that offer apartments/houses as vacation rentals for a fraction of the cost of a hotel. These apartments are generally privately owned and made available by their owners for various reasons. There are humble offerings (1 BR/1BA) as well as extremely luxurious accommodations (entire villas that can accommodate 10+).

Most owners require a minimum stay of two nights and some will only rent for a week or more. There is usually also an additional cleaning fee to take into account. The listings usually include pictures, information about the apartment, an availability calendar, rental costs, any additional charges and many have reviews from previous guests. These reviews can be helpful for making a choice amongst the various properties. All you need is access to a computer and a little patience. It may be helpful to have a PayPal account.

Here are a few sites that can help you to begin your search:



www.flipkey.com This site is affiliated with TripAdvisor and operates out of Boston, Mass. FlipKey offers a repertoire of over 150,000 vacation rentals in locations all around the world. The site is easy to use and yields numerous choices in most locations. I'm a little newer to this site but recently used it successfully.

www.vrbo.com This site is affiliated with HomeAway, (another site that you can Google), which operates out of Texas. The site offers over 190,000 listings worldwide. This site is also quite user-friendly and I've used it many times. Recently, I had a glitch (apartment could have been cleaner and missing some basic kitchen equipment) and an email to the owner brought prompt corrective action.

www.sabbaticalhomes.com This site describes itself as an academic community resource for

home exchanges and home rentals worldwide. Although not all of their listings are available as short-term rentals and some are only looking for home exchanges or offer limited availability, there are still many interesting listings to consider. Founded by the spouse of an academic, this site operates out of California.

This is just a glimpse at the world of vacation rentals. I have selected these three because I have personal experience with them and/or someone I trust has. There are numerous sites out there that can help to make your dream vacation come true if you use a search engine and type in vacation rental or any variation thereof. A note of caution, some sites have had issues with scammers so, if it sounds fishy, walk away. It is normal for owners to require a deposit but if you're suspicious about the amount or method of payment being requested, ask them for their coordinates. This way you can check to see if they're legitimate. The websites that have been most problematic are the ones that offer local listings for anything from roller skates to cars to birds for sale.

I hope to have contributed to your retirement pleasure in some small way and let me know if you have good or bad experiences with these or other rental websites.

Special Report:**Haitian child welfare issues prove daunting**

By Michael Udy

When I retired in October 2008 it was not my intention to stop working. I had been accepted as a PNF trainer by ACJQ, and I had a couple of other contract offers. I have been surprised at how many more projects have come my way since. One I'd like to describe concerns Haiti.

When the earthquake struck Haiti on January 12th, 2010, I was leaving a motel in Saint-Jérôme. I had completed the first day of a PNF training. In the lobby a TV showed images from Port-au-Prince of destruction, bodies in the street, stunned survivors. The next morning, in the training group, we discussed briefly how it could be that this small country suffers one calamity after another and never seems to have the opportunity to progress.

I had no inkling that 7 months later I would be there, to work on one of the many fronts on which progress is needed.

SOS Children's Villages

Two months after the earthquake, countries met to pledge about \$5b in aid to Haiti. In addition, international non-governmental agencies (NGOs) received influxes of funds tagged by donors for use in Haiti. SOS Children's Villages Canada received about \$500,000 tagged this way.

SOS Children's Villages is an international NGO, founded in Austria in 1949. Today it is active in 133 countries. The core program for many years was the 'children's village', essentially an orphanage. Children orphaned or abandoned enter at a young age



Michael in his "magic" SOS Children's Villages vest

and stay until their mid-teens. Boys and girls of varying ages live together in a house in the village (keeping in mind the standards of the country) and are cared for by a 'mother', a woman in charge of the house and committed to working there for many years. She is assisted by 'aunties'. There are typically about 12 children in a house. In the SOS Children's Village in Santo, Port-au-Prince there are 18 houses.

Over the years the SOS movement has expanded its programming. As was the case in Canada and other countries, SOS began to realize that 'orphaned' children were not always true orphans; they had family somewhere who had let them go or lost them for a host of reasons.

Over the last 15 years many SOS national programs have added Family Strengthening programs



SOS Family Strengthening program in Segur, Port-au-Prince

to help families at risk of abandoning their children to keep them. Family Reunification programs have also been added to help reunite children with their families where feasible, and to support those families afterwards.

You may have read about American missionaries arrested in Spring 2010 at the Haiti-Dominican Republic border with 33 Haitian children. These children were brought to the SOS Children's Village at Santo and by August 2010 had been reunited with their families. On my first visit that August I met three of them when I accompanied SOS workers on follow-up visits.

The SOS literature mentions the importance of advocating for children, for working with other child focused organizations, and of working at a system level. One example of this is the work done by SOS to assist the UN to produce the Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children, approved in 2009, and easily found through Google.

SOS Canada decided to use its Haiti-designated donations to strengthen the child protection system in Haiti. Through professional contacts I was approached to work on this project. I accepted, knowing I was launching myself into many unknowns.

My work in Haiti

To date, I have made three trips to Haiti; four weeks in August 2010, two weeks in April 2011,

One of the many tent camps still remaining in the country



and another four weeks in July 2011.

On my first trip I was asked to make an assessment of the child protection situation. You have probably read about living conditions in Haiti. Most children and families are very poor, and therefore face significant problems about nutrition, safe water, sanitation, health care and education. I had to try to look beyond these problems to assess other issues of social vulnerability.

There turned out to be many reports written about children in Haiti, and I interviewed several people working for UNICEF, international and local NGOs, and people working in child related services in the Haitian government.



Women prepare food in a makeshift kitchen

To summarize: of Haiti's 10M population about 4.6M are under 18. Of these, about 1 in 10 (10%; over 400,000 children) do not live with their family of origin. By comparison, in Canada the figure is 1-2%.

The largest numbers of these children live in a controversial social arrangement called *restavèk*. Children are 'given' by one family to another (money often changes hands). The receiving family, usually better off, agrees to care for and educate the child in exchange for housework to be performed by the child. While there may be situations in which children are well cared for, there is a great deal of literature reporting extensive exploitation and abuse in these arrangements. The UN has denounced *restavèk* as a modern form of slavery.

Then, there are at least 100,000 children in various kinds of orphanages. No one knows exactly how many orphanages there are. Again there is much literature reporting neglect and abuse in many orphanages.

Third, there is an active child trafficking trade that sees at least

2,000 children a year transported to the Dominican Republic for domestic service and prostitution.

Fourth, an unknown number of very young children are given up to the *crèches* (another type of orphanage) and go into the black market for adoption. Legal international adoptions from Haiti have been frozen. But for the right price, an infant can be had.

Lastly, there are children who live in the street, and others who are in conflict with the law and are jailed, with adults.

My report said that the first major protection problem was that it is too easy for children to become separated from their families of origin; and second, many of these children live in harmful conditions. As a consequence I recommended that work be done to advocate for and to enable more families to keep their children, and that the conditions of care for those who live in substitute care be improved.

These lofty goals are easy to write about, but it is a big challenge to answer the question:



Another Family Strengthening program in the Segur neighbourhood

how do we make this happen?

On my second and third visits I worked with staff from SOS Haiti, and from UNICEF and the Haitian government's children's social service agency, on details of a plan that would move in the direction proposed.

In brief, such a plan has to be thought of as covering perhaps 20 years, and working on different levels such as social attitudes about children, legislation, supports to families, implementation of standards of out of home care, and training of all people involved in these endeavours about the risks children face, their consequences, and how to intervene and support.

SOS International responds to report

In January 2012 there was an unexpected turn of events. The international leadership of SOS became fully aware of the project and they intervened over concern about the capacity of SOS Haiti to carry out this work on top of the many other issues facing them. Some of the objectives of the fledgling project were adopted as objectives for SOS Haiti, but others were ruled out. SOS Canada was told it would have to find other means if it wanted to pursue them.

I was not surprised about the concern over

the capacity of SOS Haiti. Having been there I saw what their objectives were, and how stretched their resources were.

At the moment SOS Canada is trying to find another Canadian based organization interested in continuing this project. I am part of that effort. I don't know if it will be successful. If it is, I don't know if I will be asked to continue working on it. If I was asked I would certainly say yes.

Personal impact

I'll conclude by describing a bit of what the personal impact is of being involved in this kind of work. On my first trip to Haiti I had a crash course in what it is like to work in a hot and constantly humid climate. It is completely draining. I lost about 10lbs on each trip I made to Haiti. I would review written work I had done the previous day and be amazed at how many mistakes there were, obviously because my concentration was diminished.

Second, I have never been in a country like Haiti with its turbulent history and present. I was very cautious about my movements. I gradually became used to the chaos and the fact that the infrastructure hardly works at all, and that surprising things happen. Haitian roads are not to be believed. They resemble the surface of the moon. One night I was awakened by a shot gun blast right outside my bedroom window. It turned out to have

been fired by one of the armed guards patrolling the SOS Children's Village where I was living. He apparently wanted to warn would-be intruders!

Third, there is an army of foreign staff working for NGOs and UN agencies in Haiti. They form a kind of specialized universe with buzz words and concepts which you have to learn. If it was not for the work of these organizations, living conditions in Haiti would be worse. But this work is

Armed guards who protect the village



not really conducted in a way that makes Haiti stronger in the long term, in spite of most people's sincere efforts.

Fourth, I came to have a respect for the resilience and determination of ordinary Haitians. They persist with a kind of grim, sometimes cheerful solidarity, to eke out a life in the face of enormous obstacles and relative lack of support from their own government.

Finally, on my first and second trips I experienced a peculiar kind of temporary disorientation, which I am told is not unusual for people from the developed world who are plunged into the developing, or underdeveloped world. When I returned from my first trip, after four weeks I had become used to the relative chaos of Haiti. During my first two days back at home I kept noticing all the evidence of the considerable social order and collective wealth that can be seen just driving down Sources Boulevard. I didn't feel guilty that I live in a country like Canada, but the disparity between the two countries is so enormous that you can't help but think it isn't right and be shocked by it.

On my second trip, when I arrived in Haiti, I felt like I was in a movie I had seen before. I felt guilty that what I was seeing didn't seem real when I knew it was. Gradually this went away. On my third trip I didn't have any of these reactions. It finally dawned on me that it takes time for the mind to grasp and become adjusted to two very disparate realities, and to be able so see both as real.

I'll end this reflection by saying that my experience with this project in Haiti has reinforced a conclusion that I had arrived at through my experiences at Batshaw. Sometimes, it can take an extraordinary amount of effort to accomplish just a little bit of good.

Batshaw CCC looking for support

By Gérald Savoie

Batshaw Youth and Family Centres Users' Committee (better known as the CCC) is undergoing an important transition as the leadership of Mr. and Mrs. Essing is gradually phasing out.

To help with the transition, the CCC is looking for assistance in exercising their administrative responsibilities, such as preparing agendas for their meetings, writing minutes, completing their annu-

al report, reviewing internal rules, focusing on quality of services to clients, ensuring proper functioning of residents committees, etc.

There will also be a need to prepare for replacing Mrs. Essing when she steps down from her advocacy role next year.

The CCC is responsible for hiring and remunerating a person who shows interest in providing the support they

require. If you are interested, Gérald Savoie is available to answer any questions or give additional information. Gérald can be reached at:

gerald_savoie@ssss.gouv.qc.ca
or 514-989-1885 #1108.

In Memoriam Sherwin Laptiste

(Taken from the Globe and Mail article written by Shane Laptiste on June 4, 2012)



Father, husband, social worker, community advocate, former Batshaw manager and past president of the Batshaw Alumni Association, Sherwin Jeffrey Laptiste, aged 65, died on November 19, 2011 after a 2½ year battle with colon cancer. Sherwin died peacefully at his home in Roxboro surrounded by his loved ones.

Born Sept. 17, 1946, in Duncan Village, Naparima, Trinidad, Sherwin came to Montreal in 1969 where he attended Sir George Williams, Concordia, and McGill Universities. In the 1970s Sherwin began a 16-year career at Batshaw Youth and Family Services where he rose through the ranks.

As a manager, Sherwin used his engaging personality and his dedication to youth to ease delicate situations. He mentored potential managers and was a leader in the organization's cultural diversity program.

Sherwin retired from Batshaw in 2006, and began working as a teacher in the youth and adult correctional program at John Abbott College, where he encouraged his students to reflect on themselves and challenged them to act pro-

President's report

By Zalman Bitensky

I wish to welcome you to the fifth Annual General Meeting of the Batshaw Alumni Association (BAA). Since our last General Assembly on June 1, 2011 the following has transpired;

Your new, active executive committee continued to meet on a regular basis to plan and organize the activities of the Alumni Association. The executive has worked hard to increase membership, produce the annual newsletter, organize the Annual General Meeting, send members copies of 'Apropos' and other relevant information.

In the fall of 2011 an information package was sent to all Batshaw staff, past and present, which helped make the Alumni Association more visible. Batshaw supplied the paper, printing and mailing cost.

The Social Committee organized two more successful Fun Lunches which drew 11 and 13 participants. A fifth lunch is planned for October 10, 2012.

Our crowning achievement was our first ever fundraiser event. This was a joint effort with The Concerto Della Donna choir group. The event was held on

June 5, 2012 and from all accounts it was a great success as the BAA donated \$3000 to The Batshaw Foundation. There were more than 300 people who attended this event. The committee struck for this event consisted of Julia Paré, Carol Kimmis and Kathy Faludi. I wish to thank them for their dedication and tireless efforts which made this such a success.

On a sad note we learnt of the passing of the first president of the BAA, Sherwin Laptiste, who died on November 19, 2011. He will be sorely missed.

In conclusion I wish to thank the members of the executive; Louise Jessop, Barbara Kemp, Van Small, Jerbanoo Irani, Julia Paré and Nicolette deSmit who have helped make this a successful year. Thanks also go to all the members of the Association without whom none of what we did would have succeeded or have been necessary. On behalf of the Association I wish to thank the Batshaw Youth and family Centres for their continued support in providing us an office, a place to meet and the means to communicate with the members of the Association.

I wish you all a healthy and fulfilling year.

Zalman Bitensky, President

fessionally in their interactions with others. During the last 10 years, Sherwin also served on the boards of the

Quebec Association of Educators, the West Island Black Community Association and Jeunesse Caraïbe.