

# BATSHAW ALUMNI ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



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## The Call of the North: A Nunavik experience

By Elizabeth Pusztai

This article chronicles the adventures of a “southerner” from Montreal who decided to live and work in the Northern Village of Salluit from January to June of this year.



Elisapie, the “southern” adventurer, getting a ride home from work.

In 2016, having accepted M. Barrette’s generous offer to vacate my position as the Ombudsman of the CSSS Sud-Ouest Verdun, I was left with an unsettling absence of a daily focus or a predictable schedule. In the Fall of that year when everyone was gearing up and getting back to work, I found myself at loose ends and decided to embark on a project to sort through 25 years’ worth of accumulated junk. The prospect was both overwhelming and discouraging! I had just decided to embark upon the EAP allotted 6 sessions to help motivate me to get excited about putting order into my house when I got the call of the North! I responded to the call by immediately accepting to replace the Head of Program position in the Salluit Rehabilitation Centre for a 6 month period. I cancelled my EAP sessions.

### *How does one go about getting the call of the North?*

In my case, I had informed colleagues, past and present, that I would soon be free and interested to embark upon new adventures. I now also know that the Human Resource department of the Ungava Tulattivik Health Center is a very helpful contact as is Barthi-maeus. If one is interested in exploring opportunities in the North, I highly recommend the publication “Perspective Nunavik” put out by the Régie régionale de la santé et des services sociaux Nunavik available via internet.

As well, for personal readings I found two books particularly pertinent and helpful. One is “the Right to be Cold” by Sheila Watt Cloutier, a non-fiction account of growing up in the north and the politics and impact of climate change. The other is “Sanaaq” by Mitiarjuk Nappaaluk, an Inuit Novel which is the story of an Inuit family negotiating the changes brought by the arrival of the *Qallunat*, White people.

### *Initial shock:*

I arrived to my transit (lodging) in Salluit the week of January 12<sup>th</sup>. It was an all day travel event from Montreal via jets, planes and automobiles. Being January there was approximately 4 hours of sunlight every day and I realized after a few days that I had been going to bed at 6:00pm believing that it was way past bedtime. The temperatures were regularly hovering below -25 C and on January 17<sup>th</sup>, there was a fierce blizzard that reduced visibility to



0. I was called by the program coordinator who instructed me not to go outside because with the wind and snow I would get lost trying to cross the street to my office at the Sapummivik rehabilitation center. Throughout the day my building was literally being blown around by the wind. It was shaking and rattling to such an extent that I had begun to plan what I would do when the roof blew off, the power went out and the heating stopped. Even more exciting for me was the fact that the sewage and water lights had lit up, indicating that the tanks were, respectively, nearing full and nearing empty. I was afraid of the dogs roaming around, I was afraid of getting frost bite on my face, I was afraid of going outside and getting lost, I was afraid my house would blow away, I was afraid that there would never be another plane arriving or leaving Salluit, I was afraid that I was losing my memory because I could not retain the Inuit names of the staff nor could I recognize people I had already met. In short, I was surprisingly scared of everything, and as a rule I am not a scaredy cat! Fortunately, adapting to one's environment occurs quite quickly. When I remembered that there are about 1500 people presently living in Salluit and that there have been people inhabiting the area, off and on, since 800 B.C. it gave me the reassuring knowledge that I too would survive!

### *Getting into the routine:*

By the second week I was able to start presenting a more professional image as the new interim Head of Program of Sapummivik Rehabilitation center. The center is a highly structured treatment unit designed for adolescent boys placed under the Youth Protection Act and the Youth Criminal Justice Act. It is a very well quipped facility with a full complement of educators, intervention agents, teacher, cook, housekeeper, administration staff and a soon-to-be added, technical services person. Although I was familiar and comfortable with all

the Treatment Program aspects of my role, there were a number of things I simply did not know and was not prepared for. For example, I did not know that the furnace, the sewage tanks, the telephone and internet connections required constant monitoring and reparations and that technical support had to be found independently in the village. Nor did I know that staff replacement would be a constant challenge for reasons related to life in the North. For example, the Salluit hockey team, whose players are primarily Sapummivik staff, has a particularly important place within the village and was expected to travel to tournaments throughout Nunavik, despite their scheduled shifts. Likewise, Beluga season takes precedence, when the ice starts to break up in Salluit Bay and the whole community, including of course the staff, go hunting for the whole village.



Other factors that cause havoc with scheduling include when staff accompany the elders and most of the village on their annual hunting trip; and when medical interventions, like removal of a cast, require a hospital visit in another village (or even Montreal) with no fixed return date. I will be eternally grateful to the program coordinator who has been with Sapummivik center since it opened in 1999, as well as her administrative assistant, for their patience and their wisdom during my learning curve.

### *The Importance of community :*

I left Salluit on June 30<sup>th</sup> 2017, much wiser than when I had arrived. Only now, having spent this time in the North, can I begin to understand the importance of “being on the land” and being in the community. The youth of Sapummivik center are members of the community in a way that I have never seen anywhere in Montreal. They participate in hunting, fishing and trapping activities within the community alongside staff & community members. Those youth who are interested in working are counted upon to replace (and of course get paid) when help is needed on the water delivery trucks or the sewage removal trucks. They are invited to community dinners, celebrations, and to participate in local talent shows if they wish. In cases where a tragic event may have befallen a youth’s family, the village elder whose role it is to deliver such news throughout the village, comes to share the sad news and to comfort the youth. It seems that there is a special “Nunavik geography” whereby everyone knows what is going on in each of the 14 villages and also seem to know who is related to whom.

I was touched by the warmth, honesty, and acceptance I experienced and observed in Salluit. It inspires awe that in spite of numerous “southerners” passing through for various periods of time, I felt included, welcomed and was given the opportunity and trust to develop a positive and rewarding working relationship with the team. Working in the North, was a great learning experience and a fascinating adventure and a place I hope to return to in the future.



Last day with the wise and patient Imallak (program coordinator). This is the view of Salluit Bay from Sapummivik center.

## From Where I Sit

By Judy Martin

It's been a busy year at the CIUSSS-ODIM and the politics involved in sitting on this board certainly come into play more often than I've ever experienced when we were 'stand alone' Batshaw. In spite of it, in my humble opinion, we have a CEO and a Board President who are doing their best to cut through them all, and the entire Board is focused on providing quality, efficient care for all of our clients. They are a caring group, and many have a social service background, which is helpful. As Chair of the Quality and Vigilance Committee, I am doing my best to rally our team around the issues that come to our table or that citizens or clients address directly to me. They are encouraged to write official complaints if it's warranted, to put everything in writing, to come to the public Board sessions to make the Board aware of issues needing improvement that should be addressed.



In the past months, a coalition of 3 associations ( the Batshaw Alumni Association, CARE Jeunesse and the Quebec Association of Educators ) attended a board meeting and read a letter of concern about feedback they have been receiving from their members since the 2015 merger. Frequent reports about a declining quality in services to clients at Batshaw and a stressful, chaotic working environment there persuaded the coalition to speak out on behalf of their membership. The letter questioned the board's awareness of the crisis in the youth center and asked what steps were being taken to address the problems. The board was receptive to the coalition's concerns and directed them to meet with senior directors of the agency for further dialogue. The Beaconsfield Citizen's Association asked the Board for an update about the Building project , i.e. moving Shawbridge campus to Beaconsfield so that the kids will be in the city, closer to their family and services.....Benoit responded that they are committed, are awaiting funding, and that the property will be maintained. He also encouraged Al Gardiner to keep in touch. Interestingly, Al Gardiner won a seat on the Beaconsfield council.

One challenge looming over the heads of everyone in the health and social services network is the threat of a merger amongst the CIUSSS-ODIM, CIUSSS-Centre Ouest and the MUHC under the McGill umbrella. Over the past year, Dr. Arvind Joshi was given the mandate to study the possibility. Our Board, many staff and clients were consulted. Dr. Joshi was open to hearing everything, and we were encouraged to share our opinions. His report recommended that the merger should not go ahead, and we are counting on Dr. Gaetan Barrette to be true to his promise that he would not force a merger. As we enter our last year of our mandate, I am hopeful that with your support, we will continue to look out for the best interests of our kids in care. They deserve it, and you can count on me to be vigilant in a respectful way. As I've always said, it's a privilege that the kids allow me to be involved in their lives with visits, which I love doing and will never give up. Please keep up your interest.....I can't help them alone.

## A Coalition representing Batshaw clients and staff addresses the CIUSS Board

By Julia Paré



In the Spring of 2016 a recurring discussion in many of our Association's formal and informal get togethers centered on developments in the youth centers since the 2015 merger. Feedback from retiring employees, current staff at Batshaw and clients receiving services all shared the common themes of loss, confusion and declining quality in services. Interactions with other youth care related Associations further increased our awareness that Batshaw staff, youth and families were in crisis.

These concerns resulted in the formation of a Coalition of Associations who jointly signed a letter to the Director General and the President of the new Board of Director of the Centre Intégré Universitaire de Santé et de Services Sociaux de l'Ouest-de-l'Île-de-Montréal.

Association members attended the June Board meeting and the following letter was read to the Board:

*Dear M. Morin.*

*A growing concern about the decline in the quality of services that the CIUSSS is providing for children and their families as well as the dismal state of morale among the employees working in the youth centres has persuaded the undersigned Associations to form a coalition and speak out. CARE Jeunesse (Centre d'Amitié, Ressources at Entraide pour la Jeunesse), a non-profit organization comprised of former youth in care, provide support and advocacy for youth who are leaving care. They are in regular contact with youth in residential and group home settings. These youths report a decline in basic care: from the quality of food they are given, to the lack of monies for leisure time and community activities to the frequency with which unfamiliar and temporary staff are coming on shift with little to no knowledge about the children or their program. They describe situations in which the safety and predictability of their day is uncertain and the attention to their needs is neglected.*

*The Batshaw Alumni Association is regularly in touch with employees contemplating retirement or who have recently retired. They invariably describe an environment of instability, confusion and lack of support or direction with ever increasing workload expectations. Some are on sick leave from work related stress, others are contemplating early retirement and others tell us they are counting the days until they can leave the center. They identify the formation of the CIUSSS as the beginning of the decline in their working conditions*

*The Quebec Association of Educators provides a forum for practitioners to discuss services to youth and families, to exchange information and to promote the development of standards in the field of youth care. The Association has had a steady stream of members exchanging on the declining working conditions in the units and programs they work in throughout the CIUSSS.*

(continued)

*Many are on leave due to "burn out" others are looking elsewhere for employment and there is an overwhelming sense of disillusionment among them.*

*Since the merger in April 2015 each of our associations have witnessed the gradual erosion of programs, the elimination of essential services and positions, a decline in the quality of services to youth and families and a deterioration in staff morale. The coalition was formed in response to this situation and a consensus on the need to act. We have joined forces to raise our concerns and questions on a regular basis and throughout the year to the Board of Directors of the CIUSSS de l'Ouest.*

*Our first question is:*

*What concrete evidence can you give us that you are aware of the current crises in youth centers and what steps are being taken to rectify the situation?*

*Yours truly,*

*Amanda Keller, President; CARE Jeunesse*

*Zalman Bitensky, President; Batshaw Alumni Association*

*Tony Maciocia President; Québec Association of Educators*

The Board of Directors acknowledged our concerns and directed us to meet with Senior Managers at Batshaw for answers to our question.

Representative of the three Associations; Amanda Keller, Tony Maciocia and Julia Pare have had two meetings with senior managers of the CIUSSS de l'ouest/ Batshaw services; Katherine Moxness, Sue Gallo, Beverley Robinson and Lynne Mc Vey.

Although there was some agreement about the poor morale of staff and clients' dissatisfaction with services, the overall impression of the senior managers is that Batshaw employees are adjusting to the changes and that many of the frustrations they have experienced are related to the transition period following a merger. They acknowledged communication problems were a headache for all employees but believe that these will be resolved as the restructuring is completed. They identified a lack of personnel to fill vacant positions as the most significant obstacle to employee and client satisfaction. They have had difficulty recruiting suitable applicants for both front line services and support staff services.

In the eyes of the coalition representatives, there is a discrepancy between the employees' and clients' perceptions of the impact of the merger as described by our memberships, and the Senior Managers' observations and explanations. Our members describe a fundamental shift in the mission and philosophy of Batshaw Youth and Family Centers and a sense of permanent loss of some of its core values. Professional staff have reported that clinical intervention, which had been supported by supervision, team meetings and in-service training has been greatly undermined by an increasing emphasis on administrative tasks. Whereas the senior managers describe an instability based on a transition process and do not acknowledge a shifting approach to the delivery of services to clients.

The Coalition members were invited to continue informing Senior Management about their memberships' feedback and offered continued meetings to discuss our concerns. The Coalition agreed to keep the dialogue open with both the Senior Managers and the Board as the year progresses and as new developments or concerns emerge.

## Update on our Youth Programs

Dr. Katherine Moxness  
Directrice du Programme jeunesse



We have been very busy in the Youth Program! We are happy to announce that we have added to the continuum of residential services by opening our offer of services to include two intermediate resources (RI) and by launching our Aspire program. We transformed two community group homes into intermediate resources to offer our youth a continuum of living environments. Moreover, we are very pleased to announce that we have built on existing innovations and will have an official launch of our Aspire program designed to support youth who are transitioning to adulthood. Based on best practices and inspired by the GAP Program, Aspire will provide five young adults (at a time) with the opportunity to continue to learn the essential life skills needed to become successful adults. We also had the Tree Planting initiative in November, led by our eco friendly sector and many volunteers that planted more than 80 trees on the Dorval campus, with the participation of youth and supporting managers and educators. The flight to the North Pole, an initiative of Air Canada in collaboration with the Batshaw Centres Foundation and the Division of Youth Protection, is scheduled for the 9th of December involves **46** youth and will be an exciting experience for all. That same day, there will be a Toy Drive at the Place Vertu Mall in Ville St-Laurent from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. sponsored by MSC (Mediterranean Shipping Company (Canada) Inc.), who last year helped to raise 10,000\$ to ensure, in collaboration with Frank Campanile, our Resident Santa, that all children and youth have a wonderful and bountiful holiday.

Wishing you all Happy Holidays and lots of health and happiness for the New Year!

## News from the Batshaw Centres Foundation

by: Judith Obadia, Director of Development

### *A special thank you*

As alumni of Batshaw many of you have stayed close to the Batshaw Centres Foundation, have supported the Foundation in a myriad of ways over the years and still hold the cause close to your hearts. Through attendance to our events or through your own fundraisers and volunteer activities, you have given so much. As alumni, you hold a precious piece of history in your hands and through your participation and act of giving your time and sharing your knowledge, you enrich the work that we do at the Foundation by sharing that knowledge and history. And for that, we are very grateful.

### *What's happening at Batshaw Centres Foundation*

There are some interesting things going on these days at the Batshaw Centres Foundation. We have recently received wonderful support from corporate members of the Montreal Community such as Linknow Media a long-time supporter of the Holiday Gift Campaign, CN Railway, a major donor to the Foundation's Scholarship Fund, and Global Vision Inc., an important contributor to the Emergency Services and Independent Living Funds, to name just a few companies. We are also pleased to announce that for the first time, Air Canada's annual Santa Flight, taking place December 9, will be filled with Batshaw kids this year! The Santa Flight involves a 45 minute plane ride over Montreal dedicated to "Looking for Santa". Santa will then appears on the plane and provide gifts to the kids. We are thrilled that we were involved in bringing this opportunity to our kids.

### *2017 Annual Appeal – Raising Funds for Hope Chests*

This year's Annual Fundraising Campaign focused on raising funds for youth going through life changing transitions, including both younger kids that have gone through a youth protection evaluation and older kids going into independent living.

Youth in transition following Youth Protection Evaluation - The Foundation is raising money to provide support to these youth in the form of items to help contribute to their emotional well-being. Some examples include: Mugs for teenagers, Stuffed animals, Toys, Books, DVDs, Coloring books, Crayons, Duffel bag to facilitate moving with dignity, and many more essentials to provide additional comfort to the youth we serve.

Youth going into independent living - There are on average, 60 youth annually, who, after having been in care, reach the age of 18 and have little or no family support. We've been wrestling with this problem for many years. When they move into independent living they have less financial and psychosocial support in comparison with their peers from more functional families. This Fall, we are raising money to ensure that these youth have the basic necessities required to move out on their own. These include small and large household items such as: Dish set, microwave, toaster, coffee maker, kettle, cutlery and other cooking utensils, baking pans, starter kit for pots and pans, welcome mat,

Towels, Little tool kit, First aid kit, Dish towels, Dish rack, Can opener, Toiletry items, Toilet paper, Paper towels, Bath mat, Pillows, Laundry basket, Laundry soap, Softener, Large duffel bag, Broom, Mop, Bucket, Small garbage can, Cleaning supplies., Blankets. **Global Vision Inc.** mentioned above, has taken our cause to heart and has started an employee campaign to raise funds and secure items for the hope chest.

### *How you can help*

**Attend the Fundraiser:** Our Annual Spring Event has become a flagship fundraiser for the Foundation. Batshaw staff and Alumni are entitled to reduced rate of \$75 for tickets and tickets are eligible for a partial tax receipt. The date of the next event is March 28, 2018 and it will be taking place at the beautiful Entrepôts Dominion in Saint Henri. For tickets, please contact Ola Dupelycz by calling 514-989-1885 extension 1164.



**Start a fundraiser:** The Foundation has recently launched an online portal that allows donors and supporters to run their own events and set up their own donation pages (for Birthdays, Graduations, Bar mitzvahs and more) or make tribute donations online. Visit [www.batshawfoundation.ca](http://www.batshawfoundation.ca) for further details. For help in setting up an event, please contact 514-989-1885 extension 1011.

**Become a volunteer:** If you are interested in volunteering for the Foundation, please contact 514-989-1885 extension 1011.



## Book Review: Manhattan Beach

by: Barbara Kemp

Manhattan Beach by Jennifer Egan is one of the best books I have read this year. It is a novel with many characters, but probably the one the story follows most closely is Anna who, as a young woman, works in the Brooklyn Navel Yards during World War II. She starts as a welder (like Rosie the Riveter) fixing parts of the ships that go into battle, but eventually she manages to get the work that she has long wanted - she becomes the first woman diver to work under water to repair the ships.



Anna comes from a family struggling after the great depression. Her father, who is the other principle character in the story, unbeknownst to his family, in a desperate move to provide financial support becomes involved in the dock workers' gangster underworld – a corrupt and unforgiving way to make a living. It is Anna who gradually comes to realize what her father is into and the plot largely turns on how the situation plays out.

But this book is so much more than its story. I think Jennifer Egan is a brilliant writer (her last novel, *A Visit from the Goon Squad* won a Pulitzer Prize) so the novel is not only a page-turner, it is full of amazingly interesting and detailed descriptions of a variety of scenes, from diving for bodies, surviving at sea after a shipwreck, caring for a severely handicapped child (Anna's younger sister) or making it in the world of gangsters.

Good dialogue, great characters, a suspenseful plot, thoughtful insights – this book has it all!



## Recipe: EGGPLANT RAITA

By Sandhya Karnick

*1 large eggplant, cut into small chunks*

*1 large onion finely diced*

*2 cloves of garlic finely chopped*

*1 tsp chilly powder*

*¼ tsp turmeric powder*

*1 cup of sour cream*

*Salt and pepper to taste.*



Heat oven to 400 degrees. Place eggplant on greased pan and bake for 20 minutes till cooked.

Heat 2 tablespoons for oil and fry onion till brown, add garlic and fry for 1 more minute. Reduce heat to medium and add baked eggplant, stir well. Add ¼ cup of water and keep cooking till eggplant gets mushy, adding more water as needed. Add the seasonings and chilly and turmeric powders. Stir well. Take off heat. Let cool and then stir in the sour cream. You can use light sour cream. Garnish with chopped coriander leaves. Serve as an accompaniment to a main meal or can be eaten with rotis.



## Report from the President

By Zalman Bitensky President BAA

Since the last General Assembly on September 28, 2016 your executive has been occupied with following activities;

The executive met on four occasions over the year during which we planned programs and discussed issues. Our membership increased by 10 and we are now 270 strong. With sadness we needed to say farewell to Victoria Chato and Ron Feltus who passed away during this period. Newsletter No.7 was produced, this Annual General Meeting organized, and members were informed about BAA, Batshaw, and other news and special events by email.

The Social Committee planned two Social Lunches which were well attended. A fifteenth will be organized for November 8, 2017. Noteworthy is that our last luncheon was a BBQ at 5 Weredale park and was our best attended lunch to date.

Financially we had a quiet year. Our current bank balance is \$1,313.98.

As always this was a busy year for your executive. We continued to liaise with Care Jeunesse (a group for young adults leaving care). Julia and Robin were involved in helping them plan their first fundraiser which was held in November 2016 at Concordia's Loyola campus and was quite successful. We continue to monitor the progress of the Batshaw History Project through Louise Jessop who is a member. The Batshaw history project website was launched on September 28, 2016 and they are still looking for memorabilia from Batshaw and its constituent agencies. The BAA members' interest questionnaire mentioned in my last year's report was finished and sent out. There were 51 responses and the results were sent to our members. We are in the process of planning events to meet the interests expressed by the results of the questionnaire. The main issue we tackled this year was how to respond to the concerns we were hearing from managers and front-line workers at Batshaw. The issues were about low staff morale, high rate of staff leaves and the consequences of this on youth in care. This prompted us to become involved in a coalition with Care Jeunesse, and Quebec Association of Educators. They jointly read a letter to the CIUSSS Board of Directors expressing the concerns about the impact that the 2015 merger was having on the quality of services to clients and the working conditions of all staff. Tony and Julia have kept the executive informed of development which will be past on to our members.

In conclusion, I wish to thank the members of the executive; Tony Maciocia VP, Barbara Kemp secretary, Sandhya Karnick treasurer and members at large;( Louise Jessop, Julia Paré, Carol Kimmis, Robin Bondaroff and Rose Rheault), for their hard work and commitment to the BAA. As always, thanks to you, our members, who made what we do necessary and successful. On behalf of the Association I would like to thank the agency for its continued support in providing us with 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.