

WEST ISLAND YOUTH PROJECT

ANNUAL REPORT

APRIL 1, 2005 – MARCH 31, 2006



Amcal FAMILY SERVICES

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MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



For over twenty-five years, Amcal Family Services has been responding to the needs of families and children in difficulty. During this time we have learned that the only constant in our lives is change. During this past year at Amcal we have experienced significant organizational changes in staffing, programs and funding.

As regards funding, changes have occurred in the structure of the Health and Social Services ministry at the provincial level that will have a long-term impact on the role and future of community organizations. The Board of Directors and staff of Amcal Family Services intend to take a proactive response to these changes rather than simply reacting after the fact.

With reference to programming, over the past few years Amcal has added a number of programs in response to the changing needs of the community, and has eliminated programs that were identified either as under-utilized or not serving the most urgent needs of the community. The Young Mothers' Program, for example, continues to flourish under the coordination of Diane Marsland. In order to increase attendance for this program, an apartment was rented in the Delmar area of Pierrefonds—a location more convenient for young women living in the area than our storefront office on Lakeshore Road.

Several private schools availed themselves of Amcal's school-based programs this past year, and we are proud to be offering programs to Socrates School, a Greek school in Roxboro, and Alexander Von Humboldt School in Baie D'Urfé. Further, the after-school Anger Management program, which has existed for over five years, was restructured in order to include aspects related to moral and character development.

Fundraising activities—such as our annual Golf Tournament and the Professional Development Conference in the fall—have not only increased our revenues but also contributed to greater public awareness of our services and programs. As well, staff have been present in schools and at public events in order to increase Amcal's visibility in the community.

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Staff changes in the past year mostly resulted from the fact that the majority of our work force is part-time. As is often the case in community organizations, staff move on when they have achieved a level of experience and are offered a full-time job. This situation is not unique to Amcal; many social service agencies are experiencing challenges in the recruitment and retention of employees.

I would like to express my appreciation and gratitude to all the staff at Amcal. They are a dedicated group of professionals who have a strong belief not only in the mission of the organization but also in the families who have the courage to seek support and counselling in a time of difficulty.

I would also like to thank the Board of Directors for their commitment to the agency and for the seriousness with which they take their governance responsibilities. The Executive of the Board of Directors has supported and provided me with direction during a number of challenges this past year. I am grateful to work with a group of such talented individuals who are passionate about giving back to the community.

We live in a constantly changing environment. Thus, it is imperative that the Board of Directors and staff of Amcal Family Services adopt a forward-thinking approach to the annual Strategic Planning process. As we move into 2007, we intend to engage in a consultation process with the community, to enable Amcal to position itself to respond creatively and appropriately to the greatest needs of children and families—in a cost effective manner, and with limited resources. Indeed a challenge for all of us. However, given the high level of commitment and capability which has been shown by the Board of Directors, the staff, and the families who use our services, I have no doubt that this organization will rise to the challenges we will encounter.

Heather Parker
Executive Director

Amcal STAFF

Heather Parker
Executive Director

Margaret Dodge
Overnight Supervisor

Diane Marsland
Coordinator – Intake, Residence

Pamela Jewell
Coordinator - Administrative Services

Sherman Blunte
Coordinator - Supervised Visits

Anita Tso
Coordinator - Family Workers

Susan Layne
Team Leader - Priorité Jeunesse

Delia Noel
Team Leader - Child Care Workers

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RESIDENTIAL & OUTREACH PROGRAMS

"Amcal Family Services offers a team of professionals committed to help promote and preserve healthy family relationships." Amcal Mission Statement

The **Residential Program** provides a unique component to the agency's services. The fourteen-week program offers the opportunity for teens and their parents to receive the support and guidance necessary to get their relationships "back on track," while providing a safe environment for the teens to live during this process. At the same time, the teens are required to attend school as usual, and they return home on weekends, so they are not totally removed from their families and community. The requests for residential services remained quite high from the beginning of the year through the summer months. When we returned in September (after the usual August closure of the Residence), we opened with five clients, which is higher than in past years. However, we noticed a decline in the demand for the program in November. Overall, we served 27 families in the residential program. The occupancy rate was 64.3%, and 70% of the families paid the full rate.

Outreach counselling is available for families who experience difficulties with their teens, but who feel a stay in the Residence is not warranted. The outreach program served 34 families of adolescents in 2005-2006. This program has remained stable throughout the year. We have provided individual and couple counselling where we felt it was needed. This flexibility has enabled us to explore a wider range of issues that the families may be facing such as, abuse, marital problems, parental issues, and divorce.

Boroughs with the most frequent **callers** are:

- 1.Montreal
- 2.Pierrefonds

Sources of **referrals** are:

- 1.Other helping professionals
- 2.Schools
- 3.Batshaw Youth and Family Centres

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<i>DESCRIPTION</i>	<i>2005-2006</i>
Residential program	27 families
Outreach Family Counselling	34 adolescents
Phone calls requesting Residential Program	200
Phone calls requesting Outreach services	38
Information Meetings: adolescents	94
Information Meetings: pre-adolescents	3



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SUPERVISED VISITATION PROGRAM

The Supervised Visitation Program provides supervision for visits between family members and children under the aegis of the Batshaw Youth and Family Services. There are four Amcal employees assigned to the program. Visits are held at two locations: during the week, visits take place at Batshaw's Tupper street facility in Westmount; weekend visits are held at Amcal's Ste. Anne street location in Pointe Claire.

During the past year the demand for supervised visits remained constant. Our statistics show that there was the usual decrease in July and August, when school-age children attend summer camps or go on vacation. This was followed by another decrease in January and February, when families shy away from attending visits in the "dead of winter." To compensate for the decline during this period, Mondays and Fridays were temporarily suspended as visitation days. The clientele were then compressed into a five day schedule instead of seven days. With the resurgence of visits beginning in late March, Monday has since been reopened as a visitation day.

The S.V.P team is poised and ready for the busy spring/summer period which is about to descend on us. We also look forward to another year of providing this much-needed service to our S.V.P families.

<i>SUPERVISED VISITATION 2005-2006</i>	
Supervised Visitation (# of families)	75
Total family members	134
Total number of visits	1,163
Total number of hours	1,787

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CLSC PRIORITÉ JEUNESSE: FAMILIES FIRST

*"We are a community-based organization providing services to identify and develop the core values and strengths of the family, and anticipate and respond to needs in the community." **Amcal Mission Statement***

For the past seven years, Amcal Family Services, through a contract with the CLSC Pierrefonds, has provided family intervention when problems at school are thought to be related to family issues at home. The Families First program is designed for children who have been identified by school administrators as having behaviour problems, and for families who are unable to pay for services. The program offers ten family sessions with no cost to the school or family. The sessions include an initial meeting, which brings together the parents and school personnel to discuss the behaviours the child is presenting, and their expectations of the program, as well as a classroom observation of the child, so the Family Worker can experience the issues first-hand. This is followed by six visits to the home, to support the parents and provide strategies and tools to assist in the child's academic success. A mid-way progress meeting is held at the school, to discuss progress and identify further needs of the child. Finally, a termination meeting is held with the family and school personnel, to evaluate the progress of the child and family, and to make further referrals to other services in the community, if necessary.

The program receives its referrals from elementary schools in the CLSC Pierrefonds territory, and there has been a pattern in the number of referrals received: these are usually highest during the months of March to April and lowest during the months of September to November. This may be due to the fact that behaviour problems are just beginning to be identified and worked through between September and November, whereas between March and April, if the problems have not improved, there is an increase in motivation from the families and schools to ameliorate the child's academic performance before the school term ends.

The mandate of Public Health, which funds Priorité Jeunesse, is to provide prevention programs. Because of its preventative nature, Priorité Jeunesse is frequently used as a resource to address the needs of elementary school children. The school system continues to be faced with cut cutbacks in resource programs and a reduced number of school Social Workers. This means that schools continue to express an ever-increasing need for Amcal's services.

<i>CLSC - FAMILIES FIRST 2005-2006</i>	
Number of families served	25

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CLSC PRIORITÉ JEUNESSE: SCHOOL-BASED Services: Social Skills Program

As in previous years, this has been an exciting and challenging year for the Social Skills Program. There was an increase in requests for school-based services—from seven schools who participated in the Priorité Jeunesse contract with the CLSC Pierrefonds last year, to ten schools this year. However, only one French school requested services. A new facilitator was hired to be the primary provider of services to the French-speaking schools, as well as to work in several of the English schools. Unfortunately, this worker left the agency, so there was only one worker to provide services to the remaining schools from which requests had been received.

This year, we also received requests to fulfill two private contracts—at Socrates Greek School and Alexander von Humbolt German School. At Socrates Greek School, the initial contract was for all students in Grades 1 to Grade 6. However, given the success of the program, and the positive feedback from teachers and parents, the school has requested the program also be done with Kindergarten students in the spring of 2006.

Many of the schools have had to deal with their own dilemmas and challenges this year, with several schools slated for closure and others merging with other schools in the territory. Three of the affected schools presently request Social Skills programs from Amcal. The main reasons cited for these closures are changes in demographics and low enrolment. These factors are reflected in the number of students being served by the Social Skills program. While this year saw an increase in the number of requests from schools, the number of students per class, especially in the younger grades, has decreased.

With regard to the annual reporting process, the CLSC has been very stringent in its requests for specific information. In addition, this will be the last year that the program will exist in its present form. As of next year, a new program will be in effect, and the CLSC is still in the process of determining how the new transformation will be implemented.

But while the Social Skills program has been faced with some challenges, we have enjoyed a successful year in terms of meeting the needs of the schools. We look forward to the year ahead with enthusiasm and excitement.

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<i>CLSC – SOCIAL SKILLS PROGRAM 2005-2006</i>	
# of schools served	10 CLSC schools, 2 private schools =12
# of sessions provided	446
# of students receiving the program	1,885



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CLSC SERVICES INTÉGRÉS: OUR PLACE

It's been a very exciting year for the Young Parents' Program, which is operated by Amcal through a grant from the CLSC Lac St. Louis. On September 15th 2005, we moved to our new location, at 503 Delmar in Pointe-Claire, and chose a new name, "Our Place," for the group (formerly known as the "Cyber-Café"). We wanted to be more central to our clientele and we were growing out of our space on the Lakeshore Road. Since the move, the number of participants has increased from ten to 26, and the daily average attendance has expanded from approximately three to six people. Three dads/partners also joined in some of the activities. In addition, one of our moms, a participant in the program since the beginning, gave birth to her second child—so the children have ranged in age from our youngest baby, at three days old, to our oldest toddler, at four years old.

Again this year we tried a variety of different activities. These included arts and crafts, manicures and facials at Gordon Robertson School, visits to the Eco Museum, the Cap St-Jacques beach and farm, swimming (in the summer) at the outdoor pool behind Amcal, outings to the water slides, and the new playground in Pointe-Claire shopping center, apple picking at Quinn's, and movies for the moms.

Since the move, we have started a GIRLS' NIGHT, one Friday per month. We have a babysitter for the evening, and the women take turns cooking for everyone. Since they come from a variety of different ethnic backgrounds, we have enjoyed Pakistani dishes, an Indian evening, and Italian and American cooking. Sometimes we even make chocolates following our meals! The women look forward to these evenings, since many are alone and do not get much time to themselves.

Different representatives from the group have taken turns attending our monthly Services Intégrés meetings. They have given feedback on the program and offered suggestions for the future. This sense of belonging has allowed the women take initiative and responsibility both in the program and in their personal lives. Gradually, the women are making better choices that are impacting their personal lives in a positive manner.

We continue to develop partnerships in the community. **The Women's Shelter** has offered workshops on Abusive Relationships. **The Women's Center** has run an Arts and Crafts and Music activity, on a bi-monthly basis, with the moms and babies. The feedback about this part of the program was very positive,

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and we hope to increase the number of hours the Women's Center staff can spend with us. **SIMONET** (Young Mothers Network) visited the women on a bi-monthly basis, to advise them about life planning. The **CLSC** nurses and Social Worker dropped in regularly. The nurses held two days of flu vaccination clinics for the women, and invited other tenants in the apartment complex to participate as well. Finally, we have taken full advantage, on a bi-weekly basis, of the **YMCA** facilities, especially their "Splash Time."

We are planning new partnerships for the future, and a collective kitchen and bulk buying program are in the developmental stages. Clearly, Our Place is a happening place!

<i>CLSC – SERVICES INTÉGRÉS 2005-2006</i>	
Number of young parents served	23



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COMMUNITY GROUPS

There are two community groups which have been functioning at Amcal throughout the year. The Anger Management Program was re-structured and renamed the **“Anger Management: Conflict Resolution and Character Development Program,”** and was re-formatted to an eight-week, rather than ten-week, structure. The program incorporates a cognitive and behavioural approach, and aims to assist teens in identifying the role that anger is playing in their lives—at home, at school, and in the community. The youth are also encouraged to explore character issues and consider the ways their expression of anger is impacting others’ views of them, in contrast to how they wish to be viewed. The facilitators assist the teens in becoming more knowledgeable about anger as an emotion they can control, and encourage them to create space in their lives to consider and evaluate methods of expressing their feelings which may more effectively meet their needs.

The group is facilitated by Anita Tso and Julia Benner. It accommodates a maximum of eight clients, and is presently operating at full capacity. On average this year we had six teens enrolled in the program. We have received several court-ordered referrals from Batshaw Youth and Family Services. In these instances, we submit reports to the appropriate Social Workers at Batshaw.

The group for **Children of Divorce** began at the end of March. This group is designed for children, aged eight to 11 years, who have either recently experienced parental separation or who are having trouble accepting the divorce of their parents. It is an eight-week program, and addresses the following issues: changes in the family which occur as a result of divorce, living in two houses, feelings of anger, feelings of guilt, the grieving process, and step parenting. In the fall of 2006, we hope to increase the number of children served by this group by marketing the program in schools and through our network of community agencies.

<i>COMMUNITY GROUPS 2005-2006</i>	
# of clients, Anger Man./Character Dev.	36 participants
# of clients, Children of Divorce	6 children

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SUMMER PROGRAM 2005

The summer program for 2005 was animated by Child Care Workers Janet Gallagher and Adam Filleul, and operated for eight weeks during June and July. Participants were residents in the Amcal program, who were involved until they completed their stay in the Residence. The number of participants thus ranged weekly from five to seven teens. The program is funded by a Challenge Grant from Human Resource Development Canada, as well as contributions made by parents to the Activity Fund.

The animators worked in close collaboration with the evening staff in the Residence, so that inter-program consistency and staffing and program continuity were maintained. The animators stressed the importance of the support they received from the evening staff, and felt the presence of both male and female staff was a positive resource for the youth. Both the summer program staff and the regular evening workers consistently held teens accountable, and emphasized that the change or loss of an activity would be affected by the teens' behaviour.

The goal was to provide a range of structured, volunteer, and "fun" activities during the course of each week, with flexibility being a key concept. The program included the following aspects:

- ✓ **Mondays:** an adaptable schedule, to accommodate the varied arrival times of the youth from their weekends at home, and to re-establish group cohesion. Outings included climbing at Mount Royal, a picnic in Park Angrignon, a journey to the Old Port, as well as local games of basketball and soccer, a quick dip at the Pointe Claire public pool, and ice-cream!
- ✓ **Tuesdays:** volunteer day: the youth assisted as animators at the YMCA's Cloverdale Summer Camp program, mostly with sports activities. Later in the summer, the teens elected to assist with refreshments, conversation and cards at a residence for the elderly, October House.
- ✓ **Wednesdays:** educational days, with visits to such venues as the Planetarium, the Bio-dome, the Insectarium, Botanical Gardens and the IMAX Science Centre. The educational outing was deliberately scheduled before the "fun" outings on Thursdays, to emphasize that such privileges had to be "earned," and were dependent on behaviour, not automatic.

- ✓ **Thursdays:** “fun” days, at the movies and arcades, bowling, and (especially popular) jet-boating and days at La Ronde. The animators noted that psychological/behavioural challenges were minimal on such days, and group cohesion was strong.
- ✓ **Fridays:** a day for sleeping in, and preparing for the teens’ return to their families for the weekend; a day of often ambivalent emotions, from excitement to anxiety, so the schedule was flexible, and activities included cards and board games (especially “Un Game,” a board game which encourages participants to share thoughts and feelings).

The animators spoke highly of the youth who participated in this summer program, as well as of the professionalism and support of the Amcal organization overall.



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COMMUNITY AWARENESS / MARKETING

"Amcal aims to be the primary West Island community resource for families seeking support, intervention or counselling." Amcal Vision Statement

In order to support this vision statement, Amcal requires a comprehensive Communications Plan so that families experiencing the challenges of parenting are aware of the services provided by our agency.

The Executive Director and the staff of Amcal Family Services continue to be involved in a number of task forces at the local CSSS. Several members of the staff did a "tour of schools" to increase participation in the Residential Program and provide staff, teachers and administrators an opportunity to get better-acquainted with our services overall. Staff answered questions related to admissions, costs and interventions of the various services. Staff also provided a kiosk at Parents' evenings when requested by the schools.

As well, our regular articles in *BoomersView* magazine and the Questions and Answer series in the Quebec Home and School Association newsletter increased awareness in the schools, as well as the larger community, of the kind of services we offer to families. We also solicited the involvement and feedback of users of our Residential and Outreach programs, by mailing them a survey asking for their comments on the services they received and their suggestions about ways in which Amcal could improve or develop our programs. Overwhelmingly, parents indicated in their replies they felt the teens should receive individual counselling once they have completed the program. A pilot project will be put in place shortly to address this need.

Delia Noel, senior Child Care Worker, participated on two occasions in a panel discussion with Aphrodite Sales on Global Radio about a number of trends emerging in adolescent behaviour. Amcal was mentioned numerous times throughout the program and this resulted in a number of queries about our services/programs.

The Fundraising/Marketing Committee have merged and new Board members Laurie Higgins and Suzanne Charette have agreed to join the Committee. With this increased membership and a recently-developed Fundraising/Communications Plan, we hope to continue to create more awareness of, and interest in, our services/programs.

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Amcal staff and the Executive Director participate in the following community networking and public awareness activities:

- Canadian Social Entrepreneur Network
- Centre Local de Développement (CLD) West Island
- CSSS Dorval/Lasalle/Lachine—Assessment of mental health needs of youth
- CSSS Lac St. Louis—Services Intégrés
- CSSS Pierrefonds—Priorité Jeunesse
- Community Resource Centre (CRC)—Networking Lunches
- Family Service Canada
- L'Agence – Access Committee, English Services in Public Institutions
- Project de Prévention de Suicide
- Quebec Federation of Home and School Associations (QFHSA)
- Régie Régionale, Santé et Services Sociaux
- Regroupement of Community Organizations (RIOCM)
- Santé Publique
- Table de Concertation Jeunesse de l'Ouest-de-l'île
- Table de Toxicomanie
- West Island Chamber of Commerce
- West Island Community Shares (WICS)



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FUNDRAISING

OBJECTIVE 2005-2006 \$158,200

SOURCE	Target 2005-2006	ACTUAL 2005-2006	ACTUAL 2004-2005	ACTUAL 2003-2004
WICS	\$55,000	\$56,500	\$55,000	\$52,500
Board members	\$2,500	\$3,100	\$1,606	\$3,300
Donations	\$50,000	\$25,575	\$22,016	\$17,397
MNA*	\$4,000	\$0	\$5,000	\$4,750
Municipalities	\$14,200	\$19,000	\$14,400	\$14,200
Golf	\$17,500	\$22,132	\$20,906	\$17,838
Conference	\$10,000	\$17,181	\$9,396	\$9,168
Corporate Cards	\$5,000	\$3,227	\$2,947	\$4,269
TOTAL	\$158,200	\$146,715	\$131,272	\$123,422

***Note: MNA donations were posted to Golf for 2005-2006**

As indicated in previous Annual Reports, Amcal needs to focus more on fundraising and the recruitment of additional members for the Fundraising Committee. Several new Board members offered to assist the Fundraising Committee and, as a result, a Fundraising/Communications Plan has been developed for the coming year. It is an ambitious plan with a formalized approach to fundraising and solicitation. As well, a second professional development conference was organized for May 3, 2006, featuring guest speaker Dr. Michael Bradley, author of the best-seller *Yes, Your Teen Is Crazy*.

In order to assist with our fundraising activities and plan, we have purchased a fundraising software program called "Income Manager." Martine St. Onge, Coordinator of Administrative Services, participated in a training session about this software with the staff at West Island Citizens Advocacy. Technical support for the program is provided by the company's head office in Toronto. Martine is presently on a maternity leave, so the programming and use of this software has been postponed for a few months. Since the success of most of Amcal's fundraising and community awareness activities is

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contingent on maintaining accurate and updated mailing lists, in the coming months we will need to develop a way to improve this process.

WICS – West Island Community Shares

West Island Community Shares, who are the anchor of our fundraising efforts, have increased their yearly donation to Amcal Family Services from \$55,000 to \$58,000. Amcal has just completed its three year evaluation process with WICS and has been assured of funding for an additional three years. WICS has set the impressive goal of reaching the \$1,000,000 mark in three years. Their attainment of this goal will probably result in additional monies for Amcal's programs/services.

Golf Tournament

Amcal hosted its fourth annual "Family Matters" Golf Tournament on September 15, 2005, which realized a profit of \$22,131 from its many supporters and participants. Pfizer contributed \$5,000 as the lead sponsor for the tournament, and our numerous community partners contributed to its success as well through their participation, prizes and sponsorships. The Fifth Annual Golf Tournament is scheduled for September 21, 2006 at our usual Ile Perrot Golf Club venue.

Professional Development Conference

Amcal has offered a two-day fall training event for helping professionals for more than ten years. We held our Fall Conference on October 24 and 25th, 2005 at Hotel Le Chantecler. The speaker was Dr. Gordon Neufeld, and his presentation was based on the content of his book *Holding on to Your Kids* . A well-known and respected lecturer, Dr. Neufeld had also addressed a workshop for local teachers during the summer months. The surplus of \$17,000 generated by this event was the greatest of any of our previous conferences.

Corporate Card Campaign

Once again this past December 2005, our representative, Alan Voizard, solicited local businesses for their Christmas card orders. This activity generated a profit of \$3226.

HUMAN RESOURCES

Over the past year, the number of full-time staff has remained consistent at seven persons. However, the number of part-time staff has continually decreased, because of both a decrease in the number of clients as well as the agency's decision to have staff members take on more than one role and additional responsibilities.

Martine St. Onge, who performs a key function as Administrative Coordinator, is away on maternity leave from March until February 2007. During this period, Martine is being replaced by Pamela Jewell.

Normally, two students from McGill University and Vanier College would complete their stages/internships with Amcal. However this past year, the McGill University Social Work student decided not to continue her program and thus ended her stage. In 2006, we accepted a Vanier student for the winter semester.

Catherine Polan, a Family Worker who replaced John D'Angelo in September 2005, returned to the United States after she became engaged. Catherine has been replaced by Anita Tso.

Andrew Middleton, who was a Child Care Worker in the Residential Program two evenings per week, resigned to take on a permanent position with the school board. Andrew was not replaced due to a reduced number of adolescents in the Residential Program.

Stephanie Kalman, who was Coordinator of the Supervised Visitation Program, left in September 2005 when she gave birth. Sherman Blunte assumed her role as the Coordinator of the SVP.

It is apparent from the changes in staff noted above that it is a continual challenge to retain personnel when most of the employment being offered is part-time. The training in interviewing done in 2004 has certainly helped us to select the right candidates for the positions available. However it has not improved our retention rate for employees, and we feel this high turnover results mostly because the largest portion of our workforce is part-time. Most of the staff join our team in hopes of securing full-time employment. If that expectation is not met within a short time, they often opt for the first full-time job that is offered to them. Community organizations have traditionally been viewed as places to gain experience and employment for the short term. Although this attitude has changed over the past few

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years, there still is considerable turnover in staff at Amcal, and this results in increased expenses for the agency for training and orientation.

Although some years appear to have more staff turnover than other years, in fact the rate has remained fairly constant. Currently, one-third of the staff have more than five years of service, and one-third have been employed at Amcal for 3-5 years; one-third are constantly moving on after only two years of service. So, despite the apparent state of constant flux, there is some continuity in personnel. And happily, commitment to the agency's values and mission remains high for all employees—whether full- or part-time.



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FACILITY

Thanks to our regularly- scheduled yearly Maintenance Plan prepared by Board member Grant Ghelsen, the Amcal facility at 7 Ste. Anne St. in Pointe Claire is superbly maintained. We enjoy many compliments from the large number of parents who visit the facility on a regular basis.

Because the nature of our agency, and because the safety of the teens in the Residence is of primary importance to the Board of Directors, staff and management of Amcal, the Board considered for many years the installation of a sprinkler system, even though it was not absolutely necessary. We are happy to report that, during the month of June 2005, a sprinkler system was installed throughout all three floors of the building.

The Young Mothers Program which was operating from our 330 Lakeshore Road location was moved, in September 2005, to an apartment located in the Delmar area of Pointe Claire. The number of young mothers using the program had dropped, and the CLSC observed that many of the participants were coming from the Delmar Ave. complex. Therefore organizers believed the program would attract greater numbers if it was located in the apartment complex. The City of Pointe Claire gave permission for the use of the apartment, and since the move, the number of clients and babies has continually increased.

Additional space had been a pressing need of this agency for several years, so Amcal Family Services agreed to participate in a Community Village Project. The concept was that the Community Village would provide office space for a number of non-profit organizations in the West Island area who have difficulty securing appropriate space. However because of the time and financial resources required to move the process along, it was decided, at the beginning of 2006, to disband the committee and put the project on hold until there was a renewed interest, as well as the necessary leadership, to complete the project. Centraide had allocated \$25,000 for a Project Manager; this grant has been returned to Centraide by the West Island Volunteer Bureau.

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CONCLUSION

In conclusion, I would like to thank the staff and the Board of Directors of Amcal Family Services for their ongoing commitment and dedication to the mission of the agency. The coming year will not be without its unique challenges but, as in previous years, we will endeavour to respond in a manner that best meets the needs of families in our West Island community.

The Board of Directors will undertake a Strategic Planning process for 2006-2007, and we will engage an outside consultant for this. The process will focus not only internally but also on input from users of Amcal's services, from community partners and funding sources. This will provide feedback from the community on a wide range of Amcal's services and programs.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our outgoing Board member, Charles Colomb, for his contributions to the Board of Directors over the past few years. Chuck will continue to serve his community in another capacity as a Borough councillor. I would also like to thank Louis Tassé for his support in my role as Executive Director. As well, I would like to thank the members of the Executive Committee for their expertise and support.

Three new people have joined the Board during the past year—Suzanne Charette, Laurie Higgins and Eric Mills—and I would like to take this opportunity to formally and warmly welcome them to the Board. We look forward to the participation of Suzanne and Laurie on the Fundraising Committee. The Fundraising/Marketing Committee has developed an aggressive plan for the coming year, and a team effort will be required to implement this plan in the months ahead. Eric Mills will be elected as Secretary of the Board at the Annual General Meeting on May 18, 2006.

I look forward to another year of leading such an important community agency, with its staff of caring professionals, and a Board of Directors comprised of expert professionals in their fields who are willing to give back so generously to their community.