

WEST ISLAND YOUTH PROJECT

ANNUAL REPORT

APRIL 1, 2008 – MARCH 31, 2009



Amcal FAMILY SERVICES

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MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Normally my message in the Annual Report would be a summary of the accomplishments and challenges of the agency in the past year. However, as this is my last annual report, the message will be one of nostalgia and of my hopes for the agency as it moves forward. Amcal Family Services began in the late 1970's, as part of a contractual arrangement with Ville Marie Social Services (VMSS) to provide an eight-bed shelter for teens in Kirkland. This continued until 1989, at which point the agency lost the contract with VMSS, and thus lost its sole source of revenue. Amcal closed that year from April until September.

Although I began my career in the helping professions with Amcal Family Services in 1984, it was not until 1990, when the agency re-opened, that I became the Executive Director. My mandate at that time was to develop a program that addressed the needs of the community and simultaneously, to secure funding for this new program. The new program Amcal then initiated was designed to preserve healthy family relationships. It was modeled after a program that had been developed in the United States as a response to legislation requiring that social workers do everything possible to maintain a child in the home. There was great reluctance and doubts about the feasibility of introducing such a program in the West Island community but we pressed forward and opened with an all-day presentation from Shirley Schlosberg, author of the book *Families in Perpetual Crisis*, as a way of marketing the concept of family preservation to our colleagues in the helping professions in our community. Finally, Amcal Family Services re-opened its doors, in 1990, with a budget of \$9,000. The endeavour would not have been possible without my commitment as Executive Director, and the willingness of then and still current staff members Diane Marsland and Margaret Dodge.

In 1995, Amcal underwent another major change: a move from its location of almost 15 years on Chemin Ste. Marie, to the Village of Pointe Claire. With the assistance of Board member John Deakin, Amcal found the present facility, at 7 Ste. Anne Street. Although we were unable to secure a mortgage with any of the local banks, the seller agreed to mortgage the property while Amcal undertook a fundraising campaign targeting corporations—a campaign that would not normally have been possible for an agency of Amcal's size. With a \$20,000 grant of "seed money" from the McConnell Foundation, Amcal



was able to raise the necessary funds, based on commitments for the next three years from many West Island companies. Allan Bootes, who was the CEO of Pfizer at the time, chaired a group of committed volunteers, and monies were raised to pay off the building. A mortgage burning party was held three years later, with Allan Bootes presiding at the event.

From those humble beginnings, the agency has grown and evolved—from a full-time staff of four offering one program, to an organization with a budget of almost \$900,000, a professional staff of 20 full- and part-time employees, and a full range of services/programs for families in difficulty. We have also grown from a community agency that functioned with two dial telephones, no computers, and very little documentation, into an organizational structure that has a Human Resources policy, training manuals, standardized forms, and evaluation protocols—not to mention computerized accounting and an automated payroll system, as well as an agency-specific database for client files. In order to support our present programs, fundraising has become an integral and necessary component of the work. However, while the importance of fundraising cannot be understated, the *raison d'être* of Amcal—to provide a quality professional service that is attuned to the changing needs of the community—must remain a central focus.

I am very proud of my accomplishments over the past 25 years, and take this opportunity to thank especially those past Board members who contributed to my success and enabled me to reach my professional goals and capacity. We have now arrived at another crossroads in the evolution of the agency and its role in the community. We are fortunate to have added three more talented individuals to the Board of Directors—Allison Birss, Marc Lalonde and Margo Uson—and their arrival could not be more timely, as the Board will again need to undertake a critical strategic planning process to decide the future and vision for the agency.

I would be remiss if I did not thank the committed group of individuals who work in the trenches each day at Amcal, and respond with the highest level of integrity and professionalism to the needs of families. Although not often in the forefront, the staff at Amcal truly are the heart and soul of the agency. I thank you for your support, camaraderie, and dedication to the agency. I truly will miss each and every one of you.

I wish my successor, Heather Holmes, great success in her new role as Executive Director. She brings both enthusiasm and her fundraising experience to the agency. I wish Amcal Family Services much success in all its endeavours in the future as it continues to play a vital role in the community, responding with innovative and professional services to meet the ever-changing needs of contemporary families.


Heather Parker, Executive Director

MISSION STATEMENT

Adopted **April 1, 2007**

Amcal Family Services' team of professionals is committed to promoting and preserving healthy family relationships.

As a community-based organization, we will anticipate, advocate and advance the role of families, thereby strengthening communities.

VISION STATEMENT

Amcal Family Services aims to be a leader in strengthening families and the community through innovation and responsiveness.

TAG LINE

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VALUES

- ✓ **NURTURING:** Amcal believes in nurturing and promoting positive family relationships.
- ✓ **RESPECT:** Amcal respects the choices of families and empowers them to take control of their family situation.
- ✓ **SUPPORT:** Amcal recognizes the uniqueness of each family and seeks to understand and support the family in achieving healthier relationships.
- ✓ **INTEGRITY:** Amcal incorporates the highest level of integrity in its governance, administration, and programs, with the ultimate goal of achieving the mission and vision of the organization.
- ✓ **COLLABORATION:** Amcal believes in building collaborative partnerships with other community agencies, public institutions, schools and businesses to foster and enhance healthy family relationships.



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Amcal STAFF

Heather Parker
Executive Director

Heather Holmes
Associate Executive Director

Suanne Day
Accountant

Sophie Dalbec
Development Assistant

Diane Marsland
Coordinator – Our Place

Delia Noel
Coordinator – Residence and
Coordinator – Family Work

Cory Binning
Team Leader – Residential Program

Katy Lessard
Coordinator – School-Based Programs

Sherman Blunte
Coordinator – Supervised Visitation
Program

BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2008 / 2009 EXECUTIVE

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RESIDENTIAL PROGRAM

The uniqueness of Amcal Family Services is evidenced in the foundational agency program—the Residential Program, designed for teens between the ages of 12 and 17 years. The Residential Program is comprised of 14 weeks of family counselling, which includes an eight-week structured therapeutic program of respite care for the youth, as well as psycho-educational groups that address the needs of that population. The goal of the program is to provide a strengths-based, solution-focused approach that supports and assists families facing difficulties, and promotes family integration.

The Ministry of Health and Social Services funds 2/3 of the operating budget of the program. The remainder of the operating budget is financed through client fees (assessed on a sliding scale basis) and fundraising. The major source of Amcal's funding consists of an annual grant from West Island Community Shares (WICS). Last year this grant amounted to \$60,000.

This past year the child care workers' team in the Residential Program welcomed an additional staff member, Jason Veerboomen, in December 2008. Jason joins an already strong team that includes Cory Binning, as Team Leader of the child care workers, and Jersey Benner. The Residential Program also benefits from the input of students from McGill University, Champlain College, and Vanier College, who are placed at Amcal to enhance their knowledge and experience in the field.

The family work team welcomed back Susan Layne, who had been an Amcal employee for many years. Susan's return followed the departure of Marie Principe in February 2009. Stephanie Salagan and Laurie Wallace continue to provide excellent service to Amcal's families, and their strong therapeutic skills are an important asset that enhances the quality of client care and the professional reputation of the agency.

In the past year, a training protocol for family workers in all programs in the Family Work division (i.e. Residential Program, Outreach Family Counselling, and Families First) was developed. The training manual incorporates the systemic, strengths-based, solution-focused therapeutic modality that was described in Pamela Yarrow's Master's research project, outlined in last year's annual report.

The goals of the agency in the coming year are to implement this staff training program, beginning with family workers, and to continue to focus on the program evaluation process that is key to receiving necessary and vital feedback from parents. The input received from parents assists us in planning program direction for the future. These goals reflect Amcal's desire to maintain our quarter-century long



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reputation for excellence in the community, and to ensure our continued delivery of the best professional services to families in distress.

Delia Noel, Coordinator, Residence

RESIDENTIAL PROGRAM	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Total # of individuals/families	152 individuals	34 families	33 families
# of Information Meetings, RP	100	80	86
# of telephone requests	250	200	110
Areas of origin for most frequent calls about RP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pierrefonds • Dollard des Ormeaux • Kirkland 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pierrefonds • Montreal • Dollard des Ormeaux 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Montreal • West Island
Most frequent sources of referrals for RP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools • Other helping professionals • CSSS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other helping professionals • Schools • Batshaw 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other helping professionals • Schools • Batshaw



OUTREACH FAMILY COUNSELLING PROGRAM

In order to fulfil our mission of preserving healthy family relationships between parents and children, Amcal offers the Outreach Family Counselling Program. This program responds to the needs of families who have not identified the Residential Program as necessary for their family situation, or is offered when there is a waiting list for the Residential Program. Amcal thus provides support during a family crisis and often helps families come to terms with the eventual necessity of placing their child in the Residential Program. The Outreach Family Counselling Program also responds to younger children in elementary school whose acting out behaviour is impeding their success at school or causing stress to the family at home.

Family workers provide support and guidance to help clients identify issues of concern and provide concrete strategies to the family to address these concerns. If necessary, at the end of the four week Outreach Family Counselling contract, families can engage the services of Amcal for another contract, or the family worker may suggest an appropriate community resource. This is a fee-based program and not subsidized by government monies.

In the coming year, there will be an increase in individual as well as team supervision in the clinical aspect of the program. A training protocol for family workers has been developed and will be implemented in the coming months. The goal for the coming year will be to address a number of concerns, including the recruitment and retention of family workers who excel at short-term, solution-focused, strengths-based work.

Delia Noel, Coordinator, Residence



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OUTREACH FAMILY COUNSELLING PROGRAM	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Total # of families: adolescents Pre-adolescents	18	35 4	40
# of Information Meetings: pre- adolescents:	3	2	30
# of telephone requests	31	11	31
Areas of origin for most frequent calls about OFC	Pierrefonds Dollard des Ormeaux Kirkland	Dollard des Ormeaux Pierrefonds	Dollard des Ormeaux Pierrefonds



SUPERVISED VISITATION PROGRAM

The Supervised Visitation Program's goal is to provide supervised access to families who require a supervised setting in which to visit their biological child. The program focuses on the preservation of the parent-child bond during lengthy periods of separation.

Supervision of Access Rights is applied in situations where the right of access is interrupted or confrontational between the two parents—as in cases of separation or divorce. When a minor is considered at risk, cases can be referred by the Department of Youth Protection prior to a court order. In the majority of cases, families are referred by a court order from the Superior Court or Youth Court.

The Supervised Visitation Program provides parent(s) or others an opportunity to visit their child(ren) in a neutral environment. A Visitation Supervisor, who is an employee of Amcal Family Services, supervises when parents visit their child(ren). Children whose parents have experienced a confrontational separation, with threats of violence, may also be assisted by a Visitation Supervisor to make a supervised transition from one home to another, which is called an Exchange of Custody.

There are two existing components to the program, and a third is currently under negotiation. One component is a contractual agreement that Amcal has had with Batshaw Youth and Family Centers for more than 10 years. The other component is Amcal's provision of the same service offered, on a fee-for-service basis, to clients who are not presently under Youth Protection but in need of a supervised visit or exchange. The third component of the Supervised Visitation Program relates to contractual negotiations now underway with the Ministry of Health and Social Services with respect to Health and Social Services reforms that affect access rights for parents and children.

The Batshaw contract was renewed in March, 2009 and retains the previous agreement of 250 hours per month of supervised visits. However, in the new contract, funding for the hours for coordination is reduced from 100 to 70 hours per month.

Sherman Blunte, Coordinator, Supervised Visitation Program



SUPERVISED VISITATION PROGRAM	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Supervised Visitation (# of families)	67	62	86
Total number of visits	827	615	1,233
Total number of hours	1365	1254	1,505

SVP PRIVATE VISITS	2008-2009	2007-2008
Supervised Visitation (# of families)	17	11
Total number of visits	202	156
Total number of hours	398	316.5



CSSS PRIORITÉ JEUNESSE: FAMILIES FIRST

For the past decade, through a contract with the CSSS Pierrefonds, Amcal Family Services has provided home-based family support and intervention to identified elementary school children in that territory. This multidisciplinary approach recognizes that the resolution of children's difficulties in school may be related to addressing issues of family dynamics in the home.

The Families First Program is funded through Santé Publique and is designed for families who are either currently accessing social supports or who cannot afford to pay for services. The program is offered at no cost to the school or family. The 10-session program includes: a classroom observation, so the family worker can experience first-hand the issue the child and school personnel have identified; six home visits to support the parents and provide strategies and tools to assist in the child's academic success; and regular meetings and conferences with school personnel involved with the child, to discuss progress and identify further needs of the child and family. If necessary, at the conclusion of the program, referrals are made to other community services.

This year, in accordance with one of the goals set by Amcal for 2008-2009, Amcal family workers offered services to an increasing number of families with children in francophone elementary schools. As well, for the second year, the service was offered to high school students, and these families also comprised a large number of the requests received this year.

As reported last year, many of the referrals to the program were received in the months of March and April, making it difficult, if not impossible, to complete the 10-session program before the required March 31st year-end date. To address this challenge in the coming year, Amcal has designed materials to provide schools with more information regarding the service, as well as the exact dates for which the program is offered. During the past year, the program coordinator strengthened relationships with school principals and staff, and will contact these schools in the months of May, June and August in preparation for the service's beginning at the start of the next school year, in September. Thus, Amcal hopes to continue to offer the Families First Program in a timely fashion, as well as maintain the high level of satisfaction with the program that school personnel have repeatedly expressed.

Katy Lessard, Coordinator, School-based Programs



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FAMILIES FIRST	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Number of families served			
• in elementary schools:	8	25	25
• in high schools:	5	4	
Total:	13	29	



CSSS PRIORITÉ JEUNESSE: SCHOOL-BASED PROGRAMS

For over a decade, as part of the Priorité Jeunesse initiative to elementary school-aged students in the Lester B. Pearson and Marguerite Bourgeois School Boards, Amcal has offered School-based Programs with funding provided by the CSSS Pierrefonds. The programs are well-known and highly-regarded among Amcal's community partners. The six-week "**Making Friends, Staying Friends**" program teaches age-appropriate social skills for Kindergarten, Grades 1, 2 and 3. The program uses stories, games and role-plays to help children talk about feelings and learn positive conflict resolution skills. For Grades 4, 5 and 6, the "**Character Matters**" program, formerly known as the "Social Skills Building" program, gives students the opportunity to discuss and resolve issues that create conflicts at school, and helps them identify positive character traits and make better decisions. The program also addresses some issues and fears that Grade 6 students may have about entering high school.

This latter program was renamed "Character Matters" to more accurately reflect the goals set out by the program—with its emphasis on the students' characters as a whole. This new emphasis also enables facilitators to explore other elements of character apart from social skills. For example, this year the program explored elements of trust, honesty, friendship (bullying), responsibility, respect, and acceptance/tolerance of differences. It is our goal for next year to incorporate each of these elements into the written material for the program.

There were many changes with respect to staffing in the School-based Programs this past year. Katy Lessard took on the role of coordinator of the programs, as well as animation in many of the schools during the year. Cristina Iannetta was also a new addition to the staff as a group facilitator, while Jersey Benner continued her work as facilitator in the School-based programs, in addition to being a child care worker in Amcal's Residential Program.

Currently Amcal's School-based programs are in a very satisfactory position. During the past year we were able to increase the number of groups offered, as well as the number of schools served in the CSSS Pierrefonds territory. As well, there was an increase in the number of groups offered on a private, fee-for-service, basis. As a result of Amcal's initiative in building stronger relationships with the



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schools in the Marguerite Bourgeois School Board, there was also a notable increase in the number of groups offered to francophone schools.

Relationships with individuals in the Lester B. Pearson School Board were also strengthened in the past year, as contacts were more intentionally made with the principals and sector directors. In the coming year, our main goal will be to create and maintain more contacts, with a view to further increase the visibility of the programs as well as continue to offer the best service possible, to as many clients and schools as possible. Amcal is also working at the CSSS level, in collaboration with other organizations from Priorité Jeunesse, to increase the visibility of, and awareness about, our programs in schools among principals and other community organizations.

Private Contracts

This past year Amcal obtained private contracts with Orchard Elementary, Dorval Elementary, and St. Paul Elementary schools. At Orchard Elementary School, a pilot project was done with a smaller group of about seven students, for a reduced price. This project was challenging for the facilitator because of differences between Amcal and the school regarding interpretation and understanding of the contract. Very unexpectedly, the group consisted of students ranging from grades 3-6; this variety of ages in one group made implementation of the program more difficult. In future, the contract will indicate more clearly the meaning of terms such as “non-targeted group.”

A pilot project was also conducted at St. Paul School, working with one individual, much like a mentoring program. The guidelines of the project, expectations of the school, and role of the Amcal worker were very clearly defined, which made the project very successful. The facilitator reported a challenge: that the regular six-week duration of the program was not sufficient to build the relationship necessary for one-on-one client work. To address this issue in the future, it is recommended that the contract be offered for eight weeks, at an increased price than the original amount for the pilot project.

Katy Lessard, Coordinator, School-based Programs



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SCHOOL-BASED PROGRAMS	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Total # of groups	80	78	59
Total # of sessions	480	468	306
Total # of students	1900	1950	1,458
Total # of schools: Private contracts:	3 English	1 English	1 English
CSSS Pierrefonds contract:s:	13: 7 English, 6 French	11: 6 English, 5 French	8: 3 French, 5 English



CSSS SERVICES INTÉGRÉS: OUR PLACE

The innovative Our Place Program, which is funded through a grant from Santé Publique in association with the CSSS Lac St-Louis, was created four years ago to meet the needs of young parents and recent immigrant populations. The program offers a “drop-in” program of education and social support to an “at risk” population of parents (e.g. recent immigrants, or parents who have not completed high school). The program’s goal is to develop a “Life Plan” for young and new parents so that they can move to the next phase in their lives while coping with the isolation, depression, substance abuse issues, mental health problems, and limited parental support they may experience.

The Life Plan is developed based on the individual needs of the young mothers, who are encouraged to return to school or seek employment. As well, the program aims to assist mothers with parenting skills, and increase their children’s socialization skills. The program operates three days a week at an off -site location, in a Delmar Ave. apartment in Pointe-Claire. During the month of August, 2008, we moved from a third floor flat to a first floor apartment—which has made everyone’s life so much easier!

The Our Place family grew this year with the births of four new babies. We are always proud of the successes of our moms. This past year, one mom who was studying dentistry is now working full-time in her field. Our first high school graduate has now started studying at WAVE in a professional cooking course, and hopes to continue her career by enrolling in a professional pastry course. After many years of being out of school and raising three children, one of our moms has returned to study hairdressing at the Gordon Robertson Center. She graduates in June. Another mom has joined a fitness class at the Women’s Center, which has boosted her self-confidence and independence.

After 18 months of stable staffing, we said good-bye to Marie Principe, our educator. The moms and children were sad to see her leave. However, the group welcomed Katy Lessard, who has been Coordinator of School-based Programs for the past year. Katy was quickly at ease with the group, and the children are adjusting to her as well. Katy has a very outgoing personality, which has helped the clients make the transition.

Amcal’s continued partnership with West Island Citizen’s Advocacy (WICA) has resulted in the formation of a residents’ committee, the goal of which is to enhance the Delmar area. The committee,



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with the cooperation of other tenants, as well as HOME DEPOT (who built the fence), and La Ferme Cooperative Tournesol (who supplied the plants), built a vegetable garden in the Delmar complex. The garden is maintained by the residents, and the tenants benefit from fresh vegetables throughout the summer. Another new initiative of this committee is “Bonne Boîte Bonne Bouffe,” a fruit and vegetable bulk-buying program operated through Moisson Montreal. The program began in February and is becoming quite popular with our clients and the local residents.

Our visibility in the community has greatly increased this year through our partnerships both with WICA and the West Island Women’s Center (WIWC). The apartment has been used by these two organizations when Our Place is not operating. The Women’s Center uses it on Tuesdays to run a program for immigrant women. WICA uses it for collective kitchens for the residents, residents’ meetings, and as a drop-off point for “Bonne Boîte Bonne Bouffe.” We often find donations from other tenants of clothing and toys on our door step.

The Coordinator of the program, Diane Marsland, has been asked by the CSSS to participate in the founding of a Table de Quartier for the southern area of the West Island, known as “Conseil des partenaires en développement social Lac St-Louis/Dorval.” Other participants on this Table are the CSSS, WICA, the municipalities of Pointe-Claire and Dorval, WIWC, and representatives from our two local school boards.

Our partners, WIWC and WICA, have increased their presence in the Our Place program from bi-monthly to weekly structured activities with the children. With the music and arts and craft segment of our program, we have focused on skill development in the children, and we encourage the moms to carry through with these activities at home. Once again this year, the nurses from the CSSS were present in November to give flu vaccinations to our participants, and to residents with children less than two years old. And of course we still must have fun. The weekly cooking activity is taking on a life of its own. The moms now also bring their own recipes to share with the group. We have made different ethnic meals that have stimulated interesting conversations/information about the women’s backgrounds.

In the spring, when the weather cooperated, an aerobics instructor came to the apartment and led exercises with the moms. She also took them to different locations for fitness programs. During the summer months, we made an effort to have as many outings as possible. We visited the Ecomuseum, enjoyed a picnic in the local park, and climbed the apparatus at Fundomundo a few times. Again this year we went to the farm at Cap St-Jacques, and swimming at Ile Bizard. In the fall we went apple picking and met Mr. Quinn himself. We really tried to do activities with minimal entrance fees.

Again this year the Christmas party was held at the CSSS, with 10 moms, 14 children, three dads, and staff in attendance. Because of our increased numbers, we had to limit the participation of children to



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those less than five years old, but children of all ages received WebKins. Although attendance is somewhat lower during the winter months (i.e. during the colds and flu season), the structure of the program this year encouraged more consistency in attendance. The moms choose the activity that suits their needs. Wednesdays have become days for moms with infants to visit, and have the opportunity to talk to a peer who is at the same stage in life. Their babies' needs make it difficult for these moms to participate in other activities at Our Place.

We made our first attempt in the pizza business in partnership with "Little Caesar Pizza." The company gave us pizzas at a reduced price, and the moms sold them at the CSSS in May. It was a fun day, but we learned we can make more money with our bake sales. We had two bake sales—in November and December, in anticipation of Santa's arrival. We raised approximately \$750. This event got all the moms, new and old, involved in the project. We received a very generous donation from "Le Panier" gift store: each child went home with three WebKins and a present from Santa. The moms were also surprised with hand creams, purses, slippers, make-up cases, perfumes and candles. Through the generosity of the Lakeshore University Women's Club, each mom also received a \$50 gift card for Loblaw's. Marcelle Cosmetics also supported us for a second year with a gift package of their products.

Given such great success in the past year, we are focusing on similar activities for the coming year.

Diane Marsland, Coordinator, Our Place

OUR PLACE PROGRAM	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Number of mothers and fathers served:	26 mothers, 3 fathers	34 mothers	27 mothers



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COMMUNITY GROUPS

The **Anger Management/Conflict Resolution and Character Development Program** is an eight-week, after-school program that incorporates a psycho-educational approach. The aim of the program is to assist teens aged 12-17 years to develop positive relationships with others and effective strategies for coping with difficult situations. The goal of the program is to promote pro social attitudes and behaviours, as well as better decision making. The teens are encouraged to explore character issues (e.g. respect, responsibility, tolerance, and resilience), and to identify the role that anger plays in their lives—at home, at school, and in the community. The program is designed to help teens understand anger as an emotion they can control.

The program had two facilitators this past year, Jennifer Davis and Jersey Benner. This is a fee-based program, offered to the community from September to July, that can accommodate a maximum of eight clients at a time.

Jersey Benner, Group facilitator

COMMUNITY GROUPS	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
# of participants, Anger Man./Character Dev. group	21	19	21



SUMMER DAY PROGRAM 2008

Amcal's Summer Day Program officially started on June 23rd, with seven participants present, and concluded, at the end of July, with six teens in attendance. During the month of June, short excursions and activities were designed, to take into consideration the exam schedules of the teens. The goal of the program, which is funded by a Challenge Grant from Human Resources Canada, as well as contributions made by parents to the Activity Fund, is to give the youth in the Residential Program a positive summer experience, and to encourage them to contribute to the local community through volunteer work.

A typical day in the summer program begins for both animators and teens with routines that must be completed by mid-morning, when the planned activities of the program get underway. Weather permitting, most days end with a trip to the public pool or outside activities such as champ and basketball. The animators' shift ends at 4 p.m., when Amcal's regular evening staff arrive to begin the evening program.

- ✓ ***Mondays:*** the schedule was flexible and featured activities located in the area, which minimized costs (e.g. *mini putt, bowling, the Aqua Dome, and a hike up Mount Royal*). This time slot was also used to reconnect with the teens and discuss their weekend.
- ✓ ***Tuesdays:*** consisted of educational activities designed to introduce the teens to many areas of Montreal and to art and different cultures (e.g. *the Montreal Science Center, the Montreal Tower, the Eco-Museum, the Museum of Fine Arts, the Old-Port, the Redpath Museum, and Stewart Hall*). The teens were rarely initially enthusiastic about the concept of educational day trips, but usually enjoyed the activity in the end. The positioning of "Tuesdays: Educational Outings" was to ensure appropriate behaviour so that teens could earn the "Thursdays: Fun Outings."
- ✓ ***Wednesdays:*** were volunteer days at The Welcome Hall Mission—an organization that helps the homeless and individuals living in poverty—except for our last week, spent at Avatil—an organization that helps and promotes the integration into mainstream society of people with intellectual impairments. The Welcome Hall Mission has drop-in centers, food distribution, and many other services. The teens worked for several hours cleaning back-to-school binders, bagging food, as well as folding and organizing clothes. As usual, the first day of volunteering was difficult for the teens. But after numerous discussions about making a difference in the lives of the



- less fortunate, the teens genuinely enjoyed the experience. As well, they became creative in formalizing plans to make the jobs go faster, and the team work concept became clear.
- ✓ **Thursdays:** were FUN DAYS that the teens, of course, enjoyed the most. If teens misbehaved during the early part of the week, the consequence could be that they were not allowed to participate in the Thursday activity. Thursday's activities (e.g. *the Labyrinth at the Old Port, movies, jet- boating, Laser Quest and La Ronde*) were typically the most expensive (i.e. ranging from \$60 to \$200). None of the Thursday activities were cancelled entirely because of teen bad behaviour, but one teen did miss out on two occasions.
 - ✓ **Fridays:** much the same as Monday's, Friday's schedule was planned with flexibility in mind (e.g., *sports at Amcal, Terra Cotta and other parks, board games, card games, breakfast at Tim Horton's, a trip to St-Anne's, the driving range at the Golf- Dome*), since the teens' departure times on Friday varied. The teens were allowed to sleep in, but were required to clean their rooms before going home. Staff sometimes prepared a "big" breakfast for the teens, and teens and staff would usually have time to discuss how the week went and the teens' plans for the weekend.

Teens were not informed in advance about the program schedule—in order to prevent extended complaining about teens' less favourite activities, and to motivate them to behave appropriately in order to receive a reward on "exciting activity" Thursday. While constant reminders to the teens about Amcal's rules and expectations, as well as rules at the venues visited, were necessary, it was also energizing for the animators to see the extent of the teens' growth in maturity from their first day of volunteering at the Welcome Hall Mission to their last day at Avatil. The variety in volunteer experiences throughout the summer enhanced their tolerance and understanding for other populations.

The teens learned from each other and from the experiences provided by the staff in games, community settings, and volunteer work. Similar to parents, the staff realized the importance of consistency in administering consequences for unacceptable behaviour, as well as the necessity of having back-up plans that could be adjusted according to changes in moods and weather. Further, the decision, halfway through the summer, to change the staff schedule, to have a night staff and day staff person paired during each shift, proved effective in dealing with the difficult behaviours of certain teens. Overall, the summer was a positive experience.

Jennifer Davis and Kelly Grevatt, Program Animators



SUMMER DAY PROGRAM	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Number of youth participants	4-6	4	5-8



COMMUNITY AWARENESS / MARKETING

Amcal places a high priority on its connections in the community, and the agency's commitment to a multidisciplinary approach is reflected in its collaboration with numerous other helping professionals, community organizations and government agencies. The Executive Director, Associate Executive Director and staff of Amcal Family Services participated in various events and meetings throughout the year—to raise awareness in the community about the services offered by Amcal, as well as to nurture the relationships that currently exist with other community partners.

Several staff members serve on the local community Task Forces and Tables that address the needs of children and families in the West Island. In light of the input to these Tables of our “Our Place” coordinator, Diane Marsland, a new Table has been created, focussing on the south side of the West Island, and the specific needs that lie in that geographic area. Key staff members also attended several Community Resource Centre Networking Lunches, the West Island Chamber of Commerce luncheons, West Island Community Shares events, and various other functions, all of which offer important educational and networking opportunities. To promote awareness of Amcal's mission and services, staff also attended parent-teacher evenings in both elementary and high schools across the West Island, as well as Career Days at both CEGEPs and Universities.

Throughout the year, Amcal once again submitted regular columns addressing issues of family dynamics to the Quebec Federation of Home and School Association (QFHSA) newsletters, as well as articles to *BoomersView* magazine. Both publications also featured advertisements that increased awareness across the Island of Montreal about Amcal's Residential Program. In addition, Amcal approached Transcontinental, the local publisher of both English and French weeklies, *The Chronicle* and *Cité-Nouvelles*, to have free monthly articles published. These articles, titled “Ask Amcal,” appeared five times between October of 2008 and January of 2009. These two local newspapers also published eight other articles about Amcal, assisting in the ever crucial task of getting the word out to the public about what Amcal does for the community, and how we can help families in crisis.

The Executive Director, Associate Executive Director and Amcal staff worked with the following helping professionals, community organizations and government agencies, or attended the following courses and seminars in 2008-2009:



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- ✓ Agence de la Santé et des Services Sociaux de Montréal
- ✓ Batshaw Youth and Family Centres
- ✓ Centre Local de Développement (CLD) West Island
- ✓ CSSS Lac St. Louis – Services Intégrés
- ✓ CSSS Pierrefonds – Priorité Jeunesse
- ✓ Community Resource Centre (CRC) networking lunches
- ✓ Dollard des Ormeaux Old Timers Hockey Association presentation (March 09)
- ✓ Family Matters golf tournament (September 08)
- ✓ Hincks Dellcrest Institute – Trauma Training (March 09)
- ✓ John Abbott College – presentation to Police Technology students (February 09)
- ✓ Newspaper interviews, the *Chronicle & Cité-Nouvelles* (October 08 through February 09)
- ✓ Pointe-Claire Old Timers' Hockey Club presentation (November 08)
- ✓ Presentations in Pierrefonds Comprehensive High School, Beaconsfield High School and DDO High School (Fall 08)
- ✓ Professional Development Conference with Dr. Kenneth Hardy (October 08)
- ✓ Price Waterhouse Coopers Grant (June 08 – June 09)
- ✓ Quebec Federation of Home and School Associations (QFHSA)
- ✓ Regroupement of Community Organizations (RIOCM)
- ✓ Santé Publique
- ✓ Table de Concertation Jeunesse de l'Ouest de l'Île
- ✓ Villes de :
 - Baie D'Urfé
 - Beaconsfield
 - Dollard des Ormeaux
 - Kirkland
 - Pointe-Claire
 - Pierrefonds – Roxboro



- ✓ West Island Chamber of Commerce Accolades (June 08)
- ✓ West Island Chamber of Commerce networking luncheons (October 08 – Feb 09)
- ✓ West Island Community Shares (WICS) Campaign Launch (September 08)
- ✓ West Island Community Shares (WICS) Benefit Auction (November 08)
- ✓ West Island Community Shares (WICS) Red and White Event (January 09)
- ✓ West Island Community Shares (WICS) Distribution Ceremony (April 09)
- ✓ Women's Links golf tournament (September 08)



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FUNDRAISING

OBJECTIVE 2009-2010 \$195,000

SOURCE	TARGET 2009-2010	TARGET 2008-2009	ACTUAL 2008-2009	ACTUAL 2007-2008
WICS	\$60,000	\$60,000	\$60,000	\$59,000
Board members	\$2,000	\$3,000	\$1,300	\$2,551
Donations	\$46,000	\$47,000	\$36,192	\$30,865
MNAs	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000
Municipalities	\$20,000	\$16,000	\$19,500	\$19,000
Golf	\$40,000	\$30,000	\$37,056	\$26,067
Conferences	\$5,000	\$9,000	\$2,803	\$2,000
Corporate Cards	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$2,599	\$3,458
Clyde's	\$2,000	n/a	\$2,024	n/a
"A Taste of Amcal"	\$15,000	n/a	\$11,377	n/a
TOTAL	\$195,000	\$170,000	\$174,851	\$144, 941

As part of the ongoing implementation of the Strategic Plan that was created in 2007-2008, Amcal carried out its fundraising/marketing plan that targeted parents, churches, service clubs, foundations, municipalities and corporations. The total monies raised in 2008-2009 increased by just under **\$30,000**, or **21%**. This was largely a result of the increase in the surplus from the golf tournament, which amounted to almost **\$11,000** or **42%**, and because of corporate donations, which were up by almost **\$7,000** or **17%**. As well, Amcal launched two new activities (please see below): at Clyde's bar, in January, 2009, and "A Taste of Amcal," at the Royal St. Lawrence Yacht Club, in March, 2009. These two new activities raised over **\$13,000**, and will be easily repeated in the coming year.



Amcal hosted the following fundraising activities in 2008-2009:

- ✓ **7th annual Family Matters Golf Tournament:** For the third consecutive year, the tournament was sold out and once again was a huge success. Our surplus exceeded \$37,000, due largely to the addition of a raffle for two airline tickets anywhere in North America, generously donated by Air Canada Children's Horizon, as well as the addition of a silent auction. The 8th edition of our golf tournament will once again be held at the Beaconsfield Golf Club, on Monday, September 14, 2009.
- ✓ **Professional Development Conferences:** After consultation with our major community partner, Batshaw Youth and Family Centres, we decided for this year's conference to engage the internationally-acclaimed family therapist, Dr. Kenneth Hardy. Dr. Hardy addressed the topic of "Kids in Crisis: Strategies for Working with Troubled Youth" at our annual conference that took place October 20th and 21st, 2008, at Hotel Le Chanteclerc, in Ste. Adèle.
- ✓ **Corporate Card Campaign:** Again the yearly solicitation for the sale of corporate Christmas cards was successfully undertaken by Alain Voizard. Businesses interested in obtaining the cards for 2009 are advised to contact the Associate Executive Director.
- ✓ **Clyde's:** Amcal was fortunate to partner with Clyde's bar, located in the Pointe-Claire village, for an evening of music and entertainment. Clyde's donated the locale, the band "Crisis" donated their talents for the evening, and Amcal was able to generate \$2,024 from tickets sales.
- ✓ **"A Taste of Amcal":** A fundraising committee was formed in November 2008, whose objective was to generate a new "signature" event that would generate a minimum of \$10,000 for Amcal. Eight members of the community stepped forward, and "A Taste of Amcal" was born. On Tuesday, March 24th, 2009, at the Royal St. Lawrence Yacht Club, Amcal Family Services presented the first edition of "A Taste of Amcal," a delicious evening of tastings from local restaurants and caterers. All of the food and beverage suppliers donated their wares free of charge to Amcal, allowing all monies raised to be used to continue and enhance the services we provide to the West Island community.



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Thank you to our major donors!

The following is a list of event partners and donors who supported Amcal in 2008-2009:

40 West
Air Canada Kids' Horizon
Avant Guard Flooring
Barefoot Wine
BBB Foundation
Beaconsfield Old Timers Hockey Club
Becket Players
Bel*Fast
Borden Ladner Gervais
Canada Metal
Capital Wellington West
Cité-Nouvelles
Clyde's
Crisis Band
Dollard Old Timers Hockey Club
Eric T. Webster Foundation
Fred Pye
Gildan Activewear
Glenn Doré
Il Centro
John Duncan
Kirkland Old Timers Hockey Club
Lester B. Pearson School Board Social Fund
Marlowe
McKesson
McKibbin's Irish Pub
Merck Frosst Employees' Charity Trust Fund
MR Graphique
Pearson School of Culinary Arts
Pfizer
Pierrefonds-Roxboro
Pointe-Claire Old Timers Hockey Club



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Q-92

Raymond and Susan Doré

Regatronics

Ridley Doors and Windows

Rockaberry - Kirkland

Royal St. Lawrence Yacht Club

Sahib

St. Edmonds Social Action Committee

St. John Fisher Roman Catholic Church

St. Michael and All Angels Anglican Church

Sunrise

Sushi Shop - Kirkland and Pointe-Claire

Teff Administration

The Chronicle

The Great-West Life Assurance Company

UPS Canada

Urban Sisters Catering

Ville de Baie d'Urfé

Ville de Beaconsfield

Ville de Dollard des Ormeaux

Ville de Kirkland

Ville de Pointe-Claire

Women's Links



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HUMAN RESOURCES

Research has indicated that the most important aspect related to successfully intervening with families in difficulty is the therapeutic relationship between the worker and the family. This has certainly been true for the families who receive service at Amcal. Given the importance of this relationship with clients, the maintenance of a stable and consistent professional staff is similarly identified as important. Amcal has determined that the key to the retention of our workers—particularly family workers—is ongoing clinical supervision and professional training for those delivering the services.

However, while we can provide clinical supervision and training for our staff, there is little we can do to change two other aspects of the work at Amcal: the part-time nature of the work, and the fact that almost all meetings occur in the evenings. These factors accounted for most of the staff turnover during this past year.

The group with the highest staff turnover has traditionally been the Supervised Visitation Program, and this year was no exception. However, Sherman Blunte, Coordinator, seems now to have established a strong team with several new additions, including Kate Allen and Tasha Mulcare.

Marie Principe, family worker, resigned in February to start a new entrepreneurial adventure with her brother, leaving the Our Place Program without an educator, as well as leaving the agency with one less family worker. Katy Lessard, Coordinator of School-based Programs, has joined Diane Marsland, Coordinator of Our Place, as the new educator in that program. At the conclusion of the School-based programs, Christina lanetta, facilitator, left to take on a new full-time position, and will not be returning in the fall.

The one area that is the nerve center of the agency—our finances—has continued to experience a constant turnover in staff for a variety of reasons. After much difficulty, and a trying time in the agency, and after losing three accountants over the space of six months, Amcal was fortunate to have Eva Havas-Lobel join the agency. Eva did a great job of tightening policies and procedures in the agency and implementing practices that enabled the smooth operation of the office. Unfortunately for Amcal, Eva's husband was transferred to Belleville and Eva had to leave. Suanne Day replaced Eva but recently her employment was terminated. Turnover in this area adds considerable stress for all agency employees as well as for management. We are hopeful that the new staff person, Katrina Kavalersky, who is a certified accountant (CA), will effortlessly and capably fill the role of Amcal's accountant.



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All program coordinators have remained constant during the past year. Caroline Mills, development assistant, left in June and was replaced by Sophie Dalbec, in October 2009. We are confident that the dedication and commitment of this current group of employees will ensure the ongoing success of the agency.



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FACILITY & TECHNOLOGY

Facility

Each year in August, during the closure of the Residential Program, the necessary repairs and upgrades of the building take place. Grant Ghelsen has been facilitating these repairs each year. Grant has prepared a regular maintenance schedule for the summer of 2009 that includes replacing the flooring going down to the basement. Last year, through a contract from board member Glenn Doré, we were very fortunate to have a major donation from Avant Guard Flooring of over \$5,000 worth of wood flooring for the bedrooms on the residential (second) floor. Removing the old carpet and replacing with wood floors has greatly improved the appearance and cleanliness of the bedrooms.

The annual maintenance schedule last year also included outside painting of the soffits, balconies and staircase, as well as repairs to a window frame on the second floor and the replacement of the blinds in the living room. Repair of the foundation cracks, part of last year's maintenance plan, has just been completed.

In order to increase our flexibility to respond to the demand for service that, at times, includes mostly girls or mostly boys, bunk beds have been added in rooms on both the boys' and girls' "sides" of the second floor. This prevents us from losing revenue, and enables us to accommodate our maximum of eight clients, since seven teens of the same sex can now be housed on one side while still leaving one space on the other side of the building for a teen of the other gender.

Technology

We are very pleased to have the continued support and service of Regatronics for all of our technological needs. Mike Regan is available to Amcal to answer our questions and lend a hand with tech support whenever required. The implementation of remote access for our coordinators and family workers has greatly facilitated the staff's ability to prepare and submit their reports in a timely manner. Passwords for remote access are changed frequently in order to enhance the security of our privileged and confidential information

Database

With increased use and more users, the database must continually be improved and updated. In the past year, there was a major overhaul of the set-up and format of the database. We now have a



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programmer who understands the agency's needs and can quickly make the necessary changes. In the coming months, as should be the practice each year, coordinators will submit their requests for additions or deletions to the database, which will be forwarded to our programmer so yearly revisions can be made. Database input is checked regularly by the Residence Coordinator to ensure that client files are up-to-date and contain the necessary forms and data. Thus, the agency can respond promptly to requests for Release of Information from Youth Protection, a hospital, or other helping professional. This is a vast improvement over the situation of previous years.

Overall, the upgrades to the building and the enhancement of the technological resources used by the agency, described above, position Amcal as a community agency well-placed to respond efficiently and effectively to the dynamic context in which we live in the twenty-first century.



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