
**EASTERN BRANCH
ONTARIO ASSOCIATION OF SOCIAL WORKERS**



BULLETIN

**SECTION DE L'EST: L'ASSOCIATION DES
TRAVAILLEUSES ET TRAVAILLEURS SOCIAUX DE L'ONTARIO**

✧ Fall /Automne ✧

2008 (Vol. 34 No. 3)

Social Work and Families

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Wednesday of the month at the Royal Ottawa Hospital at 7:00PM. Association members are always welcome.

Each of the members of the Board is responsible for different activities. Laurie Alphonse is Chair of Membership. Bill Dare is working on the development of an electronic means of dialoguing with members on developments regarding the profession and the association.

Barbara Merriam is Secretary of the Board and keeps us on track. Margaret Nelson heads up the Social Justice Committee. Ann-Marie O'Brien represents Eastern Branch at the provincial meetings. Nathalie Tremblay Morand works on the Planning Committee for the Gala/Annual General Meeting. And Martha Wiebe is acting President for the next five months.

Two new members have joined the Board this year. They are Kathy Stiell, who brings a lot of professional experience to the table, and Mélanie Laberge, a student representative from the University of Ottawa. A student representative from Carleton University is still to be appointed.

Another new and encouraging development is the appointment of Valerie Morinville as Chair of the Program Committee. In the past few years, Program has focused on National Social Week and activities associated with the Gala. This year they will continue to be priorities, but Valerie is also hoping to develop other activities. Please join her and the Program Committee. She needs your input and assistance.

EASTERN BRANCH NEWS

PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2008

The first Board meeting of the fall was held on October 15. Meetings are held on the third

Bulletin

The Official Publication of the Branch

Le Bulletin est publié trois fois par année : Fall/Automne, Spring/Printemps, et Summer/Été. The Publication Committee welcomes submissions that examine public health and social issues, discuss local, regional or provincial issues in social work/social welfare, or which share social work information of interest to social workers or the social service public.

Toutes contributions seront considérées pour publication; les articles sur des questions relatives au travail social/ bien-être social, tant sur le plan local, régional ou provincial ainsi que des renseignements d'intérêt public ou professionnel. Preferred length is **500 words** (600 words maximum). **All articles require a précis!**

Submissions may be e-mailed to the address below. They must be in an IBM-compatible word processing format.

Subscription Price: Members and Non-members \$12. Single issues: \$4.

Classified ads/Annonces : Cost/coût : Full page \$90. Half page \$60. Quarter page \$30. Deadline /date limite : le 17 octobre, le 17 février et le 17 mai.

Contact Graeme Roderick at (613) 226-7081, or request an ad circular from the Branch Office at (613) 238-8406.

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M. Dubois, J. Ireland, M. Wiebe, K.A. Blakely, G. Roderick (Chair).

Translator: H. Balthazar
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Send submissions and ads by e-mail to/faire parvenir soumissions et annonces par courriel à :

reacheb@magma.ca

THE BULLETIN FOR SPRING 2009 "CONTINUING EDUCATION AND SOCIAL WORKERS"

Deadline for submissions: February 17, 2009.
Your news, articles and ideas for this issue
are welcomed.

We still have an ongoing challenge of reaching members in rural areas and small towns in eastern Ontario. If you have any ideas or suggestions in that regard, please tell members of the board or come to a meeting to share your suggestions and concerns.

This will be my last report for about six months. Martha Wiebe will write one while I am away. I am heading off to Avignon in southern France for three months for study and then another two months in England (near Cambridge). While I am away, I am going to check on the activities of some social work colleagues in both countries. I'll let you in on the news when I return.

Glenn Drover
President

NEW MEMBERS

Eastern Branch welcomes new members

Kathy Leah Kiverago, Jonathan Vant, Vanessa Woods, Adam Crewdson, Amar Ghelani, Anne-Marie Deneault, Shana Coffin, Annick Constant, Jeffrey Goldman, Heather Laushway, Lisa Zaccardelli, and Fred Phelps.

Welcome back to Deborah M.F. Foran, Karen Beutel, and Siobhan Sexton.

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS 2009-2010

Get involved with your Branch!

Stand for a position on the Board of Directors.

The election of new members will take place at the **Annual General Meeting** portion of our **Spring Gala** in April 2009. The term of office is for two years.

Please submit your candidature for the Board or the name of a nominee to the Branch office by e-mail at **reacheb@magma.ca**, or by regular mail (address on back cover) **no later than April 1, 2009.**

APPEL DE NOMINATIONS POUR L'ANNEE 2009-2010

Engagez-vous dans l'œuvre
de la Section de l'est!

Devenez membre du Conseil d'administration.

L'élection des nouveaux membres aura lieu à
l'Assemblée générale annuelle à notre ***Soirée
gala du printemps*** en avril 2009. La durée du
mandat est deux ans.

Pour siéger au conseil d'administration en 2009-
2010, vous pouvez soumettre votre candidature
ou celle d'un membre au bureau de la Section
par courriel à reacheb@magma.ca ou par la
poste (l'adresse se trouve au verso)
avant le 1 avril 2009.

BRANCH REPRESENTATIVE TO OASW

OASW Provincial Board Meeting

The OASW board met in Toronto on October 23,
24 and 25. The following are highlights from
meeting about the professional advocacy efforts
being made on behalf of the OASW membership:

- The theme of National Social Work Week 2009 is
*Social Workers: Making a Difference in the Lives
of Older Adults and Their Families.*
- OASW remains an active participant on the
Management Committee of the Bridging to
Employment Program for Internationally
Educated Social Work Professionals, which
offers a program leading to a Certificate in
Canadian Social Work Practice through Ryerson
University.
- OASW has drafted Terms of Reference to
establish a Health Care Advisory Task Group to
provide leadership and advice to the Association
to promote and enhance the role of social work
across the entire health care sector in the areas
of policy, practice, research, education and
advocacy. The Task Group will be composed of
social work leaders from the various sectors (e.g.

acute care, home care, long-term care, Family
Health Teams and mental health) as well as
those with in-depth research and policy
expertise.

- Members of OASW's Government Relations
Advisory Committee continue to work closely
with Government Relations consultant Peter
Regenstreif, and with OASW staff to refine and
implement OASW's Government Relations
Strategy.

A joint meeting with David Caplan, Minister of
Health and Long-Term Care, and the Minister
of Community and Social Services is being
sought. A meeting was scheduled for October
29, 2008 with a senior policy advisor in the
MOHLTC to discuss the *Psychotherapy Act*
and the implications of restrictions on the use
of the title "Psychotherapist" for our profession.

Additionally, the Government Relations
Strategy includes a province-wide campaign to
reach out to MPPs to increase their awareness
of the role social workers play in the delivery of
social and health services.

- OASW's Mental Health Advisory Task Group is
developing a marketing strategy to assist in the
promotion and distribution of generic job
templates (BSW and MSW positions) for social
workers employed in the mental health sector.
The job templates highlight skill sets as well as
differentiating between the generalist
bachelor's degree and the more advanced
master's degree. The marketing strategy will
target major employers, human resource
personnel and members of the profession.
- The Advisory Task Group continues to seek
opportunities to present findings from OASW's
Mental Health Survey as they relate to
curriculum to teaching faculty within Ontario
schools of social work. Presentations have
been made at four schools/faculties (Factor-
Inwentash Faculty of Social Work, University of
Toronto; University of Windsor; Carleton
University; and the University of Ottawa).
Presentations are being explored at Wilfrid
Laurier University and at Renison College,
University of Waterloo. The presentation
promotes usage of the role statement for social
workers in mental health and the job
descriptions as educational tools. Based

upon findings from the survey, two academic papers are being prepared for submission to journals.

- AFACTS, the Alliance of Professional Associations of Community-based Therapy Associations (of which OASW is a member), has completed a strategic planning process which reestablishes priorities as the context of home care in the province continues to evolve.

Attention is currently focusing on revamping the AFACTS website so it can better serve as a resource for members of our respective associations and provide a stronger presence for the rehabilitation professions within the home care sector.

- OASW's Children and Youth Advisory Group has completed its work plan and has identified three issues which will be the focus of their work in the coming months. Situated within a social justice framework, these issues include: the exploration of ways to promote the government policy directive of "fully engaging" children and youth in the planning, delivery and provision of the services they receive; leadership within the profession and enhancing the understanding of evidence-based practice; and an examination of ways to enhance social work skills and competencies related to social and professional advocacy.

Ann-Marie O'Brien
Branch Representative

AWARDS: CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

BESSIE TOUZEL AWARD 2009

The Bessie Touzel Award recognizes social workers who have demonstrated both leadership and vision in the practice of social work and who have contributed to the Ontario Association of Social Workers.

The Award is named for Bessie Touzel (1904 - 1997). Google® her name and read item after item about her career. The *Canadian Association of Social Work* writes, "The one

constant theme throughout her career was that of advocacy for the poor and dispossessed, especially mothers and their children." *The Encyclopedia of Social Welfare* notes, "She was active on the Service Standards Committee where she led the fight for standards of practice that respected the dignity of clients, such as increased relief rates."

The call for Nominations for the 2009 Bessie Touzel Award is open until February 28, 2009. Your submission must include a clear statement of the reasons why you are nominating a particular member of OASW for the award, along with a completed nomination form (available from the Branch Office by calling us at (613) 238-8406), the nominee's resumé, and any other relevant supporting documents (optional). Please submit your nomination to the Branch Office (address on back cover).

For more information, please don't hesitate to contact Virginia Lafond by telephone at (613) 722-6521 ext. 6610, or by e-mail at virginialafond@rogers.com.

LE PRIX BESSIE TOUZEL 2009

Le prix Bessie Touzel reconnaît les membres de la profession qui ont fait preuve de leadership et de vision dans la pratique du service social et qui ont contribué à l'ATTSO.

Le prix a été créé en mémoire de Bessie Touzel (1904-1997). Une recherche sur Google® vous donnera accès à de nombreux articles au sujet de sa carrière. *L'Association Canadienne des travailleuses et travailleurs sociaux* écrit à ce propos que « le thème qui traverse sa carrière est celui de la défense des droits des pauvres et des plus démunis, plus particulièrement les mères et leurs enfants. » *L'Encyclopédie du Bien-être Social* rapporte qu'au Comité des Services relatifs aux normes, c'est elle qui a mené la lutte pour l'établissement de normes dans la pratique du travail social afin d'assurer le respect de la dignité des clients, qui se traduirait notamment en prestations de bien-être adéquates.

L'appel de nominations pour le prix Bessie Touzel, 2009, est lancé jusqu'au **28 février**

2009. Votre soumission doit comporter les raisons justifiant la nomination d'un membre et être accompagnée du formulaire approprié, de son cv et de tout autre document jugé pertinent. Veuillez téléphoner au numéro (613) 238-8406 pour obtenir ce formulaire. Les documents de mise en nominations doivent être postés au Bureau du chapitre de l'Est, dont l'adresse se trouve à la dernière page du Bulletin. Pour de plus amples renseignements, veuillez vous adresser à Virginia Lafond, par téléphone au (613) 722-6521, poste 6610 ou par courriel à virginialafond@rogers.com.

JOAN GULLEN ANNUAL AWARD

The eighth recipient of the **Joan Gullen Award for Media Excellence** for in-depth reporting on social welfare issues will be formally recognized during **Social Work Week** in March, 2009.

Joan Gullen is a Bessie Touzel Award winner, and a recipient of a Governor General's Citation. She is also a social justice advocate, and a member of the Branch.

There are two categories for the award. One will be given to large print media which serve cities and towns of Eastern Ontario. A second award is to be given to small print media which serve ethnic, language, neighborhood and/or religious communities in Eastern Ontario.

The Award consists of a citation, and a monetary prize donated to a local charity of the winner's choice.

To be eligible for the Award, a nominee must have produced an article or series that:

- covered social welfare, social concerns and social policy issues of local import;
- used extensive research, case studies, and viewpoints of local or provincial service providers;
- and/or reported on research findings by North American experts;
- made reference to local agencies; and
- called for action.

Nominations must be received in the Branch Office (see address on back cover) **by January 22, 2009**.

LE PRIX ANNUEL JOAN GULLEN

Le septième récipiendaire **du prix Joan Gullen pour excellence médiatique**, destiné à un individu ayant réalisé un reportage en profondeur sur un sujet lié au bien-être social, sera formellement honoré durant **la semaine du travail social**, en mars 2009.

Joan Gullen a reçu le prix Bessie Touzel ainsi qu'une citation du Gouverneur Général. Elle est aussi reconnue pour son militantisme face aux questions de justice sociale. Elle est un membre de notre Section.

Il existe deux catégories au prix. L'un sera décerné à la personne d'un média à grand format qui dessert les villes et villages de l'est de l'Ontario. L'autre est destiné à la personne d'un média à ciblé qui dessert des groupes ethniques, de langues, de quartier et/ou de groupes religieux dans l'est de l'Ontario.

Le prix comprend une citation et une somme d'argent destinée à un organisme de charité choisi par le récipiendaire.

Pour être éligible au Prix, un candidat doit avoir réalisé un ou une série d'articles répondant aux critères suivants :

- traiter de questions de bien-être, de préoccupations sociales et de politiques sociales d'intérêt local ;
- s'appuyer sur des recherches approfondies, des études de cas, et les points de vue de pourvoyeurs de services au niveau municipal ou provincial ;
- et/ou rapporter des résultats de recherches effectuées par des experts nord américains;
- se référer à des agences locales ; et
- inviter à poser des gestes concrets.

Vos choix de candidatures doivent être soumis au bureau de la Section (adresse au verso) **avant le 22 janvier 2009**.

COMMITTEES

SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE

The Social Justice Committee continues to act on the recommendations of the communications study conducted by students at the Carleton University School of Journalism (see below: "Together, We Are Stronger"). This past summer, representatives of 10 agencies in eastern Ontario were contacted regarding the communication strategy, and a positive response was received from five of them. The next step is to distribute posters and send a questionnaire to the members in the agencies that welcomed member communication with our Social Justice Committee. We will again contact agencies that have not given a positive response.

Because of our concern about the use of street drugs by children and youth, the Committee has closely followed the initiatives of Crime Prevention Ottawa and sent a representative to the second CPO Forum in May 2008, as well as to a public presentation on Youth Gangs in Ottawa in October.

The Committee has taken several initiatives related to poverty over the past six months. In June, a letter was sent to the Ottawa mayor and councillors, congratulating them on Council's letter to the provincial government in which Council called for the back to school and winter clothing allowances to be restored for families receiving social assistance and advocating for the full amount of the National Child Benefit Supplement to be passed on to such families.

In September, a letter on the Ontario Poverty Reduction Strategy from Ontario Campaign 2000, co-signed by two members of the Social Justice Committee, was delivered to the Honourable Madeleine Meilleur's constituency office. The letter, composed by Campaign 2000, called for action in accordance with the recommendations of the "25 in 5 Network for Poverty Reduction". Four recommendations were spelled out:

1. Ontario's poverty reduction plan must include a target;

2. Ontario needs a long term five year plan;
3. the strategy should address how all Ontarians are doing; and
4. a multi-year plan must build in assurances of accountability from one year to the next.

Under point 4, our version of the letter included the following words, "front line workers", inserted in the call for "A Citizen's Advisory Committee that includes grassroots leaders, experts, *front line workers* and people living on low income." Our Committee intends to promote the idea of consultation with front line workers, including social workers, at every opportunity in future communications with the Ontario government.

In October the Honourable Madeleine Meilleur received a delegation of three members from our Committee at her constituency office in Ottawa. The meeting was very cordial, however, she was not interested in our arguments or recommendations for change on the issue of the Ontario Child Benefit and the accompanying changes to OW and ODSP benefits. The brief upon which the presentation was based, as well as a short report on the minister's response, is available upon request from socialjustice.oasweb@gmail.com.

At this time, we are researching any standards that may be in place to protect residents of domiciliary hostels and the monitoring of conditions in these homes.

We are participating with People for a Better Ottawa and preparing to make a presentation to the Ottawa City Council on the severe cuts proposed in the 2009 budget. We are also researching standards that may be in place to protect residents of domiciliary hostels and the monitoring of conditions in these homes.

We welcome input from Eastern Branch members on any issue, but particularly at this time on concerns about domiciliary hostels and on recent experiences with families on social assistance who have teenagers. Please contact us at: socialjustice.oasweb@gmail.com.

Margaret Nelson, Chair

PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE

The Publications Committee was pleased to have Karen Anne Blakely of Jewish Family Services attend as our special guest at our last meeting. Karen added a fresh perspective to our discussions in developing this issue of the Bulletin.

Bill Dare has turned his considerable talents to developing electronic means of communicating with members on developments regarding the profession and the association. Thank you for your participation on the Publications Committee these past years, Bill, and we wish you all success in this new endeavor!

Interested in becoming a member of the Publications Committee? Call Graeme at 613 226-7081.

Publications Committee

SOCIAL WORK IN AGING AND GERONTOLOGY (SWAG)

ATTENTION SOCIAL WORKERS INTERESTED IN SENIOR'S ISSUES AND WORK WITH THE ELDERLY!

Eastern Branch OASW sponsors a network for Social Work in Aging and Gerontology (SWAG). All professionals in social work or related fields of practice are welcome to attend any of the meetings. There is no cost and no official "membership" except a common concern about issues related to aging. Meetings are kindly hosted by Colonel By Retirement Residence, 43 Aylmer Avenue (near Sunnyside) and always feature a speaker on a topic of interest to Ottawa social workers.

Upcoming 2009 Meeting Dates

(always on a Thursday from 3:30 PM to 5:00PM)

January 15	April TBA
February 19	May 21
March 19	

If you want to get on the SWAG distribution list, or confirm the topic of the month, e-mail beverlee.mcintosh+swag@gmail.com.

EDITORIAL AND ARTICLES

FAMILY MATTERS

Until now, the most recent issue of our Branch's *Bulletin* dedicated to Families was Spring 1994. Co-editors Madeleine Dubois and Elinor Mueller observed that the realities and complexities of changing family patterns challenge social workers in a number of ways, such as:

- developing positive language to describe family lifestyles and promoting models of equal partnerships in marriages and parenting.
- supporting the development of economic and social policies which recognize and value the important of families in nurturing members and training children.
- questioning our roles in working with troubled families. Could it be that the assumptions which underlie our concepts of ourselves as helpers and therapists get in the way of effective family work?

In that same issue, Marion Balla observed that as a profession we have much to celebrate in our work of identifying and addressing social issues related to families: poverty; family violence; family law reform; child care; housing; pay equity; child welfare. These issues could be seen as aspects of the social environment in which the profession has historically situated much of its activities.

The *Bulletin's* Summer 2008 issue linked the social and physical environment to our work. Its editorial linked social justice to environmental justice. Contributor Cindy Shrigley challenged us to take off the blinders we have worn as a profession with regard to environmental issues and become sensitized to the related devastating impact on the lives and health of many families and individuals.

It is worth noting that in the Spring 2008 issue of the Vanier Institute of the Family's journal *Transitions*, with the theme Family and the [Physical] Environment, Margrit Eichler of OISE reported that in a literature review of this topic, she found almost nothing. Thus, the April 2008 paper with the same title by Barbara Vogt,

released by that Institute, is worthy of your attention. It is available as a download. Ms. Vogt noted that families are faced with a new and huge challenge of understanding the impact of environmental problems on their lives, and what to do about them.

At the Centre of our Lives

In his 2005 survey, R. Bibby found that almost every Canadian saw the family, including the adult's parent(s) and sibling(s), to be a key source of love, support, stability, happiness and companionship – social well being. Most respondents also firmly believed that families were an important foundation of healthy communities. Bibby noted that while there is 'a mosaic of family structures, the largest tile within that mosaic remains the traditional family.' While the ideal of a conventional family was held widely, 'it was just that – an ideal.' Survey respondents acknowledged the discrepancy between the ideal and reality, such as 38% of marriages ending in divorce. Respondents believed that we as a society need to do all we can to help optimize family situations, however diverse these may be.

Considering our discipline's perspective on families, families are understood as a group of individuals, as a unit, and within the context of communities in which members interact (i.e. work, school, peer group, cultural associations). Social workers work with families affected by adversity, their vulnerabilities often stemming from social justice issues. Our approaches strive to create pathways to resiliency or healthy functioning. Gilles Rondeau, in his address to the 2005 OASW Provincial Conference organized by our Eastern Branch, noted that the increasing fragility of the family unit requires our intervention processes to be more complex.

While social work employment statistics for Eastern Ontario were not accessed, 30% of the 61 private practitioners listed in the Ottawa Yellow Pages under Marriage and Couple Counselling were social workers. NASW reports that 12% of American social workers were employed in Family Service Agencies. Ottawa Family Service agencies have grown from three to five. Social workers are lead professionals in these agencies. Family Service Canada reports

that its member organizations serve over three million annually. But work with or on behalf of families occurs in all our fields of practice.

At the Centre of our Training?

Given the centrality of family to social well-being, and given the role social work plays in the achieving or maintaining social wellbeing with our clients, how knowledgeable and skilled are we in working with them? In 1994, Marion Balla observed that, "as social workers we are challenged to overcome our own learning and biases as to what a family should be." While it might be argued that generalist skills are sufficient, Dr. Rondeau suggests that client profiles are increasingly complex, requiring enhanced skills.

Just how extensive is a new social worker's exposure to family theory and intervention skills during their initial training? To seek an answer, the 2008/2009 Directory of Schools listed on the CASSW website (<http://www.cassw-access.ca>) was used to establish links to over 60 accredited BSW/MSW programs.

Fewer than six program's course descriptions could not be accessed. In our review, courses which focused on individuals and families, couples and families, and children and families were included in the count. Four schools offered this focus as a specialty. UBC's program is the School of Social Work and Family Studies. Half the BSW programs and 40% of MSW programs offered two or more courses focused on families. The highest number of courses offered was 12. The University of Ottawa offered the highest number of courses among francophone schools. In all schools, course offerings, many of which were electives, could be augmented by field placements. But these observations would miss the mark, if it were not noted that family courses could be found in theory and policy as well as in clinical work. CASSW is encouraged to identify specialty programs or schools that offer advanced level courses.

In Critical Demand: Social Work in Canada (2000) called for ongoing mandatory professional development. Given the likely limited exposure to family approaches during our formal education, and acknowledging our responsibility to be

current with best practice, what continuing education opportunities are available? The University of Toronto offers two sequential online courses on Children and Families, as well as a certificate program in family mediation and a diploma program in Brief Narrative Therapy with Families, Couples and Individuals. Wayne State's school offers a graduate certificate in social work practice with families and couples. Online learning opportunities can be accessed through NASW. The reader is encouraged to share others with us.

Another way of looking at the importance the profession places on family matters is to consider evidence of the family as being a focus of our research efforts. For example, this year the University of Calgary's School of Social Work announced the establishment of its first endowed research chair – in the field of domestic violence. As to the content of our journals reporting research findings, *Canadian Social Work* was surveyed. The past five issues were scanned. Many research-based articles were found. Indeed two-thirds of the articles dealt with some aspect of family life.

Still another way of looking at the importance the profession places on families is to consider its fundraising efforts. Again this year, the University of Calgary's School's fundraising focus is in support of "reduction of family violence in our communities", "child welfare and family enhancement initiative to better understand family systems and child development challenges", and "strategies to reduce poverty and homelessness". No doubt the reader could provide other examples.

Conclusions

The continued centrality of family in the lives of Canadians of all ages can be found in 83% of us saying that family is very important, and another 15% saying family is somewhat important. Its centrality to our profession should not be taken for granted. Nor should the knowledge and skills to aid, empower or advocate for families be assumed to necessarily be within our generic skill set.

Contributors to this issue present aspects of our local interventions related to Families Matter.

With our Branch's use of the OASW versatile website to potentially publish an expanded version, in the next month should readers wish to contribute material on this topic that meet our submission guidelines, please contact Graeme Roderick (ottawaroderick@sympatico.ca). A number of contributors could be added. The mailed version of the last and **must read and keep issue** on *Social Work and the Environment* was 16 pages, while the digital version was 25. As was suggested in the March 2008 issue of the *Bulletin*, an index of topics could be developed, particularly in light of recent issues now being available on our Branch's page of the OASW's inviting site. Perhaps OASW Provincial could expand its current index for their recently reformatted *News magazine* to include articles from Branch publications.

Publication Committee

FAMILY WORK IN THE NEW MILLENNIUM

by Lynn Sherwood

Précis : *Cet article présente l'évolution de cadres conceptuels permettant de comprendre et d'aborder les difficultés auxquelles sont confrontées certaines familles. Il s'appuie sur une intégration des notions théoriques explorant l'attachement, le traumatisme et des connaissances en matière de neurobiologie. Ce cadre conceptuel plus global ouvre la voie à une meilleure compréhension des éléments et des dynamiques contribuant aux problèmes vécus dans ces familles et permet aux intervenants de générer des façons renouvelées pour faciliter l'actualisation de leur plein potentiel.*

Every few years a sea change marking an evolution in our way of doing social work emerges. To my mind such a change is now under way in relation to our work with children and families – perhaps the biggest change since the early '80s when we began to realize that abuse – first physical abuse, but most significantly, sexual abuse - had a huge influence on the lives of the families with whom we worked.

The most difficult situations we deal with have been traditionally characterized as "chaotic, multi

problem families". Child and family counselors know what that means. Parents bounce between psychiatric facilities, rehabilitation centers and jail. Children struggle at school both behaviorally and academically. Children's Aid seems almost to be a part of the family. Families who finally get subsidized housing after spending months in a homeless shelter often live in large projects where drug abuse and violence are facts of daily life, despite the best efforts of community organizers.

Flotillas of therapists are involved at great expense, at different points in the process, all to little avail. Our clients seem addicted to crisis. No sooner is one horrible mess resolved through superhuman effort than another problem arises.

Those of us who have been in the field more than 10 or 15 years start meeting the children of our early clients. The cycle of avoidable human suffering continues. What to do?

A new way of understanding and conceptualizing the issues faced by these families appears to me to be evolving based on an integrated understanding of the principals of attachment theory, trauma theory, and our new understanding of neurobiology. We are beginning to achieve a greater insight into the mechanisms and processes which lead to the cycle of dysfunction which we see in these families.

Our current understanding of attachment is based on the work of the British psychiatrist, John Bowlby, who in 1969 wrote the seminal book, *Attachment, Separation and Loss*. He was the first to observe that abandoned infants who were physically cared for in a hospital setting, but were not provided with nurturing, touch, and stimulation not only failed to thrive, but often died. This concept of attachment has now been much elaborated and integrated with ideas from Erikson's theory of personality development, trauma theory and new insights into neurobiology.

Reactive Attachment Disorder (RAD), the inability to form close relationships, associated with anti-social behaviour, is now recognized as a psychiatric illness which is the consequence of lack of early attachment and bonding with a

consistent permanent parental figure. Individuals with RAD have not mastered the first Eriksonian stage of personality development, trust versus mistrust. They are consequently unable to form meaningful relationships, and have little or no empathy or sense of moral responsibility.

Sub sets of attachment disorder include:

- *Avoidant attachment* which characterizes someone who is overly independent and emotionally unavailable. Such individuals have experienced an emotionally unavailable and detached parenting style.
- *Ambivalent attachment* which describes the persistent anxiety and stress characteristic of an individual who has experienced inconsistent parenting – a parent who is not attuned to the needs of his/her child, and who may, to the contrary depend on the child to meet his/her needs.
- *Disorganized attachment* which characterizes the individual whose needs have been ignored or responded to on an inconsistent basis, or who has been traumatized by the disorganized and frightening behaviour of a parent with significant behavioural issues. Such individuals typically have chaotic and disorganized lifestyles, trusting no one and reacting in response to one chaotic event to the next.

Additionally, we are now more aware of the significance of trauma in the formation of personality and attachment styles. The impact of traumatic events can actually be measured in the brain function of traumatized individuals. Young children who experience repeated emotional trauma, especially in the context of poor attachment, demonstrate visible differences in brain function from untraumatized, well attached children. Traumatized folk tend to interpret future life experiences in the context of their initial response to trauma, thus perpetuating and reinforcing traumatic experience.

An attachment/trauma framework for understanding dysfunctional families permits integration of a number of different perspectives. Structural issues including racism, power inequities, sexism, and poverty all fit into the context of the trauma experienced by individuals enduring such situations and reinforce dysfunctional attachment styles. Suddenly the

connections between individual neurobiology, early nurturing, trauma, and societal structures, fit together like the pieces of a complex jigsaw puzzle. Our “chaotic, multi problem families” live in crisis because they have a learned culture of disorganized attachment, reinforced by the neurobiological consequences of trauma caused by the structural inequities they face in society.

We are now able to intervene in a number of ways in order to assist these families. Numerous well proven techniques for healing RAD include supportive nurturing techniques, regression therapies, and behavioural approaches emphasizing security, routines and consistency. Therapies including EMDR, neurofeedback, and medication can be useful in tackling neurobiological issues. Traditional group and family therapies as well as psychotherapy is useful, and social activism helps tackle the structural inequities which re traumatize and stigmatize our clients. Insight into the processes and consequences of attachment form the framework into which all these techniques fit.

It is time to re-visit old assumptions about our ability to help these individuals and families, to discard our sense of helplessness and hopelessness, and to generate new ways of supporting their full participation in the opportunities evolving in our affluent society.

Lynn Sherwood is a counsellor at Jewish Family Services of Ottawa. She has worked with children and families since 1969. She earned her masters degree in 1984.

DREAMING ... IN CELEBRATION OF SOCIAL WORK AND FAMILIES IN MENTAL HEALTH: A TALE FROM THE ROMHC

by Virginia Lafond

Précis : *Le travail avec des personnes ayant un problème de santé mentale plus chronique néglige souvent de s'intéresser suffisamment à leurs familles. Après avoir illustré certaines des répercussions sur les familles de la maladie d'un de leurs membres, cet article évoque le travail qui pourrait se faire avec ces dernières et présente des pistes susceptibles de mener à bien de telles interventions.*

- *I am an 82 year old widow. My son is 55. He has schizophrenia. I desperately need some help. It's to do with what will happen to him after I'm gone.*
- *My wife has what they call a major depressive disorder. This has affected everybody in our family – our three kids and me. My wife and I, well, she is not the person I married. I don't want to blame her but she rejects help. She says I'm the problem.*
- *We know our 17 year old son has problems – he's mostly holed up in his room, will hardly talk to us, and we believe he's smoking up regularly. It's been six months now. He is refusing to go for help.*

These few snippets* from the numerous cold calls social workers receive at the Royal Ottawa Mental Health Centre (ROMHC) point to the multifaceted shape of our work. Serious mental illness involves working both with the person who carries the illness first-hand, and very often with the person's family members.

Specifically, what do we do with and about family members? We first listen – listen *carefully*. We use a grieving-mental-illness lens to help us understand the person wherever he or she is at emotionally. We make efforts to enter into collaborative creative problem-solving. We suggest resources. And, last but not least, we routinely invite family members to our Family Information and Support Group Meetings and one of our Family Education Series, both now more than a quarter of a century old.

Having jolted myself by the mention of the age of our family group work efforts, I begin to dream – dream about rendering recognition. If I were in a prize-giving position, I would certainly award the efforts of all the facilitating social workers who, over the years, have laboured to meet with family members and also have family members meet each other in these particular group forums. They have not ever waited for referrals from physicians. Instead, they spread the word that these meetings are open to the public. Why? Because they early on realized that family members can struggle long and hard before the

person in the family with the mental health problem finds his/her footing on the road to recovery.

Being proactive has definitely made a difference. Oftentimes we've been able to strategize with the family to effectively expedite assistance both for family members and for the one burdened first-hand. Also, I would be sure to cite a fact that should not go without saying: these social workers have continuously worked to develop their knowledge and skill to serve family members in group and individual contexts in accordance with best practice models.

I would not stop there. Indeed, if I were on that prize-giving podium, I would be giving an equal prize to all the family members who have worked with us. I would list how families have:

- informed our practice – sometimes just by the sheer telling of their heart-rending stories;
- shown us what steadfastness means as they have stood with their loved ones who at times can be literally leveled to the ground by symptoms and other losses;
- participated with us in taking advocacy stances to improve the quality of life for their relatives (a recent example: the successful efforts made to restore transportation allowances for ODSP recipients); and
- reached out to families new to the world of mental illness. Stellar examples are found among the members of the Schizophrenia Society of Ontario and the Mood Disorders Association of Ontario.

Finally, I'd raise a glass to lead a toast. I'd exclaim, "Social workers everywhere, let us celebrate the priceless reciprocity achieved between family members and social workers! May it continue to work to serve us all."

*slightly fictionalized to respect confidentiality

Virginia Lafond is the author of Grieving Mental Illness: A Guide for Patients and Their Caregivers (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2nd Edition: 2002) and 'Coming to terms with mental illness in the family – Working constructively through its grief', a chapter in A Casebook of Family Interventions for Psychosis. (Lobban, F. & Barrowclough [Eds.] John Wiley & Sons. [In

press]) She does front-line social work in the Schizophrenia Program, ROMHC.

THE KINSHIP PROGRAM AT THE OTTAWA CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETY

by Mira Legault and Yvonne Gomez

Précis : *Cet article donne une vue d'ensemble du programme de garde au sein de la famille (kinship care) développé par les sociétés de l'aide à l'enfance. Celui-ci vise à accorder la garde légale d'un enfant en besoin de protection à un membre de sa famille ou de sa communauté, et à donner au tribunal le droit d'énoncer des conditions pour la supervision de ces placements. Après avoir présenté certains des avantages attribués à ce programme, l'auteur offre un aperçu de son fonctionnement à Ottawa.*

Many changes have been made to Children's Aid Societies across the province over the past few years. The Kinship program at the Ottawa Children's Aid Society was developed in response to a number of these changes. Among others, Bill 210 amends the Child and Family Services Act (CFSA) to permit the court to order the legal custody of a child in need of protection to a family or community member, in voluntary, non-voluntary, or foster care placements. It also permits the court, when making a supervision order with respect to the child, to impose terms and conditions on any person who puts forth a plan for the care and custody of the child. These amendments allowed the Ministry of Child and Family Services (MCFS) to develop Kinship Standards, which outlined the new responsibilities of the Society in providing service to Kinship families.

As well as the changes in the CFSA, the implementation of the Kinship program was also a response to the Jeffery Baldwin case that occurred in Toronto in 2002. Jeffery died while in the care of his grandparents, who had continuous involvement with the Children's Aid Society. This case highlighted the need for a "second set of eyes" when assessing a possible Kinship living arrangement. Finally, Kinship was also reflective of the agency's transformation in terms of using

new methods of differential response and a strengths based approach to practice.

The purpose of this program is to build on existing relationships, to promote stability for the child, to promote the notion that it takes a community to raise a child, and that all families have strengths that can contribute to healthy child development. The program's goal is to service children ranging in age from 0 to 18 who are in need of protection and cannot be maintained in their own home, and for whom a kin option was determined suitable in order to prevent admission into care. It is also designed to support the licensing of a Kinship family to become a foster home for a specific child. Such arrangements help to minimize the impact of being separated from the parents by allowing the child to stay with a relative or a community member who has a meaningful and beneficial relationship with the child.

The positive outcomes in clinical practice that were noted above are complimented with positive outcomes from a systemic perspective. A formal Kinship program provides standardized practice and procedures relating to the unique needs of Kinship families. This allows service provision to families who may not fall under the guise of either protection services or traditional foster care. Moreover, the MCFS Standards in service provision, such as assessments, plans of service and face-to-face contact, are better controlled through the contractual relationship between caregivers and workers.

Prior to the development of a Kinship program, it was apparent that typical protection worker caseload responsibilities made it difficult for workers to meet the Kinship MCFS Standards. Without a discrete process for addressing Kinship Standards and regulations, any attempts to ensure accountability were more onerous.

The positive outcomes of Kinship include but are not limited to more permanency outcomes, both family and community centred. With a clear assessment tool, concrete and practical services can be identified and implemented. Families are given the opportunity to provide their input and exert some influence in decision making and case planning. Children remain with members of

their entourage and do not lose a sense of belonging to the surroundings, and to the people with whom they share a history. Finally, with added support to the Kinship families, child-oriented intervention is less overshadowed by the protection demands of Society. Some of the challenges with program implementation include communication and cooperation between different departments, the need for new case law with respect to legal custody, and the lack of promised Ministry funding for ongoing support.

A snapshot of our program's caseload for the month of August 2008 is provided here. There were 46 homes in the process of being assessed (Kin Foster Homes with 15, Kin Out-of-Care homes at 30). There were 52 open Out-of-Care homes, and 28 open Foster homes. Finally, 12 files were closed as permanency was achieved for the child and family. At present our program employs 11 Kinship staff in total, with 1 supervisor, 1 unit assistant, 5 kinship assessors, 5 case carrying, and 1 legal custody worker. As an Agency, the Society's goal is to implement a management system to track statistical data as well as outcomes.

About the Authors

Mira Legault has been a Kinship case worker with the Children's Aid Society of Ottawa since October 2007. She has also worked at the Department of Youth Protection in Montreal as an intake worker.

Yvonne Gomez has worked in the field of Child Welfare for the past five years as a frontline child protection social worker, an international caseworker, and as an adoption and guardianship counsellor. Currently she is working for the Children's Aid Society of Ottawa as an assessor in the Kinship Program.

DAILY PRACTICE NARRATIVES OF CHILD PROTECTION SOCIAL WORKERS: THE POWER OF THE FRONTLINE

by Yvonne Gomez

Précis : *Cet article traite de l'étude de recherche que j'ai entreprise à l'Université de Victoria dans le cadre du programme à la maîtrise. L'œuvre était*

centrée sur la conceptualisation du pouvoir chez les travailleurs et travailleuses sociaux de première ligne, responsables du service de protection à l'enfance, en analysant les histoires quotidiennes relevant des cas dans leur pratique. Résultat – la relation avec les membres de la famille était primordiale pour mener à bien leur intervention, le choix du genre de modèle n'ayant aucunement plus de valeur qu'un autre. C'est ainsi qu'il en est venu à conclure qu'en tant que professionnels, nous sommes isolés les uns des autres.

As social workers in child welfare we are constantly working with families. What is often overlooked is how workers understand the impact we have on our families. The research I conducted for my MSW was to better understand how frontline child protection social workers conceptualize power. This was done by conducting a narrative analysis of daily practice stories and then analyzing the implications for practice.

The literature review was grounded in three main areas. *Part One: Power in Child Protection*, examined the ways power has been understood in social work literature from various perspectives. *Part Two: Perspectives from the Frontline* explored the ways that child protection social workers have been represented in the literature and identifies gaps in the literature. *Part Three: Anti-Oppressive Practice in Child Welfare* presents an alternative means of practice for frontline child protection social workers.

Workers were asked to tell me a story about their daily practice. What was key was that the story should be told from their own perspective where they were in an active role as a front line child protection social worker. The purpose of the stories was to expand the understanding of how frontline child protection social workers conceptualize power in daily practice and add to the literature where their own voices are heard. In making these stories of daily practice experiences more public, the dominant discourse of frontline child protection social workers can be

expanded, examined, and dismantled, thus creating space for other stories.

My own research addresses those who enact legislation: frontline child protection social workers. I recognize that my own research is limited in its scope and does not include supervisors or families, but I acknowledge here that this research has been done, at least in part. The research that was conducted was small in scale and there is great variance in the participants' narratives. Further research should involve the input of frontline child protection social workers, individually as well as in the form of discussions.

My research has reinforced my own personal experiences of being a frontline child protection social worker, specifically the idea that one thinks that their own practice is individual and that they are practicing alone. My research shows that this sentiment of practicing in isolation is shared and that normalizing these feelings of practicing alone could both open the discussion on how practice is occurring and broaden our understanding of how practice is being done from the perspective of the frontline. Furthermore, such a dialogue could tackle the possibility of how conceptualizing power in these terms may provide us with a different way to discuss change from the bottom up.

Finally, without understanding the perception of frontline child protection social workers in their daily practice, we are in the same place we have always been with an incomplete narrative of child welfare. The study's six frontline child protection social workers have given me an understanding of how to continue the pursuit of practice knowledge. I hope that, in part, my work presents alternative views of child protection practice and how dedicated the workers in this field are to the families in which they try to serve.

(Gomez, Yvonne. Daily Practice Narratives of Child Protection Social Workers: The Power of the Frontline, University of Victoria, Masters Thesis 2008).

SOCIAL WORK WEEK

NATIONAL SOCIAL WORK WEEK IS
MARCH 2-8, 2009

This year's theme for National Social Work Week is:

Social Workers: Making a Difference in the Lives of Older Adults and Their Families.

For more information, please check the OASW Web site at <http://oasw.org>.

ANNUAL SPRING GALA 2009



Your Planning Committee is busy organizing the April 2009 Eastern Branch Spring Gala and Annual General Meeting. An enjoyable evening with friends and colleagues is guaranteed.


Please see the *Spring 2009* issue of *Bulletin* for full details of the program, the date, time, location, and how to register.

WEB LINKS

The Canadian Counselling Association (National Capital Region) invites you to visit their Web site at

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- Do you have an issue of concern to the Social Work Community you'd like to address?
- Do you have a comment about an item or article that appeared in the *Bulletin*?

Members are invited to send their *Letters to the Editor* on subjects of interest to social work and the social work profession.

You can reach us by email at reacheb@magma.ca

Your comments are always welcome.

NOMINATIONS DUE:

**Joan Gullen Annual Award
January 22, 2009**

**Bessie Touzel Award
February 28, 2009**

**Eastern Branch Board of Directors
April 1, 2009**

**THE BULLETIN FOR SPRING 2009
"CONTINUING EDUCATION AND SOCIAL WORKERS"**

Deadline for submissions:
February 17, 2009.
Your news, articles and ideas for this issue are welcomed.

MEILLEURS VŒUX DE LA SAISON!

Les membres du Conseil de la Section de l'est de l'ATTSO et le Comité des publications responsable du Bulletin vous souhaitent d'heureuses fêtes et une nouvelle année comblée de joie et de prospérité.

SEASON'S GREETINGS!

The Members of the Eastern Branch Board and the Bulletin Publication wish you a very Happy Holiday Season and a peaceful, prosperous New Year.

