

B.C.R.C. Newsletter

Volume 1, Issue 1

February 2004

Executive Director's Message

Dear Community, As many of you know, this is not B.C.R.C.'s first newsletter issue. However, it has been some time since our last one. This newsletter is one of several strategies that B.C.R.C. will be employing this year to promote the Centre's activities and to inform the community about those activities. Just as importantly, we are hoping that community-based organizations will take advantage of this quarterly newsletter to publicize their own events and services – the positive work taking place in our community is deserving of attention and notice.

The past fiscal year has been one of endurance and triumph in the face of change and new challenges. Black Community Resource Centre (B.C.R.C.) has experienced new developments in funding and accompanying changes in programming and staffing. Nevertheless, we have remained wholly committed and

continued on page 2

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 Executive Director's Message
- 1 Building Better Futures for Black Anglophone Youth
- 2 Preparing Our Youth for Success
- 2 Using Art as A Weapon Against Racism
- 3 Strategic Planning Session
- 4 Black History Month

Building Better Futures for Black Anglophone Youth

Youth Solidarity Project to be Renewed for Another Year

In September 2001, B.C.R.C. began the Youth Solidarity Project for the Montreal Black Community. The Project was destined to help English-speaking Black youth between the ages of 18 and 23 reintegrate into their community by either returning to school or finding meaningful employment. Jamaica Association of Montreal, Inc., Batshaw Youth and Family Services, Rosemount Technology Centre and Riverside Park Technology Centre were actively involved in making this project a success.

This pilot-project allowed B.C.R.C. to assist over thirty (30) youth in developing action plans to achieve their educational and career goals. Graduates of the program have gone on to study Computer Graphics, Accounting, Printing and Digital Layout and Nursing Assistant programs. Others are currently in the process of obtaining pre-requisites for admission to educational programs.

These successes were showcased in October 2003, during *Forum Solidarité Jeunesse*. This event, held one hour North of Quebec City, publicized organizations hosting Youth Solidarity Projects province-wide. The forum attracted over 4,000 people from public and para-public agencies and community organizations. The two-day event was highlighted with a presentation by the then Premier of Quebec, Bernard Landry.

B.C.R.C has received notice that the Project will be renewed and is actively recruiting serious young people who are committed to pursuing their educational and employment goals.

If you know of any youth who might be interested in this Project, please contact Courtney Sewell at the Centre.✱

unswerving in offering needed programs and services to members of the Montreal Black community. In large part, we are surviving this transition due to our tradition of positive collaboration and partnership; B.C.R.C.'s success *depends* on our ability to dialogue and collaborate with our friends in the community para-public and public sectors.

My acceptance of the position of Executive Director of the Centre in April, 2003 was based on a commitment to the ideals of the Centre and my confidence in the Centre's ability to be a moving force within the community. The upcoming fiscal year will be one of open dialogue and growth as we work to re-examine our mandate and assess our role within the community. We welcome the support and assistance of the network of individuals, groups and organizations that comprise our extended B.C.R.C. family in this endeavour.*

Sharon Springer, Executive Director

February 2004

Preparing our Youth For Success

Youth Employability Internship Program.

In September of 2001, B.C.R.C. began working with ten (10) young people between the ages of 16 and 30 years old to increase their chances of finding long-term meaningful employment. The participants were youth who had little or no secondary education or work experience that were at risk of high unemployment. After an extensive employment preparation training program facilitated by professional trainers, youth were matched with an employer. Organizations and companies that accepted interns include Montreal Children's Hospital, Enterprise Rent-a-Car, Inc., Canadian Sickle Cell Society and Options II High School. Although two (2) youth were unable to finish their internships for reasons beyond their control, other interns successfully completed their placements. B.C.R.C. continues to conduct follow-up with the youth by providing them with assistance in finding work or returning to school.

We are thankful to all of the professional trainers and Montreal employers who helped to make this project a success! *



Work Contract and Ethics Workshop with Ms. Fabienne Pierre-Jacques.

Using Art as a Weapon Against Racism

Boston - Montreal Youth Cultural Exchange Project



Welcome dinner for Boston Youth.

For the first time ever, B.C.R.C. worked in partnership Carrefour Jeunesse Emploi Côte-des-Neiges to coordinate a cultural exchange project for youth at risk of long-term unemployment. Specifically, the project targeted youth with theatrical talent and artistic abilities and was aimed at providing youth with valuable social, employability and entrepreneurial skills.

Preparation for this two-month long project began in January 2003. Ten (10) youth selected from Woodland Adult Centre attended several workshops on employability

continues on page 3

and life skills training. The exchange between youth from Montreal and youth of Brockton RISE Youth Opportunity Centre in Boston was an added benefit to the youth who persevered in the program. While in Boston, the youth took part in a historical tour of the city and participated in a talent show with their Boston counterparts. The highlight of the visit was the Mayor's Youth Summit where Montreal youth were able to witness first-hand the issues, challenges and concerns faced by youth in Brockton.

In Montreal, Boston youth took part in the Week of Action Against Racism and Rendez-vous des jeunes. Together with their Montreal friends, they took part in various workshops offered through these events.

These activities included a musical encounter between Brazil, Africa and Playback Theatre at Centre d'Afrique. Youth took part in workshops on African drumming and dancing, graffiti, sculpture, and dance choreography. They also visited the Black Theatre Workshop (B.T.W.) for a presentation and discussion session with B.T.W.'s youth drama club.

B.C.R.C. will run a similar program in 2004. *

MONTREAL BLACK COMMUNITY RESOURCE GUIDE NOW AVAILABLE

B.C.R.C. has an updated Black Community Resource Guide. The latest edition provides contact and programming information for community, para-public and public organizations of relevance to members of the Black community. The guide is available through the Centre and is being sold for \$2 to help cover production costs. Contact the Centre to get your copy. *

B.C.R.C.'S NEW WEB SITE

Check out B.C.R.C.'s website in progress at www.blackyouthproject.com. The website features news on the Centre's activities and serves as a portal to other sites featuring news and information on Black communities in Quebec and Canada. *

STRATEGIC PLANNING SESSION

In the summer of 2003, B.C.R.C. consulted with a number of community stakeholders in order to gather some initial feedback with respect to the Centre's programs and services. The findings of this survey assisted in the development of B.C.R.C.'s strategic planning session which was held at Hotel Le Chantecler on January 17 and 18. The issues raised during this successful weekend provided an opportunity (cont. on pg 4)



Participant at the Rosemount Technology Centre.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH (BHM)

As we celebrate Black History Month, let us remember that history has a past, it will have a future, and the present is what we have right now. Therefore, let us pay homage to our ancestors who helped build Canada, and many other countries around the world, let us aspire to achieve our goals, and stay focus. In the words of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., "our bodies are tired, our feet are somewhat sore, but our souls are rested."

From February 1st, B.C.R.C. will celebrate Black History for the remaining 335 days of 2004; visit our website at – www.blackyouthproject.org for knowledge, understanding and awareness of our world heritage. *

SOME EVENTS DURING BHM

Feb.3rd: The **St. James Society** proudly presents a unique opportunity to meet author **Mairuth Sarsfield** – Tuesday, 7pm, **Westmount Library**, Westmount Room, 4574 Sherbrooke West. Info: 848-0146. The general public is invited to this FREE presentation. (cont. on pg4)

for Board and staff to seriously examine the evolution of the Centre's activities since its inception in 1995. The planning was facilitated by Ms. Karen Diaz of CKG Associates, Ltd. Ms. Diaz guided the B.C.R.C. team through dynamic exercises that encouraged self-reflection and progressive thinking about the Centre's vision and mission.

A written summary of the session will form the basis for a second and more road-based phase of community consultations that will be taking place within the next two months. We are hoping that our community partners will be active in these consultations to ensure that B.C.R.C.'s vision for the future remains faithful to our enduring commitment to the community. *

Feb.14th: Young, Gifted & Black: “A Celebration of our youth” - 8pm, **Oscar Peterson Concert Hall**, 7141 Sherbrooke Street West. Tickets: \$20 adults, \$15 students & seniors, \$10 children. For more info, contact Kevin, (514) 624-9372.

Feb. 29th: inobe productions' presents

Coco Café: Culture Shock

With hostess **Mahalia “Miss Thang” Verna**

Quartier Latin: 318 Ontario St. East (St. Denis)

\$6. For more info: inobe@dsuper.net

For more information on BHM events, please contact the Black History Month Round Table at: (514) 282-3443. *

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