



Fondation Aquarium Foundation

Fondation psychanalytique pour le bien-être des enfants et des jeunes adultes

Psychoanalytic Foundation for the Well-Being of Children and Young Adults

News Letter No. 3

June 12th, 2020

We hope this News Letter finds you well and safe. Who would have guessed that February 2020 would belong to a past life that we are not sure will be restored? The pandemic is now part of our reality and the work of AF is needed more than ever. **Aquarium is the only psychoanalytic foundation in Canada devoted to children and adolescents.**

This is why we want to keep you informed about our activities and invite your participation.

The Covid-19

- Aquarium continued its administrative and other activities on ZOOM or other media.
- The need in the field of mental health is enormous and Aquarium, within its limited resources, has been active towards vulnerable communities, mental health professionals, and the media.
- We are reflecting with the rest of our colleagues on the impact of this crisis on our practice and on children and their families. Three articles reflecting on psychoanalysis and the Covid-19 were published since April in International and local psychoanalytic forums.

Fundraising:

- Prior to a public launch, and while we aimed to raise 5000\$, **we are happy to announce that AF received so far about 35.000\$ in donations.** This will allow us to hire professionals and start offering grants for the treatment of children, adolescents and young adults. We are immensely grateful to our donors, many of them anonymous.
- We remain grateful to the artist Ms. Indelicato Roseval who bequeathed the totality of her art work to Aquarium Foundation.
- Our thanks to those who donated prestigious gifts and art works in anticipation of a fundraising event.
- AF applied for a grant to Bell's *Cause pour la cause* and we are awaiting their response.
- We have also applied to the Special Federal Government fund for mental health organizations managed by the Canadian Red Cross.
- Donation can be made directly on our Website and are now managed by Canada Help. Donations can also be made by cheque to Aquarium Foundation. Receipts for tax purposes are issued immediately. Donation forms and promotional material in the form

of beautiful Bookmarks and Pamphlets are also available. Our Vice- president in Communication is keeping our Website beautiful and impressive. We need volunteers on this committee.

- A devoted volunteer who has our mission at heart offered to take care of our bookkeeping and other minutia. We thank her wholeheartedly.

News from the Board of Administration:

- The Board met on April 29th on ZOOM.
- **A huge welcome to Dr.Lila Amirali**, who was elected on the Board. Dr. Amirali is a highly respected psychiatrist and child psychiatrist, Head of the Department of psychiatry at Ste Justine Hospital and elected chair of the Child and Adolescent psychiatry committee of the Royal College of Physicians. Lila's clinical and administrative experience is a major asset for our mission.
- The revised Bylaws of AF were approved by the Board and will be submitted to the membership at our coming meeting. We are grateful to the Bylaws committee that worked hard and diligently on this task.
- We are still **grieving the loss of Dr. Dianne Casoni**, a Board member and treasurer on the Executive committee. She died from complications of an acute pneumonia on February 3rd. Dianne had a valuable place in our organisation. She sat on the Fundraising and Bylaws committees and had accepted to chair our important First Nations' committee.
- To comply with the Bylaws, the office of Webmaster on the Executive committee is renamed Second Vice-president in communication.
- There are vacant places on the Board and we welcome people from the field of politics, media, High-technology or the corporate world.

Public Launch:

- With the help of colleagues and a Communication firm, we are putting together a Press Kit.
- We are planning a public launch with a press release sometimes in the fall depending on the situation.
- This event will be separate from a larger fundraising activity that had be presently postponed.

The legal and ethical basis of Aquarium:

- The past few months have been devoted to building a **strong legal and administrative basis for the Foundation for the next decades**. A bylaws committee worked many hours at reviewing every single item of the bylaws to adapt it legally and ethically to the work and mission of our organisation. We are truly grateful for their hard work.
- We have purchased Directors and Officers insurance as well as Errors and Commissions insurance to protect the members and activities of Aquarium. Our insurance is effective as of June first. Our first Vice-president on the EC worked very hard on this file.

Aquarium activities:

1. Special Communities:

We believe at Aquarium that a psychoanalytic thinking is important to the understanding and intervention while working with children and their families in distinct communities.

- The Ultra-orthodox Jewish communities have been severely affected by the propagation of the Covid19, confinement and social distancing. Aquarium is active in providing consultation and supervision. In addition, AF offered its services to Relief Resources.
- First Nation Communities are also badly affected by the pandemic and its consequences. AF is actively working with mental health professionals of Manawan Atikamek community and provides consultation and supervision. A letter was sent by the Honorable Patrick Brazeau, senator, to all First Nations Communities informing them of AF.

2. Commission des droits de l'enfant et de la protection de la jeunesse (Mme Régine Laurent):

Aquarium Foundation presented in November a *mémoire* to the commissioners stressing the importance of the developmental and psychological needs of the child and the mental health needs of professionals working with children in distress.

3. Community psychotherapists:

Aquarium responded to requests for consultation and supervision coming from psychotherapists working in the community and who work with children and adolescents. We hope to start whenever possible an efficient networking of psychotherapists to start a peer study and consultation groups.

4. Community Panel Discussion:

Aquarium responded to an invitation last February to participate to a multi-disciplinary panel discussion with other university professors and politicians on the Quebec law prohibiting religious signs in certain functions, including teachers. The panel was organised by a non-denominational community organisation in Ville St-Laurent.

5. School outreach:

The Lester B Pearson School Board is a partner of Aquarium Foundation. We had

to postpone obviously outreach projects in selected schools until some school normality is resumed.

A word of thanks

This has not been an easy time and technology has not always been kind. We have been stressed personally and professionally by the Covid-19 and its many consequences. This is why we need to acknowledge even more the hard work of everybody. We estimate the number of benevolent hours in the several hundreds just in the past few months. We had a dozen of formal meetings with different people and organisations. Our thanks go to all our general members, to the Board members, to our honorary members, to our legal representative, Me David Rosenzweig who worked pro-bono and to the many volunteers that gave generously of their heart and time to attend the multiple minutias of our work and obligations.

As we are moving to a next step towards providing grants for analytic treatment, a public launch, and public awareness of mental health issues in young people, we need an army of volunteers. If you have time to spare, please tell us. We need your help. We also cordially invite you to donate or to communicate with us.

We sincerely wish each one of you, health, safety and wellbeing for you and your loved ones. This is a historical crisis and as such, it is a unique opportunity for solidarity, creativity and further knowledge.

The Executive Committee,

Mounir Samy, President
Susan Baxt, First Vice-president
Jennifer Erunza, Second Vice-president, communication
Mercedes Muhlegg, Secretary