



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

The only psychoanalytic foundation in Canada devoted to children and adolescents

Newsletter No. 4

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It is at times of crisis that we are revealed to ourselves. It is only then, that we are able to touch the essence of our humanity, what is truly *essential* to us and what we believe in. The world is in crisis, children are suffering. We learned in a recent survey that one youth in four in Quebec is suffering from anxiety. Parents and teachers are stressed and therapists are heavily solicited. Mental health has become a national concern.

The Covid-19 has not occulted the preceding Global Unrest related to the survival of the self and the planet, but on the contrary: It has put these existential issues under the magnifying glass of trauma.

The founders and members of Aquarium Foundation (AF) believe in psychoanalytic *truth*. Away from any dogmatism or any particular author or theory, we believe in the unique tool it provides to heal deep suffering, to restore broken relationships within and outside the family and to give meaning to the challenges of existence via the expansion of conscious awareness of self and others. Far from being fixed, this *truth*, from the start, has been in constant movement and evolution. It is a living truth, both unique and universal, personified as well as informed by our daily clinical encounters. We call this *psychoanalytic love*, and there is no better description of what defines Aquarium. Hence, this is our mission: Make analytically informed therapy more accessible to children, support therapists via peer support and discussion groups, and promote child psychoanalysis and bring to public awareness the deep emotional concerns of children and adolescents.

To achieve these goals, we need your involvement as well as your financial support.

Did you visit our Website lately?

Don't wait for a vaccine to cheer-up! It transmits the hope and optimism that children compel us to. Thanks to Jennifer Errunza, Mercedes Muhlegg and others, you will find information about AF, about the Covid-19 and other subjects of interest. Given how stressed and overworked everybody is, the upkeep of the Website is simply a miracle of generosity. You can safely donate online and receive an immediate receipt for tax purposes.

Great News: Grant awards!

It is with unconcealed excitement that we are announcing that Aquarium will start the process of subsidizing the treatment of children and youth (up to 28 years of age) by beginning of 2021. Aquarium has secured to date \$10,000 to that effect but much more is needed. We all know that psychoanalytic treatment is lengthy and expensive. Grants will be available on a priority basis to the CPS community. The grant committee is working diligently to make the entire process respect the strict confidentiality of the patients and families, to provide a blind neutral evaluation of requests, to foster the respect of the therapist-patient clinical space as well as secure every legal and ethical aspect of Grant awards. We extend our sincerest gratitude to Francine Cyr and Oscar Grossman for their tireless work on the Grant Committee.

Strong foundations for the next decades for Aquarium

As promised in our last Newsletter, Aquarium has acquired insurance for its activities which came into effect June 1st, 2020. These are called in the corporate jargon « Director and Officers (D&O) » and « Errors and Omissions (E&O) ». Insurance adds to our operating cost while being necessary for our organisation. Susan Baxt, single handed, worked relentlessly for several months on this file and AF is truly indebted to her.

With much appreciation to Susan Baxt, Daniel Proulx and the late Dianne Casoni, we have now carefully re-written our Bylaws to reflect the unique spirit and nature of Aquarium. We are proud to announce that the new Bylaws have been adopted in both their English and French versions at our second Annual General Membership Meeting that was held October 5th, 2020.

The Annual General Membership Meeting (AGM)

The Pandemic didn't stop our work; it only complicated the logistics and frustrated our desire to get together and celebrate with shared wine and food. On October 5th, 2020 we had our second AGM on ZOOM, sober and wired rather than tipsy and connected. Our membership has expanded to about 125 people from various disciplines and horizons. *Any person* can become a member of Aquarium as long as he/she agrees with the Foundation's mission and abides to its Bylaws. This year and because of the Pandemic, the Board waved off any membership fee and instead invites each member to donate \$20 (tax deductible) to help AF with its operating costs. **Some have been prompt and generous; we are praying for others to follow.** Becoming a member will allow you to vote on the governance of AF, sit on various committees, participate in the way you wish or simply state your support. All that is required to become a member is to contact AF or a member on the Board.

Fundraising under the Covid-19

Fundraising under the Covid-19 is like asking an alpinist during a hard climb to relax and think of something else. Public fundraising activities are presently very difficult and the general

philanthropic movement in the country and elsewhere is suffering. And yet, what AF can offer to the society is needed more than ever. We have started a year ago to meet with communication firms and are seriously considering hiring a specialized firm to accompany us in our attempts towards public visibility, access to government officials and other donor foundations sensitive to mental health issues and the recruitment of power people on our Board. Mounir Samy and Lila Amirali recently attended – by invitation – a private forum with M. Christian Dubé, the Quebec Minister of Health and Social Services. It was an enlightened experience of how to sell AF to people in power and the necessity of the help of an experienced PR firm. Putting AF on social media is another story and can only be achieved if we have an administrative director for its daily operation.

Despite an important pro-bono portion, the hiring of a PR firm is a large expense, and we hope to raise the necessary funds to be financially solid.

Awarded Grant from the Federal Government via the Red Cross

We applied to several grants offered by the federal government in relation to the Covid-19. We were hoping for money, but registered Foundations like AF are not eligible for funds. We received instead a few hundred packages of personal protective equipment (masks and gloves) that were offered to our community partners, the Lester B. Pearson School Board and the Hassidic Communities of Montreal where they were much needed and greatly appreciated.

News from the Executive Committee

Our immense gratitude goes to Susan Baxt and Mercedes Muhlegg for their commitment and devotion on the Executive as Vice-president and Secretary, respectively, during the two most important years of the Foundation's existence and who have recently stepped down from office. At its last meeting (October 2020), the Board elected Lila Amirali in the office of Vice-president and Cindy Finn in the office of Secretary. Mena Iaciofano joined the executive to help us benevolently with our administration. We welcome Lila, Cindy and Mena with pride and pleasure. The New Year 2021 promises to be busy for AF's Board and Executive Committee and we can only praise the commitment and generosity of all Board members and volunteers.

Aquarium at work

AF continues to provide regular consultation to therapists working with special communities and who have been our partners from the beginning (ex. the Atikamekw community of Manawan and the Hassidic communities). We have also responded to requests from therapists in the general community and from Social Pediatric Centers affiliated with Dr. Julien's well-known foundation. We aim to start soon psychoanalytic peer support and consultation groups to interested therapists. Since mid-March, there have been four publications

in both languages reflecting on the impact of the Pandemic on children and our role as child therapists and analysts.

Our Secret

Since the time when this Foundation was only a hopeful idea on January 1st, 2018, the number of benevolent hours bestowed to the vision of Aquarium by so many dedicated individuals is counted in the thousands! And it still goes on...

It is that same vision that inspired generous donors to give so far close to 35,000\$ prior to any public launch, and without any publicity. Thanks to them, we were able to pay legal registration, accountant and insurance fees and secure money towards therapy grants and other projects. And Aquarium is determined to keep that vision yet stronger and higher.

Our motivation comes probably from what is *organic* about our organisation. Something live and vibrant that transcends our individualities and that brings us together in a fertile and purposeful way for the welfare of children, adolescents and emerging adults. We are privileged as therapists and analysts to touch what is most intimate about being human and know that Aquarium couldn't be anything else.

Thank you for joining us and for your support.

The Executive Committee,

Mounir Samy, President

Lila Amirali, Vice-President

Jennifer Erunza, Vice-president Communication

Cindy Finn, Secretary

Mena Iaciovano, Administrative Assistant