



**MARK YOUR CALENDAR**



- ◆ **Tues., September 16, 2008:** Amcal's 7th annual "Family Matters" Golf Tournament, at the Beaconsfield Golf Club.
- ◆ **Oct. 20-21, 2008:** fall Professional Development Conference with Dr. Kenneth Hardy; topic: "**Kids in Crisis: Strategies for Working with Troubled Youth,**" at Hotel Le Chantecler, Ste. Adèle, Que.

**Congratulations** are heartily extended by the staff and Board of Directors of Amcal Family Services to our Executive Director, **Heather Parker**, who is again the recipient of the Price Waterhouse Coopers Canada Foundation 2008 **Leadership Grant** of \$2500.

**NEW! KIDS IN CRISIS**



Reprising its role in bringing internationally-known therapists to share their expertise, Amcal has booked Dr. Kenneth Hardy to speak at its annual fall Professional Development Conference, to be held at Hotel Le Chantecler, in Ste.

Adèle, on Mon. and Tues., **October 20<sup>th</sup>—21<sup>st</sup>, 2008.** Dr. Hardy's topic will be "**Kids in Crisis: Strategies for Working with Troubled Youth.**"

An award-winning author, educator, and consultant, Dr. Hardy is a Professor of Family Therapy at Drexel University in Philadelphia, and the Director of the Eikenberg Institute for Relationships in New York. In his private practice, Dr. Hardy's work with at-risk children and families has earned him considerable public acclaim—not to mention appearances on the Oprah Winfrey Show and Dateline NBC.

Dr. Hardy is a popular and frequent conference presenter, and works extensively with institutions that help at-risk children and families such as the Children's Defence Fund, the D. C. Superior Court, and the Menninger Clinic. He recently co-authored the book "Teens Who Hurt: Clinical Interventions to Break the Cycle of Adolescent Violence."

Dr. Hardy's presentation in October will address ways of dealing effectively with adolescents in crisis and turmoil. He comments candidly: "Working with adolescents (is) a daunting endeavour." The "normal" developmental issues of adolescents, combined with youths' general spirit of experimentation, can be further com-

pounded by other emotional, behavioural, and familial crises.

Dr. Hardy's workshop will give therapists and other helping professionals a framework for understanding the angry, aggressive, even explosive behaviours that may be exhibited by troubled youth, as well as strategies to effectively assess, engage and treat youth who have been identified as "acting out."

Dr. Hardy's systemic approach offers steps to help professionals establish successful alliances with the youths' peers, schools, and families. He also will suggest ways to avoid common pitfalls associated with working with adolescents, and ways to monitor the level of fear that may be experienced by those who work with troubled youth.

Plan to participate in this dynamic and topical workshop!

**Date: Mon. & Tues., October 20-21, 2008**

**Location:** Hotel Le Chantecler, Ste. Adèle, Que.

**Cost: \$210**

**Registration/Information:** visit the "Upcoming Events" page of our website [www.amcal.ca](http://www.amcal.ca) or call (514) 694-3161, ext. 301.

*For more than 10 years, Amcal has hosted a fall Professional Development Conference, as part of our commitment to provide quality training and networking opportunities for helping professionals, and promote community awareness about issues affecting families.*

**TOTALLY WIRED!**

Would you know what this means?

Cyber friend 1: "**g2g. Cul gle1**"

Cyber friend 2: "**hagn tc hb**"

Approximately 30 teachers who attended the hour-long presentation made by Amcal's Executive Director at the November 2007 Teachers' Convention got some answers.

Tackling the topical and controversial issue of the impact of technology on families, Mrs. Heather Parker offered historical perspective and some practical tips for teens and parents coping with concerns such as cyber bullying, video game addictions, access to pornography, and sexual predators.

Mrs. Parker quoted recent Pew statistics that indicate more than 90% of parents and youth are online daily, and that more than 60% of both groups possess two or more technological "gadgets."

Mrs. Parker encouraged parents to educate themselves and their children about Internet safety, and to check the search history on their browsers regularly. She also advised that children be frequently reminded that the people they chat with online may conceal their true identity, and that anything children post online is there forever, and can never be taken back.

Still wondering about the answers to above abbreviations? Invite Amcal's Executive Director to present her timely "Totally Wired" address (complete with Resources list) to your school or parents' meeting.

**Contact:** Mrs. Heather Parker, Executive Director, Amcal, at 514-694-3161, ext. 222, or at [hparker@amcal.ca](mailto:hparker@amcal.ca)



**AND:** read Amcal's articles, featured regularly in **BoomersView** magazine (distributed to selected West Island communities).



*Every father should remember that one day his son will follow his example instead of his advice.*

Unknown

### AMCAL'S APPROACH

Now we have it in writing—the theory behind the practice at Amcal. In collaboration with Amcal's Executive Director and staff, McGill Master of Education student Mrs. Pamela Yarrow recently completed a research project designed to make more explicit the therapeutic orientation used in Amcal's Residential Program. Current research suggests that a coherent theoretical framework is associated with improved client care, as well as facilitates accountability to community partners and funding sources.

Mrs. Yarrow's research paper documents the **therapeutic modality** used in the Residential Program—which is a **strengths-based, solution-focused** approach that takes seriously the **dynamic systems** that impact the family. To promote positive change and family integration for families facing difficulties, the 14-week Residential Program provides a structured therapeutic environment of respite care for the youth, as well as family counselling and a Parents' Support Group. The emphasis is on identifying the family's unique values, competencies, and resources. Amcal's staff take a holistic, multidisciplinary approach, working in consultation with school and other professionals involved with the family.

Mrs. Yarrow also developed new evaluation questionnaires, incorporating a five-point Likert scale, that are designed to assess the perceptions of parents, youth and staff about the program's effectiveness and consistency, as well as the staff's standards of professional practice. To obtain copies of this therapeutic modality document, **contact:** 514-694-3161, ext. 301 or [afs@amcal.ca](mailto:afs@amcal.ca)



### TESTIMONIAL

#### ECSTASY

*I popped to become real, and life became meaningless.*

*I popped to become social, and felt alone. I popped to understand, and became confused.*

*I popped to feel, and became numb.*

*I popped to keep together, and fell apart.*

*I popped to become something, and became a nothing.*

*I popped to become a part, and fell apart.*

*I popped for love, and found contempt.*

*I popped for clarity, and my future became dark.*

*I popped to live, and died inside.*

Contributed by an Amcal Residential Teen, June 2007

### AMICABLE VISITS AFTER DIVORCE:



The father wanted to take his kids to the mall. A simple scenario that shouldn't require complex preparations and negotiations. Unless you're a divorced father, whom the court has decided cannot see his children without supervision. Then you may need to contact Sherman Blunte, Coordinator of Amcal's **Supervised Visitation Program**.

In response to requests from a growing segment of the population, Amcal is now offering a Supervised Visitation Program for **private clients** who need assistance with custody and visitation issues. As Mr. Blunte points out, "family problems hit all of us."

If those problems result in a divorce settlement in which one parent is not allowed unsupervised access to the children, the Supervised Visitation Program may be the family's best option for a "home-like visit" when visiting at home is not an option.

For more than a decade, Amcal has offered a

### AMCAL HELPS IT HAPPEN!



Supervised Visitation Program on a contractual basis with Batshaw Youth and Family Centres. That program provides supervised visits for children who are under the mandate of the Department of Youth Protection.

Increasingly, however, Amcal was receiving requests from private individuals who were experiencing spousal and family problems which the court considered potentially dangerous to their children. This is where Mr. Blunte's job begins.

He explains, "You do this with your heart; you can't judge." Typically, the non-custodial parent contacts Mr. Blunte. He interviews that parent, and obtains permission to consult with other professionals associated with the case (e.g. lawyers, social workers, psychologists), in addition to the custodial parent, to get a sense of the issues, and boundaries, involved.

As Mr. Blunte clarifies: "I'm there for the clients. But I need honesty." His goal is to protect the children as well as Amcal's Visitation Supervisors, who are always vigilant that nothing inappropriate takes place during the visits.

"It's all about conversation," Mr. Blunte remarks. "Most times people are glad to see their children." And Visitation Supervisors are glad to be present even when visits involve special occasions that do not take place at Amcal's facility.

Mr. Blunte recalls supervised outings to Disney on Ice, even a day trip to visit elderly grandparents living off the island of Montreal. Clients pay an hourly fee for this service, and negotiate the times (usually evenings or weekends) according to the availability of the Visitation Supervisors.

The goal of the Supervised Visitation Program is to provide neutrality, security and confidentiality, and to help strengthen parent-child relationships that have become disconnected by divorce. "We like to give it a personal touch," comments Mr. Blunte.

And, he elaborates, the Visitation Supervisor may refer a client to the Outreach Family Counselling Program if private counselling is needed, in addition to supervised family visits. "We look at the whole family situation," Mr. Blunte explains. "That's why we're called Amcal FAMILY Services."

Are you, or someone you know, experiencing family difficulties as a result of divorce? **Contact** Sherman Blunte, **SVP Coordinator**, at 514-694-3161 ext. 228, or at [sblunte@amcal.ca](mailto:sblunte@amcal.ca)

