

Dombresson, October 2012

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To supporters of the FL Borel
Foundation

NIC (Non-residential Intensive Care) Experimental Group

Dear ladies and gentlemen,

For a period of three years, the FL Borel Foundation in Dombresson undertook an innovative project as an extension of the support services we provide for vulnerable children and their families. This is what we said about it in autumn 2008:

At-risk children and young people are usually supported by outreach family care workers or placed in full- or part-time residential care. In 1992 the "Fondation Borel" (as it is known in French) developed a new concept of personalised placements which we were able to implement thanks to funding from the Loterie Romande and the Fondation Isabelle Hafen in 1998. We have already seen some positive results and this way of working is now recognised by the local Canton. The NIC 2008 Project is a further extension of this concept. It seeks to provide support for 14 to 16 children and adolescents over three years within a structured group that would usually work with only nine children in full residential care. This experimental unit breaks down the "inside vs. outside" boundaries that normally exist between outreach services and full-time residential placements.

The fundamental principle is that a child should grow up within their family. Fostering and residential care aim to provide a flexible safety net, which is sometimes temporary and necessary, but not an end in itself. We believe it is important for a child to be able to follow the variations within their family situation and have the option of adapting their living conditions as a result. Sometimes full- or part-time residential care will be appropriate, at other times day-care or living at home with close monitoring; the child should be able to move fluidly between these different situations while always being supported by the same team of adult care-givers and youth workers. Giving the child a place within a structured group

supported long-term by the same youth worker team, regardless of the child's status or living situation, will enable this greater fluidity.

The goal is to provide a care setting which builds on and reinforces the bond between child, family and professional care team.

This experience made a deep impression on us. It made us question ourselves and consider our service provision and how we deliver it. In the end, this experience confirmed our choices were the right ones and it strengthened our belief in them.

We are going to continue working in this way with children and their families, with an emphasis on defending children's rights. We will continue to seek solutions even in situations that appear "impossible", because it is by overcoming limitations through dialogue and involving families in finding their own answers, and by staying humble as to what we can achieve, that we can sometimes help a child to build a future for him or herself. It is also by being attentive to the child and family that we allow the child to build his or her own lasting foundations.

Attached you will find the summarised report of this experimental project, which was made possible through the generous financial support of the Loterie Romande and the Canton of Neuchâtel.

We hope that you will find it interesting reading and we send you our kind regards.

On behalf of the FL Borel Foundation
Director

Jean-Marie Villat