



June 2008

THE RIGHTS STUFF

Mental Health Rights Coalition

**Drop In and
Peer Support**

Hours:

11a.m- 4p.m,

Mon - Fri

Our Mission: To encourage, enable and empower the voice and participation of consumers in the mental health system in Hamilton.



The members, board and staff welcome Frances Jewell to Mental Health Rights Coalition. The new Executive Director brings with her to this position more than 15 years experience in peer counseling and consumer education.

Frances will be available by appointment for anyone who would like to meet with her. She will be attending some of the mental health meetings in the area so other community partners will be able to meet her in those forums. There will be a more formal welcoming held in September.

Seeking Board Members

The Mental Health Rights Coalition will be holding it's Annual General Meeting on September 15 and at that time there is an election of officers.

The board which can consist of 11 members is seeking nominations of mental health consumer/survivors who might be interested in participating on the board.

The only experience required is that you are a member of the Mental Health Rights Coalition and you have a personal understanding of what it is like to live with a mental illness. Other experience in the work place or with other boards is certainly an asset but not necessary.

If you think you might be interested in becoming a board member you must have been a member of the Mental Health Rights Coalition for no less than 3 months. You don't have to decide about the board right now but if you want to consider it you must be a member by June 15, 2008.

A membership form is included with this newsletter or you may come in to the office or contact us on line to get one. (mhrcprograms@bellnet.ca)

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Views and opinions expressed in this newsletter represent those of individual contributors, and not necessarily of The Mental Health Rights Coalition.



Aging and Mental Health—June is Senior's Month

By Peggy Guiler-Delahunt

Aging can be a frightening prospect for the most secure in society but for those with existing mental health issues and some of the other complicating factors like poverty the thoughts of growing old are terrifying.

June is "Senior's Month" in Ontario and the theme, "Discover the Possibilities" is meant to

encourage the fast growing aging population to "live life to the fullest and to continue to make their enormous contribution to their families, communities and country" says, Aileen Carroll, Minister Responsible for Seniors in Ontario.

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If you would prefer to receive an email copy of this newsletter please notify the editor at mhrcprograms@bellnet.ca

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Congratulations to John, Wayne, Patty, Kirsten, Nora, Fabrizio, Sandie, Lindsay and Marion for finishing the classroom piece of the Peer Support Training. The staff and members of MHRC look forward to seeing your faces in the drop in centre while you complete your practicum hours and volunteer with us. It's hard to believe that the

10 weeks have come and gone already! Wednesday afternoons just aren't the same without the training.

Do you have a problem that you'd like to talk to someone about? Do you have a goal that you'd like someone to support you to reach? Call us today

for information about how Peer Support could help you. We have trained volunteers to meet one-on-one with you; or you can call on one of our Peer Support Workers or Volunteers for "Peer Support on Demand". We have people who can talk to you Monday-Friday, 11-4. All you have to do is drop by or give us a call. You do not need an appointment or a referral from a doctor.

There will be a Peer Support Worker meeting on Thursday, June 19 at 12 pm. Lunch will be provided. Please RSVP to Amy.



Some of the class who recently completed the Peer Support Training pose at their last session with the trainer. Patty, Wayne, Amy Rogers—Peer Support Trainer, Marion, Lindsay, and Sandie-Lee

Administrative Assistant

Peggy Guiler-Delahunt

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Because this is Senior's Month I have spent some time studying aging and mental health over the past few weeks. The subject is huge and the issues are seemingly endless but I am encouraged to know that mental health consumer/survivors are not alone in their concern. It is an issue which is being addressed on a broad scale.

After all the reading and listening it would have been easy to be discouraged and wonder where we will ever come up with solutions for this enormous problem but then I look around the drop in centre where I work and and I see a network of help which already exists. There is all sorts of help existing in this city and advocates abound in all manner of places.

Our most important resource however is one another. As peers in mental health we have an obligation to one another and to ourselves to take responsibility for our own good health. We cannot expect "the system" to do it for us. We have disabilities but we also have abilities and it's time to concentrate on them.

"Although the world is full of suffering, it is also full of the overcoming of it."
Helen Keller—1880-1968

Matches Available

Any consumer looking for on-going peer support by a trained volunteer is encouraged to call the Peer Support Coordinator, Amy Rogers, at 905-545-2525.

FOR SUPPORT....



Give Us A Call!
A Peer Support Worker is available Monday to Friday, 11a.m.-4p.m.
905-545-2525

(Continued from page 1)

Many experts believe it is important to understand that mental illness is sometimes confused with the illnesses of aging like dementia and delirium. While these disorders are certainly disorders of the mind they are not the same thing as other mental illnesses like depression, schizophrenia and bi-polar disorder.

In Canada 12% of the population are over 65. By 2011 that number will rise to 14% and by 2025 (17 years from now) it will be 18%.

In recent years there has been a rise in suicide rates among seniors and now men over 80 are the highest risk group for suicide.

It is also estimated that 30 to 40% of the elderly who now live in institutions (seniors residences and hospitals) live with some degree of depression.

“One in five older persons suffers from a diagnosable psychiatric illness and the number of persons age 65 and older with a psychiatric disorder will more than double over the coming decades” says Stephen J. Bartels, in an article published by the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill in the U.S. (NAMI). Dr. Bartels also points out that these “disorders can ...impair functioning and can result in unnecessary hospitalizations and nursing home placements.”

While the numbers are frightening Dr. Bartels also points out “there have been dramatic advances in our understanding of these disorders ...and major gains in developing new treatments.”

On the down side though, Dr. Bartels says, “all too often older persons with psychiatric illness fail to receive treatments and services that they need. Family members,” he says, “are often left with the task of sorting out a confusing array of providers, treatments and systems of care, without basic information.

The theme throughout many of the documents on aging and mental illness seems to be one which promotes good self care, the acquisition of good information for both those who are aging and for those who provide support and service.

The key to aging with dignity and health is a responsibility of society but it is also the responsibility of those who are aging. Those of us who live with mental illness have to be particularly diligent to ensure

that the illnesses we live with do not further complicate our aging process.

Aging with “Attitude” is an article written by Charlotte Loewens for the older adult ministry of with the Association of Brethren Churches. It offers a simple list of suggestions to help maintain good health

- Exercise both mind and body on a regular basis, such as regular aerobic exercise, stretching , learning to play a musical instrument, or watching Jeopardy.
- Have a good network of social support
- Practice your faith
- Have regular medical check ups
- Eat a healthy well balanced diet
- Have reasonable expectations of yourself

(http://www.brethren.org/abc/hps_theme/hps_06/aging.html)

The **LHIN 4** (Hamilton Niagara Haldimand Brant Local Health Integration Network) has produced several **“Aging at Home Bulletins”** for seniors . While it has many strategies and suggestions for making aging easier it does not specifically address the issues surrounding mental illness. There are some good thoughts on how to keep yourself physically well and ideas about transportation along with ideas which can be championed by the community to making aging easier.

(<http://www.hnhblhin.on.ca/Page.aspx?id=1664>)

NAMI—Guide for Older Adults and Caregivers - this guide is a comprehensive and easy to understand handbook for those with mental illness and for their caregivers. It can be found at:

(http://www.nami.org/content/contentgroups/home4/home_page_spotlights/spotlight_1/guidebook.pdf)



Laughter is good

One of those email forwards we all get—author unknown.

AAADD—Know the Symptoms

Thank goodness there’s a name for this disorder. Somehow I feel better, even though I have it!!

Recently, I was diagnosed with AAADD—Age Activated Attention Deficit Disorder.

This is how it manifests:

I decide to water my garden. As I turn on the hose in the driveway, I look over at my car and decide it needs washing. As I start toward the garage, I notice mail on the porch table that I brought up from the mail box earlier. I decide to go through the mail before I wash the car. I lie my car keys on the table, put the junk mail in the garbage can under the table, and notice the can is full. I decide to put the bills back on the table and take out the garbage first. Then I think, since I’m going to be near the mailbox when I take out the garbage, I may as well pay the bills first. I take my cheque book off the table, and see there is only one check left. My extra cheques are in my desk in the study, so I go inside the house to my desk where I find the can of Coke I’d been drinking. I’m going to look for my cheques, but first I need to push the Coke aside so that I don’t accidentally knock it over. The Coke is getting warm, and I decide to put it in the refrigerator to keep it cold. As I head toward the kitchen with the Coke, a vase of flowers on the counter catches my eye...they need water. I put the Coke on the counter and discover my reading glasses that I’ve been searching for all morning. I decide I better put them back on my desk, but first I’m going to water the flowers. I set the glasses back down on the counter, fill a container with water and suddenly spot the RV remote. Someone left it on the kitchen table! I realize tonight when we go to watch TV, I’ll be looking for the remote, but I won’t remember it’s on the kitchen table, so I decide to put it back in the den where it belongs, but first I’ll water the flowers. I pour some water in the flowers, but quite a bit of it spills on the floor. I set the remote back on the table, get some towels and wipe up the spill. Then I head down the hall trying to remember what I was planning to do. At the end of the day : the car isn’t washed, the bills aren’t paid, there is a warm can of Coke on the counter, the flowers don’t have enough water, there is still only have one cheque in my book , I can’t find the remote, or my glasses and I don’t remember what I did with the car keys. Then, when I try to figure out why nothing got done today, I’m really baffled because I know I was busy all day and I’m really tired. I realize this is a serious problem, and I’ll try to get some help for it, but first I’ll read my email. ..Do me a favour. Forward this message to everyone you know, because I don’t remember who on earth I’ve sent it to.

An Idea I had

This page appears periodically in the Rights Stuff and is the work of members at the Mental Health Rights Coalition. The poetry and prose are the opinions of the authors and may not reflect the opinion of the Mental Health Rights Coalition. The Editor reserves the right to edit as seen fit, any material submitted for this column. Submissions from members are encouraged. They should be original material and include the name of the author. Names may be withheld from the readership if requested.



Photo by Peggy Guiler-Delahunt.

The whole world gets a little manic in the Spring

By Martha Ronalds

I don't know if other people get a little manic in the Spring, but I do!

I actually wait for it, despite taking my pills, and a long cold Canadian Winter, I look forward to the time when I feel "Spring arriving" in the air. I look forward to longer days, warmer times, flowers, trees opening, and pollen galore.

It is a time I cherish. It is a great time to go on a trip, a day trip, or look forward to visiting museums and parks, and the Royal Botanical Gardens. I love the Lilac Dell there. It has over 750 types of lilacs and there are trails to walk which connect with the Bruce Trail.

I remember visiting the RBG with my parents and friends. It was the perfect place for enjoying gardens and having a picnic. It is also a great place to take photographs and learn about plants and flowers.

I am also looking forward to buying a few plants for my balcony box. I love growing ivy, pansies and sweet peas. A few flowers can brighten any home. I look forward to seeing some of you out and about in Hamilton, and at the drop in at the Mental Health Rights Coalition.

Have a great Summer!

Schizophrenia

By David Billings

**The rare one percent's personality
Can hear a voice outside of currency,
Upon the dark edge of society,**

**Some view this call as Criminality,
A question upon good civility
The one percent's rare personality**

**The difference seems to both calamity,
A comedy that turns to tragedy
Upon the dark edge of society**

**Conformists often reject oddities
The different guise confronts well known Beauty
The one percents' rare personality**

**The voice's message is a mystery
A mad world makes it look like sanity
Upon the dark edge of society
The one percent's rare personality.**

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Up Coming Events of Interest

Mental Health Rights Coalition Events

Peer Support Workers

Meeting — Thursday, June 19 at 12 noon — Lunch will be provided. Please come and brainstorm with our new Executive Director and the other staff. RSVP to Amy.

Karaoke

Another Karaoke event this month.



Practice with staff each week in preparation for our big concert on **June 27th**. If service providers would like join us for this show please do. If you want to share a song please contact us about it ahead of time.

Annual General Meeting— Monday, September 15 10—12:30—location to be announced. This meeting will include the election of officers to the board of directors. If you want to apply for a board position you must be a member of the Mental Health Rights Coalition for no less than three months. Applications for membership may be picked up at the coalition office or by requesting one via email at mhrcprogams@bellnet.ca.

Application packages for the board will be made available by August and may also be re-

quested by contacting the coalition in person, by phone or on the internet.

SCOPE Awards—Monday, September 15, 2008—12:30 to 3 p.m.—Location to be announced.

Information about SCOPE Awards and an application are included with this newsletter and are also available on the web site.

Local events of interest for Mental Health Consumers

Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction

Report to the Community 2008—Sharing Hamilton's Successes in Poverty Reduction

Thursday, **June 5, 2008**
8 a.m. to 11:45 a.m.
Liuna Station

Space is limited—RSVP to 905.523.5600x222 or hrpr@hcf.on.ca

The Heat is On

Community Heat Response Plan Information Forum



Thursday, **June 12, 2008**—1-4 p.m. at Scot-tish Rite—4 Queen St.

South, Hamilton—free bus tickets and parking available.

You are invited to attend and learn how agencies, landlords, organizations and the city can help. Also learn about the new alert system strategies to reduce heat. Discuss and share experience and help inform and improve the Hamilton response effort strategies. For information and to register email rfrith@hamilton.ca or call 905-546-2424x7604

Free Dental Clinic

Usually held one Saturday a month this free clinic is run on by volunteer dentists in the Hamilton area. It is a first come, first serve basis. The clinic is held at 201 Wilson Street East in Ancaster. For information call 905-304-6300.

National Aboriginal Day Celebrations - June 20 & 21, 11:30 a.m. to 9 p.m. in the Gage Park Band shell





















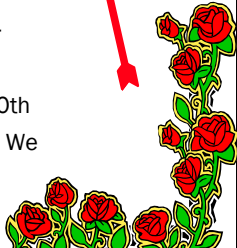
Arts and crafts, agency displays, workshops & speakers, drumming, dance demonstrations, food, Aboriginal Idol (June 21, 5-8 p.m.), Live entertainment each evening 8:30 to 10. Sunrise Ceremony at 7 a.m. each day.

For more information contact Deborah or Stephanie at 905-548-9593.



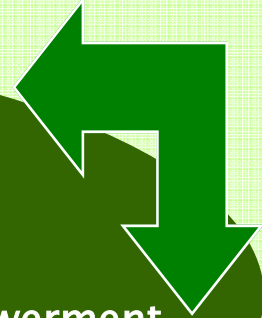
June 2008



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2 1 Movie 	3 1 Karaoke 	4 11 sign up for HPS trip 1 Backgammon 	5 1 Cards 	6 1 Movie 	7
8	9 1 Cards 	10 1 Movie 	11 HPS Trip to Blue Jays Game 1-4 Peer Training begins 	12 1 Karaoke 	13 1 Board Games 	14
15 Father's Day	16 1 Card Games 	17 1 Crafts 	18 1 Karaoke 1-4 Peer Training 	19 12 Peer Support Workers meeting—lunch will be provided. 1 Movie 	20 1 A little artwork 	21
22	23 1 Karaoke 	24 1 Cards 	25 1 Birthday Party for June Birthdays 1 - 4 Peer Training 1:30 Card games 	26 1 Bingo 	27 1 Karaoke Concert 	28
29	30 Closed until July 2nd	<p>On June 30 there will be a Karaoke concert. Members are asked to make note of their favourites over the month and we will give all performers a chance to show off their skill on the 30th Birthday Party Day—if it is your birthday please come and join us and have some cake. We might even sing to you if you think you could stand that.</p> 				



SCOPE Awards



Supporting Consumer Opportunities for Personal Empowerment

September 15, 2008—Details to be announced

SCOPE awards recognize people for their contributions and efforts which empower consumer/survivors of the mental health system in Hamilton. If you feel someone has empowered you or helped you achieve personal growth please fill out the name of the person you wish to nominate along with their contact information, your own information, and why you feel this person deserves this award.

Submission requirements

- To Mental Health Rights Coalition at address/es below.
- No later than Friday August 15, 2008.
- Maximum of three nominations

Your Information:

Your name: _____

Address: _____

City _____ Postal Code: _____

Your telephone number: _____

Are you: A Consumer A Service Provider

Who You Would Like To Nominate:

Their name: _____

Their address: _____

_____ Postal Code: _____

Their telephone number: _____

Is he/she a service provider? _____

Where? _____

Why are you nominating this person for a S.C.O.P.E. award?

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Use the reverse of the form if you need more room.