



February 2008

THE RIGHTS STUFF

A Publication of The Mental Health Rights Coalition

Our Mission: To encourage, enable and empower the voice and participation of consumers in the Mental Health System in Hamilton.

Drop In and Peer Support

Hours:

11a.m- 4p.m,

Mon - Fri

Comings and Goings—change of staff at MHRC

January brings the new year but also changes in staff for the Mental Health Rights Coalition. Kate Moore who has been with the Mental Health Rights Coalition for about two years is moving on to a teaching position

in a private school.

She will be missed but the staff and members wish Kate the very best in her new position.

Taking over the Administrative Assistant position is Peggy Guiler-Delahunt who comes to

Mental Health Rights Coalition with ten years experience working at another Consumer Survivor Initiative in the area.

Commuting to Hamilton from Port Dover, Peggy also works part time at Good Shepherd

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A Letter from Kate Moore

As you read this, I will have been away from the Coalition for roughly a month; however, I did not get a chance before my departure to prepare an official “goodbye”, so here it is!

As some of you know, I obtained another part time job on top of my MHRC hours, instructing some college courses for a private college. This is where I’ve been when I’m not in the office! Over the Christmas holidays, one of the permanent instructors for the college resigned his position, and it was offered to me. Because it is a full time position I have decided to resign as the Membership Coordinator/Administrative Assistant with the Coalition. Because it happened over the holidays, I did not have time to adequately say goodbye to you before the January edition of the newsletter went out.

I want to thank everyone who came by the

drop in to say goodbye and give their best wishes; it meant a lot to me to know that you gave up some time for me! I want to thank each and every person I have ever met here (members and staff) for giving me the knowledge I need to live my life, do my job(s), and take one day at a time. You have all taught me something different, something unique and something equally valuable.

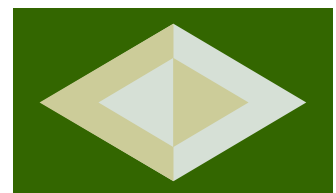
As I go on in life I will never forget the lessons taught to me here. I learned that patience and perseverance will always pay off. I learned the benefits of empowerment and the grim face of tokenism. I have learned the value of each and every life and that positives come out of every negative. I have learned that Consumer Survivor Initiatives work; not because of their mandate or their funding, but because of the dedication and energy of the Executive Director, Board of Directors, staff, volunteers and active members. They work because those involved give

hope where all hope was lost, they lift up when everything else pulls down, and they pull together when no one else will.

I will keep you all in my heart and on my mind as I go on in my new place of employment, and I promise that the lessons I have learned here will not be lost or tainted.

I wish you all the best in your new year, in your life, and in all your future endeavours.

Sincerely Yours,
Kate



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

A Shorter Version of the Rights Stuff

This publication of the Rights Stuff is shorter than usual because of the change in staff. We felt it was important to get it out on time to those who depend on having the calendar and other information. Next month’s issue will return to its normal size and we look forward to your comments and suggestions.

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

Deb Sherman: Executive Director

mhrced@bellnet.ca

I know that I represent the feelings of all the staff, the Board of Directors and our regular drop-in users in expressing our mixed feelings around the loss of a valued staff member. Once again MHRC's loss is someone else's gain, and in the case of Kate, who has moved on to teach Community Service Worker program full time at a private college, it is a win-win for the college and for her. It's comforting too, to know that her graduates entering our local workforce will have been taught by someone who "gets" the issues and the perspectives of our unique community.

I am very pleased that the hiring committee of your Board of Directors was able to narrow down to a few excellent candidates for our Administrative Assistant/ Member Coordinator. Peg Guiler-Delahunt has joined us just this week, and brings extensive experience in consumer/survivor initiatives as well as a long history of collaborating with MHRC on research projects around peer support. On her third day, Peg shows promise of being as much of a taskmaster as Kate – she has the newsletter almost ready to go and has insisted that I stop everything and give her my share. After giving Peg a reasonable time to settle in and get to know the members, I hope that our community partners will connect with her, too. Peg will also be taking on the Voices of Experience project duties for as long as that project and its funding continue.

Another transition I am both sad and pleased to tell you of is the departure of Shawn Lauzon as Executive Director of Ontario Peer Development Initiative. Shawn is taking on a newly created position in the marketing of Fresh Start Clean in Toronto (a consumer run business). His leadership and dedicated service to OPDI over the past five years has steered our provincial voice through a period of both reformation and reform, and he will most certainly be missed. That's the sad part of the news - the happy part is that Fresh Start will benefit and grow from this change as, no doubt, Shawn will, too.

I wish to thank our member John S for his efforts around expressing to the Ministry of Health, his and some local consumers'

questions and concerns about the Common Assessment Tool that is to be used by all community mental health programs (no, not us, we don't do assessments of our members...) The MOH has responded by developing some training modules that will help providers to conduct the assessment interviews with sensitivity – and has included consumers in that training, which your President Herman and I will be assisting with in one of the regional sites in the first few days of February.

I must express our extreme gratitude to Melrose United Church for once again making a donation to MHRC – thanks to them, you will soon be seeing some improvements in that last stronghold of extreme

Peer Support Coordinator:
Amy Rogers
peersupport@bellnet.ca

There are some changes to the Peer Support team to announce. Blair will be moving on from his role with MHRC to work with the ACT team in Brantford. Blair has been with us since April and we are sad to see him leave, but happy he's found a great position elsewhere! We will miss Blair's computer expertise and his constant multi-tasking. Good luck in the future, Blair and thanks for all your hard work with us.

There is a silver lining in all this as we are lucky to welcome Carl to our team. Carl has been filling in as relief staff for a few months, and now joins us on Wednesdays. Carl's calm nature and thoughtfulness will be an asset to our team. Please drop by and say hello!

Peer Support Training

Now that we have welcomed Peggy to fill Kate's absence, I can continue with the Peer Support training. There is a large number of people who are interested in taking the training, and the list continues to grow! Interviews will begin soon and I'll begin training March 5th. If you are interested in taking the Peer Sup-

port Volunteer Training, contact me soon at 905-545-2525 or peersupport@bellnet.ca.

shabbiness; the kitchen. Once it's fixed up, people might actually choose to eat in there...
Please keep yourselves bundled up during this season of multiple cold alert days – and hope that this year Warton Willie will wear his sunglasses or something, so that by next newsletter, maybe we'll be starting to warm up just a little. In the meantime, the more people in the drop-in, the warmer it will be!!!

port Volunteer Training, contact me soon at 905-545-2525 or peersupport@bellnet.ca.

Special Training Opportunity

There is a **Crisis Refresher Training** for all Peer Supporters on **Tuesday, February 26** from **10-4** at **MHRC**. This new, one day training opportunity is designed to supplement the Peer Support Volunteer Training offered at MHRC. It will increase your comfort level in providing peer support during a crisis situation by reviewing and expanding on the crisis component already offered through the ten week training course. We will look at defining a crisis, feelings associated with a crisis, supportive listening during a crisis, crisis risk assessment, safety planning and local area resources. This training is open to anyone who has already *completed* the Peer Support Training and wants to have some additional training on how to support someone who is in distress or crisis. Special consideration will be given to people who have not completed MHRC's training, but are currently working in a peer-defined, supportive role and feel they would benefit from this supplemental training. Please RSVP to Amy no later than **Thursday, February 21** if you would like to attend.

Notes from the President

Board Updates

From the President—Herman Westerik

It is the hope of the board that regular updates will give some

Meeting highlights—January 21, 2008

- Margaret Bennett was introduced as the newest member of the board. She will attend the Annual General Meeting where her appointment will be ratified
- Dan Warburton has resigned from the board. Dan will be missed.
- Thanks to a generous gift from Melrose United Church some updates and new furniture will give a new look to the kitchen. We thank Melrose for their continued support of our centre.
- Next meeting—February 28th - 1:30 p.m. at Rosemary's

The Board hopes these newsletter inserts will give the membership some idea of just what the function of a board is so that we can continue to be of service to them.

Respectfully submitted by

Herman Westerik, President

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President
Herman Westerik

Vice President
Rosemary Garside

Secretary
Jennifer Armstrong

Treasurer
Sharon Richards

Members at large
Connie Bryce-McKinlay
Margaret Bennett

Administrative Assistant Peggy Guiler- Delahunt

mhrcprograms@bellnet.ca

This is my first week at Mental Health Rights Coalition and already I feel like I belong. I thank the staff and members for making me feel so welcome.

The learning curve for me is a big one these days. There is the job to learn about and members and other service providers to get to know. Coming from a small town I am also experiencing a little culture shock.

It is all very exciting and I look forward to getting to know the people and places of Hamilton.

As editor of this newsletter I had to make a hurried effort to get it out this week. We will return to the eight page format next month.

If you have comments or suggestions for the newsletter please feel free to contact me by email or phone at the Coalition.

Poetry Contest

6th Annual BrainStorm
Poetry Contest for mental
health consumers

1st Prize \$250

2nd Prize \$150

3rd Prize \$ 75

This contest is sponsored by Northern Initiative for Social Action in Sudbury and is open to all mental health consumers. Poems must be original works and can be on any topic. They are judged on their originality, creativity, how well they provoke the readers, writing ability, use of imagery and sound devices, writing mechanics and their lasting affect on the readers.

Winning poems will be published in the spring 2008 issue of Open Minds Quarterly

Deadline is March 28, 2008



News Briefs

Affordable Transit Pass Pilot Program

This pilot program has been approved by City council and is to run from April 1, 2008 to March 31, 2009.

The pilot program is only for citizens who are working and whose annual income falls below the poverty line. For a single person that means if you are working and make less than \$17,570 you are eligible. Depending on the success of the program it may be expanded to include those on Ontario Works and Ontario Disability in the future.

If you are eligible for the program a monthly pass will cost \$39.50 rather than the usual \$79.00.

For more information you may contact a Municipal Services Centre or your city councillor.

REMINDER

If there is inclement weather in the winter months, MHRC may close the drop in for safety of members and staff.

If you think the drop-in may be closed because of bad weather, CALL before you try to come. If we are closed, the greeting on the answering machine will inform you not to come to the drop-in.

Mental Health Rights Coalition Main Phone Number:

FOR SUPPORT...



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

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.

STANDING & AD HOC COMMITTEES

Development: R. Garside, Chair

Finance: Sharon Richards

Education: Staff Facilitated

Newsletter: Staff Facilitated

SCOPE: Staff Facilitated

Note: standing committees can include voting members who are not on the board. If you are considering running for the Board of Directors, your participation on a standing committee would demonstrate your commitment and give you some experience!

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FORM

*Please Note: if you fill in your phone number and/or email, address, we will assume it is ok for us to contact you to give notice of important events or meetings.

Do you live, work or receive services within LHIN 4? YES NO

Please Print

Today's Date: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

Postal Code: _____

*Phone: _____

Birth Date: _____

Email: _____

Please Check One:

I am a consumer/survivor
(full privileges)

I am not a consumer/survivor
(Limited privileges, and newsletter by email only)

Crisis Refresher Training

Tuesday, February 26; 10am–4 pm
At The Mental Health Rights Coalition,
training room

Come review and expand your skills in supporting people who are in distress or crisis:

- What is a crisis?
- Feelings associated with a crisis
- Supportive listening during a crisis
- Crisis risk assessment
- Safety planning
- Resources

This training opportunity is open to anyone who has already completed the Mental Health Rights Coalition's Peer Support Volunteer Training. Special consideration will be given to those who have not completed MHRC's training, and are currently working in a peer-defined, supportive role and feel that they would benefit from some additional training on providing peer support during a distress or crisis situation.

Please R.S.V.P. to Amy no later than Thursday, February 21 if you would like to attend.

Out With the Cold

Wondering how to stay well during the cold & flu season and still get out with people? Come and find out how to better care for yourself.

Thursday, February 28

2 p.m.

The Mental Health Rights Coalition

102-678 Main St E

Hamilton, ON L8M 1K2











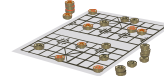







PH: 905-545-2525 F: 905-545-0211

Speakers: Jill and Mahad from Public Health

RSVP by calling 905-545-2525 or drop by to see a Peer Worker

February 2008

Don't let the cold you keep you inside. There is lots to do around here!

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
<p>If you would prefer to receive an email copy of this newsletter please notify the editor at mhrcprograms@bellnet.ca</p>				1
<p>4 Card Games</p> 	<p>5 Decorate for Valentines Day</p> 	<p>6</p>  <p>Cribbage</p>	<p>7 Movies & Popcorn</p> 	<p>8 Drawing</p> 
 <p>11 Movies & Popcorn</p>	<p>12</p>  <p>1 Craft project Make a card for some- one special</p>	<p>13 Skip Bo Tournament</p>  <p>Sign up for Theatre Aquarius</p>	 <p>14 Valentine's Day 1 Valentine Bingo</p> 	<p>15 Board Games</p> 
<p>18 Family Day Holiday We are closed</p>	<p>19 1 p.m. March Planning Meet- ing/newsletter plan- ning</p>	<p>20 Cribbage Tournament</p> 	<p>21 Movies & Popcorn</p> 	<p>22</p>  <p>Computer search</p>
 <p>25 Movies & Popcorn</p>	<p>26 Exploring Current Events in the Drop-In</p>  <p>Crisis Refresher Train- ing for Peer Supporters</p>	<p>27 Theatre Aquarius with HPS</p> 	 <p>28 2 p.m. Education Forum Staying healthy during cold and flu season</p>	<p>29 1:30 Board Meeting at Rosemary's</p> 