



May/June 2010

The Rights Stuff

Mental Health Rights Coalition

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

Peer Support

Hours:

11a.m- 4p.m,

Mon - Fri



The Real Soloist

This is the real Nathaniel Ayers, concert cellist, played by Jamie Fox in "The Soloist". There is some discussion about the movie in comments by Peggy on page three and more information about a foundation for those gifted in the arts who live with mental illness on page four. (See pages 3 and 4 form more)

Cottage Studio

On page four find links and info about Hamilton's own answer to the healing arts—the Cottage Studio. (Page 4)

Suicide Prevention Community Council of Hamilton

Suicide Prevention Consultation

Tuesday, May 18, 2010

1 pm. To 2:30 pm at MHRC

Details on Page 6

Taking Peer Support to a New Arena

MHRC Receives \$75,000 Trillium Grant

Mental Health Rights Coalition has received a grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation and is partnering with two local businesses — Trivaris and Crazy Daisy — to bring Peer Support into to the Public Sector. Read more about this exciting project in the ED's comments on page two. This newsletter will have regular updates on this project as continues through March of 2011. See page 2.

Peer Support Tasks

The Rights Stuff offers a snapshot of how peer supporters help other consumers who request our service. (See page 4)

Praise for Volunteers

MHRC has a small army of volunteers who make it possible to keep doing what is done. A little taste of what they do on page four. (page 4)

People's Review Panel Hires MHRC Peer Supporter

MHRC part time staffer and volunteer Dylan Goff is involved in an exciting project in Toronto. He tells about it on page five. (page 5)



Some links discussing issues which affect mental health/addiction consumers on page six.

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**MENTAL
HEALTH
RIGHTS
COALITION**

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Google Map

<http://maps.google.ca/maps?hl=en&q=20+Jackson+St.+W.+Hamilton+file:///C:/Users/John/My%20Documents/170522/0005017.0.0096026z-17>

Our Mission is to encourage, enable, and empower the voice and participation of consumer/survivors in the mental health system



Executive Director: Frances V. Jewell mhrced@bellnet.ca

MHRC is delighted to announce a \$75,000.00 grant from Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF). MHRC has partnered with Crazy Daisy Floral Productions and Trivaris Ltd in a Peer Support Training and employment project. The grant provides paid peer support worker training to twelve people with lived experience of mental illness and/or addictions. The second phase of the project employs three peer support workers who will provide peer support around mental health to companies/corporations in the Hamilton area. A fourth position is for a senior peer support worker who will act as a supporter for the three seconded peer support workers.

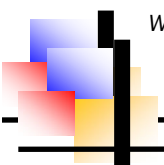
Mental Health at Work: Survive, Strive and Thrive

The project is ground breaking in terms of addressing barriers to employment for people with lived experience of mental illnesses/addiction. It addresses stigma, discrimination, attitudes, reintegration to the workplace and supporting people in the workplace during their illness.

Cindy Porter, Director of Marketing for Trivaris says, "Trivaris is thrilled to be partnering with Mental Health Rights Coalition and Crazy Daisy to develop a program aimed at providing employers with the information, tools and resources required to support leadership development in mental health in the workplace."

Understanding that individuals are the drivers of a company's productivity, employers will benefit significantly by ensuring their employees are at their best. If they are not at their best, companies, with the help of the peer supporter, will be able to offer help for their employees through difficult times. From an employee's perspective, a supportive recovery process can be instrumental in retaining employment" she added.

Sarah Moir of Crazy Daisy says, "By engaging with the corporate community we hope to get mental illness "out of the shadows", fight stigma and change how people with mental health conditions are viewed at work."



We are Crazy Daisy, not shrinking violets; and we will promote mental wellness

and education in a positive manor, with no shame, no judgment, and no apologies for who we are!"

...we will promote mental wellness and education in a positive manor, with no shame, no judgment, and no apologies for who we are!"

MHRC is pleased to have Trillium recognize the value of paid peer support. Our project, Mental Health at Work: Survive, Strive and Thrive, not only supports the concept of peer support, but also address barriers to employment, discrimination, and the challenges of stigma which people with lived experience of mental illness face.

Trillium's acknowledgement around peer support cements the notion that peer support belongs to people who have survived the mental health system, not to mental health organization or agencies.

The first phase of *Mental Health at Work: Survive, Strive Thrive* is underway. MHRC received 57 qualifying applications for the paid training. Interviews took place the last week of April. Twelve applicants will be chosen and training begins mid May.

On behalf of MHRC Board of Directors, members and staff I would like to thank Susan West and Mike Kirk of OTF for their support and genuine understanding of the importance and value of peer support.

Watch for updates around the project in our newsletters.



This project is funded by a grant from The Ontario Trillium Foundation.

The project is done in partnership with

TRIVARIS

 **crazydaisy**

<http://www.trivaris.com/>

<http://www.crazydaisy.org/>

Steps to Health, Good Shepherd.



For the past twenty weeks I have participated in Monday morning walk with Steps to Health program. I usually start earlier than the rest of the walkers as I have to get to the office. It has been a great way to start the day and I have managed to shave off a few pounds. I have been a walking enthusiast for years.

I am sure this is a deeply embedded trait. My mum tells the story of my first winter. Mum says it was a remarkably kind winter; sunny and warmer than most years, she walked with me in the buggy every day along Highland Road in Stoney Creek.

A Snowy Owl had nested that year along Highland and my mum delighted in seeing the owl on our daily walk.

My first walking holiday was in 1999, ten days, twenty four women, in Ireland.

The next year the same group of women walked in the south of France. The connection with the women and nature was a big draw for me, but the France trip had a different vibe as we had landed in Marseille during the morning hours of 9/11 attacks in the US. We all wanted to be home with our families but we couldn't return because of restricted air travel. So we walked, sang and tried to busy ourselves. Eventually we returned home, some saying they wouldn't travel again because of the threat of terrorism; but the next year we met and walked in the south west of England.

And so I continue to walk on Monday mornings, and most days for that matter. I have heard great feedback about the Steps to Health program and activities. People tell me they love the cooking classes, Wii Fit, the weekly visit to the "Y" and are eagerly anticipating the camping trip coming up in June.

My only hesitation about Steps to Health is having to ask for things. I don't like having to ask for a pass or membership and shoes. I wonder if the program could be more self-directed in some way.

Overall I would say this is a highly successful endeavor and I applaud Good Shepherd and LHIN 4 for making it happen.

For more information about Steps to Health or to Arrange an Appointment

**Call Sarah Stevens, Steps to Health Facilitator at
905-528-3655, extension 229**

Program Manager

Peggy Guiler-Delahunt



mhrcprograms@bellnet.ca

I want more happy endings in mental health. I need to learn to want more endings which people living with mental illness are happy with themselves.

It is so easy for me and for any of us to decide what we think someone else's life should look like. When I watched "The Soloist" (story of Nathaniel Ayers and his reporter friend), I found myself very disappointed at the end that Nathaniel didn't have a complete recovery and go on live life as a concert artist and so called "thriving" member of the community.

I had to give my head a shake and realize that what I wanted for him and what he wanted and needed were not the same.

Recovery from mental illness is not like recovering from the common cold. You don't pack up your Kleenex box and pillow from the couch and go on from where you were. Recovery from mental illness requires completely redefining who you are, including your goals, your values and your sense of self.

When people live with mental illness there are often real and permanent changes to their thought processes and abilities. Often the illness alters the very core of who people are. Sadly, what the illness doesn't disrupt, the medications often do.

At the end of the movie, Nathaniel was quite content and very happy to be living in a modest apartment and attend some concerts with his new friend. I, however, wanted something different, something more "normal" for him. Maybe I even wanted him to go beyond normal to excel in the world of music and become a star.

So it is for all of us who live with and/or work with and support people who have mental illnesses. It is so easy to project on to them our values and our desires. It is so easy to be disappointed when the standards we have set are not met.

I challenge myself and all of us to accept the limitations the illness imposes on us

Housing Committee Seeks Members

(Hamilton Addiction and Mental Health Collaborative (HAMHC) —Housing Committee)

The Housing Committee is currently recruiting new members who are committed to improving access to affordable, supported housing in Hamilton for persons with serious mental illness and/or addiction.

The Housing Committee is interested in recruiting individuals who are/ or belong to:

- Consumers¹ and family members
- Consumer and family support organizations
- Mental health and addiction organizations and services
- Housing providers and associations

Interested applicant's value:

- Consumer choice, consumer-directed care and other recovery-oriented best practices
- Consumers right to safe, appropriate, affordable and normal housing with security of tenure.
- Housing which promotes privacy, independence, community integration, and enhanced quality of life.

Regular meetings are held quarterly, with special meetings called as required at the discretion of Co-Chairs Frances Jewell and John Schalkwyk.

If you are interested in joining the Housing Committee, please contact:

Frances V. Jewell:

Email: mhrccd@bellnet.ca or Tel: (905) 545-2525

OR

John Schalkwyk:

Email: schalkwykjo@gmail.com or Tel: 905 577 0241

¹ The term "Consumer" means people with lived experience of mental health and/or addiction.

and then to make every effort to live the very best lives we can within those limits.

At the same time I also suggest that we constantly challenge those limits. In each step of our recovery, we may find that the limits are not stagnant. We never need to accept our illnesses as the definition of who we are.

For some more information on Nathaniel Ayers Foundation see page 4.



Give Us A Call! A Peer Support Worker is available

Monday to Friday, 11a.m.-4p.m.

905-545-2525

The Real Soloist



The
Nathaniel
Anthony
AYERS
Foundation

The Nathaniel A. Ayers Foundation has been established in honour of its namesake, the real artist, depicted in the movie, The Soloist.

Established by members of Ayers's family, the foundation promotes the arts and supports the efforts of the artistically gifted in improving their craft by offering programs and resources.

The tag line on the web site says it is for "the Artistically Gifted Mentally Ill" (www.naayers.org)

While the organization and its focus are American they do offer some supports and suggestions for consumers and family members on the web site. One thing consumers and family can do is share their stories. In an article of 500 words or less consumers and their caregivers are encouraged to tell their story on the web site.

"Without art there would be no civilization" say the web site authors.

There are some interesting links on this web site and they seem to be adding to it regularly.

Mental Health Rights staff have written to NAAyers Foundation to ask if a similar focus could begin in Canada but we have not yet had a response.

The Healing Arts at Home Cottage Studio

In Hamilton there is already one group, who believe in the healing power of art.

The Cottage Studio is located behind MHRC at 70 James Street South. The web site says, "The Cottage Studio is a unique Consumer Art Program that promotes mental health and the development of realizing the artistic potential of its members. It is supported by the Hamilton Program for Schizophrenia Family Association.

For more information about this program visit their web site at <http://www.cottagestudio.ca/>

Web Site Revamp



The Mental Health Rights Coalition Web site is undergoing some changes thanks to the help of two talented volunteers, Wayne and Danielle.

Hopefully all the links are working now and soon we will begin to change the face of the site so it is more attractive and friendlier to use.

If you find errors or broken links on the site please contact the site manager at mhrprograms@bellnet.ca

Volunteers Keep us Ticking

Mental Health Rights is proud of its volunteers and all the work they do. A growing force this group of more than 30 active volunteers contribute much to the day to day operation of MHRC and the lives of those they serve.

At present there are six active peer support matches; that is, peer support training graduates who are meeting regularly with consumers who need some extra support on their road to recovery. Others are still waiting for a match.

Other volunteer work being done includes those faithful volunteers who come in daily to support our staff with program and other tasks.

Honourable mention goes to our growing board of directors. Now a devoted group of six they are actively seeking new members. Anyone who is interested in joining the board may contact the Executive Director for details at mhrced@bellnet.ca or by calling MHRC at 905-545-2525

Seeking Donations

We make it a practice to make available toiletries like shampoo, conditioner, creams, soaps, tooth brushes, etc., which for many of our members are luxury items. Donations of sample and full size items are much appreciated.

Fresh fruit is also a rare treat to many and a great alternative to convenience foods.



Contact us at
MHRC

905-545-2525



Peer Support Tasks

People often ask what we do as peer supporters. The list is extensive, but here we offer a sampling of things we have been able to support people with in the past few weeks. These examples are real but some changes may have been made to the story to protect the persons involved.

A member with a physical disability wanted to participate in the Race Around the Bay. The peer support worker supported the member by going for training walks for about six weeks and then the two of them did the bay race together.

Another mental health agency called and asked if we could assist a person who is new to the city and needed support going to the doctor because of anxiety issues and because the person is unfamiliar with the bus routes and locations. The peer supporter was able to travel with the person and made them feel much more at ease with the situation.

Someone called who was having flashbacks because of something they had observed. The worker on the phone was able to listen for a few minutes and help them sort out some good ideas for coping with the problem.

A member came in quite concerned about their anxiety level and sleeplessness. They wanted to be sure they weren't going to relapse. After talking with the worker for a few minutes the person realized they had not been eating properly and decided to go home to eat and have a nap.

The Rights Stuff

Published every other month

by

Mental Health Rights Coalition

Editorial Policy

The Rights Stuff is published every other month by Mental Health Rights Coalition. Our purpose is to inform our membership and other interested partners in mental health and the community about issues and events which may be of interest. Included is a calendar of events for the upcoming month at MHRC.

The Rights Stuff is available to our members via mail and to others as requested via email and our web site at: www.mentalhealthrights.ca

The Rights Stuff welcomes submissions & letters of 250 words or less. Be advised that MHRC reserves the right to edit and/ or decline publication of any submissions.

Deadline for submissions is the 15th of the month previous to publication.

Printing dates are September 1, November 1, December 23, March 1, May 1 and July 1.

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

Matches Available

Any consumer looking for on-going peer support by a trained volunteer is encouraged to call the Program Manager at

905-545-2525.

The People's Review Panel



by Dylan Goff (above), Peer Support Worker and member of the People's Review Panel

The provincial government is currently considering its options respecting a promised review of the Social Assistance Programs: Ontario Works (OW) and the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP). The last major review was conducted in the late 1980s and many of the positive recommendations that came out of that review were never implemented.

In anticipation of this review, a People's Review Panel has been set up as a joint venture of the Daily Bread Food Bank and Voices From The Street. The objective of the Review Panel is to "hit the ground running" with a "People's Blueprint" for the changes needed in the OW and ODSP programs when the review is initiated by the government.

The People's Review Panel consists of 19 people, including myself, who have lived experience with the OW and/or the ODSP social assistance programs. The 19 members were asked to serve on the Panel after an extensive interview process with all of those who responded to a job posting last fall. The group is very representative: some of us live with mental illness, some of us live with physical disabilities, some of us are immigrants who, despite credentials have been unable to work or to find work; and we come from all over Ontario: for example, Ottawa, Toronto, Hamilton, Thunder Bay, Sudbury and Sault Ste. Marie.

Our task as members of the panel is to record first hand accounts about the challenges of trying to live on social assistance in our respective home communities, and to collect ideas about how to fix the system so that these challenges are removed. The

information and ideas we collect will form the basis of the "People's Blueprint" for change which will be submitted to the government.

We are currently going through a training process that began in January. We meet for a few days each month in Toronto to expand our knowledge of the issues relating to poverty in Ontario and to develop research ideas. We are learning how to interview peers to obtain the information that will form the basis for the "blueprint" for change.

For me, the project is exciting. It gives those of us who have had to rely on the OW and ODSP support programs a real chance to be heard about the issues we face on a day-to-day basis; and about how the system should be changed to resolve these issues.

By the end of April, our training will be completed and I will begin conducting interviews with my peers in the Hamilton area.

Harmonized Sales Tax

The provincial government is moving toward HST and has produced an informative document to help Ontarians understand how it will affect them. The "What's Taxable Under the HST and What is Not" document is available on our web site in a PDF—Look on our site and go to Newsletter.

www.mentalhealthrights.ca

Support Group

This consumer group meets twice a month to talk about things of interest

All consumers of mental health and addictions are welcome

**1st & 3rd Tuesday
of each month**

Bringing Mental Health Issues Into the Light

By Peggy Guiler-Delahunt

There have been so many articles and issues about poverty and mental health passing over my desk the past couple of months that I can hardly keep track.

I will not try to recap the issues in this publication but will merely point readers toward them.

Code Red

Worthy of mention is the recent Spec (Hamilton Spectator) story, Code Red, by Steve Buist. In the article about mental health on line readers will not only find interesting data about mental health and poverty but also an some great links which include a Tour of St. Joe's psychiatric emergency room. Read the entire seven day series at:

<http://www.thespec.com/sections/codered>

Ending Special Needs Diet for Ontarians

The battle against the proposed budget cut of the Special Diet allowance is ongoing. Last week some members of MHRC attended a rally in Toronto protesting the cut. Poverty Watch Ontario has some comments and media on their web site regarding putting food back in the budget. <http://www.povertywatchontario.ca/>

Hamilton Centre MPP and NDP Leader, Andrea Horvath, has also been championing the cause and has comments posted on her web site. When you visit the site you may have to go back a page or two to find comments from April 13th. <http://andreaorvath.ca/>

The Social Network Planning group also has some interesting links and information on the topic. <http://putfoodinthebudget.ca/>



Judy Hoover ED of Niagara CSI is opening doors for Mental Health Consumers

Photo by Allan Benner—The Tribune

New Enterprise for Niagara CSI

The Niagara Consumer Survivor Initiative has taken on a new business venture and hopes to get Welland buses and mental health consumers moving in the community again.

Executive Director, Judy Hoover, sees this business venture as an opportunity to help mental health consumers learn some transferable skills which will help them get back into the work force.

Read the full story at

<http://www.wellandtribune.ca/ArticleDisplay.aspx?e=2506191>

Oops!!! We missed an ingredient

Graham Cracker Cookies

Last issue we printed this fabulous recipe but forgot to tell one thing. It takes 1 cup of brown sugar as well. Now you can try it and not wonder why it didn't work.

- 18 graham crackers
- 1 cup brown sugar
- 1 cup butter
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1/2 to 1 cup sliced almonds

Line cookies sheet with crackers

Boil butter and brown sugar for 2 minutes and remove from heat. Add vanilla

Pour over crackers and sprinkle almonds on top. Bake at 350F for about 1/2 hour. Cut or break into pieces (don't burn your fingers)



Suicide Prevention Community Council of Hamilton

Suicide Prevention Consultation

Tuesday, May 18, 2010

1 pm. To 2:30 pm



















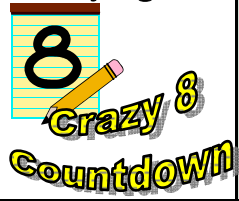


Mental Health Rights Coalition—20 Jackson St. W.

Draft copies of the Suicide Prevention document are available for your perusal at MHRC. Please sign up in person or by phone to let us know you are coming to this event.















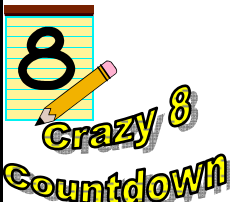





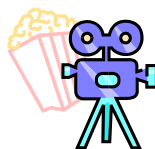

Any mental health or addiction consumer needing to access to web sites or email who does not have computer or internet use is welcome to become a member at MHRC and use our computer.

Membership is free for all mental health/addiction consumers.

May 2010

S	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	Bingo 	11am Support Group 	Backgammon 	Cards 	Wii Athon Wii Fit 	
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Mothers Day	Skip-Bo 	Crafts 	11am Gage Park Greenhouse 	Speaker - ODSP Information session 	Walk About 	
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
	Euchre 	11am Support Group 1 pm Suicide Prevention Focus Group 	Cribbage 	Air Hockey 	Members Meeting 	
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
	Victoria Day Holiday Closed	Coffee Walk 	Current Events 	Board Games 	Crazy Eights 	
30	31					
	Birthday Party 	<p>Calendar Activities begin at 1 p.m. unless otherwise stated.</p> <p>Walking/Exercise activities are dependant on weather. Please wear appropriate shoes and clothing.</p>				 MENTAL HEALTH RIGHTS COALITION

June 2010

S	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	S
		1	2	3	4	5
	 MENTAL HEALTH RIGHTS COALITION	11am Support Group 	Skip-Bo 	Backgammon 	Walk about 	
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
	Yahtzee 	Crafts 	Scrabble 	Current Events 	Cribbage 	
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
	Dominos 	11am Support Group 	Coffee Walk 	Board Games 	Crazy Eights 	
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
	Members Meeting 	Birthday Party 	McMaster Museum 	Euchre 	Air Hockey 	
27	28	29	30	Calendar Activities begin at 1 p.m. unless otherwise stated Walking/Exercise activities are dependant upon weather. Please wear appropriate shoes and clothing.		
	Movies 	Bingo 	Art 