



November 2008

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.

Drop In and Peer Support Hours:
11a.m- 4p.m,
Mon - Fri

"You Can Do It—We Can Help"

Homes for Special Care



Following are excerpts (with permission) from an article in the Fall 2007 issue of the St. Joseph's Healthcare Hamilton publication "Innovator". The HSC program houses some of the members of

the Mental Health Rights Coalition and we consider HSC to be one of our partners in the mental health community.

The Homes for Special Care (HSC) Program, established in 1964 by the Ontario Ministry of Health, provides residential

and support services to adults with severe mental health problems and limited functioning. The Central South HSC Program offers more than just a place to live and basic necessities for these recovering individuals. Within residences that strive to provide a home-like atmosphere and where individuals can feel comfortable and secure, the Program's multidisciplinary staff focus on enhancing each client's full potential and quality of life. According to Anna Bernardo, Manager of Homes for Special Care, "staff within the Program strongly believe in and use PSR (Psycho Social Rehabilitation)/Recovery principles in their daily clinical practice." What does this actually mean? As Anna puts it, "one simple slogan, borrowed from a well

known home improvement company, says it all: 'You can do it—we can help'."

Individuals residing in an HSC home are actively encouraged to define and pursue their own goals and are supported through every step of that long, non-linear process. "All changes toward those goals, no matter how small or seemingly insignificant, are acknowledged", assures Anna. "Gradually, most individuals develop or require a sense of accomplishment, confidence and trust.

There are 15 homes under the program, located in urban and rural areas across Hamilton, Niagara, Haldimand, Norfolk and Brant. These privately owned and operated homes are licensed annually by the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care (MOHLTC) following formal inspections by the HSC staff. Staff is also responsible for closely monitoring the operations of the homes and ensuring that residents'

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Left with a Record

Following is the personal account of K. L. Morrow in regard to Police Record Checks. Mental health consumers who have been escorted to hospital for suicide attempts or other mental health issues often end up with a police record. This practice varies depending on the municipalities.

"When you're in the midst of crisis the last thing you think about or at least I thought about was, "Am I going to be left with a police record?" I can remember it vividly. I had decided this would be my last (suicide) attempt. Things seemed so awful that I didn't seem to be worried about the aftermath of my decision. I never thought I would recover from my illness ...and I was in a state of my life that I just didn't care if I did or not. I saw myself as blending into the scenery of

some old discarded picture, not worth anything. As I look back, it was quite sad.

I remember calling for help, 911...The ambulance came but not alone. There were two police officers as well. I told them I was willing to go with them and would not fight but I just wanted help.

...After going away for treatment I had put my life back in order and was in recovery. I was ready to get a part time job and go back to school. The future was bright...I was excited for a second chance. That all changed when I picked up my police record check.

The front page said I had no criminal record but the second page said I had been taken to hospital for a mental health issue.

Angry and confused I called the psychiatric pa-

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If you prefer to receive an email copy of this newsletter please notify the editor.
mhrcpro-grams@bellnet.ca

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Executive Director: Frances Jewell mhrced@bellnet.ca

October has been another busy month for us here at Mental Health Rights Coalition.

As Peggy will tell you in her note, we have had the privilege of attending a number of conferences this month including a talk by David Simpson, Program Manager, of the Psychiatric Patient Advocate Office regarding Police Record checks.

This is a very important issue and I urge you to read Kerri Lynne's article. Check out <http://www.ppao.gov.on.ca/> for more information

We have hired a new face at the MHRC. Taking over the Friday Peer support shift is Patty Smith. Patty recently graduated from the Peer Support Training program and has been a devoted volunteer for

many months. We welcome Patty to the team.

Also joining the team on a casual basis are Amanda, Fabrizio and Languide. They will be filling in empty shifts at our front desk when others are not available.

Our drop-in had 318 visits this month with folks coming by for Karaoke, air hockey, crafts as well as pumpkin pie and ice cream in celebration of Thanksgiving.

We have also had many volunteers offering a variety of help.

Thanks to Elizabeth and Cindy for spending one entire day at the Richard Russell Memorial Fair held at Liuna Station on October 22. They fielded questions about what we do at MHRC and handed out brochures. We are very grateful to Cindy for the extra time she put in preparing the display board and transporting it to the

event.

Amanda has been working hard, helping us design electronic forms. A tedious job.

Rory, a student volunteer, has been helping us access inexpensive programs for our computer systems and is also a ready hand in the drop in, helping with program.

Our very own Lance Dingman, has recently made a video presentation about Schizophrenia which is appearing on Cable 14. Congratulations for a job well done.

Lance and our other peer support staff members, Jennifer, Carl, Mike, and Patty are all fine ambassadors for mental health and we are glad to have them as part of our team.

There's always something going on, someone to chat with and something to learn.

I encourage you to visit us in person and see what's happening in November.

Program Coordinator

Peggy Guiler-Delahunt
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Mental Illness Awareness Week was, from our perspective a great success. In fact the entire month has been loaded with events which have been very informative and have also given MHRC the chance to showcase what we do.

I was able to attend three very special events in October.

The Mental Health and Ethics Conference, sponsored by the Journal of Ethics In Mental Health (www.JEMH.ca) and held in Lakefield was a two day event and offered a nice weekend away along with a great introduction to the many issues of Ethics in Mental Health. The event is held annually and raises the funds for the Journal. The Journal of Ethic in Mental Health is available on their web site along with web casts from previous events.

A luncheon at Liuna Station on October 8 with Sheila Rogers was a wonderful celebration of strides in mental health. It is always encouraging to hear mental health survivor stories of people who are considered "successful" in our society. It somehow validates and normalizes mental illness.

The musical entertainment of "The Hype", a local group of musicians who are also mental health consumers was also encouraging to everyone present.

The Suicide Prevention Community Council of Hamilton held it's 8th annual conference on October 21st at Michelangelo's. "Postvention" was the theme of the day and presenters provided information on preventing suicide and helping those who are suicide survivors.

Some of the information from these events may begin to filter out through this newsletter in the next few months as time permits.

October was the beginning of the Peer Support Training and Voices of Experience Training beings November 4th.

Hamilton Public Health Department is always good to us and often give us items to distribute to our members. Recently they gave us warm undergarments along with hats and mitts which will help to keep our members warm as we approach winter.

The Rights Stuff

**A monthly publication of the
Mental Health Rights Coalition.**

Editorial Policy

The Rights Stuff is published every month by the 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 Rigths Stuff is published two or three working days before the end of each month. It 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 each month (or the closest weekday).



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

Coming Events



If you know of coming events which may be of interest to mental health consumer/survivors in the Hamilton area please email at mhrprograms@bellnet.ca or call 905-545-2525

"Thinking Outside of the Bus"

Hamilton...Moving Forward

The City of Hamilton is seeking your input on the proposed rapid transit system. You can fill out the [survey](#) and find out more. A [video presentation](#) gives some interesting history of the HSR and explains the focus for the future her Hamilton activities.

FOR SUPPORT...



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

Homes for Special Care

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needs are being met. Beyond the partnering relationship with residents, HSC staff work closely and collaboratively with home operators/staff, families, community service-providers, and anyone else that is significant to the residents. To facilitate the residents' road to recovery, HSC staff handles the referral and relocation process and ensure that the residents receive the therapeutic and other support services they frequently require.

Residents are encouraged to access a

wide range of community based therapeutic activities offered through two HSC SKILLS (Success through Knowledge, Integration, Learning, Living and Skills) Centres. Located in Hamilton and Vineland, these Centres offer residents individualized opportunities that facilitate the development or acquisition of transferable skills, and that will help maximize a resident's potential for meaningful function and inclusion in their own communities. Programs focus on developing or rebuilding social, vocation, pre-vocational, recreations and activities of daily living skills.

If you would like to read the entire article please visit our resource library.

Seeking Donations

If you or anyone you know might have access to fresh fruit or would like donate toward the purchase of fruit we would like to be able to provide it for our members each weekday.

For more information contact us at MHRC
678 Main St E, Ste. 102- Hamilton, ON L8M 1K2
Phone: 905-545-2525 Facsimile: 905-545-0211
Email: mentalhealthrights@bellnet.ca

Left with a Record

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tient advocate office at St. Joe's . They made some suggestions about what to do.

I spoke to criminal records at the Hamilton Police Services - a complete waste of time—and wrote letters to Chief Mullen and Barbara Hall, Chief Commissioner of the Ontario Human Rights Commission. All I received back was form letters. I had hoped my complaints would have been considered seriously and the record removed because all I was doing was going to the hospital for help.

Luckily my honesty about my police record check with my employer and school placement allowed me to carry on with my plans. I was fortunate but many people are not.

How many people don't realize their voice can be heard and these laws must change. I encourage people to get involved . One person can have a voice but many voices can carry a louder message that can influence society and the world we live in. Use yours!

For more information on the work of the Psychiatric Patient Advocate Office of Ontario visit their web site at www.ppao.gov.on.ca

Membership Renewal

Memberships must be renewed annually before the end of April.

If you are an existing member you may renew your membership by calling the MHRC at 905-545-2525 weekdays between 11 a.m. and 4 p.m.

New members may complete a form available at MHRC

Membership entitlements:

- Access to peer support
- Voting privileges at all General Meetings
- Receipt of the "The Rights Stuff" - the monthly newsletter via mail or email.
- Participation in the drop in
- Access to the Resource Library
- Access to special trips and events
- May join internal committees
- May apply for membership on the Board of Directors

Non consumers members are considered associate members and will be non voting members . They will not be eligible for all the rights of membership.

Any personal information collected by Mental Health Rights Coalition is kept in strict confidence and is not shared with any other agency or corporation.

Members must be residents, working or receiving service within LHIN 4 (Hamilton, Niagara, Brant, Haldimand, East Norfolk)

Members must be mental health consumer/survivors.

Peer Support Matches Available

Consumers needing on-going peer support by a trained volunteer are encouraged to call the Peer Support Coordinator at 905-545-2525.

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



November 2008



0Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Activities begin at 1 pm unless otherwise stated Turn your clocks back one hour on Saturday evening, November 1.						
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	Air Hockey PS Training	Crafts 	Karaoke VoE Training	Movie 	Board Games 	
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
	Cards PS Training	 Remembrance Day Movie 	Cards VoE Training	Karaoke 	Movie 	
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
	Movie 	Bingo 	Backgammon 	Air Hockey 	Karaoke 	
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
	Karaoke 	Movie 	November Birthday Party 	Walk 	Cards 	
30	Peer Support Training Continues through November to December 15 on Mondays from 1 to 4 p.m. Voices of Experience Training begins Wednesday, November 4 and carries through on Wednesdays from 1 to 4 pm. Until December 3 Voices of Experience Steering Committee meet the second Tuesday, each month from 11:30 to 1p.m Coop Housing Group meets at MHRC on the third Thursday from 9 to 10:30 a.m..					