



December  
2008

**Drop In and  
Peer Support**

**Hours:**

11a.m- 4p.m,  
Mon - Fri

# 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.*



SEASONS GREETINGS - MERRY CHRISTMAS - HAPPY HANUKKAH

**MHRC wishes you the very best of the season - be safe and happy until we meet again in 2009**

## Stay Healthy This Winter

Hamilton Public Health has some advice about how to help keep one another healthy this winter.

### **"Follow these tips to avoid influenza infection"**

Wash your hands:

- Before handling or eating food
- After using the toilet or urinal
- After sneezing or wiping your nose
- After changing diapers
- Whenever hands are dirty
- Get a flu shot every year
- Keep immunizations up to date
- Stay home if you are sick so you don't spread germs
- Don't share personal items (water bottles, cups, cigarettes, food.)
- Get enough rest, exercise and eat properly"

**Flu Shots** are still available from your family doctor or visit a flu clinic

Friday, December 5 Centre Mall 1-5

Monday, December 8—Dundas Lions Memorial Community Centre - 3-7 pm.

Wednesday, December 10—Hamilton Public Library 2-6 p.m.

<http://www.myhamilton.ca/myhamilton/CityandGovernment/HealthandSocialServices/PublicHealth/Influenza/Prevention.htm>

## The Early Cheque Trap

Each year the January cheques for Ontario Disability Support (ODSP) are issued by the Ministry of Community and Social Services about 12 days earlier than usual. This year they will arrive on December 22. Whatever the reason is for this early delivery it is a practice which often has a very detrimental effect on the recipients.

People who depend on the monthly income support are asked to live on about \$1000 a month. It doesn't go far and buying anything extra like presents for the people they love and care about is a luxury few can afford.

When that cheque which is intended for January's expenses arrives just days before Christmas the temptation is often too much and many people take some money which should be paying for their basic needs in January and spend it on gifts and items they cannot really afford.

One of the MHRC members offered a few suggestions she had used over the past few years to make sure she doesn't spend this money.

The most important thing she says, is to have a budget and stick to it.

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## Grads All Over the Place

By mid December MHRC will have graduates from both the Peer Support Program and the Voices of Experience Training.

Peer Support Grads will begin their practicum hours in December and should have their certificates in January or February. This eager group of Peer supporters will be looking for volunteer and work opportunities in the area.

The Voices of Experience group are also eager. They have been learning the ins and

outs of working as a volunteer member of a board or committee. While the training has targeted qualification as "consumer members" on the boards of Mental Health and Addiction services the training equips people for work on any sort of board.

If you know of a group in need of board members who are ready to work please let us know.

We will offer more information about this in the next newsletter.

**Good Gift Idea—See Coming  
Events on Page 3**



## Executive Director: Frances Jewell [mhrced@bellnet.ca](mailto:mhrced@bellnet.ca)

### My Favorite Things

Raindrops on roses and whiskers on kittens  
Bright copper kettles and warm woolen mittens  
Brown paper packages tied up with strings  
These are a few of my favorite things

Cream colored ponies and crisp apple strudels  
Doorbells and sleigh bells and schnitzel with noodles  
Wild geese that fly with the moon on their wings  
These are a few of my favorite things

Girls in white dresses with blue satin sashes  
Snowflakes that stay on my nose and eyelashes  
Silver white winters that melt into springs  
These are a few of my favorite things

When the dog bites  
When the bee stings  
When I'm feeling sad  
I simply remember my favorite things  
And then I don't feel so bad

*From "Rodgers and Hammerstein's Sound of Music"*

#### Rodgers and Hammerstein

I am fortunate to have good memories of Christmastime and this song is one of them.

My favorite holiday things are Christmas Caroling with Hamilton Bay Sailing Club at the Gruneberg's home. Forty or so sailors arrive for an evening of singing and merriment accompanied by Julianne on the grand piano.

Each year I take an evening walk in my Durand Neighborhood to see the beautifully decorated homes. Wrapping gifts is another thing that really gets me in the spirit of the season. I like to carefully

choose the perfect paper, card and bow to go with the gift that I hope will be just right.

Over the years I have visited the many churches in the downtown for Christmas and Holiday concerts. The music brings back fond memories of school concerts with Miss Houslander, my grade three teacher and music teacher for Tapelytown Public School.

A more recent holiday tradition has been an open house at my Mum's on Christmas Eve. Friends with wee ones in tow drop in for seafood chowder, warm biscuits, traditional Christmas cookies and of course gifts for tiny tots with eyes all-aglow.

I love my Mother's turkey stuffing and no one can duplicate the recipe. I've tried but it never really works. After Christmas dinner we all bundle up for our annual evening walk.

There's always a little sadness too. I miss my family and friends that are no longer with us but I'm ever so grateful for those around me.

Merry Christmas to all....

## Program Coordinator

Peggy Guiler-Delahunt  
[mhrprograms@bellnet.ca](mailto:mhrprograms@bellnet.ca)



'Tis the season for giving and receiving and for fun and family and celebrations of all sorts.

'Tis also the season that so many of the people we serve at MHRC feel deeply the devastation which mental illness may have caused them. Many do not have family to share the season with and many live on limited incomes which make gift giving burdensome.

While MHRC and many of the other service providers in the community make huge efforts to provide special events and gifts this time of year, the loneliness of the season remains.

I know from my own experience of loss that while the good things that happen are wonderful, there is often a shadow of sadness which takes some of the shine out of the tinsel.

Those who live with mental illness know many different kinds of loss. Some have lost their lifestyle, their income, their friends, or their families. More important than that they may suffer the loss of self respect and dignity along with the loss of

hope for life ever being any better for them.

If you know someone who may have lost their hope during this season of hope try to find some way to offer them the gift of hope.

Hope is not expensive or wrapped up in paper and ribbons under a tree. Rather hope is in a kind word, a soft look, or a gentle touch.

Perhaps the most wonderful thing about giving hope is that when you give it to someone else you end up getting some back for yourself.

Give, give, give during this season. Give good gifts of warmth and kindness. Give the gift of yourself to those who are closest to you and also to someone in the community who needs to know that their life is important and worth living. Give HOPE.

If you prefer to receive an email copy of this newsletter please notify the editor. [mhrprograms@bellnet.ca](mailto:mhrprograms@bellnet.ca)

### 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 Rights 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](http://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).

## Coming Events

**Good Shepherd Christmas Dinner** at the Convention Centre will be Sunday December 21/08 – sittings at 3 pm or 5 pm. No need to register.

People can register this month for **Christmas Hamper program**

**Sponsor a Family Program.** Good Shepherd has a sponsorship program to help families for Christmas and has recently added a sponsorship program which all year. You might consider giving a gift of sponsorship to those on your list

who really don't need much. Visit their Website at:

[www.goodshepherdcentres.ca](http://www.goodshepherdcentres.ca)

Or call **Rose Marie at 905-528-656,5 ext. 3332**, or by email

[rose-mariem@goodshepherdcentres.ca](mailto:rose-mariem@goodshepherdcentres.ca)

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

# 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)

This member has found a community agency, Catholic Family Services, who have been helpful in assisting her with budgeting so she doesn't spend too much.

Some people may also find that having someone else hold their money for them is helpful. There are agencies in the city which are happy to act as trustees. Trustees have to be licensed by the province and they are careful with people's money. They make sure their clients are having their needs met and they attempt to help clients pay down debt and have a little extra for special expenses. Trustees are sometimes ordered by the court but are also available on a voluntary basis.

To avoid being caught in the "Early Cheque Trap" here are a few simple ideas—you can likely think of more.

- Put the money in your bank account and pretend it's not there until January
- Make a budget and stick to it
- Pay some of your bills in advance for January
- Buy grocery cards for yourself for the amount you usually spend in January and don't spend them until next month
- If you have a family member or friend you trust, ask them to hang on to the money for you or put it in a joint account that needs two signatures to get it out
- Find ways to give people inexpensive gifts like certificates for some work around the house or things you have made yourself

## 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.**

## Seeking Donations

- Small gift items for men and women for giving to our members at our annual Christmas Party.
- Fresh fruit for our members when they arrive each weekday.
- Gift certificates for the purchase of groceries or for outings to the local coffee shop.

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: [mentalhealth-rights@bellnet.ca](mailto:mentalhealth-rights@bellnet.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.

