



# January 2009



## 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

### OUT WITH THE OLD AND IN WITH THE NEW

By Amanda Carey

At this time of year, most people still make "New Year's Resolutions," an ancient tradition dating back 2161 years (153 B.C)<sup>1</sup>. It is a time to look back at the previous years and the year to come.

In the middle of winter our calendar changes to the new year and people who may not have the will to get out of bed in the cold and grey days, yet expect themselves to make huge life changes at this time. This is not very realistic.

How about:

- Make a gratitude scrapbook or keep a gratitude journal through the year, of all the things that you are thankful for. It makes us feel better to remember the good things instead of what we want to change.
- Reward yourself for accomplishments of the past year
- Make a "new month's resolution" any time of year, then you can focus on things when you are prepared for them, and do one thing at a time, rather than trying to change many things (67% of people make 3 or more resolutions<sup>2</sup>)
- Don't aim too high, think about what you are prepared and able to do at this time.
- Reward yourself throughout the process for each achievement; don't just wait until you have finished your goal.
- Tell people you know who can help you with your goal and encourage yourself along the way
- Wait until spring, when it is warmer and there is more sun, this can help with the motivation and energy to do the things you need to do
- Set little goals instead of one big one
- Know specifically what you want to achieve and how you want to do it. A general idea of wanting to drink less soda is not specific enough to know when you have achieved your goal. "I want to drink one soda a day" is a concrete goal
- Plan out how you will achieve your goal. Having a plan or steps to your goal will make it realistic and achievable.
- Don't sweat the setbacks; persistence is key. Celebrate the victories and renew your resolution to your goal, then get up and "try, try again"

Notes:

1. <http://ezinearticles.com/?The-History-of-New-Years-Resolutions&id=245213>
2. <http://www.funfacts.com.au/new-years-resolutions-the-facts/>

**Happy New Year from the Staff of MHRC**



### Voices of Experience Class Complete

This eager group recently completed the Voices of Experience Training and most will be seeking positions as volunteer members of boards and committees.

The Voices of Experience training offers a 12 hour (soon to be 15 hour) course for those who might

be interested in being "consumer" members of boards and committees. The group originally focused only on mental health and addictions consumers but is now broadening its scope to include those who represent the "consumer voice" for a wide variety of service agencies.

The voice of those who use services has long been recognized as a valuable perspective for boards.

In a report on consumer participation, Jason Newberry speaks of the "experiential power" of consumers and explains that in discussions at the board level consumers are able to "draw upon their own personal experiences with ... issues, services, and the system, as well as peak to the experiences of other consumers in the community." Newberry goes on to explain the benefits of the consumer involvement and promotes the training and the establishment of consumer positions on boards as "good governance."

As an organization with a focus on systemic advocacy MHRC strongly supports consumers and boards in providing opportunities for the consumer voice in the policy making process.

The training offers: an overview of the work of boards, their structure, meeting procedures, skills development for executive positions, lessons in procedure and rules of order, and discussion about how to be a good board member.

The program also offers ongoing support to consumers and to boards.

To the boards or potential boards MHRC is willing to do a short educational piece on the advantages of having the consumer voice at the table. We also offer ongoing mentoring for graduates who may feel they need extra support while they "learn the ropes".

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

#### Inside this issue:

Staff Notes	2
A quick gift	3
Winter Solstice	3
January Calendar	4



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

Happy New Year!

2009 is now upon us.

What New Year resolutions have you made?

Lose weight, quit smoking, exercise, take up a new hobby, or go back to school?

I suspect most of us make some sort of promise to ourselves to do something better, different, or for self-improvement. I wonder what motivates us.

What if this year you said "I'm doing well, I like who I am and I'm ok with the way my life goes." For the most part, that is how I feel about my life; happy and healthy and not in any real need of a major renovation. However, like most people there are a few things I'd like to

work on. The items I've chosen to work on this year are more about how one affects the people and neighborhood in one's world.

Here are the things I'm working on...

- Give more time to others
- Be in the moment more often
- Greet people on the street
- Shop locally
- Spend more time outdoors
- Connect with old friends
- Enjoy the day to day routine of life
- Talk less, listen more
- Be kind to others
- Be kind to myself

**Program Coordinator**

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

There is much discussion about "resolve" in this newsletter. We seem to have reached the same sort of basic conclusion and that is that resolutions are likely not a great thing unless they are made with a heart which is willing to work but also to be self forgiving.

I remember as a child spending New Years Eve with my grandparents while my parents went off to some party at Port Dover's historic "Summer Garden". My grandmother would have me put a penny dated for the past year, on the windowsill outside the dining room window. I was to make a wish for the coming year. In the morning I would take the penny (often frozen to the sill) and carefully wrap it in a small piece of foil. Then I was to carry it for the year in my wallet. It would bring me luck and good fortune she said. I'm not sure it ever did but I believed it did and if nothing else it reminded me each time I saw it—and now each I think of it—of the great fortune I had in the love of my grandparents.

I was one of the fortunate. Not only was I an only child but was also the only child of an only child. The world of my grandmother revolved around me and her unconditional and unwavering love for me still holds me in moments when I feel less than good about myself.

Now, a grandmother myself, I have the great privilege of passing that same kind of love to my own grandchildren—there are three of them to date.

I don't usually get to keep my grandkids on New Year's but I believe that rather than making resolutions to myself what I prefer to do is to make promises to them—even if I only do it my heart.

I can't promise big gifts or expensive trips but I can promise them these things; to love each of them as if they were the only one I have to love; to be available to them and for them, without judgment; to continue to be the best person, best citizen, mother, grandmother, friend and employee that I know

**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).

how to be; to care for the future more and lament the past less; to uphold the "golden rule" by loving others as I love myself; and to work hard at learning to love and care for myself (perhaps the hardest job of all).



When my own children were small I made a vow to them that I would never drive under the influence of drugs or alcohol. I uphold that vow to this day. It is one which they know they can count on and one which stops me in my tracks at least a couple of times a year.

I don't know why making promises to others works better than making them to myself. Perhaps it is because I don't want to disappoint. I learned long ago not to make threats or promises I'm not willing to carry out.

To all of you I wish the very best for the coming year. that you can find a reason worthy of your promises and that you will always have a pocket full of good luck pennies.



Mental Health Rights Coalition—678 Main St E, Ste. 102-  
 Hamilton, ON L8M 1K2  
 Phone: 905-545-2525 Facsimile: 905-545-0211  
 Email: [mentalhealthrights@bellnet.ca](mailto:mentalhealthrights@bellnet.ca)

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

## Winter Solstice: a Seasonal Signpost

In a recent article on the Weather Network Andrew Fazekas offered some interesting insights into the winter solstice which happens on or around December 21 each year.

He explains this phenomenon, in the Northern Hemisphere, occurs when "for locations north of the equator the sun is the lowest in the southern sky" which makes it the shortest day of the year.

Fazekas adds, "Sky watchers will notice that throughout the fall season, the Sun's midday position in the sky slowly sinks closer to the horizon, making for ever longer shadows. Meanwhile, the Sun appears to move toward the south day by day, rising farther from the east and setting farther from the west as we approach the winter solstice. During winter the Earth's northern axis is slightly tilted away from the Sun and so the Northern Hemisphere receives less sunlight."

Explaining the reason for the longest shadows of the year the writer adds, "The first day of winter the sun rises as far south of due east as it gets for the year and for the next few days ...appears to rise at the same place on the horizon.

When the solstice is complete the sun begins its northward path until about June 21, the longest day of the year.

Fazekas also says, "The exact date and time of the winter solstice, while always occurring within a day or two of December 21, changes from year to year because of the difference between a calendar year of 365 days, and the solar year of 365.26 days - the exact time it takes for the Earth to make one trip around the Sun.

<http://www.theweathernetwork.com/index.php?product=glossary&pagecontent=glossaryindex&pagecontent=wintersolstice>

### Seeking Donations

- 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: [mentalhealthrights@bellnet.ca](mailto:mentalhealthrights@bellnet.ca)

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

### CAKE IN A MUG RECIPE—an inexpensive and easy gift idea

(the most dangerous cake recipe in the world)

#### Dry ingredients

- 4 tablespoons cake flour or all purpose (plain, no self-rising)
- 4 tablespoons Splenda or sugar
- 2 tablespoons baking cocoa
- 3 tablespoons chocolate chips (optional)

#### Wet ingredients

- 1 egg
- 3 tablespoons milk
- 3 tablespoons oil
- A small dash of vanilla flavoring

#### Mix in 1 microwaveable coffee mug

Add dry ingredients to mug, and mix well.

Add the egg and mix thoroughly.

Pour in the milk and oil and mix well.

Add the chocolate chips and vanilla flavoring...and mix again.

Put your mug in the microwave and cook for 3 minutes at 1000 watts. The cake will rise over the top of the mug, but don't be alarmed! Allow to cool a little, and tip out onto a plate if desired. EAT! (this can serve 2 if you want to feel slightly more virtuous).

And why is this the most dangerous cake recipe in the world?

As a gift you could put the dry ingredients in the cup with instructions for the wet ones and the cooking instructions on a card, wrap it cello with a ribbon—instant gift. Because now we are all only 5 minutes away from chocolate cake at any time of the day or night!

## 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.

# FOR SUPPORT...



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

905-545-2525

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

## 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.

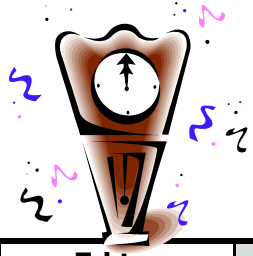
Any personal information collected by Mental Health Rights Coalition is kept in strict confidence and is not shared with any other agency or corporation.



















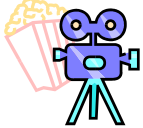




Members must be residents, working or receiving service within LHIN 4 (Hamilton, Niagara, Brant, Haldimand, East Norfolk)

Members must be mental health consumer/survivors.



# Happy New Year January 2009



0Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	At the time of publication information about HPS trips was not available. Please contact us for information or visit the web site.			1	2	3
	 <b>Computer Training</b> Thursdays from 1 to 3 					Closed
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	Games 	Movie 	Karaoke 	Coffee Walk  Computer Training	Bingo 	
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
	Karaoke 	Bingo 	Yahtzee tournament 	Air Hockey  Computer Training	Crafts 	
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
	Coffee walk 	Karaoke 		Bingo  Computer Training	Cards & Games 	
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
	Movie 	Crafts 	Birthday Party Karaoke 	Air Hockey  Computer Training	Movie 	

Calendar Activities begin at 1 p.m. unless otherwise stated.