

## How You Can Support the Parents of People with Schizophrenia — by Susan Inman

### 1. Let them know that they did not cause this illness.

- "There is no evidence whatsoever that schizophrenia is caused by how people have been treated either as children or as adults; it is a biological disease of the brain..."  
Dr. E Fuller Torrey, *Surviving Schizophrenia, A Manual for Families, Patients, and Providers, 5th ed.* p. 318

### 2. Acknowledge what a life-altering situation they are now facing.

- Dealing with this illness can impact a family emotionally, physically, spiritually, socially, financially
- Help families know that their efforts can make an enormous difference in the course of the illness

### 3. Encourage families to learn all they can about the illnesses.

- BCSS Strengthening Families Together - free ten week course
- National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI: [www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org)) Family to Family
- VCMHS Family Advisory Committee's 6th annual Family Conference on April 29th and 30th Public education events - Mood Disorders Association
- Receive updates on research, programs, events by being on the e-list for VCMHS Coordinator of Family Support and Involvement: [shirley.rogers@vch.ca](mailto:shirley.rogers@vch.ca)
- Useful websites: [www.bcass.org](http://www.bcass.org), [www.nimh.nih.gov](http://www.nimh.nih.gov)

### 4. Encourage parents to connect to other families coping with severe mental illnesses.

### 5. Suggest that they keep track of all medical records for their family member.

- Urge them to provide a one page summary for new service providers. Encourage their contributions to their family member's mental health providers
- In VCH, clinicians are supposed to treat collateral data from families confidentially
- Access to this information ensures that the best decisions are being made re: meds and psr

### 6. Help families understand anosognosia and its implications.

- 40 - 50% of people experiencing psychosis have a neurological condition that prevents them from understanding that they are ill ([www.treatmentadvocacycenter.org](http://www.treatmentadvocacycenter.org))
- Helping an ill family member receive the treatment they need does not undermine their autonomy

### 7. Help families find out about useful programs for their son or daughter.

- BRIDGES - a NAMI developed psychoeducation program taught by consumers for consumers
- Gastown Vocational Services
- Douglas College course for people with mental illnesses
- The use of Disability Counselling Services in colleges and universities to get all possible supports and accommodations

### 8. Help families learn about the legal and financial tools they need.

- Representation Agreements
- PWD, RDSP, Disability Tax Credit, Trusts

### 9. Urge families to realize the importance of their advocacy efforts.

- Family Advisory Committees – Family Conferences
- Families are an enormous untapped force to improve services for people with mental illnesses and for their caregivers
- Encourage opposition to fads that promote misunderstandings of schizophrenia (see excerpts from Joseph Brea's National Post article)

### 10. Things you can advocate for:

- Inclusion of the voice of family caregivers in planning and evaluating mental health services - current accreditation policies encourage this
- Improved education about how to collaborate with family caregivers
- Better standards so that all programs training mental health professionals have adequate curriculum about schizophrenia and mood disorders
- Professional development opportunities for mental health staff



# Newsletter

Victoria Branch, B.C. Schizophrenia Society

VOL. 27, No. 2 [www.facebook.com/bcssvictoria](http://www.facebook.com/bcssvictoria)

May 2011

## Gaining Personal Power

—SUPER BRAVE, SUPER BARE—

Share on FaceBook! <http://on.fb.me/braveandbarebungy>

When talking about human rights and regaining control over my life after mental illness took hold of me, I tell people I have a need to gain personal power. Gaining power and giving back to my community are linked in my mind and can take many forms including spiritual endeavors, volunteering, and working on fundraising for the cause. The Annual Bungy Event gives me an opportunity to fly past the pain of illness and be a super hero for BCSS Victoria.

This year we raised over \$5000 in pledges, which is an increase from last years campaign. I hope to step it up a notch in 2012 so stay tuned. I look forward to your support of my jump, for the cause. I can't explain how much this does to put me in a place of empowerment. It is my right to succeed. It is my right to grow as a person regardless of illness or medication use.

I am truly inspired every day by our participants and their families reaching out for help and achieving their goals, learning and becoming full citizens with rights to a good quality of life.



Tara Timmers Bungy Jump 2011!!!

Way to go Tara for being brave for the cause! Thanks to everyone who made this event a success. See u next February!



You'd think that jumping off a bridge (although it is supported by great staff and encouraging people and all sorts of safety measures) is crazy, but in fact this event raises awareness not only of personal choice but reclaiming of life for those with or without illness. This shows what inspiration really is!!!

Bungy jumping is both tribal and cathartic; freeing and powerful. I'd like to thank the staff of WildPlay Elements Park for providing a venue of safety and creating an atmosphere of controlled fun.

Next year we will be in need of volunteers to help in Nanaimo so if you are interested please let me know. It is over two full days of pure excitement!

In total BCSS Victoria raised \$15,000 to put towards our programs and services.

Human rights and dignity for everyone is an integral part of recovery. Being able to make my own decisions and be in control of my own life gives me a chance to learn. Having an illness does not mean I have to be dependent on the system—it is only a starting point for personal growth. I have the right to succeed, work, educate myself and inspire the world. The only statistic I will be is the one that changed the minds of those affected by stigma.—By Tara Timmers





# Families and Patient Right to Privacy: The Swinging Pendulum



Elana Angus—practicum student

Privacy is important and as an employee of VIHA, I can assure you that patient privacy is taken very seriously. From hiring to training to our daily work, we are constantly reminded of our obligations to uphold patient privacy. Rarely does a week pass without VIHA sending a mass email reminding us about the importance of protecting patient privacy. We know our jobs count on it. In this age of electronic medical file sharing, people are concerned about more than the release of embarrassing information. Concerns range from identity theft and fraud to the potential sale of personal information. However, it is clear that laws of privacy have been taken to the extreme. For caretakers of someone who is in a mental health crisis, privacy policies can be intensely frustrating, to say the least. Many families fight tooth and nail to have their loved ones admitted when they are unwell, but once in hospital the family may be cut off if the patient does not consent to sharing information.

For caretakers who only want the best, it can be heart-breaking to be left in the dark by medical professionals. Information necessary to care for an individual cannot be shared without a signed consent form. Even if the nurses, social workers and doctors believe it's for the best, their hands are tied by policy and law. When a patient poses a risk to the family upon discharge from hospital, privacy policies are still such that no one can be alerted of the time of release without the patient's consent. To paraphrase a family member, how can someone be deemed so unwell that they must have their constitutional rights suspended, but still be given the choice to inform their spouse of what is happening?

Privacy is important – I think everyone agrees – but I argue that the pendulum has swung too far. Privacy must be balanced with caretakers' right to know how to care for their loved ones and to care for themselves. Ultimately, it's in the best interests of the patient.

— By Elana Angus

*Elana is a Master's of Social Work student. She has just completed her practicum at BCSS Victoria mostly working in family counselling and co-facilitating groups. She has been a great asset to all of us and we wish her every success! Elana, stay in touch! Hazel Meredith*

See our special insert highlighting our next amazing feet... UM... FEAT!  
Featuring Team "Champions 4 Hope"

The Goodlife Victoria Marathon 2011 October 9th  
Walk—Run— Pledge—Cheer!!!

Something for everyone!... Kids walk, 8 km, 13km, 26km

Raising funds for the Memorial Fund to help people who have a mental illness find inspiration hope and recovery to achieve artistic, sporting, and educational goals!

And to support our popular Peer Support Program!

Or Consider donating items asap or bid on online at [www.gobid.ca](http://www.gobid.ca) to support our charity!

# On Personal Spirituality, Rights And Rewards

To many individuals, spirituality is an important aspect of their lives. Spirituality can build community for some or be deeply personal to another. It can be a powerful aspect of a culture, a hierarchy composed of dogma and/or ritual, or just one person's sense that they are doing good in the eyes of karma.

There are two truths that I would like to see in regards to spirituality. They are as such:

Spiritual practice should be available to anyone who seeks it.

Every sentient being has the right to choose whichever spiritual path they desire, and the same right to have no spirituality whatsoever.

When both of these statements are so for everyone, spirituality can do a great deal in aiding the healing process both for those suffering from mental illness or from any other form of dis-ease.

A spiritual path brings comfort, solace, a break from everyday life or mindfulness of said everyday life.

Spiritual freedom is indeed a basic human right as is the right to seek happiness, physical and/or psychological wellness, and personal fulfilment – all of which are things that can be gained by finding a spiritual path which fits you just right.

I personally have spent years trying to find my own true spiritual place in the multiverse. I have experimented with a number of spiritual paths and have come to the knowledge that I, for myself must "bushwhack" my own path and practice my personal beliefs, for the most part, in a solitary manner.

The part of my path that I can share, however, is my role as a Reiki practitioner. I am a level II Reiki practitioner and as such I act as a conduit for universal healing energy or Chi. Using a variety of hand positions placed on the client and the intent of the client herself, I aid in channelling the healing energy into the client in order to clear blockages in the subtle body, the energy fields which extend beyond but which is still a very strong part of the physical body. This energy aids in the healing process of many forms of dis-ease including mental illness and addictions. Reiki is a supplemental treatment only, and does not replace the advice of a doctor, psychiatrist or any other health care professional).

Though to many Reiki is a spiritual pursuit, Reiki energy is **universal** energy, available to anyone who seeks it regardless of their individual spiritual choices. Thus Reiki allows for both of my spiritual truths to apply.

Reiki healing is open to everyone

Clients receiving Reiki energy will receive it whatever their free will choice is regarding their own spirituality.

I will be available to give free level II (practitioner level) Reiki treatments at the BCSS Victoria on Sunday afternoons. Appointments can be booked between 1 and 5 and take approximately one hour.

Please contact me at (250) 412-3781 or [reikiceleste@gmail.com](mailto:reikiceleste@gmail.com).

**Do not try to contact me through the BCSS Victoria office.**

If you must cancel an appointment, please contact me before 12 noon on Sunday if possible. I will be unable to receive calls during appointment hours on Sunday. I look forward to meeting anyone who wishes to make an appointment and I invite you all to relax, release, and receive.—By Random Luna Merydian



DO YOU KNOW YOU CAN DONATE TO  
BCSS, VICTORIA BRANCH, ONLINE?

Just go to [www.bcssvictoria.ca](http://www.bcssvictoria.ca), enter the site,  
then click on Canada Helps button



Local fundraising for local services





Artwork By Devon Sneed

On February 19, 2011, BCSS Victoria hosted “JAZZ at CAFE BERLIN” at the Edelweiss Club in James Bay. This was the 9th Annual 2011 Hans Fear Memorial where all proceeds went to the BCSS Victoria Memorial Fund for our local chapter. This event was a huge success made possible by the hard work of volunteers, donors and the sponsorship of community partners. Local citizens opened up their hearts with compassion and generosity for people living with mental illness. It was a fitting memorial to a brilliant young artist whose remarkable life was cut short by schizophrenia.

The event was an important reminder that every person with a mental illness has a right to access services and treatment. In remembering Hans Fear, everyone at the event had a profound appreciation of the immense challenges of living with a mental illness. Robert Amos, well known artist, wrote a poignant homage to Hans Fear in 2003: “ Hans Fear was a young artist of uncommon talent, a legend among street people and skaters...The technical complexity of his black and white work - shading and cross hatching and every other artistic trick - is astounding to me. “ As Amos so eloquently states,” Fear’s work reveals him as being a benign, even gentle soul. But he was a man driven by schizophrenia.” In this tribute to Hans Fear on February 19, he was honoured and recognised for his courage in dealing with mental illness.

The evening at the Jazz Cafe was packed with fun and excitement. It was very well attended. The fantastic Cold Cut Combo, along with The UVic Jazz Orchestra and Drabbit Plays Pastorious, kept us entertained and craving more with rounds of applause. There was great food and drinks. Many people from the BCSS Victoria and VIHA displayed their highly skilled artwork. And a silent auction kept us thrilled and on our toes. I went home with 23 free coffee coupons to McDonalds which will keep me climbing the walls for months.

The extraordinary generosity of so many people this year was mind boggling. Tara Timmers, Administrative Coordinator for BCSS Victoria spent countless hours organising this event with John Fear, Hans’s father. Great job, Tara! A special “Thank you” to our media sponsor ‘A’ for complimentary advertising and the witty personable presence of Stephen Andrew as emcee. We appreciate the many wonderful companies who donated items for the silent auction. To all the sponsors and volunteers who donated their time and their endorsements - we appreciate you! A special thanks to Caffè Fantastico on Kings Road for supporting our event with a monetary donation AND coffee for the night.

This year’s event raised \$ 5, 504! That money will put hope and happiness into the lives of so many people living with mental illness. If you listen hard enough, you will hear Hans Fear softly chuckling as he draws another work of art on some golden celestial wall. - By Doreen Marion Gee

## THE RIGHT TO HOPE

Sometimes one art course or an exercise program can mean the difference between despair and hope for someone living with a mental illness. Being able to learn a new skill or get valuable training can pave the way to a hopeful future for those in recovery. That is the promise of the Memorial Fund provided through the BC Schizophrenia Society. This wonderful program provides funds to successful applicants in pursuing their education or for recreational activities on their road to recovery. Staff at the Victoria BCSS office firmly believe that participants have an inherent right to access the same educational and recreational opportunities that others enjoy. A decent standard of living is a basic human right that should be enjoyed by all of those seeking recovery.

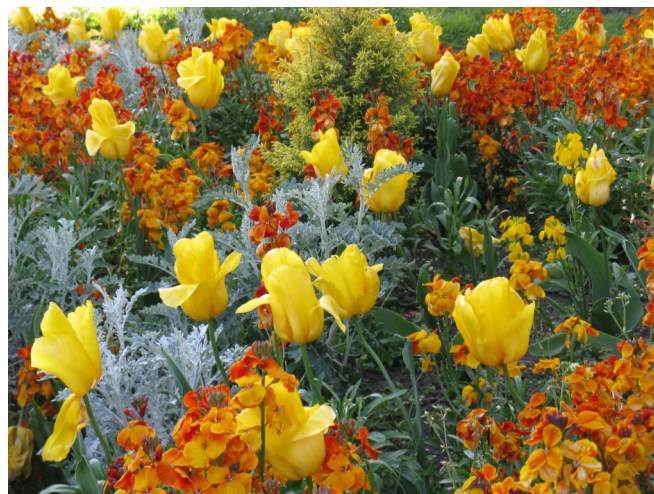


Photo By Doreen Marion Gee

## MY PATH TO EDUCATION



John Lamont-Volunteer

Going to school is not the first time I have had to deal with a challenge with education. I already had a mental illness when I did my university degree at UVIC. Now eight years later, and years of being unwell from schizophrenia I am finally well enough to take on education again. It will be harder now than before but I believe I can accomplish whatever I put my mind to.

Having a chance to get the skills to pursue a career that fits with all of your life goals gives you hope. My path to continued education has been supported by my recovery coach and about 25% of my education costs have been taken care of by the BCSS Memorial Fund & I believe my family is behind me in my decision to pursue a career in bookkeeping. I believe that bookkeeping can give me a stable work schedule, options for being self-employed, the potential for full time work and getting off of Provincial Disability Benefits, and a higher salary than other entry level positions. I believe I would maximize my personal strengths in this type of work environment and my weaknesses would be almost non-existent.

I am choosing to go back to school because taking extra classes it will give me an extra option in searching for jobs. Even if going back to school never gets me a bookkeeping job, which I highly doubt, I won't have any regrets. I can say I did my best to get qualifications necessary for a career that I am interested in. I believe going back to school is a calculated risk for me and will end up making my life so much better than if I settled for any job I can get.

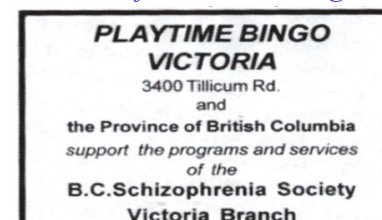
I think education is a right and a privilege. The number one thing that prevented me from considering school earlier in my recovery was the financial costs. I am grateful that I was able to go to UVIC as many people never get to experience university life. I am also grateful for the continuing education program at Camosun as this is the only thing I could afford to do. It made more sense than spending lots at a private university.

I now see education as an opportunity. I used to see it as a challenge. It is a choice and it has the power to influence the journey that you take for the rest of your life.

An education doesn't guarantee anything but it does open a lot of doors that normally wouldn't be available.

—By John Lamont

*Congratulations on your return to school!  
Thanks for volunteering with us! Hazel*



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# Practicing Dignity



Jessie Leung- -Practicum Student

I am a fourth year Child and Youth Care student from the University of Victoria with a practicum placement at the British Columbia Schizophrenia Society Victoria. I have come to recognize the enormous impact a non-profit organization can have on a community that is so often left out on the fringes. Through the actions of the volunteers and workers BCSS Victoria has taught me that the human rights of its members are the focus of their work. It is through the pure and intentional actions of empowerment and support that not only are the members and clients highly valued by this community, but are also shown the power of self appreciation. This level of self appreciation and assertion can be accomplished at BCSS Victoria through the sharing of lived experiences and the various peer and family programs. These programs encourage dignity and equality to all members and clients by creating a safe space for the recognition of self and the membership to the human family. This is in stark contrast to how history has described individuals who are living with a mental illness as burdens on the human family. With the acknowledgement of the immense strengths of the members and clients of BCSS Victoria the stigma of

mental illness can be broken down along with the many barriers that accompany it.

The impact that my time spent at BCSS Victoria has had on me will directly affect my practice in the future. I have a greater appreciation for the internal strengths that individuals living with a mental illness have and how powerful the message of hope is in the process of recovery. This understanding will add to my spirit of practice which is based on the values of equality, accountability, self-reflection, and strength-based approaches. By Jessie Leung

Jessie, you will be missed! We hope to continue our work together with you!  
Congratulations on achieving your degree in Child and Youth Care! Hazel

**We hope you enjoy receiving our newsletter! Please note the following news items for BCSS Victoria. Consider joining Facebook /twitter for more news! ON TV!** "Island Together" Starting next week you will see a 60 second piece featuring Lily Zaharieva and I on BCSS Victoria and our new program called "insideOUT" a youth led group for teens who have a parent with mental illness. Check out her new Blog [www.thinkinsideout.ca](http://www.thinkinsideout.ca)

We were successful in attaining a CAI grant and grateful that it will help us provide much more hope to youth with parents who have a mental illness. Stay tuned for more information and check out Lily's blog for updates!

**Mental Health Commission of Canada and Exciting projects:** As the only G8 Country without a national mental health strategy, it can be challenging to bring supporters not seemingly affected directly by mental illness to support funding and policy development for those whom our community at BCSS Victoria care deeply. We have strived to stay abreast of new developments in this area as we want to take strides forward like Australia and the UK in stronger mental health care services. Invited to a small stakeholder review meeting, Tara and I were able to represent people with mental illness and their families. The unveiling of a new strategy should take place early 2012! **we are participating in three projects!**

**\*Evidence Panel: Self Directed Option: Review of International Evidence**

**\*Human Rights Project\*:** We were successful in gaining the Project Lead position to use a newly developed tool to apply our Canadian Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms and the new UN Declaration of Rights for Persons with Disabilities

**\*Peer Support Project:** Thanks to the expertise of our Peer Program Coordinator, Wendy Mishkin (on academic leave), and our BCSS Victoria work, we won a contract to develop a national peer support worker training curriculum.

**Consider attending our AGM September 14th 2011 to hear more or contact Hazel Meredith at 250-384-4225 /email [execdir.bcscs@shaw.ca](mailto:execdir.bcscs@shaw.ca).**

**Are you on our e-news distribution list? Please join! [Admin.bcscs@shaw.ca](mailto:Admin.bcscs@shaw.ca)**

**OUR MISSION STATEMENT:**  
**To improve the quality of life for those affected by schizophrenia and psychosis through education, support programs, public policy, and research.**

## Attention BCSS Members

The theme of this months BCSS Victoria Newsletter is "Human Rights" and how it relates to empowerment, spirituality, accessing programs, families and educa-

**AGM NOTICE:**  
**SEPTEMBER 14TH**  
**SEE WEBSITE/CALL FOR MORE INFO!**

Proud to host Stephan Grenier Peer Support Project Lead with the Mental Health Commission of Canada! Come and hear about the latest developments including an update from our Peer Program Coordinator Wendy Mishkin, as she lends her expertise to draft the curriculum for a national peer worker training program!

## THE RIGHT TO RECOVER

- By Doreen Marion Gee



Photo By Doreen Marion Gee

Every person with a mental illness has the human right to be well and have a productive high quality life. They have the right to recover and enjoy a bountiful existence with work, play and friends. The Wellness Recovery Action Plan ( WRAP ) Program offers participants an opportunity to exercise these rights by using their own inner resources and strengths to heal themselves. Created by Mary Ellen Copeland, WRAP is a proactive way for those in recovery to build and maintain their mental health. With a Wellness Toolbox, Daily Maintenance Plan and plans to prevent or deal with crisis if it happens, WRAP is a buffer against hopelessness and despair. Integral to success are wellness tools - an emotional survival kit of strategies and skills that make us feel good and keep us afloat as we sail into our own horizons of promise and hope. On March 16, Carol Bailey Floyd hosted a Webinar about creative tools to add to our arsenal of wellness toolsthat are based on Copeland's WRAP concept and her new WRAP PLUS Program.

As a participant in the Webinar, I learned many innovative wellness tools to help me in my own personal WRAP Program. Carol Bailey Floyd is a Mental Health Recovery and WRAP facilitator from Akron Ohio. As someone in recovery herself, she has many strategies under her belt to keep herself well. They can be incorporated by any of us into our daily lives. My favourite is an " Idea Book" - a book that she carries around with her where she jots down any new concept or interesting idea she encounters during her day. I learned about " Exchange Listening" where you call your friends and exchange stories about personal successes and achievements. Floyd keeps a "Gratitude List" of things that she is grateful for in her life. On bad days, she studies that list to lift her spirits. She referred participants to a gratitude website : [www.goodlistdaily.com](http://www.goodlistdaily.com). " Living in gratitude is so powerful " to Carol. I was glad to hear that I am not the only one who loves to go to matinees by myself ! Maybe recovery is also about making your own rules about what you uniquely enjoy.

Writing down ten good things in her life every day helps Carol Bailey Floyd keep her head above water. She talks about a " Laughing Club" where she and her friends just goof around like giddy kids. How about her " Musical Bath " where she lies in a tub of warm water and glides through the clouds on waves of gorgeous music. Her most fascinating wellness tool is learning the Art of the Zentangle, a relaxing meditative way of creating beautiful images from repetitive patterns. Please see their web site at [www.zentangle.com](http://www.zentangle.com). Floyd enjoys wellness tools that are wildly imaginative. She refers those in recovery to [www.planetsark.com](http://www.planetsark.com), a " Multimedia Journey of Healing and Transformation for the Splendidly Imperfect."

To Carol Bailey Floyd, variety really is the spice of life. She firmly believes in using your creativity to constantly change your tools to avoid getting into a repetitive rut. For example, she came up with the idea to take stones out of her garden and paint inspirational words on them like " hope " and " courage." Tucked away in her purse, they come out when she needs them. In our busy hectic life, it is sometimes difficult to find time to fully use those wellness tools. But Floyd reassures us that many of these skills and strategies need only take two to five minutes, like breathing exercises.

The Webinar stressed the huge importance of these wellness tools in our lives. " They keep us protected" stresses Carol Bailey Floyd. We can all fulfil our absolute right to recover by finding that oasis within to heal ourselves. The WRAP tools are a compass on that healing path.

Other resources mentioned in the Webinar: [www.celebratepossibilities.blogspot.com](http://www.celebratepossibilities.blogspot.com) ( Floyd's recovery blog ) ; [www.mentalhealthrecovery.com](http://www.mentalhealthrecovery.com) ( Copeland's website ). - By Doreen Marion Gee

**Thanks Doreen for recently stigma-busting in our community! Doreen determined that a publicly written joke was cruel and hurtful to those living with their own mental illness and their families/friends! Doreen took a stand and brought this to the attention of the publication. The group agreed and a public written apology was given to its readers! Now that's ACTION! Kudos! Hazel Meredith**