



Newsletter

Victoria Branch, B.C. Schizophrenia Society

VOL. 26, No. 1

JANUARY, 2010

President's Message

2010: THE YEAR TO SPEAK OUT

Have you ever been frustrated waiting in a line-up? I have. Moaning to the person next to you can provide some momentary relief, **but it doesn't change anything.**

Complaining to the check-out person, even after they've provided a scripted apology, can provide some additional relief, **but it probably won't change anything.**

Telus, Shaw Cable, Terasen Gas, banks, etc. have us climbing up and down their phone-trees, pushing buttons for them. Our frustrations might be relieved by periodic scripted apologies, but we might still 'go through the roof' when we hear *"All our customer service agents are busy, please hold for the next available agent,"* to be followed by *"We are experiencing a higher than expected volume of calls. Your patience is appreciated. Your wait time will be"*

Organizational structures have systemic faults and systematized ways of dealing with the problems that accompany them. Management may mean well, but it's the end-user that pays the price.

In October 2009 the Vancouver Island Health Authority announced massive budget cuts to the mental health services provided in the greater Victoria area. Specifically:

- 15% reduction of psychiatric in-patient beds.
- 20% reduction in social work and case management services for the patients discharged from hospital.
- 20% reduction of urgent "front-end" counsellor-for patients referred by family practitioners or seen in the ER but not admitted.

We can moan amongst ourselves, **and it doesn't change anything.**

We can complain to front desk admissions people, doctors, even our front-line workers, **and it probably won't change anything.**

We can experience a long burning anger, **and it won't change anything.**

We live in a society where we can say and write what we feel. If we see an injustice committed, we can voice our opinion; say how things should be; constructively make recommendations; ask for changes to be implemented!

My 2010 questions to you are:

How will the decision-makers know about systemic faults unless someone takes the time to tell them; and will you be the person who will write to, speak of, organize for and demand the authorities make the systemic corrections **that will change something?**

See MESSAGE — PAGE 2



Joan Appleton (acting as Mrs. Claus) hands out candy canes at the BCSS Christmas dinner and dance. (Additional pictures and story on Page 4)

MEMBERSHIP FEES FOR 2010 ARE NOW DUE

Speak out and make a difference!

I wish you and your families all the very best for 2010.

Keep healthy and active!

**Josie Jones
President,
Board of Directors,
BCSS Victoria**



From Page1 **MESSAGE**

When we or a loved one need help from the health care system, we – families in Victoria - need to know that the services will be there. I encourage you to tell VIHA how you feel about the cuts and what you want the health care system to look like.

Check the BCSS website: <http://bcssvictoria.ca> and click on **CUTS PETITION** at the bottom of the Home Page. Keep a copy of letters and e-mails you write and send copies to your local MLA.

Don't know who your MLA is? Go to <http://www.leg.bc.ca/mla/3-1-1.htm>

This newsletter, which is published four times a year, is a publication of



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Recovery and Hope support group

The Recovery and Hope support group meets on the second and fourth Wednesday of the month from 3:p.m.to 4:30. We share our life situations and challenges, our goals, hopes, recovery strategies and wellness tips. We always welcome to new members.

Last year, we published some of the members' reflections on how the group has helped in their recovery. We received too many to print last time, so here are some more

Gayle

I came to the Hope and Recovery group because I was quickly losing hope of getting a handle on my mood swings. The medication I was taking was making me feel less than human. I had been hospitalized twice [in the past two months] because of medication and mania difficulties and nothing, up until the time I began this group, seemed to be pointing towards hope for me.

Somewhere that I had been walking one day had a poster attached to a bulletin board or door and immediately I felt a sense of relief that there might be something "out there", beyond the mental health system, that could help me. My hopes escalated after attending that first meeting, as I realized how others were struggling as well for that almost elusive hope. Some people were well on their way to recovery and, at that moment, I too realized that I could recover as well.

Thank you to BCSS for putting a positive spin on my sense of negative possibilities. I KNOW now I will recover...What more could I ever ask for?!

Rebecca

Each time I went to the group came away with a piece of information that has changed my life. I have been to many support groups and counsellors in my life and have never gotten the kind of support I am now getting at BCSS. I call the group my 'Masters degree' in understanding my own mental health. I wish the group met every week because I would go regularly. I am still amazed at what the group has done for me already after only two sessions.



United Way

**UNITED WAY
OF
GREATER VICTORIA**

Thank you everyone
for supporting United Way
agencies

The past year has been a challenge

By Hazel Meredith, Executive Director

It has been another exciting year at BCSS Victoria. It is with sincere thanks to our dedicated board, volunteers, students, staff, and contractors that we achieve our mission: *"To improve the quality of life for those affected by schizophrenia and psychosis through education, support programs, public policy, and research"*. At BCSS Victoria, it is our hope that you will find information, hope and help, whether you are a family member, caregiver, friend or someone with a serious mental illness.

This past year has been a challenge to our health services budgets that are there to provide care to people with serious mental illness and other psychiatric problems. While BCSS Victoria has worked hard to build healthy relationships with local service providers in the community and in the public systems, we must continue to keep people aware of the benefits to funding mental health/mental illness services in the community and in the public domain. I hear many people describe good things within "the system" and not so good things within "the system". A caution I like to assert is that we are all part of "the system". If the system is not working, we need to communicate it back to develop and strengthen channels of concerns/complaints and, of course, compliments! Without hearing what is working, what isn't and suggesting what could help, systems remain static. It is especially helpful to come from people who are using the services and the families and caregivers who interface with service providers.

Where can you make a difference by using your voice and your story? At BCSS Victoria, you can call or email me or the President of my board. Within VIHA, you can connect with the Client Relations Department around a direct matter or contact the Client Advisory Committee, chaired by our Peer Specialist Corey. The Client Advisory Committee consists of family members and people with their own experience of seeking recovery from their mental illness. Within the government you can write to local MLAs, MPs, Ministers and the highest non partisan official, the deputy minister. As British Columbians and voters, we can help to influence systems of care, through our voices. Informed voices help create meaningful change. I invite you to our upcoming educational forums and to be part of our informed network as a BCSS Victoria member. As a reader of this newsletter, I invite you to remain proud to be an ambassador for those who courageously journey through mental illness and greater levels of recovery and for families and friends who care. We need to reach wider than those in our community to help create change so I also invite you to speak to people outside of our immediate circle...we need all the supporters we can get!

We also have to focus on helping ourselves. There are those who are not eligible for care, those on waitlists and those who are seeking adjunct to their clinical care. An area associated with gaining greater levels of recovery through inspiration, hope and action is "self management" which comes from the self help movement. At BCSS Victoria we seek to provide a place where people can reclaim ... EMPOWERMENT...whether a family member or those seeking own recovery steps from a mental

health issue! There are options at BCSS Victoria for you as a person with a mental health issue or as a family member/supporter...We have educational groups, peer services (family or person in recovery) , support groups for spouses, family members, people seeking recovery, children and teens. As well, there are groups in the community. The message is...you are not alone! We welcome you to join us for hope and help or to join us to give help and hope to others. Contact me or view our website..come and be involved!





As in past years, groups from the Friends of Music were on hand to provide entertainment (above). Executive assistant Tara Timmers (right photo) poses with Bill Buckle, a board member who also acted as MC and at bottom right, Santa found time to visit volunteer Anne Marie Appleton in the kitchen



Christmas party touches many lives

Christmas is about socializing, opening your heart and receiving many blessings. I was witness to joy and hope this Season and the abundance of good cheer. Our Dinner and Dance brought music and fun and a well cooked meal. I would like to thank our chef Steven Walker Duncan from Ambrosia Catering Centre and his staff for giving of their time to make the dinner enjoyable.

Also a big hug to Friends of Music (Eclectics, Minds at Work and the Choir) for providing the music during dinner and for dancing. My future wish is to recruit more volunteers and hope our membership will give of themselves again and again. This event touches so many lives, 300 in fact and it is the volunteers that make it happen. If you are interested in volunteering next Christmas or know someone with a kind spirit please have them contact me. Thank you to all those who volunteered their time to help support this event. We will be receiving a donation from the Government this year for every volunteer that donated five hours of time. We also appreciated your donations of food and money. This helped with all the added items and gives way for provision to those in need. All the best for the New Year and I hope that your holiday celebrations meant the most to you in the way of peace in the heart. If you are needing support reach out to community agencies and the people who care about your well being — **Tara Timmers**



PHOTOS BY JUNE PRYER



JAZZ @ CAFÉ BERLIN

8th Annual
2010 Hans Fear Memorial

PROCEEDS TO THE MEMORIAL FUND OF THE BC SCHIZOPHRENIA SOCIETY VICTORIA BRANCH

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 20TH @ 7:00PM

~COLD CUT COMBO~
~BRIANNE DEVERTEUIL & HER SAVVY 6~
~BRENT JARVIS QUARTET~

VICTORIA EDELWEISS CLUB, 108 NIAGARA STREET
Bar & Kitchen Open at 6:00 pm - Catering: Innovations by Ursula (Doors Open 6pm)
ALSO FEATURING SILENT AUCTION & ORIGINAL ARTWORK FOR SALE 100% TO ARTISTS

TICKETS ARE \$22 OR \$25 AT THE DOOR (CASH OR CHEQUE ONLY) - AVAILABLE FROM:
LARSEN MUSIC, LONG & McQUADE, MUNRO BOOKS, TANNER'S BOOKS IN SIDNEY OR
BCSS VICTORIA BRANCH: 384-4225: BRISTOL TOWN HAIR FASHIONS: 477-3098

LARSEN MUSIC, ALLISON PLANO, Monday, TIMES COLONY, NEWS

Jazz event to feature three combos

By Tara Timmers

We are really excited about this year's upcoming Jazz at Café Berlin for the BCSS-Victoria Memorial Fund fundraiser! Last year our memorial fund helped 61 people with mental illness and their families. There are three jazz groups on the program. If you are interested in purchasing or helping sell tickets, they are \$22 in advance and \$25 at the door (19 years of age and over). Please let me know as soon as possible. We have 250 tickets available. There is a cash bar and food for purchase. Make sure you come out and see the value-added art exhibit put on by people in recovery from a mental illness (sales of the art go to the artist).

3 UPCOMING PUBLIC FORUMS:

Schizophrenia and Psychosis "When a loved one does not know they are ill"
Disability Tax Credit information session
Inspirational Accounts by people in Recovery from a Mental Illness

Please see our website www.bcsvgvictoria.ca or call 250-384-4225 for details.

NAKED BUNGEE A Provocative Event!

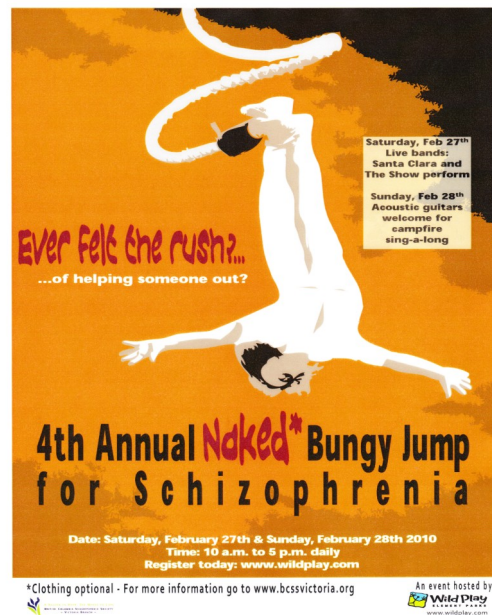
We were asked to assume leadership of the Bungee Event from BCSS Provincial to partner with WildPlay Element Parks and continue to fundraise for local island services aimed to help people with serious mental illness and their families/supporters. We have linked with Nanaimo FOS non-profit housing which is a valued 20 unit housing for people with serious mental illness. (great work!)

Did you know WildPlay owners are "Family members of someone with schizophrenia?" A business owner helped by our services who pays it forward!!! *Thank you!*

Why hold a Naked Annual Bungee event?

As you can imagine, BCSS Victoria leadership and community discussed and debated the message of the event AT LENGTH before embracing this event. Our people in recovery from serious mental illness shared comments about what the activity would mean to them ...*Comments like "Courageous", "if others can do it why can't we?", "it is a safe event—the bungee cord makes me think of a community and family connection that helps me when I am in need!"* ...We all learned something new...

Overall it was an impassioned exploration of our assumptions, beliefs and attitudes—all which fuel stigma...whether self imposed or imposed by others..it is a valuable discussion AND WE are pleased that issues pertinent to our organization and membership are being discussed in wider circles—we need all the supporters we can get in and out of our regular circles to increase awareness and promote positive change...and for folks to explore their own assumptions beliefs and attitudes



Ever Felt the Rush?...
...of helping someone out?

4th Annual Naked* Bungee Jump for Schizophrenia

Date: Saturday, February 27th & Sunday, February 28th 2010
Time: 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily
Register today: www.wildplay.com

*Clothing optional - For more information go to www.bcsvgvictoria.org

An event hosted by WildPlay ELEMENT PARKS

Saturday, Feb 27th
Live bands:
Santa Clara and The Show perform
Sunday, Feb 28th
Acoustic guitars welcome for
campfire sing-a-long

New This Year at event... LIVE BANDS!

Santa Clara, currently playing on radio and **The Show**, who have a family member with schizophrenia have both donated their time to support our event on Saturday! THANK YOU!

You are invited to bring guitars for around the campfire!

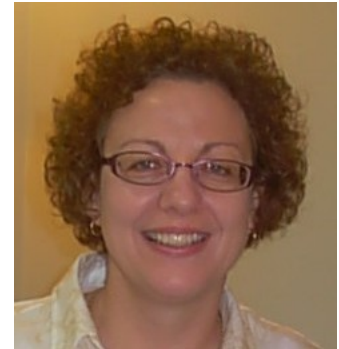
Spectators will enjoy live acoustic music and the frivolities! Most spectators last year were local seniors seeking to capture the vitality of the day! **19+ welcome**

Support group seeks to help spouses, partners

A new support group for people whose partners or spouses have mental illness (schizophrenia, bipolar disorder or major depression, with or without addictions) was

launched in November. Called Strategies and Support, the group provides an opportunity to discuss the experience of being in an intimate relationship with a person with a mental ill-

ness in a safe and supportive environment. Issues that are specific to the spouse/partner relationship such as intimacy, parenting, separation and divorce are discussed. The



Dana Lewis

group is facilitated by Inderdeep Marwaha who has a diploma in Mental Health and Addictions from Camosun College and Dana Lewis, BCSS Victoria Family Counsellor. The group meets on the last Thursday of the month at 941 Kings Road from 7:00 to 8:30 pm. New members are welcome to attend.

A new family support group for people with a family member or friend who has a mental illness (schizophrenia, bipolar disorder or major depression, with or without addictions) is slated to begin on January 14th, 2010. The group will provide a forum for discussing concerns, experiences and successes with others in similar circumstances. Held at 941 Kings Road, meetings will be on the second Thursday of the month from 7:00 to 8:30 pm. The group will be co-facilitated by Dana Lewis and a BCSS practicum student.



FAMILY SUPPORT GROUP

**Second Thursday
of the month**

This new group is a support group for people with a loved one (family member or friend) who has a mental illness.

**February 11
March 11
April 8
May 13
7.00pm—8.30pm**

Schizophrenia, Bipolar or Major Depression, with or without addictions

**Last Thursday
of the month**

STRATEGIES AND SUPPORT

Support group for people whose partners or spouses have a mental illness.

**February 25
March 25
April 29
May 27
7.00pm—8.30pm**

**2nd & 4th Wednesday
of the month**

RECOVERY AND HOPE SUPPORT GROUP

Offering strategies and wellness tips to those people recovering from a mental illness.

**Feb. 4, 24
March 10, 24
April 14, 28
May 12, 26
3 pm— 4.30pm**

**Location BCSS Victoria 941 Kings Road
For More Information call 250-384-4225**

New material available in the library

By Jean Forrest

Several items have been added to our library in the past year, including the following:

- Safe and secure: Six steps to creating a good life for people with disabilities by Al Etmsanski: this book includes a discussion of government disability benefits and policies and how to set up a discretionary trust for someone on B.C. Disability Assistance.
- Toward recovery and well-being: a framework for a mental health strategy for Canada: This is the Kirby Mental Health Commission report outlining seven goals to be addressed in creating a 'genuine mental health system in Canada'. The report includes many excerpts from stakeholder submissions, participants in regional dialogues and public online participants.
- Grandparents raising grandchildren: a legal guide: edited by Carol Ross of Parent Support Services and Barbara Whittington of University of Victoria School of Social Work.

- Twelve steps and dual disorders by Tim Hamilton
- Dual disorders recovery book: Hazelden publisher
- Hidden victims, hidden healers, by Julie Tallard Johnson
- New hope for borderline personality disorder by Neil Bockian
- Freedom from self-harm: overcoming self-injury with skills from DBT and other treatment, by Kim Grantz and Alexander Chapman
- Do you know the face of borderline personality disorder? A DVD by Elizabeth Bogod
- Schizophrenia, the dark horse: a book of poetry by Gillian Shirreff

Any of these titles can be borrowed from our library. Books can be borrowed for four weeks and videos and DVDs for one week. Members borrow free of charge and non-members pay a \$2 non-returnable fee each time they borrow library items.

Membership Form

Please make cheques payable to:

British Columbia Schizophrenia Society (BCSS), Victoria Branch

My membership renewal/new member fee of \$25.00 is enclosed. (Please check box)

Please accept my **donation** of \$_____ Total Cheque \$_____

Name: _____ Phone #: _____

Address: _____ City: _____

Postal Code: _____ E-mail: _____

Date: _____

☐ I would like to be notified of upcoming events by e-mail.

☐ I would like to be notified of upcoming events by telephone

An associate membership is available free of charge to people with a mental illness

We REMEMBER . . .

Alfred Blashill 1926 - 2009

A Founding Member of the Friends of Schizophrenia in Vancouver and its second president, Alfred Blashill set up the society's first bylaws and its first Board of Directors. In 1986 he brought the Annual Schizophrenia Conference to the west for the first time.

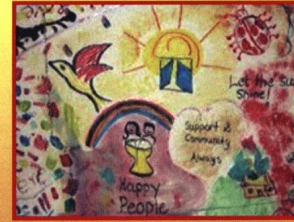
Gillian Shirreff 1941 - 2009

One of the many charities Gillian assisted was BCSS Victoria. In the year 2000, together with friends Roland and Connie, she set up a Special Schizophrenia Service at St. Andrews Presbyterian Church. For a time they were able to provide a weekly hot meal to those in need. As she said, "Life on the street is lonesome and noisy and one never knows who could end up there next." An artist and poet Gillian was author of Schizophrenia, the Dark Horse, which recounted her personal experiences with mental illness.

Glenn Hurrell 1926 - 2009

Members of the B.C. Schizophrenia Society mourned the passing of a friend, Glenn Hurrell this last year. He was a major contributor and came to every support group held in those days to show how much he cared for his family. Glenn was an active member of the Society where he became known as a loving father and companion to their ill son. Of good humour in spite of the adversity visited by the illness, he was a gentle-man that we will all miss, and our deepest sympathy goes to Stella.

On the Journey... Art of Hope and Recovery



Opening Gala:

A night of music, song, poetry and art

Opening: March 19, 2010, 7-9 pm

Location: Caffé Fantastico (corner of Kings and Quadra Rd).

Exhibit runs until April 15th



Thank you to our sponsors:



BC Schizophrenia Society
(Victoria Branch)
A Reason to Hope. The
Means to Cope.
Expect Recovery!

An anonymous donor
through the Victoria
Foundation



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Victoria,
B.C. V6T 1W7