



# Newsletter

Victoria Branch, B.C. Schizophrenia Society

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## Jazz at Café Berlin- Hans Fear Memorial Sat Feb 19th 2011

Come join us at the 9th Annual jazz event fundraiser for our BCSS-Victoria Memorial Fund at the Victoria Edelweiss Club at 108 Niagara Street in James Bay. Tickets are now on sale at \$22 in advance and \$25 at the door. 18+. We expect 200 people at this cabaret style seating event! You can pick up tickets at **LARSEN MUSIC, TEMPO TREND, LONG & MCQUADE, MUNRO BOOKS, TANNER'S BOOKS IN SIDNEY OR BCSS VICTORIA BRANCH: 384-4225: BRISTOL TOWN HAIR FASHIONS: 477-3098.**

**AMAZING SILENT AUCTION DONATED ITEMS SO FAR**  
THANKS TO Silk Road Tea Company, Thrifty Foods, Level Ground Trading Company, Janssen Ortho, Kent Laforme Sculpture, Hazel Meredith, Price's Locksmith, MacDonald's. It's a fun time to bid on the items and all the proceeds go to support the applicants of our Memorial Fund which helps clients and their families improve their quality of life!

*Would you consider making a donation or sponsoring this event and make a difference to those in need of a helping hand?*



*In this photo, past recipient gives back to the fund from sales of his published book!*

Once again this year, there will be artists display of poetry books and CD's, jewelry and paintings for purchase with funds going directly to the artist. So bring some extra monies in case you see something that catches your eye! Thanks office volunteer and family member, Devon Sneed, for your art which graces our posters! This year the fabulous bands include:

~COLD CUT COMBO~

~THE UVIC JAZZ ORCHESTRA~  
FEATURING -

~ DRABBIT PLAYS PASTORIOUS~

YOU MAY BE ABLE TO WIN TICKETS AS OUR  
MEDIA SPONSOR "A" IS HOSTING A CONTEST!

## Naked Bungy Jump



## Fundraiser with Wild Play Element Parks

Sat March 5th & Sun 6th in Nanaimo

—SUPER BRAVE, SUPER BARE—

Wow , another year of empowerment has come upon us. We hope you can join us in our 5th annual fundraising efforts with WildPlay Element Parks. If you'd like to make a pledge for a jump or volunteer Sat and/or Sunday please let us know by calling the BCSS-Victoria office at 250-384-4225.

The day hosts a venue for people from all over the world. Our Administrative Coordinator Tara Timmers is hoping to double her pledge amounts this year from \$1500-\$3000. **We have a matching donor for up to \$15,000 in pledge amounts-so please show your support if you can! !**

**This year's theme is to be a super hero** for mental illness. *If you are too timid to jump, consider supporting "TIMMERS"! TARA TIMMERS!*  
<http://www.wildplay.com/naked-bungy-2011-0>



Tara Timmers, Admin Coordinator and Kees Bastiaans, BCSS Board member and Strengthening Families Together facilitator in Duncan at the event registration desk last year!

**NEW:  
UPCOMING  
February 2011**



**Ken Beattie Age 20**

## **PUSHING THE ENVELOPE**

Several months ago, thanks to Hazel Meredith, I found out that the Anxiety Clinic at the EMP now offers a support group for those suffering from Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (O.C.D.) I have Bi-Polar Disorder but I have been battling O.C.D. for much longer, in fact most of my life.

I am now a member of the O.C.D. support group, and I am happy to report, that the treatment is working for myself and others. When you witness people moving forward, in conquering their fears, it indeed offers Hope! We meet every Tuesday from 10am-12Noon, at Victoria Mental Health Centre. The group is led by a Psychologist, Dr. Eric Ochs, and a Psychiatrist, Dr. Cliff Duncalf.

I have had other help for O.C.D., but not any that has worked this well. This help is "hands on," quite literally! People are exposed to getting their hands soiled, but instead of washing, we learn to "live with it," for up to an hour and one-half before washing.

Anxiety levels are recorded at regular intervals, and if we hang in there, the anxiety will, and does drop! We are always reminded that although difficult, the treatment is not dangerous.

To achieve victory, it's all about "unlearning," and then pushing the re-start button. When I earned my private pilot license, I learned that pushing the envelope, could kill me, but with O.C.D., I'll keep pushing the envelope because it won't kill me.

*-By Ken Beattie*

**O.C.D. in the Movies:  
"As Good As It Gets" and  
"The Aviator."**



# Your Recovery Journey



**Peer Worker, Corey, was  
flown out East to lend  
his voice to this  
National project!**

### **What is the program about?**

Your Recovery Journey is based on the premise that there is hope, that people with mental illness can get well and stay well for long periods of time, doing the things they want to do with their lives.

### **Objectives of the program**

The overall goal of the program is to increase participants' ability to meet their personal recovery goals by enhancing their self-determination and quality of life. We hope to accomplish this by:

- providing an opportunity for participants to explore the many aspects of recovery
- exploring the role of personal goals in the recovery journey
- giving participants the knowledge and tools they need to be active participants in managing their illness and recovery
- modeling hope and recovery by using a peer-support approach
- providing an opportunity for participants to reflect on and plan for their recovery journey

**Your Recovery Journey** is important for several reasons. It builds on the now well-established literature and evidence base for recovery from mental illness, and contributes to the growing number of programs that focus on empowering people to manage their own treatment and recovery journey.

We have based the program on a peer-support model for a number of reasons:

because peer support is an example of the kind of self-determination that occurs in recovery, and because peer support can transform lives. Hearing from others who have experienced similar struggles, and who understand how we are feeling, is an important factor in recovery.

The program is designed to be facilitated or co-facilitated by people who themselves have experience with mental illness and have also experienced recovery in their own lives. This "hope in action" approach is a fundamental principle of the program.

Questions and information? Call or email Hazel Meredith 250-384-4225 [execdir.bcss@shaw.ca](mailto:execdir.bcss@shaw.ca)

**2 groups will be run starting in late February!**

**5 modules in 10 sessions! Thank you to VIHA for supporting this project!**

*- By Hazel Meredith*



# ONE MORE CALL !

Finding employment in Victoria as a professional writer is a horror in this savagely competitive job market. Add to that the fact that I have a chronic anxiety disorder and it is the challenge of a lifetime. But during this tortuous process, I learned a very valuable recovery lesson. No matter how bad it gets, stay in the ring and keep on fighting - because hope and success could be only one phone call away.

A few months ago, I was in a state of total discouragement and despair. After a series of negative experiences in my job search, I sat at my desk crying. Then out of the blue came an inspiring thought. When it seemed that there was no hope, I had to pick myself up and create some hope for myself. It became crucial that I do anything to put some sunlight into my stark existence.

With all the bravado that I could muster, I made a "cold call" to the editor of a magazine and asked if they needed any writers. The gods must have taken a coffee break because the woman who answered was extremely nice and pleasant. She said that they were accepting freelance work plus they had regular writers working for them. With this jolt to my confidence, I took a gamble. "Would you consider me for one of your writing positions if you like my writing?" I said, my heart in my mouth. "Yes", she replied, "send me samples of your work."

The rest is history. The editor loved my writing and I am now a regular paid writer for their magazine. This is a dream come true. I have volunteered as a writer for years to achieve this goal and I finally made it. Happy times! One more call and my life changed.

One more effort and I have a future. As someone in recovery, this was a life changing event. I learned that there is always hope for someone in recovery. Never surrender to the night because a wonderful opportunity could be in the dawn's early light. Make that call ! -*Photo and Article By Doreen Marion Gee*



## Annual Vancouver Family Conference...with Globe and Mail's Andre Picard!

**The date for the Family Conference is Saturday, April 30th at VGH.** Included is a Friday night 'fireside' conversation and networking evening with the Saturday keynote speaker, Globe and Mail's Andre Picard, talking with David Eby of the BC Civil Liberties Association on Mental Health and Human Rights. On Saturday, Andre Picard will be speaking on Stigma, Mental Illness and the Influence of Media. We hope you will be able to attend both. One of the requests from last year is to provide families time to talk with each other. The organizers are trying to meet this request with the Friday night event, plus a dedicated lunch space at the Sassafras cafeteria for lunchtime (informal) conversation. Stay tuned for more information! Shirley Rogers from Vancouver Coastal Health Authority Family Advisory Committee is a lead representative.



*André Picard is the public health reporter at The Globe and Mail, and the author of three bestselling books. Mr. Picard has received much acclaim for his writing, including the Michener Award for Public Service Journalism. He is also a five-time nominee for the National Newspaper Award, Canada's top journalism prize.*

### LOCAL NEWS...

**PROPOSED DATE OF OUR LOCAL VANCOUVER ISLAND CONFERENCE ON SCHIZOPHRENIA IS NOVEMBER 19th 2011.**

*MORE LOCAL NEWS: THERE IS A NEW INDEPENDENT FAMILY ADVOCACY COMMITTEE for more information come out on February 7th at 6pm in our BCSS Victoria office at 941 Kings Road or leave a message for now for Cherry Lynn or Terry at 384-4225.*

# FAMILY RECOVERY JOURNEY

**Families also experience a journey...** Authors of a recent survey of people caring for family members with schizophrenia concluded that the mental health of many family caregivers borders dangerously close to clinical depression<sup>1</sup>. The burden of caregiving for families with a mentally ill member has been well documented. There is, however, little written on how family members of persons with severe mental illness and the family as a whole recover from the impact of mental illness. Recovery is the experiential shift from despair to hope, alienation to purpose, isolation to relationship, withdrawal to involvement, and from passive adjustment to active coping.<sup>2</sup> Just as individuals with mental illness may embark on a recovery journey, so may families with a mentally ill member.

Authors LeRoy Spaniol and Anthony Zippel<sup>3</sup> describe some general characteristics of the family recovery process:

- Recovery is a growth process—a transforming process
- Each family member recovers at his or her own rate
- The particular impact of the psychiatric disability differs in family members
- Families need to be aware of each other's phase of recovery
- Recovery is not linear
- Emotional reactions of family members during the recovery process are natural and do not mean there is something wrong with family members.



Tara Timmers, Administrative Coordinator (Left) and Dana Lewis, Family Counsellor (right)

## HELPING FAMILIES and COMMUNITIES BE STRONGER:

**Similar to other Schizophrenia Society services across Canada, we provide services to people sharing diagnoses and experiences of psychosis. This includes schizophrenia and schizoaffective disorders, first break psychosis, bipolar disorder and major depression.**

Many non profit societies are specialists in helping identify and support people in gaps (those who are struggling and may not be diagnosed yet or ineligible for services). A number of people share the experience of receiving a diagnosis and then having it change if or when more symptoms arise. We are there as specialists for those facing psychosis... providing information, consultation, support, advocacy and referral to community partners. - Hazel Meredith

**At BCSS Victoria** we work with families and supporters to assist their recovery process in a variety of ways. **Strengthening Families Together is a 10 session educational program** designed to give participants the information they need to understand a family member or friend's mental illness. A waiting list is now being taken for spring 2011. **Support groups** for family members meet at the BCSS offices and at Eric Martin Pavilion. Professional, **individual counselling** that promotes recovery is available at no cost through BCSS Victoria, thanks to our funders and donors. To find out which support group is right for you or to schedule a counselling appointment phone Dana at 250-384-4225.

*-By Dana Lewis MSW Family Counsellor BCSS-Victoria<sup>1</sup>*

Consumer Health Sciences and the National Mental Health Association Study, 2011

<sup>2</sup>Ridgway, P. (2001). Restorying psychiatric disability: Learning from first person recovery narratives. *Psychiatric Rehabilitation Journal*, 24(4), 335-343.

<sup>3</sup>Spaniol, L., & Zippel, A. M. (1994). The family recovery process. *The Journal of the California Alliance for the Mentally Ill*, 5(2), 57-

## OUR MISSION STATEMENT!

**To improve the quality of life for those affected by schizophrenia and psychosis through education, support programs,**





## STAGES OF FAMILY RECOVERY

Recognizing that a family's recovery from the crisis of mental illness is not a linear one, authors LeRoy Spaniol and Anthony Zipple<sup>1</sup> describe four stages of recovery for families:

**SHOCK/DENIAL/DISBELIEF** As family members grow aware of what is happening they may develop other explanations for their family member's behavior such as adolescence, substance use or negative peer pressure. Family tensions and frustrations rise and members often feel guilty, embarrassed or blame themselves. In this stage families tend to rely heavily on professionals, believing that they hold the answers. As time passes and the psychiatric disability continues faith in the mental health system may be replaced by pessimism and despair.

**RECOGNITION/ACCEPTANCE** As family members' acceptance of the situation grows, they frequently feel a profound sense of loss as they let go of expectations for their family member's life. A fluctuation in functioning over time may be an emotional roller coaster ride for families. The grieving process involves family members letting go of old hopes and expectations and developing new ones. Profound changes in the outlook of family members may result from the meaning they attach to their family member's illness.

**COPING** Coping replaces grieving when family members realize the need to resume living their own lives while providing long-term support to their loved one. Family members cope with the disruption in normal family life, recurrent crises, the persistence of the psychiatric disability, the loss of faith in some professionals and the mental health system, and the aspirations of their loved one. Family members often discover that as a result of their experiences they are more assertive, feel less self-blame and are more confident in their own abilities.

**PERSONAL/POLITICAL ADVOCACY** Family members often come to a new awareness of themselves in their recovery process. This awareness can include increased assertiveness and confidence. They may experience a desire to influence the systems that are supposed to support their family member.


**Families at all stages of the family recovery process benefit from support.** During the initial phase of psychiatric illness, from onset through diagnosis, families require information about the illness, the mental health system and advocacy to access resources for their family member. Supportive counselling can help the family members to explore their reaction to the crisis and to increase their understanding of other family members' recovery process. Families also benefit from meeting with others in support and information groups. This affords an opportunity to relate to peers going through a similar crisis. Family members may also profit from counselling to work through grief issues. As they move from grief to coping, families may find support groups a helpful forum to discuss ongoing struggles and they may act as mentors to family members beginning their recovery. In the later stages of the recovery process family members may be interested in assistance with their advocacy efforts, either through accessing existing channels for advocacy or by creating new ones.

**At BCSS Victoria we support families in their recovery journey through a variety of services—professional, individual counselling, support groups for families** at different stages of the recovery process from pre-diagnosis onwards, educational opportunities that address concerns of caregivers and advocacy opportunities. To find out how we can help you with your recovery, please contact us at **250-384-4225** or email at [admin.bcsc@shaw.ca](mailto:admin.bcsc@shaw.ca)

<sup>1</sup>Spaniol, L., & Zipple, A. M. (1994). The family recovery process. *The Journal of the California Alliance for the Mentally Ill*, 5(2), 57-59.

**-By Dana Lewis MSW Family Counselor BCSS-Victoria**

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The Victoria Branch,  
B.C. Schizophrenia Society,  
941 Kings Rd., Victoria V8T 1W7  
Tel: 384-4225; fax: 388-4391  
e-mail: [admin.bcsc@shaw.ca](mailto:admin.bcsc@shaw.ca)  
website: [www.bcscvictoria.ca](http://www.bcscvictoria.ca)  
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## CHRISTMAS MIRACLES!

Christmas is a time of rebirth and renewal when miracles can happen. At the 26<sup>th</sup> BCSS Victoria Christmas Dinner and Dance on December 4, laughter and celebration filled the huge auditorium at the First Metropolitan United Church. Three hundred people in recovery and their supporters felt their spirits soar with the magic of the season and the hope of new possibilities for wellness and success in their lives.

It was a wonderful event. The “Mood Swing Chorus” entertained us with great music. We were all warmly welcomed by President Jane Milliken and Executive Director Hazel Meredith. Erica Pryer enchanted everyone with her beautiful singing. Then we all gobbled down juicy scrumptious turkey with all the trimmings. There were satisfied sighs and delighted faces all around as people relished the feast. After dinner, we all sang along to the “Eclectics” with full stomachs and happy hearts. During the raffle prize draw, many ecstatic winners walked away with sumptuous high quality gifts. These kinds of rewards make mental health consumers feel special and valued – which is priceless. The rest of the evening was spent dancing to songs by the clearly talented “Jason Dunphy & the Religion” with more prizes for spot dances.

BCSS Victoria staff wish to thank all the caring people who volunteered their time and donated gifts to make the evening special for those in recovery. They are deeply grateful to the First Metropolitan United Church and Sharon MacDonald (Administrator), the church custodians, all the “Friends of Music” groups and Chef Steve Walker-Duncan and his hard-working staff.

This benevolent Christmas spirit is reflected all year round in the work of the BC Schizophrenia Society Victoria Branch. Our local branch gives people the gift of hope, renewal and recovery. Clients are encouraged to expect a future of wellness and success. Now that is a true miracle!

*-By Doreen Marion Gee, In Recovery*





## Through a Mother's Eyes...

**I am the mother of a now adult child of Schizophrenia.** Eighteen years ago, my son's life was altered completely and forever. Like any person faced with a serious illness would experience profound levels of change...My son, seventeen years of age, a bright scholar, good sportsman an ambitious young man a person who was received happily by his peers, teachers and family. He was "King of the Hill". My beautiful son's life changed. Frighteningly, suddenly almost without warning. He was still my son, a son I know longer knew. What illness had befallen him? That question plagued my family until after two years of multiple hospitalizations, tests, countless harmful medications he was given a diagnosis of "Paranoid Schizophrenia" !

I have seen a lot of serious illness with two of my other children. Life threatening illnesses, with one child there would be finality; in fact this child did die. What could be more wrong than that, to have a child die before you?

And now this...this new illness not of the body but *of the mind*... this was the cruellest illness I had to see a child of mine suffer...It could not be cut out, fixed in any way by science that I could see clearly. This was how I began the journey with my son and his mental illness. Schizophrenia, fractured my family, caused an ocean of tears, leaving me a mother to try to "help cure my son with Love"...**Ah, that was eighteen years ago, however... change happens!**

Today it is January 3, 2011, My son, now thirty-four, his once emotionless face that schizophrenia caused, seems to be clearing, like through a dark veil, so my boy can now smile and laugh, sometimes. I to have found that with consistency, good medications, not forgetting the hard work of mental health staff...that Hope is a word, Cure is a word... I now see as true possibility for my beautiful son. Altered by mental illness, yes, I have Faith Trust and the Belief that there will be a Cure. The greatest gratuity that you can give my son is to remember he is person first, who just happens to have a mental illness. *-By Kathleen Robinson*



**Michael Brown Track & Field**

## Walking Toward Wellness

My name is Michael Brown. In 2004 I spent a few weeks in the hospital and was diagnosed with schizophrenia. I had gained some weight before my stay in the hospital but after my stay I found myself about 40 pounds overweight. I had some knowledge in fitness training and eventually lost 40 pounds. I started this process initially through walking. When I felt ready for running I started that. My first runs were 3 km moving to 5 km. I also did some training with weights. I found I could get a "LIFE PASS" to use at local fitness centers.

I presently workout roughly three times per week and I think I am in fairly good shape. I know my knowledge in fitness has helped me. Maybe I can help others with their fitness goals. After consulting with Heather, my VIHA counselor, I have planned a walking group with BCSS. This walking group will meet twice per week at the BCSS office. We will probably start with a 30 minute walk to begin with. Some flexibility training will occur after the walk. I will lead the workouts. To sign-up and to get more information on when the workouts will occur please talk to Tara at the BCSS office. Phone 250 384 4225. *-By Michael Brown*

## Donate your Fabulous Finds to BCSS for the Next Antique and Retro Show



Three successful fundraising events in 2010 means we will be back in 2011 at our table at the Antique and Retro Show and Sale. Thanks to our members and friends for the assortment of treasures we had at our table. We know you have more in your closets, basements and attics to donate so start looking now!! Ask your friends and family to help us out, too.

We will start collecting gently used articles at the BCSS office in March 2011 for our next event to be held in April 2011. Need some ideas ?

Individuals who stopped by our table purchased china, kitchen utensils (including a 1950's retro potato masher!), table linens, ornaments, costume jewellery, handbags, hat boxes, statuettes, books, toys, lamps, pictures, flatware, serving dishes, trays, silver tea sets, retro dish sets and more. Of course if you have large items that you want to sell but they are too large to bring to the sale, consider taking a picture and setting a price— we will display the picture and connect the purchaser to you to arrange pick up.

There's more to the table than fundraising. We have our promotional material on the table and many people are interested in the community services we provide. It is a chance to be part of our community and talk about Schizophrenia. Many people who stop by share a story or a thought with us and some leave a donation and thank us for the work we do because in some way BCSS Victoria has touched their life or the lives of someone they care about.

## Volunteer Opportunity

If you are interested in volunteering for the next sale for a couple of fun-filled hours meeting and greeting members of our community while helping them select a treasure from our donated collection, please give us a call.

The Mary Winspear Centre in Sidney is central and served by public transit. The atmosphere is friendly. Great food is available on site and you get to visit the other wonderful displays ahead of the crowd. It is hard to leave without a treasure or two of your own!

