



AUGUST 2015

Newsletter

BC Schizophrenia Society, Victoria Branch

“It Takes a Community”

For info or self referral: visit www.bcssvictoria.ca or call 250-384-4225 email: admin.bcss@shaw.ca

A Few Words from our Executive Director

On behalf of all of us at BCSS Victoria, I want to express our most heartfelt gratitude for the amazing transformation of our building by HeroWork! HeroWork is led by the kind and energetic visionary, Paul Latour. Paul is the Founder and Executive Director of HeroWork. He is dedicated to community building in the spirit of a modern day “barnraising”. His vision is to help bring new life to the community based non profits who are unable to prioritize building upgrades and updating due to the prioritization of service delivery when only limited funds are available. My colleagues and I had the opportunity to work beside many of the professional and lay-person volunteers to witness the kind, generous and selfless dedicated work to transform the much loved but worn out 941 Kings office space. Not only is the building now up to fire code, it is GORGEOUS!

As you know, BCSS Victoria, helps hundreds of people per year, often at the darkest points in their lives as family caregivers or as people with serious mental health issues such as schizophrenia (1:100people), bipolar, and major depression or youth dealing with early psychosis. We provide in house support and respond to 7000 phone, drop ins and email contacts per year. One of the biggest things people need when they come to BCSS Victoria is to seek a sense of hope to keep going on in their journey. The newly updated space offers a boost to the spirit of all those who attend and work at 941 Kings. We could not be more thrilled to offer some light in their journey....and HEROWORK MADE THIS JOURNEY LIGHTER for all those who are seeking HOPE and help through our service. It does indeed take a community! The modern day barn-raising has lifted drywall, tools AND SPIRIT!!

Here are some of the comments we have heard:

Core Office Volunteers: “BCSS Victoria now reflects the openness and genuine warmth of the staff. Clients have thanked us over the weeks since we moved back for providing a safe warm and bright space where they can be themselves. It is a joy to be part of that. Thank you so much!” “In all my years of volunteering here, I cannot believe how fortunate we are to have such a beautiful work place. I can’t believe my eyes! People will be so happy coming here!”

Clients “It’s so bright and fresh” “WOW!” (we have heard countless times!) “It makes me feel so good!” “I feel like I matter.” “The community did this for us? It makes me feel cared about.” “People really do care!”

Volunteer board members were overwhelmed at the radical renovation, especially as it was done in such a short amount of time. The staff walk with a bounce in their step and showcase the space with a flourish and real sense of pride! From the bottom of our hearts, thank you so much for the tangible difference you have made to our place of HOPE. We could not have done this without you and your incredible team. Please take the time to visit www.HeroWork.com to view the many contributing businesses, volunteers and to witness the transformation on video clips. A special thank you goes to Paul LaTour, Kent McFadyen, Pete Smither, Cheryl Rowley, Neville Gregg of Agenda Furniture and Andrew Sheret for the temporary space to allow us to operate during the radical renovation. All of the contractors and lay people generously volunteered their time for this project and raised funds for the supplies, although many supplies were generously donated. **We are so grateful! It does take a community to make a difference and here is the evidence of what can be achieved when we all come together! Thank you HeroWork! -Hazel Meredith**





BCSS Victoria Welcomes David Butler Our New Family Counsellor!!

On behalf of all of us at BCSS Victoria, we would like to welcome David Butler to the team. David is an experienced mental health nurse, trained in Canada and the UK who has specialized in Early Psychosis/Schizophrenia since 1995. He began this work first in Victoria, BC as Coordinator of Schizophrenia Services for Island Health and then he worked in Southampton UK as Manager and developer of the Southampton Early Intervention in Psychosis Service with the NHS. David has now returned to Canada and is excited to take up his role as Family Counsellor for Mental Health with BCSS Victoria Branch.

David has training in Group Psychotherapy and also has a certificate in Behavioural Family Therapy, which is an evidence based approach to supporting families and caregivers using a recovery approach and the stress-vulnerability model. Even when managing services, David has maintained a clinical involvement and a small caseload and has continued to run groups. He is a passionate advocate for parity of esteem between mental health and physical health and has also given presentations on stigma and mental health at workshops and conferences.

Other career highlights include working as a mental health Regional Planner for Northern BC as part of the Riverview downsizing project and taking part in research on Schizophrenia and Psychosis. David was published in the Journal of Psychosocial Nursing in 2010 with two co- authors regarding a research pilot project to look at the decrease in burden of caregiver stress by providing support and education using a CBT based mode. He was also involved in the PPIp study, part of a UK national study facilitated by Oxford University looking at antibodies and schizophrenia. As well, David was involved with a Peer Support research project looking at the effectiveness of peer support in engagement of socially isolated persons with psychosis. He has been a key participant in setting up a Psychosis Pathway based on the Stroke Pathway which looks at strict timelines for interventions for all aspects of psychosis. He was also involved in the development of Adanac House, and with BCSS Victoria, helped set up the first early psychosis family and caregiver support group on Vancouver Island.

All of us at the BCSS Victoria office are happy to have you as part of our team!

With Heavy Hearts...In Memorium – Bill Buckle

It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of long time BCSS Victoria Board Member Bill Buckle on August 5, 2015. Bill has served BCSS Victoria well in various capacities for many years as a Board Member, a lead committee member on the Memorial Fund and MC for our Annual Christmas Dinner and Dance. Bill will be missed by everyone at BCSS Victoria.

A celebration of Bill's life and achievements will be featured in our next newsletter.

Visitation will be held on Friday, August 14, 2015, 6:00-8:00 PM at McCall Brothers, Johnson & Vancouver Streets. Service will be held on Saturday, August 15, 2015, 10:30 AM at Lutheran Church of the Cross, Cedar Hill and Cedar Hill Cross Roads, with Pastor Ron Nelson officiating. Burial to follow at Royal Oak Burial Park.



BCSS Victoria 4th Annual Iris Luncheon



Our 4th Annual Iris Luncheon on May 22nd at the Union Club was a great success again this year! The venue looked lovely with all of the tables adorned with beautiful flower arrangements of irises and the lunch was delicious. There were 116 people at the event and there were fabulous prizes for the silent auction.

Andrew Johnson from CTV was our emcee again and he did a fabulous job. The first speaker was Paula Roumeliotis, our Administrative Coordinator, who shared her experiences around living with mental illness and her recovery journey as well as the importance of peer support and recovery focussed treatment. We were also honoured to have our Mayor Lisa Helps as our keynote speaker who spoke about the importance of coming together as a community to help those who live with mental illness as well as her own personal experiences of supporting a friend with mental illness.

The total amount of money that was raised was just over \$31,000 which will go a long way towards supporting our programs and services which help people living with mental illness as well as family members. Among the generosity of all who supported the event, we had the amazing experience to receive an incredible gift from an event attendee of \$25,000! Given a shortfall this year, words cannot express how instrumental it will be in helping people with lived experience find some hope and support they need, when they need it most!

We would like to thank the Investors Group for being our platinum sponsors again this year and we are especially grateful for all the hard work and dedication of the planning and organizing committee including Barbara Sutherland, MaryJane Tiller, Michael Hemmings, Paul de Gagne, Chris Gerow and Jeff Smith. Thank you also to Dan Trinajstic from the Medicine Shoppe and Barry O'Bara and Associates for being sponsors.

We would also like to thank all of the businesses and individuals for their generous donations of items for our silent auction: Cedar Hill Golf Course, The Keg, Fairways Market, GameStop Video, Fifth St. Bar and Grill, San Remos, Belfry Theatre, Joan Bell, Chris Caleb, Victoria Royals, Stages Wine Bar, Old Morris Tobacconist, HILTI, Saunders Subaru, Savage Cycle, Lallicare Pharmacy, Harley Tiller, Olive the Senses and JonesCo Realty.

A Big Shout out to our former practicum student Dylan Harms, and to Patty Milne for their time and enthusiasm around getting so many wonderful silent auction donations.

BCSS Victoria Upcoming Events

BCSS Victoria Annual General Meeting:

September 14 from 6-8:00 pm (Location to be announced)

Please remember to make sure your membership fees are up to date if you would like to vote about issues that are important you at the meeting and to support our community!

"WRAP for Kids" who have a family member with a mental illness:

September 26th from 11:30-1:00 pm at 941 Kings Road for 8 weeks.

Strengthening Families Together: course for family caregivers

September 28th from 6-8:00 pm at 941 Kings Road for 10 weeks.

Annual Schizophrenia Conference

November 20th from 8-4:00 pm.

Comfort Inn and Suites

3020 Blanshard (at Finlayson)

Registration will be open soon!

Camp Barnard: A Principle in Practice

by Don Palmer
Coordinator of the Peer Support Program



Every peer supporter at BCSS Victoria has developed their own personal WRAP® (Wellness Recovery Action Plan®). Along with employing their WRAP in their daily routine of mental health hygiene as individuals, our peer supporters at BCSS Victoria have found great benefit in spending time together socially. A strong social network is another aspect of WRAP. At various times of the year different members of our peer support team will get together to attend a movie, go to a festival, celebrate someone's birthday with a lunch or dinner out, host a BBQ or brunch for each other or some other social outing. The Annual BCSS picnic and the Christmas dinner are also well attended by our peer supporters.

In a peer support team meeting five years ago there was a very productive brainstorming session on how we could spend a weekend together each summer. That same year we started our annual three day weekends together at Camp Barnard – just outside of Sooke. The campground is on the edge of Young's Lake which is ideal for swimming or canoeing. Both cabins and canoes are rented at a very affordable rate. There is a hiking trail around the lake and lots of field area to play softball, bocce ball, badminton etc. Our Camp Barnard weekend is the main event on many peer supporters social calendar. Nothing compares to prolonged exposure to fresh country air and the company of those people who can not only relate to living with a mental illness but also to what it's like to fulfil the duties of a peer supporter. Carefree fun and laughter fill our days which carries on through the evening as we sit around a roaring campfire singing and/or playing our guitars. The principle in practice - it takes a community – the foundation of the recovery movement.



BCSS Victoria COPE Forum
“Expert Medical Panel: Optimizing Quality of Life for
Patients with Schizophrenia”
by Terry Germanson

As the starting event in its public forum series, BCSS Victoria co-sponsored a panel presentation, “Optimizing Quality of Life for Patients with Schizophrenia”, on June 30th, 2015 at the Comfort Inn with the Lucie Dubue, Janssen representative. The panel included newly appointed Director of Schizophrenia Services and the Early Psychosis Intervention (EPI) Program, Dr Andrea Bardell, Clinical Pharmacology Specialist Dr Bree Zehm, and Lindway Rawluk, RPN from Island Health.

Dr. Bardell provided a biomedical overview of the prevalence, progression, and treatment of psychotic illnesses. Justification from the scientific literature for early intervention was emphasized. Dr. Zehm spoke knowledgeably about choices between antipsychotic medications, and drew attention to the clinical benefits of injectable versus oral forms of medication. Lindsay Rawluk spoke about the need for psychosocial rehabilitation to complement pharmaceutical therapy and the importance of regarding the mental health patient as a whole person to facilitate recovery.

The event was well attended by and the audience diverse, though most were caregivers and family members. Ample time was allotted for open dialogue with the panel discussants. Members of the audience meeting Dr Bardell for the first time noted her warm and approachable manner, her balanced view of psychiatry, and her obvious compassion for patients. A long and productive association between BCSS and the new director is envisioned. As always Dr Zehm's open personality and zeal for pharmaceutical science were evident as well as her acumen for relating up-to-date scientific findings with the needs of individual patients. Lindsay Rawluk spoke with the gravitas of one who has dedicated her clinical career as a registered psychiatric nurse to bring about recovery in the lives of persons with mental illness.



BCSS Victoria Annual Picnic in the Park

by Annuska Vanderpol

The BCSS picnic took place on July 4th, 2015. It was a day to come together and celebrate being a community. There were many volunteers and donors who helped pull the day off. There was a check-in on coming into the picnic and we had over 100 people attend. Michael and Charles were the ones manning the table for most of the day. Participants received a name tag so that others could learn their names quickly. The weather was hot and breezy. There were a number of gazebos set up and they provided people with some shade. After checking in, people could help themselves to cold drinks and they could play badminton, frisbee and bocci ball if they wanted to. Later the pizza came. There was enough pizza for everyone. It was served by a number of volunteers. There was also salad and after the pizza was served there was fruit and dessert for everyone. The picnic had a musician playing live music, such as music by Fleetwood Mac. Looking forward to next year's picnic!

Thank you to all of our corporate sponsors: Hot House Pizza, Thrifty Foods, Dollarama and Monks Office Supply.

A big thank you to all of our wonderful volunteers who dedicated their time and energy to make the picnic a special event for everyone: Joan & Blane McIntosh, Peter & Eileen Shieldrop, Joan Appleton, John Pang, June Pryer, Stephanie Ringwood, Charles Crossland, Chris Caleb, and Joan Bell. Thank you to all those who donated to the event to help us keep our costs down!



Vintage, Retro and Collectibles Show/Sale

September 6, 2015 9:30-4:00 pm

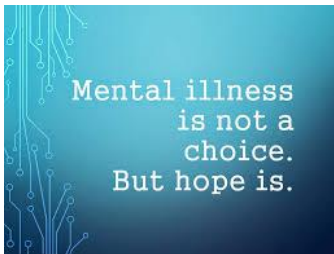
Mary Winspear Centre, Beacon Avenue, Sidney

General Admission \$4.00 Early Birds (8:30 am) \$20.00

BCSS Victoria Branch will be hosting two fundraising and information tables at the Vintage, Retro & Collectible Show. This event supports our efforts to raise the quality of life for our clients and their families.

We would appreciate any donations of collectibles for the sale. Donations can be dropped off at 941 Kings Road or you can call the BCSS Victoria office at 250-384-4225.

You are also welcome to come on down to the Vintage Show to find some new treasures to add to your own collections and to support programs and services at BCSS Victoria Branch. We hope to see you there!



What can a community do to support recovery and change for those experiencing mental health difficulties and their families

by David Butler

It should not be a surprise to note that mental illness will affect everyone in Canada at some point through a family member, a colleague or a friend. About one in five will experience mental health concerns personally in their life time.

Often the language used within the mental health system is jargonized using words that are not easily understood. If we have a physical illness we will ask our doctor to explain exactly what that means and what it takes to fix it. The same needs to be true of mental illness – many of the diagnostic terms are unwieldy and do not have an immediate meaning for community or the individual. The words are often stigmatized. Often these words are unhelpful and unhelpful. We would not feel too uncomfortable to mention to our friends or a boss that we have a physical problem such as diabetes or high blood pressure. A boss or a friend may then encourage us to get help or offer support to enable someone to do their job more effectively. The same may not be true of mental health condition. As a community we need to start to change the culture and stigma that has developed around mental illness.

The words we use often isolate people in mental health. Imagine receiving a diagnosis of schizophrenia and not having a proper explanation of what that means. You look it up on the internet and you read more scary words and explanations. Schizophrenia can be a range of different experiences and are quite individual. That first time an explanation is given it needs to be hopeful and based on the person's experience of their symptoms and not a broad description from a text book. Health care professionals are often taught a series of words that are technical and precise in the context of the mental health "system".

Let's start thinking differently as a community about mental health. Let's listen carefully to what the people around us are experiencing and try to understand from their perspective and not solely from a text book. Having a positive thinking approach as a community will in itself lift mental health out the rut and make it equal alongside physical health and not below like a poor relative. As a community we can collectively change the "vibe" around mental health and change the outlook to one of positivity which we will not think twice about discussing openly. After all, psychosis is treatable and recovery is expected.

Recovery Happens



BCSS Victoria on Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/BCSchizophreniaSocietyVictoria>
BC Schizophrenia Society Victoria Banch on Twitter: [@BCSSVictoria](https://twitter.com/BCSSVictoria)