



The Spirit of Christmas

SUBMITTED BY the Mental Health Foundation of Nova Scotia

On Saturday, November 23, the true spirit of Christmas came shining through. With one incredibly generous act of kindness, the Compass Group Canada Festival of Trees Black Tie Gala turned magical. It all happened because of one very special tree.

Amidst the Mental Health Foundation of Nova Scotia's Forest of Trees, there stood an eye-catching offering. The Heather Otto Memorial Tree shone brightly. It was adorned with white lights and sparkling dragonflies. Accompanying the tree was a story about the confusing transformation of a water bug into a dragonfly. Although the bug's physical change parted him from his friends below the water, he was able to watch over them from above. He also knew they would soon magically transform and join him in the sky.

The tree was created by Bea Pelley and dedicated to her good friend, Heather Otto. Heather was a longtime Festival volunteer and Mental Health Foundation supporter. She passed



From left to right: Tree creator Bea Pelley, Kristin Otto, Nancy Ford Johnston and Jennifer Fletcher Power with the Heather Otto Memorial Tree at the Shannex Holiday Luncheon.

away in February of this year. Heather's husband, Phil, is also a longtime supporter. A past Board Member, Phil continues to generously support the Foundation through his company, Revolve Branding. The Otto Family, and Heather's friends,

have found comfort in the dragonfly story.

At the Luncheon event, held on Friday, November 22, bids began on the Forest of Trees. Phil Otto attended, and brought along his 11-year-old daughter, Kristin.

Kristin placed bids throughout the event on the Dragonfly Tree, stopping at \$125, the extent of her savings.

On Saturday, bids on the Dragonfly Tree took off. Two guests in particular entered into a bidding war. They both shared a connection with the Otto family. As the Silent Auction drew to a close, one bid had peaked at \$11,000; the other at \$10,000. In an amazing show of Christmas spirit, the two parties came together to combine their bids for a grand total of \$21,000!

Their delivery instructions were simple: Send the tree to Kristin Otto.

This magical holiday moment of compassion and giving has touched many. The Mental Health Foundation of Nova Scotia is honoured to have known Heather, and to have had a part in this story.

We hope this display of warmth and hope will serve as a reminder: **The true spirit of the season lives on.** We wish all of you a warm and peaceful holiday season.



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Stay Connected Mental Health Project

The Stay Connected Mental Health Project is a comprehensive 5-year project to connect youth who have mental health and addictions challenges with the appropriate services and support that they require. Funded by the QEII Foundation from a generous endowment from Fred and Elizabeth Fountain in memory of their son Alex, the project will build a culture of youth self-management, family engagement and seamless transition between the IWK and Capital Health so that youth and their families who require ongoing care will receive it as they transition to adult-based services.

The project includes a partnership with local universities to promote mental health literacy, to raise the profile of mental health issues on campus, to enhance the identification of students who have mental health and addiction challenges and to support collaborative pathways between universities and health-based mental health and addictions services when needed. With a focus on early identification of those with mental health and addiction challenges, youth self-management, rapport-building between the IWK and local universities and Capital Health, and the promotion of appropriate care pathways among these settings, our objective is to shift the culture and practice of supporting youth with mental health and addiction problems to stay connected to the care that they require.

On November 25th, Cheyenne Smythe Kelvey began her new role as the Coordinator for the Stay Connected Mental Health Project.

Cheyenne is an Occupational Therapist with a degree from Dalhousie University and a Halifax native. Throughout her education and career,



she has embraced opportunities to work with people experiencing a variety of mental health needs. At Connections Halifax she has held a variety of positions, including a leadership role in the development and coordination of the Community Outreach and Housing Program. In her recent work with the Community Health Teams, Cheyenne has enjoyed the opportunity to work within primary health care and to partner with the IWK, public health and youth focused community partners. Additionally, she has been involved with the development and delivery of the Borderline Personality Disorder Treatment Program. One of the greatest rewards of her work has been the realization of her passion for community focused work and building capacity through self-management supports. Cheyenne has developed an understanding of the challenges that people within the mental health system face, the impact on their circle of care and the barriers they experience in trying to access resources.

Cheyenne is delighted to be coordinating the implementation of the Stay Connected Mental Health Project.

She will be engaging with mental health and addiction teams across both the IWK and Capital Health in the coming months to discuss this project.

Stay Connected
Mental Health Project



Interesting Tidbits

The Canadian Psychiatric Association (CPA) is redesigning its website in 2014 and they want to hear from you! Please go to <http://groups.cpa-apc.org/surveys/index.php/325158/lang-en> to complete a short survey. Your participation is voluntary, confidential and very much appreciated. Thanks for Dr. Aileen Brunet for sharing this.

Announcing the official launch of the **World Health Organization's MiNDbank** online platform. WHO MiNDbank is a product of the QualityRights Project, WHO's flagship campaign to improve care and end human rights violations against people with mental and psychosocial disabilities. To access WHO MiNDbank, please go to: http://www.who.int/mental_health/mindbank.

Decent Housing a Cornerstone of Mental Health

BY Trevor Briggs, director, Capital Health Addictions and Mental Health Program, and Dr. Nick Delva, head, department of psychiatry, Dalhousie University and chief, department of psychiatry, Capital Health

“Supportive housing is a critical component of a high-performing mental health system.” - Mental Health Commission of Canada

The Capital Health Addictions and Mental Health Program (CHAMHP) has been reviewing its core services in order to determine how best to meet the mental health and addiction needs of our health district within the resources provided to us.

As we have these conversations and try to make progress in the recovery of people who come to us for care, the topic of housing has come up time and time again.

So why is a mental health care service so concerned about housing?

Housing and mental health and/or addictions are closely intertwined. CHAMHP estimates that a quarter of all beds in mental health acute care inpatient units are occupied by individuals who could be discharged into the community if appropriate supported housing were available.

According to the Mental Health Commission of Canada, 25 to 50 percent of homeless people live with a mental health disorder. It stated in its recent report: “For people living with mental illness who are homeless, recovery can’t happen without adequate housing.”

Mental health providers need to be able to integrate patients back into the community in order for them to continue their recovery. But without access to affordable, supportive housing for patients and clients, recovery and re-integration is stymied. People stay in hospital beds much longer than they should.

In addition to being essential for recovery and wellness, affordable, supportive housing just makes good economic sense. According to the Canadian Mental Health Association of Ontario, it costs approximately \$486 a day to keep a person in a psychiatric hospital, compared to \$72 a day to house a person in the community with supports.

One study found that supportive housing programs can help keep healthcare and justice costs at bay: supportive housing costs for an individual range from \$13,000 to \$18,000 per year, while it costs \$66,000 to \$120,000 per year to house a person in prison or in hospital.

Solutions are out there. The “housing first” approach to homelessness has shown significant promise in helping people who are homeless and living with mental health issues and/or addictions. Capital Health supports this approach, which has also been embraced by the Province of Nova Scotia in its recent Housing Strategy.

Programs using a “housing first” approach provide housing to the people who need it most, and then provide them with treatments and supports of their choosing, rather than expecting people to be fully well before they can access housing. The Mental Health Commission of Canada has encouraged the expansion of programs that take a “housing first” approach to homelessness.

In addition, it is clear that an increased supply of affordable, supportive housing is needed in our health district—and across the province and nation. One recent report found that there are as many as 530,700 people in Canada living with mental illness who are inadequately housed, including up to 119,800 who are homeless. Yet only 25,000 supportive housing units are available across the country.

Investing in affordable, supportive housing solutions for individuals with serious mental illness can help prevent the costly need for intensive treatments and lengthy inpatient stays. As well, it will free up hospital beds for clients who need acute care services.

The old adage, “An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure,” comes to mind. People living in good housing have reduce psychiatric symptoms and are less likely to experience a relapse of their mental illness or addiction.

It just makes sense. Housing first!

Newsletter Submissions

The next issue of Our Voice will be distributed on January 23, 2014 with the deadline for submissions to be January 13, 2014.

Please send all submissions to patricia_dauphinee@cdha.nshealth.ca.

The Choice and Partnership Approach - Update

Team Away Days were held on the week of November 11th; all community mental health teams participated. Susan Hare and Amy MacRae facilitated the morning sessions where they discussed values and beliefs. Each team member had an opportunity to reflect on their personal values and beliefs, team values and beliefs and some of the fundamental concepts/values and beliefs that CAPA highlights. For the most part they were all aligned. A piece of artwork that represents the words and reflects those conversations is being prepared for each team. During the afternoon session, each clinician completed a skills inventory tool. This will help with the job and team planning, deciding where we need to build skills and competencies, and each clinician may also be able to use their individual skills inventory to help them consider directions for their own future learning.

A data tracking tool was implemented to provide a snapshot of who we are providing services to, what we are offering and what clients are looking for. This data will be used, in conjunction with data from STAR and PHS, to help with the job and team planning. Clinicians were asked to enter client data into an online form between November 18—December 20. We want to thank all of the clinicians for your participation in this effort.

Next Steps?

A working group is tasked with putting together a road map of the work based on the modules outlined in the CAPA workbook using a mock community mental health team which consists of the clinicians on the CAPA Steering Committee. This work should be completed by March 2014. This will be presented to the Health Service Managers (HSM) and Clinical-Academic Leaders (CAL) for each community mental health team during a special meeting (details TBA), and then to the rest of the community mental health staff program during Team Away Days in May.

Each team has representation on the CAPA Steering Committee, and they have committed, along with their manager and CAL, to provide CAPA education to their teams based on the learning needs of the individual teams and staff members. Work is underway on education modules.

If you would like to learn more about CAPA, please contact Patricia Dauphinee, project coordinator, at patricia.dauphinee@cdha.nshealth.ca.

Annual Patient-Family-Staff Christmas Brunch



December 20, 2013



Patients, family and staff of 6/7 Lane and Short Stay came together and had a great time at the Annual Christmas Brunch held at the Abbie J. Lane.

Upcoming Events and Education Sessions



Tuesdays, 12:15—1:30 pm

Inter-professional Education Sessions

Hugh Bell Lecture Hall, NSH (available via Telehealth)

- ◆ January 14—Psychiatry, Drs. David Gardner and Andrea Murphy
- ◆ January 21—Specialty Services, Emerald Hall/COAST, Dr. Colin Pottie and team
- ◆ January 28—Pharmacy, Michelle Locke and Kelly MacIsaac

Wednesdays, 8:30—9:30 am

QEII Academic Rounds/Dalhousie University Rounds

AJL, Room 4074 (available via Telehealth)

- ◆ January 8—Child & Adolescent, Dr. Kathleen Pajer
- ◆ January 15—Mood Disorders, Dr. Tomas Hajek
- ◆ January 22—University Rounds, Dr. Joanne Belknap, University of Colorado
- ◆ January 29—Dr. Sarah Fancy, Resident

Library Training

Courses in PubMed, RefWorks, Literature Searching, Computer Skills, and more are now being offered in January and February. Special topics include: Mobile App Petting Zoo and Patient & Consumer Health Information. To register, see our Learning

Opportunities page.

New at the library: Check out our access to high-quality training videos from Lynda.com. Courses include Microsoft Excel, Word, and Outlook, Writing Articles, Acing Your Interview, Managing Small Projects, and many more.

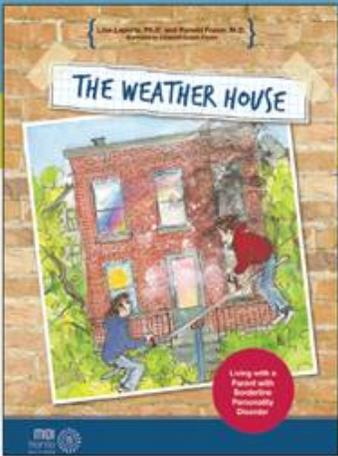
To obtain a login, contact cdhalib@cdha.nshealth.ca. **These online courses are getting rave reviews!** For more information on our training opportunities, please visit the Health Sciences Library website or contact the Library at cdhalib@cdha.nshealth.ca.

3rd Wednesday of each month, starting December 18, 1:30—3:30 pm

The LIFT Café Coffee House

McInnes Room, Bayers Road Community Mental Health
7071 Bayers Road, Suite 109, Halifax

This is a monthly opportunity to socialize and learn with peers, with an emphasis on encouraging leisure and social activity in a welcoming, safe, and supportive environment. This is a free event made possible by the Mental Health Foundation of Nova Scotia, Capital Health Addictions and Mental Health Program, Healthy Minds Cooperative and the Mindful Mango. Everyone is welcome for a free coffee and lots of fun!



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THE WEATHER HOUSE

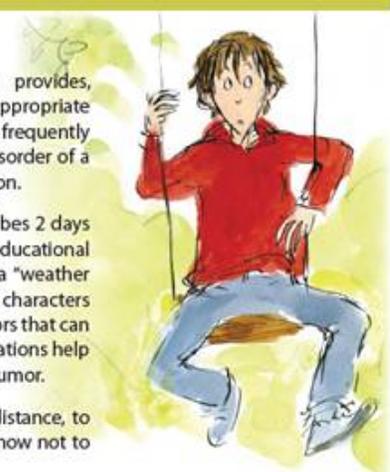
Living with a Parent with Borderline Personality Disorder

Lise Laporte, Ph.D. and Ronald Fraser, M.D.
Illustrated by Elisabeth Eudes-Pascal

This illustrated book for **school-aged children** provides, through its touching story, clinically sound and age-appropriate information for children, giving them clear answers to frequently asked questions about the borderline personality disorder of a parent, and suggesting ways to cope with the situation.

Through weather pattern analogies, the book describes 2 days in the chaotic life of David and Mary. Psychoeducational comments are provided throughout the book by a "weather wiz" who explains, in a simple manner, to both the characters and readers, the mother's sometimes strange behaviors that can be challenging to comprehend. The wonderful illustrations help with the understanding, and lighten the story with humor.

This book will help teach children take a certain distance, to better understand what is happening at home and how not to feel responsible for their parents' stormy moments.



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Éditions Midi trenté
www.miditrente.ca

