

Our Voice



News from NSHA Mental Health and Addictions, Central Zone (Halifax area, Eastern Shore, and West Hants)

Returning to Camp: A day in the life at Camp BELIEVE

Submitted by the Mental Health Foundation of Nova Scotia



On July 27th, our team at the Mental Health Foundation of Nova Scotia went to summer camp.

Camp BELIEVE is a truly special place. An initiative of the Mental Health Foundation of Nova Scotia in partnership with Brigadoon Village and the support of Bell Aliant, it is a camp like no other.

Camp BELIEVE lets kids do what they do best – play. Congruently, they are supported by others their own age who know what it's like to have a parent living with a mental illness. It is a place for kids to connect with one another, even their own siblings, and talk about what it's like on those days when Mom can't get out of bed or Dad can be overheard talking back to voices in his head.

"This camp was created out of the awareness that mental illness affects the family," says Starr Dobson, CEO and President of the Mental Health Foundation of Nova Scotia.

"We recognize the stress and guilt placed on parents who are struggling, the confusion and questions asked by children who can't make sense of what it's all about, and the stigma of asking for help."

The camp sits next to a lake in beautiful Aylesford, Nova Scotia. It's like every other summer camp

with kayaking, archery, games and swimming except everything is centered around connecting youth who share similar familial experiences. Together, they learn healthy coping skills while engaging in traditional camp activities.

The age range of the children at Camp BELIEVE is eight to 17. Some of the camp's staff and volunteers are former campers. There's a medical team on site to deal with the children's particular needs and medication. This year nearly 40 children participated in this week-long program.

As we toured around the facility, which has been there since 2011, we learned about food budgets, operating costs and other statistics. As we listened, we started to realize there's more to this place than what you see at first glance; something more than a summer camp where forever-friendships are forged over campfires and canon balls.

"Emotional demands can be pretty high here," says Michelle Bohaychuk, the Director of Development at Brigadoon Village, who led the tour.

Brigadoon Village is a year-round facility for children with chronic illnesses or conditions. It hosts camps for children who are living with a variety of illnesses and conditions such as arthritis, epilepsy, cancer and even those who are struggling with bereavement.

"Some parents will call their kids to check in," said Bohaychuk. "But at Camp BELIEVE, it's the opposite. It's often the campers who want to call home, not because they are homesick, but because they want to check on how their moms and dads are feeling; to see what kind of a day they're having."

It was clear to all of us just how important it is that a camp like this exists. The one thing that stood out time and again was that getting early support for a child who is struggling to cope with mental illness is the best possible thing we can do to help our children as they grow up.

As we absorbed this, a triangle dinner bell sounded and it was time for lunch. We had team pictures



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This newsletter is published for NSHA Mental Health and Addictions, Central Zone. It may include submissions from our mental health and addictions community partners.

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Camp BELIEVE

continued from FRONT COVER

taken by the lake, met some of the campers and sat down to eat grilled cheese sandwiches and tomato soup.

The kids sitting around my table didn't look sad. They were great looking kids. Some were playing music, some were drawing and some were betting they can eat more sandwiches than their friends. They were laughing and smiling. We all were.

And we kept smiling as the cafeteria exploded in a camp-style sing-a-long that had every kid singing and cheering so loudly that I could no longer hear my colleagues who were sitting next to me.

Mental illness does not discriminate. It impacts people of all ages, genders, races and economic backgrounds. Parents who struggle with mental health concerns may worry about the impact the illness has on their children. But for a week, at Camp BELIEVE, their kids are fine. They're singing and sharing, laughing and learning.

And most importantly, they're being kids.



[View a video](#)
showing what a week at Camp BELIEVE is like.

New funding for affordable housing

Submitted by Jane Mitchell, Housing and Homelessness Partnership

On August 17th, the federal and provincial government announced \$75 million in new funding for supporting affordable housing.

The Housing and Homelessness Partnership acknowledges, and expresses our appreciation for this new significant funding.

[Read the full letter here.](#)





Changes for the clinical nurse educators

Submitted by the Clinical Nurse Educators

There are lots of changes happening with the clinical nurse educators.

We would like to welcome **Jennifer Mason** to the team. Jennifer, who previously worked with Seniors Mental Health Services and ECT, began her new role on August 29th.

We would also like to welcome **Sandra Beumer** back to her role on August 22nd. Sandra recently finished a term position with the Registered Nurses Professional Development Centre. She brings lots of great experience back to her role.

Best wishes to **Laura White** who filled in during Sandra's term assignment. Laura returned to her position with Dartmouth Community Mental Health Services on August 22nd.

Finally, congratulations to **Jane Hughes** who retired on August 31st. Read more on page 4...

The clinical nurse educators contribute invaluable support to the educational needs of our program, working closely with the new Education and Training portfolio. However, they are a part of the larger Professional Practice team that serves NSHA and report directly to Lorraine Robertson, manager and professional practice leader, Central Zone.

In 2015, the clinical nurse educators were each aligned with a specific service within the program. This approach was taken to build familiarity between the educators and staff to strengthen practice competencies. The clinical nurse educators are assigned to service areas as follows:

- Sandra Beumer - ECFH, Offender Health, Emerald Hall
- Kim Hiscock - Community Transition Program, Simpson Landing, Transition Hall
- Amy MacRae - Short Stay Unit, Mayflower, Willow Hall & Staff Orientation (more details on page 6)
- Jennifer Mason - 6 & 7 Lanes, Addictions Inpatient Treatment Program, Opioid Treatment Program

The educators also contribute to many cross-service training initiatives, including the Nonviolent Crisis Intervention, which represents a significant investment of their time.

Our people

Retirement

After 28 years, **Dr. Mai Riives** retired on July 29th. During her 28 years, she worked on several



Photo credit: Nick Pearce, Dalhousie University.

inpatient units but the majority of her time was spent working with people with intellectual disabilities on Emerald Hall and COAST. To say that Dr. Riives was dedicated to working with this group of people is an understatement. It was her passion and her life!

She had a unique way of working with patients, their family and caregiv-

ers. She made them feel at ease through her support and understanding. Dr. Riives was an excellent teacher. She was well respected by the team; always willing to listen, to explain and support. She often had very entertaining stories - especially about why she arrived later than she expected... which was often. It was always a great laugh amongst the team.

Two retirement celebrations took place prior to her retirement at the end of July. As she retires, she'll take with her a vast array of knowledge and experiences. She will truly be missed by her colleagues and patients.

We all wish her the best in the next leg of her journey.

(Submitted by: Shonagh Parker and Amy Stewart)



Our people

Retirement



Jane Hughes, clinical nurse educator, (pictured above) retired on August 31st.

This new phase of life comes after a career devoted to mental health. Jane's career has taken her to many parts of the world - from St. John's, Newfoundland, to Australia.

Jane graduated from Memorial University School of Nursing in 1985. The seeds for her love of mental health were first planted when she worked as a nursing assistant at the Waterford Hospital in St. John's, Newfoundland. She did this in the summers when attending university.

After graduating, Jane's first position was as a casual nurse at the Waterford Hospital. She practiced in a variety of settings, including Cardiology, but quickly realized her passion was mental health nursing. She also discovered that she hated blood and technical equipment!

Jane arrived in Halifax in 1988. She worked at the Acute Observation Unit at the Abbie J. Lane/Camp Hill Hospital. She was head nurse on N17 at The Nova Scotia Hospital, and was instrumental in having the title of head nurse changed to nursing unit manager. She spent time working in nursing research, and has been in the role of clinical nurse educator since 1994.

In 1998, wanderlust struck and she was fortunate to take a year off to travel and work in Australia. She describes this as an "amazing learning experience" where she realized everyone has the desire to live happy, productive and meaningful lives.

Jane has contributed greatly to the practice of

mental health nursing. She has been a voice for advancing nursing practice which is evident in the role she played in spearheading the development of the Mental Health Nurses Association of Nova Scotia (MHNANS). Her passions include the Tidal Model and promoting person-centered care.

On August 29th, we hosted a gathering to honour Jane on her special occasion. It was a great chance for her to connect with friends and colleagues.

Thank you, Jane, for your passion and all you have done to advance mental health nursing practice. We hope retirement gives you many opportunities to exercise your passion of travelling with Bill (her husband).

In the words of Phil Barker (The Tidal Model), "Life is a journey undertaken on an ocean of experience."

We hope that this new part of your journey is fulfilling.

(Submitted by the clinical nurse educators)





Our people

Moving on...



After 27 years in mental health (and later mental health and addictions), **Denise LeBlanc** accepted a new position within the NSHA; her last day was on August 23rd. She will be working at the Dartmouth General Hospital as administrative assistant to the director of health services.

In 1989, Denise began her career at The Nova Scotia Hospital with Stenographic Services. Six years later, she became the secretary for Seniors Mental Health working closely with Willow Hall, the Seniors Outreach Team and Electroconvulsive Therapy (ECT). Denise supported Joan Boniface and Beth Floyd in their leadership roles with Seniors Mental Health, and broadened her role when she began working with Dr. David Pilon, program leader, Specialty Mental Health Services and (more recently) the new Education and Training portfolio. She has brought great skill, organizational finesse and attention to detail to all that she has contributed to over the years, be it creating treatment manuals, organizing conferences, balancing countless recruitments, and keeping on top of dozens of cost centres all in a quiet and unassuming way.

The clinical nurse educators would like to wish Denise all the best in her new position. They said, "We know that she will do an amazing job. It was wonderful reconnecting with her with the creation of the new Education and Training portfolio. We will miss your strong organizational skills, your friendliness and willingness to help and your thoughtful discussions. Our loss is the gain of the Dartmouth General Hospital."

Denise has always retained a special place in her heart for the Nova Scotia Hospital site and the needs of those we are privileged to serve. While we will greatly miss working with her, she is moving into a position that will provide an advanced opportunity to apply her many talents and skills.

I want to wish Denise the very best in her new role and to thank her for her exemplary service over the years, particularly over those years that I have been fortunate to work closely with her on our team.

There will be a celebration to honor Denise to be held on **September 13th** from 4:30 to 7:30 pm at the **Mic Mac Grill (219 Waverley Road, Dartmouth)**. All are welcome to join us to send Denise off in style.

(Submitted by: Dr. David Pilon)

Loss of a colleague

It is with sadness that I announce the loss of a valued colleague and friend, **Jane Stephen**.

Jane was a social worker in addictions services with the NSHA Mental Health and Addictions, Central Zone.

She gave 200 percent of herself to the people she served, and exemplified the gold standard in compassion and client-centered care. She had a passion for the holistic approach to women's health and inherent strength. Her passion, knowledge and skills enabled her to facilitate groups that activated the power of mutual support. I am a better person and clinician because of the time that I spent with her co-facilitating groups, collaborating in client care, or sharing a coffee... a walk.... a laugh.

Heartfelt condolence to her sister, **Elizabeth Stephen** (who also works for NSHA Mental Health and Addictions, Central Zone), and her two children - Luke and Alexandra.

(Submitted by: Jennifer Cantley)

CLOTHING DONATIONS NEEDED

The ECFH Apparel Shop is in desperate need of donations such as:

- Men's shirts/sweaters: Size L and up
- Men's pants: Any size
- Men/Women's casual shoes, PJs and fall jackets: Any size

Please drop donations off at the ECFH reception.



Upcoming events and education sessions

Orientation for Mental Health and Addictions

8:30 am to 4:30 pm

Upcoming sessions are scheduled for:

- Sept 27 - 30: NSH site, Hugh Bell Lecture Hall
- Nov 22 - 25: NSH site, Hugh Bell Lecture Hall

Orientation sessions are open to all new staff working in NSHA Mental Health and Addictions, Central Zone. To register for a session, please contact Heidi Wolfe at heidi.wolfe@nshealth.ca or 902-460-7353. For any questions regarding orientation, please contact Amy MacRae at amy.macrae@nshealth.ca or 902-464-3062.

Non-Violent Crisis Intervention Recertification

7:30 to 11:30 am

These sessions are open to all clinical staff working in Mental Health and Addictions. These replace any of the Blitz sessions previously offered.

Upcoming sessions are scheduled for:

- Sept 21: NSH site, Hugh Bell Lecture Hall (**CLASS FULL**)
- Nov 16: NSH site, Hugh Bell Lecture Hall (**LIMITED SPACE AVAILABLE**)
- Dec 7: NSH site, Hugh Bell Lecture Hall (**SPACE AVAILABLE**)

Please register for these sessions through LMS. If you have any questions about any of the sessions listed above, please contact one of clinical nurse educators below:

- Sandra Beumer: 902-464-3351
- Kim Hiscock: 902-464-3120
- Amy MacRae: 902-464-3062
- Jennifer Mason: 902-464-3168

Schizophrenia Society of Canada National Conference

October 27 & 28

World Trade & Convention Centre

Halifax, Nova Scotia

Our theme is Psychosis: New Perspectives, Bright Horizons. Keynote speakers include Dr. Ashok Malla who speaks to transformational research and treatment for people with psychosis and schizophrenia;

Dr. Anne Bassett who is an internationally renowned speaker specializing in the gene connection.

Workshops and sessions are broader in scope:

- Innovations in Treatments: Short-term dynamic therapy, clinical services and recovery, cognitive behavioural therapy for psychosis;
- Community Perspectives: Emerging and best-practices in aboriginal mental health, subjective experiences of negative symptoms among youth with psychosis, From OT to family member, a new perspective, Families Matter;
- Community Living: Innovations in supportive housing and Beacon Program;
- Emerging Perspectives: CBT new frontiers, early intervention, FORBOW study, early identification of severe mental illness in high risk youth;
- Evidence-based Practice/Program Evaluation: Key findings in early psychosis, the results from an SSO National engagement initiative and evaluation results from our provincial mental health and addictions strategy;
- Workshops around recovery, creating recovery culture with peer support, peer support panel;
- A legal panel discussing the issues around justice and those living with a diagnosis (Dr. Patrick Bailie, Justice Richard Schneider, Archie Kaiser and Justice Anne Derrick); and
- Artistic performances by Laura Burke and The Park Bench Players.

The [website](#) will have a full agenda coming soon.

PSYCHOSIS: NEW PERSPECTIVES, BRIGHT HORIZONS
Schizophrenia Society of Canada National Conference

Presenting Sponsors: Otsuka, Janssen

Keynote Speakers:
Dr. Anne Bassett
Dr. Ashok Malla
William J. Walsh, PhD

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Workshops

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